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## Boundaries of innovation

Turkish religious politics between pedagogic inventiveness  
and theological transgression

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This paper discusses the Turkish state sponsored celebration of 'Holy Birth Week' (HBW), commemorating the birth of Prophet Muhammed. Successfully transformed from 2010 into a massive, national celebration, it was considered a success for the Islamically oriented AKP government. It however not only infuriated the secularist opposition. More significantly, it spurred theological critique, alleging HBW to represent an unacceptable religious innovation (*bida'*), leading to a complete re-formulation and downsizing from 2017.

This paper explores the HBW controversy as indicative of the current blurring of the sacred/secular, traditional/modern, public/private binaries in Turkish religio-politics. Re-medialized and innovative celebrations *sacralizes* secular institutions and public spheres, while simultaneously *secularizing* religious practices and imaginations. Religo-pedagogical inventiveness thus requires delicate boundary-drawings, between aspirations of mobilization and the dangers of transgressing institutional mandates and theological sensitivities.