

STRATEGIC  
DEFAMATION  
*of* FETHULLAH  
GÜLEN

*ENGLISH VS. TURKISH*

DOĞAN KOÇ

# Strategic Defamation of Fethullah Gülen

English vs. Turkish

Doğan Koç




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## *Chapter I*

# **Introduction**

In recent years, Fethullah Gülen and the Hizmet (service) Movement have attracted significant attention from both Western and Muslim populations. Academic conferences in Houston, London, Washington, Amsterdam, Berlin, Cairo, Cape Town, Los Angeles, Delhi, and Jakarta, have analyzed the growth and influence of the movement. Gülen himself has been the topic of hundreds of articles and books, and leading newspapers around the world have reported on the Hizmet Movement. The French newspaper “Le Monde” analyzed the Hizmet Movement schools inspired by Fethullah Gülen in Germany, suggesting that they could provide an example to the French immigrant population (Borne 2008). The New York Times also featured a cover story on the Hizmet Movement schools in Pakistan, this time pointing them as a possible remedy for the spread of radical Islam (Tavernise 2008).

With this growing public awareness has come increased critical attention. New scholarly research has resulted in several masters and PhD theses investigating topics related to the movement, and critical reflection on the teachings of Fethullah Gülen and the activities of the Hizmet Movement is essential for the movement’s continued relevance. While Gülen’s efforts for education and dialogue are typically applauded by politicians and government officials, the formulation of various critiques by researchers and scholars is to be expected and welcomed as a sign of the very cultural dialogue that Gülen works to promote. However, among a small group of authors, criticism has given way to flagrant defamation. Here the term “defamation” is not used frivolously; it denotes the deliberately slanderous or libelous injury of another’s good reputation. Such injury obviously offends the many educators and social workers who identify themselves with Fetullah Gülen, but it also precludes the possibility of honest and unguarded critical dialogue between

the Hizmet Movement and its social neighbors in both Western and Muslim countries.

This book offers a comprehensive analysis of the vilification of Fethullah Gülen at work in both English and Turkish texts in order to illustrate that these defamatory articles and books do not offer any consistent critique; they are consistent only with the fears of their intended audiences. As Türker (2009) has demonstrated, a fundamental inconsistency exists between the defamatory picture of Gülen that appears in Turkish and the defamatory picture of him that appears in English. In the Muslim world, Gülen is depicted as a Zionist CIA agent, a US puppet, or even a secret cardinal of the Pope. Articles warn that he is a Western Trojan horse, trying to either Christianize Muslims or allow for the Western exploitation of the Muslim world. On the other hand, English articles depict Gülen as a nefarious anti-Semitic or anti-Western presence, whose moderate Islam is a secret plot to Islamize Christians. Here, defamatory authors warn that he is an Islamist Trojan horse: a second Khomeini trying to establish an Islamic caliphate in the world. And Türker is cynical of such directly contradictory warnings:

It makes more sense to warn Turkish speakers of an American imperialist danger that is supported by Zionists. But on the other hand, for English speakers, you will find more buyers if you use an Islamic danger argument.

To take a brief example, Hikmet Cetinkaya appears to calculate in precisely this way. In Turkish, he has authored ten books and several articles claiming that Fetullah Gülen is a puppet of US political interests, whose religious message conceals a subversive secularism masterminded by the American government (see “Defamation of Gülen in Turkish” and “Appendix” for more information). However, when the same Hikmet Cetinkaya appears on a Dutch documentary, he warns the Dutch people that Gülen leads a dangerous radical religious movement whose progressive social actions conceal a secret Islamist agenda (Sharon-Krespin 2009). In other words, when he addresses a Turkish audience, Hikmet Cetinkaya typically portrays Gülen as an American puppet. But when he addresses a Western audience, Gülen is portrayed as an Islamic danger to the West. The contradictory accusations of Hikmet Cetinkaya could perhaps be dismissed as an isolated case of distortion, but unfortunately he is not alone in making such defamatory statements. And as this book hopes to demonstrate, when the sum total of defamatory articles written in either English or Turkish is analyzed as a whole, this very same inconsistency appears.

This book shows that Hikmet Cetinkaya is not alone in these defamation ‘campaigns,’ there is a wide group of people who act strategically when defaming Fethullah Gülen and the Hizmet Movement.

## *Chapter 2*

# **Fethullah Gülen and the Hizmet Movement**

### **2.1. BIOGRAPHY OF FETHULLAH GÜLEN**

Before examining the various defamatory articles and books, it is necessary to understand a little bit about Fethullah Gülen and the Hizmet Movement. Fethullah Gülen is a moderate Turkish Muslim scholar, known primarily as an advocate of education and religious dialogue. He began his career as a preacher and an education activist, and his ideas have mobilized millions of people towards civic engagement. This “Hizmet Movement,” sometimes referred to as the Gülen Movement, denotes the unofficial affiliation of those who are committed to Gülen’s vision of education, dialogue, peace, social justice, and social harmony. The popularity of Gülen’s teachings and the dedication of the Hizmet Movement have resulted in the establishment of hundreds of education and dialogue institutions throughout the world.

M. Fethullah Gülen was born in 1941 in the town of Erzurum, located in the eastern part of Turkey (Erdogan, 1995). His father was an imam and a farmer, and Fethullah Gülen was the second eldest in a family of seven children. He received a traditional education from both family members and religious institutions, and initiated the rigorous regimen of self-education that he would continue throughout his life. Gülen explains these early encounters with education:

My first teacher was my mother. At that time, our village had no elementary school. Later, one was opened. My first Arabic and Persian teacher was my father. Later, I was taught by Muhammed Lutfi Efendi’s grandson, Sadi Efendi. While studying the religious sciences, I also read other books and studied the Sufi sciences. For me, traces of the religious sciences and Sufism always produced the same rhythm (Erdogan, p.35).

Despite a lack of formal education, the depth of Gülen's knowledge in various traditions has surprised several of his biographers. In his analysis of Gülen's educational life, Tuncer (2005) admires his comprehensive knowledge of not only traditional Islamic sources, but Western, Eastern, Turkish, and modern Islamic sources as well. Gülen's self-education began when he read the Qur'an at age three, later committing it to memory (Tuncer 2005). Aras & Caha (2000) also cite Gülen's extensive knowledge of both traditional Islamic sources and Western philosophy, emphasizing his interest in the work of Immanuel Kant.

At the age of fourteen, Gülen began preaching in local mosques. In 1959, he passed a state exam and left Erzurum for Edirne, where he would become a state preacher at the Ucserefeli Mosque. By August 6, 1959, Gülen had been officially appointed the imam second in charge. He served for three years in Edirne, and then traveled to Kestanepazari, Izmir, Turkey's third largest city. Gülen's years in Izmir are considered to be the founding years of his community. His service here in the field of education, beginning with the Kestanepazari Qur'anic School and continuing through his travels as a preacher throughout Western Anatolia, gained him popularity in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Gülen explains these pivotal years:

At Kestanepazari [Izmir], I was busy with students. My official duty was not limited to Izmir, for I was expected to travel in the Aegean part of Turkey. From time to time I would go to coffeehouses to explain things to the men who were killing time there. (Erdogan, 1995, p.53)

During this time, a small community of students and laypeople began to take shape with Gülen at its center. According to his interview with Erdogan (1995), he was spending most of his time in Izmir preaching, giving conferences, studying, and teaching.

Gülen was then appointed to Edremit, to Manisa, and finally to Bornova, Izmir, where he worked until September 12, 1980. As he continued to travel, Gülen's popularity increased. His discourse was distinguished for its depth of knowledge, sensitivity, and eloquence, and audiences all over the country gathered to hear him address various religious, social, economic, and philosophical issues. His sermons were highly structured, and his systematic presentation of a topic might extend over many months, an uncommon practice at that time.

Gülen's teachings attracted the attention of the academic community and common people alike. Traveling to numerous cities and towns across Turkey, he would give sermons in mosques and then give public speeches in theatres and coffee houses. These sermons and speeches were often recorded on tape, and volunteers all around the country distributed such tapes, further amplifying his influence. Although he was only in his thirties, Gülen had already become one of the few preachers to achieve such nationwide recognition.

After his retirement in 1981, Gülen continued to give speeches and sermons into the early 1990s.

Aside from his reputation as an orator, Gülen continued to attract significant media attention due to his educational activities and support for religious dialogue. In the late 1990s, Gülen was interviewed by several different media organizations, and these televised appearances helped introduce him to a much wider population. Gülen's personality also helped him to gain fame in intellectual circles, as his books have become bestsellers in Turkey (Aras & Caha, 2000). As Nuriye Akman, a senior Turkish columnist, states:

He is like that "old-style gentleman" we read about in old books and see in old films. He says "*estagfurullah*" [I beg the pardon of God] in every other sentence. He speaks in delicate and polite phrases. He is extremely modest.... He speaks in an even tone knowing what he will say and uses correct grammar and an Ottoman vocabulary. (Akman 1995, p.16-18)

Dale F. Eickelman, an American expert on Islam and Middle East, speaks of Gülen as Turkey's answer to Billy Graham, the media-savvy American evangelist. In televised chat shows, interviews, and occasional sermons, Gülen speaks about Islam and science, democracy, modernity, religious and ideological tolerance, the importance of education, and various current events (Eickelman 1998).

Although some people remain suspicious of his influence, Gülen has generally gained the support of civil and political leaders in Turkey.<sup>1</sup> He has visited with political leaders from both left and right wing parties and has met with Jewish and Christian leaders, even Pope John II, at various interfaith dialogue events. In 1999, Gülen moved to United States for medical treatment, where he still lives today.

Gülen continues to write in an almost cloistral life while teaching Islamic sciences to a small number of students. In addition to his books, Gülen contributes editorials to *Sizinti*, *Yeni Ümit*, *Yagmur*, and *The Fountain* magazines. His sermons and discourses have been recorded on thousands of tapes and video cassettes, and many books have been compiled from these sources. Currently, he communicates with the world and with the Hizmet Movement through his writings published in magazines and on the internet.

## 2.2. HISTORY OF THE HIZMET MOVEMENT

Although he began teaching at the Kestanepazari Qur'anic School in 1966, people did not start to organize around Gülen's ideas until the 1970s (Hermansen, 2005). Inspired by his emphasis on education, the first study center

(*dersane*) was established by people around Gülen in 1978 to prepare high school students for the nationwide university entrance examination.<sup>2</sup> Currently, there are hundreds of *dersanes* all over Turkey, and every year; these centers generate the top test scores. In 1979, the movement began to publish the journal *Sizinti*, promoting a synthesis of scientific knowledge and Islam (Agai, 2005).

After the 1980 military coup, legal changes enabled the opening of state-controlled private schools. Gülen then encouraged people around him to open private secular schools that would include English as a primary language and put more emphasis on science. After the collapse of Soviet Union, similar schools were opened in the Central Asian Turkic countries. Now, there are over one thousand schools inspired by Gülen's ideas in more than a hundred different countries (Ebaugh 2009).

The Hizmet Movement has established a sizeable media network, including a newspaper (Zaman), a television station (STV), several radio stations, an academic theology magazine (Yeni Umit), a literature magazine (Yagmur), an ecology magazine (Ekoloji), a news magazine (Aksiyon), and a news agency (Cihan Haber Ajansi).<sup>3</sup> According to Aras & Caha (2000) the movement draws much of its support from young urban men, with a special appeal to doctors, academics, and other professionals. Hakan Yavuz explains the intentions of those who identify themselves with the teachings of Gülen in an interview with *Religioscope* conducted in 2004:

The movement is very active, responsible for newspapers, financial institutions, the best hospitals and private high schools in Turkey, and so forth. It is part of every aspect of Turkish life. It tries to set a good example and to improve standards. I think it is well integrated into Turkish society.

The movement wants to provide a good image of Islam, not so much through indoctrination, but to teach Islam through its members setting a good example by becoming good doctors, good mathematicians, good politicians, good cooks, and so forth. Such people want to teach Islam by doing their duty properly.

In a way, they represent a new model of Islam in Turkey, at peace with democracy and modernity. This also reflects the Anatolian understanding of Islam, i.e. the Sufi conception of morality is at the centre of the movement (Religioscope, 2004, interview with Hakan Yavuz).

The Hizmet Movement is ultimately an array of service projects initiated, funded, and conducted by people who are motivated to various extents by Gülen's humanitarian discourse. In a surprisingly short time, the movement has become active in over a hundred countries, with an extensive education and media network that spans Turkey, Central Asia, the Balkans, Southeast Asia, West Africa, Russia, Mongolia, China, Australia, Western Europe, and the United States (Hendrick, 2006).

In order to understand the Hizmet Movement and its development, it is necessary to examine the beliefs and motivations of its participants. Since these beliefs are often directly influenced by the teachings of Fethullah Gülen, the Hizmet Movement is often characterized as a unique amalgamation of civic engagement and religious identity. Aras and Caha (2000) define the movement as simultaneously Islamic, liberal, and modern, whereas Yavuz (2003) prefers to discuss it as a set of contemporary and ultimately pragmatic reforms. But the movement's ability to reconcile traditional Islamic values with modern life and science is its most characteristic feature, and this is precisely what has enabled Gülen to gather such a large, receptive audience (Aras and Caha 2000).

### **2.2.1. Islam**

The movement must first be approached in terms of its Islamic identity. Fethullah Gülen is first and foremost a prominent religious leader in Turkey, and he regularly uses Islamic sources to motivate and mobilize the people around him. Thus, a comprehension of Gülen's particular interpretation of Islam will be essential to the understanding of the movement and its activities.

For Yavuz (2004), the Hizmet Movement represents a model of Islam that is at peace with democracy and modernity, typifying the Anatolian understanding of religion and morality. Researchers<sup>4</sup> who have studied the movement agree that it mobilizes a particularly Sufi conception of morality. Even though Gülen does not establish a Sufi order in its common sense<sup>5</sup>, he does seek to recontextualize basic principles of the Sufi life within a modern framework (Gokcek 2005). Gülen is often portrayed as the leader of a "social movement" encouraging a private morality modeled after Sufism rather than a traditional Sufi tariqa<sup>6</sup> (Williams 2005; Yavuz 2004). This relationship to the Sufi tradition has led some scholars to refer to the Hizmet Movement as "quasi-Sufi," "Sufi-oriented," or even "post-Sufism" (Kim 2005; Yavuz 2004).

To cut a long story short, Sufism denotes the personal, spiritual aspect of Islam: the inner life of a practicing Muslim (Chittick, 1999). In Gülen's own definition, Sufism is a life-long process of spiritual development that demands the individual's active participation. Strict observance of all religious obligations and adherence to the Prophet Muhammad's example are meant to enable individuals, through the practice of constant worship, to deepen their awareness of themselves as devotees of God (Gülen, 1999). The Qur'an and Sunnah (tradition of the Prophet Muhammad) are the foundations of this practice (Yavuz, 2004). Gülen summarizes his understanding of Sufism as follows:

Sufism is the path followed by an individual who, having been able to free himself or herself from human vices and weakness in order to acquire angelic



qualities and conduct that pleases God, lives in accordance with the requirements of God's knowledge and love and in the resulting spiritual delight that ensues (Gülen, 1999, p.xiv).

Although he praises Sufism (tasawwuf), Gülen refuses the title of Sufi Sheikh and denies that the Hizmet Movement is in any way a Sufi *tariqah*<sup>7</sup> (Özkök, 1995). In this way, Gülen's understanding of Sufism resembles that of the early centuries of Islam. His practice calls to mind the first and second centuries of Islam, before Sufism had been institutionalized. Sarioprak (2001) calls Gülen "a Sufi in his own way," pointing to parallels between Gülen's insistence that he is not the leader of a religious movement and the attitude of early Sufi scholars:

Early Sufis had neither orders nor even Sufi organizations. Rabia, Junayd, Muhasibi, Bishr, Ghazzali, Feriduddin Attar, and even Rumi did not belong to a *tariqah*. However they were Sufis.

This Sufi understanding with a typically Ottoman-Turkish<sup>8</sup> approach to Islam has shaped Gülen's characteristic interpretation of the role of religion in public life (Aras & Caha, 2000). He interprets most Islamic regulations as applying to an individual's private life, with only a small portion of them concerning the role of government. And according to Gülen, these latter provisions need not be enforced. Religion is a private matter, and its requirements should not be imposed on anyone (Gülen, 1995). Aras and Caha (2000) emphasize the influence of Anatolian history and culture on this interpretation of Islam. According to Aras and Caha (2000), the movement's interpretation of Islam is liberal and tolerant of non-Islamic lifestyles, which is rooted again in Anatolian historical experience and Sufi traditions. All creatures are to be loved as reflections of God and objects of His own love, leaving no place for enemies or "others" (Gülen, 2004).

### 2.2.2. Education

The Hizmet Movement is primarily known for the network of schools it has created around the world. Among those inspired by Gülen, education is regarded as the pivotal field of service. Yavuz (2004) asserts that work of education is at the very core of the Hizmet movement's identity, which he refers to not as a religious movement, but rather an education-oriented one. As mentioned previously, the movement entered the educational field first in 1978 by establishing private university preparatory centers. After the 1980 military coup made possible the establishment of private schools, the Private

Yamanlar High School in Izmir and Private Fatih High School in Istanbul became the movement's first high schools, opened in 1982.<sup>9</sup> The subsequent success of graduates from these schools and private centers has brought the Hizmet Movement widespread public recognition.<sup>10</sup> And after the dissolution of Soviet Union, the movement started to open exceptional high schools in former Soviet Union countries, and then all over the world.

Throughout his public life, Gülen taught that learning is the main duty and obligation of all humans:

The main duty and purpose of human life is to seek understanding. The effort of doing so, known as education, is a perfecting process through which we earn, in the spiritual, intellectual, and physical dimensions of our beings, the rank appointed for us as the perfect pattern of creation (Unal and Williams, 2000, p.305).

For Gülen, education is a defining human characteristic that distinguishes us from other creatures:

We are truly human if we learn, teach, and inspire others. It is difficult to regard those who are ignorant and without desire to learn as truly human. (Unal and Williams, 2000, p.309)

When he discusses education, Gülen typically emphasizes the importance of both individual and societal change. Education is for him the essence of humanity, but it also sustains a well-balanced society. Thomas Michel (2003), who has studied various Gülen-inspired schools around the world, claims that Gülen's educational understanding reflects Turkey's particular educational dilemma. In a sense, Gülen's educational project can be read as an attempt to combine the strengths of each school. He envisions a "marriage of hearts and minds" that would provide instruction in science, reason, and morality and mold individuals of "thought, action, and inspiration" (Gülen, 1996).

The schools established by the movement provide a secular education with an emphasis on the sciences.<sup>11</sup> Each institution is run independently, although each shares a common vision, sometimes even a common curriculum (Williams, 2005). The balance of instruction in science, reason, and morality envisioned by Gülen is achieved by providing students with a high quality education and exemplary teachers. None of the schools offer religious education. Instead, the teachers model moral and ethical behavior in their daily life. Today, an enormous diversity of ethnic groups are a part of the same community, and the teachers of the Hizmet Movement insist that this shared experience must be accompanied by shared understanding and a shared code

of ethics. It is this “universal” code of ethics that the schools hope to convey. Hizmet Movement schools employ all kinds of teachers: Turkish, non-Turkish, Muslim, and non-Muslim. And according to Agai (2005), many of the students at such schools have never heard the name “Fethullah Gülen.” In this sense it would be a mistake to call the schools “Gülen schools” as many casually do. But on the other hand, without Gülen’s inspiration it is almost certain that such schools would not exist.

### 2.2.3. Dialogue

Aside from education, the most characteristic activity of the Hizmet Movement is the promotion of interfaith dialogue and tolerance.<sup>12</sup> Gülen emphasizes the importance of tolerance and dialogue in his teachings, and these values have become central to the Hizmet Movement’s mission and identity (Hendrick, 2005).

Among the many things we have lost, perhaps the first and most important is tolerance. From this word we understand embracing people regardless of difference of opinion, world-view, ideology, ethnicity, or belief. It also means putting up with matters we do not like by finding strength in a deep conscience, faith and a generous heart or by strength of our emotions. From another approach, it means, in the words of the famous Turkish poet Yunus<sup>13</sup>, loving the created simply because of the Creator (Gülen 2004a. p.46).

In his writings, speeches, sermons, and interviews, Gülen praises the person who practices dialogue, tolerance, and love:

Throughout the four corners of the world, people of truth and love, by acting on these truths, are carrying messages of love, tolerance, and dialogue with everyone (Gülen, 2004b, p.174).

Gülen considers dialogue and tolerance to be the two essential pillars of a peaceful, democratic society. “Dialogue” he defines as the coming together of two or more people for the sake of discussion and community. Such dialogue requires a patient tolerance that accepts others and is willing to learn how to get along with them as they are. Gülen argues that this conception of tolerance is clearly grounded in Islamic texts, and emphasizes that tolerance does not require a person to forego his or her own traditions or beliefs (Gülen, 2004b).

Aslan (2005) situates Gülen’s approach to dialogue in the Islamic tradition, arguing that he deploys the Qur’an, Sunnah, and the intellectual tradition

of Sufism in order to establish a clear precedent within Islam for cultural coexistence. According to Gülen, interfaith dialogue is not alien to Islam; it is the natural result of the practice of Islamic ethics. Aras & Caha (2000) suggest that this project is not new. Gülen's conception of dialogue is rooted in the Anatolian experience of Islam. Gülen himself support this view and talks about this as "Turkish Muslimness" (Gülen, 2004b ; Unal and Williams, 2000, p.56). He emphasizes the universality of Islam, but often favors an interpretation of it closely associated with the historical practice of Muslim Turks rooted in Central Asia and Anatolia.

As an advocate of dialogue, Gülen has met with various Christian and Jewish religious leaders, including Patriarch Bartholomeos, head of the Greek Orthodox Fener Patriarchate in Istanbul. In February 1998, he visited Pope John Paul II in Rome and received a visit from Israel's Sephardic Head Rabbi Eliyahu Bakshi Doron. In Turkey, the Hizmet Movement has established the Journalists' and Writers' Foundation, which brings intellectuals together across the ideological spectrum to promote discussion. Numerous institutions for dialogue have been established by Gülen-inspired people around the world. These initiatives aim to bring their respective communities together in order to promote understanding, mutual respect, compassion, and broader community service.

## **2.2.4. Science and Modernity**

Another common point of emphasis in Gülen's teachings is the importance of science and modernity. According to him, a good Muslim needs to catch up with the modern developments and also needs to obey the scientific laws as much as divine laws:

So, Muslims must realize both intellectual and spiritual enlightenment. The light of the intellect is scientific knowledge while the heart or spirit derives its light from religious science. Scientific knowledge without religion usually causes atheism or agnosticism while religious knowledge without intellectual enlightenment gives rise to bigotry. When combined, they urge a student to further and further research and deepening in both belief and knowledge (Gülen, 1997, p.320).

Gülen does not see any conflict between science and religion; they are both regulations established by God. Gülen requires science and knowledge for the development and illumination of mind, whereas he underlines the path to misguidance and deception in the absence of both (Gülen, 2000). According to Gülen, scientific knowledge is a universal product, having

developed over time according to the contributions of many civilizations. Although Muslims have played an important role in this evolution, Western nations have led the world in innovation for last three centuries. But this should not suggest an incompatibility between science and non-Western culture. He regrets the lack of scientific involvement in the Muslim world today and encourages Muslims to engage with and transform the contemporary field. If the twentieth century was an era of science, the twenty-first will be even more so (Gülen, 2000).

Gülen argues that man lives in an age of science and technology for which there is no alternative. Instead of resisting it, he seeks to articulate a “middle way between modernity and the Muslim tradition” (Kuru 2003). According to Kuru’s analysis, Gülen does not invent a “middle way” between modernity and Islam, for he sees Islam itself as this middle way. For Gülen, Islam is the balance between materialism and spirituality, between rationalism and mysticism, between worldliness and asceticism, between this world and next (Gülen 1995). He calls Muslims to “*sirat-i mustakim*” (the straight path) and to be “*ummeten vasatan*” (community of the middle way).<sup>14</sup> According to Michel (2005), Gülen criticizes both the traditional schools (madrasas, takyas) and the modern, secular state and military academies. Gülen critiques the former for a lack of scientific knowledge, and the latter for a lack of spiritual and ethical values:

In both cases, that of the madrasas and takyas and that of the state schools and military academies, the root problem is the same, the lack of integration- integration of the new and the old, of modernity and tradition, of scientific and religious knowledge, of ethical skills and character formation. The result of this lack of integration is a society in crisis (Michel 2005).

Gülen argues that modernity and modernism are not the same, and he criticizes the modernism whose ultimate goal is simply modernity. Instead, he suggests that a richer concept of “civilization” should be the true goal of nations:

Modern facilities can help to ‘modernize’ the outward appearance of life, but that does not amount to being civilized... [Civilization] is a final destination reached along a rational way going through time and circumstances. Civilization is different from modernism. While the former means the changing and renewal of man with respect to his views, way of thinking and human aspects, the latter consists in the changing of life-style and bodily pleasures and the development of living facilities (Gülen 1998).

In Turkey’s political context, Yavuz (2004) defines Gülen’s ideal modernity as “bottom-up modernity”: one that is internalized by the masses rather than imposed by the state.