Political History and Embodied Identity Discourse in the Turkish Call to Prayer

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Introduction

This article examines the Turkish language call to prayer, which was recited in lieu of the traditional Arabic call for a brief time in Turkey's early national period, and discusses the subsequent discourse this brief period continues to engender among listeners and practitioners. This discourse manifests itself both in recitation practice and reception, reflecting the co-existence of theoretically contradictory and incompatible identities. The call to prayer is just one case study exemplifying these multiple constructions of identity – constructions which began as early as the nineteenth century and which now seem to be an organic part of Turkish self-identification. I argue that, even though current practice prefers Arabic language recitation, the contemporary Arabic language call in Turkey nonetheless has been profoundly influenced by the Turkish language period because this period solidified the presence of a politically-oriented embodied discourse evidenced in recitation artists' production of the call and in Turkish listeners' auditory reception.

The early national period that espoused Turkicization of the call to prayer began during the first half of the twentieth century when the publicly broadcast call was targeted for reform by the new secularist government. Having recently replaced the Ottoman Empire's Muslim leadership with that of the national Turkish Republic, reformers were troubled by the call to prayer's traditional language of recitation, Arabic, and its regular presence in public auditory space. As part of an overall modernization agenda that forwarded secularist and nationalist ideals, new language laws called for Turkish as the national language of the Republic and for state control over religious practice, as well. Hence, in 1932 mandated Turkish language recitation began. This linguistic change quickly resulted in popular unrest in part because Arabic is the sacred language of Islam and recitation in Arabic of the Koran, and to a lesser extent the call to prayer, is another important and direct link to God. Further, by mandating Turkish language call to prayer recitation, the populace of Turkey experienced a public five-times-daily reminder that the secular nation now took precedence over previous allegiances and more than a millennium of practice. However, despite popular opposition, the state felt strongly that Turkish recitation of this public practice should continue and the practice was maintained for almost twenty years before being restored to Arabic recitation. Consequently, while Turkish secularists and some government officials may have perceived of their agenda as "freeing" the state from religion, what in fact happened was the reverse; as historian Kemal Karpat argues, "The problem that Turks would eventually face, therefore, was how to free the faith from the autocracy of the state rather than vice versa."¹ Seen in this light, opposition to the call and other state mandated religious reform efforts was, in a sense, an internal rebellion in which practicing Muslim Turks sought to regain autonomy over their religious practice.

¹ Kemal Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 8.

Although this period of Turkish language recitation lasted a relatively short time, it nonetheless achieved some of its goals in terms of nationalization: the period influenced the construction and conception of a unique national Turkish *style* of call to prayer recitation, codifying a national vocal and melodic practice that had not previously existed. However, there was also a perhaps unintended consequence: this representative national style was tied to specific Ottoman recitation practices that referred to the sultan's and cosmopolitan Istanbul's preferences for the sound of the voice and the melodic line. The end result is that when muezzins and imams, the official recitation practitioners, recite today in Turkey, they invoke stylistically, physically, and through the language of recitation Muslim, Turkish, and Ottoman identities without necessarily privileging any particular one; thus, this recitation practice serves as a concrete example of the way in which seemingly disparate identity paradigms coexist and blend as a natural outgrowth of social and political processes.² In the case of the call to prayer, the practitioner's voice quality and melodic treatment of the call physically embody theoretically competing identities. The context in which these identities chimerically formed was framed by the construction of secular modernity as a fundamental component of the new Turkish nation state. But, despite the presentation of this nation state as a distinct secular and modern identity, the process, which involved active resistance and protest, instead resulted in multiple co-existing identity constructions that reveal the complex history and expression of Turkey's identity politics.

Early Nationalization Processes in the Ottoman Empire

The nationalist movement that led to the Turkish Republic, and, consequently, the call to prayer nationalization efforts, traces its beginning to the reforms of the mid-nineteenth-century Tanzimat period. At that time, the Ottoman Empire was in the midst of a financial and structural crisis: it was in substantial debt to the major European powers and was rapidly losing control of much of its empire to both ethnic nationalist revolts and to the interests of these European powers. By the mid 1800s, Greece had achieved independence from the Ottomans and Egypt was just nominally subject to Istanbul palace control, having, in effect, become its own kingdom. Thus, when Mustafa Reshid (1800-1858) initially became grand vizier (the head minister in the body of the sultan's administrative ministers) in 1846, he initiated a series of reforms known as the Tanzimat, designed to modernize the empire, and thereby restore its strength. This period of reform engendered a discourse in which Turkish ethnic identity began to preoccupy the elites. Along with this developing construction of a Turkish ethnic identity, certain traditional practices among the elites, such as a preference for Persian phrasing, fell out of fashion.³ Simultaneously, an interest grew in reducing the use of Arabic and Persian words and there was a hope among some Turks that the Turkish language could be "purified" of non-Turkish elements – a project that intensified as the nineteenth century came to a close; it was eventually more fully implemented in the early years of the Turkish Republic.

One of the strongest proponents of Turkish linguistic reform and the Turkicization of the empire was the social theorist Ziya Gökalp (1876-1924). Gökalp's writings successfully promoted and, to a certain extent, constructed Turkish ethnic identity. He sought and claimed to find the ancient roots of

²Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam*, 5-6.

³ Sydney Nettleton Fisher and William Ochenwald, *The Middle East: A History Volume II* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1997), 306.

“Turkishness,” encouraged folkloric scholarship on the topic, and, central to this discussion, argued that “Turkishness” should be reflected in the language itself, i.e., the Turkish language should consist of purely Turkish roots. Purity of language was extended to worship: Gökâlp asserted that the language of worship should be in Turkish and not in Arabic.⁴ His oft-cited poem reflects this position and specifically refers to the call to prayer:

“Homeland”

*In one country in the mosque the Turkish call to prayer is read,
The villager understands the meaning of the namaz prayers
Young and old everyone knows God’s command...
Oh Turkish son, like this it is your homeland!*⁵

Gökâlp felt that not only should the publicly broadcast call to prayer be readily understandable to all Turks, but that the same was true of all worship.⁶

However, his suggestion that worship be in the vernacular and not in classical Arabic would have been deeply disturbing to many adherents and religious leaders, given the importance of the Arabic language itself in Islamic worship and the belief that the words of the Koran came to Mohammed directly from God in Arabic. In fact, reports circulate that in the early years of Islam conversions were effected simply by listening to the beauty of the recited Koran.⁷ In the case of the call to prayer, while the origin of the text was not the Prophet Mohammed, it was nonetheless divine to a lesser degree (it was received in a dream by an early follower of the Prophet).⁸ Further, the call to prayer’s beauty, both in terms of the Arabic text and the voice of the caller, has long been and continues to be perceived as instrumental in calling and converting listeners to Islam. Thus, Gökâlp’s general promotion of worship in Turkish alarmed many adherents and was one factor leading to increased rifts between Ottoman Islamists and secular modernists. These tensions, however, did not result in conflict for another fifty years or so. In the final years of the Ottoman Empire before the First World War, Islam and its role as a guiding force in the country were still thoroughly integrated into the fabric of Ottoman life. For instance, the first Grand National Assembly, a parliamentary body, counted professional religious men as one-fifth of its members.⁹ The pronounced shift towards a secularist government came under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, when the Ottoman Empire, having sided with Germany and lost, was dismantled in the aftermath of World War I.

In many ways, Atatürk and his followers, the Kemalists, were simply continuing an agenda that started during the Tanzimat Period (some might argue even earlier with the leadership of Sultan Selim III in the 1790s) and which was further strengthened during World War I. While World War I was ongoing, the parliamentary Committee of Union and Progress saw to it that the beginnings of a Turkish identity were inspired in the local population. This burgeoning, legislated identity was evident particularly in the decrees issued with regards to the use of the Turkish language: Turkish became the official language of the

⁴ Ziya Gökâlp, *The Principles of Turkism*, trans. Robert Devereux (Leiden: Brill, 1968).

⁵ İhsan Süreyya Sırma, *Ezan ya da Ebedi Kurtuluşa Çağrı* (Ankara: Beyan Yayınları, 2005), 86.

⁶ Gökâlp, *The Principles of Turkism*.

⁷ Karen Armstrong, *Islam: A Short History* (London: Phoenix, 2000), 5.

⁸ Sırma, *Ezan ya da Ebedi Kurtuluşa Çağrı*, 24-29.

⁹ Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 396.

post office and all shop signs were required to be in Turkish.¹⁰ Moreover, the government actively supported the development of a Turkish middle class that could sustain a Turkish national economy and thus, when the war ended, despite the Ottoman defeat, many systems were in place that allowed the Turkish nation to emerge and endure the hardships that followed. The population, it seemed, might be prepared to accept the secular ideals of the Kemalists who came to power after the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in World War One; these ideals included the proposal that worship and the call to prayer, one of the most important public symbols of Islam, be practiced in the vernacular language.

The Kemalists specifically sought to distance themselves from their Ottoman past, even from the reform-minded Ottomans of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and set in motion a series of reforms designed to increase the sovereignty of the Turkish Republic and the perception of a unified Turkish ethnic, cultural, and national identity – an identity which they hoped would take precedence over the heretofore unifying Muslim identity of much of the Ottoman Empire’s population. Along with the Kemalists’ secularist nationalist ideology, not long after the Republic’s founding, hostilities from the so-called “Army of the Caliphate” towards the Kemalists caused the reformers to turn their attention to worship practices. After a brief attempt to reconcile Islam with secular government, in 1928 constitutional secularism was ratified, entirely removing Islam from the Turkish constitution. This amendment was preceded by other measures: the prohibition of religious education, the nationalization of the religious foundations, the replacing of Islamic civil penal codes with European ones, and the abolition of the *Ulema* (Islamic legal counselors). Along with these actions, the leaders began to make plans for the Turkicization of worship, including instituting the Turkish language call to prayer.

The Turkicization of the Call to Prayer

From the perspective of some Western democratic paradigms, the Kemalists’ interest in religious reform and specific attention to the language of worship may seem unusual given their simultaneous interest in the creation of a secular state. It must be noted, however, that the concept of secularism was quite different from that which is theoretically forwarded in the West. The Kemalists did not necessarily conceive of a separation of mosque and state: they sought to control religious practice and to disestablish Islam as a strong unifying element through the nationalization of religion – thus creating a stronger tie to Turkish identity over Muslim identity. Because the Kemalist leaders recognized that Islam was an intrinsic part of Turkish society, one of the few “ethnic” bonds across the diverse Ottoman world,¹¹ they knew it could not be removed from daily life and therefore felt the need to regulate and reform it; otherwise, in their opinion, traditional adherence to its tenets would slow, or even reverse, the social changes they had implemented.¹² Thus, attention to the reform of Islam was crucial and, as a very important public symbol of the dominance of Islam in Turkish daily life, the call to prayer was of immediate interest to the reformers. By regulating it and changing its language of recitation, they introduced a nationalist discourse into “...the undeniable presence of Islam in the public sphere.”¹³

¹⁰ Feroz Ahmad, “War and Society under the Young Turks, 1908-18,” in *Ottoman Empire: Nineteenth-Century Transformations*, edited by Çağlar Keyder (Binghamton, NY: SUNY, 1988), 135.

¹¹ Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam*.

¹² Yael Navaro-Yashin, *Faces of the State: Secularism and Public Life in Turkey* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 48.

¹³ Alev Çınar, “Secularism and Islamic Modernism in Turkey,” *Etnografica* 10, no. 1 (2006): 89.

In order to “reform” religion, the new government initially created a Presidency of Religious Affairs and a Directorate-General of Pious Foundations. The Prime Minister nominated the President of Religious Affairs and all activities of that department were consequently under the auspices of the secular Prime Minister. The duties of the President of Religious Affairs were, among others, to oversee administration of all religious institutions, such as mosques, and the appointment of all religious functionaries, such as imams and muezzins.¹⁴

The government also sought to direct the social impact of religion through the establishment of the University of Istanbul, which was conceived as a new faculty of divinity. Under the direction of the Minister of Education, this university was to instruct its pupils in religious matters from a more “modern and scientific” perspective. And, in 1928, the faculty formed a committee to make recommendations concerning the reform and modernization of Islam in Turkey.¹⁵ In its report released that year, the committee determined that religion was a social institution and should progress to serve the needs of a changing society. In order for it to progress properly the committee made several recommendations. Among these were the proposals that the language of worship should be in the vernacular, that worship should be made inspirational by the inclusion of trained musicians and musical instruments, and that set sermons approved by the appropriate governing agency be used throughout the country. The school was initially short-lived (later it was revived), as enrollment steadily declined due to a lack of grounding in secondary school religious instruction that adequately prepared students for a university education in religion (Atatürk had banned religious education in primary and secondary schools), and the report’s findings were not really implemented – with the exception of seeking to change the language of worship.

Initially, the government was interested in removing Arabic entirely from worship. They first attempted to implement recitation of the Koran in Turkish during worship services, but this program was not wholly successful and not vigorously pursued. However, in terms of the call to prayer they were unbending in their demand that it be in Turkish. It was the public auditory space that the call occupied which made it such a target for reform. To allow the call to be publicly broadcast in Arabic would be to allow “unadulterated” Islam into the public arena and the secularists did not want to cede public space to Islam without some sort of regulation – one that would simultaneously reinforce a burgeoning Turkish identity. By insisting that the call be recited in Turkish, the secularists announced their arrival as the new power and also clearly separated themselves from Arabs culturally and ethnically, another important aspect of Turkish identity construction.¹⁶ So, while they did not attempt to remove Islam from daily life, they did stamp it as being Turkish and as being subject to secular state control.

Atatürk began the process of call to prayer Turkicization by first assembling a group of highly respected Istanbul *hafızlar* (an honorific for those who have memorized the Koran and a term of respect) at Istanbul’s Dolmabahçe Palace. He then charged them with translating the call to prayer from Arabic to Turkish. This committee met in December 1931 and consisted of nine respected practitioners: Beşiktaşlı Ali Rıza, Hafız Kemal, Hafız Sadettin Kaynak, Hafız Burhan, Hafız Fahri, Hafız Nuri, Hafız Yaşar (Okur), Hafız Zeki, and Hafız Ali Rıza. As they worked to translate the call to prayer appropriately into Turkish, whenever there was any disagreement, the group sought Atatürk’s advice, and a decision was made

¹⁴ Fisher and Ochsenswald, *The Middle East: A History Volume II*, 401.

¹⁵ Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, 408.

¹⁶ Navaro-Yashin, *Faces of the State: Secularism and Public Life in Turkey*, 49.

depending on his preferences.¹⁷ The results of this effort can be seen in the chart below. The original Arabic text is presented next to the Turkish text followed by an English translation:

Arabic Text	Turkish Text	English Translation
<i>Allāhu akbar, Allāhu akbar</i>	<i>Tanrı uludur, Tanrı uludur</i>	God is great, God is great.
<i>Ashhadu an lā ilāha illā llāh</i>	<i>Şüphesiz bilirim, bildiririm: Tanrı'dan başka yoktur tapacak</i>	I testify that there is no god but God.
<i>Ashhadu anna Muhammadan rasūl Allah</i>	<i>Şüphesiz bilirim, bildiririm: Tanrı'nın elçisidir Muhammed</i>	I testify that Muhammed is the prophet of God.
<i>Hayya 'alā 'l-salāt</i>	<i>Haydin namaza</i>	Come to prayer.
<i>Hayya 'alā 'l-falāh</i>	<i>Haydin felaha</i>	Come to salvation.
<i>*al-Salāt khayrun min al-nawm</i> *(included only in the predawn call)	<i>Namaz uykudan hayırlıdır</i>	Prayer is better than sleep.
<i>Allāhu akbar, Allāhu akbar</i>	<i>Tanrı uludur, Tanrı uludur</i>	God is great, God is great.
<i>Lā ilahā illā llāh</i>	<i>Tanrı'dan başka yoktur tapacak</i>	There is no god but God.

Chart 1. The Arabic and Turkish Language Texts of the Call to Prayer with an English Translation.

The texts differ significantly in terms of their structural components (vowels, number of syllables per line, etc.). For example, the Arabic language text allows for more open vowels that can sound more easily across distances. In contrast, the Turkish text has many more phrases ending in consonants, consequently closing off the sound from reverberating without the assistance of a loudspeaker. The quality of the sound would have been very different just in terms of the vowels themselves – a fundamental building block of voice quality. Many listeners may have found this change somewhat jarring when they first heard the Turkish language call to prayer and this reaction may have been another factor contributing to the strong opposition to the Turkish language call to prayer that was subsequently engendered. While conducting my fieldwork in Istanbul, at least one Turkish friend and musician told me that when he had heard a recording of the Turkish language call to prayer, it simply sounded “weird.”¹⁸ Further, while not directly addressing the topic of the call to prayer, Geoffrey Lewis contends that, in general, when many commonly used words considered to be of non-Turkish origin were removed in favor of neologisms, these unusual and/or seldom-used terms caused some Turks to find the changes “excruciating.”¹⁹ An

¹⁷ Hasan Hüseyin Ceylan, *Kemalizmin Türkçe Ezan Hikayesi* (Ankara: Rehber Yayıncılık, 1996), 9-10.

¹⁸ Güvenç Güres (vocalist) in conversation with the author, April 2006.

¹⁹ Geoffrey Lewis, *The Turkish Language Reform: A Catastrophic Success* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1999), 4.

example of such a substitution was the replacement of the commonly used word *Allah* with the “pure Turkish” *Tanrı*.

While the first calls to prayer in Turkish occurred in the first months of 1932, it was not until November that the Directorate of Religious Affairs issued the official order to recite in Turkish. This requirement took some time to implement throughout the country, as muezzins and imams needed to learn the new text. To that end, Sadettin Kaynak, the head muezzin at Istanbul’s Sultan Ahmet mosque (the Blue Mosque), recorded the Turkish language call to prayer and this version was distributed as the specific model to follow.²⁰

Reported dates vary between January 30 and February 3, 1932 as to when the first Turkish call to prayer was recited publicly, but it was most certainly at Istanbul’s Aya Sofya Mosque. The venue held symbolic value: Aya Sofya was once the most important house of worship in Eastern Christendom, and, when the Ottomans conquered Istanbul in 1453, one of the first actions taken was to convert the Aya Sofya into a mosque proclaiming the arrival of Islam in the previously Byzantine Christian city of Constantinople. Hence, the Kemalists’ choice to recite the inaugural Turkish call to prayer from this particular mosque announced a modernist and nationalist Republican victory. That first Turkish language call was accompanied by the prayers also being recited in Turkish and recitation of some parts of the Koran in Turkish. Newspapers from that time period offered positive accounts of this event and related that the beautiful voices reciting and the sounds of the Turkish language call to prayer caused crowds to form in the mosque.²¹

However, despite this upbeat press coverage, reactions to the Turkish call were not overwhelmingly positive; on the contrary, one scholar argues that enforcing the recitation of the call to prayer in Turkish was the most unpopular of all secularist measures.²² Consequently, acts of civil disobedience protesting Turkish recitation were not uncommon. An early and often referenced populist rebellion against recitation in Turkish took place in Bursa. On February 1, 1933, at the Bursa Ulu Mosque someone by the name of Topal Halil recited in Arabic, after which he went to the bottom of the minaret where the police were waiting to arrest him. Protests among the population ensued and a number of people marched from the *Evkaf*, a religious foundation, to the *valilik*, the home of the provincial government. The *valilik* military then sought help from the army garrison, and from there the situation was made known to the garrison that accompanied Atatürk. When Atatürk heard of the rebellion, he went to Bursa. Ultimately, on his instructions, the local religious administrative head in Bursa, the attorney general, and the justice of the peace were fired from their jobs. Nineteen people involved in the event received prison sentences.²³ Following this event and other similar ones over the next few years, in 1941 legislation was enacted completely outlawing Arabic recitation. The statute concerning this legislation, in part, read as follows: “Those ...who recite the call to prayer...in Arabic are to be punished with up to three months in prison without hard labor or with a fine between 10 and 200 lira.”²⁴

Nonetheless, civil disobedience against this measure steadily increased; those who recited in Arabic were known as *ezan çılgınları*, “call-to-prayer crazies,” and were involved in a systematic and widespread

²⁰ Ibid, 46.

²¹ “Kadir gecesi türkçe Dini ihtifal yapılacak,” *Cumhuriyet*, Feb. 1, 1932; “Bu geceki dinî merasim,” *Cumhuriyet*, Feb. 1, 1932; “Kadir Gecesi,” *Akşam*, Feb. 1, 1932.

²² Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, 401.

²³ Halis Ayhan and Mustafa Uzun, “Ezanın Türkçeleştirilmesi,” in *İslam Ansiklopedisi Volume 12* (Istanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1995), 41.

²⁴ Altan Öymen, *Değişim Yılları* (Istanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2004), 486-487.

anti-Turkish language recitation movement.²⁵ One of the most organized mass protests took place on Friday, February 4, 1949. That day, simultaneous Arabic recitation took place in the listeners' boxes at the Turkish National Assembly, at a national football match at Istanbul's Dolmabahçe Stadium, at a cinema in Istanbul's Beyoğlu district, in the presence of the governor of Ankara, and in the city of Eskişehir. In retaliation, protestors were sent to prison or fined; some also were sentenced to time in mental hospitals.²⁶

However, when Atatürk's party, the *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi* (CHP), lost its position of power to the *Demokratik Parti* (DP) in 1950 the program to Turkicize the call to prayer came to an end, which was widely approved. There were several factors leading up to this DP win. First, while Turkey was theoretically and constitutionally a democracy, in practice it had been a one-party government led by the CHP, and, when Atatürk was in power, it was essentially a dictatorship. However, his death in 1938 and the hardships endured by the population during World War II reduced support for the party of Atatürk. Moreover, many Turks had never wholly accepted the secularist reforms of the CHP. External pressures were also felt when, in 1945, Turkey joined the United Nations, the charter of which calls for a country to be democratically run. Thus, from 1945 to 1950, then Turkish President İsmet İnönü of the CHP slowly made it possible for the existence of another party. The DP made headway as a party under the leadership of Adnan Menderes, Celal Bayar (Atatürk's last prime minister), and Fuad Köprülü. The DP also gained popularity by promising to address many of the economic problems created by the war and any general complaints about the CHP. Such complaints often centered on the fate of religion in the Turkish Republic. One major reason for such a focus on religion in terms of protest is that "Before the introduction of multiparty politics in 1945, Islam was the only channel for protest, since the Republican state monopolized all legitimate political expression."²⁷ Hence, Menderes and the DP campaigned and won based in no small part on their promise to address one of the major points of expressed popular unrest; therefore, restoring Arabic language call to prayer recitation was a significant act and a way to reward those who supported the new party.

Subsequently, after the DP's May 1950 landslide victory, one of its first actions was to re-write the law that officially punished those who recited the call to prayer in Arabic. Politically it was expedient to address this subject early on – the holy month of Ramadan was approaching and the changing of this law before its onset was a popular decision. Thus, a draft of the new law was prepared for the General Assembly by June of 1950. However, a delicate ideological balance needed to be achieved. While the DP wanted to please the population, at the same time it wanted to continue the agenda forwarded by Atatürk. Many of the leaders in the DP were originally leaders in the CHP, after all. Even more important was a promise that the DP had given President İnönü concerning the creation of the new party: it would remain true to the ideals of Atatürk.²⁸

Nonetheless, there was this conflict over the issue of national secularism and how such a system should regulate religious practice – a conflict that played out every day in the public recitation of the call to prayer. The DP addressed this issue by using the rationale that the founders of the Turkish Republic had misinterpreted "...'secularism' as a restriction of the 'free exercise of religion'."²⁹ By this reasoning,

²⁵ Ayhan and Uzun, "Ezanın Türkçeleştirilmesi," 41.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Jenny B. White, *Islamist Mobilization in Turkey: A Study in Vernacular Politics* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002), 104.

²⁸ Öymen, *Değişim Yılları*, 484-485.

²⁹ "From Scholastic to Social Education (1950 to Present)," *Yükseköğretim Kurulu*, http://www.yok.gov.tr/webeng/histedu/part3_1.html.

returning the language of the call to prayer to Arabic was not in opposition to the ideals of Atatürk's Republic. The proposed amendment to the law that the DP ultimately submitted basically stated that it was legal to recite *in Arabic or in Turkish*. This amendment was approved by the General Assembly with little opposition from the CHP – perhaps in part due to the fact that the CHP was increasingly being seen as anti-religion and possibly allied with communism, and consequently did not want to be perceived as anti-religion on this particular issue.³⁰ The DP also built more mosques and made religious education in school more or less compulsory (parents were required formally to “opt out” of the religion courses that were part of the curriculum and few did).³¹ As a result, religion, specifically Islam, regained some of its authority, while still existing under the umbrella of the state.

In the end, the lifting of the ban on Arabic recitation generally met with an approving popular reception. Of course, the *entire* population was not pleased: Menderes and his government received threats from those who had supported the Turkish language call to prayer. And, tellingly, Menderes's execution in 1961 at the hands of a secularist military that had staged a successful coup against the DP was due, in part, to the DP's more tolerant outlook toward traditional religious practice; this strong military action demonstrated the continuing controversy of a more liberal attitude toward Islam in the political arena.

Today there are still debates as to whether or not the recitation of the call to prayer should be in Turkish. In the last ten years, the topic has been discussed in major Turkish newspapers such as *Milli Gazete*, *Akşam*, *Milliyet*, *Radikal*, and *Zaman*. An article in the *Turkish Encyclopedia of Islam* also addressed the topic in its 1995 edition, explaining Islamic law and how it interprets non-Arabic recitation. It stated that the call to prayer should be read with Arabic words and in a “recognizable” manner. Citing the Hanefi and Hanbali legal schools, the author states it is not permissible to recite the call to prayer in a language other than Arabic. However, he writes that, according to Shafi religious opinion, in the case where no one can be found among non-Arabic speakers who can recite the call to prayer in Arabic, it is possible to recite the call to prayer in the vernacular language.³²

Still, while a preference for Arabic is strong among Turkish practitioners and listeners, contrasting opinions can be heard. The respected composer and musicologist Yalçın Tura stated that the call to prayer should be recited in Turkish because it is an invitation. Clearly differentiating the Koran's being recited in Arabic from the call to prayer, he asserted that the text of the call to prayer did not come directly from God, and that it is necessary for Islam to be rescued from becoming an “Arab cultural weapon,” so that Islam can belong more universally to non-Arab Muslims. Otherwise, in his opinion, the words of God would be confined to “geographical borders.”³³ This comment speaks to the nationalist legacy that is entwined with debates surrounding the Turkish language call. Further, it indicates the ideological currency the Turkish language call carries in contemporary discourse, despite not being practiced for over half a century.

³⁰ Öymen, *Değişim Yılları*, 493-496.

³¹ Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, 412-413.

³² Abdurrahman Çetin, “Ezan,” in *İslam Ansiklopedisi Volume 12* (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1995), 37.

³³ Mustafa Tahir Öztürk, “Türk Din Müsikisinde Ezan” (master's thesis, İstanbul Teknik Üniversitesi, 2001), 54.

The Legacy of the Turkish Language Call to Prayer with Regards to Turkish Recitation Style

While the language of recitation was restored to Arabic, the twentieth-century history and use of Turkish has nonetheless shaped the contemporary style of the call to prayer in Turkey. The Turkish language call to prayer in and of itself may not relate obviously to the development of a specific national Turkish *style* of recitation in Arabic; however, that there is such a style perceived and preserved by listeners, practitioners, and the Turkish Department of Religious Affairs was not always the case and developed during this period of Turkish language recitation. Prior to the creation of Turkey as a nation and the reinforcing of its ethnic statehood through powerful symbols such as the Turkish language call to prayer, a particular “Turkish” style did not conceptually exist; rather, specific practices were locally based in certain cities and regions. During the Turkish language recitation period, one of these local melodic and vocal styles, that of Istanbul, blended with notions of a national style and ultimately became representative of a Turkish national call.

The contemporary Turkish recitation style belongs to a large family of styles practiced in the Middle East. Commonalities are found in the use of complex melodic modal expression and rhythmic improvisation. The modal systems of course differ, but are based on a regional or local *makam*³⁴ tradition. Turkish *makam*, for example, structurally differs from Arab and Persian *makam* traditions. In Turkey, the interval of a whole tone can theoretically be divided into nine parts (although all nine intervals are not necessarily used in practice), whereas the Arab whole tone contains four parts in theory. Turkish practice also defines *makam* through *seyir* – the typical pattern of movement for each modal entity (i.e., ascending, descending, ascending/descending, descending/ascending). In Turkey *makam* practice is perhaps the most easily identified and defined aspect of the Turkish recitation tradition and clearly contrasts with other melodic systems through the greater number of notes available via the nine theoretical divisions of the whole tone. And while not all recitation practitioners may be familiar with the strict theoretical constructs, the ones whom I consulted very much perceived a richer availability of notes and felt specifically that this richness was the defining factor of the Turkish style (which, interestingly, seems to take precedence perceptually over conceptions of the more salient defining feature of *makam*, the *seyir*). The Turkish style of call to prayer recitation also calls for the recitation of a different *makam* at each time of day – a requirement that all practitioners with whom I spoke were aware. This requirement, the general knowledge of *makam* practice, is further reinforced through annual recitation competitions which began in 2003,³⁵ in which a quarter of a competitor’s points are determined by his ability to modulate from one *makam* to another. This particular Turkish call to prayer tradition, that of a specific *makam* being recited at a particular time of day, was originally considered the Istanbul style and was most often practiced in the “Mosques of the Sultans,” and therefore was once considered the Ottoman palace style.³⁶

Another defining factor of call to prayer recitation practice is harder to concretely describe. This is the vocal timbre (voice quality). Defining call to prayer practice in terms of timbre is tricky, as it is whenever attempting to describe timbre, but acknowledging its significance is valuable as, according to almost all sources, the most important component of the call to prayer is that it be recited by someone with a “beautiful voice.” Generally speaking, the importance of voice quality is a pan-Islamic concept, but

³⁴A *makam* is most simply defined as a melodic mode.

³⁵ Mustafa Aykol, “And the Winner is . . . Muezzin Isa Aydın,” *Turkish Daily News*, 15 September 2007, <http://www.turkishdailynews.com.tr/article.php?enewsid=83469>.

³⁶ Sırma, *Ezan ya da Ebedi Kurtuluş*, 74.

ideas as to what comprises a beautiful voice are colored by local preferences. When asked if there is a particular Turkish recitation style that encompasses voice quality, listeners and practitioners agree that there is. The famous *ney* (reed flute) player Süleyman Erguner, for example, asserts as much stating that there is a Turkish sound and that it is not possible to find this sound and style in other Islamic countries. He believes that the Turks have realized the Prophet's ideal and finds the difference is in the muezzins' voice quality and in the treatment of *makam*.³⁷ This pride in the perceived Turkish sound tends to correlate directly with national pride. Illustrating this point, a recent newspaper article describing a call to prayer competition in Turkey notes the presence of tourists and states that, among those tourists who had traveled to other Muslim countries, the expressed preference is for the Turkish calls to prayer due to their superior voices and renditions of *makams*.³⁸

So, if people perceive this specific style, how then do they understand it in terms of the voice quality itself and how might it reflect varied political discourses? To answer the first part of the question, there seems to be a general agreement that the vocal register used by Turkish callers is higher than that of Arabs, the general point of comparison. Muezzin Emin Işık notes that generally the Arabs recite the call in *Rast makam*³⁹ and they also recite in a lower register. Further, he claims that the Syrian call to prayer is between that of the Arabs and the Turks and that they recite in a somewhat higher register. According to him, however, Turks recite in the highest range.⁴⁰ A dissertation on many forms of religious music practiced in Istanbul also asserts that the notes of the Turkish call are higher than those of the call to prayer as it is read in Arab countries.⁴¹ The consensus appears to be that the preferred voices are baritones or tenors (as opposed to the lower-voiced basses) and several people note this preference using this exact vocabulary. Yoram Arnon, an Israeli graduate student studying Turkish music in Istanbul, states that in his experience listening to other traditions the Turkish one is higher in register.⁴²

Ornamentation also may be an important part of the style. While not referring specifically to any particular term, some practitioners and listeners identify the Turkish style as being more heavily ornamented, particularly when it is recited from the historical mosques of Istanbul.⁴³ At least two other people whom I interviewed also pointed to ornamentation as a defining aspect of the Turkish style, one of whom expressed the opinion that while this was a definitive trait of the style, he felt that practitioners often exaggerated the ornamentation.⁴⁴ Many practitioners also note that there is an "accent" that defines the Turkish sound of a beautiful voice.

Perceptually, however, there are also regional styles in Turkey. In the Ottoman era four "official" styles of locally-based recitation were documented, those of Istanbul, Izmir, Konya, and Bursa⁴⁵ (although conversations with listeners and practitioners suggest that many more locally-based recitation styles also existed). The Istanbul style, which seems to be representative of the current Turkish national style, is just one of these. People discuss the Istanbul style specifically in relation to other local Turkish practices, often

³⁷ Öztürk, "Türk Din Müsikisinde Ezan," 46.

³⁸ Mükremi Albayrak, "Ezan yarışmasını turistler de hayranlıkla izledi," *Zaman Gazetesi*, 21 July 2005, <http://www.zaman.com.tr/?bl=bolgehaberleri&alt=marmara&trh=20050721&hn=194476>.

³⁹ *Rast* is the name of one of the main melodic modes.

⁴⁰ Öztürk, "Türk Din Müsikisinde Ezan," 47.

⁴¹ M. Safa Yeprem, "Türk Cami Müsikisi ile Mukayeseli olarak İstanbul Gayr-ı Müslimlerde Mabed Müsikisi" (dissertation, T.C. Marmara Üniversitesi, 2004), 209.

⁴² Yoram Arnon (graduate student of Turkish classical music) in discussion with the author, August 2006.

⁴³ Ali Tüfekçi (university instructor of Turkish classical music) in discussion with the author, September 2006; İsmail Karakelle (imam at the Rüstem Paşa mosque) in discussion with the author, July 2006.

⁴⁴ Mehmet Bitmez (university instructor of Turkish classical music) in discussion with the author, November 2006.

⁴⁵ Nuri Özcan, "Ezan, Musiki," in *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 12 (Istanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1995), 44.

noting that, as it is the product of the Ottoman palaces, it is the most desirable. Defining the sound of the Istanbul style is generally accomplished using comparative language. Obviously people remark on the difference between it and the Arab styles (exactly as they do when discussing the perception of a Turkish national style), but at times regionalism, as when people point to the four official styles of the Ottoman period, is the comparative tool. Yüksel Aytuğ writes about the debate concerning whether or not the special Ramadan programming of the call to prayer on the TRT (the national Turkish radio and television) should be broadcast from Ankara or from Istanbul. He notes in his article that the plan to broadcast an Istanbul call to prayer greatly upset some Ankara residents.⁴⁶ And, while people do perceive a difference between these regional styles, one practitioner claims that such distinctions are lessening. Necati Yaman, the senior muezzin at Istanbul's Nurosmaniye Mosque who began reciting during the mandated Turkish language call to prayer era, believes that there were regional differences in the past but that today these differences have diminished. Yaman, who began his career reciting in the Black Sea region and later moved to Istanbul, feels this development is due to the migration of many people from Anatolia to Istanbul. He also states that the former differences are also being affected by widespread media such as television, compact discs, and audiocassettes and concludes that twenty-five years before, the same song sung on Istanbul radio and Ankara radio would have sounded different.⁴⁷ Thus, while some listeners and practitioners agree that the differences are less well defined, at the same time they believe they still exist and are practiced particularly in the more famous mosques of each region. Burak Yedek, a filmmaker who made a film about Istanbul muezzins, reports that these mosques strive to preserve the Istanbul tradition.⁴⁸ Other listeners agree with this assessment of call to prayer practice at these famous Istanbul mosques.

Central to this discussion on national and regional perceptions of the call, however, is that listeners' and practitioners' descriptions of the Istanbul style *mirror* those of the national Turkish style. The Istanbul style and the Turkish national style are both described as being higher in range, heavily ornamented and using a different *makam* for each of the five daily calls. While conducting research on the Istanbul style of recitation, I became concerned about the conflation of the Istanbul style with that of a general Turkish style and wondered how to separate the two into distinct entities. Having completed the research, however, I now argue that what was once perceived as the distinct Istanbul Ottoman style is now the standard Turkish national style; this is the result of the Turkish language period of recitation. When the country (and the concept) of Turkey was created, regional practices came to be accepted as "Turkish" as opposed to being associated with locally-based identities. Thus, a further consequence of the period was that the Istanbul palace style displaced other regional styles and is now considered "Turkish." Various sources support this theory. Theologian Nuri Özcan claims that Istanbul and its surrounding areas have been accepted as the yardstick for Turkish call to prayer recitation.⁴⁹ Practitioners also tend to agree that Istanbul has become the national Turkish style. At one interview with the muezzin from the central Eminönü district *Yeni Cami* (New Mosque) there were several other practitioners present, at least one from Cyprus. They all seemed to agree on the point that the Istanbul style had spread to other regions and was the dominant preferred practice.⁵⁰ It should be noted that, while interviews were conducted with muezzins currently reciting in Istanbul mosques, most muezzins had held posts in other Turkish cities

⁴⁶ Yüksel Aytuğ, "TRT'nin iftar programı tartışılıyor," *Sabah*, 25 October 2004, <http://arsiv.sabah.com.tr/2004/10/25/gny/yaz1277-70-111-20041025-200.html>.

⁴⁷ Necati Yaman (Nurosmaniye mosque muezzin) in discussion with the author, November 2006.

⁴⁸ Burak Yedek (Turkish graduate student filmmaker) in discussion with the author, August 2006.

⁴⁹ Öztürk, "Türk Din Müsikiğinde Ezan," 49.

⁵⁰ Musa Çetintaş (muezzin at the Yeni Cami) in discussion with the author, August 2006.

and many had grown up in other cities throughout Turkey, as well. Thus, their perception that among call to prayer recitation styles Istanbul is the predominant one is based on their personal experience of the craft in other locations.

As to the general factors that have created the Istanbul/Turkish melodic and vocal style, there is of course the Ottoman period palace style – of which the Istanbul style is the direct descendent. The Republican period seems to have been a bit of an anomaly in terms of the development of the style, except with one notable contribution: the mentality of that period may have helped to develop the idea of a Turkish national style, which somewhat ironically, given early Republican disregard for Ottoman constructs and practices, seems to have settled on the Istanbul palace style as its representative. And, despite government interest in making a very “national” call to prayer through mandated Turkish language recitation, the experiment was theoretically unsuccessful in that Arabic language recitation was restored. However, in the midst of these changes, the population developed the sense of a national identity and it seems that the Istanbul style of recitation, a direct descendant of the Ottoman sultans, has become the national style – a style in which a certain amount of pride is taken.

Embodied Political Discourse in Turkish Call to Prayer Recitation

That the call to prayer has developed as a site of such embodied discourse is not surprising, given that the call has carried extra-textual meaning since it was first established as a component of worship. In this practice of recitation historically and across geographical borders, the sound of the human voice carries great weight because its beauty theoretically can supersede the text itself in the ability to transmit the text’s message. Therefore the voice quality of the practitioner *independently* from the text can impart the invitation to the mosque and to Islam. It is the power of this human sound to carry meaning apart from the text that predisposes listeners and practitioners in Turkey to add more layers to the voice’s message and to perceive these varied discourses and meanings in their own particular renditions of the call (in Turkey this is especially true since few listeners are Arabic speakers).

The metaphorically and physically embodied political discourse contained in the recitation of a call to prayer in Turkey reflects what Karpas has noted as being “a multifaceted process occurring in several stages of identity accretion proceeding from universal Ottomanism and Islamism to specific Turkishness and Turkism.”⁵¹ Further, he states, “Many scholars claim that, after trying and failing to reform the state through Ottomanism and Islamism, the Turks decided to abandon both for nationalism. In reality all three concepts coexisted and evolved together in constant interaction.”⁵² Navaro-Yashin also notes the multiple layers of Turkish identity when she writes, “The notions of Turkey, Turks, and Turkish culture, arguably like other terms of state or identity, have been entangled in a history of multiple constructions.”⁵³ In this vein, I argue that this history has similarly engendered competing but not mutually exclusive embodied discourses within call to prayer recitation practice. The restored, yet theoretically optional, Arabic language recitation ties a call to prayer more closely to Islam and, in Turkey, can signify that religion has overcome the state, or at least that religion has been significantly freed from perceived secularist control. Simultaneously, however, practitioners and listeners perceive and take pride in a

⁵¹ Karpas, *The Politicization of Islam*, 13.

⁵² Ibid, 327.

⁵³ Navaro-Yashin, *Faces of the State: Secularism and Public Life in Turkey*, 10.

national style that they forward through state-sponsored competitions and that they hear in certain renditions.

Listeners are just as important as practitioners in the dissemination and interpretation of the call. Listeners take part in this interactive dialogue between recitation practitioners and audience. As Hirschkind argues, “Scholars attentive to the heterogeneous temporalities of modernity have begun to chart an alternative history of the senses, one in which, not surprisingly, listening emerges as an important site of inquiry, pervading the modern in both overt and unacknowledged ways.”⁵⁴ So, when they listen to the call, they can “hear” the nation-state through this particular style. However, this Turkish national style is not one that was created by the Turkish Republic; rather, it was adopted from the Ottoman palaces as representative of Turkey, which adds another dimension of meaning to any rendition of the Turkish style, as most early nationalists were keen to distance themselves from cultural and political practices considered Ottoman and therefore “backwards.”⁵⁵ In contrast, contemporary practitioners, particularly ones working in the more famous Istanbul mosques, see themselves as perpetuators of a rich legacy – both that of the Turkish state and the Ottoman Empire.

As to the codification of the Istanbul call as the Turkish national call, this stemmed from Istanbul’s position as a leader dominant in most cultural enterprises. It was somewhat natural for this particular style to become the main representative for all of Turkey, obfuscating other regional styles. Prior to the Turkish Republic, it is likely that, after religious identity, local identity would have taken precedence over the concept of a national one,⁵⁶ as the Ottoman Empire consisted of multiple ethnicities and people of varied linguistic backgrounds. Moreover, it was only in the nineteenth century that a concerted effort was made to construct and elicit the sense of a national Turkish identity. Before that time, people were very rooted in their local communities. In their recitation practice, practitioners would have been (and still are) aware of associations of a particular style with a particular place and would have been disposed to render a call appropriate to that place. As practitioners became mentally more rooted in a nation as opposed to a city, they would have begun conceiving of a style as more nationally than locally based. And, in the end, the Istanbul style came to reflect the national ideal.

The use of cultural artifacts (including sonic artifacts) to reinforce notions of national identity is a hallmark of nationalization processes. When the modern Turkish Republic was created, a small nation was carved out of the remnants of what was once a world empire. In order to create this nation, the founding fathers had to instill in the people of Turkey a sense of communal identity. The creation of a nation requires that people learn to imagine themselves as a single community, related more to one another than to any other group.⁵⁷ The nineteenth-century pro-Turkicization political factions and subsequently Atatürk’s Kemalists successfully created a sense of national identity in the people by inventing a long history of Turkish identity as it related to Anatolia and by largely removing non-Turks and non-Muslims from any sphere of influence (and often entirely from daily life, as well). This was accomplished either through a physical removal of certain ethnic groups, as in the case of the forced population exchanges with the Greeks, or in the marginalizing of certain ethnic identities and their coerced acceptance of a Turkish identity, as in the case of the Kurds. In inventing this national identity, Atatürk carefully manipulated some

⁵⁴ Hirschkind, *The Ethical Soundscape: Cassette Sermons and Islamic Counterpublics*, 21.

⁵⁵ Karpas, *The Politicization of Islam*, 353-354; John Morgan O’Connell, “From Empire to Republic: Vocal Style in Twentieth-Century Turkey,” in *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music Volume VI: The Middle East*, edited by Virginia Danielson, Scott Marcus, and Dwight Reynolds (New York: Garland, 2002), 781-787.

⁵⁶ Karpas, *The Politicization of Islam*, 319.

⁵⁷ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991), 7.

of the major cultural symbols and imbued them with Turkishness; the call to prayer and its adoption of a Turkish text is a prime example of this undertaking in that the manipulation and creation of such traditions is a common means by which to reinforce the nation state.⁵⁸ Atatürk knew that he must create a sense of national identity while acknowledging the dominant religion of Islam because for so long it had been one of the strongest unifying factors for the people of the Ottoman Empire. In the particular case of the call to prayer, Atatürk implied the sense of the past with the use of the “pure Turkish” language, but at the same time symbolically called on listeners to hear the future when it was recited – the future being the modern Turkish Republic. Unfortunately, instead he provoked animosity from the predominantly Muslim populace and provided a unifying position for public protest among many groups.

Simultaneously, outside of the realm of sacred recitation, in the early years of the Republic, other vocal/musical styles were being identified as undesirable because they were associated with “non-modern” Turkey. Research conducted by O’Connell suggests that in Turkey there was a conscious awareness of how to manipulate vocal sound to indicate certain allegiances. He writes that a discourse emerged very specifically during the early Republican period and was tied to ideas concerning an appropriate national sound. In his research on national identity and secular vocal practice in Turkey, O’Connell finds that Turkish vocal performance became considered a style of music, as opposed to a natural form of vocal production, so as to allow people to consider other possible styles. Vocal styles came to be classified according to “regional qualities, historic characteristics, and normative functions.”⁵⁹ Thus, out of this period grew notions of styles considered undesirable — such as those associated with Arabs. In terms of vocal performance itself, new national pedagogical methods were employed in state run schools. Given state interest in governing religion, it seems logical to extend the argument to the development of a national Turkish recitation practice. However, what that recitation style would be was problematic. Call to prayer recitation style had previously defined a local or religious identity, but as national identity took precedence over local and religious, a similar need for a Turkish style developed. At the time, because the most often recorded muezzins of these early years were in Istanbul and Istanbul was still the cultural center, the Istanbul style seems to have become the preferred Turkish style simply through the wide dissemination of Istanbul muezzins’ renditions of the Turkish language call and other religious recitation practices. While there is little direct evidence that the state explicitly supported the Istanbul recitation style over others (excepting the fact that when the new Turkish language call to prayer was constructed, only recitation artists practicing in Istanbul were consulted and that the great recitation artists of the day are still cited as models), given the way in which practitioners and listeners describe both the Turkish style and the Istanbul style in similar terms, I argue that because the mindset was geared towards national identity, the often recorded and pedagogically reinforced Istanbul recitation style organically evolved as the perceived Turkish national one. As a result of these processes, a past and a contemporary awareness of the layers of meaning embedded in the sound of a call to prayer recitation are part of the fabric of Turkish life – there is no need to clearly separate all the identities; instead they intermingle freely.

In the end, somewhat paradoxically, the Istanbul Ottoman “palace” style has become the Turkish national ideal, despite an early Republican interest in minimizing Ottoman influence in the public sphere. In its attempt to create a national call solely through the language of recitation, the state did not seem to

⁵⁸ Eric Hobsbawm, “Introduction: Inventing Traditions” in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1-14.

⁵⁹ John Morgan O’Connell, “From Empire to Republic: Vocal Style in Twentieth-Century Turkey,” 784.

consider the importance of style and voice quality in the perception of the call and thus ignored those factors when regulating the call's performance. So, while a national style emerged, which practitioners and residents hold in high regard over the style of their neighbors, particularly Arab ones, the national style maintains a direct link to both its Islamic roots through the language of recitation, Arabic, and its Ottoman heritage, through its Istanbul palace roots. Such seemingly competing ideological frameworks play out with every rendition of the contemporary call and are a product of early nationalization processes. Ultimately, the embodied practice of call to prayer recitation in Turkey connotes more than a Muslim identity: it often also expresses such constructs as "Turkishness" or "Istanbulness" or "Ottoman." Thus, Muslim, Turkish, Ottoman, or Istanbul identities are not truly exclusive; rather there is a dynamic interplay among the identities in call to prayer recitation. As Navaro-Yashin writes, "...this sort of voiced disagreement about the content of 'Turkishness' is extremely commonplace in the public culture of contemporary Turkey. Not only living out their everyday practices with the lack of consciousness that Pierre Bourdieu's notion of 'habitus' suggests, people in Turkey also abstractly think and comment about their 'culture.'"⁶⁰ Thus, when Istanbul muezzins recite the call to prayer they *incorporate* and ultimately express publicly to the community a variety of nuanced mannerisms that both they and the community share as being, at the very least, Islamic, Turkish, Ottoman, and of Istanbul.

Moreover, as the call to prayer is publicly expressed sound, its agents of meaningful processing and interpretation are both those who produce the sound, muezzins, and those who hear the sound, the local residents. These combined agents produce and take in the sound, and for a collective moment are affected by its generation and seem to have come to an agreement about what this embodied practice contains in terms of historical and social information. They perform/hear Istanbul's Ottoman legacy; they express/identify the beautiful voice that is a conduit to the divine and a direct descendant of early Islam; they recite in Arabic even though they could recite in Turkish, practicing the choice to align themselves more with Islam than the nation state; however, simultaneously the nation state is celebrated through several "Turkish" features: the Turkish higher voice, ornamentation, and the belief that the sound emanating from Istanbul is the most beautiful among all styles.

Audio Example: Field recording of contemporary Turkish call to prayer

Accessible at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3998/mp.9460447.0005.105>

⁶⁰ Navaro-Yashin, *Faces of the State: Secularism and Public Life in Turkey*, 60.

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