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Hiba Irmak Kır

## RETHINKING RELIGION AND NATIONALISM: RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS AS NATIONAL SYMBOLS IN RUSSIA AND TURKEY

For two decades, Russia and Turkey have experienced important economic and political changes and have been perceived as important actors in the regional and international arena. Although Russia and Turkey have different state capacities and different ethno-religious backgrounds, for almost two decades, they have undergone a conservative recovery under the leadership of Putin and Erdoğan. Both Putin and Erdoğan, in accordance with their parties, have presented reactionary and national values to evoke victories and values of the national history, along with a powerful imagination of the present and future. Even though they have used multiple strategies to fulfill their conservative political aspirations, religion and religious symbols have been significant tools to accomplish their political projects.

Both Russia and Turkey have complicated histories in terms of religious symbols and their manifestations in public space. While Turkey had multiple debates about the role of religion in a secular state, Russia encountered a severe state-atheism under the rule of the Soviet Union (The Geopolitics 2018). Though, neither Erdoğan nor Putin describe their political parties as religiously motivated groups, they have diligently mobilized multiple religious symbols for both their domestic and international policies. As recently constructed religious buildings, the Main Cathedral of Russian Armed Forces (Cathedral of Resurrection of Christ) in Russia and the Çamlıca Mosque in Turkey have become important monumental structures, which demonstrate the reconciliation of national configuration with religious symbolization.

This comparative research aims to explore the relationship between religion and nationalism in Russia and Turkey through the perspective of cultural capacities, which are shaped by fusion of religious

symbols and national identifications. The main focus of this research is to display the triadic relationship among the dominant ideology of the state, national identity and position of religion through analyzing the state discourses, national motivations and religious emblems. This research also seeks to understand how religious symbols and national identifications are combined and instrumentalized to serve the political agenda of the leaders and how nationalism and religion provide the necessary repertoires for political discourses and actions, as well.

This research might also be helpful to observe the similarities between the strategies of Russia and Turkey in combining the religious and national symbols. Religious buildings are appropriate for this research because they have gained a noteworthy interest, for Russia and Turkey, by their architectural design, budget of construction and their role in the public sphere.

Another objective of this research is to elucidate new functions of the religious buildings that become not only a place of worship, but also a location of manifesting national sentiments and inducing national nostalgia. These enormous buildings also represent a space of spectacle for a collective memory of the nation. Neither the Cathedral of Russian Armed Forces nor the Çamlıca Mosque are built only for religious motivations; they provide different representations and memory spaces for both the nations of Russia and Turkey. Along with the mingling of religious and national values, these buildings also provide a significant place of remembrance by their museums and memorial structures, which bridge the gap between the national and religious dimensions of the state and its mindset and develop a new vision of a society in accompany with historical narratives of power and success.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The complicated relationship between religion and nationalism has been a controversial issue in different contexts. While some scholars have pointed to the tension between religious sentiments and national values, others have interpreted this relationship by the term of continuity rather than a severe

rupture by analyzing their different materials and rituals. This paper focuses on the functionalist approach and intends to accentuate its deficiencies and obstacles by the help of the analyses of the Çamlıca Mosque and the Cathedral of Russian Armed Forces.

Emil Durkheim, as a prominent sociologist, contributed to the field by his functionalist approach toward analyses of religion and collective representations. Durkheim concentrated on worldly and social aspects of the religion and perceived it as an instrument of social solidarity (Malczewski 2018, 42). Durkheim claimed that modernity presents secular rituals and generates its own narratives of survival that are entangled in communal eternity and salvation (Alexander 2003, 8). Durkheim (1995) in his outstanding study, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, described the importance of collective rituals as sources of solidarity. According to him, modernity has provided new symbols that are intertwined with secular values and discourses that eventually aims to satisfy the need of solidarity.

In addition to Durkheim's interpretations of religion and modernity, Carlton Hayes (1960) expanded Durkheim's analysis of religious rituals and evinced the connection between religion and nationalism. According to his own view, in modern era, nationalism replaces religion and presents new set of rituals and narratives for the society. He contended, "Nationalism like any religion, calls into play not simply the will, but the intellect, the imagination and the emotions" (1960, 164). Hayes argued that nationalism serves as a substitute for religion by appealing directly to emotions and replaces the religious rituals by introducing its own rituals. Symbols such as flags, anthems and national ceremonies are ascribed to modern and national practices that reformulate the sense of solidarity within a community. His views laid the foundations of the functionalist approach, which claims that religion is replaced by nationalism under the sway of modernity and the secularization process (Casanova 1994, 18). For the functionalists, nationalism is perceived as a modern religion that appeals to the basic call for social salvation and communal perpetuation by means of its own representations and practices (Llobera 2020). Although their contributions are salient to evaluate the role of modernity and nationalism in construction

of alternative forms of solidarity, they paralyze the possibility of analyzing idiosyncratic attributes of religion and nationalism. Both religion and nationalism have their own social, cultural and historical backgrounds that correspond to different individual and social emotions, motivations and aspirations. Additionally, this way of reading is strictly confined to Eurocentric understanding of history. The historical path of modern secularization along with political nationalism, cannot encapsulate the general relationship between religion and nationalism and lead to universalization of a particular European experience (Casanova 1994, 26).

Another sociologist of religion, Genevieve Zubrzycki (2010) has dedicated her studies for re-examination of the nexus between religion and nationalism. She conducted case studies in Poland and Quebec and observed different links between religious and national realms. She underscored the importance of state discourses and practices in constructing the relationship between the religion and nationalism. She also displayed that some symbols- in Poland- are not only secularized under the national-modern order, but they are resacralized as national (2006, 219). Her articulation leads to a more broad and comprehensive perspective to understand the dynamic and multifaceted connection of religion and nationalism. Her research has also contributed to underline the significance of collective symbols as a battlefield of different actors, narratives and relations. Symbols are in permanent motion and they are reconstructed or rearranged by different religious and national motives, actions and discourses (2010, 619). Zubrzycki's diligent argumentations lay a significant foundation for a new perspective of the nexus between religion and nationalism. Although she mostly focused on the Catholic representations, this paper aims to reveal that her arguments are valid for different contexts, as well.

## THE STORY OF ÇAMLICA MOSQUE

Turkey, since its foundation in 1923, has experienced long debates about the position of religion in public space. Its imperial past and the role of religion in constructing the central legitimacy of the Ottoman dynasty unleashed different problems about the role of religion in political, legal and social

aspects of the new state. The new Republic of Turkey was identified as a secular and national state leaving its multiethnic and caliphal state in the past (Çınar 2005). Nevertheless, the control of religious affairs was essential for the state in order to stabilize the population and homogenize it under the identity of Turkishness and Sunni Islam. Although the state was defined in secular terms, founders were aware of the importance of a homogeneous population, which facilitates the sense of nationhood and political control (Ulutaş 2010). The Directorate of Religious Affairs, which was founded in 1924, has enabled the management of religious issues and standardized the understanding of religion by the state.

Turkey's official understanding of secular and national state has been challenged by different symbolic debates pertaining to the public space. Turkey's public space was always perceived as a manifestation of western values and Turkish secular and national codes, thoroughly apart from religious symbols (Çınar 2005, 100). However especially from 1990s onward, due to the rise of Islamist movements and their mobilization as political parties (especially the Welfare Party), Turkey has witnessed new debates about the public space and its secular symbols. The intensity of the debates rose when JDP (Justice and Development Party) won the 2002 elections without any coalition. Even though JDP claimed its loyalty to the republican and secular premises of the Turkish states, it has reiterated Welfare Party's claims in terms of the control of the public space (Çınar 2005, 13). The construction of multiple mosques has been the most important issue that raised controversial voices by the secular elites. According to Alev Çınar, since 1994, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has always emphasized the importance of Istanbul as the capital of the Ottoman Empire and the symbol of Islamic values. When he became the mayor of Istanbul, one of his initial projects was the construction of a mosque in Taksim Square (2005, 113). This decision was noteworthy because Taksim Square has been the center of secular and national Istanbul and his project has shifted the dominancy between secularism and Islamic values in the public space.

In the last two decades, there has been a crucial proliferation in mosque constructions all over Turkey. Different scales of mosque projects have taken place in Istanbul, as well (Batuman 2016). None of them can be as important and enormous as the Çamlıca Mosque project. In 2010, the government applied to the International Union of Architects (IUA) to construct a new aerial center for TV and radio. However IUA inspected the Çamlıca area and they reported that antenna poles must be removed from the hill and cannot be constructed in order to protect the natural and historical texture of the Çamlıca Hill (Mimarlık 2012). In spite of this report, in 2012 different news were released by media organs about the possibility of a grand mosque construction on Çamlıca Hill. Although the incumbent minister of culture denied the news, in 2012, a specific land was enclosed by the municipality for the special project of Çamlıca Hill and an architectural competition was designed by the officials to build a great mosque (Dünya Bülteni 2012). This announcement brought about multiple critiques by architectures and secular intellectuals as well as some conservative, Islamist intellectuals. A prominent architect Uğur Tanyeli stated that: “A competition with Ottoman mosques is a futile attempt, eventually, it will result in a copy of an Ottoman mosque” (Arkitera 2012).

On the other hand, the winner of the competition and architect of Çamlıca mosque, Hacı Mehmet Güner insisted on the importance of grandness of the new mosque and he claimed that minarets of the mosque will be the tallest among the world mosques (Milliyet 2012). The mosque was planned as a great “Selatin mosque” in terms of architecture and magnitude. Selatin mosque is a concept that refers to the mosques that are commissioned by the Ottoman emperors as a symbol of sovereignty and legitimacy (Özbek 2008). Also, Çamlıca mosque is a significant example not only in terms of ostentation, but also in terms of symbolic representation of imperial past and national values. The diameter of the central dome is 34 meters to represent Istanbul and the length is 72 meters to symbolize the 72 millets (ethnic groups) who live in Istanbul. 16 names of Allah are written on the inner surface of the dome to represent the 16 Turkic states. Additionally, the length of four minarets are 107,1 to symbolize the war of Manzikert (Anadolu Ajansı 2019). The War of Manzikert has been portrayed as a momentous battle for Turkish

national history that opened the doors of Anatolia for Turks and undermined the Byzantine tutelage. Concerning the ornaments, the important detail is the use of turquoise color for carpets that is attributed to Turkishness and use of Turkish-islamic symbols to embellish different sides of the mosque.

Nonetheless, the mosque cannot be perceived as a complete copy of Ottoman mosque tradition. The complex also includes a conference room, library and a museum. What is interesting is that unlike the traditional Ottoman design of the mosque, these parts of the complex are extremely modern in terms of the design and layout. The museum of the mosque is aimed to present different ethnic and religious historical materials. Also, the inner design of the mosque is organized in a way that it facilitates the visit of both worshippers and other visitors. By the help of a wooden front, the inner area is separated for visitors who come to pray and to see the inner design of the mosque.

#### THE STORY OF THE CATHEDRAL OF RUSSIAN ARMED FORCES

Two decades ago, Russia's public space was defined by socialist values that ignored the religious institutions and their visibility within the public space. The ideological outlines of Soviet Union necessitated a strong program of state atheism. After the revolution, church properties were confiscated and public manifestation of religion was strongly prohibited (Nikiforenko 2015, 314). This ban led to privatization of religious rituals and hindered the public visibility of multiple religious groups in Soviet Union. On the other hand, during the Second World War, Stalin noticed the importance of Orthodox church in terms of mobilization and solidarity and he allowed the election of a new patriarch and the inauguration of several churches (Walters 1986, 139). Although the state's tolerance toward religion changed according to different leaders and events, the public space was determined by ultra secular and national representations of Soviet Union and the display of religious institutions was problematized through anti-religious campaigns.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russian constitution was arranged according to secular premises. However, in contrast to the Soviet order, religious institutions regained their freedom and the places of worship were reopened. Since Russia has a heterogeneous population in terms of religion (Muslims, Jews, Catholic Christians, Paganists and Tengrists) , the state discourse underlined the freedom of conscience and favored the pluralism of the community (Bykova 2004, 36). Nevertheless, the authoritarian leadership of Putin has paved the way to a decline in religious freedom and provided more space for Russian Orthodox Church (Warhola 2007). In recent years, his alliance with the Russian Orthodox Church has increased the public display of Orthodox Christianity and directed Russia to a more mono-cultural, politico-social entity (Anderson 2016).

The public display of Orthodox Church can be traced in construction of cathedrals in different cities of Russia (The Moscow Times 2019). Yet, the Patriarchal Cathedral of Russian Armed Forces ( also known as, Cathedral of Resurrection of Christ) represents an important project in Moscow Oblast. The cathedral was erected to commemorate the victory of the Great Patriotic War (1941-45). The church was planned regarding the Russian style that is accompanied with modern elements of design and building materials. The outer front was covered by metal and glazed immense arches, which shows the modern perspective of the memorial building. Currently, the floors of the cathedral are covered by metals to symbolize the tanks and weapons of the war. Similar to Çamlıca mosque, some sizes are symbolically arranged. For instance, the diameter of the drum of the chief dome is 19,45 meters to signify the end of the war. Additionally, the height of the belfry is 75 meters to symbolize the anniversary of the triumph (Architizer 2020). The walls are decorated by the mosaics of saints, famous commanders and soldiers. Another significance of the memorial church is that it has a modern museum, which is designed through visual technology and includes images from the war. The Patriarch of Moscow defines the church as: "It is intended not only to immortalize the memory of dead heroes but also to become a visible symbol of the strength of the Russian Army's spirit, its selfless service to the people and the Motherland," (Anadolu Ajansı 2020).



The cathedral represents the victory of the Imperial Russian army through various images and materials that intend to create a sense of pride and heroism against the enemy of the nation. A quotation from a guide clearly proves this intention: “ Think of this as you step into the cathedral. As you walk across the floors, you are symbolically delivering a blow to the fascist enemy” (The Guardian 2020). The cathedral has also been a subject of debate because of its mosaics. At first, Putin was also depicted next to the historical figures and it raised a lot of criticism. Although the government defended the mosaic, later Putin requested officials to remove his mosaic from the mural (Architizer 2020).

## THE COEXISTENCE OF MUSEUMS AND THE PLACES OF WORSHIP

According to Ernest Renan: “The nation, like the individual, is the culmination of a long past of endeavours, sacrifice and devotion. Of all cults, that of the ancestors is the most legitimate, for the ancestors have made us what we are. A heroic past, great men, glory...” (1998, 7). As regards, museums have been considered as significant representations of the nation that hold the nation's spiritual, revered past and present. Museums are arranged to solidify the national existence by carrying the message of solidarity through representation of historical heroism. According to Benedict Anderson, museums function as the narrators of national history, which strengthens the national identity and erases the alternative narration (Calhoun 2016). Another scholar, Pierre Nora (1992) in his masterpiece “Realms of Memory”, articulates the importance of memory spaces in construction and reconstruction of national identity. According to Nora, the modern nation-state plants its own secular rituals that are sacralized and embodied by memory spaces like monuments and museums (1992, 3). Hence, museums are not only symbols of the national identity, but also sacred spaces of secular and modern traditions. Spaces of collective memory is shaped by national-secular-modern prism that sacralizes the spaces in order to generate new forms of solidarity. Nora’s interpretations can be attributed to Durkheimian impacts of secular-modern rituals on construction of national memory. Besides, museums also exhibit the capacity of

a nation state in terms of cultural power. They delineate that the state has the potential and ability to protect the historical and local remnants, which give the state an opportunity to create a narrative that legitimize its own power as protector of the past. Hence, museums and memorial spaces cannot be associated only with the past but they also form a link with the present (Anderson 2006, 253).

Both Russia and Turkey provide noteworthy historical instances in order to understand the museums as representations of national-secular memory sites. The transformation of Hagia Sophia from a mosque into a museum, after the formation of Turkish Republic, was a significant event that brought about multiple debates. Hagia Sophia has been a subject of a long dispute between supporters of Byzantine and Ottoman heritage (Çınar 2005, 111). Converting Hagia Sophia into a museum was an important movement to erase the Ottoman heritage, which is associated with imperial and caliphal past. The Museum of Hagia Sophia signified a new beginning with national and secular premises of the republic and was protected as a remnant of both Byzantine and Ottoman past. By this way, the political side of the monument was nullified and it became an object of a new and more secular ritual.

On the other hand, Russia has a different story which demonstrates the binary opposition between church and museum clearly. After the formation of the Soviet Union, anti-religious movements took place in a severe fashion and churches were closed by the decree of the state. Under the compulsion of the state, the cathedrals that had historical and cultural values were transformed into museums, (Nikiforenko 2015). Cathedrals and churches took a more profane shape and function as museums, where the church remainders were exhibited. The mutated cathedrals also served as memory spaces for the Soviet nation. These new museums were designed to represent the glorious military victories and the political successes of the state and became the center of the national identity rather than the religious one.

These examples show the dichotomy between museums and the places of worship under the light of the opposition of religion and nationalism. Museums have been the sign of secular and modern order

and they have been considered as a necessary space to secularize the sacred culture and heritage. Esra Özyürek claims that : “ ... nostalgia has been an integral part of modernity” (2006, 9). As regards, museums invoke a nostalgic emotion within the borders of modern legacy. Nevertheless, the Çamlıca Mosque and the Cathedral of the Russian Armed Forces present a different narrative of religion and nationalism. In two cases, places of worship coexist with the museums, inside the same complex.

While the church and the mosque rely on traditional architecture, the museums of both places are designed in an extremely modern way. This reconciliation of museum and place of worship provides an alternative understanding of the relationship between religion and nationalism. Rather than focusing on the binary oppositions of sacred/profane, traditional/modern, religious/national; the visitors experience hybrid feelings. Another issue is that not only museums, but also the places of worship represent the national identity and history. Mosaics within the Cathedral of the Russian Armed Forces evidently display that the cathedral is not designed only as a place of worship, but also as a memorial building that carries the message of national values. Also the Çamlıca Mosque, through its national symbols and its special arrangement for the visitors who are apart from the worshippers, appeals to the national sentiments and tries to evoke a national nostalgia by promoting the Turkish-Islamic past. In contrast to the functionalist approach that differentiates between the religious and national rituals, these buildings also serve as a bulwark of the national values that are legitimized and sacralized through the historical events and experiences. In this context, places of worship also function as memory sites that basically celebrate national survival and become the object of national rituals.

Furthermore, the Cathedral of Russian Armed Forces combines both traditional and modern elements of the architecture. Beside the architectural design, the murals of the soldiers differ from the mainstream, traditional church ornamentations. Additionally, the museum and the library within the Çamlıca Mosque show that the Çamlıca Mosque cannot be understood only as a copy of the Ottoman architecture. Even though the architectural design of the mosque resembles the Ottoman architectural

tradition, the ground floors of the mosque are designed in modern parking lots, a museum, a library and conference rooms. All of these examples demonstrate that these buildings are not only symbols of reconciliation of religion and nationalism but also emblems of the amalgamation of tradition and modernity.

According to Zubrzycki, the transformation from sacralization to secularization does not follow a linear line. Her book, *The Crosses of Auschwitz* indicates that in post-Communist period of Poland, the cross was first secularized and eventually, it was resacralized as a national emblem (2006, 219). Rather than sacralization of the secular rituals and symbols- as Nora demonstrates- religious symbols might be secularized and then they can appropriate a sacred-secular meaning through national identifications. The cases of Çamlıca Mosque and Cathedral of Russian Armed Forces, corroborate Zubrzycki's articulations and represent a particular version of sacred-secular symbolization. In this case, the places of worship are secularized and resacralized as national. They are secularized because they not only address the worshippers, but through their secular spatial order, they also intend to attract the secular visitors and they form a more secular-modern image. On the other hand, these places of worship, which are assumed as sacred due to their religious function, are resacralized as national symbols through multiple national designs, discourses and rituals. As regards, multiple historical narratives and symbols are attached to evoke national sentiments. With respect to Zubrzycki's framework, both the Çamlıca mosque and the Cathedral of Russian Armed Forces propose a different understanding of sacred-secular duality that results in the fusion of religion and nationalism.

#### THE ROLE OF THE STATE:

Zubrzycki argues that the relationship between religion and nationalism cannot be interpreted as a dyadic relationship. Their link must be reexamined through the role of the political realm (2010, 613). Both in Russia and Turkey, statehood plays a crucial part in identifying the nexus between religion and nationalism. Though Both Erdoğan and Putin have been the heads of their governments for two decades,

this paper aims to focus on the last ten years of their administration in order to clearly manifest the role of religion and nationalism in recent years in Russia and Turkey.

Even if Turkey has a relatively stronger democracy than Russia, leaders of the both countries have more authoritarian inclinations (Carnegie Europe 2013). Turkey, especially after the Gezi movement in 2013 and the coup attempt in 2016, have witnessed an increased mark of state control. After the referendum (2017) and the election of presidency (2018), scholars have asserted that Erdoğan is trying to create a state-centric government that leads to a new form of power structure (Özyürek & Özpınar & Altındış 2019). The discourses of the state have changed according to these state-centric policies. Particularly, after the failed coup in 2016, the state has appropriated more national discourses along with religious symbols. The preachers, in Friday sermons, started underscoring the importance of the nation and used different national discourses. Erdoğan's political alliance with the Nationalist Movement party has strengthened this religio-national discourses and converted it to a quasi-official ideology of the state (Rogenhofer 2018). Çamlıca Mosque, which was officially planned in 2013 and constructed between 2013 and 2019, overlapped with this religio-national discourses. In the opening ceremony of the Çamlıca Mosque, Erdoğan stated that: "We are in the comfort of erecting the biggest mosque of Turkey. This place is also a social complex, not only a mosque. With its exhibition and conference rooms and Turkish-Islamic museum, this place is a great complex" (Sputnik News 2019). Apparently, for the state, the mosque brings the past, present and the future together, by its traditional and modern designs. The mosque can be construed as the place of remembrance, representation of the present power of the state and projection of ideals of the Turkish nation, simultaneously.

The state's relationship with the religious institutions have always been complicated in the Turkish context. Although the state was founded by secular values, the state has always tried to control religious affairs (Özyürek & Özpınar & Altındış 2019, 80). The last ten years of Turkey has witnessed a more nostalgic understanding of religion pertaining to the glorious Ottoman past. The Turco-Islamic

legacy has been promoted through different visual representations in architecture, art and tv shows (Foreign Policy 2020). The state has instrumentalized religious repertoires for different politico-national motivations and it has used the state organs to propagate a certain understanding of religion, which is thoroughly appropriated to the state's agenda.

On the other hand, Russia as a state has a short past with a great history of its predecessors. The Soviet Union was a buttress of the socialist ideology and a significant political power of the twentieth century. Its sudden collapse brought about different debates about sustaining the solidarity and harmony of the new state. Russia has a more heterogeneous religious and ethnic population than Turkey and it necessitates more inclusive policies about minority communities. Although in the first years of the presidency Putin preferred a more multicultural understanding of governance, owing to different conflicts with Chechnya, Georgia and Ukraine, the Russian state has taken more aggressive steps toward the minorities (Warhola 2007, 76). Additionally, between 2011-2013 rumours about vote fraud caused mass rallies and thousands of people remonstrated against the Putin administration. These events precipitated different penalties and forms of suppression toward the protestors and revealed the strident face of the state (Voice of America 2011). Above all, Putin's main motivation can be clarified as the stabilization of the state, propagation of national values and society and reinstating Russia's historical power (Carnegie Europe 2013). Recent policies of the Russian Government also display that Putin transformed the Russian multicultural policies to assimilationist ground by centralizing steps (Şentürk 2015, 292).

Russia also differs from Turkey in respect to the control on religion. Whereas Turkey has a state organ in order to administer the religious affairs, Russia does not have any official body for it. Nonetheless, Russia has its unique interaction with religious communities, which present a more statist understanding of religion (Uzell 2004) . According to Russian law, Orthodox Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Buddhism are assumed as traditional religions of Russian state (Bourdeaux 2003, 46). However, according to John Anderson, this pluralist perspective of religion does not depict a horizontal frame, but a

vertical one. Orthodox Christianity has the highest rank because of its historical importance and numerical superiority (2016, 251). Even though the majority of Russian Orthodox Christians do not practice their religion properly, they associate themselves with Orthodoxy. However, in Putin's Russia, the state's relationship with religious institutions might be interpreted as a pragmatic and reciprocal interaction (Uzell 2004). While Putin constantly repeats that Russia is a secular state, he also identifies the Orthodox Church as the heart of the Russian culture (Anderson 2016, 251). With respect to this, the church has also aligned with the state discourses in order to consolidate its influence. For instance, when the Putin administration drifted apart from the democratic route, the Orthodox Church condemned democracy and emphasized the significance of a national, united society (Anderson 2016, 256). Also, the Patriarch Kirill praised Putin several times and described him as a "miracle of God" (Reuters 2012). On the other hand, although Putin does not use religious discourses as frequently as Erdoğan, he seems satisfied by the church's discourses and support and he perceives the Orthodox Church as an important glue for the Russian nation (Yapıcı 2016).

Despite the fact that Russia and Turkey have different socio-political structures, the recent years of the two states have undergone a statist approach that is in tune with the national impetus and nostalgia. Nationalism and elements of national construction are capable of being modified and restructured through different motivations, symbols, narratives and practices. Nationalism, by way of explanation, is the constant capacity of reconstructing and rearranging the discourses and practices of unification, separation and categorization (Verdery 1993, 43). For this reason, nationalism has always been instrumentalized by the political discourses. Both Russia and Turkey, in spite of their differences, have witnessed an ossified statist approach that is fortified by national glimpse. Ironically, although both Russia and Turkey try to emphasize their own particular history and present power, they use the same national tactics to achieve their goals, which mark the power of national strategies.

According to Zubrzycki, politics has an essential role in shaping the link between religion and nationalism. Political discourses are able to create new narratives that either combine religion and nationalism or generate a tension between them. For her, “Religious symbols and stories instead provided a vocabulary and grammar to speak of the nation and its mission” (2010, 613). So, not only nationalism is a subject of instrumentalization, but also religion because religious symbols are also instrumentalized and politicized. As Friedland states: “The sacred is a cultural language of power” (1998, 146). Hence, the decision of sacredness is always produced or endorsed by political will and power. As a result, narratives, symbols and rituals, which are representations of political power, appear as legitimizing factors of the political realm. Not only do they act to validate the political power, but they also shape it because the power always needs an instrument to signify and to be signified (Friedland 1998). Religious and national symbols bring about socially established and confirmed tools that can construct new codes of power and set the boundaries of representational authority. For instance, the historical significance of Selatin mosques has shaped the understanding of power representations in Turkey and provided a solid grammar of political power. Additionally, building cathedrals in Russia cannot be deemed merely as a providing religious service, but symbol that created its own repertoires that symbolizes the resurrection of religious identity and a ground for linkage between religious awakening and national revival of Russia.

Notwithstanding their particularities, the Çamlıca Complex and the Cathedral of Russian Armed Forces are materialized versions of political power, above all. They are clear representations of instrumentalization of symbolic realm by the state. While their architectural magnificence signifies the state power, their specific sacred-secular design clarifies the religio-national discourses along with sacralization of the political past. Nevertheless, this triadic relationship of state, religion and nationalism is a corresponding relationship; because in turn, both religion and nationalism provide certain repertoires



and elements that legitimize the political power and vice versa, both religion and nationalism might be consequential in production and construction of necessary tools to entrench the cultural sway of politics.

#### CONCLUSION:

Both the Çamlica Mosque and the Cathedral of the Russian Armed Forces, are recently built places of worship and they basically display the religious and national discourses of contemporary Turkey and Russia. Erdoğan and Putin's administration have reconstructed a more conservative path in company with cultural and national values. As regards, the Çamlica Mosque and Cathedral of Russian Armed Forces are also the representations of the state discourse that pave the way to a union of religious symbols and national recognition. Both the mosque and the cathedral encompass modern/traditional, secular/sacred and religious/national elements that generate a different understanding of religion and nationalism. According to the functionalist approach, modernity leads to a secular self-identification and solidarity, rather than a religious identification (Zubrzycki 2010, 608) . The functionalists have perceived the nation and its narratives and rituals as a substitute for religious discourses. This paper follows Zubrzycki's arguments and exhibits that the relationship between religion and nationalism does not pursue a linear, fixed path, but it implies a more complicated and fluctuating linkage. In this context, religious symbols can also be the transmitters of national values and narratives.

Also this paper claims that the relationship between religion and nationalism can and must be evaluated by analyzing the state discourses and practices. As Friedland asserts, geographical spaces are not only subjects of material power but they also manifest the symbolic positionings (1998, 146). With respect to this, the mosque and cathedral can be interpreted as symbolic adaptation of political discourses that are produced by the dominant political power. Furthermore, this paper can be an important contribution to elaborate on the similar strategies of the states in instrumentalization of nationalism and religion, apart from their political, social and cultural differences. State power acts as a main actor that instrumentalizes and manipulates the national and religious myths and rituals.

Additionally this paper underscores the role of memory sites in the construction of the nexus between religion and nationalism. In this case, the places of worship are not designed only for religious purposes, but they also appeal to the secular visitors through their function as the providers of nostalgic, triumphant history. Under the umbrella of the national past, the places of worship are also transformed into secular spaces that promote certain national representations and memories. Through their specific architectural designs and modern museums, they conjure up a new apprehension of religio-national manifestation.

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