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Between 'Turkish Islam' and 'French Islam': The Role of the *Diyanet* in the *Conseil Français du Culte Musulman*

Zana Çitak

This article discusses the role of the Directorate of Religious Affairs in Turkey—the Diyanet—in the French Council for Muslim Religion (Conseil Français du Culte Musulman or CFCM). The Diyanet-linked Coordination Committee of Muslim Turks in France (Comité de Coordination des Musulmans Turcs de France, or CCMTF) was one of the constitutive federations of the CFCM, confirming its status as 'the' interlocutor for the French state in its relations with the Turkish Muslim community. I argue in this paper that this is mainly for two reasons. First, the Turkish government uses the Diyanet as a foreign-policy instrument, promoting 'Turkish Islam' as a moderate and rational religion, compatible with modernity and as a model for 'European' or 'French Islam'. The Diyanet presents itself as the legitimate representative of Muslims of Turkish origin in France, excluding other organisations as radicals. Secondly, the Turkish Muslim community in France still displays loyalty to Turkey in terms of social organisation. The paternalistic attitude of the Turkish state, the immigrants' search for protection of the country of origin, nationality divisions within the CFCM and the long-standing habit of the French state to deal with its Muslim community through foreign governments help to explain the continuing importance of the Diyanet for the Turkish Muslim community and in the CFCM.

Keywords: Turkey; France; Diyanet; CFCM; 'Turkish Islam'

In the post-Cold War world, there has been increasing debate on the role of religion in politics and international relations. While religious fundamentalist movements have been considered as the most explicit manifestation of the increasing role of religion in politics, the assertion of religious identities in the public sphere and the

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assumption by various religions of a public role in many countries led many scholars to revisit secularisation theories. Such theories had predicted a progressive and irreversible decline of religion in social life with the advance of modernisation (Berger 1969, 2000; Casanova 1994; Luckmann 1967; Stark 1999; Wilson 1966). In fact, the field of international relations, which has been considered the realm of secular relations among sovereign states *par excellence* since the Westphalia settlement of 1648, is recently examined under a new light, in order to recover the ‘forgotten’ or ‘neglected’ role of religion (Byrnes and Katzenstein 2006; Carlson and Owens 2003; Haynes 1998; Hurd 2007; Johnston and Sampson 1994; Petit and Hatzopoulos 2003; Philpott 2000; Thomas 2005). A corollary of this tendency is a renewed interest in understanding the role of religion in foreign policy.

Since the early 1980s, Turkish governments have demonstrated an unmistakable interest in immigrants of Turkish origin in Europe. The principal instrument in influencing and controlling the Turkish immigrants there has been the Directorate of Religious Affairs in Turkey (*Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı*, hereafter *Diyanet*). Turkish immigrants in Europe established mosque associations involving a variety of cultural activities among the members. The linkage between these associations and Turkey has been provided by the Turkish-Islamic Association of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet İşleri Türk-İslam Birliği*, hereafter DİTİB) or the *Diyanet* Foundations (*Diyanet Vakıfları*). In other words, the DİTİB is the formal structure through which the *Diyanet* organises its associations and prayer places in Europe.

This study focuses on the role of the *Diyanet* in the French Council for Muslim Religion (*Conseil Français du Culte Musulman*)—henceforth CFCM. Established in May 2003 by the then Minister of the Interior, Nicolas Sarkozy, the Coordination Committee of Muslim Turks in France, or CCMTF, with its organic links to the DİTİB, not only has two representatives on the governing board of the CFCM, but the President of the CCMTF is now also its General Secretary. Thus, the CCMTF was able to place itself as one of the four most important federations representing Muslims in France, largely outweighing the number and significance of Muslims of Turkish origin (450,000, about 8 per cent) in the overall Muslim population in France (about 5 million).

This paper has two major arguments: the first is that the Turkish government uses the *Diyanet* as an instrument of foreign policy, revealing a continuity in Turkish foreign policy, since the early 1980s, regarding the use of religion as a policy tool. It also highlights a renewed assertion of the *Diyanet* in France in the post-9/11 world. Having promoted ‘Turkish Islam’ as a model or inspiration for Muslims in the world and in Europe, Turks now feel justified by the fact that their brand of Islam, with its purported qualities of moderation, rationality and secularism, has proved itself in the aftermath of 9/11. Thus, ‘Turkish Islam’ is being sponsored as a ‘benign’ form of Islam—compatible with both modernity and multiculturalism, unlike its extremist rivals in Shiite Iran or Wahhabi Saudi Arabia. Hence, in their dialogue with the French public authorities, both the CCMTF and the DİTİB speak from a position of strength and with a newly found self-confidence.

The second major argument of this paper is that the examination of the *Diyanet*'s role in the CFCM demonstrates the extent to which the Turkish Muslim immigrants in France are still loyal to Turkey in terms of their social organisation. There are three factors that explain the survival of such an allegiance: Firstly, the Turkish state still retains a paternalistic attitude *vis-à-vis* Turkish immigrants. Secondly, the immigrants themselves seek the protection of the Turkish state, though this phenomenon tends to fade away with the second and third generations. And thirdly, notwithstanding its duty to bring all French Muslims under the same rubric, the CFCM is the battleground for Muslim communities of different national origins in France, a problem exacerbated by the attitude of the French state, which still makes use of its old habit of dealing with foreign governments in matters related to its Muslim community.

Based on field research—in Turkey from February to May 2007 and in France in June 2007—this paper will first examine the role of the *Diyanet* in France. It will then scrutinise the institutionalisation of Islam in France and the nature of the CFCM, before finally analysing the role of the *Diyanet* in this new Muslim representative body.

The *Diyanet* in France

The *Diyanet* was established in Turkey on 3 March 1924, the same date as the law that abrogated the Caliphate. It was attached to the Office of the Prime Minister and designed as an administrative institution in charge of a public service (Tarhanlı 1993), 'rather than the supreme spiritual authority of a religious community' (Berkes 1998: 485). It was in charge of the administration and maintenance of mosques and the appointment of *imams* and *müezzins* (who were salaried by the state) but was not trusted to administer the education of religious personnel. The Kemalist republic thus established a control regime over religion, whilst simultaneously implementing a series of radical secularising reforms which liberated the state from the last vestiges of religious legitimacy and dependence on religion. The *Diyanet*, however, has seen its fortunes improve under successive Turkish governments, particularly rightist governments after the 1970s. Since the 1980s it has grown considerably in the number of personnel and the size of its budget, the latter overriding that of the Ministry of National Education. This growth in Turkey paralleled its expansion in Europe during this period (Avcı 2005: 208).

There are three main reasons why the Turkish state started to pay more attention to Turkish immigrants in Europe. First, like many host countries, the Turkish state had long considered immigration as a passing phenomenon; only later did it feel the need to help immigrants of Turkish origin to preserve their national and religious traditions (Akgönül 2005). Second, there was also the worrisome realisation by Turkish state elites that years of inactivity had led to the rise and subsequent flourishing of many actors in the host countries who were deemed dangerous by the Turkish state. Thus, when the *Diyanet* began to be actively involved in Europe in the early 1980s, it found itself as a latecomer in the religious market, hitherto dominated

by a wide range of dissident networks such as *Milli Görüş*, *Süleymançıs*, *Kaplançıs* and extremist nationalist groups. As a principle, the Turkish state aimed to combat the influence of these groups, be they on the right of the political spectrum or on the left (Akgönül 2005; Avcı 2005: 208; Landman 1997). The *Diyanet* was therefore expected to meet the need for religious instruction and services in Europe as in secular Turkey. Thirdly, these two realisations described above overlapped with and were influenced by the post-1980 political regime in Turkey, which invented and disseminated a blend of Turkishness and Islam called the ‘Turkish-Islamic Synthesis’ (Çetinsaya 1999; Güvenç *et al.* 1994). This unofficial ideology of both the military government of 1980–83 and the Özal governments throughout the remainder of the 1980s left an indelible mark on the Turkish bureaucracy, most notably in the Ministry of National Education. In the primary- and secondary-school textbooks on history, geography, citizenship and religious culture published by the ministry, one could find the most explicit expression of the synthesis, namely the ‘natural’ association between Turkish and Muslim identities (Landman 1997: 223; Nielsen 1995: 30–1).

The *Diyanet*, despite this rather late engagement and in a context of fierce competition with other organisations and actors, quickly built its own network and emerged as the most important actor in the Turkish immigrants’ religious field in Europe (Landman 1997: 220; Ögelman 2003: 166). It is today in command of the largest network of religious organisations of Turkish origin in both Europe and France, clearly ahead of its closest rival, the *Milli Görüş* movement.¹ The *Diyanet* wields power in this network of associations through the services and funds it provides. The 18 Turkish Consulates for Religious Services (*Din Hizmetleri Müşavirliği*), the first of which was established in Germany in 1978, and 21 Attachés for Religious Services (*Din Hizmetleri Ataşeliği*) in the Turkish embassies and consulates in Europe, the United States and Australia are appointed from the *Diyanet* ticket. The *Diyanet* also exports *imams* to European countries since 1985 through a special funding agency under the control of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the so-called Fund for Advertising Turkish Cultural Heritage Abroad (*Yurtdışında Türk Kültür Varlığını Tanıtma Fonu*). A special branch within the *Diyanet*, the Bureau of Religious Affairs (*Din İşleri Dairesi*), is in charge of Turkish immigrants since 1985 through such organisations as DİTİB.²

The *Diyanet* has now become the principal interlocutor of the French state in its relations with Muslim immigrants of Turkish origin. The first treaty between France and Turkey for sending *imams* was signed in 1991 (Godard and Taussig 2007: 45). Turkey has approximately 100 *imams* in France today—13.5 per cent of all *imams* in France—all serving in Turkish mosques for a period of four years.³ Turkey organised a network of Turkish mosques and associations under the DİTİB in France (Laurence and Vaisse 2007: 150). The chairman of the DİTİB is a *Diyanet*-appointed Counsellor for Religious Services—always a male diplomat accredited to the Embassy of the Turkish Republic in Paris. It was precisely this diplomatic link which obliged the DİTİB in France to reorganise itself as the CCMTF in August 2001 in the process leading to the elections for the CFCM in April 2003. The CFCM was originally designed to be an

institution representing various Muslim civil-society organisations in France. It was therefore necessary for the DÎTÎB in France to underplay its organic link with a foreign government, and restructure as the CCMTF, an ostensibly French civil-society organisation that represents Turkish Muslim immigrants in France in their relations with French public authorities. The Secretary of the DÎTÎB in France, Mr. Haydar Demiryürek, was, at the same time, elected Chairman of the CCMTF, after which the institution became known simultaneously as the DÎTÎB *and* the CCMTF.

The CFCM or the Institutionalisation of Islam in France

Muslims have long enjoyed recognition and the institutional representation of Islam in Bulgaria, Romania and Greece, while West European countries have only addressed a process of institutionalisation—usually understood as the recognition of Islam by state agencies, either officially or unofficially—since the end of the 1990s. This process involves a deliberate effort on the part of some states to establish Muslim representative organisations. This usually takes place within national juridical frameworks and thus can be seen more or less as path-dependent (Bader 2007; Ferrari 2005: 11; Maréchal 2003a: 151). Ante-dating developments in France, representative authorities of national scope were established in Austria in 1979, Spain in 1992 and Belgium in 1999.⁴

The process of recognition and institutionalisation is mostly influenced by the competing forces of representativity and moderation (Caeiro 2005: 73; Maréchal 2003a: 178–81) because, behind the state policies, one finds a combination of different motives. The foremost factor which compelled West European governments to initiate Islamic representative organisations was the recognition of the permanency of the Muslim immigrant populations and the emergence of Islam as one of the largest religions in Europe. This factor alone encouraged governments to ‘harmonise the status of all religions’ and make them sensitive about representation as an extension of democratic values (Maréchal 2003a: 156). In addition, a desire to prevent a ‘clash of civilisations’ within the heart of the continent (Klausen 2005: 42) and placing those organisations under state control (Maréchal 2003a: 156, 176) have also played a role. Muslims in Western Europe accepted these arrangements due to a desire for respect, derived from official or symbolic recognition, even if the whole process was more often than not imposed on them from the top (Klausen 2005: 48). They are also interested in the accompanying legal or financial advantages which vary from one country to another (Maréchal 2003a: 176). For most observers of the various forms of institutionalisation of Islam in Europe and particularly in France, such policies concentrate on the integration of Muslims, which is taken to mean the ‘normalisation’ (De Galembert and Belbah 2005: 76), ‘domestication’ (Bowen 2004: 43) or ‘banalisation’ of Islam, ‘such that Islam will be considered as one religion among others’ (Sevaistre 2005: 66) or, in the words of Nicolas Sarkozy, the ‘dedramatisation of the problem [of Islam]’ (2004: 67).

France is the European country with the largest Muslim population, Islam today effectively constituting the second religion in France. CFCM was the culmination of decade-long efforts (Amiriaux 2003: 24), triggered, in essence, by the need to create an ‘Islam of France’ as opposed to an existing ‘Islam in France’ (Laurence 2005: 38, 40), since the latter was perceived as not sufficiently loyal to or compatible with France’s republican norms, values and institutions. The deliberate state policy of establishing a Muslim representative institution was rooted in three factors. First, there was already an agreement that, because Islam arrived in France later than other religions, it could not benefit from the advantages of the 1905 Law on the Separation of Church and State, which did not allow for the recognition or funding of any religion, but provided some indirect financial benefits to the existing religions—the Catholic, Lutheran and Reformed Protestant, and Jewish faiths. Secondly, all the financial and infrastructural needs of Muslim immigrants regarding Muslim worship were met by foreign governments, especially Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia and Turkey, with whom successive French governments have signed bilateral agreements since the 1980s. In practice, it was these states which sent *imams* to serve their immigrant communities in France. Moreover, transnational Muslim networks and governments, notably that of Saudi Arabia, have provided considerable funding for the construction of mosques and for religious instruction. In other words, Islam in France was under foreign influence due to legal precedent and policy conjectures, and these were rightly seen as the main obstacle to the birth of a ‘French Islam’. Thirdly, there was a widespread perception that the project of integrating Muslims into French society failed due to the malfunction of conventional channels of integration, such as the republic’s state schools. As a result, by the late 1980s religion gave the impression of being a plausible instrument with which the French state could reach out to its Muslims (Laurence 2005: 38–40; Peter 2006).

Beginning with the short-lived (1989–93) Council for Reflection on Islam in France (*Conseil de Réflexion sur l’Islam en France*, or CORIF), the decisive moment came under Jean-Pierre Chevènement, who headed the Ministry of the Interior from June 1997 to August 2000, and who initiated the *Istichara* (Consultation) process from October 1999 onwards. Successive Ministers of the Interior all pursued the *Istichara* and, when Nicolas Sarkozy was appointed as the new minister by Jacques Chirac in June 2002, he used the *Istichara* as the starting-point for the CFCM. The elections for the CFCM in April 2003 resulted in a disappointment for the GMP (*Grande Mosquée de Paris*), the traditional interlocutor of the French state until 1989, and a victory for the *Union des Organisations Islamiques de France* (UOIF)—close to the Muslim Brothers and supported mostly by Moroccans—and for the *Fédération Nationale des Musulmans de France* (FNMF), close to the Moroccan government. These results confirmed the change in the nature of Islam in France, which could no longer be represented by the GMP (Peter 2006: 714).

Nevertheless, the composition of the governing board of the CFCM reflected the pre-electoral compromise reached by Sarkozy and the four biggest federations: the GMP, UOIF, FNMF, and *Diyanet*-led CCMTF (Laurence and Vaïsse 2007: 182).

The president of the CFCM thus became Dalil Boubakeur, Rector of the GMP; the two vice-presidencies went to Fouad Alaoui, Secretary General of the UOIF, and Mohammed Bechari, President of the FNMF, while the coveted position of Secretary General of the CFCM was offered to Haydar Demiryürek, president of the *Diyanet*-led CCMTF. The working principles of the governing board of the CFCM, therefore, could be characterised by the dilemma between representativity and moderation. While the inclusion of the UOIF—perceived as fundamentalist by many observers and public opinion alike—was justified by Sarkozy on the grounds of ‘containment through engagement’ (Caeiro 2005: 74; Sarkozy 2004: 83–92), he was aware of the need to compensate for this strategy by bringing in Boubakeur, a familiar figure acceptable to public opinion. Sarkozy’s plan for consolidating the legitimacy of the CFCM had two targets: the Muslim community in France and public opinion, including both the non-Muslim majority and secular Muslims. Thus, the emergent ‘French Islam’ was to be both representative of French Muslims and suitable to the French conception of *laïcité*.

This dilemma between moderation and representativity was accompanied by an equally significant paradox (Godard and Taussig 2007: 175, 186; Laurence and Vaïsse 2007: 168, 178) characterising the establishment and the subsequent functioning of the CFCM. While one of the major aims of the French state in creating a Muslim representative body was to finally emancipate the Muslim community from foreign influence, the very process that led to the establishment of the CFCM and the appointment of the members of its administrative structure confirmed the continuing influence of foreign governments and transnational networks on the Muslim community and French governments alike (Amghar 2005). In fact, it was the French state, and more particularly Sarkozy himself, who continued to rely on negotiations with foreign ambassadors to make the CFCM possible.

The *Diyanet* and the CFCM

The role of the *Diyanet* in France can be analysed within two principal contexts: religion as a foreign-policy instrument of the Turkish government, and *Diyanet*-linked organisations as the only representatives of the Turkish community in France.

Religion as a Foreign-Policy Instrument

Since 1924, the Turkish state has utilised the *Diyanet* as a tool for controlling religion in the domestic realm. However, since the early 1980s, the *Diyanet* has also served as a foreign-policy instrument *outside* Turkey, both in maintaining a regime of control over immigrants of Turkish origin in Europe and in presenting ‘Turkish Islam’ as the ‘moderate’, ‘rational’ Islam of a secular state. This policy has suitably overlapped with the French state’s relationship with its Muslim community. For mosque construction, the importation of *imams*, and religious instruction, the French state relied on foreign

governments, including Turkey. Thus, the *Diyanet* became the most plausible intermediary in matters related to the Turkish community in France.

That the presence of immigrants was not a passing phenomenon was recognised by host states and countries of origin at around the same time, in the late 1970s. The first time the *Diyanet* sent its personnel to Europe was during the Ramadan of 1971.⁵ Initially, the Turkish governments' solutions to the religious needs of Turkish immigrants were somewhat temporary, *ad hoc* and devoid of a systematic commitment to support the immigrants, a situation that was to persist until the 1980s. When the permanent nature of Turkish immigration to Europe was fully understood and the Turkish state was forced to face problems stemming from its delay in taking action against the vigorous organisation of unwanted religious/political groups, a critical decision was made to also employ its domestic instruments of religious control externally. Moreover, as the 'Turkish-Islamic Synthesis' was becoming the unofficial ideology of successive governments in the post-1980 period, *Diyanet* officials were emboldened to refer to Islamic identity in their discourse as the cement of national unity of Turks at home and abroad (Landman 1997: 222–4).

Engaging a highly competitive field, the *Diyanet* came to supervise the largest Turkish network of mosques in Europe. In Germany and the Netherlands, two countries where the Turks are the dominant Muslim group, this also meant that *Diyanet*-linked organisations constituted the most important cluster of mosques, effectively making the *Diyanet* the most powerful Muslim organisation there. In France, where North African immigrants predominate numerically, Turks constitute only a minority within the Muslim immigrant community. Within the Turkish immigrant community, however, the CCMTF brings under its umbrella a total of 210 mosques, as opposed to some 70 of its closest rival, the *Communauté Islamique du Milli Görüş de France*. Thus, the *Diyanet* established itself as the most important Turkish Muslim community network since its entrance into the religious field of France. The CCMTF's numerical superiority seems to have been an important factor in the eyes of French public authorities in considering *Diyanet*-linked organisations as the main interlocutors in their dealings with Turkish immigrants. *Milli Görüş* was not a 'constitutive' federation of the CFCM both because of its smaller size relative to the CCMTF and because it was 'unthinkable' for the Turkish embassy to accept it in the CFCM, since 'it would have cast a shadow over the *Diyanet*', and because 'French authorities could not ignore the opinion of their Turkish counterpart as the link between the Turkish community and the Turkish state is quite strong'.⁶

The success of the *Diyanet*-linked organisational network in Europe and in France is due in the first instance to its financial and administrative power (Landman 1997: 224–5). With the backing of the Turkish state, these organisations enjoy a strength that other rival movements cannot really possess. Besides, the Turkish state has long had a paternalistic, and at times patronising, attitude *vis-à-vis* immigrants, wanting them to show allegiance to Turkey first, an allegiance best demonstrated by rallying for matters concerning the Turkish state (Akgönül 2005: 40). Besides, the secular Turkish state does not see it as inappropriate or contradictory for it to get involved in

the religious life of immigrants. In the words of a former Turkish diplomat⁷ this is natural, given the fact that half of the Turkish community can be considered as a 'mosque community' (*cami toplumu*). Thus, religious or otherwise, any problem or need of Turkish immigrants is a concern for the Turkish state. Hence, he stated that he was holding meetings twice a year with *Diyanet*-affiliated *imams* residing in France to talk about the needs and problems of the Turkish community.

In fact, based on criteria such as good command of the French language, enrollment in state schools, number of university graduates, employment and upward mobility, employment of women and mixed marriages, the Turkish population is considered to be the least-integrated immigrant community in France. It is also characterised by strong attachment to the country of origin, overshadowing a multiplicity of political and religious tendencies and ethnic divisions (Godard and Taussig 2007: 45; Laurence and Väisse 2007: 63). However, there is an increasing recognition on the part of Turkish officials that an immigrant community whose first loyalty is to the state of origin and which is characterised by a striking absence of high-level professionals and educated people who do speak the host country's language fluently, cannot really lobby for the home country.⁸

On the other hand, the Turkish immigrant population in France seems to want to preserve the protection of a paternalistic Turkish state, although such an attitude is increasingly contested by second- and third-generation Turks (Akgönül 2005: 40; Doomernik 1995). The close link between the Turkish state and its immigrant community in France is manifested in every public event—for example, at the opening of a new mosque, where the community, almost without exception, wishes to see either their Ambassador or Counsellor present and where the Turkish national anthem is sung. As such, in the words of one interviewee in Paris, the Turkish immigrant community is not an 'emancipated' community because it is not yet mature enough to emancipate itself and because the Turkish state, despite an acknowledgement of the necessity of integration, continues to act in a paternalistic way.⁹

This interdependent relationship between the Turkish state and the Turkish immigrant community in France is evident also in the associational life of the community. In the process of the establishment of the CFCM, the French state compelled all *Diyanet*-linked mosques then under the umbrella of the DİTİB to restructure as civil-society organisations, independent of any formal link with a foreign government. This is why a Turkish diplomat described the CFCM as a body in which 'the Turkish [state] is not "in" conceptually'.¹⁰ The CCMTF is certainly not a puppet organisation of the Turkish state nor is it acting under the close scrutiny of the Turkish embassy. In fact, perhaps by virtue of its inclusion in the highest administration of the CFCM, the CCMTF seems to have associated itself closely with this institution. Nevertheless, the link between the DİTİB and the CCMTF is known to everyone, including the French state, and the fact that the administrative office of the CCMTF is the same as that of the DİTİB makes it all the more difficult to establish an independent identity for the Turkish association. The strong national attachment of the Turks is also visible in the title of the CCMTF: established in August 2001, the CCMTF named itself

as a 'Turkish' organisation, the only federation under the CFCM with an explicit national identification in its official title.

However, it is not just the attitude of the Turkish immigrant community or the paternalistic tendencies of the Turkish state which open the door to the assertiveness of the Turkish state in the European religious field. The pragmatism of the French state, as well as the durability of long-standing habits which could not be abandoned overnight, can also be seen as factors contributing to the involvement of the *Diyanet* in the CFCM. The French state continues to depend on foreign governments for the provision of *imams*, as there is no school of Islamic studies and theology in France to train them. Thus, Sarkozy met regularly with the ambassadors of Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia and Turkey at dinners of a consultative nature prior to the establishment of the CFCM.¹¹ Finally, the very profile of the Muslim community in France, characterised by the prevalence of division along nationality lines (Cesari 2002; Warner and Wenner 2006), could not be overlooked by the French state, and this was also reflected in the composition and functioning of the CFCM.¹²

Diyanet-Linked Organisations as Representatives of the Turkish Community in France

The second context in which the role of the *Diyanet* can be examined is the efforts of the Turkish state and the *Diyanet* to portray *Diyanet*-linked organisations as the only acceptable and legitimate organisation to represent the Turkish community in France. The Turkish state has emphasised moderation and representativity simultaneously, on the basis that the *Diyanet* is certainly more dependable not only due to the size and power of its network in France, but also because it is an official organisation of the secular Turkish state and represents 'Turkish Islam', which promotes a scientific, rational outlook and moderation (Laurence and Vaïsse 2007: 145).¹³ In fact, for the Turkish state, attempts to establish Muslim representative organisations in Europe confirm how 'Turkish Islam' has proved to be the right way to deal with Muslim communities. Both Turkish diplomats and *Diyanet* officials claim that the *Diyanet* has been the inspiration for the establishment of Muslim representative institutions, and take pride in its having served as a 'model' for European countries, especially in the aftermath of 9/11. Thus, for the Turkish state, not only does the *Diyanet* represent the 'true' face of Islam—compatible with modernity—but it also serves as an institutional model for an emergent 'European Islam'.¹⁴ The projection of such an image has made it easier for the Turkish state to suffocate other tendencies claiming to represent Turkish-Muslim identity in France, especially the *Milli Görüş* movement. Even though *Diyanet*-linked organisations could not monopolise the religious field, the Turkish state has been largely successful in its efforts to convince successive French governments to consider the *Diyanet* as the legitimate intermediary. The DİTİB was the only Turkish-Muslim organisation invited to the *Istichara* by Chevènement; when the CFCM was established, the CCMTF was able to secure two representatives on the governing board, while *Milli Görüş* had none; in the general assembly of the 2003

elections, the CCMTF had 19 delegates as opposed to five for *Milli Görüş*, when it was even more passive and lost ground to the CCMTF.

The relationship between *Diyanet*-linked organisations and *Milli Görüş* is an ambiguous one, characterised by both mutual suspicion and resentment, and an unexpected willingness for dialogue. It is true that the *Diyanet* portrays all other rival organisations as radical and fundamentalist (Landman 1997: 225). In particular, there is a widely shared suspicion about the patriotic credentials of *Milli Görüş*. For example, it is often claimed that the representatives of *Milli Görüş* do not attend the annual Republican Day receptions hosted at the Turkish Embassy in Paris on 29 October, and that its choice of the UOIF—an organisation with close links to the Muslim Brotherhood—as a close ally in the 2003 and 2005 elections for the CFCM is suspect.¹⁵ According to *Diyanet* officials, although *Milli Görüş* has been in Europe longer than the *Diyanet*, the former did not do much for the Turkish community. Moreover, the *Diyanet* officials also see all other movements outside the *Diyanet* framework—without naming *Milli Görüş* explicitly—as not compatible with ‘true Islam’, and thus tending towards superstition and extremism. For *Milli Görüş*, on the other hand,¹⁶ the *Diyanet* is ‘the state’ and, hence, cannot be considered—as *Milli Görüş* can—as a voluntaristic, civil-society organisation. The natural outcome of this line of thought is to regard the CCMTF as an organisation under the control of the Turkish state. Again, *Milli Görüş* claims that it *does* support secularism, but emphasises that Turkish people first embraced it long before 1937, when it became a constitutional principle. *Milli Görüş* claims that the Turkish state is not secular whereas the Ottoman state was—due to the ‘millet system’ based on the peaceful coexistence of different religious communities—although it seems to ignore the hierarchical relationship between Muslim and non-Muslim communities within this system.

Another common *Milli Görüş* argument is that the *Diyanet*-linked DİTİB and the CCMTF are less aware of the needs of Turks living in Europe, whereas *Milli Görüş*, being a European grassroots organisation, has been more competent in responding to them. As for their patriotic credentials, the typical *Milli Görüş* response is to say that what it represents is an identity that is primarily Muslim, in which Turkishness is only of secondary importance. The third and last component of this identity is European Muslimness, one that manifests an awareness of the European context of the Muslim Turkish identity.¹⁷ As such, *Milli Görüş* does not mind making alliances with the UOIF. However, it resents the suspicious attitude of the representatives of the Turkish state—be they *Diyanet* officials or Turkish diplomats in Europe—and contends that, while *Milli Görüş* had had good relations with the Turkish Embassy in Paris until 1980, the ‘doors were closed to them’ after that date, even those of the annual 29 October Republican Day reception. The *Diyanet* and *Milli Görüş* blame one another for the impossibility of producing a ‘Turkish list’ in the CFCM elections. According to both *Diyanet* officials and Turkish diplomats, *Milli Görüş* prefers to align itself with the UOIF rather than the CCMTF; *Milli Görüş* retorts that the *Diyanet*, being a state organisation, wants only to absorb them, and laments the fact that the full weight of Turks in France is not really reflected in the CFCM. There are some 350 Turkish

mosques in France—20 per cent of the 2,000 mosques in France overall—and it is the lack of unity among Turks that causes their under-representation in the CFCM.

Mutual suspicion and accusations notwithstanding, one can also observe a certain degree of willingness for dialogue. Occasional electoral alliances at the local level—as in the Île-de-France Ouest region where the CCMTF and *Milli Görüş* were placed on the same Turkish list—are examples of such *rapprochement* (De Galembert and Belbah 2005: 85). The local level is more open to dialogue as the mosque communities are less suspicious of each other than the top officials. Another instance of the willingness for dialogue is the attitude of *Diyanet* officials in not ruling out contacts with *Milli Görüş*: a number stated that they would not mind visiting *Milli Görüş* mosques when they go to a CCMTF mosque in a particular region, and even announced their readiness to cooperate with *Milli Görüş* if that would bolster Turkish representation. Such cooperation, however, would only be possible if it took place under the *Diyanet*'s organisational umbrella.¹⁸ Turkish officials, for instance, did their utmost to ensure that the second seat allotted to Turks on the CFCM's governing board went to a member of the CCMTF, rather than to a member of *Milli Görüş*.¹⁹

In fact, although the French state has considered the *Diyanet* rather than *Milli Görüş* as its main partner, the CFCM is based on a dilemma of moderation and representativity. Thus, while the *Diyanet*-linked CCMTF is inevitably the principal interlocutor, due to the size of its network and its moderate outlook, the *Bureau Central des Cultes* of the French Ministry of the Interior wanted to also include *Milli Görüş* in the process in order to broaden representation by bringing in an important Turkish-Muslim network. Neither does the Turkish state's perception of *Milli Görüş* as radical and fundamentalist echo at the Ministry of the Interior, which has a different conception of 'radical' to that of the Turkish state, one meaning *jihādism*—violence.²⁰ *Milli Görüş* is aware of the pressure brought on the Ministry of the Interior, but wants to be more assertive in the third term of the CFCM and secure a better representation in the administration.²¹ Nevertheless, the 'moderation–representativity trade-off' of the CFCM would still necessitate careful consideration of an upgraded *Milli Görüş* representation, since the *Diyanet*-linked CCMTF is considered as an equilibrium maintainer (Godard and Taussig 2007: 46) with its moderate outlook and its spontaneous alliance with other moderates in the CFCM, such as the GMP. A stronger *Milli Görüş* in the CFCM might also mean reinforcing the influence of the UOIF, given the close relations between the two organisations—a prospect which has the potential to disturb the FNMF.

Conclusion

The fortunes of the *Diyanet* and the CFCM appear to have intersected in two major ways. First, religion in general became a policy tool for integration in France. Such a policy, though seeking the creation of a 'French Islam', has still relied on foreign governments and an institutionalisation of Islam based on national divisions. This encouraged a renewed assertion of the *Diyanet* as the only legitimate and acceptable

interlocutor for the Turkish Muslim community. Second, the Turkish state tied the legitimacy of the *Diyanet* to the secular character of the Turkish state and the moderate, rational and scientific outlook of ‘Turkish Islam’ as represented by the *Diyanet*. It simultaneously emphasised moderation and representativity, on the basis that ‘Turkish Islam’ as represented by the *Diyanet* is rightly entitled to represent Turks not only due to the size and power of its network in Europe and in France but also, and perhaps more importantly, due to its moderate and secular outlook, which can be presented as a model for the development of a similar ‘European Islam’.

This claim of simultaneous representativity and moderation conjoins with the dilemma of representativity and moderation of the French state in the CFCM in an interesting way. While the *Diyanet*’s claim is credible for the French state since the *Diyanet*-linked CCMTF is the biggest Turkish immigrant network with a moderate ideological positioning in the French Muslim religious field, at the same time the French state, in its search for more representativity, is open to greater representation of the *Milli Görüş* movement. This would potentially encourage further intervention by Turkish authorities in Turkish Muslim immigrant organisations in France, to secure a dominant position for the CCMTF. National divisions within the CFCM, and the French state’s continuing dependence on foreign governments to deal with its Muslims, make it more likely that the *Diyanet* will continue to assert itself, with the genuine hope that ‘French Islam’ will resemble ‘Turkish Islam’.

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Notes

- [1] *Süleymancı*s and *Nurcu*s are the two other religious tendencies among the Turkish Muslim community. However, the former is not very strong, and the latter is more engaged in educational activities than in mosques. This leaves the *Milli Görüş* movement as the only real rival to the *Diyanet* for the purposes of this study. *Milli Görüş* (National Outlook) is a religio-political movement associated with the political Islamist strand of parties led by Necmettin Erbakan, starting from the establishment of *Milli Nizam Partisi*—MNP (National Order Party) in 1970. For a more detailed account of the *Milli Görüş* movement, see Atacan (2005); Maréchal *et al.* (2003b: 132–5); Sarıbay (1985).
- [2] Author’s interview with an anonymous *Diyanet* official, Ankara, February 2007.
- [3] Author’s interview with a *Diyanet* official, Paris, June 2007.
- [4] A number of countries have experimented with varying degrees of institutionalisation. In Great Britain, the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) has been engaged in regular relations with the British government but without official recognition. In Germany, while religious

communities, including Muslim ones, can organise according to private law and benefit from such recognition, official recognition by the German state has not been extended because of the absence of an organisation bringing together all Muslims. In Sweden, no single organisation exists but a system of financial benefits is available for religious communities. For a more detailed analysis of various experiments, see Maréchal (2003a: 158–76); Shadid and van Koningsveld (2002).

- [5] Author's interview with a *Diyanet* official, Ankara, February 2007.
- [6] Author's interview with an official of the Ministry of the Interior, Paris, June 2007.
- [7] Author's interview, Turkey, May 2007.
- [8] Author's interviews with *Diyanet* officials and Turkish diplomats, Turkey, February and May 2007; Paris, June 2007.
- [9] Author's interview, Paris, June 2007.
- [10] Author's interview, Paris, June 2007.
- [11] Author's interview with a former Turkish diplomat, Turkey, May 2007.
- [12] Author's interview with an official of the Ministry of the Interior, Paris, June 2007.
- [13] For the reflection of such a self-image and an image of 'Turkish Islam', see the discourse of the current Director of the *Diyanet*, Ali Bardakoğlu (2006), particularly his chapter entitled 'Moderate perception of Islam and the Turkish model of *Diyanet*'.
- [14] This 'impression' of Turkish diplomats and *Diyanet* officials seems not to be shared by the Ministry of the Interior. An official of the Ministry claimed that the CFCM has nothing to do with the *Diyanet*, since the latter is a 'control' regime over religion whereas the CFCM is an institution that takes part in a 'separation' regime (Author's interview, Paris, June 2007). In fact, the interviewee refers here to the peculiarities of the state–religion relationship in Turkey and France, respectively. Following the establishment of a republic in 1923, a series of radical reforms—ranging from the abrogation of the Caliphate (1924), the secularisation of the civil law (1926) and the abolition of the constitutional provision declaring Islam as the state religion (1928) to changing the dress code (1926) and the alphabet (1928)—were put in place to secularise the state and society in Turkey. Through the establishment of the *Diyanet* in 1924, which made religious personnel into salaried employees of the state, along with other reforms aiming at limiting religion to the private sphere only, the Turkish state established control over religion. In France, a regime of 'recognised religions' (*cultes reconnus*) was in place during the nineteenth century with the signing of the Concordat between the French state and the Vatican in 1801. The clergy of the recognised religions were salaried by the state and the French state established close scrutiny over religions. In 1905, however, with the Law on the Separation of Church and State, the religious neutrality of the state was established on the basis of which it no longer recognised nor funded any religion.
- [15] However, though exceptional, an electoral alliance between the CCMTF and the UOIF took place in Limousin, thanks to which the CCMTF obtained a regional presidency (Godard and Taussig 2007: 177).
- [16] Author's interview with a representative of *Milli Görüş*, Paris, June 2007.
- [17] The translation of *Milli Görüş* as 'the national outlook' is a misnomer since the movement defines itself not as a national but as a religious movement. It claims that they adhere to the original meaning of the word '*millî*'—a religious community (author's interview with a representative of *Milli Görüş*, Paris, June 2007). Landman (1997: 219) also confirms this when he states that 'adherents of the *Milli Görüş* tend to refer to themselves as Muslims of Turkish origin rather than as Turks'.
- [18] Based on the observation of similar contacts taking place in Germany, Karakaşoğlu and Nonneman (1996: 264) argue that pragmatism tends to prevail over ideology in the relationship between the *Diyanet* and *Milli Görüş*. In fact, *Milli Görüş* recruits its *imams* mainly from among retired *Diyanet imams*. Nevertheless, the sermons of *Diyanet imams* are authored in Ankara and dictated to them. Avcı (2005: 210) argues that the coming to power,

in November 2002, of the AKP (The Justice and Development Party), which emerged out of the division of the *Milli Görüş* movement in 1997, has brought the *Diyanet* and *Milli Görüş* closer, a view also shared by Klausen (2005: 32).

- [19] Author's interviews, Turkey, May 2007; Paris, June 2007.
- [20] Author's interview with an official of the Ministry of the Interior, Paris, June 2007.
- [21] Author's interview with a *Milli Görüş* representative, Paris, June 2007.

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