



OPEN ACCESS

Secularism, Imam Hatip Schools, and the State's Role in Shaping Islamic Education in Türkiye

Titis Thoriquttyas*

Marmara University, Türkiye

Ahmad Munjin Nasih

Universitas Negeri Malang, Indonesia

Achmad Sultoni

Universitas Negeri Malang, Indonesia

Article History Abstract

Received
March 6, 2024

Revised
November 20,
2024

Accepted
June 26, 2025

Published
July 30, 2025

Imam Hatip schools have historically employed a unique role within Türkiye's education system, positioned at the intersection of religious instruction and secular governmental policy. Originally established to prepare religious leaders, these institutions have evolved into diverse entities that provide both religious and general education, heavily influenced by changing political ideologies and educational reforms. This study explores the historical development and current function of Imam Hatip schools, with a particular focus on how political dynamics and state interventions influence their institutional identity. Using a qualitative approach, the research combines semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. Primary data were collected from teachers, while secondary data included official documents, policy texts, and archival records. The case study of Imam Hatip Schools in Istanbul serves as the central focus, complemented by comparative references to other Imam Hatip schools. The findings suggest that the trajectory of these institutions is not solely determined by internal educational needs but is deeply intertwined with broader political narratives and the state's vision of Islamic education. This study concludes that Imam Hatip schools represent a contested and evolving space, where secularism, religious identity, and national policy continuously intersect. Their role in society remains dynamic, reflecting ongoing negotiations between tradition, modernity, and state control in Türkiye's educational landscape.

Keywords: Imam Hatip Schools; secularism; state's policy

*Correspondence: Titis Thoriquttyas, Marmara University, Türkiye
titisthoriquttyas@marun.ac.tr; titisthoriq.fs@um.ac.id



© Author(s), 2025. Published by Balai Penelitian dan Pengembangan Agama Semarang.
This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution licence (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)

INTRODUCTION

The historical experience of the Ottoman Empire, which spanned large

parts of Eastern Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East, has contributed to the strong Islamic identity that continues to

influence Turkish society today. During this period, Islam was deeply integrated into the administrative, legal, and educational systems, shaping public life and cultural values across the empire. Following the decline of the Ottoman Empire, the establishment of the Republic of Türkiye in 1923 marked a radical transformation in the state's ideological orientation. In the context of Türkiye's reforms, secularism was established as a fundamental element of the new national identity, significantly altering the dynamics between religion and the state. Legally, the Republic of Türkiye proclaimed secularism as the basis of its statehood and national identity (Rutz 1999a).

The effect of secularism is not only on political, social as well as cultural, but also Türkiye's educational landscape has undergone significant transformations over the years, particularly concerning Imam Hatip schools, which provide Islamic education alongside the regular curriculum (Junaedi 2016). These schools have been at the center of debates regarding the role of religion in the public sphere and the state's approach to Islamic education. From their inception to the present day, the state's policies concerning Imam Hatip schools have evolved, reflecting broader socio-political changes and the shifting dynamics of Turkish society.

Imam Hatip schools have emerged as central institutions in Türkiye, playing a crucial role in shaping the educational and religious landscape of the nation (Alasania and Gelovani 2011; Aşlamacı and Kaymakcan 2017; Bozarlan 2020). Originating as religious seminaries to train Islamic scholars and clerics, the evolution of Imam Hatip schools reflects the dynamic interplay between religion, education, and state policies in Türkiye (Aşlamacı and Kaymakcan 2017).

Historically, the madrasah was outlawed in 1924 following the Republic of

Türkiye's founding in 1923, putting an end to the infamous madrasah–*maktab* dispute in favor of the latter. In an effort to establish a new nation state and society, the madrasah was outlawed as a result of national, secular, and positivist education policies (Buyruk 2021; Çakmak 2009a). Nevertheless, in 1924, *Tevhidi Tedrisat Kanunu*, new schools known as Imam Hatip Schools (Imam-Hatip *Mektepleri*, and later Imam Hatip *Lisesi* in Turkish), which translates as Imam and Preacher Schools) were founded in place of the madrasah to teach "religious officers" (Rutz 1999b).

This research seeks to analyze the dynamics of government participation in Islamic education by focusing on the example of Imam Hatip schools in Türkiye. In particular, it examines the ways in which the tenets of secularism have been both incorporated into and challenged within their institutional structure. By addressing these issues, the article seeks to shed light on the evolving relationship between religion and state in Türkiye's education system, and the extent to which Imam Hatip schools reflect broader ideological and political shifts in Turkish society.

Imam Hatip schools hold significant relevance in Türkiye for three main reasons. Firstly, they possess deep historical and cultural roots, having originated during the Ottoman Empire as institutions for training religious scholars and leaders. Over time, these schools have evolved to incorporate both religious and secular curricula, reflecting Türkiye's distinctive synthesis of Islamic tradition and modern nation-building efforts (Tarhan 1996). Secondly, Imam Hatip schools continue to be at the center of academic and public debate. Critics argue that these institutions encourage religious conservatism and challenge the secular foundation of the republic, whereas proponents contend that they offer students a balanced education grounded in moral and spiritual values

(Suprianto 2020). Third, the development and regulation of Imam Hatip schools are closely tied to shifts in government policy and political ideology. Changes in funding, curriculum, and administrative oversight often mirror the ruling party's broader approach to secularism, religion, and education reform. As such, Imam Hatip schools represent a critical intersection between education policy and political discourse in Türkiye. This study focuses to examine the evolving role of Imam Hatip schools in Turkey's educational system, particularly in relation to state policies, and to propose that their future development will depend heavily on the political climate and government attitudes toward Islamic education.

Literature Review

In the early Republican period, religion was largely excluded from public life and formal education, consistent with the state's strict secularist policies (Alasania and Gelovani 2011). However, despite official restrictions, religious education persisted informally in rural areas, underscoring the continued social importance of religion (Bashirov and Lancaster 2018). The transition to a multi-party system in 1946 marked a turning point, as religion increasingly entered political and social discourse, fueled by concerns over moral decline sentiments. This period saw the gradual institutionalization of religious education, including the reopening of Imam Hatip schools in 1949 and the establishment of Islamic Theology Faculties (Findley 2010). The 1980 military coup further expanded religious education by making subjects such as "*Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi*" compulsory across all school levels, aiming to foster social cohesion through religious moral education.

Türkiye's unique model of secularism, often termed *laiklik*, involves strict state

control over religious expression to ensure a clear separation between religion and state affairs (Çakmak 2009a; Coşkun and Şentürk 2012; Rutz 1999b). This has led to a contradictory relationship in which the state both limits and oversees religious education via institutions like the Diyanet and Imam Hatip schools. These schools function as venues for imparting Islamic values, all within a structure governed by secular state ideology. This tension creates a distinct educational dynamic that merges religious instruction with secular governance, raising debates over how religious identity should be integrated within public education. Scholars highlight this as a unique case compared to other secular states, where the accommodation of religion in public schools is more limited or absent.

The history of Imam Hatip schools cannot be separated from the broader political struggles in Türkiye. These schools have historically been intertwined with political power dynamics, often reflecting the prevailing government's stance toward religion (Buyruk 2021). They have functioned as instruments for shaping a new generation aligned with the dominant ideology, whether through their closure, marginalization, or expansion under different regimes. For example, the government's policies have significantly expanded the reach and influence of Imam Hatip schools, aligning with its broader socio-political agenda. This politicization of education has sparked controversies over social inequalities, the legitimization of dominant ideologies, and the role of religion in public life.

Imam Hatip schools also have considerable social implications, influencing identity formation, religious values, and social cohesion within Turkish society (Övet et al. 2022). These schools serve not only as educational institutions but also as sites for the negotiation of religious and secular identities. Academic

interest has grown in comparing the outcomes of students attending Imam Hatip schools with those in secular or other educational institutions, assessing differences in academic performance, social attitudes, and civic engagement. Such studies contribute to understanding the effectiveness and social impact of different educational models in a pluralistic society.

Although there is existing research on the historical and political dimensions of Imam Hatip schools, there are still gaps in the critical analysis of how these institutions balance secular state policies with religious demands in daily educational practices. Additionally, there has been insufficient investigation into how the evolution of these schools impacts overall societal cohesion and the negotiation of identity within a progressively diverse Turkish society. Fulfilling these gaps, this study provides a nuanced analysis of Imam Hatip schools' evolving role within Türkiye's education policy and socio-political landscape, with a particular focus on the tensions between secularism, religious education, and political power.

Conceptual Framework

As state-funded institutions that offer both religious and general education, Imam Hatip Schools provides a unique and contested space in the Turkish educational system. They are not only pedagogical entities but also political and ideological symbols shaped by broader societal tensions. Officially, Imam Hatip Schools are intended to train religious officials with intellectual grounding, as stated in policy narratives (Mahmood 2009; Pak 2004). For many pious families, particularly those with conservative Islamic backgrounds, IHS represent a preferred alternative to secular schools due to their integration of Islamic sciences with modern subjects (Orhan 2010; Yilmaz 2018). Nevertheless, these institutions have encountered criticism

from secularist organizations, which perceive them as instruments of religious indoctrination and possible dangers to the secular principles of the Republic. This research defines secularism in Türkiye as a state-oriented framework established during the early 20th Century reforms initiated by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, aimed at enforcing a clear division between religious influence and state power. In contrast to Western liberal secularism, the Turkish approach is frequently referred to as "assertive" or "illiberal secularism," marked by governmental oversight of religious expression instead of maintaining neutrality (Bashirov and Lancaster 2018; Kırdış and Drhimeur 2016). This has historically led to tensions, particularly among rural and religious populations who perceived secular policies as repressive. The contested nature of Turkish secularism continues to shape the political and social dynamics surrounding Imam Hatip Schools, reflecting deeper ideological battles over national identity, religious freedom, and democratic pluralism.

Islamic education in this context extends beyond doctrinal instruction. It encompasses the formation of moral and civic identity, the negotiation of tradition and modernity, and the institutionalization of religious knowledge in a state-regulated framework. While some scholars argue that Imam Hatip Schools serve as hubs for Islamic revivalism, others contend that their modern infrastructure and curricula illustrate an attempt to reconcile piety with contemporary educational values (Aşlamacı and Kaymakcan 2017; Pak 2004). This suggests the need to move beyond simplistic binaries of "modern vs traditional" or "secular vs religious" and to adopt a more nuanced analytical lens.

The existing literature tends to polarize Imam Hatip Schools, either defending them as necessary for religious freedom or condemning them as tools of

political Islam. However, there is a growing body of research that approaches these schools more critically and contextually – examining them as socio-political institutions that reflect broader shifts in Turkish society (Aşlamacı and Kaymakcan 2017; Pak 2004). Despite these contributions, gaps remain in understanding the instructional methodologies, the evolution of institutional culture, and the long-term sociological roles that Imam Hatip Schools play in shaping citizenship, identity, and ideological orientation (Coşkun and Şentürk 2012).

This study responds to these gaps by integrating historical, political, and sociological perspectives to examine Imam Hatip Schools as both educational and ideological institutions. Specifically, it investigates how these schools mediate between state ideology and local religious values, how their pedagogy adapts to shifting political climates. The theoretical framework directly informs the research questions and methodology by grounding the analysis in concepts such as state-religion relations, ideological reproduction, and identity formation. Moreover, this framework situates Imam Hatip Schools within the broader landscape of Türkiye's evolving secularism, highlighting how educational spaces become arenas for negotiating political power and religious legitimacy. By addressing the fluidity of Türkiye's secular-religious spectrum and exploring the lived experiences within Imam Hatip Schools, this study offers a comprehensive and balanced understanding of the schools' role in Türkiye's contemporary sociopolitical order.

RESEARCH METHOD

Given the multidimensional nature of Imam Hatip Schools and the intersection of religious, political, and educational factors

influencing their development, this study adopts a qualitative research design supported by documentary analysis and comparative techniques. A comparative analysis framework is employed to explore similarities and differences across varying institutional contexts, providing insights into the broader dynamics shaping Imam Hatip schools in Türkiye. While the primary site of investigation is Imam Hatip Schools in Istanbul, secondary data from previous studies and written documentation of other Imam Hatip schools are also incorporated to enhance the depth and representativeness of the findings.

The fieldwork was conducted over a two-month period, from November to December 2024. During this period, data collection involved two main techniques: semi-structured interviews and document analysis. The study employed purposive sampling from Imam Hatip schools in Istanbul who had at least five years of teaching experience at the school. Initial contact was made via email to the school administration, followed by scheduling in-person interviews based on participant availability. Each interview was conducted between 45 to 60 minutes, either in person at the school or via video conferencing platforms. Interviews focused on perceptions of the school's role in society, changes in educational policy, and the intersection between religion and formal education.

Simultaneously, an analysis of documents was conducted utilizing national education policy documents, curriculum guidelines, school reports, historical records, and earlier academic publications regarding Imam Hatip schools. Archival resources were obtained from the library of Marmara University in Istanbul, along with pertinent online academic databases. Content analysis was employed to discern recurring themes, concepts, and ideological stances within these documents—especially

in relation to secularism, Islamic education, and state ideology. To maintain a longitudinal perspective, data spanning various time periods were examined, including policy document reports from the 2000s to the present. This facilitated a diachronic understanding of institutional changes and trends. All participants were provided with detailed information sheets outlining the study's aims, procedures, and confidentiality measures. Written informed consent was obtained before each interview, and all data were anonymized during analysis and reporting. Ethical clearance was approved by Marmara University's ethics committee.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

State Intervention in Islamic Education through Imam Hatip's School

Imam Hatip Schools under the Ministry of Education, Türkiye

The law on school unification, passed on March 3, 1924, was one of the fundamental ways that secularism was reflected in practice. Different educational arrangements were abolished by legislation, education was united without discrimination of any kind, including gender discrimination, and all educational institutions were placed under the Ministry of Education (MoE). Consequently, after the law was passed, the closure of 479 religious schools that belonged to the government and the opening of Imam Hatip schools in 29 cities intended "to raise religious officials". From that point on, the Presidency of Religious Affairs oversaw religious education primarily through Qur'anic courses, a role it maintained until 1948. During this period, the MoE did not open any new secondary or high schools to train religious leaders, which meant that formal religious education was no longer included in the public school system. The state's approach during this period

indicates a strategy of tightly regulating religious education (Coşkun and Yankaya 2018). In an effort to maintain oversight and control, the MoE began offering private religious courses within the public education system. Notable developments during this era included the transition to a multi-party political system, and a gradual expansion of religious freedoms. These measures, however, did not fully meet the expectations of conservative groups (Dag 2018).

Imam Hatip Schools: A Brief History

The roots of Imam Hatip schools can be traced back to the Ottoman Empire, where madrasas functioned as the primary institutions for Islamic education. However, it was not until the early years of the Republic of Türkiye, particularly during the educational reforms of the 1950s, that Imam Hatip schools were formally established as part of the national education system. These schools were created to respond to increasing public demand for religious education and aimed to offer an integrated curriculum that combined both religious instruction and secular subjects. Along with the shift to a multi-party democracy, religious education became a contentious topic once more. Attempts to implement nationalism devoid of religion as the genuine philosophy during the one-party rule were met with resistance from the populace, who primarily used their religious identity as a way of expression (Çakmak 2009a).

Historically, Imam Hatip schools have catered to students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds and have, for some individuals, acted as a pathway for upward social mobility. Consequently, they provide a significant perspective for analyzing wider issues of educational equity, access, and inclusion within the Turkish education framework. Beyond their national importance, Imam Hatip schools present an

intriguing topic for comparative educational research (Pak 2004). Scholarly debates are progressively placing these institutions within the larger context of Islamic education systems in other predominantly Muslim nations.

By the mid-1960s, graduates of Imam Hatip schools began securing administrative positions within the Turkish government, signaling a significant shift in how these institutions and their alumni were perceived. This development marked a turning point in the government's recognition of the quality, capabilities, and professional competence of Imam Hatip graduates, whose education once marginalized was now considered *on par* with that of secular schools (Buyruk 2021). The incorporation of Imam Hatip graduates into state bureaucracy signifies not merely the formal recognition of their Ministry of Education accredited curriculum but also a more extensive change in the state's perspective on religion in public life. This transformation is especially notable when compared to the early Republican period, characterized by stringent limitations on religious education, where graduates from such institutions encountered restricted career opportunities.

The growing prominence and assimilation of Imam Hatip graduates within the state framework exemplifies the changing function of Islam in the public domain, contesting the inflexible secular structure that was instituted during the early Republic (Weber 2012). It also raises important questions about the changing balance between secular and religious identities within Turkish society. As religious education gained institutional legitimacy, it began to reshape debates around national identity, citizenship, and public service highlighting enduring tensions between Türkiye's secularist foundations and the religious values

embraced by significant segments of its population.

The growing acceptance and integration of Imam Hatip school graduates into the state bureaucracy by the mid-1960s laid the groundwork for their continued relevance in the decades that followed. Following the military coup on 1980, there were widespread expectations—particularly among secularist circles—that Imam Hatip school would be closed or severely restricted. This period was marked by an effort to impose global neoliberal policies, and political Islam was increasingly viewed with suspicion. However, contrary to these expectations, the number of Imam Hatip school remained stable, and the schools continued to operate (Zengin and Hendek 2023).

Instead of being repressed, religious education discovered a revitalized function within the state framework. Imam Hatip schools transformed into tools not only for religious instruction but also for political maneuvering. Islam was strategically utilized to counteract both leftist ideologies and radical Islamist factions, thus establishing the ideological groundwork for a new right-leaning, market-driven system. In this scenario, the role of religion was reinterpreted—not as a threat to the secular state, but as a regulated and subordinate instrument of dominance, bolstering the state's power while advancing its geopolitical and economic objectives.

Imam Hatip Schools and The Politics

Plato described the relationship between politics and education as closely related. Plato explains that every culture continues to strive to maintain its authority over education in the hands of elite groups so that they are able to control politics, economics and religion (Beetham 2018; Tee 2015). In another sense, Plato considers that the relationship between politics and

education is a means to perpetuate the status quo of the elite. The dynamics of education cannot be separated from politics, because to maintain control of education itself requires a political decision from the state as the highest policy holder (Gross 2015). Not only that, education can also be a tool of state control in maintaining its power and building its image.

Under the leadership of the Justice and Development Party (AKP), which includes many alumni of Imam Hatip schools, the Turkish government has increasingly leveraged these institutions to consolidate its influence in the education sector. The expansion of Imam Hatip schools under AKP governance is not merely an educational policy—it also serves as a strategic tool for reinforcing ideological continuity. By broadening the reach and authority of Imam Hatip schools, the AKP ensures the transmission of its sociopolitical values to future generations. This process reflects a broader effort to embed a specific interpretation of Islamic morality and national identity into public education. As such, Imam Hatip schools function not only as schools for religious instruction but also as channels for cultivating political loyalty and shaping societal norms in line with the ruling party's vision. This ideological transmission is significant because it reveals how education is being used as a means of maintaining political power and redefining secularism in Türkiye (Bashirov and Lancaster 2018; Karakaya-Stump 2019; Yaşar 2020).

Over the decades, Imam Hatip schools experienced periods of growth and expansion, reflecting broader societal shifts and political changes in Türkiye (Hasanova 2018; Tarhan 1996). Under the guidance of different governmental administrations, these educational institutions experienced reforms and restructuring, emphasizing the modernization of their curricula and facilities. The 1980s marked a notable

growth in Imam Hatip schools, as initiatives designed to support religiously conservative factions of society resulted in a rise in both enrollment and resources dedicated to these schools. Imam Hatip schools experienced considerable growth in both the quantity of institutions and the number of students enrolled. This growth was part of a wider initiative to advance conservative principles and address the educational requirements of a portion of society that sought an education aligned with Islamic values. Additionally, the AKP government removed restrictions on graduates of Imam Hatip schools, allowing them to pursue higher education and enter various professions previously inaccessible to them (Yaşar 2020).

In recent years, Imam Hatip schools have continued to evolve in response to changing societal needs and educational priorities. The Turkish government has implemented various reforms aimed at regulating and standardizing the curriculum, as well as improving the quality of education in these institutions. Moving forward, it is crucial to strike a balance between preserving the religious identity of Imam Hatip schools and ensuring their compatibility with modern educational standards and secular principles.

Plato, in his magnum opus *Republic*, emphasizes the intrinsic link between education and politics. He argues that the educational system of a state must align with its ideological foundations, influencing not only educational goals and teaching methods but also the selection and training of educators (Duin and Tham 2020; Margulies 2018). In Plato's vision, schools are not neutral institutions; they are deeply embedded in the political life of the polis and serve as instruments for cultivating the values that sustain the state. Drawing from Plato's insights, we can better understand the relationship between political authority and educational institutions in the context

of Türkiye. The case of Imam Hatip Schools illustrates how a state's political ideology can directly shape its education system. Under the rule of the Justice and Development Party (AKP), these schools have been expanded and restructured not merely as sites of religious learning but as mechanisms for disseminating a specific vision of Islamic identity and national morality.

This procedure illustrates a wider political strategy wherein education serves as an instrument for ideological consolidation. For instance, alterations in policy have permitted Imam Hatip curricula to incorporate increased religious content while still adhering to national education standards. This allows the state to advocate for values that resonate with political Islam, catering to conservative groups while discreetly reshaping the parameters of secularism within public education. Moreover, the appointment of school administrators and teachers from within ideological circles affiliated with the ruling party further reinforces this trend. In this way, Imam Hatip Schools not only reproduce religious knowledge but also contribute to shaping group attitudes, political preferences, and public loyalty mirroring Plato's idea that education is foundational to sustaining the political order.

Furthermore, discussing the relationship between politics, state's ideology and the impact on education, there is fundamental argumentation from Alasania and Gelovani. Alasania and Gelovani illustrate education and politics more comprehensively in the following statement, "education and politics are inextricably linked" (Alasania and Gelovani 2011; Manojan 2019; Karlidag-Dennis et al. 2019). The close relationship between the two dimensions illustrates that there is a pattern of mutual influence on each other. The style and direction of politics can

determine the education system adopted by a country. Vice versa, the education system can play a role as a vehicle for the formation of *homo politicus* (Mayo 2017). Reciprocal relations between politics and education can occur through three aspects, namely the formation of group attitudes, employment issues, and the political role of the intelligence.

In relation to these three categories of connections, the evolution of Imam Hatip schools in Türkiye is inextricably linked to the dynamics of group attitudes and the political influence of intellectuals. The group perspectives of Turkish Islamists, who experienced an increase in their ability to express themselves following the success of the AKP party, have contributed to the formulation of new policies aimed at advancing Islamic education via the Imam Hatip Schools (Karakaya-Stump 2019; Yaşar 2020). Although in the early days of the formation of the Republic of Türkiye, Islamists received repression and limitation from the Kemal Pasha government, in subsequent political developments Islamists gained momentum in 1950. Furthermore, the attitude of Islamist groups did lead to the renewal of the Islamic education curriculum through Imam Hatip schools. However, nationalist groups viewed the development of Imam Hatip schools as contradictory to the spirit of Turkish secularism (Pak 2004).

The Articulation and Trajectory of Secularism in Imam Hatip School, Türkiye

Imam Hatip Schools and The State Control

Althusser's theory of state control and supervision in education offers a useful framework for understanding how political ideologies are embedded in educational institutions. Althusser outlines four key models, namely: 1). An education system formulated legally; 2). An education system

that emphasizes compliance with regulations and bureaucracy; 3). Compulsory education policy in the education system; 4). Political and economic reproduction that takes place in certain educational institutions (Althusser 2006; Dressler 2015). Furthermore, Althusser emphasizes the role of state apparatuses including curriculum development, administrative governance, and educational planning in molding the values and frameworks of education. As per Althusser, these mechanisms are not solely intended for academic objectives; rather, they operate as instruments for perpetuating prevailing ideologies within society.

This theoretical lens is particularly relevant when applied to Imam Hatip Schools in Türkiye. Especially during the governance of the Justice and Development Party, these schools have become central to the state's efforts to shape public ideology through education. Legal reforms have supported the expansion of Imam Hatip Schools, while regulatory systems ensure their compliance with national objectives. The integration of compulsory education policies has broadened access to these institutions, increasing their societal impact. More significantly, Imam Hatip Schools are frequently regarded as venues for ideological reproduction environments where religious and political values that align with the government's agenda are conveyed to the youth. This perspective is consistent with Althusser's assertion that educational institutions play a crucial role in upholding the ideological functions of the state, influencing not just knowledge but also social norms and political awareness.

Based on Althusser's concept of ideological state apparatuses in education, it can observe how the Turkish state has strategically used educational reforms to reinforce particular ideological and political goals. A clear example of this is the

implementation of the 4+4+4 compulsory education system in 2012, which marked a significant shift in the structure and reach of formal education in Türkiye (Buyruk 2021; Rutz 1999b). This reform restructured the education system into three tiers of four years each and served as a legal mechanism to expand the scope of religious education under state supervision. Prior to this reform, Imam Hatip schools were primarily limited to the secondary level. However, the changes introduced in 2012 allowed the government to extend Imam Hatip education to the senior high school level, thereby broadening its influence across more years of compulsory education (Aşlamacı and Kaymakcan 2017; Çakmak 2009b). This development not only illustrates the application of Althusser's model of legally formulated and compulsory education but also shows how the state can use curriculum and institutional expansion as a tool for ideological dissemination through formal schooling.

In addition, the Turkish government formulates regulations and policies related to Imam Hatip schools in a top-down manner. In the sense that, the education system and the implementation of each regulation are highly monitored and supervised in a centralized manner. Theoretically, the top-down approach to educational implementation and supervision carries both strengths and limitations. It refers to a centralized model in which national or state-level authorities determine key policies, standards, and guidelines for schools (Alasania and Gelovani 2011). While this approach can ensure uniformity, accountability, and alignment with national goals, it may also limit local autonomy, reduce responsiveness to community needs, and hinder innovative practices at the grassroots level. In education, top-down regulation refers to the creation of rules and guidelines that influence the educational process by institutions or government agencies.

Curriculum requirements, assessment protocols, teacher credentials, financial distribution, and learning objectives are a few examples of these restrictions. They are intended to give every student, regardless of location or financial status, a uniform and standardized educational experience (Beck 2020; Brøgger 2019).

Top-down control in education has drawbacks, such as the possibility of strict, inflexible rules that do not adequately address the unique requirements of particular schools or pupils. The development of uniformity and equity in educational possibilities is one advantage of top-down regulation in the field of education. Furthermore, by laying out precise guidelines and expectations for educational institutions and staff, top-down regulation can support accountability and quality control in the field of education. Furthermore, by focusing on areas that require improvement and offering direction on how to solve them, top-down regulation can support educational reform and address systemic difficulties (Brøgger 2019). All things considered, top-down regulation in education is vital in forming the educational environment since it offers a structure for professional growth, curriculum, financing, and accountability.

Educational institutions across all levels are profoundly influenced by hierarchical control within the educational sector. Hierarchical regulation provides a structure for the development and execution of curricula at the institutional level. It sets forth the standards and guidelines that schools must follow to ensure consistency and quality. Furthermore, by defining credentials and certification requirements, top-down regulation affects teacher preparation and professional growth. Moreover, top-down control affects not only policy but also the distribution of financial and material resources to schools, which can significantly

influence students' access to quality education. In the case of Imam Hatip schools, this centralized governance often restricts institutional autonomy, limiting the ability of educators and administrators to implement context-specific innovations or adapt to local needs. As a result, Imam Hatip schools struggle to foster educational environments that encourage flexibility, creativity, and responsiveness, factors that are increasingly vital in modern educational systems.

Skepticism among Kemalists

Kemalism, a political ideology grounded in the ideas of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, maintains a strict commitment to secularism as a foundational principle of the Turkish Republic. From this perspective, many Kemalist skeptics regard the existence and especially the expansion of Imam Hatip schools as contradictory to Atatürk's secular ideals (Mahmood 2009). The significant increase in both the number and perceived quality of these schools in recent decades has triggered diverse reactions across Turkish society. On one hand, proponents interpret this development as a positive step toward the revitalization of Islamic education and cultural identity. On the other hand, critics perceive it as a serious challenge to the secular character of the state. This polarization is often linked to the broader trend of increasing Islamic visibility in the public sphere, evident in the proliferation of religious symbols, rhetoric, and institutions within both political and social domains.

The revival of Imam Hatip schools also reflects a strong element of public demand, particularly in response to decades of state-imposed restrictions. As Fazlur Rahman noted, "perhaps the most spectacular development in Islamic education in the contemporary Islamic world has occurred in Türkiye, where after a quarter of a century's officially total ban, it

resurrected itself through sheer public pressure” (Völker 2012). This revival highlights the significant role public demand played in reinstating Imam Hatip schools following decades of state-imposed suppression. Today, these schools are considered by many as promising institutions for future educational development. The political climate—particularly under the leadership of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan—has further accelerated the institutional growth of Imam Hatip schools, underscoring the strong link between state policy and the fluctuating fortunes of religious education in Türkiye. The ups and downs of Turkish secularism in the public sphere, especially in relation to Islamic educational institutions, are closely related to political policies. Moreover, the direction and political background of the actors in the government.

Optimism among Islamism

Alongside the backing provided by Islamist organizations for Imam Hatip schools, the involvement of intellectuals and educated elites in political matters has played a crucial role in fostering greater public interest and enthusiasm for these educational institutions. Following the success of the AKP party, whose political figures are graduates of Imam Hatip schools, there will be indirect consequences for alterations in regulations and policies (Coşkun and Şentürk 2012; Özpek and Yaşar 2020). In fact, if tracing back, since 1950 when the political system in Türkiye became more open and allowed the existence of multiple parties, the AKP party has made the issue of Islam as one of the central issues in their campaigns. Since the victory of the AKP party, Imam Hatip school alumni who became AKP politicians gradually changed the image of the school into a professional school and able to compete with other schools. This is

evidenced by the emergence of Imam Hatip school curriculum reforms that provide opportunities for graduates to continue their studies in faculties other than the faculty of *ilahiyat* (Islamic Theology) (Coşkun and Şentürk 2012).

In the early days of its development, Imam Hatip school graduates could only continue their studies to the Faculty of *ilahiyat*. This was closely related to the position of Imam Hatip schools as vocational educational institutions for the Turkish Ministry of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet*). In subsequent developments, graduates of Imam Hatip schools have shown an even greater statistical trend of continuing their studies to non-Faculty of Divinity (*Ilahiyat*) (Ahmet 2020). Imam Hatip schools are frequently perceived as establishments that incorporate Islamic values into the educational process via what is typically known as a "hidden curriculum". This refers to the subtle conveyance of cultural norms, values, and beliefs that are not overtly stated in official curricula. This integration is meticulously designed to harmonize with the secular framework of the state, steering clear of any direct clashes with the core principles of the Turkish Republic (Hasanova 2018).

Imam Hatip Schools and The State's Apparatus

Althusser conceptualizes the state's control over society through what he terms "repressive apparatuses," which include institutions such as education, the family, and mass media (Althusser 2006; Andrews and Skoczylis 2022; Bargu 2015). These institutions are instrumental in reproducing the dominant ideology by aligning their practices and structures with the expectations of the state. In this framework, education is not a neutral process but is shaped to serve political functions. By doing so, the state ensures that education becomes

a means of ideological control and social reproduction.

Althusser distinguishes between two types of state apparatuses: Ideological State Apparatus (ISA) and Repressive State Apparatus (RSA). While the RSA operates primarily through coercion (e.g., police, military), the ISA functions through ideology, shaping beliefs and values via institutions such as education, religion, and the media (Althusser 2006; Andrews and Skoczylis 2022). In the case of Imam Hatip schools, this framework holds significant importance. Acting as an ISA, these institutions advance the state's ideological agenda by integrating religious values into the curriculum and synchronizing educational aims with wider political goals. The most prominent interest of the state in education is the use of schools and universities as agents of ideological reproduction and socialization (Karlidağ-Dennis et al. 2022). The ideology of Islamism carried by IH schools in the midst of Turkish society which is constitutionally secular, is evidence that there is a close relationship in the direction of political dynamics in Türkiye, while in the RSA the one who runs is the teacher. The teachers act as actors from the state apparatus in carrying out state ideology through education. So teachers are state apparatus who are also involved in maintaining power and spreading ideology (Margulies 2018).

In a similar vein, the Imam Hatip school serves as a manifestation of hegemony exerted by Turkish politicians, represented by those in power. The government establishes dominance over the social structure through education, further integrating Islamic values into the public domain and educational institutions. It is essential to acknowledge and comprehend that Türkiye stands as one of the most significant nations in West Asia, Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa. Given this strategic geopolitical position,

Türkiye enhances its role and contributions within the region.

Türkiye targets two main regions as markets for its Imam Hatip school model: European countries with significant Muslim minority populations and Middle Eastern and North African countries with Muslim majorities. In Europe, the growing number of Muslim immigrants in recent decades presents both opportunities and challenges. While these communities contribute to local economies through labor, their presence has also sparked social tensions and political resistance in some contexts (Prayuda 2019). As a response, European governments are increasingly seeking inclusive education models to integrate Muslim populations into broader society. Türkiye presents its unique model of secularism – where the state actively regulates religious expression – as a viable framework for addressing this issue (Akturk 2015; Dressler 2015).

The Turkish government promotes Imam Hatip schools as a means of managing Islamic education under state supervision, aiming to balance religious instruction with secular governance. As part of this effort, Türkiye has established branches of Imam Hatip schools abroad, offering what it views as a successful model of religious education that aligns with civic integration. In the Middle East and North Africa region, the Imam Hatip school model is promoted as a balanced approach in which the state plays an active, yet measured role in religious education determining what should be emphasized and where limits should be set. In conclusion, Türkiye's efforts to export the Imam Hatip schools model serve not only educational purposes but also function as an instrument of soft power. By promoting this model internationally, Türkiye aims to enhance its geopolitical influence, using school management as a strategic tool of diplomacy rather than a solely domestic educational policy.

Imam Hatip Schools and The Transformation of Türkiye's Policy

The transformation of Türkiye's state policy toward Imam Hatip schools illustrates a nuanced evolution shaped by historical, political, and social forces. Historically, these schools were marginalized during the early years of the Republic as part of the state's strict secular agenda. However, beginning in the late 20th Century, shifting political landscapes and growing public demand for religious education contributed to their revival and expansion (Dag 2018; Genc 2018; Kocamaner 2019). Politically, successive governments have supported the proliferation of Imam Hatip schools as part of a broader vision of integrating Islamic values into public life. Socially, many segments of the population have viewed these schools as a means of preserving cultural and religious identity, particularly in response to perceived threats of Westernization.

Looking ahead, Türkiye faces the challenge of balancing these diverse aspirations. The state must navigate competing expectations while maintaining a commitment to secularism, pluralism, and educational quality. The future of Imam Hatip schools, therefore, lies not only in political will but also in their ability to adapt within a framework that respects democratic values and inclusive education.

Despite their growing popularity, Imam Hatip schools continue to generate significant controversy within Turkish society. Critics argue that these institutions serve as instruments of state-led Islamization, promoting a form of religious conservatism that challenges the foundational secular principles of the Republic. Concerns have also been raised about the schools' curricula, which some view as overly focused on religious subjects at the expense of scientific and critical thinking skills. On the other hand,

proponents contend that Imam Hatip schools offer a necessary alternative to secular public education by meeting the religious and cultural needs of a substantial segment of the population. They argue that these schools contribute to social cohesion by enabling religious expression within an institutional framework. The debate extends beyond educational content to broader questions about national identity, social integration, and the role of religion in public life. Moreover, issues related to academic performance and the employability of Imam Hatip graduates have led to further scrutiny, raising questions about the effectiveness and long-term impact of these schools in the context of Türkiye's evolving educational and political landscape (Kocamaner 2017, 2019).

However, the rapid expansion of Imam Hatip schools also raised concerns about their quality and curriculum. Critics argued that the focus on religious education came at the expense of secular subjects, potentially undermining students' academic and professional prospects. Moreover, there were fears that the expansion of Imam Hatip schools could lead to social polarization and deepen divisions within Turkish society (Ahmet 2020; Altintas 2020; Ataç 2019). In light of these concerns, the Turkish government implemented a range of reforms designed to enhance the integration of Imam Hatip schools within the national education framework, while also tackling criticisms regarding educational quality and ideological neutrality. Significant reforms involved broadening the general academic curriculum to incorporate additional courses in science, mathematics, and foreign languages, thereby aligning Imam Hatip schools more closely with conventional high schools. Additionally, the Higher Education Board of Türkiye (YÖK) modified university entrance regulations to allow Imam Hatip graduates to apply to a

wider range of academic programs beyond theology, thereby increasing their higher education and career opportunities. These measures were designed to strike a balance between religious instruction and secular education, ensuring that students receive a comprehensive and competitive education suited for contemporary social and professional demands (Yavuz and Öztürk 2019). Furthermore, the evolving nature of Turkish society, including demographic shifts and changing attitudes towards religion, will influence the demand for Islamic education and the direction of educational policies.

CONCLUSION

The evolution of Imam Hatip schools in Türkiye reflects their dynamic ability to adapt to the shifting of political power, state ideology, and societal needs. Established during the early Republican era to produce religious functionaries within a secular nation-state framework, Imam Hatip schools were subjected to strict oversight, marginalization, and even closures in periods dominated by hard-line secular policies. Nevertheless, these schools re-emerged with increased societal support in the 1980s, and particularly flourished under the Justice and Development Party (AKP) beginning in the early 2000s. Under AKP leadership, Imam Hatip schools gained unprecedented state backing, experienced a rapid increase in enrolment, and underwent curriculum reform that sought to integrate both religious instruction and secular subjects. This dual-track approach positioned them as hybrid institutions operating at the intersection of religious tradition and modern educational demands.

Yet, the expansion of Imam Hatip schools has sparked broader debates regarding the place of religion in public education and its implications for Turkish democracy. Critics argue that their proliferation has contributed to increased

ideological polarization, reinforced social segmentation, and risked undermining the secular foundations of the Republic. Moreover, concerns persist about the quality of education offered, including the preparedness of teachers, the effectiveness of the dual curriculum, and student engagement, particularly in scientific and critical thinking domains. These internal challenges raise important questions about whether the schools' adaptability has translated into genuine educational advancement or primarily served political and ideological objectives.

While the government often frames Imam Hatip reforms as efforts to modernize Islamic education in alignment with national values, the outcomes remain contested. Their trajectory reveals not only an institutional transformation but also a mirror of Türkiye's ongoing struggle to balance religious identity, pluralism, and secular governance. Moving forward, the success of these schools will depend not only on their ability to remain responsive to changing social dynamics but also on their capacity to contribute meaningfully to inclusive and equitable education in a diverse and democratic society.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors are grateful to Imam Hatip schools in Istanbul, Türkiye for providing the opportunity to collect data, extract further information through discussions related to collecting the data. In addition, the author would like to thank the Turkish Government for the Türkiye *Burslari* Scholarship so that Titis have the opportunity to study for a doctoral degree at Marmara University, Istanbul Türkiye since 2022, and the State University of Malang for institutional support.

REFERENCES

Ahmet, Koç. 2020. "A Qualitative Research on the Problems and Expectations of

- Imam Hatip Secondary School Students (The Case of Istanbul Province)*." *International Journal of Psychology and Educational Studies* 7(4):43–51.
doi:10.17220/ijpes.2020.04.005
- Akturk, Sener. 2015. "Religion and Nationalism: Contradictions of Islamic Origins and Secular Nation-Building in Turkey, Algeria, and Pakistan*." *Social Science Quarterly* 96(3):778–806.
doi:10.1111/ssqu.12191.
- Alasania, Giuli, and Nani Gelovani. 2011. "Islam and Religious Education in Turkey." *IBSU Scientific Journal* 5(2):35–50.
doi:10.4324/9780429061509-3
- Althusser, Louis. 2006. "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)." *The Anthropology of the State: A Reader* 9(1):86–98. B. Brewster. New York and London
- Altintas, Mustafa Cabir. 2020. "Worldviews and Identity Discernment of Turkish Youth and the Role of Religious Education: An Investigation of Imam-Hatip High Schools' Senior Students' Meaning-Making of the World in the 21st Century." PhD Thesis, UCL (University College London).
- Andrews, Sam, and Joshua Skoczylis. 2022. "Prevent, Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus: Analysing Terrorism Prevention Policies Using Althusser's Framework." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 50(2):405–29.
doi:10.1177/03058298211063929.
- Aşlamacı, İbrahim, and Recep Kaymakcan. 2017. "A Model for Islamic Education from Turkey: The Imam-Hatip Schools." *British Journal of Religious Education* 39(3):279–92.
doi:10.1080/01416200.2015.1128390
- Aşlamacı, Nuh Dağ. 2018. "Turkey's Imam-Hatip Schools: Threat to Secular Democracy or Model of Integration?" PhD diss., Florida State University College of Education.
- Ataç, Alara. 2019. "Reconstruction of Female Subjectivity in Turkey: Neoconservatism and Imam-Hatip Schools." Master's Thesis, Middle East Technical University.
- Bargu, Banu. 2015. "Althusser's Materialist Theater: Ideology and Its Aporias." *Differences* 26(3):81–106.
doi:10.1215/10407391-3340372
- Bashirov, Galib, and Caroline Lancaster. 2018. "End of Moderation: The Radicalization of AKP in Turkey." *Democratization* 25(7):1210–30.
doi:10.1080/13510347.2018.1461208
- Beck, Jori S. 2020. "Investigating the Third Space: A New Agenda for Teacher Education Research." *Journal of Teacher Education* 71(4):379–91.
doi:10.1177/0022487118787497
- Beetham, David. 2018. *Max Weber and the Theory of Modern Politics*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Bozarslan, Hamit. 2020. "From Kemalism to the Armed Struggle: Radicalization of the Left in the 1960s." *Turkey in Turmoil* 115–36.
doi:10.1515/9783110654509-007
- Brøgger, Katja. 2019. "How Education Standards Gain Hegemonic Power and Become International: The Case of Higher Education and the Bologna Process." *European Educational Research Journal* 18(2):158–80.
doi:10.1177/1474904118790303.
- Buyruk, Halil. 2021. "The Role of Religious Education in Hegemony Construction: The Case of Imam Hatip Schools in Turkey." *Paedagogica Historica* 57(6):657–74.
doi:10.1080/00309230.2020.1762677

- Çakmak, Diren. 2009a. "Pro-Islamic Public Education in Turkey: The Imam-Hatip Schools." *Middle Eastern Studies* 45(5):825-46. doi:10.1080/00263200903135596
- Coşkun, Mustafa Kemal, and Burcu Şentürk. 2012. "The Growth of Islamic Education in Turkey: The AKP's Policies toward Imam-Hatip Schools." Pp. 165-77 in *Neoliberal Transformation of Education in Turkey*. Springer. doi:10.1057/9781137097811_13
- Coşkun, Mustafa Kemal, and Dilek Yankaya. 2018. "National Education as a Battlefield. a Restructuring of Imam-Hatip Schools After the July 15th." *Confluences Méditerranée* 107(4):73-82. doi:10.3917/come.107.0073
- Dressler, Markus. 2015. "Rereading Ziya Gökalp: Secularism and Reform of the Islamic State in the Late Young Turk Period." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 47(3):511-31. doi:10.1017/S0020743815000525
- Duin, Ann Hill, and Jason Tham. 2020. "The Current State of Analytics: Implications for Learning Management System (LMS) Use in Writing Pedagogy." *Computers and Composition* 55:102544. doi:10.1016/j.compcom.2020.102544
- Findley, Carter Vaughn. 2010. "Turkey, Islam, Nationalism, and Modernity." in *Turkey, Islam, Nationalism, and Modernity*. Yale University Press.
- Genc, Muhammet Fatih. 2018. "Values Education or Religious Education? An Alternative View of Religious Education in the Secular Age, the Case of Turkey." *Education Sciences* 8(4):220. doi:10.3390/educsci8040220
- Gross, Jacob PK. 2015. "Education and Hegemony: The Influence of Antonio Gramsci." Pp. 51-79 in *Beyond Critique*. Routledge.
- Hasanova, Samira. 2018. "A Qualitative Evaluation on Fiqh Education from İmam Hatip High Schools to Theology Faculties." P. 01054 in *SHS Web of Conferences*. Vol. 48. EDP Sciences. doi:10.1051/shsconf/20184801054
- Junaedi, Mahfud. 2016. "Imam Hatip School (Imam Hatip Lisesi): Islamic School in Contemporary Secular Turkey." *Analisa: Journal of Social Science and Religion* 1(1):121-38. doi:10.18784/analisa.v1i1.219
- K. P., Manojan. 2019. "Capturing the Gramscian Project in Critical Pedagogy: Towards a Philosophy of Praxis in Education." *Review of Development and Change* 24(1):123-45. doi:10.1177/0972266119831133.
- Karakaya-Stump, Ayfer. 2019. "The AKP, Sectarianism, and the Alevis' Struggle for Equal Rights in Turkey." Pp. 53-67 in *Alevism as an Ethno-Religious Identity*. Routledge. doi:10.4324/9781315105390-4
- Karlıdağ-Dennis, Ecem, Simon McGrath, and Howard Stevenson. 2019. "Educational Policy-Making and Hegemony: Monolithic Voices from Civil Society." *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 40(8):1138-53. doi:10.1080/01425692.2019.1647091.
- Karlıdağ-Dennis, Ecem, Zeynep Temiz, and F. Melis Cin. 2022. "Hegemony and the Neoconservative Politics of Early Education Policymaking." *Children's Geographies* 20(2):220-33. doi:10.1080/14733285.2021.1925874.
- Kirdiş, Esen, and Amina Drhimeur. 2016. "The Rise of Populism? Comparing Incumbent pro-Islamic Parties in Turkey and Morocco." *Turkish*

- Studies* 17(4):599–617.
doi:10.1080/14683849.2016.1242068
- Kocamaner, Hikmet. 2017. “Strengthening the Family through Television: Islamic Broadcasting, Secularism, and the Politics of Responsibility in Turkey.” *Anthropological Quarterly* 675–714. doi:10.1353/anq.2017.0040
- Kocamaner, Hikmet. 2019. “Regulating the Family through Religion: Secularism, Islam, and the Politics of the Family in Contemporary Turkey.” *American Ethnologist* 46(4):495–508. doi:10.1111/amet.12836.
- Mahmood, Saba. 2009. “Religious Reason and Secular Affect: An Incommensurable Divide?” *Critical Inquiry* 35(4):836–62. doi:10.1086/599592
- Margulies, Jared D. 2018. “The Conservation Ideological State Apparatus.” *Conservation and Society* 16(2):181–92. doi:10.4103/cs.cs_16_154
- Mayo, Peter. 2017. “Gramsci, Hegemony and Educational Politics.” Pp. 35–47 in *Antonio Gramsci: A Pedagogy to Change the World*, edited by N. Pizzolato and J. D. Holst. Cham: Springer International Publishing. doi:10.1007/978-3-319-40449-3_2
- Orhan, Mehmet. 2010. “Al-Qaeda: Analysis of the Emergence, Radicalism, and Violence of a Jihadist Action Group in Turkey.” *Turkish Studies* 11(2):143–61. doi:10.1080/14683849.2010.483846
- Övet, Kerem, James Hewitt, and Tahir Abbas. 2022. “Understanding PKK, Kurdish Hezbollah and ISIS Recruitment in Southeastern Turkey.” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 1–21. doi:10.1080/1057610X.2022.2042897
- Özpek, Burak Bilgehan, and Nebahat Tanriverdi Yaşar. 2020. “Populism and Foreign Policy in Turkey under the AKP Rule.” Pp. 30–48 in *Islamism, Populism, and Turkish Foreign Policy*. Routledge.
- Pak, Soon-Yong. 2004. “Articulating the Boundary between Secularism and Islamism: The Imam-Hatip Schools of Turkey.” *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 35(3):324–44. doi:10.1525/aeq.2004.35.3.324
- Prayuda, Rendi. 2019. “Diplomasi Dan Power: Sebuah Kajian Analisis.” *Journal of Diplomacy and International Studies* 2(01):80–93. doi:10.25299/jdis.2019.vol2(01).4429
- Rutz, Henry J. 1999a. “The Rise and Demise of Imam-Hatip Schools: Discourses of Islamic Belonging and Denial in the Construction of Turkish Civic Culture.” *PoLAR* 22:93. doi:10.1525/pol.1999.22.2.93
- Suprianto, Bibi. 2020. “Revitalization of Islamic Education at the Imam Hatip School in Turkey.” *ATTARBIYAH: Journal of Islamic Culture and Education* 5(1):43–59. doi:10.18326/attarbiyah.v5i1.43-59
- Tarhan, Mehmet. 1996. “Religious Education in Turkey: A Socio-Historical Study of the Imam-Hatip Schools.” PhD Thesis, Temple University.
- Tee, Caroline. 2015. “Islamic Schools in Modern Turkey: Faith, Politics and Education.” *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 21(1/2):221. doi:10.1017/CBO9781139176026.002
- Völker, Katharina. 2012. “Quran and Reform: Rahman, Arkoun, Abu Zayd.” PhD Thesis, University of Otago.
- Weber, Eugen. 2012. “Imam-Hatip Schools within a Secular State.” *Islamic Schools in Modern Turkey: Faith, Politics, and Education*. Cambridge University Press.

- Yaşar, Aysun. 2020. "Reform in Islamic Education and the AKP's Pious Youth in Turkey." *Religion & Education* 47(4):106–20. doi:10.1080/15507394.2020.1828232.
- Yavuz, M. Hakan, and Ahmet Erdi Öztürk. 2019. "Turkish Secularism and Islam under the Reign of Erdoğan." *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 19(1):1–9. doi:10.1080/14683857.2019.1580828.
- Yilmaz, Ihsan. 2018. "Islamic Populism and Creating Desirable Citizens in Erdogan's New Turkey." *Mediterranean Quarterly* 29(4):52–76. doi:10.1215/10474552-7345451
- Zengin, Mahmut, and Abdurrahman Hendek. 2023. "The Future of Imam Hatip Schools as a Model for Islamic Education in Türkiye." *Religions* 14(3):375. doi:10.3390/rel14030375