

SOCIOLOGY OF RELIGION IN TURKEY



Edited by

Zuhâl AĞILKAYA ŞAHİN

Asım YAPICI

Sarah DEMMRICH



ÇAMLICA YAYINLARI

**SOCIOLOGY OF RELIGION
IN TURKEY**

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Chapter IV

RELIGIOUS SOCIALIZATION IN TURKEY

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Abstract

Individuals learn religious beliefs, values, norms, and teachings within a process called religious socialization. Religious socialization occurs through a process similar to the general socialization process. Thus, there are four main agents, which play a role in an individual's religious socialization process: family, educational institutions, the broader social environment, and mass media. In this paper, we analyze the religious tendencies of individuals who undergo their religious socialization in the rapidly changing socio-cultural sphere of Turkey. The aim of this study is to analyze to what extent, and in which ways, the four main agents influence religious socialization in the Turkish context. Firstly, the concept of religious socialization is evaluated on a theoretical level, and secondly, the influence degree and ways of the four main agents on the process are analyzed in light of the field study findings conducted in Turkey.

Keywords: Religious socialization, Sources of influence, Turkish society

Introduction

Religion, as a social institution, is a significant determinant of people's attitudes and behaviors. The influence of religion mainly depends on the socio-religious pattern of the society in which an individual life. Since beliefs and knowledge about religion are mostly abstract, they are necessarily presented through symbols or images. A religion that does not appear in a social sphere through symbols or images could not have any social influence. As religion becomes apparent in a social sphere via symbols, values, and images, religious inclinations and typologies of individuals are formed through the extent of their interaction with these symbols. The interaction of an individual with an institutionalized religion, as it manifests in social life, is only achieved through a socialization process (Günay, 1981; Arabacı, 2003).

Socialization is a process in which an individual learns appropriate knowledge, skills, beliefs, manners, and behaviors while living among a continuous social community (Çoştu, 2011). This learning process not only includes the material culture components of the society but also the spiritual-religious culture components. Through this process, the individual learns the material culture components of a continuous society, and achieves personal development and social harmony, as well as gains religious beliefs, values, norms, feelings, thoughts, and behaviors that play an important role in the socio-cultural formation of society. In this way, the individual achieves religious growth and keeps up the religious culture of the society.

When considering the situation in contemporary Turkey within this framework, it is important to determine religious life patterns observed in various colors and perspectives using sociological methods to identify the effects of each agent that plays a role in religious socialization in Turkish society.

This study analyzes the evolution of religious life in the changing socio-cultural environment of contemporary Turkey, and within this context, the impact levels of social agents (family, educational