

**IBN HALDUN UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY**

MASTER THESIS

**RELIGION, MEMORY, AND SENSE OF BELONGING:
THE TRADITION OF MEMORIZATION OF
THE QUR'AN IN TURKEY (1923-1950)**

BÜŞRA COŞKUN

**THESIS SUPERVISOR
PROF. RAMAZAN ARAS**

ISTANBUL, 2022

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THE QUR'AN IN TURKEY (1923-1950)**

by

BÜŞRA COŞKUN

**A thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in
Sociology**

**THESIS SUPERVISOR
PROF. RAMAZAN ARAS**

ISTANBUL, 2022

APPROVAL PAGE

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that, in our opinion, it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Sociology.

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This is to confirm that this thesis complies with all the standards set by the School of Graduate Studies of Ibn Haldun University.

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I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

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ÖZ

DİN, HAFIZA VE AİDİYET: TÜRKİYE’DE HAFIZLIK GELENEĞİ (1923-1950)

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1. Dünya Savaşı sonrasında ortaya çıkan ulus-devlet yapıları, birçok coğrafyada yeni politikaların oluşumunu beraberinde getirmiştir. Nitekim, kimlik ve vatandaşlık sorunu ileriki dönemlerde yaşanacak olan siyasi, toplumsal ve kültürel krizlerin zeminini oluşturmuştur. Sekülerleşme, modernleşme, batılılaşma ve ulusallaştırma ekseninde yüzyıllardır toplumda var olan; toplumsal, kültürel, siyasi, etnik ve dini yapıları yok etmeye çalışan yeni ulus devleti projesi, Osmanlıdan miras kalan bu coğrafyalarda derin travmalara, kopuşlara ve kırılmalara neden olmuştur. Türkiye’de 1923’te başlayan ve 1950’de kırılmaya uğrayan otoriter sekülerleşme süreci, dindar toplumun ve dini grupların tarihini ve hafızasını büyük ölçüde etkilemiş ve şekillendirmiştir. Türkiye Cumhuriyeti erken dönem egemen ideolojileri, Müslümanların sosyal hayatı, kimliği ve dindarlığı üzerinde derinden değişim ve dönüşüme sebep olmuştur. Devletin fiziki ve psikolojik şiddet araçları devreye sokularak seküler ulus-devlet projesinin seküler ideoloji ve politikaları uygulanmaya zorlanmıştır.

Tek-parti rejimi olarak adlandırılan bu dönemde Müslüman toplum içerisinde en çok etkilenen gruplardan bir tanesi, Kur’anı öğrenmeye çalışan sıradan insanlar ve Hafızlar olmuştur. Hafızlar, tek parti dönemi yaptırımlarının ve şiddet içeren siyasetlerinin sebep olduğu parçalanmışlıklara rağmen, sıkı ve zor şartlar Kur’an-ı Kerimi öğrenmeye çalışarak tarihsel süreç içerisinde var olma mücadelesi vermişlerdir. Bu çalışmada, Hafızların yaşadıkları tarihi süreçte sahip oldukları dini kimlikler açısından devlete dair algılarındaki düşünceleri elde etmek ve değerlendirmek amaçlanmıştır.

Aynı zamanda, bu çalışma, otoriter sekülerleşme politikalarına şahit olan Hafızların döneme dair hayat hikâyeleri, sözlü anlatıları ve deneyimleri hakkında geniş bilgi edinmeyi amaçlayan bir saha araştırmasıdır. Özellikle 1923-1950 döneminde yaşamış olan Hafızların hayat hikâyeleri ekseninde din, hafıza ve aidiyet olgularına odaklanılmaktadır.

Bu çalışmada, Hafızların bakış açısıyla hadiseleri keşfetmek için sözlü tarih yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Dolayısıyla bu tezde, resmi tarih yazımında göz ardı edilmeye ve unutulmaya çalışılan tarihi gerçekler gündeme getirilerek hafıza çalışmalarının yeniden değerlendirilmesine olanak sağlanacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Devlet, Din Hafıza, Hafızlık Geleneği, Kimlik.



ABSTRACT

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After the First World War, the emergence of nation-states brought new policies to many countries. Notably, the issue of identity and citizenship consequently became the basis of the political, social, and cultural crises and contestations. The case of the newly founded Turkish nation-state, which was based on secularization, modernization, Westernization, and nationalization, has consciously destroyed or undermined the social, cultural, political, ethnic, and religious structures that have existed in the Ottoman Empire for centuries. The formation of the Turkish nation-state resulted in deep traumas, ruptures, and fractures in the social fabric of the society and in the political milieu.

The authoritarian secularization policies starting from 1923 to 1950, have profoundly influenced and shaped the history and memory of the religious communities. Dominant ideologies of the early Republican periods in Turkey have had many impacts and long-lasting transformations on the social life, identity, and religiosity of ordinary Muslims. Psychological and physical tools of the violence of the state were imposed on them to implement secular policies and ideologies of the secular Turkish nation-state project.

In this period of one-party regime, one of the most affected groups in the society was pious Qur'an memorizers (*Hafızlar*) who tried to learn the Qur'an under strict

conditions. Qur'an memorizers, being one of the most marginalized and violated groups, have struggled to exist and survive in these historically dire conditions, despite the brutalities inflicted by the single party's sanctions and violent policies. The principal objective of this study is to obtain and evaluate the perceptions, experiences, and life stories of Qur'an memorizers regarding the state policies and brutalities they encountered in that era. This study particularly focuses on the relations between state, religion, memory, identity, and sense of belonging in the world of Qur'an memorizers in the years between 1923-1950.

Keywords: Identity, Memory, Religion, State, Tradition of Memorization of Qur'an.



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“When a man dies, his deeds come to an end except for three things: Sadaqah Jariyah (ceaseless charity); a knowledge which is beneficial, or a virtuous descendant who prays for him (for the deceased).” (Muslim)

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to my source of inspiration, my Ustadh Hüseyin Tamgüney, who has made endless efforts to engrave the above-given precious statements of our Prophet (PBUH) in the lives of his students, and whose support I have always felt beside me, and whose student I feel comfort and peace to be.

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ISTANBUL, 2022

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study focuses on the life stories of Qur'an memorizers (hafizs) and aims to analyze the effects of the authoritarian secular policies of the Turkish state on the tradition of Qur'an memorization between the years 1923-1950. Particularly, this thesis examines the experiences, struggles, and motivations of the Qur'an memorizers who witnessed the process of building the secular Turkish nation-state. The study aims to investigate how Qur'an memorizers experienced social, spatial, political, and cultural changes during the single-party regime in the early decades of the history of the Turkish state and its repressive and social-transforming policies.

The founding of the Republic of Turkey, which was established in 1923 with the proclamation of a new secular Republican state, initiated changing and transforming the political, social, and cultural structures to create a new nation and hence society. This new nation-state project was based on some ideological frameworks such as secularism, modernism/Westernization, and Turkish nationalism. This new power elite mobilized all the institutions and means of the state (policy, discourse, law, economy, military, education, and media) at the local and national level and frequently applied various forms of violence to segments of the society that failed to conform to the imagined ideal and expected nation and society. Known as the period of one-party government, the years between 1923 and 1950 were a period when the Republican People's Party (RPP) was in power as the party of the founders of the new Republic.

An investigation into the historical literature and history books shows that the official ideology, Kemalism, reigned between 1923 and 1950. However, the secular, modern/Western, and Turkish nationalist revolutions, reforms, and other policies implemented during this period were met with serious resistance from the various segments of society. This wide spectrum of people was neglected in the historical formation of modern Turkey and therefore, unfortunately, we don't have enough

tangible data on their history. In an attempt to contribute to and closing of this gap, this study aims to reveal the meaning and nature of the institution of Qur'an memorization, which was regarded as institution to be avoided during the one-party regime under the secular state ideology, the radical change, and institutionalization process throughout the history of the state. In this sense, the struggle between the secular, Kemalist or non-secular groups started to gain ground also in the cultural, social, and political spheres. This thesis endeavors to identify the resistance mechanisms developed by Qur'an memorizers (the hafiz) against the practices imposed through the state's physical and psychological apparatuses with the inclusion of various forms of violence and discriminative measures.

Since the expression that the state's religion is Islam was removed, secularism was included in the constitutional amendment of the newly formed state. The state's control, especially over religious matters and practices, influenced the believers' lives in the individual and social sense. Qur'an memorizers, who still undertake a crucial role for the Muslim populations, are among the communities that were influenced most due to the Western-like modernism and assimilation policies of the Republic of Turkey during the early nation-state period. Legal regulations and military, religious, political, social, and cultural policies empowered secular policy, attitudes, rules, and bureaucracy. Such differences and pursuits also brought along an intellectual alternation against the institution of Qur'an memorization and the Qur'an memorizers. Although the ideological regulations that were implemented on the religious people with oppressive and harsh secularism between 1923 and 1950 hindered Qur'an education to a great extent, the Qur'an memorizers who received this unfair treatment struggled against the experienced difficulties with their own attempts and initiatives throughout these historical processes. As a part of oral history research, this project will deviate from the state-centered historical literature shaped by the Kemalist discourses of the ideology of the Republic of Turkey to reveal the hardships of marginalized groups. It will contribute to the teaching of history to the present and future generations through living witnesses.

Furthermore, there were serious identity crises and searches for identity during this modern age which have recently become more serious subjects of discussion. The aspirations for building a national identity and their rise as a theme among the

discourses on modernity paved the way for deeper crises. The identity issue of the modern age affected not only national identities but also influenced various levels and senses in cultural life. The worries as to the standardization of each and every individual or society in this new and modern world made identity searches and definitions significant subjects to analyze. This is because the new regime excluded or, what is worse, marginalized and discriminated against the identities of Qur'an memorizers. An assessment of the practices and policies imposed along with the new forms of violence reveals the question of adaptation to a new order and of belonging of the Qur'an memorization to the state. In the meantime, this brought the question "Who are we?" to the agenda of these communities, and it became hard to answer it. In this regard, this study analyses identity and otherness during the one-party regime of Turkey with the example of the Qur'an memorizers.

History shapes the production of identity by supporting memories of the past. Together with recalling, memory ensures the references for social expression and belonging. That is, a person restructures the present in accordance with recalling the past or attachment. In this sense, memory should be considered a recording device, as suggested by Ayşe Uslu (2016, 49). However, dominant political discourses frequently place hate or despising sentiments against others in the collective memory. As in the case of the example of Qur'an memorizers, it has become hard for 'the other' to defend its self-identity and to reflect its identity awareness in the public spheres of Turkey. This study demonstrates that irreparable social and cultural consequences arose due to the perception of the Qur'an memorization as 'the other,' which was also regarded as a threat, and inquires about the examination of collective memory against 'the other' by telling the experiences of the Qur'an memorizers. Therefore, this study intends to identify and evaluate the un/changing opinions in the perceptions and minds of the Qur'an memorizers in terms of their historical experiences and their cultural and ethnic identities as a marginalized religious group. To this end, we can list the significant questions of this study to be answered as follows: What were the place and meaning of being a Qur'an memorizer in that period? What were the influences of early Turkish secularism policies on the Qur'an memorizer? How did the revolutions of Atatürk shape the education of Qur'an memorization? How were the marginalizing sanctions of the state perceived by the Qur'an memorizers of the period? How was the state defined in the individual, local and social memories of the Qur'an

memorizers? What was the reaction of the Qur'an memorizers against the discourses and practices of the state?

As Qur'an is the holy book of Muslims, Qur'an memorization has been one of the best acts of worshipping, and great importance has been attached to memorizing the Qur'an in the religion of Islam by all Muslims. Allah said, "And We send down from the Qur'an that which is a cure and a mercy for the believers, but it increases the disbelievers in nothing but loss" (Qur'an 17:82). Abdullah bin Amr (RA) reported that the Prophet(PBUH) said: "Convey (from) me even if it is one Ayat"(Sahih Bukhari 3461). As a result of the advice and encouragement of our Prophet (PBUH), the widespread reading, practice, memorization, and teaching of the Holy Qur'an has been essential for Muslims until today. Qur'an education was carried out in mosques and houses of quarries and continued its activities in places such as ribat, dar- al quarries madrasahs, dar- al huffaz, dar- al hadiths, and tombs during the periods of Seljuk and Ottoman Empire. After the declaration of the Turkish Republic, with the law of Unification dated March 3, 1924, Islamic madrasahs and schools were closed, and a Western educational model was introduced. By this legislation, significant gaps occurred in the education of Qur'an memorization (Bozkurt 1997; Baltacı 1999; Çağrııcı 2002; Cebeci 2006; Vahapoğlu 2016). The alteration made in the curriculums and the structure of the educational institutions dramatically weakened the rate of Qur'an memorization and affected the life of Qur'an memorizers in diverse ways.

The second chapter explains different aspects of ethnographic fieldwork that have been carried out for this study. It reveals the use of research methods that were incorporated during the fieldwork. This chapter shows that the collection of data with fieldwork, rather than the use of surveys, ensures a continuous and in-depth interaction between the sociologist and the social actors. An important aspect of fieldwork is the position of the researcher. A qualitative researcher is a participant in his or her research. S/he doesn't differentiate himself or herself from the research but gets involved in it with his or her assumptions, knowledge, and assessments. This chapter refers to the data collection process of the researcher and provides clues as to the achievement of the field and findings.

The third chapter delves into an extensive analysis of literature on the history of memorization and Qur'an memorization in the first years of the Turkish Republic. In addition to the memorization of the Qur'an, the history of the single-party regime in the Turkish Republic has also been reviewed. Finally, the sources of literature previously published about Qur'an education, oral history, and the Turkish Republic between (1923-1950) are examined to bridge the gap between previous and today's studies and provide a sufficient backdrop for further discussions.

The fourth chapter reviews critical developments in the history of the tradition of Qur'an memorization and outlines transformations from the life of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) until the twentieth century, including the process of how the same tradition is maintained today. In this context, I will examine the concepts of memory, memorization, and memorization in Arabic culture, which are the building blocks of oral literature. Within this study, in which the Abbasid, Seljuk, the Ottoman, and finally the Republican periods will be taken into account chronologically. Thus, I will shed light on the adventure of the institution of Qur'an memorization until today. The last part of this chapter deals with the struggle of the tradition of Qur'an memorization during the single-party era. Focusing on the political embodiment of the early Turkish Republic period, I tried to find out how Qur'an memorizers experienced diverse secular policies in their everyday lives. Because of the increase in the effectiveness of the modernization/Westernization process against religion and the radical shift toward the secular system had been pillars of the Turkish nation-state building project. In this chapter, I will give stories from the experiences of Qur'an memorizers regarding secularist policies as one of the dimensions of the nation-state-building process.

The fifth chapter examines the concept of identity, sense of belonging, and state violence. It may seem these phenomena as uncomplicated and complex that has been discussed in depth by sociologists for years. Thus, before going deeper into detail, I will first look at the definitions of these concepts. In the post-WWI era, Turkey witnessed the formation and development of a new nation-state, and secular ideology gradually became an integral part of it. In a sense, the religious and ethnic groups were challenged in the new system. As a result, many non-Turkish ethnic and religious groups in Turkey were associated with the perception of 'marginal' due to the Westernization discourses in the process that followed 1923. This study uses the

example of Qur'an memorizers to discuss the violence and discrimination caused by the individual and social identity impositions and crises that started with the new nation-state policy. What kind of defense mechanism did the communities and circles of Qur'an readers with Islamic sensitivity develop against the restrictions on religion in the public sphere? One of the major arguments of this chapter is that the Kemalist state's reaction to Qur'an memorizers was an attempt to marginalize their identities. Therefore, I will focus on violence in the subjective and collective experiences of Qur'an memorizers. The objective is to analyze the ways in which state violence became visible in the newly founded Turkish Republic to maintain its sovereignty. Additionally, it examines police violence in the context of "the use or threat of violence by the state or its agents or supporters, particularly against civilian individuals and populations, as a means of political intimidation and control" (Sluka 2000, 2) in the building process of the nation-state. Thus, this chapter will illustrate what forms of resistance, struggle, and adaptation came from this community against the acts of state violence.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY AND ETHNOGRAPHY

As an oral history study, my research will focus on and analyze religion, identity, and memory based on narratives of Qur'an memorizers from 1923-1950 who experienced the events in the process of nation state-building. The use of oral sources in sociological and anthropological field studies in our country has been included in many studies but failed to tackle sensitive narratives, histories, and memories. However, in Turkey, there are hardly any exemplary studies that we can show on the use of oral sources in history regarding the era of the single-party. I think that the use of oral sources in historical studies of Turkey is related to the increasing interest in local history in recent years. It is also crucial in this sense that there has been a noticeable revival in oral history studies in universities recently.

In the first year of my master's degree, the subject of this thesis came about when my advisor Prof. Dr. Ramazan Aras, within the scope of the "Oral History and Social Memory Application and Research Center," thought of researching Qur'an memorization during the "one-party period." At the same time, my advisor's oral history project on local history (1923-1950) in the previous year was a great encouragement for me to start this study. Therefore, I think that the initiation of various projects in parallel with the theses on local history studies has also been effective in the spread of oral history. Leyla Neyzi(2010) argues that this interest in oral history became effective in the political context as well as in the academy. Neyzi attributes the fact that the excluded groups cannot find any information about themselves in the basic education programs directed by politics to the national history taught in schools in Turkey and the exclusion of many events. For this reason, it is an undeniable fact that almost of the entire society has been silenced since the founding of the Turkish Republic for almost a century (Neyzi 2010, 443-459). As Leyla Neyzi said, in this part, I will touch on the basic foundations of the interest in oral histories, such as genocide, trauma, and violence. Moreover, by entering the living space of the Qur'an memorizers

who witnessed the 1923-1950 period and collecting data on the relevant subject, I will try to shed light on the lives of ordinary people who were otherized and silenced. This made it possible to question the statistical structure of official history. Thus, in this research, the meaning of oral history as a method has been analyzed initially, and the need and use of oral history methodology within this thesis have been mentioned.

At the end of the chapter, the problems that might be encountered during the application of the oral history method, as well as the principles regarding the application of the oral history methodology, will be discussed in relation to fieldwork experiences.

2.1. The Need and Relevance for an Oral History of Hafizs

The fundamental reason for conducting this research originates from the desire to record and transfer the life stories of Qur'an memorizers of the early Turkish Republic to the next generations. Qur'an memorizers, who have played a significant role in the Muslim communities up to this day, are one of the groups who were affected mostly by the Westernization, secularization, and assimilation politics of the state in the early decades of the nation-state building process of the Turkish Republic (Sağman 1950; Bozkurt 1997; Öcal 1998). The subject of this research is how the radical change and transformation that took place during the foundation of the Turkish Republic was met by Qur'an memorizers.

In this thesis, the methodology of oral history has been used as it is one of the best-known methods in qualitative research for the comprehensive analysis of memories. However, it is a fact that ordinary people's experiences of the past and present may still be overlooked in historiography. One of the most appropriate solutions to overcome this deficiency is the oral history methodology. I used oral history methodology regarding its nature of making individuals the subjects of historiography. Also, it is more appropriate to uncover the subjective meaning and discover phenomena from perceptions of Qur'an memorizers as well as their attributions through experiences in which they live.

According to Paul Thompson, oral history, which provides access to the experiences of people who live at the border of power relations and whose lives have been documented, has an important potential to create a history from these hidden voices. Oral evidence typically combines an objective (reliable) and subjective (interpretive) dimension, both of which have historical value (Thompson 2006, 23-33). Thus, oral history makes a big contribution to understanding the sense of identity and perceptions of people. In this context, oral history provides for an understanding “to unpick the layers of memory, dig back into its darkness, hoping to reach the hidden truth” (Thompson 1988, 150).

This study aims to present a critical evaluation of early Republican policies and has a unique value in terms of revealing how the ideology of secularism during the founding period of the Turkish Republic affected the identity, history, religion, and culture of the Turkish Muslim society through the narrations of witnesses from a sociological perspective. One of the distinctive features of oral history is to reveal the experiences of neglected or marginalized groups in response to the prohibitive politics of oppressive regimes holding power. This research has a unique value in terms of revealing the effects of the sanctions imposed on Muslims in the early periods of the Republic. Quoting Paul Thompson:

Oral history is a history built around people. It thrusts life into history itself, and it widens its scope. It allows heroes not just from the leaders but from the unknown majority of the people. It brings history into and out of the community. It helps the less privileged, and especially the old, towards dignity and self-confidence. It makes for contact - and thence understanding - between social classes and between generations (Thompson 1978, 18).

One of the goals of this study is to learn some aspects of the history of Turkey from the perspectives of Qur’an memorizers because oral history makes the voice of victims, oppressed, and marginalized groups heard. In this sense, Valerie Raleigh Yow argues that “how the subject sees and interprets her experience, given her view of herself and of the world, can be gleaned in no better way than to ask in the context of life review”(Yow 2005, 14). Oral history is built on the transmission of personal experiences and memories. Hearing unheard voices and accessing information that will change the course of history enables the democratization of history writing. Hence, oral history, as a mixed genre and a process that includes the interpretations of both the narrator and the oral historian, examines the present while investigating the

past (Neyzi 2013, 15). I believe one of the values of oral history is its “retrospective construction of reality” (Hareven 1996, 275). This work strengthens the bond between people and history and provides the opportunity to carry the past to the present and comprehend the history and responsibilities of future generations once again. As a result, this study will provide a more profound historical knowledge to future generations, as Lynn Abrams said:

Oral history is a catch-all term applied to two things. It refers to the process of conducting and recording interviews with people in order to elicit information from them about the past. But oral history is also the product of that interview, the narrative account of past events. It is then both a research methodology (a means of conducting an investigation) and the result of the research process; in other words, it is both the act of recording and the record that is produced (Abrams 2010, 2).

The history of modern Turkey has been shaped in line with the ideological structure and discourse of political power, and a tradition of state-centered historiography has continued. In addition, historiography and education were shaped mostly in line with the structure, establishment, and development of the political system and Kemalist teachings. At this point, such a study to be carried out in the field of oral history in Turkey will reveal the history of societies, groups, and communities, such as the Qur’an memorizers, who were otherized and ignored or excluded from the state-centered dominant historiography tradition and understanding. I argue that this oral history study on different segments, regions, and aspects of Turkish society will not only democratize the historiography tradition in Turkey by including the stories, narratives, and testimonies of Qur’an memorizers in historiography. It will also make an important contribution to eliminating an important deficiency by uncovering and constructing an archive of the local and social memory of the geography we live in.

The interviews were formulated and then evaluated by using the concepts of identity and memory of the interviewees. The failure of the newly established nation-state to fulfill its promises, the lack of the realization of the desired freedom discourses, the repression of the hoped-for freedoms, and the change in identity definitions caused the confidence of the Qur’an memorizers to be lost. These individuals both tried to get used to this new situation and also made an effort to protect their values. This brought along a multi-faceted struggle. Especially those living in the villages carried out some activities, albeit individually, in order to prevent the eradication of the identity of

Qur'an memorizers. For the Qur'an memorizers, the state policies of that time were an obstacle or a discriminatory orientation towards their very beings and existence.

To make a general assessment, it is an undeniable fact that the Qur'an memorizers, who have an Islamic identity, were somewhat of a minority in Turkey. This forced them to acquire and use defense mechanisms. Therefore, the new power was not socio-culturally appropriate and equivalent to the identity of the Qur'an memorizers, and they began to impose their own identities in this geography. Thus, there was no cooperation or solidarity between the local people and society. At the same time, negative factors such as disruptions in the public services for the Qur'an memorizers and serious deficiencies in life, even at a minimum, reduced the probability of the Qur'an memorizer adopting a state policy to a large extent. Therefore, this study will problematize the situation that the Qur'an memorizers were assimilated to create a homogeneous identity by the new nation-state, which disinherited citizens from the heterogeneous identity structure of the Ottoman Empire.

However, following time, this effort of the Turkish State, which bases its national identity on ethnic identity, had the opposite effect, after the 1950s, other ethnic, social, and cultural identities, including the Qur'an memorizers, became stronger in Turkish society. Interviews with the Qur'an memorizers, an Islamic religious group, revealed the facts about this issue. It is seen that the identity of the Qur'an memorizers is highlighted as happiness and blessing in the answers they gave to the questions about identity. Expressing that they are happy to be a Qur'an memorizer, they believe that the identity and the perception of Islam must be preserved. They emphasize that social integration has been achieved with the cultural memory that constitutes their identity over time. Although some changes have occurred in the collective identity with the modern age, elements such as religious perspective and ethnicity still impact the provision and maintenance of the collective identity essentially. Listening to narratives of the Qur'an memorizers through the oral history method, I will investigate how they remember and perceive the first period of the Republic as horrifying, sentimental, anguished, and some with nostalgia as they celebrated their individual resistance.

Many religious and ethnic groups in Turkish society criticize official historiography and statist discourses as being biased approaches and regard them as suspicious. Alessandro Portelli discussed that "Oral history has been about the fact that there is

more to history than presidents and generals, and there is more to culture than the literary canon”(Portelli 1991, viii). This research aims to go beyond the state-centered historiography tradition shaped in line with the Kemalist discourses of the early Turkish Republic ideology by revealing the difficult experiences of a marginalized group. It will contribute to learning the historical truths for future generations from surviving witnesses. Finally, I hope to enrich the literature as an interdisciplinary study that will encompass many fields such as sociology, theology, politics, and psychology by examining the lives of Qur’an memorizers in the axis of official historiography shaped in line with the early Turkish state ideology. With this kind of work, I want historical truths that have been tried to be ignored and forgotten to come into question. This will enable the re-evaluation of memory studies and new research in the academic field.

2.2. Fieldwork in Istanbul and Adapazari

Qur’an memorizers of various ages, gender, educational background, and class were selected, and the data was collected through life stories and face-to-face in-depth interviews. I worked with sixteen male and four female Qur’an memorizers ranging from 65 to 100 years old. When I researched to find potential interviewees at the early stage of my ethnographic study, I found that the Qur’an memorizers who lived in that period (from 1923 to the 1950s) were dominantly male. Only four of the female Qur’an memorizers were found, so information regarding women’s experiences is limited. In Islam, both women and men are encouraged to be Qur’an memorizers, but because of the ban on reading the Qur’an in the first period of the Turkish Republic, it was more restricted for women to be Qur’an memorizers. As stated in the interviews, as a result of the bans and the closure of the Qur’an education schools during the single-party period, candidates of Qur’an memorizers had to attend classes held in secret houses, barns, etc. In the interviews, it was mentioned that they usually went from villages to other villages for the Qur’an memorization and walked for 2 hours or even more. Thus, those who had a chance to go distant places were mostly males since women could not travel long distances alone under such circumstances.

In this ethnographic study, interviews were conducted at various times between 2019 and 2020 in Istanbul and Adapazari. The reason I chose these regions is because of the

high rate of Qur'an memorizers living in these regions. Although I had a plan to go to the Black Sea Region, where there is a huge population of Qur'an memorizers as well, I could not go there because of inconvenient circumstances led by coronavirus pandemic outbreaks and travel restrictions. Moreover, since most of my target interviewees were elderly people, I didn't want to take any risk of threatening them with potential or possible coronavirus infections.

Oral history sessions were held with male and female Qur'an memorizers, most of whom were born in the early 1940s. The narrators were reached through the snowball method under the guidance of people who had close relations with other Qur'an memorizers and through the opportunities provided by face-to-face and sincere relations. Snowball sampling is "a technique for finding research subjects where one subject gives the researcher the name of another subject, which in turn provides the name of a third, and so on" (Vogt 2005, 300). Using this technique, in my view, eases researchers' work to find interviewees in a short span of time. In the fieldwork, snowball sampling became especially beneficial when I tried to reach interviewees, who were sometimes inaccessible because of the death of old age Qur'an memorizers. Snowball sampling is a technique used to reach interviewees when the researcher does not have enough information about the subject he is working on. If the researcher can get data on the subject from the people he interviewed, larger audiences are reached by taking these people as a reference, and the participant network grows like a snowball (Kümbetoğlu 2005, 98). Although I had some difficulties in reaching the sample group due to the current Covid-19 pandemic, using the snowball sampling technique, I was included in the communication networks and thus had the opportunity to meet with most of the members of the community of Qur'an memorization who lived in the single-party period.

The in-depth interviews were recorded with audio recordings and cameras using the unstructured interview technique that characterizes the oral history method. Some of these audio-visual recordings were completely transcribed. "In qualitative research, in-depth interviewing is an important research tool for data gathering, and the researcher acts as the measuring instrument" (Botha 2001,13). Steinar Kvale agrees with this view and defines qualitative research interviews as "attempts to understand the world from the subject's point of view, to unfold the meaning of people's

experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations” (Kvale 1996, 1). The main starting point of the interview technique, which is one of the qualitative research methods, is "if you want to know what people think, ask them" (Geray 2006, 164). Therefore, an in-depth interview is a technique that covers all dimensions of the subject under investigation, uses mostly open-ended questions, and allows detailed answers to be obtained through one-to-one interviews (Tekin and Tekin 2006, 101). The interviewer has the flexibility to ask the question that the interviewer will ask according to the flow of the conversation (Kumar 2011, 144). Oral history, which obtains and uses personal memories bearing traces of history (Kyvig and Marty 2000) through in-depth interviews, contributes to historical literature mostly by completing the documents used by historians or creating an alternative history. Thus, an in-depth interview was found to be the most appropriate for this research, as it allows for deciding the content of the study and flexible question flow design in the interview process. Thus, the in-depth interview method is a qualitative research based on confidentiality and trust between the researcher and the interviewer.

Before the interview, it would be beneficial to inform the person to be interviewed about the interview and its content. Because if the interviewee is elderly, these people may need time to remember the subject. Since the interviewees are usually elderly people, it should also be checked from time to time whether they need rest or not. Although the Qur’an memorizers were also aware of this situation and were worried about the loss or forgetting of their knowledge, they have embraced our oral history study in an effort to keep their heritage alive.

In the development and internalization of oral history, the availability of the technique and technology that enables the oral sources to be archived and hidden in an appropriate way has increased the feasibility of this study. At the beginning of the interviews, the narrators were informed that their memories of the first period of the Turkish Republic would be recorded as part of the thesis work. At first, some of them said that s/he had difficulty remembering, thus displaying a timid and anxious attitude; this could have triggered unwanted traumas probably. Thus, interviews with old aging people were kept short, considering their health status. In his work on the first years of the Turkish Republic(1923-1950), Ramazan Aras’s *Veiled Memories: An*

Ethnography of Single-Party regime in Turkey delves into the question of remembering and forgetting in oral history interviews:

We have actually reached a number of elders who could be key interviewees, but most of them were either sick, suffering memory loss, or Alzheimer's. Therefore, one realizes that beyond the politics of remembering and forgetting and the inaccessibility of state archives, many untold stories, testimonies, and memories of the era of the single-party regime have been lost (2019, 11).

Despite the difficulties, the narrators touched on many interesting subjects with their unique styles and rich details. Sessions starting with their own life stories and general questions within life frames continued with questions about the issues that were related to the subjects, such as “tradition of Qur'an memorization” and “Qur'an memorization in the early decades of the Republican period.”

I interviewed my interviewees with open-ended questions. Open-ended questions offer the opportunity to describe the event in the most detailed way possible while also letting the interviewer know that he or she is responsible for the narration. Open-ended questions are frequently preferred by the interviewers against the risk of directing the statements, and therefore, more reliable answers can be obtained (Patterson and Pipe 2009, 490-504.) More specifically, answers to such questions are likely to be longer, more detailed, more accurate, and less ambiguous (Themeli and Panagiotaki 2014, 5-7). As Sharan Merriam said, “good interview questions are those that are open-ended and yield descriptive data, even stories about the phenomenon. The more detailed and descriptive the data, the better”(Merriam 2009, 99).

Oral history has some limitations, like every method of social inquiry. For example, some interviewees have forgotten many narrations due to age, health situations, and amnesia in their memory. Ramazan Aras(2009) talks about how interviewing the witness elders is one of the toughest issues in ethnographic research, particularly in oral history studies, because of the situation of severe illnesses or sudden death of the interviewee:

In our project, at times, it was difficult to get elders' life stories due to physical and psychological complications that they endured as a result of senility. In her ethnographic work with elder women living during the early decades of the Republic, Fatma Barbarosoglu also talks about the difficulty of interviewing aged interlocutors with memory loss and senility. When we were informed by one of our contacts that there was an old lady named

Muzeyyen in her nineties who witnessed many events in that era in the Fatih district of Istanbul, we immediately set out in search of her and located a contact person to bring us to her house. When one of our female researchers in the team met Muzeyyen, she was sad to find out that Muzeyyen could not speak due to a recent severe illness of mental deterioration(2019, 10).

Similar to Aras's fieldwork, I witnessed many elders. Even though they wanted to narrate something, they could not speak because of their health problems. I understood experimentally that the oral historian should be sensitive to the characteristics of human memory during the interview. I also learned that what the researcher should pay attention to is that she/he should not lose control of the interview process. It is important to be able to establish good communication in order to establish a healthy interaction. Being conscious of how to listen to the other person, trying to understand him/her and expressing that s/he is understood, knowing what to say, and not being judgmental are important elements of communication. Oral historian Ronald Grele emphasizes the collaborative nature of oral history as follows:

When we interview someone, he not only speaks to himself and to the interviewer but also speaks through the interviewer to the larger community and its history as he views it. This is a dialogue, the exact nature of which is difficult to define. There are seemingly two relationships contained in one—that between the informant and the historian and that between the informant and his own historical consciousness (Grelé 1985, 136-137).

For this reason, I learned that one of the features to be considered in the interview process is to talk less and listen more. Constantly asking questions will only allow us to get answers to the questions, so it can cause skipping points that we have not considered and lead to redirects. For this reason, the interview should start with the interviewer introducing him/herself, giving information about the purpose and the results of the interview, and then continue with general information and free expression, in which the interviewer will introduce him/herself. Not interrupt the interviewer's speech during the free narration, be positive while speaking, and avoid words and attitudes that judge the interviewee is of vital importance. Closed-ended and repetitive questions are the types of questions that should be avoided.

People tend to react differently in various environments and feel better in familiar places. The environment should be best prepared for the interview and free from strong stimuli that can distract them. Because visual and audible stimuli can significantly affect expression processes and cognitive functions, the elderly can be easily

distracted. Apart from these, disturbing third parties and interrupting the call for any reason (such as answering the phone) should be avoided. During the research period, participants have not been disrupted since the data collection process was arranged according to interview schedules. The interviews were conducted in places that were designed for the comfort of participants.

During my field research in Istanbul and Adapazarı, not only did I collect data for my research, but I also had an exciting, informative, and unforgettable field experience with the Qur'an memorizers. As a 'researcher' at the very beginning of the road, I learned a lot from them, such as patience, perseverance, effort, and hope... It was one of the greatest blessings of my life to meet people with good morals who possessed these characteristics that the current generation never had. As a young researcher, I started this first experience of mine with some trepidation, considering, "will I be able to access the information as I want?" Because I was to examine a risky time period due to the location, corona illness, topic, etc. I thought that it would not be easy to research a time period about which not everyone dared to speak.

In this context, having the identity of a woman and a headscarved researcher was not a challenge for me. The fact that my religious beliefs overlapped with the subject I had been researching was one of my greatest advantages during the research process. Because I had the same experience as the group I had been interviewing. This enabled me to do my research with love and to involve the participants in the research with the same feelings. At the same time, as they met a young woman wearing a headscarf and making progress in the academic field, they welcomed it very positively. Our Qur'an memorizers supported me more than I expected during this study in order to express the troubles that have not been mentioned for years in books and raise the awareness of the next generations. Leyla Neyzi mentions in her oral history study that an "attachment" should be established between the interviewer and the interviewee (Neyzi 1999, 6). As if we had met before, we had a deep attachment with our Qur'an memorizers. They saw me as their daughter and reinforced their constant happiness with their blessings. They were constantly repeating their excitement and happiness by saying, "May Allah be pleased with you, my daughter." They liked my interest in Turkey's dark past, as they called it. During the Covid 19 pandemic process, we felt the value of our elderly people more intensely as a society.

Visiting them on the occasion of this research and causing a smile on their faces and excitement in their hearts was of the best aspects of my research. We have Qur'an memorizers with whom we still keep in touch. Since there has been a positive dialogue, even if the communication is not face-to-face, I have the opportunity to ask my questions on the phone. In our interviews that took place in their homes, gardens, and workplaces, I witnessed how they remember some things so clearly. Even though they were so old and sick, they remembered the same events as if they were yesterday. This made me understand the importance and the effect of memorization on their minds once again. Especially as the new generation, we forget events that we experienced yesterday. Yet, our Qur'an memorizers could talk about their experiences and the specific events clearly even though 70 years have passed.

By following the basic principles of the oral history method, I tried to ask simple, short, and plain questions as much as possible. As the Qur'an memorizers believed in the sincerity of the researcher who came to listen to their 'story,' they shared their experiences much more comfortably and in more detail. I still remember how our conversations turned into long talks. As Neyzi said, I tried to practice "silence and listening" (Neyzi 1999, 6) more. The fact that the narrators tell some moments in a more 'emphatic' way, keep silent, and seem to cry while telling their own life stories are important findings in terms of oral history. This situation showed me that the Qur'an memorizers were reliving those days while telling them. At that moment, I felt the weight of the hardships of the Qur'an memorizers on my shoulders and considered it my duty to tell the hidden truths to future generations and give agency to their voices. And once again, having done much research, I realized how right I was.

Field research was the part I enjoyed most in the thesis. It was a very important process in terms of meeting various people in many different places in Istanbul and Adapazari, discovering new places, and hearing about different life experiences. While there were good aspects of this process, I also met some difficulties. For example, sometimes, it was a little difficult to find Qur'an memorizers to be interviewed due to the pandemic process. Although the novices I experienced seemed like a disadvantage at first, since it was my first field research, it later turned into valuable experiences in applying the oral history method. After a while, when I compared them with the first interview I made, I realized that my later meetings were gradually different. I have learned that it

is necessary to be more careful in many subjects, from using the camera to the way of asking questions. Even though I didn't have much trouble with the method, I came across some hesitations in getting answers to my questions. The reason for this was the political concerns about the single-party period. Some of my questions remained unanswered; sometimes, the Qur'an memorizers warned me to change the research topic. I still remember it like it was yesterday. One of our Qur'an memorizers warned me, saying that "Daughter, change your subject. We went through the difficulties and pressures of that period, and you should not suffer just like us". This view was the result of the policy of suppression and repression of the single-party period. A series of events that are not forgotten despite the past 70 years. Again, I would like to offer my special thanks to the participants who sincerely answered my questions by not turning down my interview request.

CHAPTER III

LITERATURE REVIEW: STUDIES ON QUR'AN MEMORIZATION AND EDUCATION IN TURKEY

A literature review is succinctly defined as “a critical summary and assessment of the range of existing materials dealing with knowledge and understanding in a given field” (Blaxter 2010, 110). According to Arlene Fink, “A research literature review is a systematic, explicit, and reproducible method for identifying, evaluating and synthesizing the existing body of completed and recorded work produced by researchers, scholars and practitioners”(Fink 2005, 3). The further below box indicates some of the examples researchers can ask for in the literature review to develop comprehension and understanding of your topic:

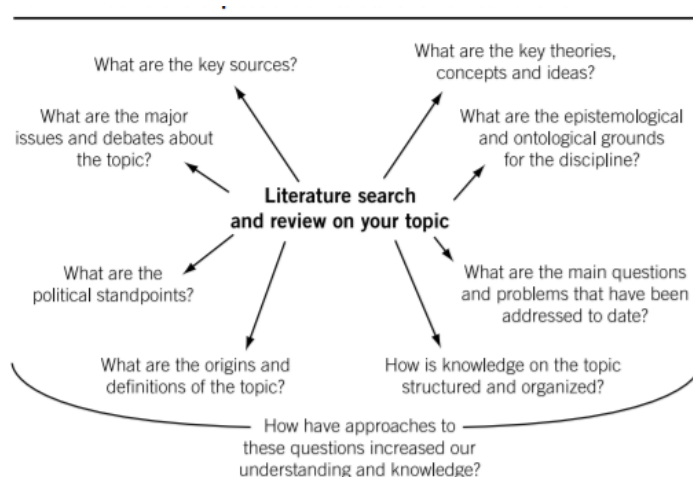


Figure 3.1. Some of The Questions a Literature Review Can Answer (Hughes and Tight 2010)

Source: Hart 1998, 14 in Blaxter & Hughes and Tight 2010, 123

A literature review allowed me to understand the phenomenon of Qur'an memorization and the overall subject matter of this thesis better and easily make comparisons with previous research. In my view, the ability to identify what has already been researched is important to prevent researchers from repeating the same framework as Jane Webster and Richard Watson defined good literature review:

Creates a firm foundation for advancing knowledge. It facilitates theory development, closes areas where a plethora of research exists, and uncovers areas where research is needed (Webster and Watson 2002, 13).

In this section, a literature review on Qur'an memorization and its history will be made, and further information will be given about how Qur'an memorization and the related institutions continued until this day since the time the Qur'an was revealed. According to Hatice Şahin, despite all the efforts, within the context of the historical course of Qur'an memorization, a detached and classical study that specifically describes Qur'an memorization could not be found. This education takes place in various parts of different sources, especially in the works of "ulumu'l-Qur'an" (Qur'anic sciences), and the studies prepared recently also provide data from these books (Şahin 2011, 5).

In addition to the mentioned sources, theses and books on the memorization of the Qur'an in today's world have also been reviewed. Thus, the sources of literature previously published about Qur'an memorization, the single-party regime in Turkey (1923-1950), and educational policies are examined to bridge the gap between previous and today's studies and provide a sufficient backdrop for further discussions. In recent years, important resources written on the importance and problems of Qur'an memorization have been accessed (Cebeci 2005; Tunç 2008; Şahin 2011; Şakar 2014). In this context, while it is possible to reach information about the tradition of Qur'an memorization in the sources of the first period (the period of the Prophet and the Hulefâ-i Raşidîn), it is not possible to reach sufficient and detailed information in the later periods of the Abbasid, Umayyad, Seljuk and Ottoman periods. In these periods, information about the tradition of the Qur'an memorization was mostly discussed within the scope of Recitation and Tafsir sciences (Şahin 2015, 14). It is noteworthy that the subject of studies on Qur'an memorizers in the last four years is more comprehensive (Kalemli 2016; Vahapoğlu 2016; Kahraman 2017; Algur 2018;

Kulođlu 2018). These studies give us valuable information about the psychological, educational, and social reflections of memorization. However, when we look at the research on religious groups, it is seen that there are almost no studies on secular state policies after 1923 related to the experiences of the Qur'an memorizers in Turkey. This thesis aims to make a modest contribution to the existing literature and address this gap in academia and historiography. With the development of oral history studies after 2000, many religious, ethnic, and ideological communities have found a place for themselves in historical sources. Oral history studies, which allowed researching and examining events as the subject of history by listening to the witnesses themselves, expanded the scope of historiography and contributed to its democratization (Perks and Thomson 1998, 4).

Prepared in the field of Tafsir in Islamic studies, Ökkeş Dađ' s master thesis titled "Memorizing the Qur'an in the Time of the Prophet and Hafiz Companions" reveals the importance and the efforts that those distinguished personalities gave to the education of Qur'an memorization by analyzing the Qur'an memorizers from Companions who contributed to the protection of Qur'an. The aim of this thesis prepared by Ökkeş Dađ in the field of Qur'an exegesis is to identify the Qur'an memorizers from Companions who contributed greatly to the preservation of the Qur'an and making it into a book. This study, which supports the thesis in focusing on the historical process of Qur'an memorization, mainly deals with the narrations about the Qur'an memorizers from Companions. Since this study includes concise information about the identities of the Qur'an memorizers from Companions, it is important in terms of allowing the distinguished personalities who devoted themselves to the Qur'an to be recognized by today's people (Dađ 2006).

In his work on Qur'an memorization, Abdullah Emin Çimen examines the education of Qur'an memorization in the time of the Prophet (PBUH) and the processes of being a Qur'an memorizer in detail. In this work, according to Çimen, there are significant differences between the way the Companions memorized the Qur'an and the memorization practiced today. Companions would first learn the content of that verse and apply them in their lives, and later on, they would start to memorize another verse. For this reason, the approach of the Companions to memorization was such that they would not engage in memorization of other verses before applying the provisions of

the memorized verses in their own lives. Çimen thinks that today's memorization is mostly done by memorizing the Qur'an as soon as possible without understanding what is being read or even thinking about it. In our interviews, one of the issues that the Qur'an memorizers emphasized most is that the purpose of Qur'an memorization is not just memorization and that the attitudes and behaviors of the Qur'an memorizers should be in accordance with the Qur'an. If there is to be a deficiency in this sense, the memorization will not cause the expected positive change in the life of the person who is a Qur'an memorizer (Çimen 2007).

Yasemin Tunç, in her master thesis titled "Hifz of the Qur'an and the Importance in the Religious Life of the Muslim," refers to the progress of the Qur'an memorization, the transition of the text of the Qur'an, and the role of the Qur'an education in the life of the Muslims by giving information about the course of the Qur'an memorization from the beginning of revelation until now. In addition, she touches on quite a significant topic, such as the virtues and moral values of Qur'an memorizers. Yasemin Tunç emphasized the origin of the word Qur'an memorizer and makes evaluations about the contributions of education of Qur'an memorization to the individual and society and emphasizes the necessity of studies to understand the Qur'an by referring to the differences in the early and today's Qur'an education. In particular, in order to emphasize the importance of applying the Qur'an while memorizing it, Tunç's narration of Hz Omar about his memorizing Surah Al-Baqara in twelve years and sacrificing a camel out of joy when he finished it had been quite accurate. According to Tunç, it is a great shortcoming that there is no scientific study aimed at transferring Qur'an memorization to life and informing Qur'an memorization candidates. Because, in terms of effort, Qur'an memorizers of the following periods should also make a maximum effort in order to create parallelism with the understanding of the Companions. It is remarkable that Tunç's evaluation that the Muslims of our country act with the logic of all or nothing when it comes to memorizing verses from the Qur'an. Explaining that a certain part of the Qur'an is memorized, not the whole of it, in other Muslim countries, Tunç received such answers as the Surahs of Bakara and Enam from the Surah Yasin and Fatah to the end when she asked how much they memorized from the Qur'an. Just like Tunç, I believe that spreading this practice in our country will bring positive results in terms of worship, piety, and raising moral consciousness (Tunç 2008).

The formation process of the tradition of Qur'an memorization, the role of Qur'an memorizer in the compilation of the Qur'an, and the historical course of Qur'an memorization, especially after the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) and the Hulefa-i Raşidin, are mentioned in Zübeyde Şakar's thesis "The Compilation of the Qur'an and The Role and Place of Hıfz in the Continuation" presented a wide range of information. Stating that the Qur'an is indispensable in the individual and social lives of the Companions and Muslims, especially the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), Şakar determined that most of the Companions were Qur'an memorizers in their maturity period. According to Şakar, who compared memorization in the period of the Companions and today, the memorization of the Qur'an in the previous period was not as it is today, but in a way that the Qur'an was fully understood. At the same time, Şakar thinks that there were many Qur'an memorizers at that time, and in this sense, he gives examples of Qur'an memorizers from Companions who were martyred in Bi'r-i Maune, the Reci Incident, and the Battle of Yamame. At the same time, Şakar highlights that the Qur'an memorizers have a great role as well as in the collection of the Qur'an, so Qur'an memorizers played the biggest role in the collection of the Qur'an and becoming a Mushaf (Şakar 2014).

Stressing on the importance of the Qur'an memorization, works and articles on this subject are increasing day by day. Being the first doctoral thesis about the tradition of Qur'an memorization, Hatice Şahin's work is a pioneer in this sense. Hatice Şahin, who says that there is no classical independent work that touches specifically the Qur'an memorization, has aimed to provide information about the course of the memorization of the Qur'an in the history of Islamic culture and to examine how Muslims continue the same tradition in her doctoral thesis. In this study, the phases of the tradition of Qur'an memorization and how the tradition of Qur'an memorization is maintained until now were explained. At the same time, Şahin offered an alternative method to improve the education of the Qur'an memorization system. The research, which deals with the position for the education of Qur'an memorization in the historical process and the factors affecting this education process, is a mixed method study in which quantitative and qualitative data are evaluated together (Şahin 2011). Again, Hatice Şahin, in her study titled "The Tradition of Hıfz of the Qur'an and Its Current Practices," explains the nature of the tradition of the Qur'an memorization, the prevalence and development of the Qur'an institutions, and the methods used to be

Qur'an memorizers in these countries. Hatice Şahin visited Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Syria, Egypt, Sudan, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore within the scope of countries where memorization continues intensively in the Islamic world. When she wanted to evaluate which country was the best in Qur'an education training, she could not give a clear answer. According to Şahin, who stated that this question should be evaluated by talking about the differences and good aspects of the Qur'an memorization methods between the countries. However, she believed that Turkey has a special place among Muslim countries that have practiced Qur'an memorization. Şahin believes that Turkey's progress with the classical Ottoman system is very important. According to her, this method ensures the permanence of a text that is unfamiliar to the Qur'an memorization candidates who do not have knowledge of Arabic and that this method is more difficult for the countries that speak Arabic(Şahin 2015).

One of the studies that may be relevant to our subject is Vahap Vahapoğlu's Master's Thesis named "The Effects of Changes in the Turkish National Education System on Hafiz Education." In the research, some applications in the Qur'an memorization schools are discussed in the periods when three different models were applied in national education in our recent history (1983-97, 1998-2011, and 2012-). According to Vahap Vahapoğlu, based on the data obtained as a result of this study, it is understood that the student resource of the Qur'an memorization schools is directly affected by the policies of the National Education, and the conditions such as discipline, communication, physical and social structure are indirectly affected. Stating that the student resource of the Qur'an memorization schools differed in all three periods in terms of age, quality, and number. We witnessed the most obvious examples of this during the founding period of the Republic (1923-1950) from the consequences of our interviews. According to him, Qur'an education has gained good momentum in recent years. Vahapoğlu explains that the communication between the Qur'an memorization schools instructors and the students differed in all three periods. The change in the formation and the professional competencies of the instructors were also of vital importance in the formation of this difference(Vahapoğlu 2016).

Being a mixed method study, Hüseyin Algur's study titled "The Assessment of Psycho-Social Status of Individuals who take Hifz education in terms of Religious Education" examines the psycho-social status of the individuals receiving education of Qur'an

memorization. Moreover, Algur, who received information about the pre-memorization process, aims at a multi-faceted assessment by identifying the motivating factors for the education of Qur'an memorization (Algur 2018).

Studies in the field of Islamic Sciences are increasing in our country day by day. One of the subject areas of this science is Qur'an education and Qur'an memorization schools. Although Qur'an education and Qur'an memorization schools have been examined from various perspectives and become the research subject of different departments, there are quite a few studies on "teaching of Qur'an memorization," which is a part of the Qur'an education and the Qur'an memorization schools. In the current research on Qur'an memorization schools, it has been considered that Qur'an education is generally superficial. In the new period, the subject of Qur'an education needs to be analyzed from a historical and methodological point of view as a subject for wider research. At the same time, in order to transfer this valuable tradition of Qur'an memorization to the next generations in the best way, the encouragement of technological studies and the necessity of new research and applications should come to the fore. Unfortunately, no study has been carried out on this subject in Turkey.

On the other hand, worldwide studies are mostly related to the effect of Qur'an memorization on memory and academic achievement, easier ways of memorizing with the technological developments, and Qur'an memorization methods (Ariffin 2013; Nawaz and Jahangir 2014; Mazidatul 2016; Faiziyah 2018). Also, several types of research investigate Quranic memorization with regard to cognitive studies (Mohamed 2014), linguistic studies (Muhammed Yaseen Alfi 2004), and educational studies (Boyle 2006). Regarding the different memorization methods applied in the world and Islamic geography, Ömer Özbek, in his study titled "Examples of Hıfz Methods in the World," states that there are various methods that are not similar to the method applied in Turkey. The study of Özbek included the memorization method of the classical Mauritanian method, the methods of schools in Malaysia, and the Cairo School of Qur'an memorization in Egypt. He shares the information that some of the methods in the world are for the preparation stage before Qur'an memorization, some for the process of Qur'an memorization, and some for strengthening after Qur'an memorization (Özbek 2015).

In the Master's Thesis written by Yusuf Kalemli, information was given about the institutions and organizations that provide Qur'an memorization training in Vienna. In the research, in which information was collected through qualitative interviews, the necessity of taking Qur'an memorization training together with formal education was defended (Kalemli 2016).

Even though the studies on the effects of secular policies of the Republic on the Qur'an memorization schools and the problems of the students and teachers of the Qur'an memorization schools increased, in plain words, studies related to Qur'an memorization in the single-party period are almost nonexistent. This study has value in terms of having an interdisciplinary character and setting an example for young researchers who will conduct joint research on Islamic and Social Sciences. Although some statistics about the education of memorization in the Qur'an memorization schools are accessed from the archives under the Directorate of Religious Affairs, it is not possible to reach sufficient information about the students of Qur'an memorization and education as a result of not keeping the registries in the courses regularly and conducting the Qur'an education secretly during the single-party regime era (Ata 2009; Akdemir 2010).

According to Michael Foucault, history leaves certain traces of the facts. However, the interpretation and conceptualization of these traces are carried out by the existing power or regime. The knowledge and discourse producers it governs are in line with their interests in every period of history (Foucault 2000, 37-42). In order to make this analysis, Foucault argues that rather than an objectively written chain of facts, which constitutes concepts such as "us" and "other," "normal" and "abnormal," "rational" and "irrational" in the collective understanding of society, historiography is the subjective constructs of the power and the producers of information and discourse under its influence (Foucault 2000, 23-28).

Concerning the years 1923-1950, as Foucault said, the Kemalist process of hegemonizing identity to people, subjectifying them, and attaching them to a certain kind of subjectivity was questioned in this study (Foucault 2000, 326-336). The discourses formed by the Kemalist ideology were constructed in a way that could affect historiography politically, economically, and culturally. Interviews indicate that

behind the visible face of this modern power, which spreads positive effects in its essence, mechanisms of oppression and intimidation work with sticks and guns. In this context, attention will be drawn to the marginalization of Qur'an memorizers and their involvement in exclusion procedures and the institutional devices (such as prison) beyond this exclusion. Undoubtedly, the years of state-building based on national sovereignty, which was the years when oppression, surveillance, and discipline were most intense in the political history of Turkey, used subjugating power mechanisms as a manifestation of an understanding that declared war on ideological attitudes, identities, worldviews and even banned books. Therefore, while trying to understand the disciplinary principle of the single-party years of 1923 over the prison apparatus, it is necessary to analyze how the social norm was produced by the government of the period together with the constitution.

Questioning the history of official history, Cemil Koçak wants us to grasp a painful historical process that played a role in determining the Turkish national identity. The following sentences quoted in the silent history of oppositional voices are of vital importance in terms of shedding light on the purpose of this research:

The group we call the public. We do not know exactly how they reacted to the government during the single-party period. However, we can deduce the idea about them from the government's view of them. I say oppositional voices, not opposition. Because they are not easily heard. They are so weak, so personal, and quickly lost. These are voices that are forgotten and cannot be remembered anymore (Koçak 2014, 122-123).

As the author emphasizes, with this work, the Qur'an memorizers, one of the communities that had been constantly humiliated and witnessed the fear of neglect, bring their own superior past to the fore. In addition, Koçak's book contributes to our study in terms of analyzing the distinctive features and tensions in the formation process of Turkish national identity. Thus, the book by Cemil Koçak titled "*Resmi Tarihe Meydan Okuyorum*" (I Challenge Official History) is supportive of recent Turkish history studies and argues that formal history transmits an extremely rigid and concrete understanding of the past (Koçak 2014, 117). He embarks on a journey from the foundation of the Republic to the present Republic. With its simple, understandable, and questioning style, the book offers an opportunity to read the history of modern Turkey on the axis of many points, from the one-party period to İnönü, from the military-politics relationship to the famous politicians of recent

history, from the issue of how much democratic Turkey was in the past and today, to the Presidential elections. Therefore, it is a book that enables us to understand and analyze the political climate of the one-party period.

Moreover, the book "*Kırk Bir Görgü Şâhidinden Naklen: Benden Târihe Haberler*" (Live News from Forty-One Eyewitnesses: News from Me to History) by Kadir Mısıroğlu is one of the most valuable and inspirational sources for this work in which there exist conversations with several famous historical people from the recent history of Turkey such as Celaleddin Ökten and Ali Ulvi Kurucu (Mısıroğlu 2017). In this very voluminous work of 816 pages, the people Kadir Mısıroğlu met personally and the memories he closely witnessed are expressed. Mısıroğlu brought together these memories, which he occasionally mentions in his lectures, conversations, and some of his books, and interviewed over 41 people. Among these people, there are well-known names such as state dignitaries, scientists, and community leaders, as well as people who are historical but whose names are not known much. Celâl Bayar, Şehzade Mahmud Şevket Efendi, Fuat Şemsi İnan, and Abdurrahman Gürses are some of the names in the book. Mısıroğlu, who met with many Ottoman remnants during his youth, left a valuable legacy to those who will come after him by writing down what he listened to after he turned eighty years old. Another purpose in conveying these memories is to hope to serve, albeit a small one, in understanding some issues that have become a dead-end in the recent past. The book, which contains many pictures and documents, sheds light on many unknown aspects of modern Turkish history.

Furthermore, "*Son Zamanın Din Mazlumları*" (Religious Oppressed People of the Last Century) by Necip Fazıl Kısakürek is of vital significance and valuable work in revealing the unknown and hidden realities of the first period of the Turkish Republic known as the period of prohibition and repression. According to Kısakürek, if we do not question and reshape the Turkish national identity construction process, more painful massacres await us down the road (Kısakürek 2011).

In that respect, the book "*Tanıkların Dilinden Cumhuriyet Dönemi Din Eğitimi ve Dini Hayat*" (Religious Education and Religious Life in the Republican Period: From the Narratives of the Witnesses) comprised three volumes, including interviews with the people who contributed to Qur'an education, by Mustafa Öcal is a good example of

oral history studies which is worth mentioning among the sociological works as well. Öcal exposed the people who were deprived of the Qur'an and religious education on the grounds of legal regulations regarding the principles of secularism and nationalism. At the same time, these people were expelled from mosques with a ban on the Arabic call to prayer, and they were barred from meeting as a religious community. Öcal questioned the practices related to the religious field and emphasized that when we look at that period, it was indeed a forbidden period in which freedom of religion and conscience was suspended. Therefore, according to Öcal, it is possible to say that religious life suffered a great blow as a result of the policies implemented in this period. In addition, there are some observations by Öcal that despite all the prohibitions and restrictions, in the complex environment of the single-party period, people cling to religion as a beacon of hope and live a lively religious life, albeit in secret. This book, in which we can follow the debates on the Imam-Hatip and Theology faculties of the Republican period with the witnesses of the period, is also important in terms of oral history studies as it deals with the people excluded by the dominant historical narratives (Öcal 2008).

Written by M. Ertuğrul Düzdağ, "*Üstad Ali Kurucu: Hatıralar*" (Memories of Master Ali Ulvi Kurucu) is also noteworthy in understanding the first period of Republican history. Ustad Ali Ulvi Kurucu was educated at Al-Azhar University in Cairo after spending the first years of his life in Konya as a scholar and wisdom leader recognized by millions in Muslim countries. Kurucu, who spent the rest of his life in Madina al Munawara, died there in 2002. The memories of Ali Ulvi Kurucu are important for this study in terms of both his view of religion in Turkey, the situation of the Islamic geography that disintegrated after the Ottoman Empire, and the events that took place between historical figures of the era(Düzdağ 2014).

CHAPTER IV

A BRIEF HISTORY OF QUR'AN MEMORIZATION

Memorization, as keeping the information in memory, is one of the ancient learning methods of humanity. The information transfer of the early times was reproduced by the method of memorization and transferred from ear to ear. In Arab society, where written literature was not very common, memorization and oral transfer of information and knowledge were an important part of this adventure. In this context, we will examine the concepts of memory, memorization, and memorization in Arabic culture, which are the building blocks of oral literature.

The general characteristic of the first part of society in which the Qur'an was revealed was illiteracy, and the writing materials were also quite limited at that time. We will witness the emergence of the institution of Qur'an memorization in this period, which is dominated by oral culture and extends to the 7th century. The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) both memorized the verses that were revealed to him and had his Companions memorize them, thus laying the foundations of the Qur'an memorization. They attained the honor of being the first Qur'an memorizers. The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) had many hadiths related to the virtue of learning and teaching the Qur'an in order to keep the interest in the Qur'an alive both in his own time and in the following periods. In this part, we will see the Prophet's (PBUH) encouragement to memorize the Qur'an and the reflections of the Qur'an memorization as a general characteristic of Arab society in the Islamic world.

The Qur'an has been preserved through both inscription and memorization throughout history since the time it was revealed. Qur'an memorization is still widespread among the ummah in Islamic countries. In this part, I will touch upon the important role taken by the Qur'an memorizers as well as the written texts within the process of the Qur'an's reaching to the present day completely and accurately. At the same time, I will analyze

the formation process of the institution of Qur'an memorization, which is so valuable, and the role played by the Qur'an memorizers in the compilation of the Qur'an. Among the other topics to be analyzed in this section, there are examples of various Islamic Empires such as Abbasids and Umayyads after the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) and Hulefa-i Raşidin and the historical course of Qur'an memorization. In this process, I will take a look at the adventure of Qur'an memorization's becoming an institution in Islamic societies. At the end of the chapter, I will focus on the various steps taken to institutionalize the institution of Qur'an memorization in Turkish society. Within this study, in which the Seljuk, the Ottoman, and finally the Republican periods will be taken into account chronologically, I will shed light on the adventure of the institution of Qur'an memorization until today.

4.1. The Question of Memory

The concept of memory has been the subject of various ideas and studies since ancient times. How a person captures and internalizes the external environment is embedded in the memory as a cognitive map. Memory is defined as the ability to store and remember things heard and learned in the mind, which is mostly seen as a mental process that uses the past without reconstructing it (Doğan 2011, 668). Human beings live with their memories and enjoy their lives. Life itself is a memory indeed. Our reactions are guided by the accumulations in our memories. Decisions are made both for today and the future by using the knowledge we have. We owe our personalities, values, and even who we are to what we remember. In a way, human beings are all about memory (Karaçay 2010, 46). According to Roberta Bartoletti, memory is not simply a recording of the past but a process of reconstructing the past as a dual operation in the present (Bartoletti 2011, 86). As Lynn Abrams points out, it is impossible to think about narrative as independent of memory. Thus, memory is the heart of the narrative and oral history:

Memory (and remembering) for the oral historian is not an abstract concept but a practical and active process of reconstruction whereby traces of the past are placed in conjunction with one another to tell a story. Memory is not just about the individual; it is also about the community, the collective, and the nation. In this regard, memory- both individual and collective- exists in a symbiotic relationship with the public memorialization of the past, so we must always be aware that memory expressed in an interview exists within a field of memory work that is going on at many levels in our society (Abrams 2010, 79).

Memory concerning itself is often thought of as an individual faculty. However, there are cases of collective memory (Connerton 2019, 7). On the concept of memory at the center of a social process, Lucia Allais, like Bartoletti, stated that memory is a specific image that can jump between past, present, and future (Allais 2016, 26-28). The concept of memory, which plays an important role in remembering the past and transferring it to the future, gains its meaning by transferring good or bad experiences from the past, directly or indirectly. Stating that memory acts as a bridge between the past and the future. Abdulkadir Atik and Şeyma Bilginer Erdoğan define the phenomenon of memory as a mental warehouse where the memories of individuals live (Atik and Erdoğan 2014, 2). For Pierre Nora, memory is always life itself produced by lived groups, while history is the re-creation of things that do not exist. Memory is always a current event, a bond that is constantly lived in the present, and history is a vision of the past (Nora 2006, 19).

Maria Konnikova, on the other hand, believes that our memory is the starting point for the way we think, the formation of our preferences, and our decision-making (Konnikova 2015, 37). She states that our brain decides where a certain memory should be removed, but we will be wrong if we think that we will get the same memory back when the day comes. Konnikova adds that “With every movement of the box in which they are placed, the content also changes, its type changes and takes a new form” (Konnikova 2015, 39).

Some describe memory as a warehouse. For example, Michel Rolph Trouillot states that the sentence “What memory is for individuals is the same as what history is for societies” is known by everyone, and it is assumed that the past experiences stored in the memory are consciously found and brought back. He calls this approach to history and memory the warehouse model, although many variations exist (2015, 40).

When we talk about memory, the basic functions that come to our mind are remembering and forgetting. As Connerton points out, the personal act of remembering is, it relates to the set of views that many other people have. This set of thoughts takes place through people, places, dates, and words, that is, together with all the material and spiritual lives of the society we are a part of or included (in Connerton 1999, 60). According to Paul Connerton, a British social anthropologist known for his

studies on social and body memory, the subject of memory, which was very popular as a research area in psychology at the beginning of the 20th century, evolved into the research of cultural memory at the end of the century (Connerton 2018, 11). In a collective sense, memory, according to Maurice Halbwachs, is "not a given, but a socially constructed notion"(1992, 22). In this context, memory has an aspect that characterizes attachment to a community.

Memory studies gain momentum especially after the Second World War and the Holocaust, the genocide against the Jews. Especially since the 1960s, the method of oral history has developed rapidly in order to create an audio and video archive by listening to the experiences of the survivors of the genocide, witnessing what happened, and contributing to the healing process. The intensive research of memory in social sciences begins with the development of oral history (Passerini 1987, 10-16). Luisa Passerini states that oral history comes into conflict with traditional historiography by ensuring that oral testimonies are as important and valid as other sources. Afterward, Passerini problematizes widening the horizon of history and opening up new areas of reality by incorporating the experiences of the lower classes and everyday life into history (Passerini 1998, 53).

Passerini's warning that oral history can fall into the trap of superficial democratization is remarkable. Passerini mentions two basic needs to avoid falling into such traps: to be aware that oral history is not the expression of testimonies and memories but also the representation of culture. At the same time, oral history must take into account the problem of subjectivity. In this respect, the complex multidimensional relationship of subjective reality with its own history and institutional power should be taken into account. The testimonies don't just tell stories. They include dimensions of memory, ideology, and unconscious desires. (Passerini 1998, 54). As well as encouraging socially oppressed and excluded individuals and groups to speak for themselves, oral history should also provide an analysis and a critical commentary on how the memory and subjectivity that make up the testimonies interact with dominant historical understandings and ideologies (Passerini 1998; Grele 1985).

Today, Turkish society consists of segments whose political and cultural stances, and thus their narratives about past events, in short, their memories, are very different and

even conflicting. Neyzi, drawing attention to the relationship between memory and the human brain, stated that scientific research on the brain in recent years has made it easier to understand how individual memory works, and the most important finding of these studies indicates that the remembering process does not work like a storage system or a computer (2011,1). In this respect, in order to investigate memory, it is necessary to consider the current context as well as the past and the relationship between the two. According to the idea that the human brain forgets most of what it experiences, Neyzi says that examining the remembering process requires being aware of the forgetting process at the same time. While all these disrupt the relationship of society with the past and affect the processes of interpreting and transferring life experiences, they can create subjects who are internally divided and experience intense internal conflicts (Neyzi 2011, 1-2).

Memory studies allow history to be reconsidered through individual experiences. The history taught in schools in Turkey does not deal with many events that the society has experienced in the recent past. Many events included in the national historical narrative are interpreted in different ways by different groups and individuals. There are differences and contradictions between what individuals learn at home and locally and what they learn in the public sphere.

Memory studies is a quite new field in Turkey. Social developments after 1980 increased the interest in the recent past in Turkey intensively. The military coups inflicted irreparable wounds on society. The search for cultural and subjective identities came to the fore. Academic research on this subject began in the 1990s. In this way, Turkish society started to recent discuss history, especially the transition process from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic and the founding project of the Republic. Oral history studies, which started in the 1990s, began to cover the field of memory studies in the 2000s. Ahıska (2006) studying on the discipline and method of history in the context of memory in Turkey, anthropologist Esra Özyürek (2001) making researched the symbols of the Republic and Ottoman history, and Yael Navaro-Yashin (2002) wrote about the mythology of Atatürk in popular culture developed social memory studies in Turkey.

The concept of memory is intertwined with remembering and keeping, as well as forgetting, changing, and deletion as human characteristics, no matter under what discipline it is studied. It is mostly individual, individual aggregations and similitudes from collective memory. Societal memory is also in a sphere of forgetting, erasing, and changing that occurs at a communal level.

Since oral history focuses on people's personal memories, it is basically the work of collecting historical material from memory (Ritchie 2015, 31-33). Memory, which is the most important data source in this process, is defined as the capacity to store, remember, or retrieve experiences. In the face of this resistance to remembering, the state tries to suppress the cultural identity by trying to prevent the implementation of these practices, which are the nourishing elements of identity. It tries to establish power over social memory.

The state influences social memory through the history it reconstructs and the discourses spread about this history. An attempt is made to form a tabula rasa by making the communities lose their memory. Thus, a new identity can be built in accordance with the state ideology because what is important for this study is how the social memories of the people who migrate to the same geography for different political reasons are affected and how and by what practices they are protected. Violence is the subject of this study to the extent that it tries to inhibit the recollection of social memory. The subject of violence has been discussed only regarding the legitimate use of force. Because the use of legitimate force is a reaction against the power of social memory, this thesis, will be examined whether state violence was effective in the formation of social memory or not.

The government tried to erase some events from the collective memory by trying to establish power over the memory of the Qur'an memorizers through the state's devices and followed a systematic policy of making them forget. Some events can be kept alive in the memories by being repeated over and over again and not letting them be forgotten. In such a case, those who remember the relevant historical event were exiled and dismissed like the historians of the period, such as Kadir Mısıroğlu and many others.

When we look at the difference between history and social memory on the axis of violence, official history and historiography can somehow legitimize violence, but on the other hand, social memory strives to show that the legitimacy of violence is questionable, as in the example of the Qur'an memorizers.

It is also important how the struggle of the Qur'an memorizers took place in official historiography as much as the traces it left in the memories. It has been mentioned how the nation-state ideology tends to manipulate the collective memory by monopolizing the official historiography. Turkish historiography, while writing the historical events of the 1920s, has adopted a historiography approach that is dependent on the dominant ideology. Accordingly, the stories of many people who were affected by the early Kemalist ideology were remembered/reminded or forgotten/made to be forgotten in line with the ideological aims of the political power and regime.

4.2. The Act of Memorization

Since the earliest times, when human beings began to hold on to life, they have tried to know and understand the unknown with the presence of a sense of curiosity. In particular, the transfer of knowledge of the earlier times was reproduced by the method of memorization and transferred from the ear to the other ear – hence generation to generation. The memory includes the processes of recording, storing, long or short-term storage, and recalling the information learned in the past (Öktem 1992). Mehmet Doğan (2011) defined the words memorization and memorize as "Learning something in a way that can be read without looking at the original by transferring a text to memory," "the lesson that needs to be memorized," and "placing in the mind, learning thoroughly" (Doğan 2011, 511-512). When evaluated in a textual context, memorization is a mental process that requires being recalled to be literally the same and was derived from the word memory (Salehuddin 2018).

The method of memorization is one of the ancient learning methods of humanity. Memorization has an important place in our daily life: Names, cities, addresses, telephone information and prayers read in worship practices, etc. Memorization has become the most important element of our social life. It does not seem possible to remove memorization from our lives and leave it out of education. A person can not

use something that is not in his/her memory. When we repeat specific information adequately, we can transfer it to our long-term memories. A phone number or citizenship number can be memorized in a very short time. However, these numbers are quickly forgotten when not used or repeated at regular intervals. The primary way of transferring information to long-term memory is repetition. Naturally, the first memory strategy children use is the repetition of information, in other words, memorization (Eren 2006, 8).

It is seen from the conducted studies that the memory capacity of individuals, who make textual memorization, increases (Nawaz and Jahangir 2014). As the texts are repeated continuously and regularly, the synaptic connections in the brain become stronger. Arife Süngü narrates, according to Ibn Khaldun, that memorization can be applied as a method and that it is very significant in language learning. According to Ibn Khaldun, language skill is acquired by memorizing a lot, and the development of this skill is based on memorized texts. According to him, a person who wants to learn a language should memorize a lot, and the literary value of the texts he/she memorized must be high in order to perfect his/her language skill (Süngü 2009, 80).

The greater emphasis on memorization can be largely attributed to the low prevalence of writing and the Arabs' natural predisposition to memorization. For the memorization and preservation of the Qur'an memory was regarded as a more practical and reliable method than writing at that time. What's more, the trust in memory in the transmission of the Qur'an, has been stated to have priority over the writing of the mushafs (Demirci 1996, 201).

Sümeyye Şirin's Master's study titled "Effects of Hafiz Training (Memorizing the Qur'an) on Cognitive Functions" seeks to answer the question of what is the effect of Qur'an memorization on cognitive functions. In her study, it is determined that individuals who received Qur'an education have better verbal memory, visual memory, attention speed, and verbal fluency performances after the training. In addition, in her study, when the measurements related to verbal learning are evaluated in detail, it is found that memorizing the Qur'an increases the capacity of short- and long-term verbal memory; therefore, it is concluded that memorizing the Qur'an also affects the remembering processes positively. At the same time, the results indicate

that Qur'an memorization increases the ability to distinguish, which is an indicator of a good memory process and makes the use of learning strategies more efficient(Şirin 2019).

With the advancement of technology, new methods and techniques have been put into practice to facilitate the memorization of the Qur'an. Memory techniques, in other words, methods of encoding information, are among them. In order to facilitate the teaching of the Holy Qur'an, independent methods such as benefiting from the comprehension and memory techniques, Qur'an audios sorting the subjects in the verses from easy to difficult, combining traditional training with the photographic memory technique, and conference method are employed in addition to the traditional teaching techniques of the Holy Qur'an. It is desired to achieve better results by using the brain and memory more efficiently as well as by combining the different mental activities with the employment of these methods (Şahin 2012, 19).

Since the students actively participate in the computer-based training, the computer can also be part of Qur'an memorization. In this technique, students can listen to their memorizing, which is previously recorded, while following their memorizing from the computer screen. In a field study carried out, this practice, which is called the technique of memorizing the Qur'an with the computer, has been mentioned, the necessity and applicability of this technique have been asked to the trainers, and it has been found to be applied to a large extent (Alicıgüzel 1999, 240-241).

In terms of Qur'an education, the textual memorization process is evaluated in two different ways for students who know Arabic and for those who do not. While an individual who does not know Arabic memorizes without knowing the meaning of the words in the text, an individual who knows Arabic memorizes knowing the meaning of the words. Words whose meanings are processed are sent to short-term memory as new information via sensory recording and are associated with their meanings in long-term memory (Oakhill 2003). Therefore, the fact that the person who knows Arabic is familiar with the meanings of the words s/he has memorized facilitates the memorization process.

4.3. Memorization in the Arab Culture

As it is known, the period before the advent of Islam is called the “age of ignorance” in Islamic history and literature. When the general characteristics of the relevant period are examined, it will be seen that the oral culture or the narration culture was the lifestyle of the people of that previous era. Arab culture and history were mostly based on strong oral traditions and cultural forms. For instance, the Ancient Arab Wars between tribes called *Eyyamu'l-Arab* were narrated through poetry forms and lineage knowledge to the next generations through oral narrations. Putting aside the inscriptions belonging to the states established in the south and north of the peninsula, the treaty texts of states and tribes, the letters they wrote to each other, commercial documents and similar obligatory texts, the thousands of years of history of the peoples living on the peninsula were being transmitted from one generation to the other through oral narrative forms (Özcan 2011, 37).

The Arabs among the Semitic tribes were prone to poetry due to their nature, language, and the effects of geographical location. There is hardly an individual among Arabs who is not interested in poetry. Thus, poetry is one of the most important and oldest narrative genres of oral culture. In the transmission of ancient Arabic poetry, the poems needed to be memorized and transmitted by a particular narrator or narrators with the master-apprentice method. In the Arabia of the Age of Ignorance, some occasions encouraged poetry, and the circles nourished it. Poetry competitions were held in the presence of referees in fairs such as Ukaz and Zülmecâz, which were established in sacred (*haram*) months.¹ Hire and Ghassanid palaces and some Hejaz centers were also among such places for performances of poetry competitions. Before the sixth century, some poets left their tribes and became wandering eulogists (Çetin 1988, 487).

Eyyamu'l-Arab is similar to epics, heroic stories other nations inscribed or handed down to the next generations through oral narration. Eyyamu'l Arab is an Arabian epic, although not the same. In these narrations, which are in the form of poetry and prose, there were Arab lifestyle and values, issues of war and peace, traditional provisions

¹ Four months: Dhu al-Qadah, Dhu'l-Hijah, Muharram, and Rajab, in which fighting is forbidden in Islamic literature.

such as ransom and covenant, ingenious methods, proverbs, and impressive oratory (Câde'l-Mevla, el-Bacâvî and İbrâhim 2009 in Özcan 2011, 39). The fact that the preservation of information in oral cultures is largely based on memorization also changes verbal and mental functioning and relationship. Expression styles are shaped according to this situation. These expressions are of the kind that takes place in the memory easily and strengthens the memory. Therefore, it is possible to come across rhythmic, repetitive, harmonious, and poetic narratives frequently.

Information transfer, also known as oral culture, which had an important place in the transfer of culture and values in the periods when the history of humanity was not yet acquainted with writing, was provided by memorization practices. People passed on their life stories and experiences, experiences of war, heroism, and many other issues to the next generations by memorizing. The transmission of the poems by memorization by the narrators ensured the circulation of knowledge among the tribes and, thus, its continuity. The lack of written texts in illiterate societies shaped by oral tradition assigns an important role to memory in the preservation and transmission of information. In a sense, the memory becomes a place of recording. So much so that the Arabs memorize everything they hear and the following proverb, "Knowledge is what is in mind (memorization), not in the lines!" (العلم في الصدُّور، لا في السُّطور) (Gezer 2015, 45) is worth mentioning in terms of showing the dimensions of the importance of oral culture among Arabs. While complaining about how writing harms memory, the Greek philosopher Plato emphasizes that people belonging to oral tradition have better memory and recalling power than people belonging to written culture (Goody 2000, 27).

Conditions are one of the most important factors affecting a person's abilities. Although being Ummi(illiterate) seems to be a negative situation normally, some positive aspects it provided to the Companions of the Prophet who grew up in the Meccan society can be mentioned in this sense. Chief among these was the fact that these people memorized many things about their culture and social life. As I have mentioned before, people used to preserve memorized poems and read them at fairs. The knowledge of their ancestry and historical heritage was preserved mostly by memorization and transferred to the next generations. Therefore, the Companions used their heart and mental potential for the Qur'an, for which they sacrificed everything.

4.4. Qur'an Memorization in the Time of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

The preservation of the Qur'an in history began with the memorization of the first verses. In Mecca, during the revelation period, as a result of the absence of a Qur'an *mushaf* (written verses), memory was admitted as the primary mechanism in the work of preservation and confirmation of knowledge. In any case, in the face of the dominance of oral culture and the unavailability of inscription, coding in memory was the most permanent method to preserve information. This shows that the ability of the Qur'an memorization is seriously functional in the preservation of the revelation in Meccan society (Kaysî 1997, 57). In this chapter, I will shed light on "how the historical process of the Qur'an memorization has been since the Prophet (PBUH)"?

At the time of Prophet Muhammad's life, Qur'an memorization was aimed at protecting, understanding, and practicing the teachings of the Qur'an. Therefore, memorization of the Qur'an in the time of the Prophet (PBUH) was the first factor in the protection of the Qur'an and in teaching today. Since the Qur'an was sent down as Divine Revelation, it was first memorized by the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) and then, in the meantime, Companions followed his steps, and devoted their life to memorizing and conveying Qur'an. According to Zübeyde Şakar:

The high enthusiasm for adopting a new religion, the appeal of the Qur'an as being a Divine Word, and the Prophet's encouragement for reading and memorizing the Qur'an made some Companions compete with each other in memorizing the Qur'an because people who memorized the Qur'an more were considered more honored and respected in society (Şakar 2014, 39).

This tradition and sensibility of the Companions have set an example for many people of every age to memorize the Qur'an among generations and preserve it without being tampered with until today. Muhammed bin Abdülbâkî Zerkani says that the Prophet memorized the verses as they were revealed, then the scribes of the Prophet wrote and conveyed to people the message and afterward made them memorize (Zerkânî 1995, 217).

Memorization is one of the methods of education that has been used since the first century and is still valid; besides, great importance has been attached to memorizing the Qur'an in the religion of Islam. A person who completely memorizes the Qur'an

is called the Qur'an memorizer, *Hafiz*. The word *Hafiz*, which is an adjective and derived from the root of the infinitive word *Hifz* حفظ meaning "to preserve, memorize, keeping preserved" in Arabic, (plural حَفَاط) means "guardian, memorizer" (Bozkurt 1997, 74). It is observed that the following words are related to memorizing the Qur'an: Cem' (memorizing the Qur'an collectively), Hatim (reading the Qur'an from beginning to end), Qiraat (reading the Qur'an), Qurra (reading the Qur'an by proper rules of tajwid in seven different maqam) (Kurt 2012, 231).

At the same time, *al-Qari* was called those who memorized the verses from the moment the Qur'an began to be revealed. The word dar al qurra comes from the dâr, which means "space, place, house," and the suffix qurra, which is the plural of the word kârî, meaning "reader," was a training center where Qur'an memorizers studied the science of recitation². These establishments were also called dar al Qur'an and dar al huffaz.

Even al-Qari was used to mean the one who memorizes verses of the Qur'an according to the amount a person heard, but after the death of the Prophet, the word *Qari* was used to mean someone who memorized the entire Qur'an and had been very competent in recitation. It is understood from the narrations of Bukhari that the word *qiraat* was used to memorize the Qur'an partially or completely (Dağ 2006, 20). In the hadith of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), he mentioned that respect for *Hamil al Qur'an* is for those who do not forget the Qur'an after memorizing it, which indirectly means respect for Allah (Abu Dawud, Adab, 20). Also, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was called *Sayyid al-Huffaz* as the first reader, representative, and memorizer of the Qur'an after the first revelations of the Holy Qur'an during the month of Ramadhan in the cave of Hira. The importance of reading the Qur'an and the unique position of memorizer of the Qur'an was expounded by the Prophet Muhammad. In his words: "The best among you (Muslims) are those who learn the Qur'an and teach it (Sahih al-Bukhari, 5027).

It is declared by the divine Speech of Allah (SWT) Himself that the Qur'an is going to be preserved. God Almighty stated in the 9th verse of Surah al-Hijr that the Holy

²<https://www.vgm.gov.tr/about-us/about-us/dictionary-of-foundational-terms> (accessed January 07, 2020).

Qur'an would be protected from all kinds of distortions and changes. It is stated, "It is certainly We Who have revealed the Reminder, and it is certainly We Who will preserve it" (Qur'an 15:9).

As mentioned before, according to Islam, the importance of reading and memorizing the Holy Qur'an is enormous. Our Prophet (PBUH) explains this situation as follows: Narrated 'Abdullah bin 'Amr: that the Prophet (PBUH) said

It shall be said - meaning to the one who memorized the Qur'an - 'Recite, and rise up, recite (melodiously) as you would recite in the world. For indeed, your rank shall be at the last Ayah you recited (Jami` at-Tirmidhi, 2914).

When the wife of Prophet Aisha, Radhi Allahu anha, was asked about Prophet Muhammad's character, she replied saying: "His character was the Qur'an" (Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, 746). When the Prophet received revelation, he was in a hurry to memorize any words of the Qur'an. Thus, Allah sent down the following revelation to the Messenger that Allah would make it easier for him to understand His Wording, recitation, and meaning.

(O Prophet), do not stir your tongue hastily (to commit the Revelation to memory). Surely it is for Us to have you commit it to memory and recite it. And so when We recite it, follow its recitation attentively (Qur'an 16: 16-18).

During the month of Ramadan, the verses and chapters that were recited by Gabriel (as) to the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), and then the Prophet recited to Gabriel (Ṣakar 2014, 8). He visited Prophet Muhammad every night and recited the Qur'an to him each year in the month of Ramadan. During the last Ramadan, Gabriel repeated it twice with him. Our Prophet (PBUH) narrates this situation in the hadiths as follows:

Gabriel would come to me to revise the Qur'an once every year. This year he revised with me twice. I do not think it means anything but that my term will come to an end (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, 3376).

Reading the Qur'an twice, which is called *arza-i ahir*, was thought of as systematically the beginning of the education of Qur'an memorization (Ṣakar 2014, 16). Some rumors state that the compilation of the Qur'an is based on the transcript controlled in the arza-

i ahir³. Therefore, arza-i ahîr was an extremely important event in the protection of the Qur'an (Canan 2004, 20).

At the time of the first revelation, the Qur'an education was given in the house of Prophet Muhammad. Then, the first house of Islam, which became the gathering place of Muslims, was Arqam ibn Abi'l-Arqam's house. In the 12th year of the Prophethood (621), after the first Pledge of Aqaba, the Muslims of Medina requested a teacher from Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to teach them the Qur'an and Islam. Thus, the Prophet (PBUH) assigned Muaz b. Jabal. On this occasion, Qur'an education went beyond the borders of Mecca. After the hijra, the suffah⁴ was built as a school of Qur'an next to the Masjid an-Nabawi in Medina (Çetin 2015, 37-38).

People from outside those who wanted to study the Qur'an came to Suffa. Those who stayed here were called *Ashab-ı Suffah*, which means "people of shade," because this place was a shaded area. It was mentioned that there were women in this education circle, and they had a madrasah called "Suffetü'n-Nisa," which belonged to women. On the other hand, all the needs of the people staying in the Suffa were continuously met by Muslims (Baktır 2009, 470).

There are different narrations from the Companions regarding the numbers and names of Qur'an memorizers. According to Suat Cebeci, the fact that there were about 70 martyrs in the case of the Bir-i Maune incident⁵ and this number gives an idea about the abundance of Qur'an memorizers among the Companions in the fourth year of the Migration (Cebeci 2012, 11). There is also a narration that the number of Qur'an memorizers from Companions was six, ten, and nearly 30 (Ayni 1972; İbn Sa'd 1957). One of the reasons for this difference is that some of the Companions completed their memorization after the death of the Prophet (Cebeci 2012, 10).

³ It is the last Qur'an iteration that Prophet Muhammad(PBUH) to Jebraïl(as) in the last Ramadan before the death of Prophet Muhammad.

⁴The place next to the Masjid an-Nabawi was built for the shelter of the poor Companions and gradually became an educational institution.

⁵ historically well, in Hicaz in Saudia Arabia. The event in which about seventy Companions were martyred (Safar 4 / July 625) And the place where this event took place. Hz. Enes: "I have never seen the Messenger of Allah grieve for anything as much as he grieved for his Companions who were martyred in Bi'r-i Mauna!" he said. (Muslim, Mesâcid, 302) Because almost all of the martyrs of Bi'r-i Maune were from the Companions of Suffa and were teachers of the Qur'an and Sunnah, who were trained by the Messenger of Allah.

The most important point that the Companions paid attention to during the process of memorization was that they acted with the verses they memorized. Bahattin Dartma examined the difference between the age of Companions and today's Qur'an memorization practices. According to him, today's tradition of Qur'an memorization is not equivalent to what Qur'an memorization meant in the Age of Companions (Dartma 2013, 190). According to Dartma,

Today, while those who are only content with memorizing the Qur'an are called a hafiz, during the Companions period, the person who memorizes, understands, and applies it was called Hafiz. It is the grim truth that the majority of Qur'an memorizers in our society are devoid of understanding and applying the Qur'an (Dartma 2013, 187).

The lesson circles of advanced Qur'an education created here were called "seb" and "tasdir." These places were called "Dar al qurra," and after the 4th century, madrasahs, which were independent education centers, were started to be established (Bozkurt 1993, 543). The teachers from Ashab-ı Suffah sent by the Messenger of Allah to various tribes to teach the Qur'an were called "qurra," (Bozkurt 1997, 74). Ashab-ı Suffah was among the most valuable Companions in terms of virtue after Ashra Mubashra, Rashidun Caliphs, and Companions. Almost all of the 73 Qur'an memorizers who were martyred in the Bir-i Maune incident that took place in 625 were teachers trained in this institution. Because of increased demand, recitation education expanded in 9 mosques in the surrounding areas. Abu Hurairah (r.a.) reported:

The Messenger of Allah(PBUH) said, "Any group of people that assemble in one of the Houses of Allah to recite the Book of Allah, learning and teaching it, tranquility will descend upon them, mercy will engulf them, angels will surround them, and Allah will make mention of them to those (the angels) in His proximity"(Sahih Muslim, 6518).

At the same time, apart from the mosque and suffah madrasah, the Companions were learning and memorizing the Qur'an in the house of Mahreme ibn Nawfal (r.a). This place was known as "Dar al qurra" in the time of the Messenger of Allah (Bozkurt 1997, 76).

According to a narration mentioned in Ibn Sa'd (eṭ-Ṭabaḳāt, IV: 205), it is known that during the migration of a visually impaired person, Abdullah bin Ummu Mektum who used to recite Qur'an quite and beautifully stayed as a guest in Mahreme bin Nevfel's house called Dar al qurra, thus from that very detail it is understood that this name has

started to be used for places where the Qur'an is read and taught other than mosques, even during the time of the Prophet (Bozkurt 1993, 545). The method of "tadaarus" was used in the memorization of the Qur'an in the time of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH). According to this method, the Messenger of Allah taught the Companions ten verses and did not start to memorize the other ten verses before completing the first memorization process (Suyûti 2008, 208).

What is meant by memorizing and preserving the Qur'an is to put it at the center of our life. When we look at the Prophet and his Companions, we can say that this is what they understood from memorizing the Qur'an. In terms of his relationship with the Qur'an, the Prophet (PBUH) has an exceptional place. He was speaking, walking, and living Qur'an, so to speak. When we look at the Companions, it can be stated that whenever they encountered a problem in their daily lives, they used the Qur'an as a reference and the Sunnah as the second source and thus found a solution.

As it was mentioned, an important issue in terms of preserving the Qur'an is the event of arza that took place in the month of Ramadan between the Prophet and Gabriel. Accordingly, the verses of the Qur'an that were revealed were read by Gabriel every year in Ramadan, and the Prophet repeated these verses in the same way and confirmed his memorization.

Bringing together, collecting, and writing down the Qur'an is a very important step in preventing its corruption and alteration. From the moment it was revealed, the Qur'an was recorded in memory and in writing by the revelation scribes as it came out of the Prophet's mouth.

4.5. The Compilation of the Qur'an

In the period of the emergence of Islam in the Arabian peninsula, the paper was not widely used yet due to the dominance of oral culture during the Nuzul(revelation) period. Environmental, and technological factors, which made it difficult to write the revelation, especially the lack of equipment in Mecca, made memorization inevitably obligatory. In the sources, there is information that the texts of the revelation were written on pieces of cloth, wooden tablets, the shoulder blades of camels and sheep,

and the mid-veins of date palm leaves, tanned leather, parchment, unprocessed leather, thin white stones, and broken ceramic pieces. The verses had to be preserved in some way. To meet this demand, Muslims tried to memorize the verses as soon as they were revealed and thus preserve the revelation in the first place (es-Sâbûnî 2014, 53). The phonetic structure, measure, and rhythm of Arabic make the process of memorization easier (Hojjati, Rahimi, Farehani, Sobhi- Gharamaleki, and Alian 2013, 286). Research on “Effectiveness of Qur’an Tune on Memory in children” examined whether Qur’an harmony strengthens memory or not and concluded rhythms affected memory positively due to stimulating the auditory cortex:

First, we gave both tests to students, and then the Qur’an tune was played to them for 15 minutes using headphones. Finally, the two tests were applied once more. This procedure was done in the control group with the exception that no tune was played for 15 minutes. The control subjects were monitored not to do any effective or intervening activity to influence memory. Data were analyzed using the t-Test. The research findings indicated that the Qur’an group was significantly different from the control group in terms of digit span ($p < 0.001$) as well as alphabet succession ($p < 0.001$) (Hojjati, Rahimi, Farehani, Sobhi- Gharamaleki and Alian 2013, 283).

Rhythm, as one of these linguistic miracles of the Qur’an, exists in the following repetition of letters:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 أَنَا أَعْطَيْتَكَ الْكَوْثَرَ (١) فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّكَ وَأَنْحَرِ (٢)
 إِنَّ شَانِكَ هُوَ الْأَبْتَرُ (٣)

Bismillahirrahmanirrahim

1. Inna a'tayna kal kaw**thar**
2. Fasalli li rabbika wan**har**
3. Inna shani-aka huwal **abtar**

As Allah(SWT) explained: “And We have indeed made the Qur’an easy to understand and remember, but is there any that will remember?”(Qur’an 54: 40), “A special characteristic of the Qur’an, each having its own unique form and its unique use of literary devices”⁶ made memorization easier and faster.

⁶https://www.muslimlibrary.com/dl/books/english_Linguistic_Historic_Futuristic_And_Scientific_Miracles_Of_The_QUR'AN.pdf (accessed November 19; 2021).

While the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) was alive, although many surahs and parts of the Qur'an were written by the scribes of revelation, they were not gathered together we call Mushaf. Such a job could not be done as the Prophet continued to revelation throughout his life. During the caliphate of Abu Bakr (RA), there was a concern about the loss of Qur'an verses because of the martyrdoms in the battle of Yamama.

An estimated 600 to 700 Muslims were slain at Yamamah. Al-Tabari states that among them were over 300 Muhajirun and Ansar, while Ibn Kathir quotes Khalifah ibn Khayyat (d. 240 AH/854 AC) as saying that 450 Muslims were slain, among them 50 Muhajirun and Ansar. Some scholars assert that all of the 700 soldiers slain were qurra', while others consider the number 70 to be correct. In any case, a considerable number of qurra' died. As Omar said: "Casualties were heavy among the qurra'" on the day of the Battle of Yamamah (Al-Imam 2006, 23).

Afterward, "Jam' al-Qur'an" (the collection of Qur'an) was brought to the agenda with the proposal of Khalifa Omar. A commission headed by Zaid bin Sabit was established, and efforts were made to bring all the verses together between two covers in one book form. The full name and nisba of Zaid, was Zaid b. Sabit b. Dalihak Levzan al-Ensari en-Neccari and he was tagged as Ebu Said. When Zaid learned the Jewish script and language correctly, he started to write the letters that the Prophet wanted to send to the Jews and other nations as "the translator and scribe of the Messenger of Allah" and read the incoming letters to the Prophet. In addition to Syriac, Zaid b. Sabit learned Persian, Latin (Roman), Ancient Egyptian (Coptic), and Ethiopian languages from people who knew these languages in Medina (Kutluay 2009, 136). It is also reported that apart from Zaid, there were names such as Hz. Omar, Hz. Uthman, Hz Ali, Ubey bin Ka'b, Ibn Masud, Abdullah bin Zubayr, Abdullah bin Said, Talha, Sa'd, Abdullah bin Omar, Abdullah bin Abbas, Huzayfe, Amr bin As, Abu Hurayra, Khalid b. Walid, Abu Musa al-Ash'ari, Abu Zeyd, and Abu'd Darda were responsible for the committee (Bilmen 1996, 22). Considering that the verses were written in the presence of the Messenger of Allah when they were witnessed by two witnesses, very meticulous work was carried out; thus, a solid step was taken toward the preservation of the Qur'an (Şakar 2014, 72). Narrated by Zaid bin Sabit:

Abu Bakr said (to me), 'Omar has come to me and said, 'A great number of Qaris of the Holy Qur'an were killed on the day of the battle of Al-Yamama, and I am afraid that the casualties among the Qaris of the Qur'an may increase on other battle-fields whereby a large part of the Qur'an may be lost. Therefore, I consider it advisable that you (Abu Bakr) should have the Qur'an collected.' I said, 'How dare I do something which Allah's Messenger did not do?' 'Omar said, By Allah, it is something beneficial.' 'Omar kept on pressing me for that till Allah opened my chest for that for which He had opened the chest of 'Omar and I had in that

matter, the same opinion as `Omar had." Abu Bakr then said to me (Zaid), "You are a wise young man, and we do not have any suspicion about you, and you used to write the Divine Inspiration for Allah's Messenger. So you should search for the fragmentary scripts of the Qur'an and collect it (in one Book)." Zaid further said: By Allah, if Abu Bakr had ordered me to shift a mountain among the mountains from one place to another, it would not have been heavier for me than this the ordering me to collect the Qur'an. Then I said (to `Omar and Abu Bakr), "How can you do something which Allah's Messenger did not do?" Abu Bakr said, "By Allah, it is something beneficial." Zaid added: So he (Abu Bakr) kept on pressing me for that until Allah opened my chest for that for which He had opened the chests of Abu Bakr and `Omar, and I had in that matter, the same opinion as theirs. So I started compiling the Qur'an by collecting it from the leafless stalks of the date-palm tree and from the pieces of leather and hides from the stones and from the chests of men (who had memorized the Qur'an). I found the last verses of Sirat-at-Tauba: ('Verily there has come unto you an Apostle (Muhammad) from amongst yourselves...' (9.128-129) from Khuza`ima or Abi Khuza`ima, and I added to it the rest of the Sura. The manuscripts of the Qur'an remained with Abu Bakr till Allah took him unto Him. Then it remained with `Omar till Allah took him unto Him, and then with Hafsa bint `Omar (Sahih al-Bukhari, 7191).

The transmission of the revelation to the next generations during the revelation period was provided by memory in the first place and immediately afterward by inscription. Zaid b. Sâbit (ö. 45/666) was very careful and meticulous when compiling the Qur'an and scrutinized carefully both what was preserved in the minds and what was written in a more reliable way (er-Râfî 1965, 39).

It is referred from Hazrat Zaid bin Sabit that those Sahifas in which the Holy Qur'an had been arranged were the possession of Hazrat Abu Bakar; when he died, Hazrat Omar was the safeguard of these scriptures, and after the martyr of Hazrat Omar, these scriptures were under the third caliph after Hazrat Hafsa (Aziz, 2011:156)

Qur'an memorizers were encouraged very much, and the Companions were sent to various regions. In this context, Zubeyde Şakar includes Hz. Omar's (r.a) efforts to memorize the text of the Qur'an in her research. To explain Hz. Omar's (r.a) incentives in this regard she quotes from Gökhan Atmaca:

Hz. Omar's distribution of the spoils according to the extent of memorizing the Qur'an, paying a salary from Beytü'l Mal to children who are educated in the Qur'an, ensuring that every segment can benefit from this education without making any distinction between free slaves, gathering the Companions from time to time and giving lessons for interpretation doing it is an example of his encouragement to memorize the Qur'an (Atmaca 2011, 122).

It was one of the conditions sought for the appointment of Imams to have a lot of memorization of the Qur'an. During the time of Hz. Omar, the following Companions, were appointed as Qur'an teachers in the mentioned places: Ubade. b. Sâmit (34/654),

in Humus; Abu'd Derda '(33/654) in Damascus; Mu'az b. Jabal (17/638), in Palestine, Abu Musa al-Ash'ari (42 / 662- 63) in Basra (Akbaş 2009, 8).

Shortly after Abu Musa al-Ash'ari was appointed as the governor of Basra, he wrote a letter to Omar (r.a.), stating that many people in Basra memorized the Qur'an. Thereupon, Hz. Omar ordered all Qur'an memorizers to pay a salary. When he said that the Qur'an memorizers increased more in the next year, he stopped paying due to the worry that they would memorize the Qur'an because of this fondness for money but would not live according to Its verdict. Thus, he said that "I prefer to understand and read a part of the Qur'an rather than to memorize its letters without understanding it" (Şakar 2014, 73).

When the Islamic geography expanded over time, and different dialects began to emerge in different regions, the Qur'an was promulgated by the decision of Hz. Uthman. During this period, the Companions who became Qur'an memorizers dispersed to central places such as Kufa, Basra, and Damascus other than Mecca and Medina (Maşalı and Serin 2020,242). In the period of Hulefa-i Raşidin, administrators appointed to newly conquered places were also selected from Qur'an memorizers. Thus, as the Islamic geography expanded, efforts to learn and memorize the Qur'an gradually became widespread.

Countless Qur'an memorizers were trained in the mosques built in every corner of Islamic geography until the Ottomans came, and in the education centers called Dar al qurra and Dar al Huffaz, which were built in the following years. At the same time, the fact that the Qur'an has been memorized by countless men and women since the time it was revealed is a very important answer to the extreme groups that make the claim that there are removals or additions in the Qur'an because it is not possible for any change to occur in a Book that has been memorized by countless people from all over the world. In this context, the accepted belief in Islam is that it is impossible to alter verses, even one letter of the Qur'an(2:23). Allah(SWT) said: "If you are in any doubt whether it is We Who have revealed this Book to Our servant, then produce just a surah like it, and call all your supporters and seek in it the support of all others save Allah. Accomplish this if you are truthful (2:23) But if you fail to do this – and you

will most certainly fail – then have a fear of the Fire whose fuel is men and stones and which has been prepared for those who deny the Truth”(2:24).

4.6. Qur’an Memorization Before the Ottoman Empire

The first madrasahs in the Islamic world were established in Nishapur in the middle of the 4th century. In the meantime, Nebi Bozkurt emphasizes the fact that most of the teachers in dar al qurras were mukrîs(readers of the Qur'an in accordance with its rules), and the science of recitation had an important place. Apart from the mosques, the first independent madrasahs established for teaching the Qur'an at a high level were the dar al Qur'an. The first dar al-Qur'an was the Sadiriyye Madrasah, which was established in Dîmaşk in 391 AH. According to the sources, the Qur'an education was also given in Damascus, Baghdad, and other Muslim cities. Likely, Qur'an lessons were taught in Azhar, which was established in Egypt from the beginning of the foundation(Bozkurt 1993, 543).

During the Andalusia era, independent madrasah buildings were not common. Generally, recitation and Qur’an memorization lessons were continued in certain mosques. Also, in Andalusia, certain masjids were arranged for some qurras. Hatice Şahin narrates that Abu Bakr ibn al-Arabi, one of the last scholars of the Andalusian period, mentioned a very successful practice in his country about Qur’an education and memorization. According to this application, with the knowledge of writing, calculus, and grammar, they stepped into primary education, and then the teacher of the Qur'an teaches the Qur’an to his students. Children were made to memorize a part of the Qur’an according to their abilities. In this way, the Qur’an memorization was practiced. Those who want to finish their Qur’an memorization continue their education with fiqh and hadith lessons (Şahin 2011, 42).

Umayyads, the first dynasty-state of Islamic history, was established in Damascus, the center of Syria, after the reign of Hulefa-i Raşidin (632-661). Qur’an education continued in mosques for adults and *scribes* (küttâbs)for young children. In this period, two different methods were taken as the basis in the teaching of the Qur’an, *arz*, and *telaqqi*. In the first method, arz, the student would present the lesson he had memorized before, listen to the teacher and correct it if it was wrong. In the second method, telaqqi,

the teacher is reading, and the student is listening (Söylemez 2002, 67). Among these schools, there were different lessons taught besides the lessons of the Qur'an. The ones with the predominance of the Qur'an lesson were later called "Qur'an kuttabs" (Şahin 2011, 38). In the Umayyad period, the number of students could be fifteen hundred or more from time to time (Aycan 2003, 58-59). According to the information provided by Ibn-i Hallikan based on the work of Ebü'l -Ferec Ibn-ul Cevzi, the sounds of the Qur'an were spreading outside the palace "like a hive of bees" (Bozkurt 1997, 76). Based on this light of the foregoing information, it is possible to understand how extensive the interest in the Qur'an and Qur'an education was at that time.

Also, the Seljuks(12th and 13th centuries) gave great importance to scholars as well as the tradition of the Qur'an memorization. With the efforts of Sultan I. Kılıçarslan (1092/1107), a large part of Anatolia left the Byzantine domination and passed to the Seljuks, and therefore Islamization activities in these lands accelerated. Schools in the Seljuks were established to teach children the Qur'an. Regarding this, it is stated that a school was built by the prominent people of that region next to every neighborhood mosque in Konya and Kayseri, and girls and boys were educated there(Baykara 1985, 87). Seljuks, by forming a unit called "hassa hafiz," always kept some Qur'an memorizers with the sultan in the palace or on the journey. Qur'an memorizers were appointed as responsible for reading the Qur'an in tombs and madrasahs, as well as Qur'an memorization boarding schools(yatılı okullar) which were opened for the first time (Corci 1976, 413). The Seljuks established many foundations for the maintenance and repair of these institutions to the needs of the students studying there. According to the charters, the staff of dar al huffaz consisted of Sheikh ul huffaz(Sheikh of Qur'an memorizers), teachers, imams, müezzin, and other officials. While a maximum of 10 students were accepted to these institutions, it was deemed appropriate for the students to be at least ten years old. The fact that the number of students was limited to 10 was explained by the idea of keeping the education level high in the aforementioned specialized madrasahs(Çiftçioğlu 2001, 57). The verses were memorized ten by ten or five by five, and no new lessons were given until they were appropriately learned. Some teachers had to listen to several students simultaneously due to the high number of students. Some teachers used to listen to their students even while walking on the road(Bozkurt 1997, 76).

In the Seljuks, Qur'an was generally taught in dar al huffaz. Most of the dar al huffaz were founded by volunteer people. However, few of them have reached so far (Baltacı 2000, 16). Based on the information given by İbrahim Hakkı Konyalı about the dar al huffaz, it is known that the number of dar al huffaz in Konya, most of which were built by individuals and a small part of which has reached the present day, was close to thirty. Some of them survived for a long time by being transferred from the Karamanids and Seljuks to the Ottomans (Bozkurt 1993, 544). In pre-Ottoman Anatolian madrasahs, the issue of the recitation of the Qur'an was given great importance. For example, the Konya Karatay Madrasah foundation ensured that the two Qur'an memorizers, who were in charge of reciting the Qur'an every morning and evening, received 60 dirhams per month from the madrasah income (Konyalı 2007, 575).

In this section, it has been concluded that although the Qur'anic education institutions in the Ottoman Empire were different from the institutions in other periods in terms of their names and nature, they were actually a continuation of the old ones, and the Qur'an teaching centers were influenced by the institutions in the Anatolian Seljuk period.

In today's studies, the situation of the science of recitation in Anatolia before the Ottoman Empire has not been mentioned much. Anatolia hosted scientific and intellectual activities and lived its brightest period during the Seljuk period. As far as it is examined, in the periods before the Ottomans, the places where recitation was most widely taught were Konya, Ahlat, Hakkari, Harran, and Antakya (Sahillioğlu 1991, 231). They did not only engage in war but also supported scientific and cultural efforts. As understood, the Seljuk period had a great influence on the Ottoman Empire in the field of recitation. For example, dar al huffaz had been a source of inspiration for the dar al qurra in the Ottoman Empire in terms of their establishment purpose, curriculum, and teaching staff. Therefore, the issue of the Qur'anic education in the pre-Ottoman period is a subject that needs to be emphasized in many aspects, such as its teaching, recitation, and reading. Now, I will touch upon the Ottomans, who gave importance to these institutions and made efforts to bring them to a higher level after the periods of Seljuks and the principalities.

4.7. The Practice of Qur'an Memorization During Ottoman Empire

Folk history states that the first dar al qurra in the Ottoman period was the Süleyman Pasha Madrasah, which was built by Süleyman Pasha, the son of Orhan Ghazi, after the conquest of İznik between 1335-1359. During the Ottoman period (600 years), it is mentioned that dar al qurras existed within the structure of the big mosques of Istanbul as detached buildings. Although most of them do not exist, for the time being, there were many dar al qurras in every region of the Ottoman lands (Tanman 1993, 545).

In the Ottoman period, learning and memorizing the Qur'an, as well as living following its judgment, came before everything else. In some shrines, the Qur'an was recited by the Qur'an memorizers alternately for 24 hours non-stop. For example, 72 Qur'an memorizers were assigned to Eyüp Sultan Shrine for that duty. Likewise, 90 Qur'an memorizers were assigned to the tomb of Fatih Sultan Mehmet Han. The Qur'an used to be recited by the Qur'an memorizers for 443 years without a break from 1481 to 1924 in the tomb of Fatih Sultan Mehmet. What is more important, Qur'an memorizers used to recite the Qur'an without a break in Topkapı Palace from the moment when Yavuz Sultan Selim Khan brought the sacred relics to Istanbul until the first years of the Republic. The tomb of Efrîdûniye, which was built in the VIII (XIV) 14th century in Damascus, and the tomb of the Ayyubid ruler al-Melikül-Esref, where the famous recitation scholar Abu Shame was in charge, can be examples of that. Likewise, in the testament made for the Tomb of Umm Salih in Damascus, it was requested that the person who knows the qiraat best in the city be chosen as the Qur'an teacher. Some Ottoman Sultans, such as Abdulhamid I. and some Lady sultans, such as Shah Sultan, who was the daughter of Sultan Mustafa III, are known to have made a will to have the Qur'an read and taught at certain times in their tombs (Bozkurt 1993, 545).

Invaluable information and analysis were given by Evliya Çelebi (1093/1682) about dar al qurras. In his study, Nebi Bozkurt conducted a comprehensive study on this issue. He states that according to Seyahatname, the number of *eshnaf-ı hafizan* (tradesman Qur'an memorizers) of the Qur'an in Istanbul was 9.000, and 3.000 of them were women. According to the information conveyed by Evliya Çelebi; there were dar

al qurras in many places, such as Bitlis, Tekirdağ, Manisa, Gelibolu, Merzifon, and Tire (Gelibolu). There were nine dar al qurras in Amasya and Manisa and more than 300 Qur'an memorizers in the Sultan Bayezid Dar al Qurra in Amasya. During the Ottoman period, dar al qurras were active in many places outside of Anatolia too. For example, there were 370 dar al qurras in Egypt, 40 in Mecca, 7 in Medina, 7 in Jerusalem, and 40 in Damascus in the 17th century (Bozkurt 1993, 544-545).

Dar al qurras, which served as specialized Qur'anic institutions in the Ottoman Empire, were at various levels. Students who completed their memorization in the lower department of the primary school, which had little children as Qur'an memorizers, could pass to the upper dar al qurra and learn the science of recitation there. There were two classes in the lower level, dar al qurra, "ihtiyat," and "huffaz." Of these, the function of the ihtiyat class was to prepare for Qur'an memorization. In the Qur'an memorizer's class, in addition to Qur'an memorization, tajweed and calligraphy lessons were given (Er 1999, 30). First of all, girls and boys were taught Qur'an at an early age in primary schools. According to Suat Cebeci,

Children started their lessons in neighborhood schools with the Elifba book called elif juz, and when they finished it, they would continue to read with Amma juz and improve their reading. Next, they continued the 29th juz called Tabareke juz, and after that, the 28th and 27th juzes were recited according to the status of the student, and the complete reading of the Qur'an was finished from the beginning of the Mushaf, starting with the Surah al-Fatiha. Students who started the mushaf were also given a tajweed lesson, and they tried to improve their recitation. Students who completed the memorization of the Qur'an and the tajweed course would not start to practice hifz education. Some of the teachers were not satisfied with this, and starting from Subkaneke, they used to give the education called meharic-i huruf for the salah prayers, and the last ten short surahs of the Qur'an called prayer surahs (Cebeci 2012, 13).

Dar al huffaz were one of the classical education systems of the Ottoman Empire. Like every institution, it had its rules of operation. Students between the ages of 9 and 11 who graduated from the Sibyan School were educated in these institutions. In addition to the Qur'an and tajweed education, the entire Qur'an was memorized. Those who graduated from dar al huffaz went to the dar al qurra.

They used to take lessons in recitation and letter training called mehâric-i hurûf here again. In these madrasahs, where the education of Qur'an memorization was at the forefront, tafsir, hadith, fiqh, aqidah, and other sciences were also taught. Students who were brought up here were appointed to the positions of imams, muezzins, and

preachers in mosque services after their education was completed (Karakaya 2017, 17). The teachers who gave lessons in dar al huffaz or dar alqurras were called “sheik al-Qurrâ”, “sheik al-Qırââ” and their duties were called “Meşîhâtul-Qırââ” (Sheik of Qur’an recitation) (Bozkurt 1993, 543). In the Ottoman Empire, there were also institutions called Women School/ Kadın Mektebi(15th-19th century); that gave education to girls above the age of 10 and specially educated female Qur’an memorizers (İrfan 2007, 71). As obvious that the tradition of starting the education of Qur’an memorization at an early age has always been common among Muslims. Cebeci claims that:

Although it is accepted that it is more approved for children to have Qur’an education as early as possible, in madrasahs, the age of starting Qur’an memorization used to be generally around the age of 10 in the history of Islamic education, this was not due to the idea that the age of 10 is a more suitable age for hifz. Since the child starts the madrasah after finishing primary school, he/she is ten years old when he/she completes the preparatory education before the Qur’an memorizer in the madrasah. Because it is recited that the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said in a hadith narrated by Abu Hurayra, “Whoever learns the Qur’an at an early age, the Qur’an will be mixed with his flesh and blood” (Cebeci 2012, 12).

As it can be understood here, the aim of the low number of students per tutor was to increase the quality of education by allowing the tutor to allocate more time to the student (Yıldırım 2004, 78).

I will discuss the last period of the Ottoman Empire in detail following the chapter that the system was changed with the idea of specializing in dar al qurras. After this change, some of the dar al qurras continued to serve as Medresetü-l eimmeti vel hutebâ (similar to today’s Imam Hatip High Schools), some of them *Medresetül-Müezzinîn vel-Qurra*(School of Qur'an and Adhan Reciters), some *Medresetül-Vâizîn*(School of Preachers)and some *Medresetül-Müderrisîn* (School of Lecturers) (Tunç 2008, 37).

We see that just like the memorization in terms of specialization was continued in dar al qurras, the respect and the importance given to the Qur’an were prevalent in all educational institutions of the Ottoman Empire. In the Ottomans, great importance was given to the science of recitation, and thousands of Qur’an memorizers were trained. When the issue is evaluated in terms of having information on Qur’an educational institutions, the figures given by Evliya Çelebi for his period in this part are remarkable. Along with the practice of continuation of the process of Qur’an education

uninterruptedly in the Balkan, we can understand how this tradition was considered important in the Ottoman Empire.

4.8. The Precarity of Qur'an Memorization in the Republican Period

The authoritarian secularization process in Turkey took place to shape the history and memory of Muslim communities to a large extent. Particularly, the attempt to take religious elements and practices under state control affected the lives of religious people both individually and socially. Qur'an memorizers, who have played a very important role in the Muslim communities up to this day, were one of the communities affected mostly by Western modernism and secular politics in the early decades of the building process of the Turkish Republic.

In the first period of the Turkish Republic, the closure of dar al qurras upon the law on the Unification of Education issued on March 3; 1924, and not substituting them with any other specialized madrasahs created such a huge gap that caused a period of stagnation and stigma in the education of Qur'an memorization (Bozkurt 1997; Baltacı 1999; Cebeci and Ünsal 2006; Vahapoğlu 2016). Ahmet Koç thinks that the period between 1919-1946 was not bright in terms of the Qur'an memorization school and education. The law on the Unification of Education aimed to provide education from a single source, all the education and training institutions in the country were transferred to the Ministry of Education, and all madrasahs were closed (Koç 2014, 375-405).

Although Darulfunun Theology Faculty was opened in 1924 according to the 4th Article of the law on the Unification of Education, no school was opened to replace dar al qurras (Öcal 1998, 242). This was a consequence and evidence of the political and ideological interventions made by the state, especially in aspects of religious lessons in which authoritarian secular policies were implemented (Başgil 1998, 192-201). Moreover, there came a period in which madrasahs (traditional Islamic schools) and Qur'an education/reading were prohibited, overseen, and nationalized (1924) by an authoritarian government just after Tevhid-i Tedrisat. Qur'an memorization schools were the only religious educational institutions that the Religious Affairs Administration supervised. Because of the increasing rate of traumatic events,

violence, otherization, etc., in the public sphere, people did not prefer to go to official schools but attempted to take their Qur'an memorization schools hiddenly in many places like the barn, home, and train.

In the following times, courses such as the Qur'an, religious law, fiqh, and Arabic were removed from the school programs in the Republican period. The religion course, which was removed from high schools after 1924 and from secondary schools in 1927, was given to only 5th- grade students in 1930 on certain days and hours upon request.

Recep Şentürk claims that:

Education was standardized using a secularist perspective and put under the monopoly of the state by the Unification of Education law. According to this law, only the secular state could give education, including religious education. Islamic religious education was not given at all during the early decades of the Republic (Şentürk 2010, 325).

Mustafa Öcal criticizes the state's ideological work regarding educational policy. He states that:

However, these schools started to be closed systematically 2-3 months after their opening due to the lack of students (!), And by the end of the 1925-1926 academic year, they were completely closed except in Istanbul and Kütahya. Imam and Hatip Schools in these two provinces, which were left to the last, were closed in 1930 and passed down into history (Öcal 2008, 404).

As a result of the prohibition of reading and writing Arabic in education, after the Alphabet change on November 1st 1928, the existing Qur'an memorization schools were completely closed. In line with the secularization policies, all provisions associated with religion were removed from the constitution in 1928, and the religious education system began to be liquidated.

Based on Giuli Alasania and Nani Gelovani(2011)'s research, it is understood how much the number of Qur'an memorization schools decreased and how the prohibition of Qur'an education negatively affected religious education in early Turkish secularism. Alasania and Nani attempted to draw attention to the paradigmatic changes in religious education in Turkey. Statistically, they mentioned, "there were ten Qur'an memorization schools between the years of 1925-1931, this number dropped to nine in 1932-3. In the academic year of 1934-1935, records show that only one Qur'an

memorization school continued its educational activities”(Alasania and Gelovani 2011, 38).

In other words, in the process of nation-building, the state aimed to banish the religious institutions of the Ottoman Empire. The Tevhid-i Tedrisat law “stipulated that new schools (mekteps) to train imams and preachers were to be established. These mekteps survived until 1933, and the Diyanet opened Qur’an Study Schools in 1934 in order to replace these mekteps” (Ulutas 2010, 392). Hence, religious courses were removed from the primary and teacher training schools in 1931 and the village primary school curriculum in 1939 (Öcal 1998, 244). Cahit Baltacı explains this process as follows:

No institution was established to train staff to carry out muezzin services in mosques. In fact, in the text of the law, it was stipulated that separate schools such as Imamat and oratory would be opened to serve the religion, which allowed the opening of the Qur’an Education School. However, no religious school other than Imam-Hatip School was opened in practice (1999, 183).

Since there was no religious institution to train the Qur’an memorizer for a long time, some mosque imams tried to teach the Qur’an and train the Qur’an memorizer with their own efforts. Ali Rıza Sağman wrote about the necessity of finding a remedy by stating that the profession (tradition) of Qur’an memorization was about to die in that period (Sağman 1950, 50-58). Ayşe Karakaya identified the negative effects of the chaotic transition period on the education of religion and learning to read Qur’an and Qur’an memorization. She thinks that the decrease in the number of Qur’an memorization, the inability of the memorizers to be able to understand the meaning of the text memorized, the disconnection of Qur’an memorization from Arabic, and the loss of occupational aspect of Qur’an education were some of the consequences. In addition, the fact that while some of the society memorized the whole of the Qur’an, others “moved” away from the Qur’an due to the secularization processes and hence can be evaluated as a negative result of the process (Karakaya 2017, 5).

According to Şakar, the style of Haseki Education Center, the specialization school of the Diyanet, can be shown as a continuation of dar al qurras today. However, these centers were opened (1976) long after the foundation years of the Republic (Şakar

2014, 38). Therefore, we can say that the education of Qur'an memorization was interrupted for a while in the first decades of the Republic (Baltacı 1999, 183).

In summary, learning the Qur'an in Turkey was officially banned for 24 years. The ban began on March 3, 1924, with the law numbered 430. According to the law, books written in Arabic letters became prohibited. Learning the Qur'an was abolished with the application of 'Tevhid-i Tedrisat.' The ban lasted purely until 1948. Imam Hatip Courses were opened for the first time; however, the gap in religious education gradually widened over time. The teaching of the Qur'an on a school basis was made possible for the first time with the 1950 Democratic Party government. Not only the publications but even the Arabic call to prayer has been the victim of this ban for 18 years. In Turkey, Muslim villagers who could not even find a person to lead their funerals buried the dead without praying. In the other part, we will listen to the individual and social struggles of the Qur'an memorizers in regard to the establishment of the Republic as a political regime rejecting the theocracy, weakening the influence of religion while trying to strengthen ethnic identity.

4.9. Qur'an Memorization After the 1950's Turkey

When Turkey moved towards a multi-party era, a severe revival started in the education of the Qur'an. A new era began in Turkey when Democratic Party (DP) won the elections in 1950 (Zengin 2011, 15). After the end of the RPP (Republican People's Party) period, DP lifted the ban on adhan in Arabic and allowed a reinstitutionalization process in the field of religious education. Qur'an memorization schools that train the Qur'an memorizers started to be opened all around the country. The Qur'an education is still carried out in Qur'an memorization schools that pertain to the Department of Religious Affairs. There has been a revival in religious life with new developments such as the establishment of Ankara University Faculty of Theology in 1949 (Ayhan 1999, 213), the reintroduction of religion lessons in primary schools (Öcal 2008, 407), the reopening of imam hatip schools under the Ministry of National Education in 1951 (Akseki 1951, 5), the establishment of Istanbul High Islamic Institutes in 1959 (Öcal 2008, 403) and the establishment of new regulations of Qur'an memorization schools (Ünsal 2006, 17).

Besides, the number of Qur'an memorization schools increased exponentially between 1949 and 1997 (Çaylı 2005, 12). According to calculations, the number of the Qur'an memorizers who got their certificates in Qur'an memorization schools in Turkey has been more than 30,000 since 1970 (Bozkurt 1997, 77). In this context, Çaylı states that:

While 8706 students were studying 127 official courses in 1950, in 1980, the number of courses was 2730, and the number of students was 80.911; In the 1994-1995 academic year, the number of courses reached 5483, and the number of students was 193.528 - 172 of whom were those who learned to read (70.40% of them were girls), 21.475 of whom were memorizers (35.2% of them were girls). In this academic year, 3208 male and 827 female students received a certificate of Qur'an memorization (Çaylı 2005, 2).

With the effect of the coup of February 28, 1997, a negative process started again in the tradition of Qur'an memorization. All secondary schools, including Imam-Hatip High Schools, were closed by the establishment of the 8-year uninterrupted compulsory education law in the Official Gazette on 16 August 1997 (Öcal 2008, 406). Qur'an education after primary school was seriously affected by uninterrupted compulsory education being increased to 8 years. It is claimed that:

The fact that the age of Qur'an memorization went 3-4 years further in this way has brought other problems with it, and this has played an important role in the decrease of interest in Qur'an memorization and the closure of many courses. Because those who want to perform Qur'an memorization become able to do so at the earliest age of 15, this situation both affected the decrease in the interest in Qur'an memorization and the results of the Qur'an memorization process. During this period, there was a significant decrease in both the number of courses and the number of those who received Qur'an memorizer certification (Karakaya 2017, 24).

Therefore, although the number of those who received the Qur'an memorization decreased in this period, later, it was seen that the number of students who received the Qur'an memorization increased gradually in the following years with the change of political power in 2002 when AK Party came to power. The AK Party government's positive response to the demands of the mass conservative populations in Turkish society played a great role in that transformation (Algur 2018, 56). The Presidency of Religious Affairs carried out new studies on the courses and training of the Qur'an in 2004. Afterward, the effects of the postmodern coup were reduced, and the institution of Qur'an memorization was made more active. With the education of the Qur'an memorization program prepared in 2010, it was aimed to systematize the education of Qur'an memorization (Karakaya 2017, 25). In addition, some important steps were

taken to eliminate the age problem and the obstacles that had prevented the enrollment of the pre-primary and formal education students in the Qur'an memorization schools (Vahapoğlu 2016, 23).

According to Karakaya, years after 2012 have been a period when the obstacles before the education of Qur'an memorization were completely removed as a result of the political developments in the country (Karakaya 2017, 26). The eight-year uninterrupted compulsory education was terminated, and the 12-year compulsory education, called 4 + 4 + 4, was replaced. The new system was structured gradually as four years of primary school, four years of secondary school, and four years of high school. With the arrangements made in the Directorate of Religious Affairs, Qur'an Memorization Schools Directive, students who wanted to become Qur'an memorizers were allowed to graduate by taking Qur'an memorization. In addition, new courses related to religious education were included in the curriculum, and it was stated that they could benefit from e-education with the use of developing technological devices⁷.

Recently, the "Qur'an Memorization with Formal Education Project" (Örgün Eğitimle Birlikte Hafızlık Projesi) has been initiated for those who want to work as Qur'an memorizers in some schools affiliated with the Ministry of National Education or for students who have not completed their education of Qur'an memorization, and independent schools have been opened for this project⁸. As it can be seen, the increasing demand for Qur'an memorization has brought positive developments along with it, and also, the services of Qur'an memorization started to be continued by becoming widespread in foundation buildings, various houses, and informal courses.

The content of the Presidency of Religious Affairs⁹ on the Qur'an curriculum below shows that there are studies to make the quality of the education of Qur'an memorization similar to that of the dar al qurras in the Ottoman period. Based on the data provided by the Presidency of Religious Affairs, it is possible to list the teaching programs in today's Qur'an memorization schools as follows;

⁷<https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2012/04/20120407-13.htm> (accessed December 17, 2021).

⁸https://dogm.meb.gov.tr/pdf/Orgun_Egitimle_Birlikte_Hafizlik.pdf (Accessed September 30, 2021).

⁹Turkish state official institution that administers religious affairs.

1. Needs-Oriented Qur'an Memorization Schools Curriculum,
2. Education of Qur'an Memorization Program
3. Qur'an Memorization Schools Education Program (4-6 Age Group)
4. Summer Qur'an Memorization Schools Curriculum
5. Qur'an Memorization Schools Education Program for Those Attending Formal Education
6. Qur'an Memorization Repetition and Instruction Program
7. The program of Qur'an Teaching in Mosques Weekend Qur'an Memorization Schools
8. Need-Oriented Qur'an Memorization Schools
9. Friday Lessons Additional Education Program
10. Preparation Program for International Qur'an Memorizer
11. Qur'an Reading Contests
12. Boarding Summer Qur'an Memorization Schools Curriculum
13. Qur'an Memorization Schools Abroad
14. Guest Student Education Program
15. Qur'an Teaching Program in Mosques¹⁰

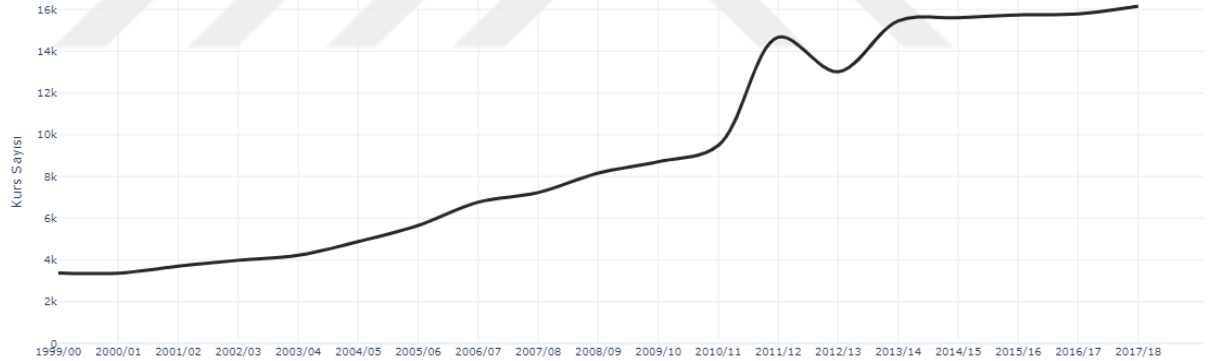


Figure 4.1. The Number of Qur'an Memorization Schools in Turkey from 1999 until 2017¹¹

It has been observed that the number of courses, which was 3 thousand in 2000, reached 16.2 thousand in 2018. Qur'an memorization schools are one of the important fields of study and prominent institutions in regard to religious education. These institutions provide important contributions to our country in the fields of reading,

¹⁰<https://egitimhizmetleri.diyamet.gov.tr/sayfa/489>(Accessed September 28, 2021).

¹¹<https://www.verikaynagi.com/grafik/kuran-kursu-sayisi>(Accessed September 29, 2021).

memorization, knowledge of the Qur'an, tajweed, catechism, and so on. In Turkey, the number of institutions providing religious education is increasing based on social demand as the opening of Qur'an memorization project schools in recent years. This numerical increase has a significant impact on society's gaining a religious identity.

As it can be understood from the interviews, the Qur'an memorizers, who lived in the period when the Qur'an was forbidden, tried to overcome the difficulties in the one-party period by making personal sacrifices, and as a result of their struggles, the tradition of being a Qur'an memorizer is now becoming more and more widespread in Turkey. With the above graph, we understand that, unlike the single-party period, the perspective of the society on religious life has changed in Turkey, and the services for making and keeping the Qur'an memorization schools continue increasingly.

The new government (1923-1950) aimed at the construction of the nation-state was the transformation of the state structures, society, and individuals. In this regard, the gist of the formal Kemalist ideology that aimed at the individual's daily life has been the policies for secularism, Westernization, and Turkification. Although Qur'an memorizers who lived during the single-party regime era (1923-1950) in Turkey have experienced quite troublous times from the proclamation of the Republic up to the present, it is evident that this tradition could have reached until today with the personal efforts and the patience of guards of the Qur'an namely Qur'an memorizers.

4.10. Qur'an Memorization in Other Muslim Countries

After the First World War and especially after the communist rule, there has been a significant breakdown in the activities of Qur'an memorizers in the Balkans. On the one hand, Skopje and its region preserved the tradition of raising Qur'an memorizers in the Ottoman period even under the most difficult conditions and met the needs of other Balkan countries. Until recently, the regions that raised the most Qur'an memorizers are Skopje, Tetovo, and Gostivar in Macedonia, and Sarajevo, Mostar, and Zenica in Bosnia-Herzegovina (Bozkurt 1997, 77). Did the classical system of the Ottomans set an example for other countries? Did non-Arab nations find a new method like the Ottomans? Although being a Qur'an memorizer is considered an important

level in all Muslim societies, the issue of how to be a Qur'an memorizer differs according to nation.

In other Muslim countries, there are memorization practices in sections such as pages, juz, and surahs. Qur'an memorization in Turkey is carried out in Qur'an memorization schools affiliated with the Presidency of Religious Affairs. In addition to this, some make it with personal efforts. Moreover, it is known that there are very few students who practice Qur'an memorization with the assistance of teachers in mosques or private teachers.

In our country, the traditional memorization method is commonly practiced as memorizing by starting from the end of the juz and going towards the beginning of the juz by adding one page at a time. A student who starts with 1 page a day completes a cycle every 30 days by memorizing and listening to each juz's last pages. In other words, in the first month, by memorizing the 20th, 40th, 60th, 80th, and following pages daily, he finishes a total of 30 pages in a month. On the return, it completes the second round in the form of 19-20, 39-40, and 59-60 again with a "ham" insertion of 1 page. On the other hand, when we look at the memorization methods applied globally, we encounter a wide variety of them that are not similar to the method preferred in Turkey. In almost every place where the Qur'an is taught, especially in Arab countries, Qur'an memorization is commonly practiced by memorizing the Qur'an from the end to the beginning or from the beginning to the end. Ömer Özbek(2015) presents various method examples in the world in his study titled "Examples of Hifz Methods in the World" and talks about the Mauritanian Classical Method: Özbek says that it is a model that we do not encounter in our country. According to this method:

1st day: The page to be memorized is memorized, albeit weakly, and repeated 500 times. (This will take about 4-5 hours)

2nd day: The second page is memorized and repeated.

3rd day: The new page is repeated 500 times, the 2nd day's memorization 150 times, and the 1st day's 50-75 times.

4th day: same style 500 (new) + 150 (day 3) + 50-75 (day 2).

The 5th day is the same as the 4th day. It focuses more on connections (2015, 191).

Secondly, Özbek, who gave an example from Malaysia, stated that in a Qur'an school in Malaysia, the activities in the school are named as such: Sabak, Para Sabak, Ammokhtar, and Halaqah Dauri.

In the Sabak method, new students work on the five juz backward from the last juz and then return to the first juz. These students read the part they will memorize 40 times. They finish their memorization between 5:00 and 9:00 in the morning. Each student reads their homework more than ten times to their friends in their group before reading it to their teacher. In the second stage, Para Sabak, one juz is recited backward from the memorized ones. This activity takes place between 9:30 and 11:30. The next stage, Ammokhtar, involves reciting the part exceeding one juz in the previous memorizations. This is between 2:30-4:00. Halaqa Dauri, on the other hand, is about mutual reading among students who have finished memorization: The Qur'an is divided into three, and one juz is read every day. Thus, the recitation of the Qur'an is repeated several times (2015, 192).

In another example, Özbek mentions the Cairo method and says that the age factor is of great importance in Qur'an memorization. Therefore, education in Cairo begins at a young age. A characteristic of the education conducted here is that students are given good reading, diction, and voice training so that they can become good Qur'an memorizers and readers of the Qur'an (Kari). First, the last five juz of the Qur'an are memorized, then memorization is continued until it is completed, starting from the beginning. When starting from the beginning, after each page, the new page is read with the old ones, and when the total number of pages reaches twenty, the last pages are left, and only twenty pages are read. This is the classical Egyptian method. The remarkable point of this method is that it is recommended to memorize by listening to the Qur'an readers such as Abdulbasit Abdussamed (2015, 193).

Stating that the Democratic Republic of Somalia has a great reputation in Africa in terms of Qur'an memorization, Şahin wrote that Somalia is known as the country that does not marry non-Qur'an memorizers (2011, 104). Students who memorize the entire Qur'an in an average of three years are given three hatims to ensure their fluency in pre-Qur'an memorization reading. There are two processes during the Qur'an memorization. First of all, beginners write from the teacher's mouth on the plates in

their hands. Those who pass this stage now memorize the Mushaf. Students who finish their memorization early in daily lessons are released. Memorizing from Surah Nas to the beginning is not repeated until the memorization is finished, and when the Qur'an is completed, it is repeated from the beginning to the end. The repetitions are left to the individual responsibility of the student until the memorization of the Qur'an is finished.

In another study, Hatice Şahin mentioned the Kingdom of Belgium and the French Republic, countries with minority Muslim populations, and stated that the efforts to train Qur'an memorizers continue despite the limited number of them. As a method of Qur'an memorization, it is observed that a hybrid system has emerged, the infrastructure of which belongs to the Ottoman Empire but was later enriched with the additions of Arabic methods (2011, 176-177).

As I have mentioned, the interest in Qur'an education has increased both individually and socially day by day worldwide. I aimed to examine the Qur'an memorization in other cultures. From the beginning of Islamic history, Muslims have applied various methods for the process of Qur'an memorization. Rather than the historical backgrounds and experiences of Qur'an memorization worldwide, I tried to focus on methodological techniques of Qur'an memorization, whether they differ or resemble each other. In the following chapter, I will argue what kind of struggle and resistance mechanism the groups with Islamic sensitivity at the forefront in the public sphere of early Turkey shaped in line with the new values of the secular state ideology that developed against such an act of disabling religion and religiosity.

CHAPTER V

IDENTITY, SENSE OF BELONGING AND STATE VIOLENCE

During the interviews, I asked Qur'an memorizers about their experiences during the single-party rule and how the state sanctions were perceived and experienced by them at that time. Hafız Mukaddes, one of our 81-year-old female Qur'an memorizers, who graduated from the Department of Language, History, and Geography of Istanbul University, worked at the Tuba Girls Qur'an memorization schools, has provided us with a wide range of historical and literary information. The sad language and discourses that she used, especially when describing the first period with poems, are remarkable. Reading a poem by Mehmet Akif Ersoy, Hafız Mukaddes expressed her emotions about what happened in the first years of the Republic. In her words:

Those who fought to save the homeland at that time, the heroes of the wars, were either martyred or executed by opposing irreligion and corruption and were eliminated. Also, followers of RPP made a propaganda stance by saying, "reject the religion, be irreligious or not to be a Turkish citizen." They killed the scholars so that they would not grow up to be Qur'an memorizers.¹²

According to her, it was not only challenging to become a Qur'an memorizer but it was also very tough to practice Islam during that period. Thus, in this narrative, the narrator sees the attitudes of the newly established Republic of Turkey as an attempt to hegemonize Islamic values. Did the single-party regime intervene in religious institutions and worship? What forms of resistance and struggle came from Qur'an memorizers against the single-party regime? In this section, I will discuss Kemalist attitudes toward Qur'an memorizers under the pressure of the new Republic's authoritarian legislation while analyzing the life stories and testimonies of Qur'an memorizers. On the other hand, I will examine the struggles and motivations of the Qur'an memorizers who witnessed bans of Qur'an education and Qur'an

¹² Personal Interview with Hafız Mukaddes. 22.10.2018, Üsküdar, İstanbul.

memorization schools in the process of building a new Turkish Republic identity. Further, in looking at educational policies after 1923, this chapter presents a huge amount of detail on the first years of the Turkish Republic.

The following sections analyze the motivations affecting the sense of ‘belonging’ and ‘identity’ of Qur’an memorizers in the single-party regime. Did practices of Turkish nationalism enable a sense of belonging? To what extent did Qur’an memorizers feel they belonged to secular Turkey between 1923-1950? What role did the unification of the education system play in feeling a sense of belonging? If so, where in Turkish society did Qur’an memorizers see themselves as lacking a sense of belonging? Discussing the concepts of violence, sense of belonging, and identity of Qur’an memorizers to the Turkish state necessitates the concentration on the mutual relation between self, society, and state.

5.1. Critical Historical Rethinking of Early Republican Era

As the founding mantra of the Republic, the expression that emphasizes “sovereignty unconditionally belongs to the nation” (Egemenlik kayıtsız şartsız milletindir), which is in the 3rd article of the 1921 Constitution, has been the marker of secularization and its justifications in terms of shifting the source of political sovereignty from being religious to human. Despite the fact that the articles of 1921 and 1924 include that the state has an official religion (Cündioğlu 2005, 15), secularism was included in the 1928 program of the RPP (Republican People’s Party), clearly expressing a secularization understanding of the authoritarian state that primarily targeted state institutionalism and rendered them with no religious attachments.

In the first months of the Republic, the caliphate was not abolished immediately. Following the abolition of the caliphate in March 1924, members of the dynasty were exiled abroad, and religious institutions in education and judiciary were banned. However, the provision that “Islam is the religion of the Turkish State” in the 1924 Constitution was preserved until the constitutional amendment in 1928 (Tunçay 2011, 92).

The first steps towards secularization in the Republican era were taken with the adoption of the law of Unification of Education, which made unity in education with the abolition of the caliphate and the Ministry of Sharia and Evkaf on March 3, 1924 (Tunçay 1981, 225-226). Another of the 1924 regulations, the Week Holiday law, heralded the secularization process by moving the holiday practice, which was the holy Friday for Islam, to Sunday, as in the West (Tunçay 1981, 229).

Furthermore, as a symbolic gesture of secularization, immediately after the abolition of the caliphate and with the decision of the Council of Ministers dated 31 May 1925, the coat of arms, tughra, and sultanate images in all state buildings and schools reminded us of the old regime were removed (Kocaoğlu 2007, 1306). With a law dated 1925, dervish orders, dervish lodges, and tombs were also closed, and it was aimed to strengthen the understanding of religion in which all religious institutions would be under state control of the new regime (Ahmad 1995, 117).

With the closure of lodges and zawiya, the use of religious titles belonging to various sects was prohibited, and all kinds of places and positions became illegal, except for mosques and imams affiliated with the Presidency of Religious Affairs. After these regulations, secularism took its place in the constitution as a principle defining the state in 1937. Zafer Toprak discusses, “The concept of secularism does not mean that religion is in the hands of the state, but that religion and state are independent of each other. The control of religion is in question in the protection of the secular system” (Toprak 2007, 381). However, some thinkers state that the secular state constitutionally attempted control over religious affairs through the Presidency of Religious Affairs (Tezcür 2007; Çınar 2005). Recep Şentürk agrees with this view:

The duties of the Presidency of Religious Affairs are to supervise the activities concerning the beliefs, worship, and ethics of Islam, enlighten the public about their religion, and administer the sacred places of worship. All mosques are under the control of the Presidency of Religious Affairs, and the imams are civil servants who are paid by the state. These reform efforts are commonly known as Kemalist revolutions. Their aim is to remodel religion and its place in Turkish social, cultural, and political life(2010, 326-327).

According to Zeki Salih Zengin, the secular ruling elites applied a policy of transition. He writes that:

Although in the constitutions of 1921 and 1924, it is stated that sovereignty belongs to the nation unconditionally, the connection of the state with religion is mentioned, and duties are assigned to it. Even though it is stated that sovereignty belongs to the nation, the emphasis on religion shows that the reflexes of the society regarding religion were taken into account under the conditions of the period, and there was an effort to prevent opposition in the axis of religion (Zengin 2011, 116).

Andrew Davison(2006) also highlights the militant kind of secularism in Turkey exercises control over religion rather than the separation of religion and state. In this context, state-sponsored hegemony over religion was aimed to feed national identity through the Presidency of Religious Affairs(1924)as one of the established government bodies of secular systems taking place in the Şeriye Vekâleti (Ministry of Religious Affairs) of the Ottoman Empire:

Not placing the institution of “religion” in a political body was a key part of the overall policy of the founding political decision-making elite of Turkey, which aimed to establish a secular state and transform society into a modern one. They did not want to have a unit within the cabinet dealing with religious affairs. Instead, by assigning religious affairs to an administrative unit, the ruling elite both took religion under their control and, at the same time, tried to break the potentially sacred significance of the Diyanet(Gözaydın 2008, 13).

Following these discussions, I argue that the Turkish state has experienced a radical authoritarian and repressive model of secularism “that entailed the full subjugation of Islam to the state, its eradication from the public sphere and its limitation into a very narrowly defined private sphere” (Grigoriadis 2009, 2). Thus, “the Kemalist national project, in the name of secularism, established a tense relationship with Islam – ‘religion’ – by progressive distancing itself from religion, which resulted in ‘Islam’ becoming the ‘other’ of Kemalist secularism” (Cindoglu and Zencirci 2008, 796).

Halil İnalçık states that this period, which he describes as a total revolution, embraced the West with its philosophy of life and all its symbols and value rules. He describes the total change as Atatürk's idea of radical revolutionary modernization. The aim is to transform the Turkish social order, social relations, and material and spiritual civilization into a Western civilization type and to realize a radical social change and revolution. Atatürk expressed modernization in terms of reaching the level of contemporary civilization or Westernization (İnalçık 2004, 101).

The adoption of the Latin letters with the law dated November 1st, 1928, was the most advanced application of secularism directed towards distance from the Ottoman era

(Tunçay 1981, 230). While the state was very sensitive to protecting itself from the influence of religious ideas and structures, it saw itself as the authority to intervene in religious institutions and worship. For instance, in 1932, the Qur'an and the call to prayer started to be read in Turkish for the first time. In fact, it continued the social secularization process with the Arabic call to prayer with the regulation made in 1941 and the Surname law of 1934. As a result, when considered as a whole, changes such as banning the fez and enacting the wearing of hats, changing the calendar and the alphabet, and changing the weekly holiday from Friday to Sunday are quite comprehensive changes that were made to weaken the social influence of religion (Jackhe 1972, 19-35). The inclusion of secularism in the text of the Constitution as a basic principle in 1937 (Erüreten 1998, 172) is the embodiment of this process at the highest level in terms of politics and law. As Ali Fuad Başgil points out (2003, 190), Turkey experienced a secularism system in which religion was tied to the state, starting from the 1930s. Because according to the founding leaders of the Republic, cultural change was the key to modernization/Westernization (Toprak 2005, 30).

During the interviews, I asked Qur'an memorizers about their experiences during the single-party rule and how the state sanctions were perceived and experienced by them at that time. Hafız Mukaddes explains how the government, which said, "Let's destroy the old ones and get the new ones," burned the official documents in the Ottoman archives. According to her, the problem is huge, and the cure is difficult. Hafız Mukaddes narrated:

Does any man deny his ancestors? If I read the Qur'an and sing hymns until the evening, I don't get tired, but when I talk, it makes me feel tired. I am living it. My language does not speak when I speak. One day, they asked Akif, "what kind of poet are you? You write about a nightingale or the martyrs of Çanakkale. They are always sorrowful about war. Out of his sadness, he said a couplet: "If I had seen the rose era, I would have been a nightingale, O Lord! What would have happened if you had brought me earlier"¹³?

She remembers how the religious leaders were embarrassed because one of the Muslim women warned him about his fedora (fötr şapka). Because of obligation, he did not have the chance not to wear a fedora. In a similar vein, Mukaddes Hoca said: "Why had Akif gone out of the country? Due to using Arabic words more, he was criticized

¹³ Personal Interview with Hafız Mukaddes. 22.10.2018, Üsküdar, İstanbul.

a lot. Also, our archives, Ottoman written papers, and all edicts, that is, our history, were sent to Bulgaria as waste papers. Poet Mithat Cemal was aware of this and said:

Those who woke up 300 years ago,
Should see the quality of those who are still asleep
Those who raise hell when their legend disappears,
Should see the folks who sell their history with an oka¹⁴.

During the interview with Necdet Tosun, a Professor at Marmara University, who has a wide range of knowledge in various Islamic communities, he narrated many memoirs from his teachers and relatives who survived that period. He narrated:

We had our uncle Ali, a confectioner, who passed away in Bandırma in 2008. He says I don't know exactly the year, but in the pressure years on religion, there was a sweet shop in Bandırma. Sometimes the gendarmerie or police used to come to the shop; the police used to come more often, but the gendarme would come during the coup time. One of them looked at a Basmalah picture on the wall; he took and threw it over my head: "Do you still oppose the Arabic letter change?" You do not have the right to hang a basmala frame in your own shop.¹⁵

In this narrative, it is clearly seen that the single-party regime did not hesitate to exclude religiousness from the structure of the state and society and did not hesitate to reject any structure they saw as an obstacle, like the Ottoman legacy. Therefore, the authoritarian secular Kemalist regime ignored the existence and intellectual legacy of the Ottoman Empire. Similarly, Mehmet Ali Hoca, born in 1933, started Qur'an memorization at a time when it was not widespread and acquired knowledge from the precious Reisül Qur'as, and trained many students. Mehmet Ali Hoca, who is also proficient in fiqh, recitation, Arabic, and religious music, worked in many important institutions such as Istanbul and Marmara University and still continues his studies on Qur'an memorization. According to Hafız Mehmet Ali, there were no Qur'an education schools in his time when the Republican regime was dictated to the people. He stated that there was not even a radio in their village during the Second World War, and the news could not be received. He narrated:

I'm talking about the years 1943-1944. Those who studied at religious school were not seen as very reputable. We used to hide that we were hafiz in official institutions such as districts and gendarmes. Until 1950, the period of the national chief was dominant. They were the ruling group. They would spread their ideas in newspapers such as the nation (ulus) and the

¹⁴ Personal Interview with Hafız Mukaddes. 22.10.2018, Üsküdar, İstanbul.

¹⁵ Personal Interview with Necdet Hoca. 18.11.2019, Altunizade, İstanbul.

Republic (Cumhuriyet). For example, a newspaper named Tercüman would not enter the school where I was a reserve officer because they would not accept me. Teachers from schools such as Arifiye and Kızılçullu were brought up as irreligious under the guise of left-wing modernity. At the same time, they would not come to the mosque.¹⁶

When we look at the interviews in general, we see that our Qur'an memorizers witnessed the difficulties of the conditions of that period and uttered similar words. It can be understood from the narratives that there was a distance between the religious society and the administration, together with the great pressure. Even more, Qur'an memorizers said in a very severe language that "there was such a situation that they would declare Christianity and bring it to that state in this country." In the eyes of the Qur'an memorizers, the People's Party did not contribute to Muslims in any way. However, my interlocutors said that their target was to destroy Islam.

Abdullah Hoca devoted his life to the Qur'an and had to recite the Turkish adhan in Diyarbakır, Ulu Mosque, from 1946 to 1950. His life story is also significant in this sense. He narrated his memories of childhood from Diyarbakır:

During those prohibition times, 47 execution stands were set up in Diyarbakır from the way of Mardin Gate to Dağ Kapı in the morning. People were executed on the gallows. I was just a kid. News like "14 bandits were caught" was heard. We all gathered in front of the gendarmerie station. After a while, they hung 14 human heads on the ends of bayonets to the iron desks around the police station and told people that "they were the bandits." I remember two of our elders witnessed those painful events talking to each other there. One of them said, "they are not bandits. One of them is the headman of a village, the other is the mosque imam, another is the sheik in a village". Those were quite hard times. Now, all our prayers are that "God may not show those days to this nation again." This cruelty was one of the obvious things in a single-party regime.¹⁷

As it is understood from the life stories and narratives, radical secularization was applied in the process of construction of a secular Turkish national identity, which included a break with Islamic values such as the caliphate and a social transformation towards Westernization. By presenting a new identity to the people with the concept of a nation purged of its religious content, new behavior patterns were determined, and this hegemony was implemented by the state's own practices and instruments. This is because the new regime excluded or, what is worse, marginalized and discriminated against the identities of Qur'an memorizers. An assessment of the practices and

¹⁶ Personal Interview with Mehmet Ali Hoca. 04.03.2020, Erenköy, İstanbul.

¹⁷ Personal Interview with Abdullah Hoca. 28.10.2019, Bahçelievler, İstanbul.

policies imposed along with the new forms of violence of the new state ideology reveals the question of adaptation to a new order and of belonging to the Qur'an memorizers. In time, this would bring the question "Who are we?" to the agenda of these communities, and it would become hard to answer it.

5.2. Unification of Education System During the Kemalist Era

The Ottoman Empire had developed a successful education system since its foundation. These educational institutions served for centuries. In the Ottoman Empire, it can be mentioned that there were four types of education for different purposes, in which different courses were taught with different methods. The first was *enderûn*, which was a palace educational institution to train administrative staff; the second was *Küttab* (clerks, scribes) training for bureaucrats, which trained bureaucrats with the master-apprentice method. The third was the convent education for the training of Sufi connoisseurs, and the fourth was the madrasah education that trained scientists in the classical sense (İpşirli 1994, 259).

The first of the Ottoman madrasahs providing secondary and higher education in the Ottoman Empire was opened by Orhan Gazi in 1331 in Iznik. Later, with the conquest of Bursa, many madrasahs were built in the city. After Edirne became the center of the Ottoman Empire, many new madrasahs were opened there too. In addition, foundations were established to cover the expenses of madrasahs, professors, and students (Kazıç1 2010, 519).

It is seen that there was a great revival in the field of science and Ottoman madrasahs during the reigns of Yıldırım Bayezid (1389-1402) and especially Murad II (1421-1451). In this process, the establishment of *Sahn-ı Semân* madrasahs by Fatih Sultan Mehmet after the conquest of Istanbul and the reorganization of the education system with the *Madrasah-i Evvel*, *Dar'al-hadîs* and *Medicine Madrasah* established by Kanunî Sultan Süleyman around the Süleymaniye Mosque were important turning points (İpşirli 2000, 143). The arrival of many scholars such as Molla Gürânî, Alaeddin et Tusî, Seydi Ali Arabî, and Acem Sinan to the Ottoman lands during the relevant period had a great impact on this development (İpşirli 1994, 272). These scholars, who brought the tradition of science, the manners, and the style of scientific discussion with

them, provided a scientific activity in Ottoman geography (İnalçık 2006, 171). Until the 16th century, it was seen that the madrasahs became widespread in all the provinces and sanjaks, even in the districts (Cihan 2007, 25).

One of the most important and well-known aspects of the Ottoman Empire was its educational institutions called “madrasahs,” which offered high-quality and broad curricula. In the madrasahs, such courses were taught “instrumental sciences (ulûm-ı âliyye / علوم آلیّة), Literature sciences such as rhetoric, logic, kalam, Arabic spelling and ulûm-ı âliye (علوم عالیة) consisted of lessons of hadith, Qur’an Commentary and Islamic Jurisprudence” (İpşirli 2003, 328). The Ottoman education system was primarily based on the Islamic faith. Studies of Qur’anic Sciences from the Seljuks to the Ottomans became more and more important day by day. During the Ottoman period, the existence of dar al qurras was located within the structure of the big mosques as detached buildings. The construction of madrasahs in the newly conquered settlements was also a custom in the Ottoman period.

As I mentioned in the previous section, little girls and boys were taught the Qur’an in Ottoman elementary-primary school/ *Sıbyan Mekteb*. After Primary School, students between the ages of 9 and 11 went to dar al huffaz, the lower level of dar al qurra education. Students who received their first education with basic religious knowledge, reading, writing, and memorizing the Qur’an would later be transferred to higher-level dar al qurra education to complete their recitation education.

Education in Ottoman was mainly religious at a higher level prior to the eighteenth century. The third Selim (1789-1808) expanded new colleges and established European type of educational institutions separate from the madrasah system as the Engineering School for Armed Forces (Mühendishane-i Berrî-i Hümâyûn) to innovate the military and civilian public schools. Although the whole educational, judicial, and administrative organization were overseen by Sheihk al Islam (Head of Muslim Religion), however, these new systems of new schools were supervised by a new administration, which was out of control of Sheihk al Islam. Sultan Mahmud Second (1808-1839) followed the Westernization tendency of some educational institutions

more as well (Zaim 2011, 493-494). During the Tanzimat¹⁸ period (1839-76), the curriculum of the primary schools also encompassed courses of Qur'an and Qur'an memorization with an instruction dated 1847. Likewise, the 1869 Maarif-i Umumiye Nizamnâmesi(Statute on General Education) provided the education for the Qur'an lesson throughout the duration of primary school for four years. The students who wanted to take Qur'an education continued to school for a while at the end of four years (Bozkurt 2015, 106). However, changes in educational activities appeared in the Tanzimat Era. Hasan Aksakal argues that "following the Tanzimat edict(Imperial Edict of Reorganization), the opening of new educational institutions (Tıbbiye, Harbiye, Mühendishâne Mektebi) in the Empire are brought closer, either directly or indirectly, to secularism" (Aksakal 2010, 253). Ayşe Furat discussed the establishment of secularized middle schools, rushdiyahs/Ottoman junior high schools caused many fluctuations in the teaching/learning of religious education policy in Turkey in short periods of time in early 1847(Furat 2020, 246):

In regard to religious education, reform acts found their reflections in two interrelated changes: the transformation of the madrasahs, the backbone of classical Ottoman education, through the implementation of a Western style of teaching and the introduction of religion as a course subject into the newly created Western-style public schooling. Nevertheless, the main breakthrough for religious education did not occur in these schools but rather in their new rivals, i.e., mektebs/schools (Furat 2020, 227).

Similarly, Zaim (2011) sheds light on the educational patterns of the last Ottoman and early Turkish eras. Some changes in educational institutions after 1780 by chronological order are as follows:

- 1:Tanzimat Era: Imitation of Western Institutions on the one side and preserving traditional values and institutions on the other side (1780-1876).
- 2: Constitutional Period: Arise of a new generation educated in Western culture (young Turk) and deterioration of traditional values and institutions (1876- 1923). (I should add that Sultan Abdülhamid Second didn't open the door for revolutionary institutions against traditional Islamic values until 1908).
- 3: Revolutionary Movements of the Republican Era: Aiming to change the traditional eastern structure of society into a Western type through secularism and Westernization (1923-1948) (Zaim 2011, 490).

Hence, besides giving importance to the Qur'an memorization, which was an important part of the institutions that trained religious officials in the Ottoman period,

¹⁸ The plural of the word "Tanzim" means to reform and order.

there had been periods when it had been debated for a long time whether even religious lessons would be included in the formal education curriculum after the establishment of the Turkish Republic or not. Mustafa Necati as the minister of National Education (1925-29), explained the principles of Republican Education (Cumhuriyet Maarifi).

Everyone should take a national, worldly, modern, and democratic education in Turkey. National education means “to adopt all institutions to the national society with ideas and ideals.” Worldly means secular education and staying away from any kind of religious influence. It is also based on this principle that primary education should be kept away from religious influences and that foreign languages are not included (Sakaoğlu 1992, 34-5).

According to Necdet Subaşı, the Kemalist regime had been negligent about the religion until the 1980s and almost discarded it (Subaşı 2004, 210). Therefore, in this process, education and training had been brought forward to accept new values and to break the power of religiosity. Right after the abolition of the Sultanate in 1922 and the caliphate in 1924, the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Foundations was abolished in 1924, which supervised the compliance of state affairs with religion and also managed schools, hospitals, mosques, and masjids opened by religious foundations. This office was made subordinate to the Prime Ministry, and the Directorate of Religious Affairs was established. In addition, the law of Unification of Education was enacted on March 3, 1924, and with this law, educational institutions, including schools and madrasahs providing religious education, were combined and connected to the Ministry of National Education (Mumcu, 1983: 135- 138). With this law, madrasahs were closed, and imam hatip schools and theology faculties affiliated to the Ministry of National Education were opened (these schools were gradually closed from 1930 to 1949). In 1930, it was claimed that some teachers were allowed to teach only the Qur’an and the prayer verses in addition to some prayers to those over the age of 12- under strict controls - but nothing to those under the age of 12 (Baltacı 2000, 16).

Erdal Aydın claimed that “In 1924, a new monopolistic educational syllabus was imposed a new cultural identity to generations using the Tevhid-i Tedrisat law” (Aydın 2019, 1761). With the decision to close the dervish lodges and zawiya, the education and training activities carried out by these institutions passed under the control of the state. In this way, dar al qurra and other institutions providing education in this style were closed (Baltacı 2000, 16). According to Yasemin Tunç, similar to the education program of the dar al qurras, the Haseki Training Center, the specialization course of

today's Diyanet, can be shown. When we look at the first opening date of this center, it is seen that it was long after the foundation years of the Republic (Tunç 2008, 38). During the early years of the Republic, institutions of religious education were almost exterminated. As a result of this preference, it was not possible to find any Hoca to hold even funerals in the villages. Zeki Salih Zengin addressed the closure of the religious institutions under the Ministry of Education in 1930; as a result, no institutions were left to train religious officials (Zengin 2011, 5-6). Therefore, while new schools were opened with the presence of a political understanding that deemed religious education unnecessary, no school was opened to replace the dar al qurras. Instead, by the provision in the 4th article of the law of Unification of Education, a Faculty of Theology was opened with a 3-year education period at Istanbul University (Dârul-Funûn) in 1924. In addition, it is claimed that Imam-Hatip Schools were opened in 29 places from 1923-1924, based on primary schools and teaching periods of 4 years. However, after a while, these schools were closed again on the excuse of student absence (Öcal 2008, 403).

According to Mustafa Öcal's (2017) accounts, it has been criticized that there were inferior and incomplete madrasah buildings and very few students due to the sanctions imposed on the schools. Similarly, İsmail Kara explains that the abolition of Imam Hatip schools is another form of minimizing the religion under secularism, not because of the lack of students (Kara 2017, 259). Qur'an education, in which madrasahs were established in its history, could not even have an independent educational institution in our country in the last century. Thus, Qur'an memorization schools in general and Qur'an memorization, in particular, were removed from being a formal religious education activity.

After the alphabet reform on November 1, 1928, reading and writing in Arabic was prohibited in education, and as a result, the existing Qur'an memorization schools were closed. After this date, teaching and reading the Qur'an were followed closely. Despite everything, citizens continued to teach the Qur'an, albeit secretly, in cities, villages, barns, and towns. An Academician in the Religious Education Department, Mehmet Günaydın, in the first years of the Republic, writes that being a Qur'an memorizer was almost synonymous with religiousness in social life. With the intense demand and effort of people, Qur'an memorizers continued to be trained even in difficult times.

Mehmet Rüştü Aşıkutlu is one of the important Qur'an memorizers who survived that era. Even when it was mentioned that he did not have a son, Aşıkutlu Hoca had a habit of saying, "I have thousands of sons from Qur'an memorizers" as he trained many Qur'an memorizers(Günaydın 2004, 29-30).

According to Osman Öztürk, the understanding of education adopted in the first period of the Republic was used as a propaganda tool for the internalization and spread of Kemalist revolutions. In this way, the closure of dervish lodges and zawiya, the enactment of the law of Unification of Education, the inclusion of the change in measurement units in the curriculum, and the change of language that followed, reflect the logic of the political power created by the function of establishing ideological and cultural hegemony in the education sector (Öztürk 2013, 11). Mete Tunçay emphasized changing the alphabet in 1928 was one of the most effective changes aimed at breaking relations with the past. Tunçay writes that it is necessary to evaluate the script change in the context of the Turkification movements of Islam, which was tried through language in the first decade of the Republic (Tunçay 2011, 94).

In this regard, mass education became one of the fundamental tools in transforming society and world view by the Kemalist ideology. First of all, the educational policies of the early Turkish Republic were based on the idea of "Westernization" as the main paradigm. For this purpose, the closure of Islamic schools was realized. Official sources write the insufficient number of students as a reason for this event. However, according to Öcal, the accuracy of this information should be questioned. To corroborate his view, Öcal states some enforcements of the early Republican period. Most importantly, in the first years of the Republic, the Ministry reduced the level of financial aid to religious schools. Also, he severely criticizes the claim of society's disregard for religious schools after the Alphabet change in November 1928. Yet, Alphabet change does affect not only religious schools but also all kinds of schools (Öcal 2017, 138-141). Hatice Selen Akçalı Uzunhasan also stated that in the early Republican years, Kemalists used education not only for political purposes but also to reach their cultural ideals:

This is why Atatürk turned into a "Headmaster," Kemalist political leaders into teachers, the citizens into students, and politics into political pedagogy. In a way, Kemalism included not

only the political but also the day-to-day (daily life). The state was to convey these ideal practices to citizens through education (2016, 63).

Osman Öztürk sees education as one of the most important ideological tools in maintaining the hegemony and the reproduction of an ideology. He even writes that the longevity of ideologies is directly proportional to the continuity and success of the reproduction process through education. In this sense, Öztürk, who gives examples of the portrait of Atatürk, the Turkish flag, the National anthem, and Atatürks address to the youth in schools and books, thinks that a change is experienced in Turkey through education (Öztürk 2013, 115-116).

In this context, Etienne Copeaux (2003) analyzed the educational books of Turkey from 1931 to 1993 and discusses that the aim of history education in the 1930s centered on the six arrows of Kemalism, especially nationalism and secularism. Similarly, Cemil Koçak claims that textbooks change whenever the government changes, and the content of the textbooks is so ideological (Koçak 2014, 173). Similarly, Gavin Brockett's (2011) work, *How Happy to Call Oneself a Turk: Provincial Newspapers and the Negotiation of Muslim National Identity*, focuses on the relationship between a provincial newspaper and the process of building Turkish national identity in the 1930s. He considers provincial newspapers "allowed people to actually participate in the theater of the nation" (Brockett 2011, 125) and used as an important medium to "inculcate a national loyalty in the people," in his book, Brockett tells us that the effects of authoritarian Kemalism "were manifest in a relatively weak printing and publishing industry," because representations in print culture "infused with both Kemalist and centralist perspective" (2011, 56). Through disseminating its own discourses and hegemony in print culture, I claim that ideological books and newspapers represented the public visibility of Muslims as an evil to the secular public sphere and served for the reproduction of Kemalism.

Moreover, Öcal assigned an ideological mission to the Kemalist Staff Community Centers and Village Institutes. In other words, these institutions had an important place in the educational function of the state, providing consent to the Kemalist hegemony by educating the segments they addressed and through discourse. At the same time, it played an active role in the reproduction of hegemony (2013, 146). According to

Necdet Sakaoğlu, teachers and then all civil servants were employed as trainers in Village Education Courses (Köy Enstitüleri) in the 1930s. Along with the laws, they aim to spread the Republic culture and increase the Turkish literacy rate. Living together with the peasants in the village, Sakaoğlu thinks that they aimed to give the villagers the ideological motivations of the new state (Sakaoğlu 1992, 46-50). Taha Parla explained that these institutions help to build a national culture and a national identity with the statement in the RPP Program as follows: “We consider it important to provide public education to the masses, which is continuous and suitable for Turkey’s progress, apart from classical school education” (Parla 1995, 77).

According to Bekir Topaloğlu, the maximum effort was made for the people of our country in this period since being a Qur’an memorizer was evaluated as equivalent to their children's learning, living, and keeping their religious feelings strong. However, the institution weakened with the opening of Imam-Hatib schools. Because, in the first period, the perception of the state for the institution of Qur’an memorization as a reaction against official education and giving diplomas in the official teaching of the Qur’an and religious education by Imam-Hatib schools decreased the demand for the institution of Qur’an memorization. Because the ineffectiveness of the Qur’an memorization certificate in institutions other than the Religious Affairs Administration caused people to turn to official education and leave the Qur’an memorization to the second plan¹⁹.

In the interviews, we asked our Qur’an memorizers: “What was the importance and meaning of being a Qur’an memorizer at that time? What were the effects of the early Turkish education policies on the Qur’an memorizer?” All of our Qur’an memorizers talked about the painful experiences they had at that time several things such as not being able to read the Qur’an even in their own homes, not being allowed to be a Qur’an memorizer officially, being beaten and prevented from living a religious life comfortably in the society, being banned from wearing religious clothes are among the unpleasant experiences they had. Taking the memoirs told by our Qur’an memorizers into account, it can be stated that the political atmosphere of that day had a significant influence on the institution of Qur’an memorization. Although it was said by a group

¹⁹ Interview with Bekir Topaloğlu. 27.04.07, Altunizade (Tunç 2008, 41).

that religious education had been given in a few Qur'an memorization schools until 1949, the narratives in the interviews made it obvious that the Qur'an memorization schools were not allowed in any way at that time. Hafiz Kaptan, who was called so because he had been a captain for a long time, explained that he could not complete his Qur'an memorization due to the closure of their Qur'an education school. Explaining that his teachers were imprisoned during that period, Hafiz Kaptan said that only five people could be Qur'an memorizers secretly. He also said that he studied on a tree secretly and improved his ability in 2 years. Their teachers were compelled to listen to the students with short phrases such as *Hu, okay*. After their courses were closed, they could not attend their courses at all. According to the narratives, the gendarmes would come in the guise of beggars, and they could hide from the gendarme thanks to the thick leaves of the tree. Moreover, Hafiz Kaptan, who stated that they could not keep the Qur'an openly, declared that he used to carry the Qur'an in his bread bag.²⁰

Similarly, Abdullah Hoca, who completed his Qur'an memorization degree in Diyarbakır at the age of 13, said that he used to a juz into two and kept the pages of the Qur'an separately in his pockets. Abdullah Hoca, who stated that there were not as many courses as there are now, explained that he completed his memorization by secretly reading in the vineyards and gardens with his uncle during prohibition. He stated that there were not even el fa be parts, which were the preparation books for the Qur'an at that time, and he learned the Qur'an without el fa be and completed his Qur'an memorization. Abdullah Hoca explained that after this process, he was compelled to recite the Turkish adhan in Malatya Ulu Mosque between 1946 and 1950. He also uttered that they were forced to recite the takbirs in Turkish too. "It was strictly forbidden to read the original Qur'an. They used to give punishment without question as soon as it was heard."²¹

Hafiz Bekir, born in Trabzon in 1937, said that there were no courses in his time, there was not even a permanent imam in the village during the prohibition times, and that the villagers hired a Hoca with their own money. According to Hafiz Bekir, the people gave importance to Qur'an memorizers, but there was cruelty and pressure from the

²⁰ Personal Interview with Kaptan Hoca. 03.10.2019, Zeytinburnu, İstanbul.

²¹ Personal Interview with Abdullah Hoca. 28.10.2019, Bahçelievler, İstanbul.

administrative side. In fact, when they memorized the Qur'an, they would definitely appoint someone at the door to see if the gendarmerie was coming. Therefore, he said that the Qur'an memorizer did not like the state at all because of the difficulties it caused. Burhan Hoca, who was born in 1933 and served as the Chief Imam of the Brooklyn Fatih Mosque and the President of the American Muslim Union, is one of our Qur'an memorizers who used to go to the Qur'an memorization by walking for 1 hour every day, due to the conditions of his time. He says that Qur'an memorizers were forced to wear hats. According to him, the state's way of looking at the clergy and civil servants was different, and it was a period when the state did not look favorably at them.

The principle of secularism in us means that the state has nothing to do with the Qur'an and Islamic morality. I do not speak by heart; this is the motion that a deputy friend of mine copied and gave to me. That's the point! The principles of the Republic are a set of principles that are set out by excluding Islam. After Atatürk, İsmet İnönü went further and kept despotism alive. I've lived in the USA for 30 years. I m sorry to say that I have never seen such a disaster.²²

Qur'an memorization was common and important for Ottoman Muslims in its entirety. However, the year 1923 was critical for Qur'an memorization. According to my interlocutors, political tension was raised when Kemalists wanted to create radical politics to replace the Ottoman heritage and the Islamic code of law. The interviews simultaneously provide a number of similar talkings and reviews. In this sense, education became one of the ideological apparatuses created by the regime for the internalization of the first-period policies of the Republic and the Western mentality of the Republic People's Party. In a similar vein, the determination of educational policies in Turkey was under the command of this party rather than the Ministry of National Education. This issue was highlighted by my interlocutors during the interviews. Some of my interlocutors said that the state was very harsh in protecting state affairs from the influence of religious ideas and was very harsh in intervening in religious institutions.

In this chapter, I focused on the struggle of the tradition of Qur'an memorization during the single-party era. While finishing this chapter, I argue that during the Kemalist years, the dissemination of anti-religious propaganda, the prohibition of religious education, and the spread of secular education in schools, the reproduction

²² Personal Interview with Bekir Hoca. 12.11.2019, Ataşehir, İstanbul.

of standardized Turkish national identity has become increasingly apparent, especially among the public. Many Qur'an memorizers, who resisted forced assimilation, were arrested, beaten, and sent to prison. Therefore, I argue that Kemalist ideology has a dark history in Turkey. With the establishment of the nation-state, the expected happiness left its place for pain, tears, and death. It is important to question the relation between the state, identity, and sense of belongings of the Qur'an memorizers. Thus, in the following topics, I will explore the issues of identity and sense of belonging in the context of assimilation politics of the Turkish state in order to better understand the single-party regime era (1923–1950).

5.3. Identity and Sense of Belonging

As Vanessa May said, in this study,

belonging is an apt concept for studying this relationship between the self and society for four reasons. First, it is person-centered; second, it takes us into every day where the official and unofficial spheres interact; third, it allows us to view the relationship between self and society as complex; and fourth, its dynamic nature allows us to examine social change (May 2011, 364).

In this context, I will investigate shared experiences and sentiments of belonging and identity among my interviewees. As Cansu Gökten discussed, “identity and sense of belonging are integral parts of an individual’s positioning in relation to social constructs and his/her perception of who he/she is. It can also be added that identity and sense of belonging are interrelated, nurturing and reinforcing one another ” (Gökten 2010, 6). These witnesses will shed light on the degree of the sense of belongingness in Qur'an memorizers to the nation-state of Turkey during one party regime period in Turkey.

While “belonging is fundamental to who and what we are” (Miller 2003, 217) as a significant necessity of life being a person, “identity is about belonging, about what you have in common with some people and what differentiates you from others” (Weeks 1990, 88). This other may be categorized sometimes as an individual, sometimes as a nation, sometimes community, or sometimes as a place. As Linn Miller explains, “belonging involves a process of creating a sense of identification with one’s social, relational and material surroundings” (Miller in May 2011, 368). Focusing on the sense of belonging of Qur'an memorizers through the analysis of the issue of

identity to the early Turkish nation-state, I aim to go to explore what kind of feeling was valid for Qur'an memorizers as perceived "other" of state when my interviewees defined their state. In this section, the question of the "other" will be defined and analyzed in detail because "Belonging and identity gain meaning and are defined with the existence of "the other" says Yurdusev" (Yurdusev in Lengerli 2006, 16). The building national identity involves the process of otherisation. Nationalist discourses determine the other/s. The other is generally perceived as a negative identity in Turkish nationalism. Hence, I argue that the identity of the Qur'an memorizer was otherized in the first periods of early Turkish history. In this chapter, I will discuss how and why the Qur'an memorizers became the "other" identity during the single-party regime era in Turkey (1923–1950).

According to Nilüfer Göle (2006), the question of identity is inseparably linked to daily life practices and both personal and communal engagements. At the end of this chapter, I will seek to outline many facets of daily life practices of Qur'an memorizers within the frame of their identity and sense of belonging. Veiled memories of everyday life of Qur'an memorizers become important to analyze how Qur'an memorizers define themselves. In order to better understand the identity of Qur'an memorizers in this veiled period of Turkey, detailed analyses of their life narratives and shared experiences are required. In this context, I will try to provide the answer to the following questions: As being excluded from the public sphere, how did they perceive the memorization of the Qur'an? What did they attribute meaning to Qur'an memorization? How did they achieve the completion of their Qur'an memorization under these harsh conditions? Did they have some tips for memorization of the Qur'an fast?

It is not easy to give an unambiguous definition for "identity," which is the subject of discussion in a wide area from psychology to sociology, from history to politics. Although, the concept of identity may seem uncomplicated. However, it is a complex phenomenon that has been discussed in depth by sociologists for years, as Steph Lawler mentions:

Part of the slipperiness of the term 'identity' derives from the difficulties of defining it adequately. It is not possible to provide a single, overarching definition of what it is, how it is developed, and how it depends on how it is thought about (Lawler 2014, 7).

On the other hand, Philip Gleason states that the word "identity," which derives from the Latin word "idem" (same), was first used by John Locke and David Hume in discussions about "self," and in the following years got narrowed down to meanings that it started to refer to "personality" per se (Gleason 1983, 910-931).

Before going deeper into detail regarding identity, I will first look at the definition of this concept. Michael A. Hogg and Dominic Abrams define identity as "people's concepts of who they are, of what sort of people they are, and how they relate to others" (Hogg and Abrams 1988, 2). Alexander Wendt asserts that identities are "relatively stable, role-specific understandings and expectations about self" (Wendt 1992, 397). Stuart Hall states that "the logic of the language of identity is extremely important to our own self-conceptions" (Hall 1993, 42). According to the Oxford English Dictionary, identity is defined as:

Who, or what somebody/something is the characteristics, feelings, or beliefs that make people different from others, the state or feeling of being very similar to and able to understand somebody/something²³.

Subjective feelings may not represent the perceptions of other subjects. Regina Gagnier says, 'I may feel like a king, but I won't be treated like one at the bank' (Gagnier 2000, 238). Focusing on Gagnier's statement, one can examine that the perceptions for discussing identity are varied, and "we are in the presence of not one but many persons- or perceptions of person" (Lawler 2014, 8).

It is assumed that our identity is formed by the expectations attributed to the social roles shaped by the socialization process we are in and later internalize. According to another assumption, we construct our identity more effectively with the materials presented to us in socialization or within the various roles we play. According to Gordon Marshall, there is no clear concept of identity in modern sociology. Instead, he uses identity broadly and flexibly, referring to one's own sense of self, feelings, and ideas about himself (Marshall 1999, 407).

²³<https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/identity?q=identity> (Accessed August 28, 2021).

The concepts of identity or sense of belonging and memory, which are essential elements for my research, are dyadic. While identity symbolizes the individual's own self, personality, and will, memory symbolizes the adoption and permanence of identity. As the individual's identity settles in his/her memory, the individual distinguishes himself/herself from others and reveals his/her subjectivity. If we think that the social environment we live in has a great impact on the formation of our identity, we can see how much these experiences interact with the memory where they are stored. Therefore, memory is a place where lives and experiences are archived: "Identity; is constructed from a tradition loaded with symbols, memories, works of art, habits, values, beliefs, and knowledge, from the heritage of the past, from history, in short, from memory (Bilgin 2007, 52-53).

While trying to construct his/her identity, an individual builds an identity guided by his/her sense of belonging. This is achieved through affiliations such as national, racial, religious, or geographical. A sense of religious belonging plays an important role in shaping identity. A person determines his religious belonging by being influenced by society and his family and behaves accordingly. As a result of these behaviors, they are identified by the other. A person's religious identity is one aspect of this process. The fact that the Turks met with the nationalist movement, and this happened right after the modernization attempts, reveals the identity problem that I will put the witnesses of Qur'an memorizers in a difficult situation. Because the Qur'an memorizers wanted to identify themselves through Muslimness and Ottoman(ness), however, the nationalist movement brought ethnic characteristics to the fore. Qur'an memorizers, who wanted to have a religious identity and belonging, were stuck between their own identity and the national identity, and thus, they were dragged into a kind of confusion. In the process of gaining an identity, it is important not only how you see yourself but also how they see you. As a result, the problem of acquiring a position against the "other" comes with it.

When religion, which played a role in shaping daily lives during the Ottoman Empire period, was seen as an element that would endanger the regime by the founding cadres of the Republic of Turkey, Qur'an memorizers felt the sentiment of unpleasantness, loneliness, and even hostilities in the process of building a nation-state. According to interviews I conducted, many political, cultural, military, economic, and social

changes that came along were top-down and not supported by the majority pious population. Throughout this process, the influence of religion had been tried to be reduced in the public eye by applying sanctions on religious institutions and making various legal regulations. Through in-depth interviews, traumatic experiences like killings, executions, prison sentences, etc., felt by Qur'an memorizers feel like they had no sense of belonging to an authoritarian Turkish nation-state. Hence, according to interviews, they were treated differently. This state of disorder made them narrate the events of injustice based on state violence. In this regard, Qur'an memorizers argued that the sense of hegemony and control secular elites have against the Qur'an memorizers increased the doubt and mistrust against the state. I will discuss below that their complaint was about injustice between identities or being "other" in public.

5.4. Qur'an Memorizers as the Figure of the Other and Otherization

As mentioned and argued in the above segments, othering is an important concept in terms of identity issues. The word "other" is expressed as "excluding in the current culture." This word is also the root of the English word "alien," meaning foreigner. In this context, it is seen that the concept of the other has a close connection with the concept of the stranger (Bayram 2015). With alienation, the concept of "me" and "she/he" emerges, and in some cases, individuals who call "that" person is perceived as a threat (Stazsak 2008).

Individual and social identities construct themselves through difference and similarity. According to Zygmunt Bauman, identity is a search for escape from uncertainty. The notion of the other is fundamental to both identity formations. While creating individual identity over the basic features that make up the self, it emphasizes the differences that distinguish the individual from other individuals. Because, while being differentiated against other individuals, it becomes "me"; on the other hand, it becomes "we" by uniting against other collectivities. Zygmunt Bauman says that we must understand the "other" in its specificity and be able to let the other speakers in order to learn from him or her (Bauman 2011, 112). The source of the whole problem is that the other is not allowed to speak, is ostracized, exiled, condemned, and accused of anonymity. It is the dominant forces that determine the existence and position of the

other. Sovereigns want to change, transform and make the 'other' like themselves. If they cannot do this, they try to destroy the 'other' (İnceoğlu and Çoban 2014, 8).

According to Michael Foucault, once a certain interest group comes to power, it consolidates its power with the help of repetitive discourse and knowledge production. Foucault agrees that every power constitutes a certain group of "others" and that he can consolidate his own power by producing discourse against these "others," in other words, by establishing ideological hegemony. Once the power has been seized, the aforementioned groups marginalize other groups according to their own interests and keep them under systematic surveillance in the name of maintaining order (Foucault 2000, 69-84).

In the Turkish example, Mustafa Kemal says, "The people of Turkey who founded the Turkish Republic are called the Turkish nation." It is understood from such discourses that the state and the nation are identical in the Kemalist understanding. Therefore, the state and the nation are accepted as identical entities, and this identity is actually tried to be explained by the fact that sovereignty belongs to the nation as the supreme power in society (Köker 2004, 154-155).

At the same time, the state tries to reproduce Kemalism as the official ideology. Therefore, national identity was tried to be produced with official ideology. However, Kemalism tried to keep itself active at the level of consciousness through certain rituals, symbols, and ceremonies. For example, the wearing of Atatürk badges on collars, the presence of Atatürk's words in many places, the naming of Atatürk's name in many settlements, cultural centers, and schools of the country, the widespread visibility and prevalence of Atatürk's statues, and the discourses in official and unofficial celebrations and ceremonies are constantly reproducing Kemalism.

Foucault argues that the production of meaning and knowledge in a given society is a process that is enforced by the existing power elite in the society in line with their interests. He mentions that in modern societies, power has reached a control capacity that penetrates far beyond the mechanism that Althusser classifies as "state's oppressive apparatuses" and "state's ideological apparatuses" (Foucault 1999, 50). Thus, according to Foucault, power realizes this power of control by producing

“discourse.” On the other hand, discourse is produced through the use of language and its interpretation by interests.

Starting from Foucault's theory, it is possible to observe that the Qur'an memorizers became an "other" group formed by the government in the first period of the Turkish Republic. Hafiz Ahmet, one of the participants who adopted this view, said, “How can people dare to read the Qur'an?” and complained that the regime had an authoritarian character in this period. He narrated:

When I was little, my brother was the imam of the village in the mosque. In our own village, he both led prayers and taught children how to pray. There was a madrasah in the mosque. One day, the gendarme came and raided suddenly. The teacher had the Koran in his hand. He was reading the Qur'an. The gendarmerie took the Qur'an from the student's hand and put it in the teacher's mouth, saying, "Oh priest(Papaz!)(degradingly), are you still dealing with this?". People who witnessed these events are ashamed to say these painful memories now. How can children who see this scene approach the Qur'an? Even went to our teacher's house from the hazelnut orchards on a 3-4 hour road with difficulties and traumatic things because of the concern of the gendarmerie. May God never show those days again.²⁴

According to Foucault, modern power has also become a kind of biopower that shapes the identity, character, thoughts, and even consumption styles of the individual in accordance with the discourses it produces and the elements he normalizes (Foucault 1993, 147). Individuals who do not comply with the norms imposed by the power are disciplined under the name of reformation. In his work titled “History of Madness,” Foucault explains how individuals who do not comply with the norms such as ethnicity, language, gender, and sect produced and constructed by the power are stigmatized and punished (Foucault 2000, 135-179). The government with such a strong biopower shapes individuals with institutions such as schools, prisons, and law enforcement in accordance with the patterns it produces in line with its own interests, and if it cannot shape it appropriately, it first otherizes and then punishes them by keeping them under systematic surveillance under the name of reform or order. As seen in history, this act of punishment can lead to a legitimized and rationalized form of brutality that can extend to genocide in the eyes of society (Öztürk 2010, 184-200). In Kemalism, the gap created with the removal of religion from the socio-political arena was tried to be filled with the "sense of nationality," which is perceived as religion. In the Kemalist nation-building process, the principles of nationalism and

²⁴ Personal Interview with Ahmet Hoca. 03.03.2020, Adapazarı.

Westernism came to the fore as the determinants of the new individual and collective identity (Yıldız 2009, 221-222). Nationalism is seen as a tool in the hands of the state rather than an expression of society's aspirations. According to Ergin Özbudun, the understanding of nation and nationalism in the Single-Party period contained racist elements (Özbudun 2016, 101). According to Hafız Mehmet, the severity of this state's authority-based oppression reinforced the fears of those who thought that they would be harmed and excluded if they remained different. Faced with this situation, he said, "was it that easy to disobey? What and how will you struggle with? The soldiers gathered all the weapons. They did not leave any weapons."²⁵

This situation caused people to be divided into two acceptable citizens and "others" during the Single-Party period. The single-party administration, on the one hand, dominated all institutions and tried to impose its ideology on the people. On the other hand, it separated the people by creating acceptable and decent citizens (Sakal 2009, 158). According to Yeğen's classification, although Kurds are the primary group in assimilationist practices, in his work, we see that Muslims are coded within the framework of the 'acceptable' - 'unacceptable' distinction. According to Mesut Yeğen, the understanding of citizenship included in the 1924 Constitution was discriminatory with its assimilationist policies towards religious and ethnic groups. He mentions that non-Turkish Muslims and ethnic or religious communities of the country were exposed to assimilationist practices, while non-Muslims were exposed to discriminatory citizenship practices (Yeğen 2009, 60- 63). As stated in the 88th article of the 1924 Constitution, citizenship was regulated as "Turkish citizens will be accepted as Turkish citizens without any differences in religion or race," it can be deduced that with this article, the nation will be Turkish, the differences will be united around the title of Turkishness, and the term Turkish will be equivalent to citizenship. (Yeğen 2008, 58). With the expression "by citizenship" in the definition of citizenship made in the article, it is stated that individuals can acquire the title of Turkishness only through citizenship. With the 1924 constitution, three different forms of Turkishness emerged: those who spoke Turkish and were Muslims, those who did not have Turkish language and culture (Circassian, Bosnian, Arab, Kurdish) but were Muslims, and those who were non-Muslims. In this way, everyone and all their differences will be brought together

²⁵ Personal Interview with Mehmet Ali Hoca. 04.03.2020, Erenköy, İstanbul

in Turkishness (Yeğin 2008, 60). We see that citizenship was used as an important tool in the reproduction of Turkishness (Yeğen 2008, 64).

The starting point of the founding elites of the Republic was not to save the Ottoman Empire but on the contrary, to establish a new state based on a national basis for the Turkish nation and expire the empire's life. For this reason, with the Republic, a new order defined as a "nation-state" was envisaged in our country. "Nationalism is an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining the autonomy, unity, and identity of the nation"(Smith 1991, 74). The new regime carried out its identity creation effort through revolutions. National Turkish identity was constructed against the multinational structure of the Ottoman Empire. The following information about the mosques of that period, told by Hafiz İhsan, who is in charge of İsmailağa Mosque, is remarkable:

İsmailağa Mosque was also destroyed. Before 1950, they had made the pulpit of the mosque a toilet. This mosque was in such filth. There was a Tevfikiye mosque. Someone was staying inside the mosque. He used it as a night lodge. One night his house burned down; the mosque had walls, nothing else. They didn't rebuild that house. Many mosques were destroyed like this; some were destroyed. They were going to make the Acemoğlu mosque a cinema. There was a shanty house in the place of the mosque. They washed that slum and took the old man there to the hospice. They demolished it and opened the mosque; its foundations were laid. Thank God they couldn't make a movie there, but then it became a passage. There is a shop over there. The shoe shop is inside the mosque. The other side was sold to a non-Muslim, and they gave this man 45 thousand TL. They also handed it over to the foundation.²⁶

According to our Qur'an memorizers, Islamic identities were subjected to a kind of discriminatory treatment in line with the Kemalist understanding of nationalism. There has always been a period of intervention, from clothing to sacred places, from life in homes to the language used. Therefore, according to them, the discursive and mental control of the Kemalist regime over the people became a means of oppression for power hegemony and domination. Realizing its hegemonic control over the masses of the people through the discourse, it produces through the laws it applies, Kemalism emphasizes the definition of "us" and defines the groups its "other"ises through identity. According to Hafiz Münevver, Kemalists, who reproduce their identity definitions, create an atmosphere of lynching by directing hatred towards others, especially in times of crisis and conflict. Therefore, in such an atmosphere, hate speech

²⁶ Personal Interview with İhsan Hoca. 17.10.2019, Üsküdar, İstanbul.

that fosters xenophobia against others is accepted as legitimate and natural and tried to be internalized. Hafız Münevver described that tense atmosphere as follows:

At that time, there was no public mosque. The man led prayers in his coffee house one day. The shopkeepers came and prayed. While the man was praying, soldiers took him to the Divan-ı Harb Court in Manisa because he brought an iqamat from his coffee saying Allahuekber, Allahuekber. How will people read the Qur'an? But the man had a lifetime. He was not executed, then there was such a thing, people are ashamed to say them. Furthermore, you have to try and do something. After the Republic, they tried not to train Qur'an memorizers but to kill them. There was a very good teacher in the country. When he called them, they all went there. He was a poor man with no one. They said, "Kill this teacher, 10000 liras for you" ... My father knows well the person who lived at that time. They stabbed that teacher in the back while he was going. Just as they stabbed him, they followed him. They had him hanged on a tree immediately so that he wouldn't go and tell people. In order not to make people say," The government immediately hanged the one who killed the hoca."²⁷

Consequently, the nation-building process has prepared the infrastructure for religious groups to move away from their traditional forms of life. According to the interviewees, in Turkey, which has a deep-rooted religious tradition, difficulty and prohibited periods appeared when even religious officials who would serve religious communities could not be trained. As Foucault argues, power is power by making its own interests a discourse rather than establishing its own discourse (Foucault 2003, 35-37).

5.5. Daily Life Practices: How to Memorize the Qur'an?

According to the interviews, the proportion of boys in the course was much higher than that of girls. Similarly, the majority of my interlocutors were male. This situation showed a similar structure in public schools, and the number of boys attending school was higher than girls. For example, Hafız Habibe²⁸ stated that she remembers four people from women and ten people from men as Qur'an memorizers. It should be evaluated as a product of the social structure of that period. The fact that girls have more responsibilities at home and are not as free as boys to go out and stay in bed can be explained that the rate of Qur'an memorizers from girls is lower than boys. In some regions, the weather conditions were not suitable for transportation. There were no boarding schools, and families did not find boarding schools suitable for girls, etc.

²⁷ Personal Interview with Münevver Hoca. 10.02.2020, Fatih, İstanbul.

²⁸ Personal Interview with Habibe Hoca. 09.12.2019, Zeytinburnu, İstanbul.

These reasons have caused cuts in education. At the same time, the education of the boy child is given priority in families to earn a living for the family because of the limited means.

In narratives, it is seen that men from Qur'an memorizers and women from Qur'an memorizers generally focused on the same subjects. However, due to the above reason, it is understood that women mostly narrated the events from their fathers and teachers as witnesses in that period and as the second generation rather than their narratives about that period. Although it is witnessed that women are more emotional in the interviews, sometimes the men also kept silent and became emotional because it was mostly the men who experienced traumatic events.

First of all, when I asked about the definition and importance of Qur'an memorization in the interviews, all of our Qur'an memorizers described it with similar definitions. In these definitions, we see that individuals begin to identify with the characteristics of their collective identity and internalize them. Therefore, personal identity has become a reflection of collective identity (Habermas 1996, 485). For all Qur'an memorizers, Qur'an memorization is love, happiness, and an indescribable blessing. According to Hafiz Nureddin, learning, teaching, reading, and listening to the Qur'an is a duty and worship for Muslims:

The institution of Qur'an memorization has been an institution that has been given great importance since the time of the Prophet. In fact, when many Qur'an memorizers were martyred in one of the wars of the time of our Prophet, the Messenger of Allah decided that the Qur'an memorizers would no longer participate in wars. To protect and watch over them. He even forbade going to wars so that the Qur'an could be passed down from generation to generation. Qur'an memorization is a very important institution in order to convey the Qur'an to the next generations, to teach them, and transfer them to them. In fact, I read in a book that the Qur'an memorizer has one degree lower than the Prophets. The value and importance of Qur'an memorization, which is such a valuable and important institution, is so much.²⁹

Uttering that "The most honorable of the ummah is the Qur'an memorizers, the one who memorizes the Qur'an becomes the protector of the Qur'an." Hafiz Kazım states that there are many benefits of constantly reading the Qur'an, the word of Allah.

The shortest answer to the question of why people want to be Qur'an memorizers is that they want to be Qur'an memorizers for the same reason they want to enter heaven. Those who are close to Allah will enter Paradise. In terms of faith and deed, the Qur'an is the shortest way

²⁹ Personal Interview with Nureddin Hoca. 05.10.2019, Bağcılar, İstanbul.

to be close to Allah. Memorizing the Qur'an is one of the first forms of connecting with the Qur'an. Therefore, the more people embrace the Qur'an, the closer they get to Allah as they dive into the Qur'an. Of course, this will take place at the closest point to the summit when it is the case of Qur'an memorization.³⁰

According to Hafiz Muhammad, a person must be a Qur'an memorizer in order to understand the Qur'an better and approach Allah. He adds that the Qur'an memorizers are the standard bearers of Islam, and these people should never be underestimated. According to Muhammad Hoca, who thinks that they should be respected for the sake of the Qur'an, Qur'an memorizers should be valued in order to raise the standard of Islam and faith. According to him, the Qur'an is in the hearts of the Qur'an memorizers:

They become Qur'an memorizers in order to memorize and preserve the divine Word. Because to memorize this divine Word means to talk to Allah in a way. A person who reads the Qur'an means s/he is talking to Allah. The Qur'an is God's letter to us. Our Prophet is His messenger. It is God's divine message. When you love that letter, you read it again and again and memorize it. That's why we memorize it. That's why we try to preserve and keep it in our memory.³¹

Hafiz İhsan tells us an anecdote that when Osman Gazi went to visit Sheikh Edebali, he saw that there was the Qur'an on the shelf, and upon this, he thought, "You cannot lie down or sleep where the Qur'an is. It is against good manners." As a blessing to the fact that Osman Gazi did not go to bed and sleep until the morning, Allah blessed him to be the founder of the longest-lasting state in the world. In addition, Hafiz İhsan, who added that just as people do not touch the Qur'an without wudu, Qur'an memorizers are not touched without wudu as respect, follows as such:

When we became Qur'an memorizers, people got respectful of us. Because s/he was a Qur'an memorizer, in other words, they are complimented, respected, and rewarded like a great person. Someone else brought the pocket money that your father did not give and put it in your pocket. "May Allah be pleased with you because you recited well." These are the things that encourage students and children. Even the old elders used to say that "Qur'an memorizers cannot be touched without wudu." They used to say that he carries the Qur'an. It is necessary to respect the Qur'an memorizers as if respecting the Qur'an. Because the Qur'an has spread to his flesh, marrow, and bone, if our people have some Muslim faith, they will respect the Qur'an.³²

Hafiz Münevver also expressed the necessity of being a Qur'an memorizer as follows:

³⁰ Personal Interview with Kazım Hoca. 19.12.2019, Fatih, İstanbul.

³¹ Personal Interview with Muhammad Hoca. 28.12.2019, Fatih, İstanbul.

³² Personal Interview with İhsan Hoca. 17.10.2019, Üsküdar, İstanbul.

It is fard-kifāya to memorize the Qur'an. In this context, Muslims attach great importance to memorizing the Qur'an. What could be more natural and vital than learning and teaching the Qur'an, which includes the life plan of the jinn and human beings Allah has made obligatory to serve until the Doomsday, and which Allah presents as the most beautiful of words, and engaging in educational activities to live it? For this reason, being the Qur'an memorizer and the guardian of the Qur'an is considered the highest honor.³³

The Qur'an, which was collected between two covers and turned into a book, reached the present day as a 600-page book divided into 30 juz, each of which consists of 20 pages after all the historical stages it had gone through. It is also called Mushaf-ı Sharif. Although miraculously, such a book can be memorized by believers, a number of methods have been developed to ensure this is a reality. I asked the Qur'an memorizers about the methods which are used for memorization. Hafız Asım stated with the common expression that reached us from the Ottoman Empire that they used the "classical system" in raising Qur'an memorizers in Turkey.

The Qur'an memorization has continued in Turkey with the traditional method since the Ottoman education system. When the memorization method is mentioned, it is actually meant the techniques during memorization. What we mean by the traditional method is that the person trains a Qur'an memorization according to what they see from their teacher within the relationship between the teacher and the student. In our country, unlike other countries, it is done by memorizing the last page of each juz. The daily study plan is made to be memorized from the last page of each juz. According to this, after the candidate for the Qur'an memorizer completes the preparation stage and reaches the level of reading fluently, s/he memorizes short verses from the 30th juz. After that, he/she memorizes the last page of each juz, starting from the 1st to the 30th juz. Memorizing the last page of each juz in this way is called a turn. When this turn is completed, it is returned to the beginning again. The penultimate page of the first juz is memorized. The new pages that are memorized are called ham or çığ, and the pages that will be memorized in the previous turn and repeated this turn are called has or pişmiş. In other words, a person who is a Qur'an memorizer memorizes the 19th page of a 20-page juz and repeats the 20th page. As the number of turns increases, the well-memorized ones increase, and it is envisaged to memorize the entire Qur'an in a total of 20 turns. According to this system, the pages are memorized from the end of the juz to the beginning, and the basic logic is that the newest memorization is always in sight and that the memorizations made in the previous turns towards the end are reinforced after it. We know that this method is applied only in our country and in some Balkan countries in the world.³⁴

Another Qur'an memorizer, Hafız Muhammed, explained the system of memorizing from the last page of each juz, in order, to the beginning.

This method reached us from the Ottoman period, but we do not know exactly from which period it was applied. The Qur'an consists of 30 juz and 20 pages each. The last page of the juz (20.) is read; you memorize the last page at the beginning. Then you come to the last page of the 2nd part. The 30th juz ends, and you finish a hatim like that. Then you come back to the 19th page of the 1st juz. They say raw - has. After completing the memorization, they say *haslama* for six months. You bring the Qur'an to the consistency of reading without

³³ Personal Interview with Münevver Hoca. 10.02.2020, Fatih, İstanbul.

³⁴ Personal Interview with Asım Hoca. 04.04.2020, Altunizade, İstanbul.

looking at it. They call it *haslama/reinforcement*. If it is raw, it means a newly memorized page. You have memorized it before, or you add it and memorize two pages. After you finish this, you go to page 3, and so on.³⁵

According to Hafiz İhsan, the student needs to reach a certain level in terms of pronouncing the letters from their origins, applying the rules of tajwīd, and reading quickly and without errors before entering the memorization process. Both the speed and strength of memorization and the quality of reading of the child who started Qur'an memorization without fully receiving the reading training before so that s/he does not fall behind will decrease.

We Turkish Qur'an memorizers memorize the Qur'an from the end of the juz. From page 20 to page 19, the above Alham is page 1. But since we come from below, it is page 20. We accept page 20 as page 1. Our second return is on page 19. It will be raw; the 20th page will be reinforced. We go upwards. Why is it done like this? Because it gives the raw page when the memory is fresh when the memory is at 20 when it is fresh? After that, he gives the reinforced page. In other words, it overcomes the difficulty of the task when the memory is awake. After that, when the memory gets tired, it can easily give the pages you have made before.³⁶

Teachers who train Qur'an memorizers have developed their own methods. According to interlocutors, the verses were sometimes memorized ten by ten or five by five, and no new lessons were given until they were thoroughly learned. Sometimes, Qur'an memorizers learn to read the Qur'an. Then they move on to the principles of tajweed. Then as an exercise, small surahs of the Qur'an are memorized first, then Juz Amma, Ya-sin, Tabaraka, and Rahman surahs are memorized. This is applied as a preliminary exercise for memorization. According to Hafiz Münevver, the age of Qur'an education varies according to the child's development, memorization ability, and education:

Every child is different. Each child's memorization time, repetition, and recall are not the same. In addition to the fact that the child is at the age of receiving Qur'an education, it is also important that the child wants this training him/herself and is determined on this issue. The family should not force the children to the Qur'an education without creating this desire.³⁷

Many Qur'an memorizers stated in the interview that the memorization process is shaped depending on the memory power of the person and said that different methods

³⁵ Personal Interview with Muhammad Hoca. 28.12.2019, Fatih, İstanbul.

³⁶ Personal Interview with Ihsan Hoca. 17.10.2019, Üsküdar, İstanbul.

³⁷ Personal Interview with Münevver Hoca. 10.02.2020, Fatih, İstanbul.

could be used depending on a person's memory. This is an event related to the person's memory. Hafiz Hüseyin narrates:

There are such memories that are super. He takes what he sees like a photograph. S/he doesn't read it a second time. He reads it once. He memorizes it. There are such Qur'an memorizers. The method of the others is not the same as the method of this memory. The method of super memory is reading once. The method of the Qur'an memorizer so close to super memory is reading the page once or twice and memorizing it. There is no need to memorize verse by verse; if he reads it two or three times, he will memorize it. His Holiness Imam Shafi used to say, "I don't read a page twice; read it once and memorize it. Here is the super memory". Or there are memories close to it. He reads the page a few times and memorizes it. Other memories close to him are excellent memories, reading the page 10 times and memorizing the verses. The memory that is a little further behind cannot memorize by reading it ten times. It memorizes verses by breaking them down or memorizes verses by verse. For example, I am a Qur'an memorizer who memorizes verses by breaking them down.³⁸

One of our Qur'an memorizers, Hafiz Fahrettin, considers that it is their priority for children to make permanent memorization and to advance by preserving their physical and mental health rather than progressing too much during their Qur'an education. According to him, the way and speed of children's learning and memorization are different from each other. Some are slow at first, but then they get faster, while others are vice versa. Some people memorize slowly but do not forget what they memorize. So there is no need to get worried:

There is no such typing memory. It is done by reading 100 times 500 times 1000 times. Allah has a servant who memorizes a phrase by reading it ten times according to his intelligence. Some people read and memorize 30 times. Some people only memorize 100 times. My father was my teacher for Qur'an memorization. They would memorize a verse or recite a verse 30 times. After 30 times, they wouldn't have had him become a Qur'an memorizer because he made it difficult, so what is the method of memorization? Verse, verse, page after page, then juz juz is to memorize the Holy Qur'an. Those who can memorize after reading ten times do it after ten times. Those who can memorize after reading 100 times can do it after 100 times.³⁹

According to Hafiz Gürses, Rosaries (tasbih) were used in the Qur'an memorization in terms of counting the verses and pages read. Both the instructors and the students stated that the students had a rosary in their hands while memorizing, which was used to perform the 33'ing process- the page repeating the process. Interestingly, some students stated that they were able to concentrate better with such tools.

Abdurahman Efendi said that when I met my teacher, Reisul qurra Abdurrahman, the head of Beyazit mosque, my father made me memorize the rosary method. He gave the three-piece rosary to his hand. You will read the vegalü... (verse from Qur'an) once. You will read it for

³⁸ Personal Interview with Hüseyin Hoca. 17.07.2019, Adapazarı.

³⁹ Personal Interview with Fahrettin Hoca. 25.11.2019, Erenköy, İstanbul.

the second time. You will count the beads. You will read until 99 without lifting your face. At 100, you will recite by heart. At 100, all the verses are engraved in your memory. This is also the rosary method. In other words, the method of memorizing varies depending on the memory capacity of the person. The super memory does not need to be repeated. It takes a photo of it, like Imam Shafi. Memories close to him read a few times and counted the beads. Those with a medium level of memory, like us, do it piecemeal. Memorize verse by verse. He combines it and becomes a Qur'an memorizer. We used to go from top to bottom of the page, and some of them go from bottom to top. It starts from the last verse (he recites the verse here) and goes up. It's also a method.⁴⁰

Demanding natural food will not only protect the health of students but also strengthen their memories. As a matter of fact, in the literature, it is recommended that students who are Qur'an memorizers should give importance to food such as honey and grapes that will strengthen their intelligence and proper nutrition (Bayraktar 2008, 128; Kaya 2010, 526).

Some of our Qur'an memorizers emphasized the role of some food, such as grapes and walnuts, for mental development and improvement during memorization. It is of vital importance to keep memorized pages in memory and to preserve memorization. The most basic and perhaps the only way to achieve this is shown in the program by repeating the memorized pages at regular intervals without forgetting. Thus, they said that one should not take a break after the memorization is over. Some of the examples Hatice Şahin gave from the life of our Prophet for the Qur'an memorization of good quality are as follows:

Being awake at dawn, starting the day with tahajjud and the blessing of dawn.
Spend two-thirds of the night resting and one-third awake.
Sleep little, talk little, eat little but often (in sufficient quantity).
Making Kaylule/Siesta.
Consuming honey regularly.
Consuming milk regularly.
Using time efficiently (Şahin 2011, 212).

As can be seen, the development of Qur'an education from the Ottoman period to the present has had its ups and downs. While positive developments are taking place in this education in various periods of history, all efforts have been made to preserve this tradition in the most troubled times. Today, this value should be appreciated, and memorization of the Qur'an should be carried out in ideal forms and conditions and should be arranged accordingly. Steps should be taken on the basis of the quality of

⁴⁰ Personal Interview with Gürses Hoca. 16.10.2019, Ataşehir, İstanbul.

this education and the trained Qur'an memorizers. Because the increase in the number of Qur'an memorizers also depends on the increase in quality. In this way, it should be noted that quantity will make sense. At the same time, it was understood that factors such as physical environment, proper time, motivation, patience, and the methodological study were found to be facilitated by Qur'an memorization. In terms of preserving memory, it seems generally accepted that Qur'an memorizers are in need of willingness and awareness, working in religious services and repeating memorization again and again – and rendering it part of their daily life.

5.6. State Violence, Fear, and Resistance in Everyday Life

The emergence of the nation-state is a turning point in terms of the state's relationship with violence and the formation and molding of subjects and accepted social subjectivities. Approaches that analyze state violence from a sociological perspective focus on the monopolization of the means of violence. The state, as a form of political power, gained a feature that distinguishes it from all other structures, namely the monopoly of violence. In this process, the state's monopoly of violence is presented as a remedy to purify social relations from violence; because the promise of the nation-state is to pacify violence and end it. But in that case, can we be sure that the privilege of the state will not turn into stronger violence? Did the nation-building process in Turkey really reduce the violence, or did it have the opposite outcome? In this section, we will reach the answer to this question by addressing the violence of the state against Qur'an memorizers during the single-party period. How did the modern Turkish nation-state use violence as an instrument in order to have obedient citizens and achieve its claims of a new nation and socio-political order? From this point of view, the definitions and scope of violence were examined in the first part of this section. Afterward, a discussion was held on the means of violence and how the government, which plays a role in the ideological construction of violence, controls the methods of violence. Lastly, in light of narratives of survivors of that era, I will document diverse forms of state violence that the Turkish secular regime inflicted on the Muslim community.

The difference in the etymological origins and usage areas of the term violence, especially in English, French, and German, makes it difficult to make a general

definition of the concept. The word violence in Turkish means *şiddet*, which was transferred from Arabic to Turkish, is derived from the words شدداد and شدات meaning hard and strict and connotes hardness, harsh hard, and rigid behavior, brute force that is unleashed (Ünsal 1996, 29-35). According to the Britannica Dictionary, violence is “an act of physical force that causes or is intended to cause harm.”⁴¹ It is also defined as violence when a person is exposed to it by being “disturbed, detained, come to rude or harsh intervention, or by the deterioration of immunity, and humiliation as a result of the use of physical force” (Michaud 1991, 8-9). One of the most known discussions concerning violence is about its role in the prevention of bodily movements of individuals or the denial of freedom of action. In this context, violence is considered to violate civil society rules such as solidarity, freedom, and equality of citizens (Keane 1998, 68). In other words, violence can be classified as evil, fear, oppression, harassment, and persecution (Büker and Kıran 2004, 16).

It is not an appropriate analysis to limit violence to sole physical force. Yet using the meanings of physical effect and bodily pain is narrow and insufficient for the concept of violence. As in following Ramazan Aras, I claim that violence has many forms “the psychological, symbolic, structural, epistemic, aesthetic, visible or invisible, physical or emotional” (Aras 2014, 13). Focusing on the psychological form of violence, Doğu Ergil emphasizes that violence stems from the social relations of the parties whose interests are in conflict:

Violence can be defined as “physical and/or psychological harm inflicted by any individual, group or organized entity against the physical and moral integrity, property, cultural or symbolic values of a person or community”(2001, 40).

The phrases in the excerpt, “the pursuit of Qur’an memorizers as a target,” they’re having been left in custody,” and “the communities of people who constantly watch over the gendarmerie,” reveal the psychological violence dimension of Kemalism’s oppression of Qur’an memorizers. One of Qur’an memorizers, Hafız Karaman, stated:

As we were coming to our village from the mosque with my late uncle's son, we met the military sergeant major. You know, it is forbidden to wear a cap/takke; in the village of Karadere, where we had been studying, the sergeant major of the police station snatched my

⁴¹<https://www.britannica.com/topic/violence> (Accessed January 1, 2022).

cap from my head. We tried to take it, but he drew his gun, and we couldn't take it. We followed him. He disappeared at that time. So we experienced that thing. It was forbidden to wear a cap. Also, one morning, they took 35 people to the police station. Let me not explain in detail, but unpleasant things happened there! I mean, at the gendarmaria station. The thing is, we don't know what happened then; of course, a two-rank sergeant was the one who did this!

-Did they do it to 35 people?

He took all 35 people to the gendarmaria station, but they did not keep much. The families heard that we were there, they all rushed to the police station, and then they let us go.⁴²

Erdem Hoca, retired Imam of Fatih Mosque, who feels still under the influence of the oppression and violence he experienced during his Qur'an memorization period and does not convey anything about that time, describes this period as utter darkness. Erdem Hoca, who gave quite clear answers to the questions I asked about the tradition of Qur'an memorization, remained silent and said almost nothing when it came to such questions about execution and imprisonment – this is clearly an indication of trauma and unresolved grief. He was even of the opinion that I should not work on this subject because of the prohibitions and sensitivities surrounding the issue. We could only hear the following important sentence from Erdem Hoca about the events of that period: “The man who recited Arabic iqama in the mosque was put into prison for six months.”⁴³ In this context, attention is drawn to the aggressive stance of the regime, which includes not only physical but also psychological violence. As seen in the example, the concept of violence includes “demeaning, humiliating, psychologically damaging implicit and indirect actions” (Wolff 1969, 606). In this case, violence can be classified by many broad and narrow words such as evil, fear, oppression, harassment, and persecution (Büker and Kiran 2004, 16).

Another type of violence, which is our main subject, is the political violence that occurs with the use of violence for political purposes. According to Harold Nieburg, violence is defined as,

Confusing, destructive, damaging actions aimed at changing the behavior of others in the event of a compromise may have consequences on the social system and whose purpose, choice of targets and victims, surrounding conditions, implementation, and effects have or may have political significance (1970, 13).

⁴²Personal Interview with Karaman Hoca. 17.07.2019, Fatih, İstanbul.

⁴³Personal Interview with Erdem Hoca. 09.09.2019, Üsküdar, İstanbul.

Von der Mehden makes a classification that gathers the acts of political violence into six groups. In this distinction, the first group is the acts of violence stemming from the culture of the country. According to this classification, in racial, ethnic, religious, and regional diversity and in an environment where conflicts of interest have persisted for centuries, the combination of feelings of introversion, xenophobia, love, and hatred symbolizes emerging tensions and various acts of violence. The second group includes revolutionary and counter-revolutionary acts of violence. The third group includes acts of violence caused by military coups; the fourth group, the violent acts of the students; the fifth group, the acts of separatist violence and finally, the sixth group includes acts that erupt during election periods(Mehden 1971, 7-17).

Jeffrey Sluka discusses state terror and violence as “the use or threat of violence by the state or its agents or supporters, particularly against civilian individuals and populations, as a means of political intimidation and control” (Sluka 2000, 2). According to him, state terror and violence as a rational and cost-effective means to aim to achieve politico-economic privilege – namely, to preserve its hegemony within the system of social stratification. “Terror is here conceived as primarily a strategy or weapon exploited in a system of concentrated power. Elites who resort to terror do not do it because the state is weak, but because they are strong and can get away with it” (Sluka 2000, 30–31).

As investigated in the early Republican period, the state as a form of political power is based on the unequal relationship between the ruler(Kemalist regime) and the ruled(citizens). Considering that the ruler is active and the ruled is in a passive position, the shortest way for one party to impose its will on the other, that is, to establish power, is to use violence. Because violence produces direct and quick results. In this respect, the phrase "violence is the conjoined twin of power, it is the protector of power" (Somersan 1996, 49) is appropriate for the Kemalist regime.

Various thinkers have offered similar views on the subject. First, Charles Tilly, in his famous article “War Making and State Making as Organized Crime,” argues that war-making and state-building are interconnected processes and explains this connection by investigating the last few centuries of Europe. According to Tilly's study, which can be summarized with the phrase "war makes the state, and the state makes war,"

making war occasions the emergence of a state in three ways: One of the results is directly related to our subject is the creation of a strong national identity among the people. Thus, money is provided, an army is established, and national identity is created. This sum ultimately reveals the structure that is equipped with the means of violence, namely the modern state.

The second effect, which concerns our subject, is called state making. This is an activity of the state related to eliminating or neutralizing its rivals in its territory. With this activity, continuous/durable surveillance and control tools are produced within the country. Extraction is seen as the provision of the tools necessary to carry out the first three activities. This is the most crucial activity, and the state that ignores it cannot last long. The realization of this activity, can be by any means of confiscation, from direct plunder of the goods/labor of the subjects to regular taxation (Tilly 1985, 181).

The questions of whether the power survives by using violence as a tool in order to make people conform to the sovereign authority or whether violence is a phenomenon used by the power as an end and ideologically legitimized emerge as questions that preoccupy social scientists. Louis Althusser believes that “To my knowledge, no class can hold state power over a long period without at the same time exercising its hegemony over and in the state ideological apparatuses” (Althusser 1984, 20). According to Althusser, it is through ideology that the dominant group, which is the minority, maintains its power over the majority by non-violent means. The state’s ideological apparatuses fulfill the duty of legitimizing violence on behalf of the state through apparatuses such as school, family, religion, media, culture, trade unions, political parties, and law (Althusser 2017, 50-51). Althusser writes that these ideological apparatuses of the state have a material existence, and each of them achieves a purpose in order to submit to the dominant ideology (Althusser 2017, 72-73).

I shall call Ideological State Apparatuses a certain number of realities that present themselves to the immediate observer in the form of distinct and specialized institutions. I propose an empirical list of these which will obviously have to be examined in detail, tested, corrected, and reorganized. With all these reservations implied by this requirement, we can, for the moment, regard the following institutions as Ideological State Apparatuses: the religious ISA, the educational ISA, the family ISA, the legal ISA, the political ISA, (the political system, including the different parties) the trade-union ISA, the communications ISA, (press, radio, and television, etc.) the cultural ISA. (Literature, the arts, sports, etc.) (Althusser 1984, 17).

Benjamin Walter, in his famous work “*On the Critique of Violence*,” said that violence has a dual function as a tool of political power: “The violence that ensures the establishment of the political order (law) of the sovereign, in other words, the violence that establishes the power (constitutive violence) and the violence that ensures the continuity of this order (law) and protects the power (protective violence)” (Walter 2010, 25-26). Since the single-party political power of the Republic of Turkey had the monopoly of using force and violence, the society either had to adopt these features of the power or accepted it, albeit reluctantly. Therefore, the phenomenon of submission to authority prevailed at that time. In the article titled “The Role of Nationality in The Genesis of Modern Turkey,” Erdal Aydın investigates the nationalist flow of the early Republic era and says:

Kemalist nationalism, as a modernist nationalism, is a project that adopts and imitates all aspects of material and spiritual Western civilization. In order to achieve this goal, it was decided to break ties with the past. A number of reforms were carried out for this purpose. That is why the caliphate was abolished. The Latin alphabet was adopted, the civilized clothing style was adopted, the women were allowed to participate in the public sphere through professionalization, the principle of secularism was accepted, madrasahs, dervish lodges (tekke), and orders (zaviyeth) were closed, the hat revolution was made, the Swiss civil code and the Italian penal code were quoted. With these reforms, Westernization was tried to be captured and imposed on social, political, and cultural life (Aydın 2019, 1764).

According to Zeki Duman, any criticism, opinion, and thought against the ideology of Westernization or the official modernization understanding of the Kemalist regime was considered associated with religion on the grounds that it poses a threat to the regime, and this kind of reaction or resistance was subjected to strict control (Duman 2010, 286). Hatice Selen Akçalı Uzunhasan mentions Althusser’s theory as “the ruling class tries to impose its ideology through its apparatuses, and it has to maintain control over these apparatuses to continue ruling. The single-party government intended to hold the reins of power, suppress the opposition, quiet civil voices, and use its power to its full extent in order to realize what Berkes labeled “national society.” (2016, 63). In this context, we can clearly understand from the interviews that during the founding period of the Turkish Republic, the army had the function of persuading by force and preventing opposing ideologies or other hegemonic discourses (Öztürk 2013,161).

In this context, Pakdil Hoca explained that there were no boarding courses in his time, and so he continued his Qur’an memorization by working as a muezzin away from the

home of his family as a child, states that having Qur'an memorization was quite hard at those times.⁴⁴ Describing the violent attitudes of the soldiers against the Qur'an memorizer, Hafız Karaman points to Turkey's first period of lack of democracy: Karaman Hoca, who even cooked his own meal and washed his own clothes because of poverty and strict conditions, the army's frequently repeated oppressive directed towards the education of Qur'an memorization continued for a long period.⁴⁵ As Ali Fuat Başgil stated (2003, 190), Turkey experienced authoritarian secularism in which practices of religion were tied to the state obligations in this process. The following memory of Pakdil Hoca is an example of this:

One of the children used to keep guard in the garden of the mosque. When he saw the gendarme coming from afar, he would warn those in the mosque to run away. As the village's children, we used to run away from the door and window of the mosque. Because in those years, it was forbidden for imams and hocas to teach children the Qur'an. They would take that hoca to the police station and beat him violently. Therefore, Hoca used to teach us the Qur'an secretly in the village mosque. When we heard that the gendarmerie was approaching, we would run out of the window of the mosque.⁴⁶

The life stories and narratives of Qur'an memorizers document the ways in which the violence was perpetrated toward Muslim subjects in the first period of the Republic as a tool for the reproduction of Kemalist ideology. One of the Qur'an memorizers, Hafız Hızır, narrated the following incident.⁴⁷ Although he was born in 1968, Hızır Hoca, who listened to the life stories of many masters in the previous period, believes that people who were interested in the Qur'an were harshly discriminated population during the one-party period and declared that at that time, so to speak, the Qur'an memorizers were tried to be wiped out by the state. Hızır Hoca remembers that after state security agents came to Mehmet Aşikkutlu Hoca's house and insulted him, he cried for two days in his house. Hızır Hoca was so disturbed by this situation, and he said, "It is a deep wound in my heart. I cannot accept it. If those insulting people fell into my hands before I died, and I cut their flesh with pliers, I would not feel comfortable again." According to Hafız Hızır, Qur'an memorizers kept clear of saying they were Qur'an memorizers in any institution until recently because they were not accepted in any institutions. He adds that those institutions also have a different perception of the

⁴⁴Personal Interview with Pakdil Hoca. 08.12.2019, Erenköy, İstanbul.

⁴⁵ Personal Interview with Karaman Hoca. 17.07.2019, Fatih, İstanbul.

⁴⁶Personal Interview with Pakdil Hoca. 08.12.2019, Erenköy, İstanbul.

⁴⁷Personal Interview with Hızır Hoca. 06.04.2020, Adapazarı.

Qur'an memorizers as they were labeled as "poor, needy, 3rd class family, unwanted people, grown up with the charity, humbled and naive"... However, according to Hafız Hızır, Qur'an memorizers were quite smart, but the state did not benefit from them because the Qur'an memorization was not seen valuable act for the state. The arrest of imams and muezzins when reciting the adhan in Arabic existed within the memories frequently told in the interviews. We learn from the memories of those who lived in the period that in addition to the prohibitions of the adhan and the Qur'an, those who went to mosques were detected, and going to the mosque in those years required great courage. However, in such an environment, no one would have the courage to recite the adhan in Arabic except sometimes secretly tries. Another disgraceful incident is that the pages of the Qur'an were destroyed and torn and used as 'paper bags.' Hafız Kemalettin, one of the students from Qur'an memorizer of that time, narrated his experiences as follows:

When I was a primary school kid, the gendarmes used to come to our place during the single-party period- it was called patrol- and people were used to staying at their houses. We used to walk around the villages with our headscarves covered, we used to wear a cap/takke, but people would take off the cap and wear a hat for the gendarmerie. The gendarme looked like a king in the eyes of the people, so they were intimidated; people had been looking for a place to escape.⁴⁸

For Althusser, the most fundamental and important point that distinguishes the state's ideological apparatus from the repressive apparatus: ISAs prioritize ideology while RSAs prioritize the use of violence. Althusser's theory of state repression apparatuses (RSA) use physical and sometimes mental violence mechanisms such as government, police, army, courts, and prisons for the reproduction of relations and the sustainability of power. RSAs form the political infrastructure for the functionalization of ideological apparatuses. Likewise, the task of ideological apparatuses is to legitimize oppression, reproduce existing social classes, find ways to ensure the dominance of power, and produce consent. The dominant ideology ensures the harmony between these two, that is, the power. Althusser believes that the life of the governments that fail to put this into action will not be long in this direction (Althusser 2017, 50-53).

The (Repressive) State Apparatus functions massively and predominantly by repression (including physical repression) while functioning secondarily by ideology. (There is no such thing as a purely repressive apparatus.) For example, the army and the police also function by ideology both to ensure their own cohesion and reproduction and in the 'values' they

⁴⁸Personal Interview with Kemalettinn Hoca. 31.04.2020, Bayrampaşa, İstanbul.

propound externally. In the same way but inversely, it is essential to say that for their part, the Ideological State Apparatuses function massively and predominantly by ideology, but they also function secondarily by repression, even if ultimately, but only ultimately, this is very attenuated and concealed, even symbolic. (There is no such thing as a purely ideological apparatus.) (Althusser 2014, 244)

Our Qur'an memorizers were asked the following interview questions: "Do you or your father/mother have a memory of violence regarding the proclamation of the Republic, Mustafa Kemal, and İsmet İnönü?", "Do you know of any stories of executions, arrests, or punishments that people experienced because of their religious practices and work during the period of one-party rule?" Most of our Qur'an memorizers described that period as a coup against Islam. According to them, state violence and terror should be considered the result and product of the self-imposition of Kemalist ideology. All of the interviews reveal that Kemalism reproduces its hegemonic power's superiority through the repression of the army in Turkey. In this respect, when the political conjuncture of Turkey before the multi-party system(1950) is evaluated, military hegemony in the "top-down" process of secularization has negatively influenced the visibility of religious life and moral values in society. Ümit Cizre discusses that the army has two important tools to reproduce Kemalism and to act as its watchdog. The first of these is in the military, education, discourse, and practices, and the second are to direct social practices and variables through intervention (Cizre 2011, 172). For instance, Hafız Nureddin stated that the involvement of the gendarmes in the events turned Qur'an memorization into a kind of torture and that the incidents grew with the uninterrupted police violence:

Isn't it forbidden? Excuse me; the gendarmes would come; I don't want to say the rest. Excuse me; they would put the Qur'an in the toilet. They would burn it. Now there is that mosque. Maybe you saw it while you were coming. There was a school in that mosque. We used to run away from the school when the gendarmerie was mentioned. We would run away and come home. This is the gendarmerie, the state. What will you do? There is no other way. They will take you away.⁴⁹

Hafız Fahrettin, who could not hide his surprise about this event, mentions that the gendarmerie resorted to direct violence in the public sphere in order to preserve the Kemalist state regime and its central place in political, social, and cultural life:

⁴⁹Personal Interview with Fahrettin Hoca. 28.11.2019, Bağcılar, İstanbul.

Qur'an memorizers have worked, they have done something, but it is not official. Let's say they work in a room. There is a door at the back: When the gendarmes arrive, they send them to another place. This is how they trained Qur'an memorizers. We would hide the Qur'an when the gendarmes came out of fear. Out of fear, we would run home as the gendarmerie came. They would tear off our caps when we were not wearing hats.⁵⁰

Hafiz Hasan is of the opinion that the state clearly intimidates, suppresses, and controls Muslim subjects. I think one of his most striking examples of the watchdog function internalized by the gendarmerie is as follows:

For example, may Allah have mercy on him; my late father came out of the mosque. He was a veteran and did not have a foot. There were inns in Hendek at that time. Horses were housed in the inns. He would come and ride his horse and come to the village. He forgot the hat in the mosque. He came wearing a cap. He was about to ride his horses. There were no police then. There were military officers. "How can you walk around wearing a cap?" He asked. He answered, "I left the mosque and forgot my hat there." He said to my late father that "pray for that of your foot, or I would put you in jail." These days passed in this country, but he gave his foot to the state.⁵¹

Naqib al Attas corroborates the Westernization of Muslim countries' thinking as "the contemporary knowledge as it is being founded on, interpreted and projected through the Western philosophical worldview in which it has caused the deIslamization of the Muslim mind."⁵² Like him, I prefer to call this early process of the Turkish Republic a "de-Islamization process." In this context, de-Islamization is like

the infusion of alien concepts into the minds of Muslims, where they remain and influence thought and reasoning. It is the causing of forgetfulness of Islam and of the Muslim/ duty to God and to His Prophet, which is the real duty assigned to his true self; and hence, it is also injustice (zulm) to the self (al-Attas 2014, 46-47).

What is most criticized by the Qur'an memorizers is the state policies of Westernization, which was the main determinant of the new administration's domestic and foreign policies that led to the exclusion of Muslim identity. This policy was tried to be disseminated and implemented not only at the "state" level but also at the "societal" level. This framework started to be formed on the basis of abandoning Ottomanism with the project of changing the civilization of the country and turning towards Turkification with the Westernization movement. From a wider perspective,

⁵⁰Personal Interview with Fahrettin Hoca. 12.08.2019, Eyüp, İstanbul.

⁵¹Personal Interview with Hasan Hoca. 15.08.2019, Fatih, İstanbul.

⁵²<https://knepublishing.com/index.php/Kne-Social/article/view/1957/4370> (Accessed September 19, 2021).

the experience of Qur'an memorizers with assimilation policies created a climate of fear. Hafız Münevver, who has objections to the annihilation of Qur'an memorizers through state-sponsored policies dependent on the Westernization project, stated that the political act was wrong in the sense that many Qur'an memorizers were killed, arrested, and tortured:

Sometimes the law got hold of them. For example, very valuable religious officials had to wear hats. "What are we doing with the hat the French wear? We wore the hats that priests wear on their heads, don't we? This is what the Jews wore, but they forced them, so aren't you ashamed?" They hung a lot. They killed a lot. Scholars were sentenced to death because they did not accept wearing hats. They were hanged in Ankara one by one. How do you expect to be a Qur'an memorizer after all this⁵³?

Dücan Cündioğlu (1998, 37- 38) agrees with the idea that political interest was the reason for the effort to challenge religious values and the tension between state and religious identities:

The basic logic of all efforts to perform prayers in the national language, such as the reciting of prayers, takbirs, salahs, and sermons in Turkish, and performing prayers with the Turkish Qur'an, is essential to produce a Turkish-specific form of religion - Islam-, with a clear expression, to create the Turkish National Religion.

In other words, the state reproduced inequalities and manipulation on Muslim populations through the nationalist imagined communities. As an indication of this decision, Cündioğlu cites that the prohibition was not included in the law. In this regard, Cündioğlu emphasizes that the main reason for the Turkification of the Qur'an and the adhan was political(1998, 113). According to Mehmet Yetiş, any legal statement that the military-bureaucratic sector is impartial is invalid. In this sense, the duty of the army is not to remain constitutionally neutral but to protect the constitution that legally reproduces the supremacy of hegemonic power (Yetiş 2009, 135). The army, namely the TAF (Turkish Armed Forces), played an important role in making Kemalism a hegemonic ideology and ensuring its reproduction. In this sense, after the proclamation of the Republic, the army was used to suppress and liquidate the supporters of the sultanate and the caliphate, together with the members of religious organizations and oppositional groups to the Republican regime. Likewise, the Independence courts acted as revolution courts in the process of internalizing the

⁵³Personal Interview with Münevver Hoca. 10.02.2020, Fatih, İstanbul.

Republic and its revolutions by the people. They were established to protect the sovereignty of the Kemalist regime and its practices. Thus, in such a political crisis, state-supported violence punished potential counter-revolution attempts and entities such as Qur'an memorizers. An investigation of socio-political relations between Qur'an memorizers and the state demonstrates how authoritarian regimes used ideological and oppressive state apparatuses for the creation of hegemony through violence, torture, and fear.

It is essential to understand new forms of Kemalist governmentality through hegemonic power demonstrates that state's use of violence. The Kemalist government abandoned religious discourses and practices with the replacement of national secular symbols to impose new policies of state based on ethnic identity, Turkish language, history, and culture. As can be seen from the above practices, in the first period of Turkey's nation-building process, the government reinforced its legitimacy with the laws enacted in series. These laws functioned as a pressure device in terms of including prohibitions. Transforming social life by purging cultural dynamics that permeate daily relationships constitutes the main characteristic of the second half of the 1920s. From the point of view of Kemalism, the owners of the existing means of production and the majority of the people as oppositional groups did not accept the superstructure-based revolution and the change that resulted from it and reacted by resisting from time to time (Küçükömer 1983, 249). In the mentioned periods, the state's repression tools came into play, and the state carried out the persuasion by resorting to marginalization and subordination of Qur'an memorizers. The law of Maintenance of Order (Takrir-i Sükun Kanunu) and the courts of independence, which were the "legalized" instruments of the army and political society in the early Republican period, can be mentioned as such means of violent actions. Therefore, we can conclude that in this period of the Republic's history, the element of coercion became more prominent.

From the narratives, that period can be characterized as the moments when the conflict peaked in the form of physical violence. Fear as one of the significant effects caused by state violence should be investigated since "A secular state does not guarantee tolerance; it introduces different constructs of passion and fear. Since law always aims to regulate violence, it never seeks to eradicate violence (Asad 2003, 8).

The relationship between fear and violence has been one of the major concerns of social scientists. Depending on Aras's view, "the emotion of fear of the state should be defined, not merely as a subjective experience, but as a social and cultural practice" (Aras 2014, 79), I endeavor to analyze how ordinary Muslim subjects who have experienced fear of state apparatuses and forms of fear during early Republican period of which began in 1923.

There are many studies about the nature of fear in the literature (Merckelbach and Collaris 1997; Gullone 2000). According to the Turkish Language Association(TDK), fear is an "apprehension and distress experienced because of danger or prospect of danger⁵⁴." Fear as one of the daily emotions "is a density-increase emotion: it is activated by a rather rapid increase in the density of neural firing" (Izard 1977, 356). In his book *Liquid Fear*, Zygmunt Bauman (1925-2017), one of the most influential sociologists of the contemporary era, explains the definition of fear eloquently:

Fear is at its most fearsome when it is diffuse, scattered, unclear, unattached, unanchored, free-floating, with no clear address or cause; when it haunts us with no visible rhyme or reason when the menace we should be afraid of can be glimpsed everywhere but is nowhere to be seen. Fear is the name we give to our uncertainty: to our ignorance of the threat and of what is to be done (Bauman 2013,1).

In his article "The Only Thing We Have to Fear is the Culture of Fear Itself," Frank Furedi discusses that:

Fear plays a key role in twenty-first-century consciousness. Increasingly, we seem to engage with various issues through a narrative of fear. You could see this trend emerging and taking hold in the last century, which was frequently described as an 'Age of Anxiety.' But in recent decades, it has become more and better defined, as specific fears have been cultivated (Furedi 2007, 1).

As Furedi argued, the emotion of fear became one of the most important concepts related to modern days in social sciences. This topic is worthwhile to investigate regarding of experiences of Qur'an memorizers. Touching emotions psychologically and sociologically, Maria Jarymowicz and Daniel BarTal (2006) assert that "fear, as primary emotion, is grounded in the experienced present and based on the memorized past, processed both consciously and unconsciously, causes freezing and

⁵⁴ Türk Dil Kurumu 2022 "Şiddet", <https://sozluk.gov.tr/>, accessed in 05.01.2022.

conservatism, and sometimes leads to pre-emptive aggression” (2006, 367). Carrold Izard (1977), who examines fear and forms of anxiety, defines the notion as follows:

Fear affects every human being, and at one time or another, it leaves its mark on each of us. It locks into our minds experiences that we can often easily recall and that sometimes erupt into consciousness through our dreams. Fear is the most toxic of all emotions (Izard 1977, 355).

Kim Witte argues that “fear is an internal emotional reaction composed of psychological and physiological dimensions that may be aroused when a serious and personally relevant threat is perceived”(Witte 2001, 20). Also, Ralph Adolphs (2013), who mentions a functional concept of fear, defines fear as an emotion “caused by particular patterns of threat-related stimuli, and in turn causing particular patterns of adaptive behavior to avoid or cope with that threat” (Adolph 2013, 80). Similar to Adolphs, Sara Ahmed points out that “the worlds we ‘are in’ might not be of ‘our making,’ but they are made, and through being made, they ‘make us’” (Ahmed 2003, 378). In this world, fear finds its place and becomes visible in the narratives. As Aras stated, “the state-sponsored systems of surveillance, spying, and stigmatization have contributed to the development of a culture of fear”(Aras 2014, 109). The sociologist, David Altheide addresses that ‘fear, does not just happen; it is socially constructed and then manipulated by those who seek to benefit’ (Altheid 2002, 26).

Many Qur’an memorizers bear in mind with deep sorrow how the military interventions supported by the secular regime drastically affected their lives. According to narrations, the oppressive actions of the Kemalist regime of the social, cultural, and political existence and rights of the Qur’an memorizers can be interpreted in two ways. As we have examined in the previous sections, one aspect of Kemalism’s oppression of Qur’an memorizers is that the regime and the system ignore the Qur’an memorizers, exclude them from the public sphere and thus deprive them of their rights. The second is the direct use of violence. Personal testimonies of Qur’an memorizers display both perceptions of the fear of the state towards Muslim subjects and the fear in the Qur’an memorizer community of repetition of state assaults.

The investigation of the Qur’an memorizers’ experience of the early nation-state as part of the use of fear enables us to realize extensive usage of violence. The relationship between fear and violence on the state is a crucial issue, particularly in

understanding state sovereignty and intervention. One of the most terrible emotions of Qur'an memorizers was the fear that the Muslim subjects could lose their identity and moral values and could exactly lose visibility in the public sphere. What is denoted in the interviews with regard to fear is relevant to the oppressive nature of the regime.

Labeling and exploiting Qur'an memorizers practiced in early Turkey was basically marked as an understanding of hate and oppression towards Muslims. In this process, democracy was coded as a tool used by Kemalists for their own interests and the continuation of their oppressive regime. Thus, interviews reveal that the Kemalist regime was lack of democracy and pluralism. What the new government aimed for with the construction of the nation-state was the transformation of the state structures, the society, and, furthermore, the individual. In this regard, the gist of the formal ideology based on secularism, Westernization, and Turkification, as Meyda Yeğenoğlu claimed, "in an attempt to establish a new sense of nationhood and a new social order, the Kemalist project took secularism, progress, and Western modernity as the founding principles of its ideology" (Yeğenoğlu 2011, 226). Hafız Münevver was very critical of Westernized Turkish nation-state practices and policies, which were imposed through the climate of fear. According to her, Kemalist ideology made a radical change and mistook decisions by worsening relations between Qur'an memorizers and the state:

Does any man deny his ancestors? If I read the Qur'an and sing hymns until the evening, I don't get tired. But when I talk face to face to someone, I get tired. I am living it. My language does not speak when I speak. One day, they said to Akif, what kind of poet are you? You are writing about a nightingale. You are writing this. The martyrs of Çanakkale they are always sad and at war. Out of his sadness at that time, he said a couplet: "If I had seen the rose era, I would have been a nightingale, O Lord! What would have happened if you had brought me earlier?" They thought it was a skill to look like them (West), our women who would wear like them, our girls who would read like them! These are all events that happened after the Republic. People persecuted their own sultans. That's the sad part of it. At Istanbul University, it was written "Inna fetahna, leke, fetaham mubina," then calligraphers wrote on the stone, but it was removed later. It is a very beautiful place in Beyazıt. Fatih Sultan Mehmet had it built. It used to be a military place, but after, it was turned into a university. A work of art was being destroyed in the writings. The workers were hitting and breaking it. It was built to destroy everything. Let's destroy the old ones. They want to swallow the new ones right away.⁵⁵

⁵⁵Personal Interview with Münevver Hoca. 10.02.2020, Fatih, İstanbul.

Hafız İhsan, as an interested in political issues, claimed the effort of invisibility of moral values is one of the important intensifier effects of disseminating the culture of fear:

If we don't return to our love, we can't be a Qur'an memorizers. May Allah help us, but here are good families who took care of their children. Allah blesses them. They will almost declare Christianity in the country, which is more striking in terms of understanding the perception of the Qur'an memorizer at that time: I know very well that the adhan is recited from the minarets in Turkish. Allah is Great. Allah is Great./ Tanrı Uludur, Tanrı Uludur. Nowhere in the world has the azan been recited except in Arabic; only read in Turkish in Turkey. Kadir Mısıroğlu wrote a book on the Lausanne issue, "Is Lausanne Peace or Defeat"? He says in the book that there are records in the Lausanne Treaty about İsmet İnönü and the declaration of Christianity in Turkey after 35 years. Because, in the state of Andalusia, the Christians either converted the Muslims to Christianity or killed them. They wanted to do the same for Turkey. Because if all of Europe, the USA, and Israel destroy Turkey and make them Christian, they will be saved. They also get the oil from the Middle East. I am especially curious about what happens in the country. I do not deal with politics, I do not belong to a party, but I know more or less what they will do. I know like a political man. Why do I know? Because I've seen the old painful memories⁵⁶.

It is in the discourse of the Qur'an memorizers that the pressure exerted by the regime after the establishment of the Republic gradually turned into an attack that threatened their existence. In the excerpts below, attention is drawn to the aggressive stance of the regime, which includes not only psychological but also physical violence. One of Qur'an memorizers, Hafız Kemalettin, narrated:

As we were coming to our village from the mosque with my late uncle's son, we met the military sergeant major. You know, it is forbidden to wear a cap/takke. In the village of Karadere, where we had been studying, the sergeant major of the gendarmaria station snatched my cap from my head. We tried to take it, but he drew his gun, and we couldn't take it. We followed him. He disappeared at that time. So we experienced that thing. It was forbidden to wear a cap.⁵⁷

State violence was continued against Qur'an memorizers through law enforcement agencies, including police, gendarmerie, and prisons. In the following lines, it is seen that Hafız Kemalettin complains about the negative effects of army operations. For instance, he says:

It was time to patrol the village. Since Hoca was in custody, there was no one to wash the funeral, so we called a hoca from another village. They bring the hoca from the other village on horseback. Then, we made the funeral, and they buried our dead. "Why isn't there a hodja in that village? Because the hodja was in custody"⁵⁸.

⁵⁶Personal Interview with İhsan Hoca. 17.10.2019, Üsküdar, İstanbul.

⁵⁷Personal Interview with Kemalettin Hoca. 31.04.2020, Bayrampaşa, İstanbul.

⁵⁸Personal Interview with Kemalettin Hoca. 31.04.2020, Bayrampaşa, İstanbul.

Another narrative text from Hafız İhsan reveals the visibility of the emotion of fear which became one of the most known natural flows of life:

So we started to read the Qur'an in 45-46. At that time, there was a lot of pressure. (his voice was changed) we used to watch the people from the government to see if the gendarmerie was coming on the hills and in the streams. That's how we studied. The gendarmerie would come straight from the town through the forest. We would watch there, and we would leave a guard. If the gendarmerie came, they would tell us to get lost. We would run away from school and go to our homes. That's how we studied. We started memorization at 46-47. Our memorization continued in the same way. I became a Qur'an memorizer, that is, in 1950. Until then, we have always studied illegally. I mean, we were afraid of the state. There was no such authority for hocas to teach freely. We always studied as fugitives.⁵⁹

Hafız İhsan also complained that the spread of single-party ideologies and state power was implemented with the support of domestic and foreign states. According to him, after the single-party administration limited the sphere of influence of religion, it firmly tried to impose the regime ideology through the village institutes and community centers it had established. He believed that understanding the Muslim experience of state violence raises awareness about the feeling of fear, trauma, and alienation in their own society. However, in my opinion, to understand power relations better, it is necessary to investigate the resistance tools, and strategic coping mechanisms of the Qur'an memorizers. During the oral history interviews, I questioned in what ways did the Qur'an memorizers challenge the RPP hegemony. By depending on the analysis of power, "Where there is power, there is resistance" (Foucault 1978, 95- 96) and "where there is resistance, there is power" (Lughod 1990, 42), I think that Qur'an memorizers show somehow resistance strategies to undermine sovereign power. Also, I think that effort to become a Qur'an memorizer and preservation of a Qur'an education is one of the most significant challenges to the practices of the secular and nationalist Turkish regime. In this regard, I will investigate the strained relationship between the state's coercive policies and the resistance of Qur'an memorizers.

As I mentioned, the revolutionary movements of the newly established Republic of Turkey disturbed many groups in society. In 1924, the feeling of unity on the sense of belonging grounds gradually disintegrated in religious, cultural, and political communities. When other factors were added to these disturbances, an uprising broke

⁵⁹Personal Interview with İhsan Hoca. 17.10.2019, Üsküdar, İstanbul.

out in Eastern provinces. The Sheikh Said Rebellion is one of the most well-known resistances related to Muslim subjects, which expanded and spread in a short time can be exemplified in this regard. Many studies have been conducted on this event, which took place in 1925 and was called the Sheikh Said⁶⁰ Rebellion. It is also called by various researchers with different names, such as the 1925 Revolt, 1925 Kurdish National Uprising, Kurdish-Islamic Revolt, and Eastern (Eastern) Uprising (Taşpınar 2010, 18). Due to the fact that it's regarded as an Islamic rebellion, I chose this event to provide a clear understanding of this phenomenon.

The uprising started on 13 February 1925 in a small village in one of the Eastern provinces. At first, the government perceived the event as a simple security problem and did not dwell on it much. With the expansion of the uprising in a short time, sharp changes began to occur in the country. The harsh intervention package prepared by İsmet İnönü, who was responsible for the task of forming the new government, including the Independence Courts, was used as a means of blocking the practices of opposition groups and punishing the anti-revolutionary publications by stopping them (Aybars 1995, 274).

Despite the fact that the uprising was widespread and communal in nature, it was again quickly suppressed. The authority to approve and implement the death sentence that belongs to the Assembly was given the responsibility to the Independence Courts with the law of Takrir-i Sükun. As soon as the law of Takrir-i Sükun was accepted on March 4, 1925, two Independence Courts were established in Ankara. Forty-seven people were executed in Diyarbakır, including Sheik Said, in 1925. Secondly, operations were carried out against opposition media and broadcasting organizations, especially those supporting the Progressive Republican Party, and the publication of some magazines and newspapers was stopped. In addition, the owners of the newspapers and the magazines in question were also prosecuted. With the Takrir-i Sükun law, newspapers and magazines such as “*Tevhid-i Efkar, Son Telegraf, İstiklâl, Sebülürreşad, İstikbal, Orak Çekiç, Aydınlık*” which we can call the opposition press of the period, were shut down and silenced on the grounds that they had an impact on the Sheikh Said Uprising and carried out reactionary propaganda in the country. (Aybars 1995, 331).

⁶⁰Sheikh Said, a member of the Naqshbandi order, was originally from the Palu district of Elazığ.

Hakimiyet-i Milliye, which operated as an official organ in this process, and even the first article was written by Mustafa Kemal at the beginning of the national struggle in 1919, reflected their governmentality and the practices of RPP (Topuz 1973, 153-154). Thus, the law of Takrir-i Sükun showed signs of its reactionary and oppressive operation.

As Christine Buci-Glucksmann said, the sovereign power tried to protect its hegemony and manifest domination through military forces and civil bureaucracy. In times of crisis, devices of the political society can act as the "one party" and become a means of re-establishing hegemony (Buci-Glucksmann 1980, 106-07 as cited in Yetiş 2009, 141). In the same direction, Kemalist hegemony was reproduced in Turkey with the effort of military forces, laws such as Takrir-i Sükun law, and state apparatuses such as Independence Courts. The approval of the law of Takrir-i Sükun and the persuasion of this legal text led to the use of state torture and violence more and more. As a result, the culture of fear occurred, and an exercise of punishments left deep traces in the history of Turkey.

Although this law was enacted to suppress the events in the East, it attracted more attention because the application of the law also led to the closure of the Progressive Republican Party (PRP) in its formation stage. In other words, the regime's aim was to consolidate the single-party government's authority. As a result, in this period, Kemalism made itself felt everywhere and did not allow the formation of opposition movements. According to some Qur'an memorizers, the Republican People's Party experienced a period that can be called party dictatorship as it was the only political party operating between 1923- 1945. According to Geddes, if opposition parties are banned or face serious institutional obstacles in a regime; or if the ruling party has never lost control of the executive and can control at least two-thirds of the seats in the parliament in every election, that regime is considered a dictatorship (Sayari and Bilgin 2015, 52). In conclusion, the interviewees unanimously agreed with the state-sponsored violence regarding the use of fear and being under strict hegemony and control mechanisms. Famous sociologist Jose Casanova provides important clues for us to understand this issue.

One wonders whether democracy does not become an impossible game when potential majorities are not allowed to win elections and when secular civilian politicians ask the military to come to the rescue of democracy by banning these potential majorities, which threaten their secular identity and their power(Casanova 2004, 94).

For instance, due to the fact that the Algerian army intervened in the elections in 1992, when the Islamist parties were successful, and canceled the elections and then took drastic changes, Rachid Ghannouchi uttered the following words which remind us of the first period of The Turkish Republic: “The so-called secularists who claim that they will end democracy if the Islamists are allowed to come to power through elections not only see themselves as justified in undermining what they claim to protect, but also justify every human rights violation they have committed (2000, 103)”. Many Qur’an memorizers agreed to the idea that “Atatürk initiated a major operation against the Islamic institutional and cultural influences in society” (Taş 2011, 82) By making changes in the social and cultural structure, both Kemalist reforms were made intensively, and social practices of Muslim communities were intervened especially in the legal and social fields. In this context, after the Progressive Republican Party was closed down, the revolutionary state-sponsored movements were resumed to mobilize citizens (Yeşil 2002, 426).

Michel Foucault, who states that power cannot be without resistance, includes resistance in all areas of life and the power relations that surround it. Foucault mentions about three types of resistance “either against forms of domination; against forms of exploitation, or against that which ties the individual to himself and submits him to others in this way (struggles against subjection, against forms of subjectivity and submission)” (Foucault 1982, 781). The period after 1923, in which individual rights were limited, could not prevent the rights struggles that would follow. Qur’an memorizers had many struggles with the enhancement and improvement of the conditions they had been exposed to. On the contrary, from those years to the present, Qur’an memorizers have continued to study the Qur'an concurrently with their struggles. During this process, the Qur’an memorizers used every opportunity to make their voices heard, and they could only continue this struggle in secret due to the Kemalist hegemony of the public sphere. Despite all the difficulties in the public sphere, the efforts to memorize the Qur'an secretly after 2 hours walk show us the determination of the Qur’an memorizers in their resistance. The fact that the Qur’an memorizers did not leave the mosques despite the intervention had also been effective

in the socialization of the resistance. The theoretical concept of “everyday resistance” explains the most appropriate definition to recognize the resistance strategies of Qur’an memorizers against political power.

Everyday resistance is about how people act in their everyday lives in ways that might undermine power. Everyday resistance is not easily recognized like public and collective resistance— such as rebellions or demonstrations – but it is typically hidden or disguised, individual and not politically articulated (Vinthagen and Johansson 2013, 2).

Everyday resistance of Qur’an memorizers includes the struggle for the effort of persistent in Qur’an education in small groups at home and in the countryside. Burhan Hoca, who said that his mother was a Hoca too, explained that the gendarmerie often came to their house and put pressure on them. He told that the house of his mother, who was setting the table to serve corn to the students, was suddenly raided by the gendarme and that her veteran father said, “Madam, don’t bother me with the gendarmerie after this age.” Nevertheless, his mother continued to teach the children even in other villages, saying that Allah is the Most Generous and the Helpful.⁶¹

İhsan Hoca, who said that the government stood against Islam, but he tried to study Islam and even based all his work on it, added that he did not experience the war, but İnönü made them experience the war:

For a person to be a Qur’an memorizer, his/her conditions should be suitable. As a person who has experienced those old hard days, I am above the clouds with happiness right now. I aim to raise awareness among young people. Young people should know about Islam so that they can become Qur’an memorizers. And thus, even if there is corruption in society, there will be decent people. I have a hernia in my knee. Although my feet hurt, I come to class every day. What for? For me to do something useful, although it takes a lot of work now! It’s as if I’m in heaven right now. What troubles we had before! How could it be forbidden to read the Qur’an? It was forbidden. They buried the books in the graves and took the commentary books to the paper machine in sacks and trucks. Fifty-five years ago, neither could we find students, nor did anyone teach anything. The population of Gaziantep exceeds 2 million people. There were only two courses in Gaziantep. One of them was closed down, but they didn’t say why. They had their ready-made sentences such as “what is the purpose of these courses and classes?” and they shut down our courses immediately. After 1950, Menderes stretched the rules against Muslims, but before that, reading the Qur’an was forbidden for us.⁶²

Ramazan Hoca, a professor at Marmara University Department of Qur’an Reading and Recitation Science, also stated that his grandfather was dismissed from his teaching post after it was announced that he was concerned with the Qur’an. When Hoca could

⁶¹ Personal Interview with Burhan Hoca. 18.11.2019, Bağcılar, İstanbul.

⁶² Personal Interview with İhsan Hoca. 17.10.2019, Üsküdar, İstanbul.

not be found due to difficulties, stating that those who came from the surrounding villages to become Qur'an memorizers stayed in their own houses, adding that hundreds of Qur'an memorizers grew up in their houses. Ramazan Hoca thinks that the current generation could not do what their grandfather could achieve despite all difficulties.

In fact, in the village of Maşalı, where they stayed, a Qur'an memorizer was raised in every house, even if it was secretly. In those conditions, despite such obstacles and being dismissed from official duty, my grandfather's effort to lead the memorization of the Qur'an and succeeding... 55 years ago, we neither had students nor anyone to teach the Qur'an in a mountain village in a district of Sinop. We worked with the last Qur'an memorizers of the early Republican era, we tried to do something within hardships, and now the Qur'an can be easily read. Even those who say I am Muslim now do not understand and see the old conditions that we experienced. But today's Muslims should strive more. Everyone should be a Qur'an memorizer! Why? We can find the Qur'an memorizer if something worse comes again. As all Qur'an memorizers died in the war during the time of our Prophet, our Prophet did not send a group of Qur'an Memorizers to fight so that they would stay alive. If all of them died in the war, there would be nobody left to know the Qur'an.⁶³

Akif Hoca, a fiqh scholar who started his teaching position at the age of 19, still continues his madrasah life in Fatih. He said that "unfortunately, Islam seemed to disappear in those years" (O yıllarda İslamiyet yok gibiydi). He continued to talk about some of his resistance and difficulties he has experienced till now. Akif Hoca narrated:

There were no places to learn the Qur'an before 1950. Where could you read the Qur'an? What is more, Ottoman writings were forbidden. You'd go to jail! I used to write the Qur'an writings wherever I saw them. I didn't even go to primary school, do you know what for? I came across a thick Math book. It was one of the high school Mathematics textbooks written in the Ottoman Turkish alphabet. Since the Ottoman Empire collapsed, Ottoman books were sold on paper. I found and bought one of them and even learned Mathematics from that book! They were opposing Islam, I tried to study Islam, and I focused on this work in my life; I both worked and studied myself.⁶⁴

Because of the increasing rate of traumatic events, violence, otherization, etc., in the public sphere, people did not prefer to go to official schools but attempted to take their Qur'an memorization schools hidden in many places like the barn, home, and train. For example, Süleyman Hilmi Tunahan(1888-1959), Sheikh al Naqshibandi order and professor-in-ordinary, was known for his devotion to Qur'an and struggled for the preservation of religious values in early secular Turkey.

Due to the security issue, Tunahan performed 'hidden' or 'silent' da'wah/case, teaching religion to Muslims by just going from one house to another. It is said that in the beginning, he taught

⁶³ Personal Interview with Ramazan Hoca. 28.10.2019, Altunizade, İstanbul.

⁶⁴ Personal Interview with Akif Hoca. 4.11.2019, Fatih, İstanbul.

just one student and that this student later brought two other students, and then the pattern continued until the students grew into a community (Wajdi 2015, 56-57).

Hafız Kaptan mentioned his effort to spread Qur'an education against the authoritarian secular regimes. One of the important points from his narratives is Tunahan's establishment and maintenance of unofficial Qur'an memorization schools despite strict pressure from the state. He was saying that Süleyman Hoca saw Qur'an education as a requirement in time.

Süleyman Hoca was sentenced to prison many times because he privately provided Islamic education within the train, cab, and bazaar. He took responsibility for teaching the Qur'an in the taxi as if traveling around Istanbul. With a few of his students, he was reciting Qur'an on the train from Haydarpaşa (Istanbul) Station to Ankara direction and listening to students' lessons from Arifiye (Sakarya) station to Ankara and after Istanbul.⁶⁵

Turkey's systematic approach to the West and split from the Islamic system caused great resistance among the Qur'an memorizers. They think that radical change of the system was considered a "deviation from religion" in the Islamist circle and led to reactions. Some of the informants said that Islamist and conservative groups gathered around the Progressive Republican Party to become the opposite groups of the Republican People Party. Especially, according to Qur'an memorizers, the annihilation of religious education provided the potential to vote for resistance in the transition to the multi-party period. Their view is that DP as an oppositional group emerged in the parliament against the RPP, and the single-party period in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey finished up with the establishment of the DP.

In this chapter, I examined state violence and fear as dynamics of the formation of the Turkish nation-state. Secularism practiced in Turkey is characterized by expressions such as the forced imposition of irreligion on the people and restriction of people's freedom in the political and social sphere. Another face of violence is assimilation and alienation through the Westernization process. In this regard, Qur'an memorizers criticized the Kemalist regime for having an orientalist logic and a colonial strategy due to its discriminatory practices. As an approach that enables the West to systematically address the East as a subject of learning and discovery (Said 2001, 83), Orientalism has transformed from a research discourse into an imperial institution

⁶⁵ Personal Interview with Kaptan Hoca. 03.10.2019, Zeytinburnu, İstanbul.

since the end of the 19th century. As we witnessed in the early Republic, the Kemalist regime exceeded the textual imaginations, and definition of the Qur'an memorizers. In other words, beyond these imaginations humiliating, using violence and fear, threatening, and otherizing Qur'an memorizers have existed in Turkey. In this context, Edward Said's comment provides a good understanding. He thinks that Western people do not only understand a new world different from themselves; in some cases, Orientalism, as the very will or intention to control, change, or even shape, is based on a sort of classification that is detached from history and understood in an essentialist way. This classification transcends the examining Westerner against this object by transforming the object under study, namely the East and the Easterner, into another entity (Said 2001, 106-107)

Further, we understood from the narratives how the practices were carried out for the ultimate goal of the one-party period as establishing a secular and national society with one voice and one party. The new nation-state project, having in mind ideas such as secularization, modernization and nationalization, has consciously destroyed or undermined the social, cultural, political, ethnic, and religious structures that have existed in these societies for centuries, and hence caused, and occasioned deep traumas, ruptures, and fractures in the social fabric of the Turkish society. In the first period of the Republic of Turkey, the state administration and all kinds of authority were in the hands and under the control of the RPP. The Kemalist cadre attempted to transform the Muslim identity into a secular framework with a top-down intervention. The quotations above refer to the oppression of Kemalism on Qur'an memorizers, which is directly interpreted as violence. For this reason, as denoted in Althusser's theory, Kemalism used ideological and repressive apparatuses together, used violence and displayed an oppressive administration. The narratives are examples where the ban on Qur'an memorizers was interpreted as direct violence, and the emphasis on prison and beatings revealed you/us opposition and showed what kind of intimidation policy the Kemalist regime implemented against the religious group in the society. Turkey's modernization/Westernization process is, in a way, an attempt to build a new culture. Therefore, this modernization process has directly affected daily life. With modernization in this context, a radical change that concerns the whole of social life was desired (Belge 1983, 871). The ruling elites of the Republican period believed that it was not possible to become modern only with some reform attempts, such as taking the European laws, accepting the orders of Europe, and wearing the clothes of Europe. For this reason, they set the modernization target as total Westernization (Vatandaş 2012, 77). This was strongly criticized by the Qur'an memorizers.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

This study aims to present a critical evaluation of early Republican policies and has an objective to contribute to the literature in terms of revealing how the ideology of secularism during the founding periods of the Turkish Republic's affected the identity, history, religion, and culture of the Turkish Muslim society through the narrations of witnesses from a sociological perspective. In other words, this thesis explores the impact of the foundation of the Turkish Republic on the formation of a marginalized and traumatized Muslim population and their memories of Republican Turkey. To comprehend the processes and relations between the state and Muslims, I conducted in-depth interviews with Qur'an memorizers from the Muslim community who experienced the early Republican era. My main aim is to investigate the reconstruction and transformation of identity and memory of Qur'an memorizers subjectively and collectively between 1923 and 1950. More significantly, the oral life narratives of Qur'an memorizers as collective memories and testimonials delve into lived experiences of state violence, the use of fear, arrests, and murders in diverse forms during this one-party dictatorship period. In this thesis, by examining the experiences of Qur'an memorizers, I have concluded that the use of violence and fear made weak the unity and sense of belonging of Qur'an memorizers to the Kemalist regime and the subsequently formed secular state and national identity.

There have been important studies conducted on Qur'an memorization. However, oral history studies on the perceptions of the Qur'an memorizers regarding the oppression they were exposed to between the years 1923 and 1950 and the ideological regulations made under the influence of a strict secular attitude are rare. In order to make up for such a gap in the literature, focusing on the Qur'an memorizers, this thesis looked at the policies of the dominant secularist policies and ideologies that excluded the pious Muslim groups in terms of identity, religion, and memory and how these ideological forces interfered with their religious life and lifestyles.

In the first place, when an evaluation is made of the new nation-state structures that emerged after the First World War, it can be concluded that the problem of the individual getting used to a new order and his/her feeling of belonging has arisen and become of relevance. Interviews have shown us that the question of "who are we" started to occupy the agenda of the ordinary people and the Qur'an memorizers who tried to learn the Qur'an in Muslim societies. Yet, it was quite challenging to find an answer to such violence and trauma created by the new nation-state project. Stuck between their own culture and the dominant culture, the Qur'an memorizers defined themselves as unidentified personalities and added that their belonging to the state was in no way possible. Therefore, we witnessed that the Qur'an memorizers could not adapt to their social identity and struggled to maintain their own culture, as the official ideology oppressed and imposed their own culture. It is evident in the narratives that the Qur'an memorizers, who were exposed to a difficult and unstable life, suffered serious psychological traumas even in their private spaces and homes since they could not read the Qur'an in their own homes and lived with the fear that the gendarmerie would visit unexpectedly at any moment. The fact that one of the Qur'an memorizers did not convey any words about the incidents, such as punishments or violence, although he supported and contributed to my work, is the result and the indicator of the oppression policy of the one-party government. After such critical processes, it is seen that the wounds of the Qur'an memorizers did not heal easily, and they had a kind of timidity during the adaptation process. The reason for this was the coexistence of emotions such as alienation, loneliness, and fear felt in that geography and not having been allowed to express them thoroughly.

In the second place, I found that the government was adopting an ethnocentric point of view, positioning those like itself as advanced and developed and non-other while defining those who did not resemble itself or didn't comply with its ideologies, such as the Qur'an memorizers, as backward and primitive. Therefore, the authoritarian sovereign aimed to change the 'other' by othering them. If they cannot achieve this, they try to destroy the 'other' (İnceoğlu and Çoban 2014, 8). During the one-party period, all efforts of the Qur'an memorizers were suppressed under the slogans of the struggle against religious fanaticism and sharia. With anti-religious propaganda, the prohibition of religious education, and the spread of secular education in schools, ethnic identity became more and more evident among the people as a basic identity.

In the third place, looking at the subject of violence, I found that many Qur'an memorizers, who resisted forced assimilation, were arrested and sent to prisons. In many places, Qur'an memorizers were beaten, wounded, killed, or shot by soldiers and police forces. Therefore, with the establishment of nation-states, the expected happiness left its place for pain, tears, and death. It is understood that Kemalist ideology has a dark history in Turkey.

I argued that it was the subject and objective of the state's instrumentalization of official historiography in order to establish power over social memory and shape memory. When the relationship between the state and power was scrutinized, the use of force and coercion, which were other control mechanisms applied by the state, was also witnessed in this study. In short, I determined that the Turkish State implemented and instituted a radical and repressive model of secularism "that entailed the full subjugation of Islam to the state, its eradication from the public sphere, and its limitation into a very narrowly defined private sphere"(Grigoriadis 2009, 2). Indeed, my interlocutors unanimously highlighted and confirmed the state-sponsored violence regarding the use of fear and being under strict hegemony and control mechanisms. I also found that the Qur'an memorizers resisted all the state pressure, restrictions, and threats. They always managed to find a place to memorize the Qur'an despite their remoteness.

Related to my first findings, I discovered that during the RPP period, the state apparatus and the party organization were intertwined and undifferentiated. At this point, it can be stated that a party is a tool that the state uses to manage and control society. So Gramsci stated, we see that the state has a hegemony (Gramsci 2003, 321-323) and has become a coercive power with the unification of the political and civil society in the single-party period. The Kemalist government used the consent of the ruling class for those who accepted its domination, but it applied dictatorship to social classes that did not accept its rule (Portelli 1982, 78). In the mentioned periods, it is seen that the means of repression of the state came into play. That is, the state carried out the persuasion by resorting to the difficult way called the political society side. The mentioned means of oppression are the law of *Takrir-i Sükûn* and the courts of independence, which were the instruments of the army and the political society in the early Republican period. As it can be understood from the interviews, the army had a

great influence on Kemalism's hegemonic ideology and its reproduction as a means of oppression by the state. In fact, according to the narratives, the army appeared as the most important tool of pressure in the reproduction of the official ideology that worked for the internalization of Kemalism by almost all segments of society. According to Max Weber, who says "All political structures use violence" (Weber 1998, 239). Modern states that hold power use all kinds of tools to protect their hegemonic structures and interests. In this context, during our interviews, we have often witnessed that the gendarme had the function of breaking into the houses, interfering, persuading by force, breaking the resistance, and preventing opposing ideologies or hegemonic discourses. I have also witnessed that in the practices of the one-party period, the gendarmerie collected the Qur'an from homes and prevented people's freedom of religious belief and worship even in private areas. These strict practices, after the death of Atatürk, continued into the so-called 'National Chief period.' All of the Qur'an memorizers reported that it continued uncompromisingly during World War II.

In this study, I aimed to know how my informants describe their identities. I found that all of the Qur'an memorizers stated that they were either Muslims or Ottomans while introducing themselves. As it can be understood from the interviews, the discourses and the practices of the one-party period were the reflections of the imposition of a new identity that aspired to be created according to the phenomenon of "nation" instead of the "ummatist/ümmetçi" identity structure of the previous Ottoman Empire. Turkey witnessed a tragic transformation. A number of examples such as the abolition of the caliphate and the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Foundations, the prohibition of Tevhid-i Tedrisat, madrasahs and the Qur'an education, the closure of Lodges and Zaviyes, the abolition of the caliphate, the alphabet revolution, Turkish azan, and secularism. Therefore, the Qur'an memorizers criticized the ideology of that period by expressing that these practices aimed at breaking the connection between the past and the present. I also discovered that national identity was constructed in a way that marginalizes Muslims. Qur'an memorizers were perceived as foreign elements in Turkish society and thus otherized. While trying to strengthen the ethnic identity through educational and cultural institutions, the influence of religion, which had been considered to be opposite to development, was tried to be reduced. When asked, "So, why would the Qur'an memorizers have not been able to develop a language to defend themselves?" a

possible answer may be that they were exposed to all kinds of violence during the one-party period. Thus, it stands to reason that nationalism left its place in fascism in later times, which is an oppressive ideological element. In certain periods, it even evolved into racism from time to time. Therefore, the attack, lynching, and torture during the one-party period prevented the Qur'an memorizers from expressing themselves and blunted their will to fight. However, despite a 30-year period of assimilation, Qur'an memorizers continued to preserve their identity. Indeed, stating that they could not learn the Qur'an freely as it was forbidden and that they were deprived of the opportunities, the Qur'an memorizers experienced the joy of learning the great word of Allah, which remained as a bitter regret in their hearts, are constantly grateful for their present state's and pray not to experience the like of the previous period at the present moment.

There have been a lot of discussions in Turkey that the written sources are insufficient in conveying historical information, and they were written in line with the interests of official ideology. As with the development of oral history studies after 2000, many religious, ethnic, and ideological communities have found a place in historical sources. Also, I discovered that oral history studies, which allow researching and examining events by listening to the witnesses as the subject of history, have expanded the scope of official historiography and contributed to the field. Finally, I hope that this study will develop the discussion of social memory by getting rid of the wrong or distorted narratives that have been in the minds and conveying meanings with the help of the oral history method. So, everything that people experienced and witnessed from the past to the present has been a part of history and took its place as historical information in written sources. Thus, from time to time, this information was not evaluated as reliable, and thus, discussions increased that the written sources were insufficient in conveying historical information and written in line with the interests of official ideology. Based on the words of Cemil Koçak (Koçak 2014, 117), who says that the official history conveys extremely solid and concrete historical information, this thesis went beyond the official historical sources and accessed some information about Qur'an memorizers that cannot be obtained from written sources (Akçalı and Aslan 2012, 671) Significantly I, also discovered the necessity of the oral history method to become one of the important sources that researchers should refer to. At this point, one of the greatest advantages of this study of oral history has been that the Qur'an

memorizers, who were exposed to violence, and threats in general, have revealed the historical truths that were unknown and hidden in Turkey in the first period.

Many states with similar “progressive” ambitions see the elements that think contrary to themselves as the other and form a countermeasure against them. Thus, the same situation still continues in many countries of the world. Yet, massacres in Bosnia, inhumane practices against Muslims in East Turkestan, massacres in Arakan, occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq, atrocities in Palestine, more than ten years of war in Syria, pain, and tears. What remains behind all these are migrations, people who have become refugees, children whose fathers died, lives lost, emotions, etc. People whose identities were exiled, like themselves, have been alienated and marginalized. Indeed, identities and feeling oneself as the other or being marginalized, trying to live without a home and identity have become the destiny of the world. The source of the whole problem is that the other is excluded, condemned, exiled, accused of anonymity, and not allowed to be spoken. It is the dominant power that determines the existence and position of the other.

Finally, I claim that an understanding of identity, in which individual identities are evaluated as diversity, can bring happiness and prosperity to humanity instead of the imaginary impositions that were desired to be realized on the basis of Westernization/modernization developed during the nation-state building process. Lastly, I would like to conclude this thesis with the following inspiring words of wisdom by one of the world’s best-known Sufis, Yunus Emre, himself an advocate of diversity, pluralism, cosmopolitanism, tolerance, humility, and peace as enshrined in the universalistic and humanistic essence of the Islamic tawhid: “The one who does not look at the seventy-two nations with the same eye would indeed be a rebel even if he is a mudarris or professor of the public” (Tatçı, 2018).

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