THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS:

THE CASE OF

THE RELATIONS BETWEEN TURKEY AND ORGANISATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION (OIC)

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ABSTRACT

THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS:

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This thesis aims to research the role of religion in international relations by examining the relationship between Turkey and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). This relationship has strengthened since 2002. This thesis will analyze this relationship in three steps from the establishment of the OIC to present. First, the establishment of the OIC and Turkey's OIC membership process, especially in terms of the principle of secularism will be analyzed. Second, the relationship between Turkish domestic politics and the OIC will be examined in terms of political parties. Finally, Turkey's relationship with the OIC will be studied by asking whether the OIC has been used as a Turkish foreign policy tool. Taking all of these elements into account, the main concern of this thesis is whether or not religion is the driving force of these relations.

Key words: Religion, Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Turkish domestic politics, Turkish foreign policy.

ÖZ

ULUSLARARASI İLİŞKİLERDE DİNİN ROLÜ: TÜRKİYE-İSLAM İŞBİRLİĞİ TEŞKİLATI İLİŞKİLERİ KONUSUNDA

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Bu tez, dinin uluslararası ilişkilerdeki rolünü, Türkiye ve İslam İşbirliği Teşkilatı (İİT) arasındaki ilişkiler üzerinden incelemeyi amaçlar. Bu ilişki 2002'den beri artmıştır. Bu tez, bu ilişkiyi İİT'nin kuruluşundan bugüne, üç adımda analiz eder. Birincisi, Türkiye'nin İİT'ye üyelik süreci, özellikle laiklik ilkesi açısından analiz edilecektir. İkincisi, Türk iç politikası ve İİT arasındaki ilişki siyasi partiler açısından incelenecektir. Son olarak, bu ilişki, İİT'nin bir dış politika olarak Türk Dış Politikası'nda kullanılıp kullanılmadığı sorusuyla incelenecektir. Tüm bu konular incelenirken, bu tezin temel sorusu, dinin bu ilişkilerde itici gücü olup olmadığıdır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Din, İslam İşbirliği Teşkilatı, Türk İç Politikası, Türk Dış Politikası.

To my precious mother Medine Öztürk

and my father Mustafa Öztürk

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PLAGIARISM.....iii

ABSTRACT.....iv

ÖZ.....v

DEDICATION…….…...vi

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS…….….vii

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....ix

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS……...xiv

CHAPTER

1 INTRODUCTION.....1

1. 1 Subject in Question.....1

1. 2 Methodology.....3

1. 3 Outline of the Thesis.....4

2. THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE ORGANISATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION.....8

2. 1 INTRODUCTION.....8

2. 2 The Establishment of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation.....8

2. 3 The Organs of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation.....13

2. 3. 1 Main Bodies of the OIC.....13

2. 3. 1. 1 Islamic Summit (The Conference of Kings and Heads of State and Government).....13

2. 3. 1. 2 Council of Foreign Ministers.....13

2. 3. 1. 3 General Secretariat.....14

2. 3. 2 Subsidiary Organs of the OIC.....14

2. 3. 3 Specialized Institutions and Organs of the OIC.....15

2. 3. 4 Affiliated Institutions of the OIC.....15

2. 4 The Missions and the Visions of the OIC.....16

2. 5 Turkey's Relation with the OIC.....20

2. 6 Conclusion.....26

3. TURKISH DOMESTIC POLITICS AND THE ORGANISATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION.....28

3. 1 Introduction.....28

3. 2 The Attitudes of Political Parties of Turkey towards Religion and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.....30

3. 2. 1 Introduction.....30

3. 2. 2 The Right Wing Parties.....31

3. 2. 2. 1 Period I: 1969-1980.....32

3. 2. 2. 2 Period II: 1980-2002.....35

3. 2. 3 The Social Democrat Wing Parties.....37

3. 2. 3. 1 Period I: 1969-1980.....37

3. 2. 3. 2 Period II: 1980-2002.....39

3. 2. 3. 3 Period III: 2002 to Present.....40

3. 2. 4 The Religious Right.....40

3. 2. 4. 1 Period I: 1969- 1980.....40

3. 2. 4. 2 Period II: 1980-2002.....43

3. 2. 4. 3 Period III: 2002 to Present.....46

3. 3 Conclusion.....51

4. TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY AND THE ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION (IN TERMS OF SPECIFIC ISSUES BETWEEN 1970 and 2002).....54

4. 1 Introduction.....54

4. 2 The Changes in Turkish Foreign Policy (1969-2002).....55

4. 3 The Oil Crisis and Economic Relations with the OIC.....58

4. 4 The Cyprus Issue.....60

4. 5 The Bulgaria Events (1980-1990).....63

4. 6 The Palestine Issue.....66

4. 7 Bosnian War (1992- 1995).....69

4. 8 Conclusion.....71

5. TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY AND THE ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION SINCE 2002.....72

5. 1 Introduction.....72

5. 2 The General Attitudes of Turkish Foreign Policy Since 2002.....73

5. 3 The Reasons of Turning to the Middle East and the OIC.....75

5. 3. 1 The 9/11 Events and the UN Effect.....75

5. 3. 2 The “Unique” Position of Turkey in the Region.....76

5. 3. 3 Turkey’s Desire for Active Role in the Region.....76

5. 3. 4 The Identity Issue.....78

5. 4 Turkey’s Initiatives towards the OIC.....80

5. 5 The New Period of the OIC and Relations with Turkey.....81

5. 5. 1 The New Period of the OIC.....81

5. 5. 1. 1 New Secretary General of the OIC.....81

5. 5. 1. 2 The Question of the Effectiveness/ Ineffectiveness of the OIC.....82

5. 5. 1. 3 The Challenges of the OIC.....85

5. 5. 2 Turkey and the OIC After 2002.....87

5. 5. 2. 1 Political Issues.....87

5. 5. 2. 1. 1 Famine in Somalia.....87

5. 5. 2. 1. 2 Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar.....89

5. 5. 2. 1. 3 The Syrian Crisis.....90

5. 5. 2. 2 Economic Issues.....91

5. 5. 2. 3 Social Issues.....92

5. 5. 3 Conclusion.....93

6. CONCLUSION.....95

LIST OF REFERENCES.....101

APPENDIX…….....……118

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

COMCEC	Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation
DLP	Democratic Left Part
DP	Democrat Party
EU	European Union
FP	Felicity Party
ICYF- DC	Islamic Conference Youth Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation
IDB	Islamic Development Bank
IPHRC	Independent Permanent Commission on Human Rights
IRCICA	The Research Center for Islamic History, Art and Culture (one of the subsidiary organ of Organisation of Islamic Cooperation)
JP	Justice Party
JDP	Justice and Development Party
MP	Motherland Party
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NMP	Nationalist Movement Party
NOP	National Order Party
NSP	National Salvation Party
NV	National View
OAPEC	Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries
OIC	Organisation of Islamic Cooperation
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organization
RPP	Republican People's Party
SESRIC	Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for the Islamic Countries (one of the subsidiary organ of Organisation of Islamic Cooperation)
SMIIC	Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries
TİKA	Türk İşbirliği ve Koordinasyon Ajansı Başkanlığı
TNGA	Turkish National Grand Assembly
TPR	True Path Party
UN	United Nations

WP	Welfare Party

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1. 1 Subject in Question

For years, religion has been one of the most controversial issues in the social sciences. Even the definition of religion has raised several questions and hence there are several approaches to defining religion in different fields.[1]

The discipline of International Relations has also become interested in the role of the religion in politics, especially since the early 1990s. Debate on this issue has increased in the post-Cold War world. From the rise of fundamentalist religious movements to the increasing role of religion in politics, theories of secularization, which had assumed the decline of the religion in social life thanks to the advance of modernization, had to be revised.[2] Furthermore Zana Çitak explains the recent situation between religion and international relations as follows:

> In fact, the field of international relations, which has been considered the realm of secular relations among sovereign states par excellence since the Westphalia settlement of 1648, is recently examined under a new light, in order to recover the 'forgotten' or 'neglected' role of religion. A corollary of

[1] To see different definitions of religion from an anthropological perspective; Fiona Bowie, *The Anthropology of Religion: An Introduction*, Blackwell Publishing, United Kindom, 2007, pp. 18-25, and to see the comparative sociological and anthropological discussions about the definition of religion; Brian Morris, *Din Üzerine Antropolojik İncelemeler: Bir Giriş Metni*, (çev. Tayfun Atay), İmge Kitabevi Yayınları, Şubat 2004, Ankara, Türkiye.

[2] Zana Çitak, "Between 'Turkish Islam' and 'French Islam': The Role of the Diyanet in the Conseil Français du Culte Musulman", *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 4, April 2010, pp. 619- 620.

> this tendency is a renewed interest in understanding the role of religion in foreign policy.[3]

Moreover, Jonathan Fox and Shmuel Sandler also indicate that Western social sciences have ignored religion as an explanation for world politics.[4] Hence the aim of Fox and Sandler in their book is to give religion its due in international relations. To realize this aim, they explain the role of religion in international relations in four steps. First, they regard religion as one source of people's worldviews. Secondly, religion is a source of identity. Thirdly, religion is a source of legitimacy, which explains politicians' use of religious terms to legitimize their actions, and lastly religion is associated with formal institutions, which play a role in political mobilization.[5] Again for Scott Thomas, religion is the main source of individual and social identity.[6]

In the light of these approaches to the relationship between religion and international relations, it is possible to say that the interest of international relations in religion has recently become more intense. Hence, this thesis tries to contribute to this growing interest to a certain degree. It attempts to do this through a case study.

I decided to work on this case after I realized that relations between Turkey and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) had been inadequately analyzed in the literature. There are limited numbers of studies on this issue and most of them analyze the historical background of relations. For instance, one of the most well-known studies is Mahmut Bali Aykan's book, *Turkey's Role in the Organization of the Islamic Conference: 1960-1992 The Nature of Deviation from the Kemalist Heritage*. This book has detailed information about the relations between Turkey and the OIC. Another important source is Meliha Benli's master's thesis, *Turkey's*

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[3] Ibid., p. 620

[4] Jonathan Fox and Shmuel Sandler, *Bringing the Religion into International Relations*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2004, p. 176

[5] Fox and Sandler, p. 176-177

[6] Scott Thomas, "Religion and International Conflict", *Religion and International Relations,* K. R. Dark (ed.), Macmillan Press Ltd, Great Britain, 2000, p. 4

Attitude towards the Organization of the Islamic Conference (1969-1984). This study is important in terms of the evaluation of relations from the perspective of Turkish foreign policy. The only other significant study on this issue is Demo Ahmet Aslan's master's thesis, *Türkiye'nin İslam Konferansı Teşkilatı'na Girişi (1969-1976).* This thesis is important in terms of providing detailed historical background of the relationship. Despite all these important studies, they only examine the issue for a specific time period. Besides these studies, there are only a few articles or studies in the literature which examine the relationship between Turkey and the OIC. This thesis will try to address a gap in the literature in studying relations between Turkey and the OIC in relation to the role of religion in Turkish foreign policy. The Justice and Development Party (JDP) period's activism in relations with the OIC is of particular interest within this framework.

According to Fox and Sandler, religion is as a form of 'soft power', which they describe as the power of an attractive idea in international relations. Moreover, they explain religion as a transnational idea which is often embodied in particular state and non-state actors. Hence this idea could be considered as the basis of international organizations such as the OIC and World Muslim League.[7] Therefore, the choice of Turkish relations with the OIC as a topic can bring to light the main focus of this thesis.

1. 2 Methodology

There are specific studies on the OIC in the literature. This situation is an advantage for the purposes of this study, because this situation has pushed me to find new sources on the topic. Hence these new sources help the study to examine these relations from various perspectives.

In this framework, the main sources of this thesis are the primary sources. The first one is the well-designed official website of the OIC.[8] The website provides access to

[7] Thomas, p. 7

[8] The official website of the OIC: www.oic-oci.org, (accessed on 05.02.2013)

official resources such as the Charter of the OIC, the full text of speeches made by the Secretary General of the OIC, and the declarations and agreements made by the OIC.

The second main source comes from media archives. These archives allow the researcher to learn about relations between Turkey and the OIC. Additionally, examining these archives has allowed me to understand the different approaches of the media. The third source is Turkish governments' programs and the minutes of the Turkish National Grand Assembly. The aim of examining the TNGA minutes is to find out about the views of the main political parties regarding relations between Turkey and the OIC. It was assumed that the debates in these minutes would draw a picture of the domestic atmosphere about relations between Turkey and the OIC. Hence, hundreds of the minutes of the TNGA were examined. It was expected that relations between Turkey and the OIC would come up for discussion in the TNGA. However, I found only limited discussions in the minutes and they were mostly related to the membership process.[9]

1. 3 Outline of the Thesis

In the framework of these ideas, this thesis starts with the introduction of the main question. Then, in the second chapter, the historical background of the OIC will be examined. The aim of this chapter is to give general information about the OIC. The chapter's goal is not to explain the history of the OIC in detail. Hence, first of all, it will examine the establishment process of the OIC. Secondly, it will attempt to explain the organs of the OIC as well as the mission and the visions of the organization to understand the mechanism of the OIC. Finally, this chapter will

[9] Interviews with significant people who had a role in these relations are to be considered the fourth primary sources of this thesis. They included the Secretary General of the OIC, Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, one of the former Prime Ministers of Turkey and the ninth President of Turkey, Süleyman Demirel who had a significant role in relations with the OIC in 1970s, and finally the journalist Sami Kohen who has examined the relations between Turkey and the OIC deeply from the perspective of Turkish foreign policy in his column in Milliyet Gazetesi since the 1970s. However, due to the busy schedules of these people and the health problems of Demirel, I could not conduct these interviews, which would have made this study richer.

analyze the OIC membership process of Turkey especially in terms of the principle of the secularism, and in accordance with the domestic and international law.

The third chapter attempts to examine the relationship between Turkish domestic politics and the OIC. In this manner, in order to find an answer to the main research question of this thesis, the role of religion in relations between Turkey and the OIC will be discussed with reference to the mainstream political parties of Turkey. The aim of this chapter is to investigate relations between the mainstream political parties and religion. Hence it is considered that this research would allow the reader to understand the attitudes of these parties towards the OIC. As Fox and Sandler indicate religion also influences international relations via the domestic system.[10] Hence it is considered that the political parties' attitudes have an effect on the growth or decline of relations with the OIC.

Furthermore, this chapter will analyze Turkish domestic politics in terms of three political wings and three periods. One of the reasons for examining this chapter in terms of political wings is that there are wide ranges of political parties in the history of Turkish policy and it is impossible to evaluate all of them in terms of this study. Hence making such a classification to figure out the attitudes of the political parties to the OIC is difficult. Political parties in Turkey have been classified as follows; Center Right Parties, Center-Left Parties, and Parties of the Religious Right. Moreover, these political wings will be analyzed in three historical periods. In determining these periods three turning points have been chosen. The first period is the term between the establishment of the OIC and the 1980 military coup. The 1980 military coup is crucial because of the increasing discussion about the effect of religion on domestic politics. The second period is the period in which the Motherland Party held sway. This period extends to 2002. The third period is the time of the rise of the JDP since 2002.

[10] Fox and Sandler, p. 168

The fourth chapter attempts to investigate relations between Turkey and the OIC in foreign affairs policy in particular. This chapter is limited to the period between 1970 and 2002, because this study regards the attitude of Turkey towards the OIC in this period as different from the period after 2002. The aim of this chapter is to give an answer to the question as to whether Turkey has used religion in its foreign policy issues and has used the OIC as a foreign policy instrument. In order to understand this, this chapter examines Turkish foreign policy in five cases where Turkey has cooperated with the OIC. These cases are the following; the Cyprus Issue in 1974, the Palestinian conflict, which comes onto Turkey's agenda in 1976, the Oil Crisis of 1973 (and with the help of this case, economic relations will be evaluated), the Bulgaria Events (1980-1990), and the Bosnia-Herzegovina War (1992-1995).

The fifth chapter will begin with an analysis of the general principles of Turkish foreign policy since 2002, as I came to realize during this research that there is a change in foreign policy perception after the JDP comes to power. This study argues that there is a turn to the Middle East and the OIC in Turkish foreign policy after 2002. Thereby, this chapter will examine the reasons for this turn and will analyze the debates about these changes in Turkish foreign policy. Moreover, after laying out the Turkish foreign policy framework, the chapter will examine the new period of the OIC after 2005. This is called the 'new' period since it is the first time there has been a democratically-elected Secretary General in the history of the OIC. Furthermore it is significant for Turkey because the Secretary General is a Turkish bureaucrat. Hence this chapter will analyze the OIC's new period in terms of its reforms, the question of the effectiveness of the organization in the international arena and the challenges facing the OIC. This study also provides the opportunity to present more up-to-date information and debates on the OIC in the light of new sources. Finally, this chapter will discuss the role of Turkey in the OIC. The chapter will try to find an answer to the same question as the previous chapter, which is whether Turkey has used religion in its foreign policy and has used the OIC as a foreign policy instrument. The chapter will examine relations between Turkey and the OIC in terms of political, economic and social issues. In terms of political issues, three cases have

been chosen to clarify the main question of the chapter. These cases are the famine in Somalia, the conflict between Buddhists and Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar, and the Syrian Crisis.

Finally, the study will end with a conclusion chapter wrapping up the main findings of the research.

CHAPTER II

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE ORGANISATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION

2. 1 Introduction

This chapter will give a historical background of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, previously known as Organization of Islamic Conference until a rebranding in 28 June, 2011. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation, which is the second biggest international organization in the world after the United Nations, is one of the fundamental organizations of the Muslim world. After a general historical background of the OIC, the organizational structure and organs will be examined. Then, the missions and visions of the OIC will be analyzed in this chapter. Finally, the historical background of Turkey's relations with the OIC and membership process of Turkey will be analyzed.

2. 2 The Establishment of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation

The immediate reason for the establishment of the OIC was indicated in the literature as the arson in the Al-Aqsa Mosque, which is the third holiest sanctuary of Islam[11], by a Jewish Australian, Michael Danis Rohen, on 21 August 1969, causing extensive

[11] Because in Muslim faith, it is believed that the Prophet Muhammad went to heaven from the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

damage.[12] However, there are different opinions about the origins of the organization.

In the literature, one important reason for the establishment of the OIC is based on the abolition of the Caliphate by the Republic of Turkey on 3rd March 1924, which led to a discussion regarding the leadership of the Muslim world. The Caliphate embodied the idea of Ummah, which is the unity of all Muslims. However, the Caliphate, until it was abolished in March 1924, had been only a symbolic institution since the title "Caliph" was never used for religious aims. Furthermore, the abolition of the Caliphate destroyed the idea of unity and the solidarity of the Muslim world, which only existed in theory. Nevertheless, it further reinforced the already existing confusion in the Muslim world.[13] As İhsanoğlu argued, this situation was a first for Muslims, and affected Muslim communities.[14] Moreover, Shahnaz Akhtar agrees with İhsanoğlu, emphasizing that the Caliphate was identified with the unity of the Muslim world.[15] It is possible to consider these views as linking the founding philosophy of the OIC with the desire to unify the Muslim world after the abrogation of the Caliphate.

Another explanation for the establishment of the OIC is related to pan-Islamism. According to Shahnaz Akhtar, pan-Islamism is a phenomenon refers to friendships, solidarity and also common feelings of Muslims all over the world.[16] Akhtar

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[12] Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, *The Islamic World in the New Century,* C. Hurst & Co., London, 2010, p. 22, To see same ideas of establishment of the OIC; Demo Ahmet Aslan*, "Türkiye'nin İslam Konferansı Teşkilatı'na Girişi (1969-1976)",* unpublished Master Thesis, The Ataturk Institute for Modern Turkish History, Hacettepe University, Ankara, 2005; Shahram Akbarzadeh and Kylie Connor, "The Organization of the Islamic Conference: Sharing an Illusion*", Middle East Policy*, Vol. XII, No. 2, Summer 2005; Shahnaz Akhtar, *"The Role of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference in Political and Economical Co-Operation of the Muslim World (1974-1994)"* PhD diss., Bahauddin Zakaria University, Multan, Pakistan, 2002

[13] Abdullah Al-Ahsan, *The Organization of the Islamic Conference,* The International Institute of Islamic Thought, USA, 1988,pp. 23- 43

[14] İhsanoğlu, p. 14

[15] Akhtar, pp. 57- 58

[16] Ibid., p. 59

establishes the relationship between pan-Islamism and the OIC as a modern form of the idea of pan-Islamism, which she calls Neo-Pan-Islamism. According to her, Neo-Pan-Islamism aims to foster cooperation as an Islamic bloc within the community of nations.[17] Her main reference point for this relationship is the reference to the solidarity in the Muslim world due to common belief in the OIC Charter.[18] However, despite this reference in the OIC Charter, it is controversial to call the philosophy of the OIC "Pan-Islamic action" because of today's international political context. It is possible to interpret the establishment of the OIC as a post-Islamist action. The term "post- Islamism" is generally used to define the state systems or political view of political actors, but in terms of the OIC, the effort toward creating solidarity in the Muslim world can be read as the modernization of the Muslim world via Islam.

When historical ideas of Islamic solidarity are analyzed, it can be said that there have always been various efforts to unify the Muslim world. After the abolition of the Caliphate, Muslim leaders tried to hold various conferences which aimed to gather all Muslim societies under the umbrella of Islam. Initially, these conferences were held to discuss the leadership issue of the Muslim world. In the first conference, held in 1926 in Cairo, Turkey was not represented.[19] The reason for Turkey's attitude to the Conference was the main aim of the Conference, which was to discuss the abolition of the Caliphate and decide on the new leader of the Muslim world. The secular structure of the new Turkish Republic and the aim of the Conference clashed at this point. Turkey did not want to take part in this new formation, which was based on religious ideas. The Cairo Conference was not successful in that respect. According to Al-Ahsan, appointing a leader to the Muslim world was not an easy

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[17] Ibid., p. 68

[18] Ibid., p. 62

[19] Al- Ahsan, p. 11

issue because of the political weakness of the Muslim world during that period - most of the states were still under the colonial control of the West.[20]

The second enterprise, the Makkah Conference, was held later in 1926, but in a different place, in Makkah.[21] Turkey sustained her attitude toward the invitation for the same reasons. Although the main issue of the Conference was not the issue of appointing a new Caliph, Turkey did not attend the Conference for these same reasons.[22] It is possible to consider that the attitude of Turkey could be related to the principle of secularism. Although Turkey did not attend the Conference, the different agenda at the Makkah Conference pleased Turkey. "Turkey's response was positive to this enterprise because Ataturk thought that neither one person nor one state could manage the whole Islamic World's problems."[23] With the Makkah Conference, it was decided to hold annual meetings to discuss the Muslim world's issues and this organization came together under the name of the World Muslim Congress (Motamar al-Alam al-Islami) which made important contributions towards the establishment of the OIC.[24]

After 1926, the Muslim world had no opportunity to come together to establish their solidarity. The King of Saudi Arabia, King Faisal began some initiatives[25] to bring together the Muslim world, yet he was unsuccessful until the arson in the Al-Aqsa Mosquein Jerusalem in 1969. It could be said that the arson provoked the Muslim world's religious sensibility. So, the leaders of the Muslim world came together at the call of King Faisal, from the 22nd to the 25th September1969 in Rabat, Morocco to

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[20] Ibid.

[21] For details of the Makkah Conference, see; Upadhyay, R."World Muslim Congress –As an alternative to the Caliphate?", South Asia Analysis Group, Paper No. 3977, 12 Aug, 2010

[22] Al-Ahsan, p. 11

[23] İhsanoğlu, p. 17

[24] Aslan, p. 81

[25] The most significant enterprises of King Faisal for this thesis, Turkey visit, will be explained later in this chapter.

discuss this unexpected attack. This meeting resulted in the establishment of the OIC. It should be emphasized here that although the establishment of the OIC is based on religious sensibility, the real reason is political. After the arson, the OIC's main focus was on the anti-Israeli sentiment and the Palestinian issue had been the one of the main tools of the OIC to develop unity among the Muslims.[26] Another sign of the OIC being a political international organization is its decision about where to place the Headquarters of the General Secretariat. According to the decision in the OIC Charter, Article 21, the headquarters of the General Secretariat was to be established in Jeddah until the liberation of the city of Al-Quds. After the liberation, Al-Quds would be the permanent headquarter of the General Secretariat of the OIC.[27] The decision could be interpreted as indicating that the main aim of the OIC is related to the Palestinian issue, which is a political rather than a religious issue. Hence it is possible to say that the OIC is a political international organization, which is based on religious concerns.

Moreover, the leadership competition between Egypt and Saudi Arabia in the region in the 1960s could be considered as another political reason for the establishment of the OIC. As mentioned above, Saudi Arabia supported solidarity in the Muslim world with different efforts. The aim of Saudi Arabia was to develop a foreign policy to counter Nasser's Egypt foreign policy which was based on Arab nationalism. The King of Saudi Arabia, King Faisal, made several visits to explain his idea about Islamic Union.[28] However, this initiative of King Faisal was regarded as a desire for a pro-Western alliance in the region by Egypt and Syria. Yet, King Faisal declared in his visits that his attempts related to the unification, peace and security of the Muslim world and it was not targeting any country. Nevertheless, King Faisal's attempts

[26] Akbarzadeh and Connor, p. 80

[27] See the OIC Charter, Article 21; http://www.oic-oci.org/page_detail.asp?p_id=53, (accessed on June 19, 2012)

[28] The King of Saudi Arabia, King Faisal visited Iran in 1965, Jordan, Sudan, Pakistan, Turkey, Morocco, Guinea, Mali, and Tunis in 1966, Aslan, p. 82

could not develop because of opposition from Nasser.[29] However, the defeat in the 1967 Six-day War decreased the popularity of Nasser's pan-Arab policies and gained popularity for King Faisal's Islamic Union idea. The Muslim world realized that after the defeat of the Arabs there was a need for unity regardless of nationalism. Hence King Faisal gained promotion with his integrationist attempts within the Muslim world and the idea of the establishment of the OIC.[30] It can be concluded that these reasons emphasize the political features of the OIC.

2. 3 The Organs of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation[31]

The OIC is composed of main bodies, specialized committees, subsidiary organs and various institutions. The following will provide the general structure of the OIC.

2. 3. 1 Main Bodies of the OIC:

2. 3. 1. 1 The Islamic Summit (The Conference of Kings and Heads of State and Government):

The Islamic Summit is the supreme authority of the OIC, which is composed of Kings and Heads of State and Government of Member States. It congregates triennially to decide the policy of the Organisation and discusses all the issues of Member States related to the Muslim world.

2. 3. 1. 2 The Council of Foreign Ministers:

The Council of Foreign Ministers is the main decision-making organ of the OIC, which meets once a year in a Member State. This organ evaluates the implementation of the decisions of the OIC, discusses all the reports of commissions, committees and expert groups of the OIC, and monitors the budgetary and financial issues of the

[29] Aslan, pp. 82-83

[30] Akbarzadeh and Connor, p. 81, Aslan, p. 83, and Akhtar, pp. 75-76

[31] For more information about the organs of the OIC see*;* İhsanoğlu, pp. 35-49;www.oic-oic.org*;* Al-Ahsan, pp. 23- 43.

Organization and any issues which concern the Member States. Moreover, it recommends the establishment of new organs in the Organization.

2. 3. 1. 3 The General Secretariat:

The General Secretariat is the administration organ of the OIC, which is in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia until the liberation of Al-Quds as stated in the OIC Charter, Article 21; "The Headquarters of the General Secretariat shall be in the city of Jeddah until the liberation of the city of Al-Quds so that it will become the permanent Headquarters of the Organisation."[32] The Secretary-General is elected by the Council of Foreign Ministers for a five year period and Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, who is the present Secretary-General of the OIC, is the first democratically-elected Secretary-General of the OIC. The main aims of the General Secretariat are to coordinate the works of the OIC, to follow the recommendations, decisions and resolutions of all the committees. It also coordinates the various committees of the OIC to implement the objectives of the OIC.

2. 3. 2 Subsidiary Organs of the OIC

Subsidiary Organs of the OIC are established to work in various fields of the Organisation such as the economic, cultural, social, historical, and technological fields by the decisions of the Council of the Foreign Ministers. Being a member state of the OIC means being a member of these organs. Their budget is approved by the Council of the Foreign Ministers. These organs are the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for the Islamic Countries(SESRIC), established in 1977, in Ankara, Turkey; the Research Center for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA), established in 1976, in Istanbul, Turkey; the Islamic University of Technology (IUT), established in 1978, in Dakar, Republic of Senegal; the Islamic Centre for the Development of Trade (ICDT), in 1981, in Casablanca, Kingdom of Morocco; the International Islamic Fiqh Academy, in 1981, in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia;

[32] http://www.oic-oci.org/page_detail.asp?p_id=53 (accessed on June 20, 2012)

the Islamic Solidarity Fund (ISF) and the Waqf / Islamic Solidarity Fund, in 1974, in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

2. 3. 3 Specialized Institutions and Organs of the OIC:

Specialized Institutions and Organs of the OIC are established to work for the resolutions of the Islamic Conference of Kings and Heads of State and Government or Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers. Membership to these institutions and organs is optional. Their budgets are independent from the Secretariat General. These institutions and organs are, according to its official website, only the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), established in 1975in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. "The purpose of the Bank is to foster the economic development and social progress of Member States and Muslim Communities individually as well as collectively in accordance with the principles of the Shariah."[33] Turkey is a member of the IDB, with 6.48%[34] supporting the total capital. The Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) was established in 1982, in Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco. The Islamic Broadcasting Union (IBU) was founded in 1975, in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The International Islamic News Agency (IINA) was established in 1970, in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Finally, the Islamic Committee of the International Crescent (ICIC)was established in 1977, in Benghazi, Libya.

2. 3. 4 Affiliated Institutions of the OIC[35]:

Affiliated Institutions of the OIC are established to support the OIC's works. Its budget is independent from the Secretariat General and membership is optional and open for members. These institutes are;

- ✓ Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Industry **(ICCI)**

[33] http://www.oic-oci.org/page_detail.asp?p_id=65 , (accessed on June 19, 2012)

[34] http://www.isdb.org/irj/portal/anonymous?NavigationTarget=navurl://9c2f799fdba05fd8b547aa0e2027b7c9, (accessed on June 19, 2012)

[35] For more details see; İhsanoğlu, pg. 47-49;http://www.oic-oci.org/page_detail.asp?p_id=66, (accessed on June 20, 2012)

- ✓ Organization of Islamic Capitals and Cities **(OICC)**
- ✓ Islamic Solidarity Sports Federation **(ISSF)**
- ✓ World Federation of Arabo-Islamic International Schools **(WFAIIS)**
- ✓ Organization of the Islamic Ship Owners Association **(OISA)**
- ✓ Islamic Conference Youth Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation **(ICYF-DC)**
- ✓ International Union of Muslim Scouts **(IUMS)**
- ✓ Federation of Consultants from Islamic Countries **(FCIC)**
- ✓ Islamic World Academy of Sciences **(IAS)**
- ✓ General Council for Islamic Banks and Financial Institutions **(CIBAFI)**
- ✓ Federation of Contractors from Islamic Countries **(FOCIC)**
- ✓ OIC Computer Emergency Response Team **(OIC-CERT)**
- ✓ Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries **(SMIIC)**
- ✓ Islamic Cement Association **(ICA),** Istanbul, Turkey
- ✓ International Islamic University Malaysia **(IIUM)**
- ✓ Association of Tax Authorities of Islamic Countries **(ATAIC)**

The outstanding point here is the variety of the institutions. The OIC aims to be effective in all these fields. It provides the member countries with new opportunities via these institutions and tries to set a standard among the member states.

2. 4 The Missions and the Visions of the OIC

The OIC aims to bring the Muslim world together and so constitutes Islamic solidarity in various fields, including politics, economics, culture, education, commerce and technology.[36] The goal of Islamic solidarity is to oppose western policies in the region and in the wider world. Especially, western colonialism and more particularly, the establishment of Israel and the Palestine issue have raised this

[36] http://www.oic-oci.org/page_detail.asp?p_id=52 (accessed on June 20, 2012)

need. Moreover, the Secretary General İhsanoğlu explains this idea with the motto of the OIC, "Solidarity in action".[37]

It can be said that what holds the members of the OIC together is Islam. The effect of the religion in the organization cannot be neglected, for every single decision is thought out from the perspective of Islam. It is possible to say that the OIC is the top religious international organization in the world. Hence, all missions of the OIC are based on Islamic thought. In this respect, the most outstanding foundations of the OIC are the Al Quds Committee, the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), and the International Islamic Fiqh Academy. That is to say, the common feature of these foundations is to strengthen the relationship within the Muslim World via their common religious bond in terms of politics (through the Al Quds Committee), economics (through the Islamic Development Bank), and education (through the International Islamic Fiqh Academy).

Furthermore, the 9/11 terrorist attacks were another important event raising the idea of Islamic solidarity. After this event, the OIC began working against Islamophobia. The Organisation publishes a monthly report, the *Islamophobia Observatory*[38], all around the world via its official website and negotiates with the Western states, international organizations and NGOs. The OIC Secretary General Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu particularly struggled with the Islamophobia and anti-Islamist reactions that took place after the caricature crisis in 2005.[39] In one of his interviews with

[37] İhsanoğlu, p. 5

[38] See the official web site; http://www.oic-oci.org/page_detail.asp?p_id=182, (accessed on June 20, 2012)

[39] The Caricature Crisis started with the furious reactions from the Muslim world to*;* Politiken, a Danish newspaper, runs an article under the headline "Deep fear of criticism of Islam", detailing the difficulty encountered by the writer Kåre Bluitgen, who had difficulties finding an illustrator for his children's book on the life of Mohammed. http://www.ft.com/cms/s/2/d30b0c22-96ee-11da-82b7-0000779e2340.html#axzz1yFGmVvGg, (accessed on June 22, 2012)

CNN TÜRK[40], he stated that after the caricature crisis, on behalf of the OIC, İhsanoğlu and his bureaucrats put forward a proposal in 2010 to the UN Human Rights Council, consisting of eight principles to prevent insolent actions not only against Islam but all other religions and beliefs. Subsequently, the UN General Assembly accepted the proposal and published a report called the "Defamation of Religion and the Right to Freedom of Religion or Belief"[41]. The impact of this decision is debatable. However, the OIC's initiative is important for its prestige in the international area. İhsanoğlu stated in a TV programme that through this UN decision the OIC declared its peaceful, tolerant and responsible approach towards all religions and beliefs.

Furthermore, when examining the vision of the OIC, the Ten-Year Programme of Action of the OIC gives ideas about the future of the Organization. The Programme is based on the Ummah idea because it has not yet been completely actualized and successful on the topic of the solidarity of the Muslim world. It consists of the recommendations of scholars and intellectuals on the challenges facing the Muslim Ummah in the 21st Century. The vision of the programme was to be able to conduct politics, economic, science, technology, education, culture, and religion under the heading of Islam, billed as the religion of moderation and tolerance, and reform of the OIC. The most outstanding points of the programme are; "…combating extremism, violence and terrorism, countering Islamophobia, the rights of Muslim minorities and communities, and rejecting unilateral sanctions."[42] Another heading is "Conflict Prevention, Conflict Resolution and Post-Conflict Peace Building"[43] which

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[40] The program was "Şirin Payzın ile 360°", on 11.04.2012, in CNN TÜRK. To watch the interview see;http://tv.cnnturk.com/video/2012/04/12/programlar/360-derece/basliksiz/index.html, (accessed on June 22, 2012)

[41] For more details of the report of the visit;www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Expression/ICCPR/Seminar2008/PaperJahangir.doc, (accessed on June 21, 2012)

[42] *"Ten- Year Programme of Action",* p. 1; http://www.oic-oci.org/english/conf/is/ex-3/TYOAP_Makkah_2005.pdf, (accessed on June 25, 2012)

[43] *"Ten- Year Programme of Action",* p. 4

aims to prevent conflicts between Member States and promote peace-building. Nevertheless, the OIC has nothing to show for its interventions in such conflicts in the Muslim world.[44] These challenges to the OIC will be analyzed in the fifth chapter.

Moreover, in the economic field, the aim is to raise potential prosperity and use all the resources and capacities of the Member States to do so. Additionally, the rights of women, children and the family are emphasized frequently. The education of the women is regarded as significant for modernization. "The principal mission that the Organization of the Islamic Conference assumes today is to achieve modernization and moderation in the Muslim world."[45]

It is possible to say that the OIC aims to provide the Muslim world with ways to act in harmony. Islam is the key point here in that all issues are dealt with reference to Islam. It can be said that the mission of the OIC is to create the union of the Muslim world with the idea of being a community of religious sentiments. As is mentioned on the official website, the OIC claims to realize these by respecting the right of self-determination, sovereignty, non-interference in the domestic affairs.[46] Moreover, according to Ahsan, the impact of Islamic thought does not have a negative effect on the Organization, "The primary basis of the OIC is the Quranic concept of the *ummah*. But this traditional religious concept has not been an obstacle for bringing modern secular nation-states under one political platform."[47]

According to the declarations and reform programme, it is possible to conclude that the vision of the OIC is to be the central actor or the heart of the Muslim world in the

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[44] For instance, there is no result of the OIC in the Arab Spring events, Syria Crisis, the Mavi Marmara events, etc. The OIC generally started the negotiations and called attention for the conflicts in the international platform but could not take tangible resolutions. For more details see the speeches of the Secretary General of the OIC: http://www.oic-oci.org/speeches.asp,(accessed on June 25, 2012)

[45] İhsanoğlu, p. 5 and *"Ten- Year Programme of Action",* p. 8

[46] http://www.oic-oci.org/page_detail.asp?p_id=52, (accessed on June 26, 2012)

[47] Al-Ahsan, p. xi

future. To make this vision real, it needs in all fields of political, economic and social life to reach 21st Century standards. It is emphasized that all these enterprises have to be in accordance with the UN Charter and international law. However, as mentioned above, the success of the OIC is a debatable issue in world politics and this will be examined in the fifth chapter of the study.

2. 5 Turkey's Relation with the OIC

From the beginning of the establishment of the OIC, Turkey has played a significant role in the Organization because of its Muslim majority, important geopolitical situation and national interests. In the 1960s and 1970s, although Turkey based its foreign policy on the West, she could not neglect developments in the Muslim world. These relations will be examined further in the study; hence in this section I will examine Turkey's membership process.

After the incident at the Al-Aqsa Mosque in 1969, the Islamic World was made aware of the need for solidarity. As was stated before, the efforts of Islamic leaders on these issues were not successful until this event. The previous Islamic summits offered the idea of Muslim world solidarity was based on the idea of the Ummah. For instance, on August 29, 1966, King Faisal, the king of Saudi Arabia visited Turkey to explain his ideas on solidarity. In this visit;

> …President Cevdet Sunay and King Faisal agreed to establish 'economic, social and cultural cooperation deriving from the moral ties and common interests between the two countries'. However, no reference was made to the proposed conference… Although King Faisal told the Turkish press that he would like to see Turkey take part in it, Turkey did not want to support the idea of an 'Islamic Pact'.[48]

[48] Meliha Benli, *Turkey's Attitude Towards the Organization of the Islamic Conference (1969-1984),*unpublished Master Thesis, The Institute Social Sciences, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, 1986, p. 34

Moreover, according to Aslan, Turkey and Saudi Arabia emphasized cooperation between the two countries but the Islamic Summit was not mentioned.[49] Turkey always stood aloof from such solidarity efforts because of various reasons. One of them was that Turkey did not want to turn her face to the Middle East via an 'Islamic Pact'. In terms of internal affairs, taking part in such an organization was considered to be in conflict with the principle of secularism.

Another reason was that Turkey did not want to be mixed up in conflict between the radical and conservative Arab states. For example, the series of visits of King Faisal was perceived differently by radical regimes. "The radical regimes, however, interpreted the proposal as a plan to create a grouping dominated by the conservative pro-Western states. For instance, Nasser, President of Egypt, compared the 'Islamic Pact' with the 'Baghdad Pact'."[50] Parallel with this view, Aslan stated that the visits of the King Faisal caused suspicion from radical Arab states, Egypt and Syria, as an enterprise to the progressive regimes in the Middle East.[51]

However, after the arson, Turkey's attitude changed toward attending the Islamic Summit. The old mufti of Jerusalem and the president of the World Islamic Congress Amin al-Husayni called the Muslim world's leaders. King Faisal repeated his summit call. The important thing at this point is that there was a political dimension to these efforts. According to Benli, because of the subjects of the conference (the Al-Aqsa incident and Jerusalem issue) Turkey perceived this participation differently from participation of King Faisal's offer, as the "Islamic Pact".[52]

The first summit of the OIC was held on 22nd-25th September 1969 in Rabat, Morocco, with an invitation to 36 countries but attendance by only 25. The main

[49] Aslan, p. 88

[50] Benli, p. 34

[51] Aslan, p. 82

[52] Benli, p. 36

subject of the summit was the Palestine issue and the Arab-Israeli conflict.[53] But Turkey had a deliberate policy towards the invitation, feigning that the president of the period, Cevdet Sunay, could not participate in the summit because of the elections. This was the ostensible reason declared by the president but the real reason was different. The foreign minister of the period, İhsan Sabri Çağlayangil, explained the participation process in his memoirs. He wrote that as the president of a secular republic, Sunay did not want to participate in a summit whose name was "Islam".[54] In contrast with Sunay's attitude, the Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel saw the participation as a political issue.[55] In 1960s, Turkey's foreign policy was dominated by its relations with the West, such as NATO membership and relations with the European Economic Community. But according to Demirel, Turkey had to have active policies towards the Middle East and the Islamic world and the initiative for the Conference offered such an opportunity. So, Turkey was represented at the level of Foreign Minister in the Rabat Conference, which was important in respect to the establishment of the OIC.[56]

Another example of Turkey's attitude towards the OIC became apparent at the Jeddah Summit in June 1971. The Summit's aim was to prepare the OIC charter, but Turkey did not attend the creation of the charter and did not sign it because of the emphasis on common religious values (Islamic values). According to Aslan, the

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[53] İhsanoğlu, p. 23

[54] *"İhsan Sabri Çağlayangil Türkiye'nin Rabat Zirvesi'ne katılım meselesini anılarında şöyle anlatmıştır: '1969 yılında New York'tayken bir şifre aldım: İslam Konferansı'nın toplanacağını, durumun Devlet Başkanı'na arz edildiğini, Sayın Sunay'ın Türkiye'nin laik bir devlet olduğunu, bu yüzden adı İslam olan bir konferansa katılmayı düşünmediğini belirttiği bildiriliyor ve 'Eğer iştirak edilecekse kimin katılacağına hükümetin karar verebileceği' kaydediliyordu. Demirel bana New York'a gönderdiği şifre ile hem haber veriyor hem de görüş istiyordu. Senato Başkanı ve bir devlet bakanıyla temsil edilmemizin uygun olduğunu yazdım. (...) Ben Birleşmiş Milletlerde konuşmak için çok önceden gün almıştım. Bu yüzden konferansa katılamayacağımı Sayın Demirel'e bildirdim. Demirel telefon etti. 'Birleşmiş Milletler Genel Sekreterine durumu söyle, zaten konferans yıl sonuna kadar sürecek, nutkunu ertele. Toplantıya sen katılıver ve tekrar Birleşmiş Milletlere dönersin' dedi.",*Aslan, p. 94

[55]Aslan, p. 95

[56] Ibid.

reason for this attitude was the secular government which was based on the precedence of the military.[57]

Until 1975, Turkey was represented at lower levels in the various OIC summits, conferences and meetings due to the period's governments' structure. It is considered that Turkish foreign policy has been shaped gradually with the reflections of different governments and in the following chapters this issue in terms of Turkish domestic politics and Turkish foreign policy will be examined. Additionally, during this period, Turkey had reservations about many decisions of the OIC because of the principle of secularism and its relations with Israel.

Moreover, a significant point for Turkey was the 7th Islamic Conference in 1976 which was held in Istanbul. First of all, the conference was important because Turkey was the host of the conference. Turkey had a calm attitude towards the OIC and the members of the OIC regarded Turkey as a European country and culturally different from them. The conclusion of the conference was remarkable. The membership of the Turkish Cypriot Federal State was accepted and the decision to open a bureau of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) in Turkey was accepted. The summit was a turning point in terms of Turkey's relations with the OIC, because Turkey abandoned its policy of aloofness within the Organization. Çağlayangil articulated this as follows:

> All of the obstacles to Turkey's acceptance as a full member of the Islam Conference Organization have disappeared. Turkey is in complete solidarity with the Conference. The legal procedure which will realize this is on the point of completion, and we will put the bill before Parliament… This is not contrary to our constitution.[58]

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[57] Ibid., p. 113

[58] "The 7th Islamic Conference", *Dünya Gazetesi*, Special edition for the 7th Islamic Conference, Vol. 2, May 14, 1974, İstanbul, p. 2

Furthermore, on 14th May 1976, the TNGA discussed the OIC membership process under the name of "İslâm Konferansı Yasasının Onaylanmasının Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Anayasası ile Bağdaştığı Ölçüde Uygun Bulunduğu Hakkında Kanun Tasarısı (1/466)" but it was not approved by the TGNA due to what was perceived as a conflict with the principle of secularism of the secular Turkish constitution. Despite Çağlayangil's statement, the membership situation of Turkey is interesting in terms of internal law, international law and the relationship between a state and an international organization.

In TNGA, this process was discussed from different points of view by parliamentarians. Most of them supported the development process of relations with the OIC, but a few parliamentarians criticized it. Although there were supporters, there were not enough to pass the law. For instance, on behalf of the Democratic Party, Ferruh Bozbeyli criticized the name of the draft law. He stated that the name was vague, not juridical and it was not in accordance with the Turkish constitution. Moreover, he criticized the 7th Islamic Conference effects on domestic politics, which meant a separation in the government under four different headings.[59] However, the Justice Party and the National Salvation Party, which were the more conservative parties of Turkey, interpreted this step positively because they supported the government's[60] multi-directional foreign policy efforts, especially towards the Islamic world. In his speech on behalf of the Justice Party, Enver Akova emphasized their common religion. In this respect he also spoke of Turkey's importance in the Islamic world being propagated through the OIC.[61] Moreover, the same ideas were seen in another statement which was M. Gündüz Sevilgen's speech

[59] See Ferruh Bozbeyli's speech in TNGA official records: 4th Term, Vol: 20, Meeting No: 3, 121th session, pp. 402, July 7, 1976

[60] That period's government was conservative I. Nationalist Front Government.

[61] See Enver Akova's speech in TNGA official records: 4th Term, Vol: 19, Meeting No: 3, 102th session, pp. 529- 530, May 5, 1976

on behalf of the Nationalist Salvation Party. He interpreted the OIC as a new page in Muslim history after a fifty-year interregnum, and advocated that Turkey had to take a leadership role in the OIC with her Western and modern face.[62]

Yet, according to internal law, the membership process had to be respectively approved by TNGA with a law, then approved by the President and published in the Official Gazetteer. Otherwise, it was not possible to have it be part of the Founding Treaty and thus Turkey being a member of the Organization.[63] Although the general attitude of TNGA was positive towards signing the OIC Charter it was not approved due to the conflict with the principle of secularism of the Turkish Constitution. Today, Turkey is not legally a member of the OIC, but she has an active position in the Organization. Turkey is accepted as a *de facto* member of the OIC. This situation was not seen as a big obstacle in choosing a Turkish bureaucrat for the Secretary General position of the OIC.

However, this "legal" relationship is not in accordance with international law because according to the 1969 Vienna Convention on the Law Treaties[64] (article 46), to assert a treaty invalid, it has to violate the internal law obviously and generally violate the constitution. In the light of this article, the relationship between Turkey and the OIC is against the Turkish Constitution and the international law. Moreover, in the literature, the most debatable point of relationship between Turkey and the OIC is the membership position.

For instance, according to Alpkaya, this situation had not been encountered or had precedent before in the doctrine and it is contrary to law. Moreover, she emphasized

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[62] See M. Gündüz Sevilgen's speech in TNGA official records: 4th Term, Vol: 19, Meeting No: 3, 101th session, pp. 479- 480, May 13, 1976

[63] Gökçen, Alpkaya, *"Türkiye ve İslam Konferansı Örgütü",* Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Dergisi (Prof. Dr. Muammer Aksoy'a Armağan), Vol: XLVI, No.1- 2, 1991,p. 63

[64] http://untreaty.un.org/ilc/texts/instruments/english/conventions/1_1_1969.pdf,(accessed on 27 June, 2012)

that there are two reasons to accept the illegal relationship. First, if there was an activity of Turkey which was based on the OIC Charter, it was not invalid on the condition of good intent. The second possibility is to create a new situation of membership which is based on mutual consensus, and this enables Turkey to be a *de facto* member of the OIC without putting a signature on the Founding Treaty of the OIC. Alpkaya interprets both possibilities as "fraud against the law"[65].

Furthermore, the membership criteria of the OIC are another debatable issue at this point. As mentioned in the OIC Charter, Article 3, any state having a Muslim majority and abiding by the Charter may join the OIC, if approved by a consensus of the Council of Foreign Ministers.[66] That is to say this membership process is both religious and political. The situation of Turkey in the organization suits having Muslim majority criteria, but it does not completely fulfill the criteria of abiding by the Charter. In the past, Turkey showed reservations towards some decisions of the OIC because of its principle of secularism and its relations with Israel. Despite this conflict, Turkey is regarded as a legal member of the OIC. This situation could be considered as such; the OIC accepted the membership of Turkey regardless of signing the Charter. This means although the main membership criterion of the OIC is having a Muslim majority, that is religious condition of the membership, is enough for Turkey to be a member of the OIC.

2. 6 Conclusion

As the political voice of the Muslim world with 57 member states, and approximately 1.6 billion Muslim people[67], the OIC is established under the roof of reference to Islam. Although it is an international political organization, this

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[65] *"Emredici kuralın yasakladığı bir amaca, bu kural ıuygulama dışı bırakarak başka bir yoldan ulaşmak",* Alpkaya,p. 65

[66] See the OIC Charter, Article 3; http://www.oic-oci.org/page_detail.asp?p_id=53, (accessed on 27 June, 2012)

[67] The total population of the OIC countries was 1,57 billion people in 2010, www.sesric.org/imgs/news/image/YouthMuslimWorld.ppt (accessed on 25 June, 2012)

reference in its name shows that the role of the Organization is not only political but also religious. The main aims of the Organization are to bring together the Muslim world to solve their political, economic, and social problems collectively, and to provide new cooperative opportunities via Islamic thought. The expectation is that this will create solidarity in what is perceived otherwise a divided Islamic world.

However, it is obvious that it has not reached this objective yet. The Organization has various problems such as political and economic concerns. When this historical process is analyzed, it is obvious that this is an international organization which tries to be effective in all fields. Yet, the OIC is growing day by day as it begins new enterprises. These issues will be examined further in the study.

At this point, Turkey has a curious position in the OIC because of her political experiences, Westernized face, and political importance in the international arena. Although Turkey is not a legal member of the OIC and this is a problem in terms of internal and international law, this problem is ignored because of the mutual interests of Turkey and the OIC. From the beginning, the OIC always admired Turkey and wanted to involve it. The reason for this wish could be proving the unity and solidarity of the Muslim world to the West through the support of Turkey, which is a both Western, and an Eastern country and more developed than the many other OIC member countries. Furthermore, Turkey supports this relationship because of her domestic and international interests. The relationship has changed according to the Turkish governments' structure and these changes will be examined in the next chapters.

CHAPTER III

TURKISH DOMESTIC POLITICS AND THE ORGANISATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION

3. 1 Introduction

Considering the inseparability of domestic politics and foreign policy in International Relations, it is worth considering Turkish domestic politics experiences to understand the relationship between Turkey and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) .This chapter aims to understand how the reflection of the relationship between Turkey and the OIC was used as a political argument in Turkish domestic politics and to analyze the question of whether the political parties' ideology and their supporters have been the driving force in this relationship since 1969.

The argument of this chapter is that, from the 1970s onwards, Turkey's domestic politics was affected by political parties' ideologies. It is possible to consider that the political parties' ideologies had a greater effect on Turkish domestic politics than government policies. Therefore, this part of the study, rather than analyzing governments one by one, will look at the backgrounds of the mainstream political parties under the headline of the main political views in political spectrum. The important point here is that some changes in these parties' ideological stance led them to use the relationship with the OIC as an argument. These changes and their effects will be discussed in this chapter.

Three political wings, on the right, The Justice Party (1961-1981), The Nationalist Movement Party (1969-) which is nationalist right, The Motherland Party (1983-) and the True Path Party (1983-2007); on the left, social-democrat The Republican People's Party (1923-); and on the religious right, National Order Party (1970-1971), National Salvation Party (1972- 1981), the Welfare Party (1983- 1998) and the Justice and Development Party (2002-) have been chosen in this study because of their influence on Turkish domestic politics. Also, their attitudes will be examined especially in terms of their effects on politicization of religion.

The political parties will be analyzed from two different points: the first is historical process, the second is their attitudes towards relations between Turkish domestic politics and the OIC. The historical process will be separated into period I, which is from 1969 to 1980; period II, which is from 1980 to 2002, and finally period III, from 2002 to present day. In this study it is considered that there are three turning points of Turkish domestic politics in terms of relations between Turkey and the OIC. Period I is from the establishment of the OIC in 1969 to the 1980 military coup. It is limited to the military coup because it is possible to say that after the military coup the effect of religion on Turkish domestic politics was increased. This point will be analyzed later. Period II is limited between the 1980 military coup and the emergence of the Justice and Development Party (JDP) in 2002. It is possible to say that this period is significant since the rising of the interests of the governments to the OIC. Period III starts from the establishment of the JDP to present day. The study states that the aim of examining the JDP term as Period III is the peak of the relations between Turkey and the OIC occurs in this term. Moreover, it is considered that the ideology of the JDP has an effect on the increasing of these relations.

3. 2 The Attitudes of Political Parties of Turkey Towards Religion and The Organization of Islamic Cooperation

3. 2. 1 Introduction

After the transition to a multi-party system, Turkey has faced a difficult reality, which is that its civil society is not totally secular, but in fact the country is still a largely religious society. The modernization efforts with the establishment of the new Republic of Turkey, such as the abolition of the Caliphate (in 1924), the unification of the education system (in 1924), the closure of the religious convents and dervish lodges (in 1925), the change of headgear and dress (in 1925), and the insertion of the principle of secularism into the Constitution (in 1937), were not digested completely by society. Tayfun Atay emphasized this challenge in one of his lectures[68], saying that the founders of the republic had a goal of modernization which had no tradition and this transition had a radical position in terms of having no continuity and no ties with the past, much like the French Revolution. These modernization efforts had aimed to reject Turkey's cultural heritage. Moreover, Binnaz Toprak regards this process as a radical secularism of the Republic which was imposed on the population from the top by a single-party regime.[69] These approaches can be evaluated in terms of societal transition. These radical changes in the society disregard the religious attachment of the people. As a result, it can be said that the society adopted reforms under the one party government, which lasted until the transition to multi-party democracy, but was it completely embraced by the society? At this point it is worth considering the secularism principle because it was strictly implemented by the single-party government. İhsan Dağı evaluates the establishment process of the Republic as a westernization process and claims that this process was carried out on a secularist line, which resulted in the exclusion of Islamic leaders, groups and thought power, eliminating the appearances of Islam in

[68] The PhD class of Tayfun Atay was *Culture and Society in Modern Turkey- II*, 04.03.2011, Faculty of Languages, History and Geography, Ankara University

[69] Binnaz Toprak, "Islam and Democracy in Turkey", *Turkish Studies*, 6: 2, 2007, p. 170

the public sphere.[70] Thereby, it is possible to consider that with a multi-party democracy; religion became an electorally popular issue, and was thus instrumentalized by political parties of the right.

3. 2. 2 The Right Wing Parties

The Democrat Party (DP) (Demokrat Parti), which was founded by Adnan Menderes, was the first right wing party in Turkey. Ersin Onulduran emphasizes that the DP's supporters were especially peasants, small businesses and large farm owners. DP implemented its policies by appealing to traditional segments of the society, such as reinstituting Arabic as the language of prayer and opening more religious schools (İmam Hatips) and mosques.[71] These policies have changed the perspective of the society towards politics and it can be said that the religious policies of the DP started the religious resurgence in Turkish politics. Despite people having supported the DP for ten years, the army was not happy and one of the reasons for the shutting down of the DP was its religious policies.[72]

The successor of the DP was the Justice Party (JP) (Adalet Partisi) which was founded by Süleyman Demirel in 1961. Demirel has been one of the most important actors in Turkish politics from the 1960s onwards. The JP's political view was conservative and it underlined its sympathy for religion openly. According to Onulduran, Demirel advanced the JP's conservative image by making frequent references to God and religion.[73] However, the JP was different from the DP in terms of keeping relations with the army balanced. It can be interpreted that although it was

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[70] İhsan Dağı, "Transformation of Islamic political identity in Turkey: Rethinking the West and westernization", *Turkish Studies,* 6: 1, 2007, p. 23

[71] Ersin Onulduran, *Political Development and Political Parties in Turkey,* Ankara Üniversitesi Basımevi, Ankara, 1974, p. 65

[72] For more information about the DP period see, Feroz Ahmad, *Modern Türkiye'nin Oluşumu*, Kaynak Yayınları, İstanbul, Şubat 2011, Eric Jan Zürcher, *Modernleşen Türkiye'nin Tarihi,* İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2010

[73] Onulduran, p. 71

the successor of the DP, the JP took the lesson of how to handle the relationship with the army.

Additionally, Eric Jan Zürcher draws attention to a different point. Demirel's entrance to Turkish political life meant the emergence of totally new elite.[74] Accordingly, while the DP came from a Kemalist background and shared an elite outlook with the Republican People's Party (RPP), the JP added a more rural dimension to the political elite in Turkey. Furthermore, Zürcher claims that Demirel's personality had more of an effect on the rural background of the JP; the rural supporters of the JP regard Demirel's success and his rural background as their best hope of social mobility.[75] This point is important in terms of understanding why the JP and Demirel had so much success, and also remarkable in terms of this study to understand the interest of the JP in the OIC. Another point here is that most of the supporters of the JP were in rural regions and it meant religious sensitivity was stronger than that of the other parties (such as the Republican People's Party). Thus, the JP could use religious issues as an argument of its domestic politics, which will be analyzed later.

The JP period was very lively in terms of political events. However, in the framework of this study, only the general attitudes of the JP vis-à-vis religion and more specifically, to the OIC will be analyzed.

3. 2. 2. 1 Period I: 1969-1980

First, we should look at the government programme of the JP. While analyzing the second Demirel government's programme (3/11/1969– 6/3/1970) it is possible to see that the party underlined the development of relations with the Arab states, and especially, Turkey's wishes to stop the Arab-Israeli conflict and constitute peace in

[74] Zürcher, p. 363

[75] Ibid, p. 363

the Middle East.[76] This shows that the JP tried to develop relations with the Middle East, and Demirel chose a moderate discourse in his statements.

However, Demirel changed his discourse in his third Government (6/3/1970-12/3/1971) programme. The party emphasized nationality, religion and freedom of conscience as part of Turkish national identity. Considering Demirel's support for social justice and the improvement conditions of the voters, peasants and farmers, it is possible to argue that Demirel tried to get the support of the rural community[77] for the third government programme by simultaneously emphasizing both their economic conditions and religion, with the emphasis on religion being more relaxed.

Moreover in the 4thDemirel Government programme (31/3/1975- 21/6/1977), there was a changed discourse about the Muslim world, and a clear interest in the Muslim world was expressed. Demirel emphasized that there were not only spiritual relations with the Middle East but also mutual benefits in the region. Thus, the government will follow an active policy in the region. These relations will not only be political and cultural, but also economic.[78] Demirel specified the intention of developing relations with the OIC during his 4th term.

The most significant example of his acts was his leading and hosting of the 7th Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers in Istanbul in 1976. The Conference was a meeting of the OIC. However, President Fahri Korutürk, was not as enthusiastic about the conference as Demirel. Instead of attending the Conference, he chose to arrange an official trip to the Southeast Anatolia Region at the same time as the Conference.[79] Korutürk's attitude was largely related to his concern with the

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[76] *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Hükümetleri,* Başbakanlık Basımevi, Ankara, 1978, p. 179

[77] Ibid, p. 188

[78] Ibid, p. 366

[79] "Korutürk, Güneydoğu Gezisine Bugün Başlıyor", http://gazetearsivi.milliyet.com.tr, 11. 05. 1976, p. 10

principle of secularism.[80] Demirel did not seem to care about the President's concern. This shows that relations with the OIC led to a disagreement between the President and the Prime Minister. Moreover the stance of Demirel towards the Muslim world gained him more support from the conservative wing in domestic politics during his political life.

Demirel gained more power in domestic politics that formed the government again. However, according to the previous statements of Demirel, his fifth term (21/7/1977-5/1/1978) programme speech put much emphasis on religion. Demirel regarded religion as a sublime factor of the unity for the society and of progress in financial and moral developments. At the same time, he underlined the existence of freedom of religion and conscience in Turkey, and claimed that his government would take all precautions to use these freedoms completely. At this point, he said that secularism in the Constitution was not an enemy of religion; but that on the contrary, it was the insurance of these freedoms.[81] This statement was interesting in terms of making much more of an emphasis on religion, which means that the fifth Demirel Government politicized religion more than the previous government programmes. In this manner, it can be interpreted that Demirel tried to legitimize his policies towards the Islamic world. It was in fact the first time that Demirel explained his government's Middle East policy in terms of religion. He had always used the argument of historical and cultural bonds for his Middle East policy. However, after the 7th Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers in 1976, it is possible to consider that Demirel could base his Middle East policies on religious arguments. In addition, he stated that they would give more attention to improve relations with the OIC in political, economic and cultural terms. Moreover, the first step was to explain their view concerning the Palestine issue, which envisaged abandonment of the occupied lands and the establishment of Palestinian people's own state.[82] Yet, after the 1980

[80] Aslan, p. 133

[81] Ibid, p. 411

[82] Ibid, p. 434

military coup, the JP was closed down, like other political parties and Demirel was banned from political life until 1987.

In the first period, another long-running rightist party, the Nationalist Movement Party (NMP) (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi), was founded by Alparslan Türkeş in 1969. The NMP's ideology was nationalist and anti-capitalist. The supporters of the NMP were conservative and nationalist. This constituency was significant in regarding religion as one of the main constituents of national identity. However, NMP did not use religion as an instrument of establishing relations between Muslim countries and the OIC, as its foreign policy vision remained rather weak.

3. 2. 2. 2 Period II: 1980-2002

In the second period, there was one significant political actor, the Motherland Party (MP) (Anavatan Partisi), which was founded by Turgut Özal, who was the architect of the 24 January Decisions[83] as the Minister responsible for the economy between 1979 and 1980.[84] The structure of the MP was a synthesis of Turkey's political factions, as the MP was founded after the 1980 military coup, which prevented the main political actors and parties in Turkish political life from re-entering politics. The closure of the most important political parties did not mean the withdrawal of their members from political life. Thus, a new political platform, the MP, which was able to cater to each political view, was the solution for continuity of their political life.[85]

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[83] For details of 24 January Decisions see, Ahmad, p. 210- 211

[84] Zürcher, p. 406- 407

[85] Furthermore, Zürcher explains the structure of the MP as a weird coalition of the ideological currents and the interest groups. Zürcher, p. 407, Moreover, Ahmad evaluates the MP as being conservative like the Justice Party, being dependent on the traditions like the National Salvation Party, and nationalist like the Nationalist Movement Party and even they believed in social justice like social democrats. Ahmad, p. 227

The MP gained 54.14% of the votes in the 1983 general elections[86] which allowed Özal to form a government single-handedly. The MP was conservative in social and cultural terms, and liberal, in economy. This meant increased opportunities for the rise of the rural middle class, who comprised the Islamist voters of the MP.

Furthermore the multi-sided structure of the MP provides the tendency to lean toward the Muslim world. The MP government's relations with the OIC occurred especially in the economic area. In 1984, Özal attended the meeting of the Standing Committee of Economic and Trade Cooperation of the OIC and signed the decision for the establishment of the Islamic Free Trade Area[87]. This shows us that Özal started relations with the Muslim world via economic relations. Two years later, Özal sustained relations in the same way, but at this point Turkey had hosted a significant meeting in 1986. The first meeting of the World Association of Islamic Banks was held, and Özal explained his aim in hosting this important event in Turkey was not a coincidence and the reason for Turkey being the host of the meeting was the attitude of the current Turkish government towards the Muslim world[88]. After these meetings, the Turkish government's relations the Muslim world intensified and Turkey hosted many meetings of the OIC during the MP government. The effects of these relations were seen in a wide-range of fields such as economics, politics, culture, art, health and education. However, the most significant effect was related to foreign policy took place during the Bulgaria events in 1989 and the first Gulf War in 1990. Özal used his relations and influence on the Muslim world wisely. These foreign policy moves were appreciated in domestic politics. Because the supporters of the MP, particularly the conservative faction within the MP, appreciated the reorientation of Turkey to the Muslim world, they moreover welcomed this new foreign policy.

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[86] Zürcher, p. 407

[87] http://gazetearsivi.milliyet.com.tr / 17. 11. 1984, p. 6

[88] http://gazetearsivi.milliyet.com.tr / 19. 10. 1986, p. 8

After the election of Özal as president in 1989, he left the party in chaos between the liberal wing and the Islamist wing. MP votes hence decreased significantly.[89] Özal's interests and policies rendered relations between Turkey and the OIC especially significant.

3. 2. 3 The Social Democrat Parties

The Social Democrat wing is represented in the Turkish political arena with the Republican People's Party (RPP), (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi) which is the founder of the Republic of Turkey. RPP run the state until 1950 as a single-party administration. This situation provided the power to the RPP to implement all reforms in domestic politics, and provided the option of running the domestic politics and foreign policies single-handedly.

3. 2. 3. 1 Period I: 1969-1980

The ideology of Bülent Ecevit was comprised of Kemalism, social democracy and being on the center left. The first period of the RPP, under the rule of İsmet İnönü, made the advocacy of secularism its strict main principle and kept a distance to the Muslim world. As such, the attitude of the RPP resulted in alienation from the people. Zürcher starts the transition of the RPP in the second half of the 1960s with Ecevit's convincing İnönü to begin changing the discourses of the RPP. Ecevit proposed a new discourse which did not emphasize socialism but rather social justice and social security. Moreover, Ecevit called this new discourse "left of the center".

The aim of this change was to get the votes of the slum. Onulduran explains in terms of economy that should be continued by statist policies to reduce the gap between the very rich and the very poor.[90] However, the general election in 1969 was

[89] One of the reasons of the decline was the higher rate of the inflation, and the bad situation of the economy. Ahmad, p.233 and the other one was the staffing of the Özal family which annoyed the society in a higher manner. Zürcher, pp. 412-413

[90] Onulduran, p. 59

disappointing for the RPP, achieving only 27.4% of the votes.[91] The unexpected low rate of turnout in the 1969 elections raised Ecevit's popularity in the party. Ecevit also criticized the elitist understanding of the RPP.[92] Ecevit hit back, maintaining the fact that society was very good at where its interests were. These views of Ecevit resulted in İnönü's resignation as the head of the RPP and Ecevit took over the party. Moreover, the success of the new RPP policies was manifested in the general elections of 1973 when RPP got the 33% of votes. Ecevit's policies got a response from society in every field. Furthermore, Ahmad shows Ecevit's efforts in changing the RPP's approach towards religion, by adopting a tolerant attitude to Islam without sacrificing secularism.[93] This allowed the RPP to take part in the coalition government with the National Salvation Party in 1974 (this coalition will be mentioned in the following part). However, starting from the mid-1970sespecially, political chaos increasingly turned violent, which the Ecevit governments had difficulty handling. Despite Ecevit's policies, the conflict between the left wing and right wing was one of the reasons for the resignation of the Ecevit government in 1979.[94]

As Ecevit’s attitude to religion was more moderate than that of İnönü, so was his approach to the Muslim world, and more specifically to the OIC. Ecevit advocated the “bridge” role of Turkey between the West and the East. Moreover, he supported the development of relations with the OIC. The coalition with the NSP facilitated to shape Ecevit’s policies towards the OIC. Ecevit used the relationship with the OIC in his own interests in domestic politics and foreign policy. A significant example of this was the Cyprus issue. Ecevit used the close relations with the OIC in the Cyprus

[91] Zürcher, p. 366- 367

[92] Ahmad, p.187

[93] Ibid., p. 193

[94] Ibid., pp. 204-205

issue, which led to strengthened relations with the OIC.[95] The details of this event will be evaluated in the next chapter but the Cyprus event is significant in terms of Ecevit's position on domestic politics. Getting the support of the OIC in this critical event promoted Ecevit both in the international and domestic arenas. In the domestic arena, Ecevit's role in the Cyprus issue turned him into a hero.[96] It is possible to consider that the effect of the OIC countries' support is important because in public opinion, the Cyprus operation was one of Turkey standing up against the West with the support of the OIC countries'.[97]

3. 2. 3. 2 Period II: 1980-2002

In the second period, a new party emerged, the Democratic Left Party (DLP), (Demokratik Sol Parti, DSP) which was founded by Rahşan Ecevit, Ecevit's wife in 1985. The ideology is based on Kemalism, democratic socialism and being to the left of center. The difference between the RPP and the DLP is that the DLP had a more nationalist attitude than the RPP. As of 1997, the DLP had been a partner in coalitions up until the term of the JDP. In this process, the DLP had moderate attitudes to religion and the Muslim world. Moreover, Ecevit used relations with the OIC, especially during his Prime Ministry from 1999 to 2002, as a foreign policy instrument. As a leftist party and thanks to Ecevit's nationalist credentials, the DLP was immune to criticism for its intimacy with the OIC because of Ecevit's nationalist behavior. One could consider that using the OIC as foreign policy leverage, such as in the Cyprus issue, gained Ecevit more support in domestic politics. This situation was regarded as Ecevit's sensibility to Turkish nationality via Islam abroad, and society felt close to Ecevit.[98]

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[95] Mahmut Bali Aykan, The OIC and Turkey's Cyprus Cause, *The Turkish Year Book*, Vol: XXV, 1995, p. 53

[96] Ahmad, p. 197

[97] The isolated position of Turkey from most of the countries in Cyprus issue caused the increasing relations of Turkey with the Muslim world. Benli, pp. 12-13

[98] Ahmad, p. 187-188

3. 2. 3. 3 Period III: 2002 to Present

In the third period, it is also necessary to examine the RPP from 1992 onwards.[99] The second opening of the RPP was with the leadership of Deniz Baykal, succeeded by that of Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu since 2010. However, the RPP could never gain the leadership of the government after the second opening. In this period, the RPP did not particularly show an enthusiasm to develop relations with the OIC. It advocated the secularism principle against governments which have Islamic roots especially during the rule of the Justice and Development Party. The RPP's attitude towards the Muslim world and the OIC is careful after the period of Ecevit. The reason for this is the leaders of the RPP have not dared to deepen relations with the Muslim world, for their concern with is secularism. In the party programme, it stated that RPP wants to increase relations with the Muslim world and the Middle East in accordance with the principle of secularism.[100] It is possible to infer that they regard close relations with Muslim countries via the OIC as to be against the principle of secularism. Moreover, it is possible to consider that another reason of this attitude could be the RPP's supporters' background which is not religious or conservative and thus they do not want to see their party in a close relationship with the Muslim world. Thus, it can be concluded that apart from Ecevit, the social democrat wing has been reluctant to establish a close relationship with the

3. 2. 4 The Religious Right

3. 2. 4. 1 Period I: 1969- 1980

The first period of the religious wing in Turkish policy started with the National Order Party (NOP) (Milli Nizam Partisi), which was founded by Necmettin Erbakan, whose constituency consisted of small tradesmen and industrialists in 1970. NOP

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[99] The internal 1980-1992 is to do the 1980 military coup which banned the RPP.

[100] See the RPP's party program; http://www.chp.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/chpprogram.pdf, p. 131 (accessed on November 30, 2012)

was based on the *National View* (NV) (Milli Görüş) idea that regards Islam as the value system of the Turkish people.[101] This also meant closer relations with the Islamic world.[102] National View is important in terms of this study because while exploring all the Islamist parties of Turkey; it can be seen that their political views are based on this ideology. However, it can be said that trying to implement the NV ideas in the political arena resulted in the shutting down of the NOP in 1971, because of its Islamist view which was regarded as a dangerous factor for the secularism principle of the Constitution.

This action was not enough to eradicate the Islamist movement. In fact, it can be argued that it had the opposite effect of opening a new Islamist party which was the National Salvation Party (NSP) (Milli Selamet Partisi), again by Erbakan, in 1972. According to Atacan, the NSP's ideology was based on 'moral development' which was the main requirement and basis for 'material development',[103] which was understood as industrialization with an emphasis on heavy industry. They evaluated secularism principle in terms of freedom of religion and religious people. At the same time they wanted to shape education based on 'modesty, morals and virtuous' religious education.[104]

In their first general elections, in 1973, NSP came third with 11.9 % of the vote.[105] The success of the NSP was related to its party programme which emphasized Islam less than its predecessor, the NOP, and with more criticism of the development of monopolies and dependence on external capital. Moreover, they wanted to create a

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[101] Fulya Atacan, "Explaining Religious Politics at the Crossroad: AKP-SP", *Turkish Studies*, 6: 2, 2007, p. 189

[102] Ibid, p. 190

[103] Atacan, p. 188

[104] Ibid, p. 188

[105] Ahmad, p. 189

banking system without interest.[106] These policies received the desired response from society. Society found in NSP both religious sensibility which did not appear so clear in the other parties, and economic promises and ideas that were much more compatible with the wishes of the religious population of society. Furthermore, Toprak evaluates the position of NSP voters as such that they care about economic issues more than religious issues.[107] This view is not wrong, but from my point of view the reason for its attitude vis-à-vis religion or for its economic proposals, NSP's vision resonated to an important extent with some part of the population.

NSP's partnership in the coalition government with RPP provided it with an opportunity to state some of its proposals. This coalition was interesting in terms of common interests of both parties. As Ahmad argues, both believed in a democracy which ensures the fundamental rights and freedom, and in protecting the small enterprises, establishing heavy industry and protecting national resources like mining and petroleum.[108] However, the NSP distinguished itself particularly in terms of economic policies that criticized relations with Europe. As an alternative to the EEC; the NSP offered to take the initiative to establish an Islamic Common Market in the region. In this manner, Turkey could be a leader of the Islamic Common Market, and at the same time she avoids enslavement to Europe.[109] These ideas of the NSP are important in regarding their attitude about the OIC. In the 1970s, it can be said that thanks to the religious right, the policies towards the Muslim countries were raised. Erbakan's party was one of them and he always supported the development of relations with Muslim countries, but only as a partner in a coalition government in those years that the political conditions did not allow him to implement his ideas. He especially attracted the attention of the RPP and the army in terms of violating the secularism principle.

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[106] Ibid, p. 189

[107] Toprak, p. 170

[108] Ahmad, p. 191

[109] Ibid, p. 191- 192

Relations between Turkey and the OIC were not high profile until 1976. Erbakan criticized relations with Europe and advocated getting closer link to Muslim countries and consequently, he always supported relations with the OIC. This meant that Erbakan used these ideas not only for NSP foreign policy, but also for their domestic politics and influence on society. The relationship between NSP and the OIC may not be obvious in this term, but it can be said that the OIC had an indirect effect on the NSP's domestic policies. However, the RPP-NSP coalition did not last long because of conflict of interests.[110] Then NSP got 8.5% of the vote in the 1977 general elections and remained a partner of the coalition government until 1978.

3. 2. 4. 2 Period II: 1980-2002

The second period of Islamist parties started after the 1980 military coup. The consequence of the military coup was the NSP being closed down because of violation of the principle of secularism. This time, the establishment of the new party took time because of the administration of a martial. In 1983, the Welfare Party (WP) (Refah Partisi) was founded by Ahmet Tekdal, as Erbakan was banned from politics. He could lead as the head of the WP after his ban was lifted in 1983.

The Welfare Party's policies were not dramatically different to its predecessor. We can find similar ideas about capitalism, Europe, and the common market with Muslim countries and independent foreign policy from the West.[111] But unlike the NOP, the WP appealed primarily to the slums of the big cities. Slums suffered from economic hardship as well as terrible infrastructure. Furthermore, the WP's appeal to slums paid off in the municipal elections of 1994, when it won 28 municipalities, including the two largest cities, Istanbul and Ankara.[112]

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[110] The conflict between RPP and NSP was detailed by Ahmad in terms of their political ideologies, foreign policy concerns and attitudes toward the principle of secularism. Ibid., p. 192

[111] Atacan, p. 188

[112] Toprak, p. 172

At this point, the significant case was the army's attitude to the WP. The military government adopted a new semi-official ideology which was based on a "Turkish-Islamic synthesis".[113] Its aim was to fight against the communist threat, so the army supported Islamist groups and the right-wing in this term.[114] This was the most significant example of the politicization of religion in domestic politics. The Islamist parties had adopted this ideology since the 1970s on their own, but the 1980 military coup.

The WP formed a coalition government with the True Path Party (TPR) in 1996, and Erbakan became the Prime Minister. (The WP got 21.4% of the total vote in the 1995 general elections[115]). Zürcher evaluates this victory as a real turning point of the history of the modern Turkey.[116] Zürcher is right because until that term there was no Islamist leader in the Prime Ministerial position and this shows the religious revival and politicization of religion in Turkish politics.

As was mentioned above, the WP always defended the closer relations with the Muslim countries like its predecessor, the NOP, which was famed for its strong anti-western ideals. According to Dağı, this idea was beneficial for the WP as follows;

> …anti-westernism had always been a breeding ground for traditionalist-Islamist movements. Thus the wave of anti-westernism in the first half of the 1990s served the interest of the Welfare Party, whose anti-West discourse gained a widespread legitimacy with the growing disappointment with the West.[117]

[113] For more information about the "Turkish- Islamic Synthesis" thesis, see, Zürcher, p. 414- 415

[114] Atacan, p. 192

[115] Zürcher, p. 428

[116] Ibid.

[117] Dağı, p. 26

He states that this had contributed to the WP's victory in Turkish politics in the 1990s. However, this approach is not enough to explain the rise of the WP. Dinç saw this policy as a neo-Ottomanist reflection of a vision with a strong emphasis on Turkish leadership and guardianship of the Muslim world, similar to the Ottomans.[118] The establishment of the D-8 Organization of for Economic Cooperation (the members of which were Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan and Turkey which were at the same time members of the OIC), which aimed at improving relations among developing Muslim countries, in June 1997, is the best example of his enterprise. This organization was established by Erbakan.[119] Moreover, Dinç claims that Erbakan wanted to increase Turkey's share of only USD 3.2 billion of the total import of USD 447 billion with the Muslim countries which took 65% of this from Western countries whereas trade between Muslim countries accounted for only 5.4% of this amount and so a common market of Muslim countries was a necessity and Turkey had to raise this ratio to 40%.[120] Thus he organized his foreign visits especially to these Muslim countries, such as Egypt, Libya and Nigeria on 2nd-7thOctober1996. Among these visits, the most striking one was to Libya where he was manifestly humiliated by Kaddafi.[121] Tank claims Erbakan stoked controversy in Turkish domestic and foreign politics by visiting those 'rogue' states such as Iran and Libya,[122] regarding his Islamic agenda.

The WP-TPR coalition had to resign after the National Security Council meeting on 28 February 1997, which included generals' views about the conditions which were perceived as a threat to the secularism principle. In 1998 the WP was banned by the Constitutional Court for violating the principle of secularism in the constitution.

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[118] Ibid, p. 6

[119] For more information about D-8, visit, www.developing8.org, (acessed on November 29, 2012)

[120] Dinç, p. 10- 11

[121] http://gazetearsivi.milliyet.com.tr / 28. 09. 1996- 10.10.1996

[122] Pınar Tank, "Political Islam in Turkey: A State of Controlled Secularity", *Turkish Studies*, 6:1, 2005, p. 9

3. 2. 4. 3 Period III: 2002 to Present:

The third period started with the closure of the WP which led to the emergence of two new Islamist parties, the Felicity Party (FP) (Saadet Partisi) founded by Recai Kutan in 2001, and the Justice and Development Party (JDP) (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi) founded by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, in 2001. The FP followed the National View ideology. The JDP, however, rejected its Islamist credentials, and proposed to be a conservative democratic party.

The party described itself through denying pro-Islamic ideology and supporting neo-conservative world views and a liberal economic model.[123] An important point here is that the JDP also rejected the National View, which was the main ideology of the Islamist parties in Turkey. Atacan maintains that the JDP's argument is not as being an Islamic party, but being a totally new party.[124] In that respect, Erdoğan has combined the JDP with the Democrat Party and regards the power of the JDP as the second Menderes period because of it having been elected by the public.[125]

JDP got 34.63% of the votes in the 2002 general elections while the FP received only 2%. This was a crucial success for the newly established party. The success of the JDP has maintained for three terms. According to Zürcher, one of the successes of the JDP was the rejection of coalitions by the voters because they held the coalition governments responsible for the corruption of the economy. Moreover, he claims that the other reason was ownerless votes.[126]

Dağı evaluates this transition as defending the post-Islamists' position by not referring to Islam, Islamic values and civilization; but in contrast, by starting to refer to Western/modern notions like democracy, human rights and the rule of law and

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[123] Bülent Aras and Şule Toktaş, "Turkey's New Dynamics in Domestic and Foreign Policy", *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 1, March 2010, p. 1

[124] Atacan, p. 188

[125] http://arsiv.zaman.com.tr/2003/05/17/politika/h2.htm

[126] Zürcher, p. 439

institutions.[127] Because of turning to the West, Dağı does not see the JDP as an Islamist party either.[128] Additionally Philip Robins regards the JDP as post-Islamist in terms of its ideology and policies.[129]

In comparison to the previous Islamist parties in Turkey, the JDP is not completely using the same arguments. First of all, as mentioned scholars emphasized, the JDP does not carry all the characteristics of Islamist parties. However, it should be more suitable to use the term *"post-Islamist"* that Dağı used for describing the JDP, for although the JDP emphasizes that it has a conservative democratic ideology and liberal views, their domestic politics and foreign policies have evoked religious aims. The term conservative democracy is important to understand the general attitude of the JDP at this point. Imahi emphasizes that conservative democracy is a political tool of the JDP in both domestic politics and foreign policies. In his article, he uses the definition of Yalçın Akdoğan, advisor of Erdoğan, with three features. The first of them is the culture of reconciliation, which means the aim to reconcile between the past and the present, tradition and modernity, religion and state, society and state, Islam and democracy, conflict and consensus, order and freedom, morality and rationality, and the global and the indigenous. The second feature is rejecting authoritarianism and totalitarianism, and the third one is based on the rule of law and popular sovereignty.[130]

There is lots of research on the changing of the Islamists and structure of the JDP. However, in the framework of this study, the essential point of the JDP is coming from Islamist origins although they rejected their past-views in their discourses. This

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[127] Dağı, p. 139

[128] For more views about the JDP is not an Islamist party see, Gareth Jenkins, "Turkey's Latest Crisis", *Survival*, Vol. 50, No. 5, October–November 2008, p. 6, Dağı, p. 34, Atacan, p. 188

[129] Philip Robins, "Turkish Foreign Policy Since 2002: Between a 'Post-Islamist' Government and a Kemalist State", *International Affairs*, 83: 1, 2007, p. 303

[130] Kohei Imai, "Turkey's Norm Diffusion Policies toward the Middle East: Turkey's Role of Norm Entrepreneur and Norm Transmitter", *The Turkish Yearbook of International Relations*, vol. 42, 2011, p. 49- 50

situation of the JDP has affected its attitudes towards the religion and towards Muslim countries. Two significant principles of the JDP would help us to understand this effect. First of all, as is mentioned in the JDP's party programme, it rejects using religion for political purposes by exploiting the sacred religious values and ethnicity. It follows that "… it is also unacceptable to make use of religion for political, economic and other interests, or to put pressure on people who think and live differently by using religion."[131] In this principle, the JDP emphasizes their opposition to the politicization of religion in every field. Furthermore, the JDP's tendency was to prioritize the sensitive issues such as changing the education system and headscarf ban issues as Jenkins emphasizes.[132] The process was run on behalf of democracy, education and religious freedom rights, but in the first term of the JDP, it felt the military's presence seriously, resulting in the post-modern coup in 27th April 2007. However, the JDP stood against the reactions and continued to run its policies.

The second principle of the JDP was about relations with Muslim countries. In the programme, it is emphasized that the JDP gives a special importance to relations with the Muslim world. As a consequence, their aim is not only developing bilateral relations with these countries, but also the JDP will strive to make the OIC obtain a dynamic structure by means of which the OIC can take the initiative, and to make it attain a respectable position in the international arena. In this context, it will endeavor to give more substance to the actions of the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC) headed by Abdullah Gül, the President of the Republic of Turkey who is the chairman.[133] These principles are crucial in terms of understanding where the JDP differs from previous governments. When the government programmes are examined, one could not find a declaration of interest of Turkey's position in an

[131] http://www.akparti.org.tr/english/akparti/parti-programme#bolum 2/ 1, (accessed on November 14, 2012)

[132] Gareth Jenkins, "Muslim Democrats in Turkey?", *Survival*, Vol. 45, No. 1, Spring 2003, p. 60

[133] http://www.akparti.org.tr/site/akparti/parti-programi#bolum_VI, (accessed on November 18, 2012)

international organization. Nearly all the previous governments had more or less the same interest in the framework of their political stance towards the OIC, but none of them made any effort to change the efficiency of the OIC itself. This mission of the JDP shows their determination about getting more prominent role in the OIC.

The first and maybe the most notable action of the JDP in the OIC was the election of Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu in 2004. İhsanoğlu was the first democratically elected Secretary General of the OIC.[134] The influence of Turkey in the Muslim countries has changed with the JDP. Turkey is in position the OIC is the result of the JDP's domestic politics' reflection to its foreign policy. Imai interprets this situation as norm transmitting in the OIC. Moreover, he gives the example of Turkey's norm transmitter role by indicating the first ministerial conference on women's roles in the development of the OIC member states, held on 20- 21 November 2006. Turkey was the host country of the conference, and was represented by İhsanoğlu, Erdoğan, and State Minister Nimet Çubukçu. The aim of the conference was to promote women's position in every field that increases opportunities for women to participate in politics, to enhance access to education, and to stop violence against women.[135] Turkey emphasizes that she is capable of moving attention to the policies oriented to women's rights in the OIC.

Turkey has contributed to the development of the OIC during the second and third terms of the JDP. JDP aimed at hosting meetings of the OIC and signing new agreements in various fields with the OIC. In this respect, the OIC has been considered as a favorable platform for the JDP in the way of proving itself in an international organization, and hence, in the international arena, gaining more support for domestic politics.

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[134] http://www.oic-oci.org/page_detail.asp?p_id=58 and see, http://webarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/2004/06/15/475166.asp, (accessed on November 18, 2012)

[135] Imai, p. 57

By considering these aims, the JDP government passed new laws, which are relevant to cultural, economic and judicial issues, for the cooperation with the OIC. One of them was about the foundation of the Islamic Conference Youth Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation in Istanbul.[136] The draft law passed in the TNGA on 26 May, 2008. The aim of the Forum is developing relations between the young who belong to different civilizations and in doing so the OIC shows its support to the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations. The JDP was eager to found the Forum, because it tried to show its interest in developing cultural relations via the young in Islamic countries. The JDP regards the cultural features of the OIC member states similar to Turkey's cultural features and this cooperation is an opportunity to develop cultural interaction between young people. Such this interaction is in line with the JDP's conservative view, and on the other hand it shows the desire of Turkey to contribute to the UN Alliance of Civilization via the OIC.

Furthermore, the other draft law is signing the agreement of the founding treaty of the International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation under the roof of the Islamic Development Bank Group, which is founded by the OIC.[137] The aim of this agreement is to unify different trade programmes and to improve trade relations between the OIC members. Turkey considers increasing her influence in the OIC by signing the agreement. Additionally the draft law of this agreement passed in the TNGA on 11 May, 2009. The challenging point here is the foundation of this cooperation as a member of the Islamic Development Bank Group whose charter is based on the principles of the Shariah[138] and the TNGA approved the foundation by disregarding the principle of secularism. The JDP uses its power for running the state in accordance with its ideology, and for its own interest which is gaining more promotion both in the domestic and in the international arena. It can be asserted that

[136] http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/tasari_teklif_gd.onerge_bilgileri?kanunlar_sira_no=65069, (accessed on November 26, 2012)

[137] http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/tasari_teklif_gd.onerge_bilgileri?kanunlar_sira_no=74171, (accessed on November 26, 2012)

[138] http://www.oic-oci.org/page_detail.asp?p_id=65, (accessed on November 24, 2012)

this is an economic issue and it is not related to the principle of secularism, but it should be taken into account that the implementation of the secularism principle is not only necessary in the political issues, but also it is necessary in every field such as economy.

Finally, the last draft law way about approving the Charter of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation. The charter was signed on 18 June, 2008; however, it did not pass at the TNGA. The reason of the rejection is not determinate in the text, but it can be interpreted like same reason in the old decision of TNGA[139] about the rejection of the OIC membership decision in 1976 (as it was explained in previous chapter). The reason of the rejection the draft of law was as being the member of the OIC conflicted with the secularism principle of the Turkish Constitution.

These policies of JDP have taken more attention to the OIC in the domestic politics by increasing relations in its II. and III. terms. The conservative and religious attitudes of the JDP and its supporters provide the JDP to politicization of the religion via developing relations with the OIC. Moreover the close relations have resulted to make the OIC in the Turkish domestic politics as much more known subject.

3. 3 Conclusion

This chapter is a summary of the Turkish domestic politics in terms of the attitudes of the political parties toward the religion and the OIC. As a conclusion, it can be claimed that from the beginning of the multi-party system in the 1950s, different political views have affected Turkish domestic politics. As a part of these political views three main political views, which are the right wing, the social democrat wing and the religious wing have newly emerged. Thanks to this new situation, the complex structure of the society has surfaced. It is worth saying that domestic politics issues cannot be considered separate from the background of the political

[139] www.tbmm.gov.tr / "İslâm Konferansı Yasasının Onaylanmasının Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Anayasası ile Bağdaştığı Ölçüde Uygun Bulunduğu Hakkında Kanun Tasarısı (1/466)", (accessed on June 22, 2012)

parties. Thus, the light of this chapter is taking into consideration of the structure of the supporters of the political parties which showed the conservative and religious features of the society that came into consideration. This situation was so clear in Lewis's interpreted that in a democratic Turkey, no party could dare to ignore the strength of the religious revival after the transition to the multi-party system.[140] And Lewis claims that although the modernization effort has been ongoing for one century, the Islamic roots of the Turkish society is still alive and Turkish and Muslim identity cannot be separated.[141]

Furthermore, in this complicated political system of Turkey, the foundation of the OIC had indirect effects. The emergence of the OIC occurred at the same time as the emergence of the religious parties in Turkey. Thus the politicization of the religion with these parties' policies resulted in closer relations with the OIC. It is possible to consider that the events in the Turkish domestic politics showed that a government which was closer to the Muslim world, gained much more support in domestic politics. It is concluded that the OIC did not appear to have a direct effect on the Turkish domestic politics, but rather an indirect effect.

It is possible to say that because of the society's conservative and religious background, it did not regard odd the close relationship between Turkey and the OIC so much that the question of whether being the charter member of the OIC would create conflict with the Turkish Constitution or not, was not crucial. Thus, all governments have used the bilateral relations with the OIC and the Muslim countries more or less in the framework of their political attitude. Toprak supports this idea as regarding the effects of the multi- party system; the political parties have to take into account the religious sensibility of the voter. According to Toprak, the consequence of this situation is the secularists and the Islamists in Turkey have to come to a

[140] Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2002, p. 422

[141] Ibid, p. 424

moderate position as soon as possible.[142] However the result of this summary of the Turkish domestic politics, it can be claimed that the voters are appreciative to see a government whose face is turned to the Muslim world in a certain degree. Hence, the politicians know this vulnerability of the supporters and keep relations with the OIC.

As a conclusion, it can be claimed that the domestic politics of Turkey has been shaped significantly by society's vulnerable points. The political parties who have been aware of this vulnerability of the voters have never avoided using it as a political argument. This situation has peaked during the administration of the JDP apparently. Moreover, the religious revival, which has come with the advent of the right wing, and being the religious sensibility of the society at the forefront have been one of the factors of turning of the Turkish domestic politics to the OIC. It can be considered that there is a parallel relationship between the level of the religious tendency of the society and the development of relations with the OIC. While the religious tendency increases in the society, relations with the OIC also increase. Finally it can be claimed that religion may be the one of the most important arguments of political parties in Turkish domestic politics all the time and it will continue to be.

[142]Toprak, p. 171

CHAPTER IV

TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY AND THE ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION

(IN TERMS OF SPECIFIC ISSUES BETWEEN 1970 and 2002)

4. 1 Introduction

This chapter aims at evaluating the interaction between Turkish foreign policy and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. First of all, the limits are designated in terms of chronology, which starts from the establishment of the OIC, 1969 to 2002. This chapter argues that these relations have intensified especially after the coming of the Justice and the Development Party to power in 2002. Hence the period after 2002 will be analyzed in the next chapter.

Second, relations between the Turkey and the OIC are examined by using specific events from the history of Turkish foreign policy. The goal of this is on the one hand, to delimit the foreign policy issues because of the impossibility of evaluating the whole process in one chapter. On the other hand, the aim is choosing the specific events according to their relevance with this study. For these reasons, five cases, which are the Oil Crisis in 1974, and economic relations with the OIC, the Cyprus Issue, Bulgaria Events, the Palestine Issue, and the Bosnia-Herzegovina War, are selected. In the first instance, a general evaluation of the Turkish foreign policy from 1970s to 2002will be given, and then the events will be evaluated in the designated framework of the study.

4. 2 The Changes in Turkish Foreign Policy (1969-2002)

The key point of the establishment of the new republic was based on Western ideas which were caused to shape Turkish foreign policy towards the West.[143] Until the transition to multi-party system it was seen that the Turkish foreign policy disregarded the East, that is, the Muslim world and the Turkic republics, which were part of the Soviet Union before.[144] Foreign policies were configured to cooperate with the West in every field, such as being a member of NATO, and starting the membership process of the EU. Turkey wanted to be a member of all these Western institutions. Furthermore, this tendency had risen significantly in the Cold War atmosphere and Turkey regarded the Soviet Union as a menace for her national security until the middle of the 1960s.[145]

However, relations with the West were not always smooth, such as during the Cuban Crisis, Cyprus Issue or Johnson Letter events. In the light of these experiences, it could be said that Turkey understood that the West was not a completely credible ally for herself. Hence, Turkey gave up the one-way foreign policy and significantly after 1967, especially with the Cyprus issue, increased economic relations with the Soviet Union which put the wind up the West about losing Turkey.[146] As Mahmut Bali Aykan emphasizes, the Turkish Foreign Affairs Ministry explained the changes in the foreign policy as a multi-faceted foreign policy. One of these changes was the tendency to lean toward the Soviet Union, and the other one was the tendency to lean

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[143] Baskın Oran, "Türk Dış Politikasının Teori ve Pratiği, *Türk Dış Politikası,* Cilt. I (1919- 1980), Baskın Oran (ed.), İletişim Yayınları, 2005, p. 50

[144] Hüseyin Bağcı, "Demokrat Parti'nin Ortadoğu Politikası", *Türk Dış Politikasının Analizi*, (der.) Faruk Sönmezoğlu, Der Yayınları, İstanbul, 2004, pp. 171- 176

[145] Mahmut Bali Aykan, "The Palestinian Question in Turkish Foreign Policy from the 1950s to the 1990s", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 1, February, 1993, p. 94

[146] Süleyman Demirel, the Prime Minister of that period, told in one of his memoires that after signing the economic agreements with the Soviet Union, the USA ambassador asked him if they were changing axis. Baskın Oran, "Göreli Özerklik- 3", Baskın Oran (ed.), 2005, p. 676

toward the Muslim world. According to Aykan, the expectation of foreign policy makers was to use the "bridge" role of Turkey by bringing religion into prominence.[147]

In this respect, Turkey tried to improve relations with the Non-Aligned Movement in 1960s. This attempt did not result in membership of the Non-Aligned Movement, because of Turkey's close relationships with the West,[148] but it is possible to think that it resulted in opening the way to a multi-faceted foreign policy. Moreover Turkey attended the first summit of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation. Furthermore, Aykan interprets this participation as part of the implementation of new foreign policy decisions.[149]

It is possible to argue that three main factors have been influential in these new foreign policy decisions: Economic problems, political isolation in the international arena and political views of different governments.

First of all, economic issues were the most significant turning point of Turkish foreign policy toward the Muslim world. In 1970s, one of the most crucial events was the 1974 Oil Crisis. The increase in oil prices after the implementation of the oil embargo by the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) after the Yom Kippur War in 1973 pushed Turkey to warm up its relations with the Muslim world. Moreover, there was a serious decline in the amount of remittances to Turkey. Hence, Meliha Benli and Mahmut Bali Aykan evaluate these two factors as one of the reasons of the changing axis of Turkish foreign policy toward the Muslim world.[150]

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[147] Aykan, February, 1993, p. 95

[148] Ibid, p. 94

[149] Mahmut Bali Aykan, Turkey and the OIC: 1984- 1992, *The Turkish Year Book*, Vol: XXIII, 1993, p. 102

[150] Benli, pp. 103- 104

Thus, after the military intervention in 1980, economic relations have grown with the Muslim world.[151] These economic developments will be analyzed further in this chapter. However, as mentioned in the previous chapter, Turgut Özal's policies and multi-directional vision in foreign policy were the peak point of improvement of relations with the OIC. It is possible to consider that Özal was one of the most important actors in developing relations with the OIC. As mentioned in the previous chapter, his conservative ideology and supporters made it easy to turn the foreign policy to the Muslim world. Muhittin Ataman describes the ideology of Özal as a synthesis of cultural Turkism and Islamism and technological Westernism.[152]

Second, the Cyprus Issue caused the isolation of Turkey from the international arena. The long-standing pro-West Turkish foreign policy created expectations from the West for all foreign policy problems. However, in the 1960s, the Cyprus Issue proved the lack of distrust to the West in the international arena.[153] This event will be evaluated in this chapter in terms of using the OIC as a foreign policy instrument in Turkish foreign policy.

Third, the political views and tendencies of the governments which were in power after the 1970s were effected in turning to the Muslim world and warming relations with the OIC by using religion as a political argument. The previous chapter examined how relations with the OIC were made by governments. The foreign policies of the Justice Party with Süleyman Demirel, the Motherland Party with Turgut Özal and the National Salvation Party with Necmettin Erbakan were significant in terms of increasing relations with the OIC between the 1970s and 2000s. Hence one of the arguments of this study is that right wing parties shaped relations with the Muslim world and OIC.

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[151] M. Hakan Yavuz, "İkicilik (Duality): Türk- Arap İlişkileri ve Filistin Sorunu (1947- 1994)", Sönmezoğlu (der.), p, 244

[152] Muhittin Ataman, "Leadership Change: Özal Leadership and Restructuring in Turkish Foreign Policy", *Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relations,* Vol.1, No.1, Spring 2002, p. 125

[153] İlter Turan, Dilek Barlas, "Batı İttifakına Üye Olmanın Türk Dış Politikası Üzerindeki Etkileri", Sönmezoğlu (der.), p. 164 and SühaBölükbaşı, "Behind the Turkish-Israeli Alliance: A Turkish View Author", *Journal of Palestine Studies,* Vol. 29, No. 1, Autumn, 1999, pp. 24- 25

After this general evaluation of Turkish foreign policy, it will be more suitable to analyze relations between Turkey and the OIC by using specific events in Turkish foreign policy. The aim is to find an answer as to whether Turkey used religion and the OIC relations as a foreign policy instrument to gain more credibility in the international arena, new variations and a new perspective in its foreign policy, or not. The events, which will be evaluated here, were chosen by considering their importance in the history of Turkish foreign policy and their relevance to the OIC.

4. 3 The Oil Crisis and Economic Relations with the OIC

The aim of this section is to understand the developments between Turkey and the OIC in terms of economic issues. As Benli indicates, the economic factor plays a fundamental role in Turkey's relations with the OIC.[154] Furthermore, she argues it is considering that the economic relations and issues have influence on Turkish foreign policy. Hence it will be discussed whether economic events prompted Turkey to reinforce relations with the Muslim world or not.

While investigating Turkish foreign policy since 1970s, one of the most significant economic events which affected Turkey was the Oil Crisis in 1974.[155] After the Fourth Arab- Israel War in 1973, the oil-exporting Arab countries increased the price of crude oil from $2.5 in 1973 to $11.6 on December 24, 1974. And this increase led to the increase in Turkey's foreign trade deficit,[156] as Turkey was dependent on the oil-exporting Arab countries. Turkey realized the importance of the Muslim world economically and intensified its relations with members of the OIC.[157]

In the 1980s, Turkey's foreign policy was increasingly active in improving economic relations with the OIC. As Benli argues, it is possible to argue that the effect of the

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[154] Benli, p. 19

[155] For details of Oil Crisis, see; Tayyar Arı, *Geçmişten Günümüze Orta Doğu, Siyaset, Savaş ve Diplomasi,* Alfa Basım Yayım Dağıtım Ltd. Şti., İstanbul, 2004, pp. 396- 406

[156] Aslan, p. 120

[157] Aslan, pp. 120- 122 and Benli, pp. 21- 24

Oil Crisis provided Turkey with a new market. In the same way, according to Aykan, in the 1980s Turkish exports increased because of the implementation of the economic resolution of January 1980. Hence this increase affected the importance of the markets of the Islamic countries positively. In this manner, the OIC became an opportunity for Turkey. Moreover, Turkey took leadership in the implementation of the "General Agreement for Economic, Commercial and Technical Cooperation" for the Islamic countries which was approved in the Eighth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers in 1977. It provided Turkey to be the host country of the discussion the "Plan of Action" for the Islamic countries in 1980 in Ankara. The aim of this meeting was crucial in terms of constituting the framework of the economic integration and the establishment of an Islamic Common Market. The Plan was approved in the Third Islamic Conference in Taif, Saudi Arabia, in 1982.[158] Moreover, its importance was declared in the summit with the following: *"the turning point in the history of the OIC as far as economic cooperation among member states is concerned."*[159]

As Aykan indicates, the rate of total export of Turkey with the Islamic countries was increased from 22.51% in 1980 to 45.79% in 1983. Moreover this increase resulted in a decline of the share of the West. Aykan interprets it as a shift in the direction of the Turkish economy towards the Islamic countries.[160] According to Altunışık, this increase reflected the growing importance of the oil-producing countries for Turkey. Again, Ataman emphasizes that as the first Özal government increased Turkey's share of the Islamic Development bank of the OIC to 160 million Islamic Dinar (ID) in 1985, Turkey gained the right to be represented at the Executive Committee of the bank as the fifth largest shareholder.[161]

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[158] Aykan, 1993, pp. 105- 106

[159] Abul-Khair Mohammed Farooq, "Islamic Common Market -An Ultimate Goal", information Report,Vol. 5, July/October 1989, pp. 10-11, qouted by Aykan, 1993, p. 106

[160] Ibid., pp. 106- 107

[161] Ataman, p. 138

It can be said that the Oil Crisis, turned Turkey's economic attention to the Muslim world. Moreover, Turkey set economic relations with the Muslim world via gaining more importance in the OIC. Hence its interest increased and it invested more money into the organs of the OIC.

4. 4 The Cyprus Issue

The Cyprus Issue has been an inseparable part of Turkish foreign policy since the 1960s. This caused a problem for pro-Western Turkish foreign policy. Bölükbaşı argues that this pro-Western foreign was damaging for Turkey's interests in Cyprus.[162] Hence, from the middle of the 1960s, Turkey started to gain support for its cause in Cyprus from the Muslim world. According to Altunışık and Aslan, the isolation of Turkey in the international arena was changing the axis of Turkish foreign policy towards the Muslim world.[163] For this reason, as Aslan indicated, Turkey sent unofficial delegates to two Islamic Congresses to gain the support of the Muslim world in 1965.[164] In the 6th Islamic Congress, a decision condemning the Greek Cypriots' violent actions was accepted by the Congress thanks to the efforts of the Turkish Committee.[165] This can be considered as part of the politicization of religion in Turkish foreign policy. Although Turkey rejected the invitations to officially join the Islamic Congress,[166] it is possible to say that Turkey did not hesitate to use the Congress for her foreign policy interests. Yet, as Aslan emphasizes, Turkey could not surpass the influence of Egypt on the Arab countries which were in the Congress, because the Greek Cypriots had gained the support of Egypt on this issue. Hence Turkey clearly realized the negative effects of its pro-

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[162] Bölükbaşı, p. 25

[163] Benli, pp. 12- 13, Aslan, pp. 66- 69

[164] Islamic Congresses were held before the establishment of the OIC to discuss the problems of the Muslim world, to gain support of the Muslim world, and led by Saudi Arabia. For details of these Congresses see; Aslan, p. 67

[165] Aslan, p. 67

[166] Ibid, p. 80

West foreign policy. Thereby, it started to make radical changes in its foreign policy via getting close to the OIC.[167]

However the turning point of the Cyprus Issue in relations between Turkey and the OIC came in the 6th Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia in July 1975. As Aykan argues, Rauf Denktaş was invited to the Conference as "the leader of the Turkish Muslim Community in Cyprus"; however, he was not the official leader at that time.[168] This invitation shows the growing sympathy of the OIC to Turkey's Cyprus policy.

Moreover, the most important event for the Cyprus Issue in the OIC was the 7th Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers held in Istanbul, Turkey, on May 1976. It was decided that the Turkish Cypriot Community will have a seat in all OIC meeting in a 'guest' capacity. This newly gained status for the Turkish Cypriot Community brought legitimacy to the Cyprus Issue in the OIC.[169] Later, this position was elevated to that of 'observer' position in the 10th Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers held in Fez, Morocco, in May 1979.[170] As Aykan emphasized, this change was significant for the interests of the Turkish Cypriot Community.[171] The OIC members agreed on providing assistance for Turkish Cypriots by using the Islamic Solidarity Fund and the all organs of the General Secretariat, and giving economic aid via the Islamic Development Bank.[172] In the next summits, such as the Dhaka

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[167] Ibid, pp. 67- 68

[168] Aykan, 1993, p. 105

[169] "Kaddafi: Türkiye Kıbrıs'a Meşruluk Getirdi", www.gazetearsivi.milliyet.com.tr, 18.05.1977, p. 11, (acessed on December 12, 2012)

[170] "7. İslam Konferansı, Konferans Kıbrıs Tezini Kabul Etti", www.gazetearsivi.milliyet.com.tr, 16.05.1976, pp. 6 – 7, (acessed on December 11, 2012)

[171] "Denktaş: 'Kıbrıs Sorunu, İslam Dünyasında Her Geçen Gün Daha İyi Anlaşılıyor'", www.gazetearsivi.milliyet.com.tr, 15.05.1979, p. 6, (acessed on December 11, 2012)

[172] Mahmut Bali Aykan, The OIC and Turkey's Cyprus Cause, *The Turkish Year Book*, Vol: XXV, 1995, p. 53

Conference in 1991 and the Casablanca Conference in 1992, the position of the Turkish Cypriot Community was strengthened in the OIC.[173]

Furthermore, the 6th Islamic Summit held in Dakar, Senegal in 1991, was another turning point in relations between the OIC and the Turkish Cypriot Community. With this summit, the OIC decided to expand relations with the "Turkish Muslim Community of Cyprus".[174] This point is important in terms of emphasizing the use of the word "Muslim", because in the previous declarations of the OIC, the wording was "Turkish Cypriot Community".[175] Identifying the Cyprus Issue from a religious perspective could make it more suitable to become a popular issue of the OIC. Moreover, with the Dakar Conference, it was decided to increase relations with the Turkish Muslim Community of Cyprus in significant fields such as trade, tourism, information, investment and sports and also to develop the Turkish Muslim Community of Cyprus's economy through consultation with the Islamic Development Bank.[176] These developments could be considered as significant developments for Turkish Cypriots in terms of gaining international support.

These were regarded as victories of Turkish foreign policy.[177] Although the OIC members did not recognize the Turkish Cypriot Community de jure, the reaction of the OIC was significant to show the international arena that there were supporters of Turkey in this issue.[178] Moreover, Aykan interprets the reservations of the members of the OIC on the recognition issue from another perspective. He argues that most of these countries were the members of the UN and of the Non-Aligned Movement.

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[173] Aykan, 1993, p. 121

[174] Ibid, p. 121

[175] Aykan, 1995, pp. 53- 55 and Aykan, 1993, p. 105

[176] Aykan, 1993, p. 121

[177] Ibid.

[178] Aykan, 1995, p. 57

Hence, their attitudes towards the Turkish Cypriot Community were balanced against their position in these international organizations.[179]

Furthermore, as Aykan states, the support of the OIC for the Turkish Cypriot Community in all fields was more important than the de jure recognition of the island for Turkey. Because the most important result of the position of the Turkish Cypriot Community is the economic support of the OIC. Moreover he emphasizes that the Turkish Cypriot community had taken place in the OIC as "unnamed full members".[180] Aykan's evaluation could have been assimilated into Turkey's position in the OIC. As is mentioned in previous chapters, Turkey is still not a de jure member of the OIC. However this situation indicates that although Turkey is not an official member of the OIC, its power in the organization is not different from the other members. After examining the decisions and the attitudes of the OIC towards the Turkish Cypriot Community, it is probable to draw conclusion that Turkey's influence is enough to influence the OIC's policies to some extent.[181]

4. 5 The Bulgaria Events (1980-1990)

The Bulgaria Events, which started in 1985 and continued until 1989, were one of the most significant issues of Turkish foreign policy in this time. Bulgaria under Jivkov had discriminatory policies towards its Turkish Muslim minority in Bulgaria. These policies included the restriction of the cultural, educational and religious rights of the minority. The Bulgarian government banned the Turkish language in every field, closed the mosques and forced people to change Turkish surnames into

[179] Ibid.

[180] Aykan, 1993, p. 121

[181] For details of the emergence of the Cyprus Issue, see; William Hale, *Türk Dış Politikası,* Mozaik Yayınları, İstanbul, 2003, pp. 153- 169 and Turan, Barlas, Sönmezoğlu (der.), p. 59

Bulgarian surnames. The result of these policies was that most Turks in Bulgaria wanted to migrate to Turkey or another country.[182]

During these events, violence towards the Turkish Muslim minority disturbed Turkey. Because Turkey regarded the policies of Jivkov as an attempt to assimilate the Turkish Muslim minority.[183] Hence Turkey tried to mold international public opinion by using the OIC.[184] The Secretary General of the OIC, Şerafettin Pirzade stated that the Muslim world will not accept the corrosion of the Turkish Muslim minority's rights.[185] In other words, the OIC was already disturbed by these events.

Turkish initiative started with the Foreign Minister Vahit Halefoğlu's visit to New York to attend the meetings of the General Assembly of the UN in New York in 1985. He had negotiations with the members of the UN who were the representatives of Islamic countries. Moreover he informed the TNGA about his visit to New York for the meeting of the UN. He told details in his speech in the General Assembly of the UN. He expressed to the TNGA that he mentioned the Bulgaria Events by not using the name Bulgaria because of diplomatic rules. Moreover, he informed about his bilateral meetings in New York during the UN meeting. He emphasized the support of all states, most of which were allies of Turkey, and he said that none of

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[182] To see detailed information about the Bulgaria Events, see; Sa'ad S. Khan "The Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and Muslim Minorities", *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs,* Vol. 22, No. 2, 2002; Ali Eminov, *Turkish and Other Muslim Minorities in Bulgaria,* Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs, Book Series No: 6, C. Hurst & Co., London, 1997, pp. 135- 137; Rüştü Yılmaz, *"Jivkov Döneminde Bulgaristan Türkleri ve Türkiye'ye Göç Olayları (Türk Basınına Göre),* Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Türk İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü, Ankara Üniversitesi, Ankara, 2008. The detailed analyzes of the sociological results of the Bulgaria Events, see; Savaş Çağlayan, *"Bulgaristan'dan Türkiye'ye Göçler (Bulgaristan Halk Cumhuriyeti'nin İlanından Günümüze)",* Doktora Tezi, Ege Üniversitesi, Sosyoloji Anabilim Dalı, İzmir, 2007

[183] Yılmaz emphasizes that Turkish Foreign Minister Mr. Halefoğlu used the term "assimilation" for the Bulgaria Events officially for the first time in the Summit of the Foreign Ministers Islam Countries, in New York, in 1985. Yılmaz, p. 114

[184] "Müslümanlar, Bulgar Zulmünü Konuşuyor", www.gazetearsivi.milliyet.com.tr, 10.10.1985, p. 3 and "Müslümanlar, Bulgaristan'ı Konuşuyor", www.gazetearsivi.milliyet.com.tr, 10.10.1985, p. 14, (acessed on December 12, 2012)

[185] "Bulgar Zulmünü İslam Konferansı'nda Tel'in Etti", Tercüman Gazetesi, 07.03.1985, p.1 and p. 10.

these countries supported the Bulgarian government. Furthermore, in this session of TNGA, a deputy of the Motherland Party, Ahmet Turan Soğancıoğlu and the deputy of Nationalist Democracy Party, Kamran İnan expressed his support to the government in the name of their party. However, İnan criticized Halefoğlu, because of his diplomacy style in the General Assembly of the UN. İnan advocated that if Turkey condemns the Bulgarian government, it should use the name of the state not use the excuse of diplomatic rules. In the same way, the deputy of the People's Party, Halil İbrahim Karal, supported İnan's criticism.[186] This discussion can be interpreted as the Nationalist Democracy Party and the People's Party wanting to see Turkey in a more active position during the Bulgaria events.

Moreover, Turkey gave more importance to the Bulgaria Events in its foreign policy. Hence, this event is considerable for this study in terms of Turkey's usage of the OIC as a foreign policy instrument. First of all, as Khan argues, Turkey requested a resolution to condemn the Bulgarian government, which was included in the 16th Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministry in Fez, Morocco in March 1986. The decision of the Conference was to constitute a committee which would investigate the conditions of Bulgarian Muslims.[187] The Committee went to Bulgaria for an investigation in May, 1987. However, Yılmaz and Khan stated that the Bulgarian government hid many signs of assimilation and gave permission to the OIC Committee to talk only to designated people and visit only designated places such as mosques and schools which were chosen by the Bulgarian government.[188] The Committee declared its report to the 17th Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministries, in Amman, Jordan in 1988.[189] According to Khan the report recommended the OIC ambassadors to visit the areas where Turkish Muslim Bulgarians live and express

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[186] See Vahit Halefoğlu's, Ahmet Turan Soğancıoğlu's, Kamran İnan's, and Halil İbrahim Karal's speeches in TNGA official records: 17th Term, Vol. 19, Meeting No. 18, 1st Session, p. 501- 510, October 17, 1985

[187] Khan, p. 362

[188] Yılmaz, p. 116, Khan, p. 363

[189] Yılmaz, p. 116

their concerns about the conditions of the Muslim minority in Bulgaria. Yet the Deputy Foreign Minister of Bulgaria, Lyubomir Popov, criticized this report and blamed Turkey for misleading and manipulating the OIC.[190]

Moreover, in 1989, Turkey reported that the condition of Turkish Muslim Bulgarians had not changed, and requested a special session of the OIC. Although this session was on the agenda of the 20th and 21st Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministries, it was not realized.[191] This situation can be read as the last attempt of Turkey concerning discussion of the Bulgaria Events in the OIC. As Yılmaz indicated, the OIC could not take an effective decision about this issue.[192] Yet, it could be possible to infer the attempts of Turkey to use the OIC for its own foreign policy interests.

4. 6 The Palestine Issue

Since the 1950s, relations with Israel and the Palestine Issue have been an important issue for Turkish foreign policy. They were sensitive issues in terms of balancing the pro-West foreign policy of Turkey with its foreign policy toward the Middle East.[193] As Benli emphasizes, Turkey's relations with Israel, especially trade relations, were always a cause of conflict with the Muslim world. For instance, the Syrian Foreign Minister in 1965 said about their discontent about relations between Turkey and Israel clearly in one of his statements; *"Our attitude is related to Turkey's relations with Israel. If Turkey insists on not giving a sincere form to these relations, it would be difficult to establish desired relations between Turkey and Syria."*[194]

While considering the importance of the Palestine Issue and relations with Israel in Turkish foreign policy, it could be said that the attitudes of Turkey towards the OIC

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[190] Khan, p. 364

[191] Ibid.

[192] Yılmaz, p. 116

[193] For details of Turkey and Israel Relations, see; Gencer Özcan, "Türkiye- İsrail İlişkileri", Sönmezoğlu (der.), pp. 329- 357

[194] Turkish Year Book… 1965, op. cit., p. 246, Quoted by Benli, p. 28

were shaped via these issues. First of all, as Çağrı Erhan and Ömer Kürkçüoğlu indicate, Turkey supported the Arab countries that were against the idea of sharing out Palestine in the UN General Assembly in the meeting about the Palestine Issue. The support of Turkey interpreted by the West as 'the brotherhood of Muslims' and despite this interpretation of the West, the real reason for the support of Turkey was not related to its sympathy to Arabs and the Muslim world, it was that Turkey was concerned about the possibility of instability of the region after this decision.[195] Additionally, Aslan evaluates the consequence of this attitude of Turkey caused cooling off relations with Israel, yet it was not breaking up relations completely.[196]

Secondly, from the establishment of the OIC, the Palestine issue constituted an ever-present part of the OIC agenda.[197] As Aslan indicates the most important issue of the Rabat Conference in 1969 was the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) at the Conference. In this discussion, on one side, Egypt and Algeria supported the attendance of the PLO; on the other side, Iran and Turkey, who both had close relations with Israel, objected to its participation. Furthermore, in the end, both sides accepted the offer of King Hasan, the King of Morocco, and the PLO attended the Rabat Conference as "observers".[198] Moreover, the Conference condemned Israel explicitly.[199] The Turkish delegate declared that they will not approve this final declaration without reservation[200] and Foreign Minister İhsan Sabri Çağlayangil said that they support the declaration *"...to the extent that it is compatible with the United Nations resolutions Turkey had voted for or supported."*[201] Hence it could be possible to say that in the beginning of relations of

[195] Çağrı Erhan – Ömer Kürkçüoğlu, "Filistin sorunu ve İsrail'le İlişkiler",Oran (ed.), p. 637

[196] Aslan, p. 93

[197] For details of the OIC agenda see, Benli, pp. 42- 107 and Aslan, pp. 80- 140

[198] Aslan, p. 85

[199] Aykan, February, 1993, p. 96

[200] Aykan, Ibid., p. 96 and Aslan, p. 100

[201] Belleten 60, September 1969, p. 48, quoted by Aykan, Ibid, p. 96

Turkey with the OIC, Turkey was not close to the OIC's position on the Palestine Issue.

During the Fourth Arab- Israel war in 1973, Turkey declared its neutrality and did not give permission to the USA to use the İncirlik Air Base on its soil: Neither did it allow the Soviet Union to use Turkey's airspace.[202] Moreover, Turan Güneş, the Turkish Foreign Minister, attended the Second Islamic Summit which was gathered to discuss the results of the war in February 1974 in Lahore, Pakistan. Mr. Güneş declared that Turkey did not accept the OIC's pressure to cut off relations with Israel.[203]

But, after the war, Turkey's attitude towards the PLO was moderated. According to Özcan, one of the reasons for this shift was the negotiations between the head of the Political Bureau of the PLO and Mr. Güneş in 1974.[204] Another reason was the Arab League's declaration in 1974 the PLO was the only legitimate representative of the Palestine people. Also, in the same year, the UN accepted the PLO's participation to the meetings of the General Assembly of the UN as "observer".[205] Turkey announced that the PLO would open a bureau in Turkey.[206] However, according to Aslan, one of the reasons for this decision was related to Turkey's concern with another oil crisis. This positive attitude towards the OIC was also in line with Turkey's new balanced foreign policy *vis*-à-*vis* the West.[207]

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[202] Özcan, Ibid, p. 335

[203] Ibid.

[204] Ibid.

[205] Özcan,p. 335 and Aslan, p. 130

[206] "The 7th Islamic Conference", Dünya Gazetesi, Special edition for the 7th Islamic Conference, Vol. 2, May 14, 1974, İstanbul, p. 2,

[207]Aslan, p. 135

Nevertheless, Turkey did not let the PLO open a bureau until 1979.[208]Aykan gives several reasons for this delay such as the support of the PLO to terrorist groups in Turkey.[209] According to Yavuz and Aykan, the reason of this delay was related with the support of the PLO to Greek Cyprus on the Cyprus Issue[210] and Turkey's balanced policy towards the PLO. However, Yavuz differentiates his approach to relations between the Cyprus Issue and the PLO. He claims Turkey's behaviors toward the PLO, in the OIC, have been shaped by Turkey's acquisitions about the Cyprus Issue by the OIC. He argues that the reason for opening the PLO bureau in 1979 was parallel with gaining observer status of the Turkish Cypriot Community in the OIC in 1979.[211] In fact, the process of opening of the PLO bureau demonstrated how the issue became more and more important as Turkey's role and effectiveness in the OIC grew hosting one of the most important conferences of the OIC, and gaining legitimacy for the Cyprus Issue in the OIC.

4. 7 Bosnian War (1992- 1995)

In 1990s, one of the significant issues in Turkish foreign policy was the Bosnian War. The declaration of independence of Bosnia-Herzegovina, which came after the approval of the referendum of independence in 1992, brought the attacks of the Serbs that started the war.[212] According to William Hale, the interest of Turkey in Bosnia was related to the widespread perception that the Muslims of Bosnia were the last remaining Muslims Eastern Europe although their ethnic roots were not Turkish.[213]

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[208] "FKÖ'nün Türkiye'de Büro Açması Kesinleşiyor", www.gazetearsivi.milliyet.com.tr, 15.08.1979, p. 9, (acessed on December 15, 2012)

[209] Aykan, February, 1993, p. 98

[210] "FKÖ'nün İslamabad'da Kıbrıs Rumlarını Desteklemesi Tepki Yarattı", www.gazetearsivi.milliyet.com.tr, 30.05.1980, p. 3, (acessed on December 15, 2012)

[211] Yavuz, Sönmezoğlu (der.), p, 246

[212] For details of the war, see; Şule Kut, "Yugoslavya Bunalımı ve Türkiye'nin Bosna – Hersek ve Makedonya Politikası: 1990- 1993", Sönmezoğlu (der.), pp. 592- 601 and Hale, pp. 276- 283

[213] Hale, p. 277

Hence the active Turkish foreign policy aimed at stopping the war, including attempts to use the OIC.

Turkey called the OIC to meet of an Extraordinary Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers in İstanbul, in 1992.[214] According to Aykan, this call of Turkey was crucial in terms of chairing the meeting, which confirmed the prestige of Turkey in the eyes of the members of the OIC. Furthermore, this position was a sign of emergence of Turkey as a rival to Saudi Arabia and Iran for leadership in the OIC.[215]

Moreover, Turkey attended the UN's extraordinary convention to discuss the measures to put an end to the war as the Chairman of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers in 1992.[216] Turkey declared that unless necessary measures were taken to protect the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina by the UN, it would send troops with the members of the OIC in December, 1992.[217] After this declaration, Turkey vouched to the decision of lifting the arms embargo against Bosnia-Herzegovina in the meetings of the OIC in 1993. Additionally, Turkey proposed the Muslim countries to send Special Forces to protect the 'safety zone', which was declared by the UN in 1999 and that it would establish perimeters around the region where Muslims of Bosnia live.[218] However, although Turkey tried to use the OIC as an international power in the Bosnian events, the efforts of Turkey were not enough to stop the war.[219]

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[214] Aykan, 1993, p. 124 and Kut, Sönmezoğlu (der), p. 593 and "Bosna- Hersek İslam Konferansı'nda", www.gazetearsivi.milliyet.com.tr, 09.06.1992, p. 7, (acessed on December 16, 2012)

[215] Aykan, 1993, p. 124

[216] Aykan, Ibid., p. 117

[217] Hale, p. 278

[218] Ibid.

[219] Hale, p. 279, Kut, Sönmezoğlu (der.), pp. 599- 601

4. 8 Conclusion

This chapter aimed to show how Turkey tried to use the OIC, for its foreign policy interests. For this, five specific issues of Turkish foreign policy were examined in terms of getting support of the OIC for legitimizing its claims about the issues in the international arena. It could be possible to conclude that this strategy of Turkey was related to the Oil Crisis in 1974 with economic interests, the Cyprus Issue, the Bulgaria Events, the Palestine Issue and the Bosnian War as related politic interests. Turkey's attitude towards these issues was not directly related with religion. However, Turkey used this reason to push the OIC to support Turkey's foreign policy causes in the international arena. As Ataman argues, "Turkey benefited from the OIC when dealing with the Cyprus question and Muslim minority problems in the Balkans."[220] It is also possible to say that this also had the effect of breaking the Arab monopoly on the OIC.[221] At the same time, when the OIC was instrumentalised by Turkey, it was to little success.

[220] Ataman, p. 138

[221] Ibid and Aykan, 1993, pp. 125- 126

CHAPTER V

TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY AND THE ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION SINCE 2002

5. 1 Introduction

This chapter aims to analyze the link between Turkish foreign policy developments since the coming to power of the Justice and Development Party (JDP) in 2002 and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to present day. Its aim is to find an answer to the question of whether Turkey has used the OIC as a foreign policy instrument or not.

First of all, the general attitudes of Turkish foreign policy in the JDP period and the reasons of turning to the Middle East and the OIC will be examined. Secondly, Turkey's activism in the OIC since 2002 and the new period of the OIC with Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu will be analyzed. At this point, the discussions about the new Secretary General, the question of efficiency/inefficiency of the OIC, and the challenges of the OIC will be examined.

Lastly, relations between Turkey and the OIC will be analyzed in terms of political, economic, and social issues. The political issues will be examined in three cases; famine in Somalia, the conflicts between Buddhists and Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar, and the Syrian Crisis. The aim of choosing these cases is the active role of Turkey and its cooperation with the OIC in these cases.

5. 2 The General Attitudes of Turkish Foreign Policy Since 2002

The Justice and Development Party's (JDP) foreign policy is a controversial topic for many observers since 2002.[222] Researching the relationship between Turkey and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in terms of its effect on Turkish foreign policy reveals many different approaches to this issue. Thereby, this study tries to put the effect of the relationship between Turkey and the OIC on Turkish foreign policy across by analyzing these approaches.

Since the coming to power of the JDP, the first outstanding event was the JDP's attitude towards the European Union (EU). This attitude did not exist only in the JDP period, but had started in the mid-1990s.[223] However, Ziya Öniş and Şuhnaz Yıldırım describe the JDP's attempts for the EU as the "golden years of the JDP", which indicates the period from November 2002 to the formal opening of EU accession negotiations in October 2005.[224] Moreover, Burak Bilgehan Özpek interprets this process in terms of two possibilities. According to Özpek, one possibility is that the JDP tries to balance the tension between a secular army and the ex-Islamist politicians of the JDP through supporting the EU membership process by revising many legal codes to meet the Copenhagen Criteria (such as the promotion of democracy and the subordination of the military to civilian authority).The other possibility is that the JDP regards democracy as the key of keeping stability in domestic affairs. Moreover, Özpek emphasizes that the JDP differs substantially from its predecessor, the Welfare Party in terms of the EU policies.[225]

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[222] The debates could be seen in the sources of this chapter.

[223] Ziya Öniş & Şuhnaz Yılmaz, "Between Europeanization and Euro-Asianism: Foreign Policy Activism in Turkey during the AKP Era", *Turkish Studies,* Vol. 10, No. 1, March 2009, p. 7

[224] Ibid.

[225] Burak Bilgehan Özpek, "'Arab Spring' or 'Turkish Winter'?", *Near East Quarterly* · September 7th, 2011, p. 3

However, since 2005, the JDP's foreign policy has changed to multi-dimensional foreign policy which is described by Öniş and Yılmaz as "loose Europeanization" or a "soft Euro-Asianism" strategy. Yet, according to them, "soft Euro-Asianism" does not just apply to the former Soviet Union region and the Middle East, but to all of Turkey's neighbors.[226] Furthermore, in the literature, this strategy is described as "zero problems towards neighbors", which is one of the foreign policy principles of Foreign Minister, Ahmet Davutoğlu.[227]

Davutoğlu explains the policy-making process of Turkish foreign policy with the help of five principles. The first is the "balance between security and democracy"; the second is "zero problems towards neighbors"; the third is "proactive and pre-emptive peace policy diplomacy"; the fourth one is "multi-dimensional foreign policy"; and the fifth is "rhythmic diplomacy".[228] This last principle is important in terms of this study, because Davutoğlu emphasizes that this principle aims at active involvement in all international organizations.[229] It is possible to consider that one of the reasons of increasing relations with the OIC[230] in the JDP period is due to this last principle. Moreover, it could be argued that these principles have changed the leaning of Turkey toward the Middle East and OIC. However, it is discussed in the literature that the only reason for this turn is not these foreign policy principles of the JDP. There are also different approaches for this turn as analyzed below.

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[226] Öniş and Yılmaz, p. 13

[227] For more details of "zero problem towards neighbors" strategy and its effects, see; Ayhan Şimşek, "Turkey's Foreign Policy From Regional to Global Player", http://en.qantara.de/From-Regional-to-Global-Player/19412c497/index.html, 03.07.2012, (access on 18.12.2012), Ahmet Davutoğlu, "Turkey's Zero-Problems Foreign Policy", http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/05/20/turkeys_zero_problems_foreign_policy?page=full, (access on 15.12.2012), Öniş and Yılmaz, p. 9, Ali Balcı & Nebi Miş, Turkey's Role in the Alliance of Civilizations: A New Perspective in Turkish Foreign Policy?", *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 3, September 2008, p. 388, Emel Parlar Dal, The Transformation of Turkey's Relations with the Middle East: Illusion or Awakening?", Turkish Studies, 13:2, pp. 257- 258

[228] Davutoğlu, Ibid.

[229] Ibid.

[230] The development between Turkey and the OIC will be analyzed in this chapter later.

5. 3 The Reasons of Turning to the Middle East and The OIC

Since the JDP came to power in 2002, while it has been widely argued that the JDP's primary foreign policy concern was the membership process of the EU, the JDP has started relations with the Middle East. While researching this process, it could be said that there are different approaches to the JDP's Middle East policies. These approaches could be examined under the following themes; 9/11 and the UN effect, Turkey's position between the East and the West, the desire of an active role in the region, and the issues of identity. Moreover these approaches are significant in terms of understanding the OIC in Turkish foreign policy by scholars.

5. 3. 1 9/11 and the UN Effect

When considering the 2000s, it is possible to say that the most significant event was the September 11th attacks. However, according to Ali Balcı and Nebi Miş, this assault has also had the effect of initiating the dialogue among civilizations under the UN umbrella.[231] The UN General Assembly initiated the "Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations"[232] on 21 November 2001. This program aims to promote a dialogue among civilizations via international organizations and states. Thereby, it is possible to say that Turkey's importance has increased in light of this attempt of the UN. For instance, Turkey hosted the foreign ministers of the OIC and observer countries, EU member and candidate countries in the OIC-EU Joint Forum, which was aimed at proving the existence of harmony between east and west, in İstanbul on 12- 13 February, 2002.[233] Moreover, Turkey was the host of the organization, as a bridge between the East and West.[234] It is possible to consider that

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[231] Balcı and Miş, p. 391

[232] For full text of , "Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations" visit; http://www.un.org/documents/ares566e.pdf (accessed on 16.12.2012)

[233] Ramazan Kılınç, "Turkey and the Alliance of Civilizations: Norm Adoption as a Survival Strategy", *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 11, No. 3, 2009, p. 59

[234] For details of the Forum, visit; http://www.mfa.gov.tr/brief-summary-of-the-proceedings-of-the-oic-eu-joint-forum.en.mfa (accessed on 16.12.2012)

Turkey used to its advantage being a member of the OIC and in the membership process of the EU in this organization.

5. 3. 2 The "Unique" Position of Turkey in the Region

One of the reasons for Turkey's turn to the Middle East and the OIC is the discussions about the "unique" position of Turkey in the region. President Abdullah Gül wrote an article when he was the Foreign Minister where he indicated that Turkey's experiences are proof of a harmony of national and spiritual values with the modern world. Moreover he emphasizes that Turkey is the only country in the region which is both a member of the OIC and a candidate member of the EU. Additionally he mentions Turkey's membership of NATO, the Council of Europe, the World Trade Organization, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and being the chairman of the Standing Committee on Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the OIC and founding membership of the D-8 Group in terms of its uniqueness.[235] According to Öniş and Yılmaz, Turkey's uniqueness was due to its multiple regional identities. They related this uniqueness to the geopolitical importance of Turkey. Additionally they regard Turkey's membership of the OIC and the membership of the other Westernized organizations both as powers of new foreign policy.[236]

5. 3. 3 Turkey's Desire for Active Role in the Region

As is mentioned above, the 9/11 events and the discussion about the unique position of Turkey in the region have initiated a desire about gaining an active role in the Middle East. The complex issues in the region aroused the interest of Turkey and most of the scholars interpret this situation as Turkey's willingness to play a global role in the peace process of the conflicts in the region. Özpek describes these attempts of Turkey as "regional activism" which has characterized Turkish foreign

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[235] Gül, Abdullah, "Turkey's Role in a Changing Middle East Environment", *Mediterranean Quarterly*, Winter 2004, pp. 6- 7

[236] Öniş and Yılmaz, p. 9

policy understanding of the JDP.[237] At this point, it would be suitable to give some examples. For instance, Turkey hosted the meeting of the Iranian nuclear issues between Javier Solana and Ali Larijani in Ankara, in 2007.[238] In the same year, Turkey invited Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf and Afgan President Hamid Karzai for the purpose of opening a dialogue between the two countries.[239] Moreover, Turkey invited the Israeli President Shimon Peres and the Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas to Ankara before the Annapolis meeting in the United States in 2007.[240] Öniş and Yılmaz claim that these attempts of Turkey emphasize the desire for a "mediator" or "facilitator" role in the region.[241]

Furthermore, Gül indicates in his article that Turkey could play a crucial role in the peace process because of its unique position in the region. He especially emphasizes the membership of the OIC and the EU accession process of Turkey.[242] Additionally, this new position of Turkey in foreign policy implies the desire of a global role in the region. *"…the new discourse in Turkish foreign policy, highlighting the "moral/normative aspect" beyond the confines of narrow "self-interest" indicative of a pronounced desire to assume a more global role and global responsibility."*[243] Furthermore, Ayhan Şimşek also indicates the desire of the active role of Turkey in

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[237] Özpek, p. 1

[238] "Tehran and EU Meet in Ankara as Result of Gul's Telephone Diplomacy ", http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/tehran-and-eu-meet-in-ankara-as-result-of-guls-telephone-diplomacy.aspx?pageID=438&n=tehran-and-eu-meet-in-ankara-as-result-of-guls-telephone-diplomacy-2007-04-26 (accessed on 12.12.2012)

[239] To see the details of the meeting, visit; http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/Afgh%20S2007%20266.pdf and "Musharraf Upbeat about His Meeting with Karzai", http://www.arabnews.com/node/297526(accessed on 11.12.2012)

[240] To see the details of the meeting, visit; "Turkish MPs host Mid-East Leaders", http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7092234.stm, (accessed on 11.12.2012)

[241] Öniş and Yılmaz, p. 19

[242] Gül, p. 6

[243] Öniş and Yılmaz, p. 12

the region by opening new embassies and consulates especially in Africa and the Middle East, and increasing the participation in international organizations such as attending the African Union and Arab League in 2005 as an "observer participant". Moreover, he claims that this pro-active foreign policy of Turkey gained her a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council in 2009-2010.[244]

5. 3. 4 The Identity Issue

The debate on whether Turkey's foreign policy had a major shift in its direction, that it has had a change from West to East, has been closely related to the issue of identity. Zeyno Baran describes this change as an identity crisis. According to her, the reason of this crisis is the political and economic challenges facing Turkey. She claims that especially after 9/11 and the Iraq war, the Islamic dimension of Turkish national identity has risen and gained more importance. "*There is now far greater awareness among Turks of their Islamic identity, culture, and norms; an increasing number of Turks consider themselves Muslim first, Turkish second.*"[245] Moreover, she claims that this situation has affected Turkish foreign policy and through Davutoğlu's foreign policy principles leading to increased relations with the Arab and Muslim world in economic and political fields. She further argues that Turkey does not act as a Western ally in the region, but that rather, it acts independently.[246]

Furthermore, Özpek emphasizes that although the JDP got rid of the pressure of the secular army, its Islamist roots affect its foreign policy decisions. Thereby, Özpek relates the Islamic identity of the JDP in foreign policy with Turkey's "regional activism" in the Middle East and the Muslim world.[247]

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[244] Şimşek, Ibid.

[245] Zeyno Baran, Turkey: Partnership on the Brink The Journal of International Security Affairs "*,Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs*, Volume: 15, Issue: 0 (Fall 2008), p. 8 and p. 11

[246] Ibid., p. 11

[247] Özpek, p. 2

Moreover, Hassan Fattah also interprets this change of Turkish foreign policy in terms of identity by referring to Bülent Aras's following statement; *"Turkish domestic politics has led to a new orientation in foreign policy"*.[248] Fattah agrees with Aras and claims that Turkey emphasizes its interest in the Muslim world by gaining the position of Secretary General of the OIC. What is more, Fattah adds that the JDP's Islamic identity prompts their foreign policy decisions as in the case of the OIC.[249] Additionally, another scholar, Robins, interprets the interest of the JDP to the OIC with Turkish society's Islamic identity and its accordance with the structure of the JDP; however, he adds another perspective to the JDP's interest in that there is the crucial effect of Abdullah Gül on the JDP's attitude towards the OIC, which Robins traces back to Gül's term as the Foreign Minister. Robins also argues that Gül worked a number of years in the Islamic Development Bank, which is the one of the four specialized institutions of the OIC, and that hence the experience of Gül has an influence on the decisions of the JDP.[250] Emiliano Alessandri also agrees with these arguments and emphasizes that the JDP uses relations between Turkey and the OIC to get the support of its constituency as the latter's interest in the Muslim world is growing.[251]

In contrast, F. Stephen Larrabee criticizes this identity debate and relates the closer relations with the OIC to Turkey's security concerns. He argues that the JDP's Islamic root has an effect on foreign policy, yet the main reason for Turkey's interest in the Middle East and the Muslim world is its fragile relations with its neighbors such as Iraq, Syria, and indirect effects of relations with the other countries in the region, such as Israel, Lebanon, Egypt and Iran.[252]

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[248] Quoted by Hassan Fattah, "Turkey Club", *The New Republic,* 11.10.2004, p. 18

[249] Ibid.

[250] Robins, p. 301

[251] Emiliano Alessandri, "Turkey's New Foreign Policy and the Future of Turkey–EU Relations", *The International Spectator: Italian Journal of International Affairs*, 45: 3, p. 86

[252] F. Stephen Larrabee, Turkey's New Geopolitics", *Survival,* Vol. 52 No. 2, April–May 2010, p. 158

5. 4 Turkey's Initiatives towards the OIC

In light of the Turkish foreign policy picture illustrated above, it is possible to understand the interest of the JDP in the OIC more easily. However, there is another debate on relations with the OIC. It is the attempts of the JDP to win the election of Secretary General of the OIC and then Turkey's efforts to gain the OIC's leadership.

After coming to power in 2002, it was discussed that the primary foreign policy concern of the JDP government was the EU. However, JDP was really enthusiastic about gaining a significant role in the OIC. As George E. Gruen indicates, Turkey made successfully lobbied to win the position of the Secretary General of the OIC. He implies that some Turkish officials visited many countries in the Muslim world to gain their support in the elections. For instance, the Parliament Speaker, Bülent Arınç visited Morocco to ask for their support for Turkey's candidature. Moreover, during this visit, Arınç signed an agreement on behalf of Turkey to strengthen bilateral Turkish-Moroccan relations.[253] Gruen mentions Ha'aretz interview with Tayyip Erdoğan in 2004. In this interview, Erdoğan furiously condemned Israel's military attacks against Palestinians. Gruen argues that the timing of the anger of Erdoğan to Israel was related with the JDP's closer relations with the Muslim world and the forthcoming elections in the OIC and Turkey's desire to win the leadership election. However, Gruen claims that the close relations with the OIC will decrease the chance of Turkey in the membership process of the EU.[254] Yet, Şimşek advocates that the close relations with the Muslim world are an advantage for Turkey's membership process of the EU because of the special position of Turkey. Şimşek refers to Hüseyin Bağcı's description of Turkey as a "middle power"; *"... a country which cannot determine or regulate political developments alone, but has valuable "soft*

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[253] George E. Gruen," Turkey's Strategic Mideast Regional Initiatives",*American Foreign Policy Interests*, 26: 2004, p. 443, "Bülent Arınç, Fas'a Eşiyle Birlikte Gitti", http://www.zaman.com.tr/newsDetail_getNewsById.action?newsId=51484 , "Evliya Çelebi Arınç", http://www.milliyet.com.tr/Siyaset/HaberDetay.aspx?aType=HaberDetayArsiv&KategoriID=4&ArticleID=116087&PAGE=1, (accessed on 11.12.2012)

[254] Gruen, p. 444

power" assets to make a systematic impact together with other countries or through international institutions"[255] Robins agrees that being the member of the OIC provides Turkey bilateral advantages. *"To the West they presented themselves as the proselytizers of democratization among the membership of the ICO; to the Islamic world their posture was that of an acceptable and effective voice for Islamic piety within the West"*[256] Furthermore, Öniş and Yılmaz interpret the effort of Turkey for the leadership role in the OIC besides Turkey's membership process of the EU, from another perspective that it was a result of Turkey's March 1, 2003 decision which did not allow US troops to use Turkish territory during the invasion of Iraq.[257]

Moreover, Baran sees the active role of Turkey in the OIC as a consequence of Davutoğlu's multi-dimensional foreign policy principle.[258] However, Öniş and Yılmaz claim that the active role of Turkey in the OIC is a consequence of Davutoğlu's rhythmic diplomacy principle which aims to gain a more active role in an international organization.[259] Hence, the lobbying of Turkey for the election could be explained with this principle.

5. 5 The New Period of the OIC and Relations with Turkey

5. 5. 1 The New Period of the OIC

5. 5. 1. 1 New Secretary General of the OIC

As is mentioned in previous chapters, the OIC has the first democratically elected Secretary General, Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu in its history. It is possible to say that on the one hand this situation represents a new period for the OIC, and on the other hand, it represents a new process for Turkey as well. Turkey made crucial efforts to

[255] Şimşek, Ibid.

[256] Robins, p. 302

[257] Öniş and Yılmaz, p. 10

[258] Baran. p. 17

[259] Öniş and Yılmaz, p. 12

win the elections; hence it could be implied that relations with the OIC have grown after the elections. It should be more suitable to analyze both the changes in the OIC with İhsanoğlu than relations between the OIC and Turkey. This provides us the opportunity to compare the new period of the OIC and Turkey's position within it.

The new period of the OIC, which started with İhsanoğlu, has given rise to two new debates among the scholars. One of them is whether İhsanoğlu is a reformer and what influence he has on the OIC, and the other is, which is even more intensely discussed than the first debate, whether the OIC has a reformist and mediator role in the Muslim world.

To start with the first debate, İbrahim Sharqieh regards İhsanoğlu as a reformer and a leader who has made administrative changes within the OIC. Accordingly, the permanent representation of the OIC on the UN Security Council is seen as a substantial indicator of the reforms of İhsanoğlu.[260] Turan Kayaoğlu also sees İhsanoğlu as a reformist leader of the OIC.[261] In contrast, Azin Tadjdini claims that although İhsanoğlu has a softer and more liberal profile than his predecessors, he does not have a significant influence on OIC policies. According to Tadjini, the complex structure of the OIC causes internal conflicts especially between policy and practice in the organization.[262]

5. 5. 1. 2 The Question of the Effectiveness/ Ineffectiveness of the OIC

The second debate is related with the efficiency or inefficiency of the OIC as a mediator with respect to the conflicts in the Muslim world. Sharqieh analyzes four cases: The Philippines, Thailand, Somalia, and Iraq, in which the OIC was involved

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[260] Ibrahim Sharqie, "Can the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Resolve Conflicts?", *Peace and Conflict Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 2, Fall 2012, p. 169

[261] Turan Kayaoğlu, A Rights Agenda for the Muslim World? The Organization of Islamic Cooperation's Evolving Human Rights Framework", *Brookings Doha Center Analysis Paper*, No. 6, January, 2013, p. 3

[262] AzinTadjdini, "The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and Regional Challenges to International Law and Security", *Amsterdam Law Forum*, Vol. 4: 2, Spring Issue, 2012, pp. 38- 39

in the peace processes. In light of these events, Sharqieh argues that the OIC has significant success in mediating these conflicts, and that yetthis is not the full potential of the OIC.[263] For Sharqieh, the OIC's importance as a platform of discussion of the Muslim world's affairs has increased, and *"... the OIC has become a "knowledge depot" for the issues and challenges facing its member states."*[264] According to him, one of the important sources of the effects of the OIC in the peace processes is, its linguistic commonality of member countries (the official languages of the OIC are, Arabic, English, and French).[265] The other one maybe more crucial than the others, the OIC's cultural competence. Sharqieh regards the cultural facilities of the OIC as a starting point of the solutions in the conflicts. At this point, the significant example is the Somalia issue. The OIC was allowed by the Shabab Movement to enter their area, and to deliver humanitarian assistance. According to Sharqieh, if the OIC did not understand Somali culture well, the UN's World Food program could not access their food aid in the Shabab controlled area of Somalia.[266] This effort of the OIC was appreciated by the UN, and the perception of the OIC in the UN was changed to that of a partner for conflict resolution in the peace processes. As Sharqieh indicated;

> In December 2006, the UN General Assembly passed a resolution to encourage greater cooperation between the UN and the OIC, specifically "welcoming the efforts of the Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference in strengthening the role of the Organization in conflict prevention, confidence-building, peacekeeping, conflict resolution, and post-conflict rehabilitation in member States as well as in conflict situations involving Muslim communities" (United Nations General Assembly 2006).[267]

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[263] Sharqieh, pp. 162- 163

[264] Ibid., p. 169

[265] Ibid., p. 170

[266] Ibid.,

[267] Ibid, pp. 171- 172

Moreover, another significant reform of the OIC is related to the development and promotion of human rights in the Muslim world. Although it is regarded as a new effort, the OIC has past experience in the development of human rights in the Muslim world. The crucial attempts are; the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam in 1990,[268]the Rabat Declaration about Covenant on the Rights of the Child in Islam[269], the Report of the First Ministerial Conference on Women's Roles in the Development of OIC Member States[270], and the last one is the "Independent Permanent Commission on Human Rights (IPHRC)" which was decided in 2008, yet it was established in 2011.[271] Kayaoğlu indicates that prior to the establishment of the IPHRC, previous attempts were based on Islamic values and Sharia. However, the IPHRC ignores Sharia. Furthermore, Kayaoğlu interprets this change as the desire of the OIC to discuss rights within the international context rather than that of Islamic values and law.[272] He also adds that this desire is supported by democratic members, Turkey and Indonesia, rather than others. Besides, the aim of this support is to gain a leadership role to the OIC in promoting human rights in the Muslim world.[273]

Another significant reformist initiative of the OIC is to combat Islamophobia. This issue has come into the agenda of the OIC after the Danish Caricature Crisis of

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[268] To see the full text of the declaration, visit; http://www.oic-oci.org/english/article/human.htm and the debate about the declaration in terms of law, see; Abdullah al-Ahsan, "Law, Religion and Human Dignity in the Muslim World Today: An Examination of OIC's Cairo Declaration of Human Rights", *Journal of Law and Religion*, 24: 2, 2008-2009, pp. 569-597

[269] To see the full text of the declaration, visit; http://www.oic-oci.org/english/conf/child/1/1st_Rabat_Declaration_en.pdf, (accessed on 29.01.2013)

[270] To see the full text of the report visit; http://www.oic-oci.org/english/conf/women/1st/OIC-REP-WOM-CONF-FINAL-06.pdf, (accessed on 29.01.2013)

[271] To see the full text of the declaration, visit; http://www.oicun.org/75/20120607051141117.html, (accessed on 29.01.2013)

[272] Kayaoğlu, p. 22

[273] Ibid., p. 13

February 2008. The reaction of the Muslim world to the caricatures was serious[274] and hence the OIC has taken action on gathering the reaction of the Muslim world under the OIC banner. Thereby, the OIC published the "1st OIC Observatory Report on Islamophobia" which aims to adopt the strategy of the OIC against Islamophobia in June 2008. After this report, being against Islamophobia has become the primary issues of the OIC and they meet annually to discuss it.[275] (The personal efforts of İhsanoğlu toward awaking the world's public opinion in the UN were mentioned in the first chapter.)

5. 5. 1. 3 The Challenges of the OIC

Although the OIC can be said to be in a reformist process as is mentioned above, there are also some challenges. The first challenge of the OIC is to make possible its reformist efforts among the multiple memberships of the OIC's member countries to the regional or other international organizations. For instance, Sharqieh implies that 27 members of the OIC are also members of the African Union, 22 members of the OIC are members of the Arab League and seven of them are both the members of the Arab League and the African Union.[276] Hence this complex situation results in conflict in the decision process of the OIC. Because Sharqieh claims that their interests in the other organizations could be in conflict with the OIC's decisions.[277]

The second challenge of the OIC is the lack of effective political support in the reforms of the OIC and its efforts in the peace processes that are of concern to the

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[274] "Cartoon Crisis Frames Europe's Conflict Within", http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/world/2006-02-13-cartoon-crisis_x.htm, (accessed on 29.01.2013) and see also; Lasse E. Lindekilde, "In the Name of the Prophet? Danish Muslim Mobilization During the Muhammad Caricatures Controversy", *An International Quarterly*, Vol. 13, No. 2, June 2008, pp. 219- 238;ŞuleYükselÖzmen, "Representing of Cartoon Crisis in Turkish Press: Samples of Vakit, Cumhuriyet and Posta Dailies", *Karadeniz Araştırmaları*, Güz 2012, No. 35, pp. 51-60

[275] To see the details of the OIC's efforts about Islamophobia, visit; http://www.oic-oci.org/page_detail.asp?p_id=182, (accessed on 29.01.2013)

[276] Sharqieh, p. 173

[277] Ibid.

Muslim world. Sharqieh examines this challenge in terms of the discussion of efficiency or inefficiency of İhsanoğlu and he claims that the reason for İhsanoğlu's limited effect on the OIC's mediator role is this lack of strong political support. He also emphasizes that this is again related with conflict of interests of the member states. Furthermore, he suggests that the OIC should increase cooperation with regional and other international organizations in a complementary role, as well.[278]

The third challenge is described by Kayaoğlu, which Sharqieh agrees with. According to them, the last challenge of the OIC is "mistrust and realpolitik among the member states".[279] This challenge is important in terms of understanding the inefficiency of the OIC although it has successes in some fields such as starting dialogue processes in conflict zones, and gaining more importance in the international arena, etc. Kayaoğlu indicates that the leading members of the OIC, Saudi Arabia, Iran and Pakistan, prevent the OIC from taking decisions which could be harmful for their interests. Furthermore he gives the example of the support of Iran to the Syrian regime, and Saudi support for the Bahraini government. According to Kayaoğlu, these situations indicate that there is a strong religious and sectarian separation among the members of the OIC, and it is the realpolitik of the OIC.[280]

Finally, according to Haroon Moghul, there is another division in the decision of the OIC's agenda: *"some countries, such as Turkey and Malaysia, envision the organization as a forum for a cultural agenda pushing moderation, while others, such as Saudi Arabia and Iran, want a more political agenda including the spread of theocratic influence"*[281]

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[278] Ibid.

[279] Ibid.,p. 174

[280] Sharqieh's interview with Turan Kayaoğlu, Sharqieh, p. 174

[281]Quoted by Sharqieh, Ibid., p. 174

5. 5. 2 Turkey and the OIC After 2002

As it is mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Turkey has changed its attitude towards the Muslim world after 2002. In this period, relations with the OIC gained more importance on the agenda of Turkish foreign policy. The most significant attempt of Turkey in relation to this change was to win the Secretary General position of the OIC. Furthermore, with this new role in the OIC, relations between Turkey and the OIC have grown considerably in political, economic and in social issues.

5. 5. 2. 1 Political Issues

In political issues, the general discussion is about the efforts of Turkey's leadership of the OIC as mentioned above. However, it is possible to say that Turkey has not changed its policy which was to use the OIC as a foreign policy instrument since the 1970s, as was explained in the previous chapter. Turkey continues to push the OIC to take action in several issues. It should be remembered that, until the 2000s, Turkey prompted the OIC to support mainly Turkish minorities by emphasizing their Muslim identity, for example the Cyprus issue and the Bulgaria Events, in foreign countries. However, it is possible to say that after 2002 Turkey has changed this policy. Recently, it can be observed that Turkey has tried to use the OIC for supporting Muslim minorities all over the world. To understand this change, three cases have been chosen: famine in Somalia, the conflict between Buddhists and Rohingya Muslims in Burma, and the Syrian Crisis.

5. 5. 2. 1. 1 Famine in Somalia

The first significant effort in this sense is the Somalia case. Turkey called the OIC to take action for an urgent meeting on the famine in Somalia in 2011.[282] Turkey was the first country to draw world attention to the famine in Somalia that year. Thanks to this urgent meeting of the OIC, the OIC pledged $350 million in financial aid for

[282] http://www.bbc.co.uk/turkce/haberler/2011/08/110817_somalia_turkey.shtml, (accessed on 30.01.2013)

Somalia.[283] According to TİKA (Türk İşbirliği ve Koordinasyon Ajansı Başkanlığı), Turkey sent financial aid amounting to 640 million TL to Somalia up until February 2012.[284] Moreover, it is possible to say that the peak of relations with Somalia was reached with the Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's official visit to Somalia in August 2011.[285] This visit attracted the attention of the world because Erdoğan was the first Western Prime Minister who visited Mogadishu despite the domestic conflicts of Somalia over the last twenty years. Furthermore, besides this financial aid for Somalia and Erdoğan's visit, Turkey developed relations with Somalia in every field. The President of Somalia, Sheikh Hasan Mahmud paid his first official foreign state visit to Turkey in September 2012. Additionally, during this visit, bilateral military and financial aid agreements were signed and it was decided to cooperate in different fields such as education, trade, health, infrastructure, etc.[286] These efforts of Turkey could be interpreted as a new foreign policy expansion of Turkey towards Africa.[287] Hence, it is possible to consider that Turkey's efforts to prompt the OIC in this case can be considered at the same time as one of the Turkish foreign policy's steps toward the development of relations with Africa.

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[283] http://www.oic-oci.org/topic_detail.asp?t_id=5585, (accessed on 30.01.2013)

[284] http://www.tika.gov.tr/haber/turkiyenin-somali-yardimlari-dunya-kamuoyunda/203, (accessed on 31.01.2013)

[285] Mehmet Özkan, "Türkiye'nin Sahraaltı Afrikası Politikası 2011", *Türk Dış Politikası Yıllığı 2011*, p. 660 and http://www.dunyabulteni.net/?aType=yazarHaber&ArticleID=18838, (accessed on 31.01.2013)

[286] http://www.tccb.gov.tr/haberler/170/84590/turkiyesomali-iliskileri-uluslararasi-camiaya-guzel-bir-ornek-olacaktir.html, (accessed on 31.01.2013)

[287] Özkan, p. 676 and http://www.dunyabulteni.net/?aType=yazarHaber&ArticleID=18838, (accessed on 31.01.2013)

5. 5. 2. 1. 2 Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar

Another example of Turkey's effort for Muslim minorities around the world is the Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar (Burma). Since 2012, Turkey had a growing interest in Myanmar and opened an Embassy on March 9, 2012.[288] Furthermore the violence between Buddhists and Muslims in Myanmar had attracted Turkey's interest since June 2012. The foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu and the wife of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Emine Erdoğan visited Myanmar in August 2012.[289] According to the media, the violence in Myanmar has come into the world's agenda thanks to Turkey.[290] During their visit, Davutoğlu indicated that their aim was both to develop relations with the Myanmar government and to help Rohingya Muslims.[291] Additionally, the Prime Minister Office started a financial aid campaign for Rohingya Muslims.[292] Furthermore, besides these efforts, Turkey has called the OIC to protect the Muslims in Myanmar.[293] Hence, the OIC has increased its efforts, such as when İhsanoğlu tried to press the Myanmar government to prevent violence, and when he draws attention to violence in different international platforms. The first meeting of the Contact Group of the OIC for the Rohingya Muslims called upon the government of Myanmar to launch a rehabilitation and reconciliation process in the region, resettle the internally displaced persons to new homes, and to take measures for the long-term economic development of the region.[294] Despite these efforts from Turkey and the OIC, they were not enough to stop the violence. Moreover, the desire

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[288] http://www.mfa.gov.tr/disisleri-bakanligi-sozcusu-selcuk-unal_in-twitter-uzerinden-duzenledigi-sanal-basin-toplantisi_-7-agustos-2012.tr.mfa, (accessed on 31.01.2013)

[289] http://www.aa.com.tr/tr/s/71614--myanmarda-sicak-karsilama, (accessed on 30.01.2013)

[290] http://www.aa.com.tr/tr/dunya/124165--arakan-turkiye-ile-gundeme-geldi, http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/aug/14/burma-violence-muslim-rohingya-refugees (accessed on 30.01.2013)

[291] http://www.haberturk.com/dunya/haber/766414-kimseye-yapmadiklarini-sturkiyeye-yaptilar, http://www.aa.com.tr/tr/s/71614--myanmarda-sicak-karsilama, (accessed on 31.01.2013)

[292] http://www.basbakanlik.gov.tr/Forms/pDetay.aspx, (accessed on 01.02.2013)

[293] http://www.todayszaman.com/news-286606-.html, (accessed on 01.02.2013)

[294] http://www.oic-oci.org/topic_detail.asp?t_id=7211&x_key=Myanmar, (accessed on 30.01.2013)

of the OIC to open an office in Myanmar to help the Muslims was blocked by the Buddhists in October 2012.[295] It is possible to say that the result of these initiatives was to ease the entrance of Turkey into Myanmar.

5. 5. 2. 1. 3 The Syrian Crisis

Furthermore Turkey continues to cooperate with the OIC in ongoing foreign policy issues such as the Cyprus issue and the Balkans, as well as initiatives from Turkey in Africa and Asia. However, it is observed that Turkey has increased its relations with the OIC in the conflicts in its neighborhood. For instance, in the Syrian crisis, from the beginning of the crisis, the OIC always expressed its readiness to contribute to host countries for the refugees of Syria. During the second meeting of the Group of Friends of the Syrian People, which was hosted by Turkey in April 2012, the OIC declared that the OIC supports all the initiatives and efforts which are decided by the Group of Friends of the Syrian People.[296] Furthermore, the OIC suspended Syria from membership in the 4th Extraordinary Summit of the OIC in Mecca, in August 2012. İhsanoğlu explained that with this decision, Syria has lost its chance to become a prominent member in the organization.[297] However, Shamshad Ahmad indicates that this decision of the OIC is an effective attempt to stop the Assad regime. According to him, the OIC should focus on peace-making and the process of dialouge instead of taking this decision.[298] In this case, it should be emphasized that the final significant attempt of Turkey was to prompt the OIC to recognize the Syrian

[295] http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-19949414, (accessed on 30.01.2013)

[296] http://www.oic-oci.org/topic_detail.asp?t_id=6644&x_key=Syria, (accessed on 29.01.2013)

[297] http://www.cnn.com/2012/08/15/world/meast/syria-unrest/index.html, (accessed on 29.01.2013)

[298] Shamshad Ahmad, "Times of Troubles", *International The News*, August 25, 2012, http://www.thenews.com.pk/PrintEdition.aspx?ID=128193&Cat=9&dt=8/25/2012, (accessed on 27.01.2013)

opposition in the 39th Session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers on 15 November 2012, in Djibouti, Somalia.[299]

5. 5. 2. 2 Economic Issues

On economic issues, Turkey has significantly increased relations with members of the OIC. According to the statistics of Turkish Statistical Institute, the total export of Turkey to the members of the OIC has increased from $4,725,287,000 to $50,953,608,000 in 2012.[300] It is possible to argue that this increase may be related to the recent economic growth of Turkey. However, it is also necessary to look at the total exports of Turkey to the members of the EU to make a comparison with the rates of the members of the OIC. The total export of Turkey to the members of the EU has increased from $20,415,034,000 to $54,332,912,000 in 2012.[301]

Furthermore, the import rates are in the same period as follows. The total amount of imports to Turkey from members of the OIC has increased from $3,749,777,000 in 2002 to $29,500,525,000 in 2012.[302] In comparison with the EU, the import rate with the members of the EU has increased from $25,688,833,000 in 2002 to $79,814,239,000 in 2012.[303] The reason for this increase could be explained with the rising interest of the Turkish companies in the region. For instance, according to Dinar Standard's research, among the Turkish companies, Koç Holding was 6th and Sabancı Holding was 18th largest company in the list of Top 100 Companies in the

[299] http://www.mfa.gov.tr/statement-by-mr_-ahmet-davutoglu_-minister-of-foreign-affairs-of-turkey_--at-the-39th-session-of-the-oic-council-of-foreign-m.en.mfa and http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/11/15/syria-crisis-turkey-oic-idUSL5E8MFDPN20121115, (accessed on 29.01.2013)

[300] http://tuik.gov.tr/VeriBilgi.do?alt_id=12 (accessed on 29.01.2013)

[301] Ibid.

[302] http://tuik.gov.tr/VeriBilgi.do?alt_id=12, (accessed on 19.12.2012)

[303] http://tuik.gov.tr/VeriBilgi.do?alt_id=12, (accessed on 19.12.2012)

Muslim world.[304] Furthermore, this increase took place in the media as the success of Turkish companies in the Muslim world.[305]

5. 5. 2. 3 Social Issues

The social issues between Turkey and the OIC have especially risen since 2010. The developments have been not only related to Turkey, but also their aim to make a difference in the whole Muslim world. One of the most significant attempts was the establishment of the Islamic Conference Youth Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation (ICYF- DC) as an affiliated institution of the OIC at the 32nd Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers held in Sana'a, Yemen, in June2005. The aim of this institution was to coordinate the youth activities in the OIC countries. Furthermore, its activities are the following: advocacy of youth interest, supporting sustainable development, promoting formal and non-formal education, strengthening moral values of young generation and engaging in the dialogue among cultures and civilizations.[306] The importance of Turkey in this activity is its being the host country of the headquarters of the institute in İstanbul. Furthermore, Turkey wants to be more active in the issues of ICYF- DC. It also hosted the 1st International Model Organization for Islamic Conference, in June 2012, in İstanbul. The aim of this organization was to promote the knowledge of the youth of the OIC countries by training and simulating the OIC model among them. By doing so, the institute aims to arouse the interest of the youth to understand the OIC, and to raise the familiarity with the structure and the actions of the OIC.[307]

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[304] http://www.dinarstandard.com/rankings/ds100/index.html, (accessed on 19.12.2012)

[305] " Türk Şirketleri İslam Ülkelerinin Gözdeleri",http://www.dunyabulteni.net/index.php?aType=haber&ArticleID=145111&q=%C4%B0slam+Konferans%C4%B1, 30.01.2011, (access on 20.12.2012)

[306] http://www.oic-oci.org/page_detail.asp?p_id=66#icyf-dc, (accessed on 29.01.2013)

[307] http://www.icyf-dc.org/en/site.php?news|45, (accessed on 30.01.2013)

Another significant attempt of the OIC under Turkey's initiative is the establishment of the Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries (SMIIC),with the Agreement on the Establishment of the SMIIC in Turkey, which was signed between the Republic of Turkey and the SMIIC during the 26th Session of the COMCEC Meeting held in Istanbul in October 2010.[308] The aim of the SMIIC is to develop harmonized standards and other relevant specific standards through a voluntary standardization process to expedite the exchange of goods and services among member bodies/states targeting the uniformity in metrology and laboratory services, standardization, certification and accreditation activities supporting sustainable economic growth, within the frame of protection health, environment, promoting innovation and ensuring safety issues.[309] Furthermore the establishment of this institute in Turkey means the establishment of the Halal Food Institute of Turkey. The President of the Turkish Standard Institute highly appreciated the establishment of this institute.[310]

5. 5. 3 Conclusion

This chapter has aimed to discuss new Turkish foreign policy and relations with the OIC from different perspectives. The main concern was whether Turkey has turned to the Muslim world and has gained leadership in the OIC or not. It is possible to say that the election of a Turkish bureaucrat as the Secretary General of the OIC has provided Turkey the opportunity to move in the organization easily. Furthermore, one could conclude that Turkey has not changed its policy of using the OIC as a foreign policy instrument. However, in the light of certain case studies, it is possible to say that Turkey started to use the OIC to enter new foreign policy areas. The crucial point here is the cases in which Turkey has intervened are not related

[308] http://www.smiic.org/smiic, (accessed on 30.01.2013)

[309] http://www.smiic.org/mission, (accessed on 30.01.2013)

[310] "Helal Gıda Enstitüsü Kuruldu", http://www.dunyabulteni.net/index.php?aType=haber&ArticleID=123817&q=%C4%B0slam+Konferans%C4%B1, 03.08.2010, (access on 19.12.2012)

specifically to the problems of Turkish minorities under oppression, but it is also related with the problems of the whole Muslim world.

Furthermore it is also possible to argue that relations between Turkey and the OIC are at their peak. Relations have become deeper in political, economic and social areas. In the light of these developments, as Özpek indicated above, it can be concluded that Turkish foreign policy has gained a more Islamic identity. Relations with the OIC are both a manifestation as well as a source of this change.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

This thesis examined the role of religion in international relations with a particular focus on the relationship between Turkey and the OIC under three main themes. The first is the establishment of the OIC and the membership process of Turkey to the OIC. The second is the effect of this relationship on Turkish domestic politics, and the last is the analysis of this relationship in terms of Turkish foreign policy.

First of all, this thesis argued that the OIC is a multi-purpose religious intergovernmental organization. It is both a religious and political organization. The religious feature of the OIC is understood not from its having a completely Islamic motivation behind all its actions, but it is understood from its membership process being based on being a Muslim country and acting in utmost accordance with Islamic doctrine. It is possible to conclude that after the abolition of the Caliphate in 1924, the Muslim world could not gather under the Caliphate institution again, and instead, Saudi Arabia emerged as the "guardian" of the Muslim world through the establishment of the OIC. Hence, its establishment is a pan-Islamist movement. Furthermore, the emergence of the OIC is also political because of the competition between Nasser and King Faisal in the 1960s and its main concern which is the Palestine issue. Despite the fact that the OIC is the second biggest international organization in the world, its effectiveness is debatable because of political differences among its members. It is possible to conclude that the competition among the members is an obstacle for the organization’s success. Until the OIC put an end to this competition, it cannot be effective in solving of the problems of the Muslim world.

Furthermore, this thesis concluded that the membership process of Turkey to the OIC is an incomplete issue from a legal point of view. There were two efforts to approve the membership of Turkey to the OIC in TNGA. One of them was discussed on 14th May 1976, when the Turkish Grand National Assembly discussed the OIC membership process under the name of "İslâm Konferansı Yasasının Onaylanmasının Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Anayasası ile Bağdaştığı Ölçüde Uygun Bulunduğu Hakkında Kanun Tasarısı (1/466)", yet, it was not approved by TGNA due to what was perceived as a conflict with the principle of secularism in the Turkish constitution. The second is the draft law approving the Charter of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation which was signed on 18 June, 2008; however it did not pass in the TNGA. One could conclude that being a member of a religious international organization was officially contrary to the constitution of Turkey. Besides this controversy according to Turkish domestic law, it is also a problematic issue in terms of international law. Because, according to international law, agreements between states and international organizations should be in accordance with the states' constitutions. Hence, firstly, this thesis stated that relations between Turkey and the OIC have developed outside the law. Moreover, I argue that this controversy has been disregarded by all of the governments since 1969, and relations have continued. This thesis also aims to point out that although the JDP declares in their party programme that they shall be the assurance of the concept of governance based on rule of law in every field,[311] they do not take into consideration the controversial nature of the relationship between Turkey and the OIC, which has intensified to an unprecedented degree during the term of the JDP. Additionally, this thesis advocates that Turkey's membership situation shows how a religious approach and political interests have been used by Turkey and especially by the JDP after 2002 in its relations with the OIC.

Second, this thesis argued that religion has an indirect effect on these relations in terms of Turkish domestic politics. In this thesis, it is discussed that although Turkey

[311] http://www.akparti.org.tr/english/akparti/parti-programme#bolum_ (accessed on 06.02.2013)

is a secular state, its political parties are affected by the Turkey's majority Muslim population and their conservative tendency. Two developments in the Turkish domestic politics are considered this argument. One of them is the rise of right wing parties after the transition to the multi-party system in Turkey in the 1950s, and the other the rising of the religious parties after the 1970s. At this point, the study emphasized that the emergence of the OIC occurred at the same time as the emergence of the religious parties in Turkey. With the dominance of the right wing and the religious wing parties in the political life of Turkey since 1970s, relations with the OIC have intensified. Hence, it can be concluded that the relationship with the OIC has an indirect effect on the right wing and religious wing parties' popularity. This indirect effect of the OIC is interpreted in this thesis as an indicator of the effect of religion on Turkish domestic politics. However, it should be emphasized that nevertheless, religious identity has come into prominence in certain periods, and the OIC was not used as a domestic political instrument until 2002. This thesis put forward that after 2002, the OIC has become a tool in domestic politics with the JDP's increase in religious discourses. The JDP could easily talk about wanting the leadership position of the Muslim world. Hence, it is possible to conclude that the OIC has become an issue of domestic politics without reservation from the JDP government. However, the usage of an international organization as an instrument of domestic politics is a significant change in Turkish domestic politics.

Third, this thesis examined relations with the OIC in terms of Turkish foreign policy. To show the cooperation between Turkey and the OIC in Turkish foreign policy, the study classified Turkish foreign policy in to two periods. The first started from the establishment of the OIC up to the JDP term (1970-2002) and the second is from 2002 to present day. By doing so, the evolution of the perception of OIC in Turkish foreign policy is emphasized. In the first period, the relationship between Turkey and the OIC was analyzed in five specific cases; the Oil Crisis in 1974, the Cyprus Issue, the Bulgaria Events, the Palestine Issue and the Bosnian War. In light of these cases, this thesis concluded that in the first period of the relations between Turkey and the

OIC, the OIC was instrumentalized by Turkey in its foreign policy. However, Turkey could not gain substantial success in these cases by using the OIC. The main characteristic of these cases is that they were the main concerns or interests of Turkish foreign policy during that period. Furthermore, Turkey's interest in the Cyprus Issue, Bulgaria Events, and Bosnian War was primarily related to Turkish identity, not Muslim identity. Its interest in the Palestine issue, however, was not the main concern of Turkish foreign policy. Turkey had to take interest in this issue to gain a place in the OIC, because of the importance of the Palestine issue within the OIC. It is possible to conclude that Turkey was not enthusiastic about the Palestine issue in that period because of its relations with Israel. Turkey's interest in the Palestine issue was compulsory and reluctant during that period. From the establishment of the organization, Turkey has stood up against pressure from the OIC over its relations with Israel. Turkey's attitude towards the Palestine issue in the OIC balanced this pressure. These cases show that Turkey has instrumentalized the OIC in its foreign policy, but only for its own interests.

These five cases are not all of the same importance in Turkish foreign policy. The Cyprus Issue, Bulgaria Events, and Bosnian War were main concerns of Turkish foreign policy, and they attracted the attention of the OIC through Turkey's efforts. This means Turkey could change the attention of the OIC for its own foreign policy interests between 1970 and 2002. However, the Oil Crisis and Palestine issue were not directly related to Turkish foreign policy therefore they were regarded rather as instruments of sealing the relationship between the OIC and Turkey.

Furthermore, in the second period, relations were examined in three specific cases; famine in Somalia, the conflict between Buddhists and Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar, and the Syrian Crisis. The thesis tried to show that the interest of Turkish foreign policy has been shaped in these cases primarily by Muslim identity. In contrast to the first period of the relationship, it is stated that religion has had more influence on the interest of Turkey on these issues. It is possible to say that the JDP's

religious tone has changed Turkish foreign policy. The crucial conclusion here is that these cases are not related with the permanent concerns of Turkish foreign policy. Rather, they are the problems and concerns of the Muslim world. This presents a break in Turkish foreign policy with the JDP. The JDP has continued to instrumentalize the OIC in Turkish foreign policy. However this instrumentalization was reactive before 2002. As mentioned in the fourth chapter, Turkey had a limited, narrow and more pragmatic approach towards the OIC. In that period, Turkey had used the OIC only for its own foreign policy concerns. Yet, since 2002, Turkey has had a proactive attitude towards the OIC with the JDP. This proactive attitude is the desire of pioneering not only in the more traditional and immediate issue of Turkish foreign policy, but also in the Muslim world and in world politics. The three cases in the fifth chapter show the proactive foreign policy of the JDP in the Muslim world by strengthening relations with the OIC. Moreover, these cases conclude that Turkey tries to open new foreign policy areas via this proactive attitude in its foreign policy. However, it should be emphasized at this point that the OIC has gained more importance in Turkish domestic politics and foreign policy agenda with the JDP, despite the fact that Turkey has still not legally become a member of the OIC.

In light of these statements, the thesis also emphasized the remarkable discussion in the literature on previous attempts by Turkey to increase its importance in the organization. It is stated that the changes in Turkish foreign policy towards the Middle East after 2002 have increased the importance of the OIC in the agenda of Turkish foreign policy. Turkey has a different position than the other members of the OIC because of her political experiences, Westernized face, and the position between the East and the West.[312] Hence the thesis argued that Turkey tries to gain the leadership position in the OIC by using a different position in the OIC, and regards the election of Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu as the Secretary of General of the OIC two times as a new step for its role in the OIC. This is another sign of the proactive attitude of Turkey towards the OIC.

[312] Aykan, 1994, p. x

Furthermore, this study discussed the changes and the challenges of the OIC itself. As mentioned before, the new period of the OIC with İhsanoğlu is regarded as a reform process of the OIC in the literature. There are several reforms of the OIC's policies such as giving more attention to human rights and combating Islamophobia. However, after all the discussions about the OIC, a new question has been raised as to whether this reform process is related to the leadership of İhsanoğlu and support of Turkey, or to the necessity of change in the organization because of changing conditions in world politics.

Finally, this thesis concluded that religion has a substantial influence on the development of relations between Turkey and the OIC, especially since the coming to power of the JDP. Although the governments regard this relationship as a political issue, it is possible to conclude from this study that religion is as an invisible driving force behind these relations since 2002. Especially with the JDP's conservative ideology, the impact of religion both in domestic politics and foreign policy is more easily perceptible than from previous governments. Finally, despite the constitution, it is highly likely that Turkey will continue to cooperate with the OIC in every field and as long as the JDP continues this activity, they will continue to use the OIC and religion in domestic politics. The JDP government also continues to use the OIC as a foreign policy instrument through an emphasized Muslim identity to gain power in new areas of Turkish foreign policy.

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APPENDIX

TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU

ENSTİTÜ

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü ☐

☐

Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü ☐

Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü ☐

Enformatik Enstitüsü ☐

Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü

YAZARIN

Soyadı :

Adı :

Bölümü :

TEZİN ADI (İngilizce) :

☐ ☐

TEZİN TÜRÜ :Yüksek Lisans Doktora

☐

1. Tezimin tamamından kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.

2. Tezimin içindekiler sayfası, özet, indeks sayfalarından ve/veya bir bölümünden kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir. ☐

3. Tezimden bir (1) yıl süreyle fotokopi alınamaz. ☐

TEZİN KÜTÜPHANEYE TESLİM TARİHİ: