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**THE VIEW OF POLITICAL ISLAM ON ISLAMOPHOBIA:
THE EXAMPLE OF THE NATIONAL OUTLOOK
MOVEMENT**

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ORCID no. 0000-0003-3677-393X**e-mail:** ugurulger@gantep.edu.tr**Abstract**

Islamophobia is a cultural based discrimination which targets the Muslim community. This research tries to be evaluate Islamophobia is from the viewpoint of Islamists in Turkey. As an Islamist group the National Outlook movement is chosen since they are the most prominent and effective Islamist group in Turkish society and politics. The National Outlook movement's view of Islamophobia has common features about Islam with Islamophobic groups. And while discussing Islamophobia, they direct the same evil to Christian and Jewish society as Islamophobic groups direct towards Islam.

Keywords: Islamophobia, National Outlook Movement, Islam, discrimination

Imperialist powers regarded Islamophobia as a serious concept and themselves grew radical Islamist movements. [...] To cause Muslims to conspire against each other and to derange their lands for their ambitions. (Yeni Şafak 2017)

Temel Karamollaoğlu, Leader, Felicity Party

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to contribute to the better explanation of the points of view of local religious groups regarding the international discriminatory approach towards their community. In this sense, the perspective and political suggestions of the National Outlook movement, which bases its identity on Islamic roots, against the Islamophobic attitudes rooted in Europe are examined. There are plenty of studies examining the National Outlook, but there is no study which focuses the National Outlook movement's perspective on Islamophobia. The significance of this research is that the reaction of the National Outlook movement will tell us more about their approach to their opponents and in this way, it will be easier to see movement's approach to people who are seen as "others" by the movement.

Although Islamophobia is a product of a process which has been in development since the 1970s, it began to draw more attention after the attacks on 11 September 2001. In

short, this notion has become an embodiment of the fear and hatred against Muslims and Islam. The fact to look out for at this point is that the feelings of anxiety and hatred are rooted in Muslim community and their culture.

In the scope of this research, political Islam is handled in the context of the National Outlook movement. For a long time, the National Outlook movement has managed to merge with an Islamic identity and shaped Islamic discourse in Turkey (Yavuz 1997, 64). Also, the movement still defines itself based on an Islamic emphasis. The importance of the movement in terms of Islamism in Turkey is that the Islamists in Turkey had not managed to establish a political party of their own until Necmettin Erbakan¹ and the evolution of National Outlook (Çiğdem 2005, 27–28). Although there are some differences from another Islamist groups in Turkey, the National Outlook movement led the Islamist conversation in Turkey for long time and also had a remarkable effect Turkish politics.

Even though political parties, which represent the National Outlook were forced to shut down many times, the movement managed to persevere. After the Virtue Party (FP) was shut down in 2001, two parties, namely the Felicity Party (SP) and the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi/AKP), emerged from the movement. However, this research focuses on SP, because Necmettin Erbakan, the founder and ideological leader of the movement, continued his political life in this party. The fact that AKP no longer follows the lines of National Outlook and Islamism has been stated by prominent figures in the party, such as Recep Tayyip Erdoğan,² in the form of academic works and debates.³ There are also ideological differences.⁴ But, although there are important differences, AKP still includes some Islamists derived from the National Outlook movement, and also still shows Islamist reactions to many different issues. So, understanding the National Outlook movement will be also helpful to understanding the core of AKP. But it is important to point out that AKP is pragmatic party, so its reactions vary according to the situation and the political atmosphere.

To better understand the perspective of the National Outlook movement, articles published in the movement's media organ, *Milli Gazete* (National Newspaper), the movement's representatives' remarks published in various media organs, as well as the movement's reports were studied. Semi-structured interviews were made with eight party executives to back up the information acquired.⁵

1 Founder and main ideolog of National Outlook.

2 Expressing that they have “took off the mantle of National Movement”, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan stated that they were no longer operating in the National Outlook perspective. <http://www.haber7.com/siyaset/haber/257136-erdogan-gomlegi-kac-kez-cikardik>, (11.08.2018)

3 You can check these researches for more information: (Tuğal 2011, 66; Çakır 2005, 575)

4 For example, there are significant differences between the views of AKP and the perspective of National Outlook in terms of the USA-led wars in the Middle East. National Outlook opposes the existence of the USA in the Middle East, while AKP has often been an ally to the USA despite some recent crises and disagreements due to various reasons.

5 Firstly an interview request was made to clearly understand the party's headquarters' perspective, which resulted in an interview with one member of the party's general executive board. Since all interview requests were directed to the same person in the party's headquarters, and we believed that the executives of Istanbul, due to its diversity and population could accurately represent the party's perspective, six district presidents and a district vice president from the Istanbul organization were interviewed. There was no need to increase the number of interviewees as all of them provided the same answers in the interviews, coherent with the literature review. A total of eight meetings were carried out between 27.03.2017 and 18.05.2017.

The first section of the article focuses on the concept of Islamophobia, the second section briefly describes the National Outlook movement and the third section includes the interviews centered on the approaches towards Islamophobia, together with a literature review.

The concept of Islamophobia and its historical course

The notion of Islamophobia is similar to xenophobia (fear-hatred directed against foreign people); so in short, it is used to describe the fear and hatred of Islam and Muslims (Taras 2012, 97). The concept also encompasses the exclusion of Muslims from settled social and political relationships (The Runnymede Trust 1997, 1–4). FAIR (the Forum Against Islamophobia and Racism) describes Islamophobia as fear, hatred and hostility towards Islam and Muslims and this description extends to include attacks on Muslims, Islamic institutions and symbols, discrimination against Muslims in education, business and accommodation and disrespectful behaviors against Muslims in public spaces (FAIR, 1). According to the Islamophobic point of view, Islam, as a holistic and unchanging system, has existed for many centuries and determines the opinions of its members with regard to politics, gender equality or society independently from the communities they live in and their economic and educational positions (Halliday 1996, 1).

Since the concept of Islamophobia makes a whole out of class, ethical and religious identities, it can lead to misconceptions (Yükleyen 2007, 260). Therefore, it can become hard to define the concept. In some cases, pure racism is classified by skin color or discrimination of nationality and then interpreted as Islamophobia. Thus, the defining factor for the discriminatory approach is whether it is based on the victim's religious beliefs or ethnic roots. Fundamentally, the target of Islamophobia is a religious group rather than an imagined race (Schiffer and Wagner 2011, 79). It wouldn't be right to interpret Islamophobia, as prejudice or violence against a particular race or nation. For example, the oppression and hatred of Arabs can also be had by a Turkish Muslim or a French Christian person. Therefore, even if there is a relationship between racism and Islamophobia, they are still not the same thing. Likewise, it wouldn't be right to construe every criticism of Islam and Muslims as constituting an Islamophobic attitude (Bayraklı and Hafez 2015, 7). For example, a criticism about the living conditions of women in Muslim countries should not be taken as Islamophobic behavior. In some cases, specific laws might result in Muslims feeling as being disadvantaged. Unless the fundamental reasons for these laws are the antagonization of Muslims, it would still be wrong to relate them to Islamophobia. For example, the ban on headscarves in public spaces in France can be an indication of the understanding that all kinds of religious symbols can be interpreted as contradictory to secularism rather than a stance against Islam's cultural power (Laitin 2010, 434). At this point, what matters is the attitude towards Islam. The Runnymede Trust listed the Islamophobic views as follows (The Runnymede Trust 1997, 4–11):

1. Looking at Islam as a single and constant whole rather than a dynamic movement which differentiates within itself.
2. Approaching Islam as a different and separate religion rather than a religion which is similar and co-dependent (to other religions).
3. Seeing Islam as underdeveloped and inferior; seeing Western civilization as superior to Islamic culture.

4. Seeing Islam as an enemy rather than a partner.
5. Seeing Muslims as manipulative rather than sincere.
6. Supporting racist attacks against Muslims.
7. Rejecting Islamic criticism against the West.
8. Normalizing anti-Islam discourse.

While Islamophobia involves the perception of Islam as a threat, in some cases this perception of danger can further distance the facts from the truth. The proportion of Muslims in Poland is less than 0.1% of the population, but in research, 47% of respondents stated in their interviews that there were too many Muslims living in Poland (Pedziwiatr 2016, 429). This is not unique to Poland. In 2014 study revealed that the French think that the proportion of Muslim population in France is 31%. However, the official figures of the period report the actual proportion to be 8% (Türkan 2015, 48–49).

It would be useful to check Islamophobia's relationship with racist approaches in order to understand it better. Pierre-André Taguieff reported that racism involves a particular set of assumptions which he listed as follows (Taguieff 2001, 200):

- Rejection of the universal unity of human beings which would be inclusive of all kinds of differences.
- The thought that human beings can be separated into fixed categories.
- Absolutization of collective differences.
- Emphasizing that differences are the result of natural processes.
- Interpretation of differences in an inegalitarian perspective.

It can be concluded that both definitions reject the universal unity of human beings and classify humans based on various categories. Specific characteristics are attributed to these categories without making any reference to variables such as education, geography and economics. That is why Islamophobes can assign certain characteristics and behavioral patterns to the Islamic world as if it is homogeneous, which is far from the reality. Islam includes diverse groups and Islam alone explains only one dimension of those groups. For example Turkey, Pakistan and Indonesia differ in many dimensions. Also, interpretation of Islam varies from group to group, since there is no single "Islam" (Halliday, 1999, 897–898).

Just as in racism, differences lead to an inegalitarian understanding that Islam is an underdeveloped and inferior form of civilization. The most fundamental difference between racism and Islamophobia is the absolutization of differences between groups. While racist approaches explain the differences between groups by natural processes, an Islamophobe's view of Islam does not refer to nature and biology, and does not invariably absolutize differences.

Although there are important differences between racism and Islamophobia, Islamophobia can still be classified as a cultural racism or new racism. Cultural racism refers to the assumption that cultures are immutable and has been characterized by Balibar as a "new racism" (Meer and Noorani, 2008, 198). Balibar also states that anti-Semitism (which has important similarities with Islamophobia) is a prototype of racism (Balibar, 1991, 23, 24) and anti-Semitism has important key points for the better understanding of Islamophobia since each target a cultural group. The main differences between them lies in their emergence. According to Bell, while anti-Semitism is reaction of middle class during economic decline since Jews were scapegoated for capital's tendency to produce disproportionate winners, Muslims are seen as global have-nots (Bell, 2018, 70–71). Also,

Islamophobic sentiments are not as strong as anti-Semitic sentiments were in the past. The idea of equality between cultures is stronger today and different cultures are able to establish their organizations to provide a voice against discrimination. But the main similarity between Islamophobia and anti-Semitism lies in how both groups were perceived as threat. Jewishness was identified as an enemy and seen as threat to the economic welfare of the nation and also to the purity of the nation (Lowenthal and Guterman 1949, 12–13). A similar approach also exists for Muslims in Europe.

Islamophobia is a modern concept and it differs from prejudices among religions that manifest themselves in long historical processes. The waves of Muslim immigrants to Europe, which is the main target of Islamophobes in Europe today, was allowed in order to meet the labour force needs of developing economies after the Second World War. Those immigrants mostly came from rural areas, due to cheap, unskilled or semi-skilled labour needs of European Economies (European Monitoring Center on Racism and Xenophobia, 2006, 22). At that time, these migrants were welcomed as guests and even perceived as “poor” people because of the problematic conditions in which they worked (Canatan 2007, 44–45). These workers, who were previously seen as guests, were then perceived as a threat to the “purity” of states when it was understood that they were there to stay (Taras 2012, 54). Moreover, the European economies entered a recession in the 1970s and unemployment rates started to rise. Economic crises reinforced the belief that minorities were the cause of social and economic problems (Türkan 2015, 43). In the post-World War II period, populist radical right-wing parties began to become prominent. These parties generally defined themselves according to a cultural foundation, from which they also created their “others”. They bestowed positive meanings to their own cultural identities, but, expectedly, negative connotations to the other’s identities (Vardar 2004, 110–114). Populist radical right-wing parties, which define themselves based on Christianity, have historically been more inclined to adopt Islamophobic attitudes. Moreover, the Iranian Islamic Revolution in 1979 contributed to the strengthening of the perception of Islam which “challenges the West” (Halliday 1996, 1). Ayatollah Khomeini’s death warrant for Salman Rushdie also negatively affected the perception of Muslims at the time. The coincidence between the increased Muslim population in Europe and economic stagnation and the rise of political Islam movements on the global stage both strengthened the opposition and exclusion against Muslims and resulted in the perception of Islam as a threat (Yüksel 2004, 196). The thesis that after the Cold War ends the struggle will then be between civilizations (Huntington 2001, 25) also played a role in the development of Islamophobic attitudes. Moreover, after 1989 when the regimes in the Balkans collapsed, efforts to establish new regimes were also home to anti-Islamic themes (Halliday 1996, 1). Furthermore, attempts to build a new hegemony in the global area based on a concept of “friend vs foe”: the fact that the wars in the Middle East also constitute a market for weapon manufacturers (The Runnymede Trust 1997, 8), the 11 September attacks also promoted hatred of Muslims,⁶ since the so-called “War on Terror” posited in minds the idea that Muslim majority countries were suspects of terrorism and they are dangerous (Lean, 2012, 142). The intensive Muslim migration risk to Europe following the Arab Spring can also be listed among other reasons. All of these developments further reinforced the opinions which opposed the “universal identity” of Islam bestowed upon to it by the West, as a culture

6 Following the events of 11 September, in nine weeks a total of 700 acts of violence, including some murders, were targeted against Muslims. (Okumuş 2007, 252)

and civilization (Yüksel 2004, 189). Islam then began to be seen as a religion and culture which contradicts and challenges civil law, secularism, democracy and gender equality, as regards to Western values (Halliday 1996, 110).

The above remarks concerning Islamophobia are based on the effect of the settled Muslim immigrants. Sometimes, although there are very small numbers of Muslims, Islamophobia can emerge. For example, although the number of Muslims living in Poland is very low, recent years have showed an increase in Islamophobia. Konrad Pedziwiatr attributes this to the pan-European identity, that it was aimed should be built hand-in-hand with the social and political transformations in Poland. According to Pedziwiatr, one of the reasons that Islamophobia cannot be repressed in Poland is that Muslims are very few in number and therefore, they are not financially and physically able to challenge the stereotypes constructed against them (Pedziwiatr 2016, 426).

Sometimes, in efforts to appeal to the votes of Islamophobic sections of society, politicians emphasize prejudices which were spread together with conspiracy theories (Ali and Clifton 2011, 109). According to the warning released by the European Commission in 2005, the xenophobic discourse was no longer particular to extremist political parties; mainstream parties also used them (Taras 2012, 68). Today, in a political environment where populist radical rightist parties feast on Islamophobia, centrist or leftist parties may hold back from objecting to Islamophobia in their efforts to avoid appearing to be in favor of Islam (Türkan 2015, 45).

The National Outlook movement

The National Outlook movement is one of the leading representatives of Islamism and has for a long time shaped the Islamic discourse in Turkey. Although parties such as the AKP include Islamists for now, the most significant difference of the National Outlook is that it takes Islam as the central reference point. Another difference is the fact that Islamist politics in Turkey was founded by the movement (Mert 2005, 414).⁷ The purpose of Islamism in Turkey was to remedy the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire (Kurtoğlu 2005, 201–202). The purpose was to prevent the disintegration of the state, at least in the Muslim-intense geography. However, the Islamist understanding could not be turned into the predominant, and Turkish Nationalist ideology became predominant in the downfall of the Ottoman Empire. The Turkish Republic was founded as a secular nation-state. However, the state's official ideology could not thoroughly penetrate the rural regions (Yavuz 2003, 4). This failure constituted the foundation for Islamist politics in the 1970s and especially in the 1980s, when identity politics had become quite prevalent.

Various religious communities such as the Community of İskenderpaşa, Sulaymanites and the Nur Movement played roles on the establishment and growth of the National Outlook movement (Çalmuk 2005, 562–563). The movement has an economic base as well as an Islamic emphasis. In a time where welfare state implementations were prevalent, the National Order Party (Milli Nizam Partisi/MNP), established in 1970, and, after this party was shut down, the National Salvation Party (Milli Selamet Partisi/MSP), established

⁷ Previously, among the Islamist people there were deputies within the Democratic Party and the Justice Party, but the first political party established with an Islamist identity was the National Outlook movement.

in 1972, represented the small and medium sized enterprises which could not benefit the import-substitution industrialization politics (Gülalp 2003, 45).

Political parties of National Outlook attracted the attention of those with a high religious sensitivity. Many of the religious voters that the party appealed to viewed the secular practices of the state as an existential threat (Çiğdem 2005, 29).

It is necessary to know the movement's view of the West in order to understand the perspective of National Outlook on Islamophobia. Its ideology is based heavily on the influence of Islamism and its viewpoint on the movement. The movement frequently interchanges the terms "Western civilization", "Christianism" and "Judaism"⁸ and attaches the adjectives of "offensive", "tyrant" and "exploiter" in their definitions. For the movement, the West is an existential "other" (Ülger 2017, 622–630). So, it can be claimed that the movement's approach to Christians and Jews also includes cultural racism. According to the founding leader of the movement, Necmettin Erbakan, Western civilization is under Zionist control and, according to Erbakan, the West is an essential tool for the project which aims to establish a "Greater Israel" and is itself the source of many problems in the world, as well as in Turkey (Erbakan 2016, 89–124). The movement's views on the West softened in the process when Erbakan was put to trial after 28 February, and it stretched even as far as advocating EU membership (Çakır, 2005, 573). However, this approach was temporary. Because according to them, EU membership would lead to Turkey being controlled by Israel in the long term, so it shouldn't happen.⁹

Due to shutting down of its political parties, various other parties have been established by the movement. Parties organized under the leadership of the movement: MNP, MSP, the Welfare Party (Refah Partisi/RP), the Virtue Party (Fazilet Partisi/FP) and the Felicity Party (Saadet Partisi/SP). Even though the political party of the movement, SP, was able to enter parliament in the general elections of 24 June 2018 by way of its political alliance, the party's proportion of votes was meager.¹⁰ The party also managed to win the municipal administrations in nine districts in the local elections of 31 March 2019, but again collected very few votes.¹¹ The movement's parties even managed to take part in coalition governments in the 1970s thanks to the fragmented structure of the party system and no election threshold.¹² RP, which was the movement's party during the 1990s, was on a significant rise which resulted in winning municipal administrations in the most important cities, namely Ankara and Istanbul, in the local elections of 1994, and was among the coalition partners as the first party before the coup on 28 February 1997.

8 The perspective of the movement also includes anti-Semitism. According to them, Zionists are the cause of many problems including the dethroning of Sultan Abdulhamid. (Gülalp 2003, 65; Çalmuk 2005, 556)

9 According to Erbakan, after Turkey became a member of the EU, the EU would continue to expand and eventually include Israel. Due to this extension it would be more challenging for the EU to operate from a single center, so multiple centers would control it, and when the Middle East would become a different section, then Turkey and Israel would become a single country, whereby Turkey would become a state of Israel (Erbakan 2016, 217).

10 The party received 1.34% of the votes in the 24 June 2018 general elections.

11 The party received 2.71% of the votes in the 31 March 2019 local elections

12 Following the elections in 1973, a coalition government was established by the Republican People's Party and the National Salvation Party.

The view of the National Outlook movement on Islamophobia

The movement's views on Islamophobia were studied in three themes.

The perception of Islamophobia

The National Outlook movement does not have a uniform approach to the concept of Islamophobia. In some cases, Islamophobia is a concept that is opposed, by others, it is a concept used to talk about anti-Islam. According to the report titled "Islamophobia and European Countries", prepared by the International Youth Strategy Research Center, which is an organ of the movement affiliated to the Anatolian Youth Foundation (Anadolu Gençlik Derneği), it is stressed that "Islam", which means "peace" and "phobia", which means "fear constitutes a vast contradiction (Göydeniz 2018, 1). An interviewer stated that the concept of Islamophobia is wholly made up and went on, "For one, I do not accept the concept of Islamophobia. There is no such concept. Is there anything called Christianophobia?" (Interview 3). This interviewer stated that the concept of "anti-Islam" or "anti-Islamic" are more accurate terms and he used these throughout the interview (Interview 3). In a news article published by Milli Gazete (National Newspaper), it was stated that the joint use of the notions of "Islam" and "phobia" was a conscious choice to portray Islam as a thing to fear. "The words which are suffixed with 'phobia' (claustrophobia, arachnophobia) to name a few, scientifically stand for psychological fears and therefore concerns which rightfully needed to be avoided" is emphasized in the news where the wording of Islamophobia is also rejected and the concept of "anti-Islamism" was suggested (Milli Gazete 2015). However, different concepts such as xenophobia, homophobia or Europhobia, wherein it is not natural to be fearful, also use the suffix "phobia". Moreover, although there are some contradictions, the concept of Islamophobia is also used by the National Outlook movement and the SP. For example, the term Islamophobia was used in a column published in the Milli Gazete (Atun 2016). The International Youth Strategy Research Center titled their report "Islamophobia and European Countries", therefore using the concept at the first hand (Milli Gazete 2018), and then Temel Karamollaoğlu, SP General President also used the term. In the interviews, some interviewees did not hesitate to use the word as well.

A look at the reasons for Islamophobia

There is a consensus within the movement on the reasons for Islamophobia, although there are different approaches to the concept. One interviewee had a more commanding knowledge of the scientific meaning of the concept. Unlike the other interviewees, this interviewee referred to the economic crisis which European economies entered in the 1970s as a reason for the emergence of Islamophobia and stated that during this process the Muslim workers began to be marginalized based on their religious identities (Interview 1). All the other interviewees talked about the reasons for Islamophobia and stated that this concept was consciously formed and that it was mostly backed up by Zionism and sometimes by Christian civilization or imperialism.¹³ An interviewee explained this;

13 Zionism is regarded as the source of the corrupted order and all that is bad that is opposed in the National Outlook movement. This subject is touched upon in the second title which provides information on National Outlook.

“We were saying Zionism. It is them who formed and spread the perception that we call Islamophobia.” However, some others referred to the Christian civilization: “I see (Islamophobia) as a manifestation of the understanding of a civilization that is founded on the Christian mentality, that is the belief-based mentality” (Interview 5). In all the interviews all of the claims were based on the idea that the currently dominant world order has been established as a product of Zionism and that there is a conflict between this order and the Just Order (Adil Düzen)¹⁴. This approach is common with anti-Semitism in the West before World War II. The world was depicted as hostile and conspiratorial due to the influence of the Jews (Smelser 1972, 106). This conflict can also be defined as a conflict between Western Civilization and the Islamic Civilization. One interviewee based the reason for Islamophobia as the struggle between the right and wrong, which indicated that the struggle has continued since the beginning of human history.¹⁵ Likewise, another interviewee pointed out that there has been hostility against Islam “Since the fight between Cain and Abel” (Interview 3). Some interviewees took up a more nationalistic outline to their approach and stated that Islamophobia is an act of revenge for the Battle of Manzikert (Interview 2). The report titled “Islamophobia and the European States” dates the roots of Islamophobia back to the establishment of the State of Andalusia (Göydeniz 2018, 1).

Likewise, Karamollaoglu stated that Islamophobia is an intentionally designed notion with roots going back to imperialism: “The imperialist forces paid utmost attention to Islamophobia and instigated the radical Islamist movements themselves.” Karamollaoglu continued to report the reason as “to cause Muslims to conspire against each other and derange their lands for their ambitions.” (Yeni Şafak 2017) pointing out the imperialist benefits in the Muslim world. Such an approach implies that Islamophobia was intentionally hand-produced to cause artificial conflicts. The report titled “Islamophobia and the European States,” emphasized that the West manufactured Islamophobia to keep its residents protected from the Islamic discourse (Göydeniz 2018, 1). An interviewee pointed out the reason behind Islamophobia: “The Muslims are bad, let’s attack them, but the Western groups shall not object to this. Human rights are for us. The children are dying. Therefore, they must be doing this first to prevent any objections from their society” (Interview 4). The same interviewee referred to the main objective of Zionism to rule the world as the reason for invasions in the Middle East, and stated that the USA, under the guidance of Zionism, has been putting its efforts to get hold of energy resources in order to dominate the world (Interview 4).

It is also claimed that one of the reasons behind Islamophobia is to stop people’s transition to Islam. Recep Taha Engin, who works for the youth branches of SP and also as a columnist at Milli Gündem¹⁶, pointed out that Islamophobia was widespread because conversion from Christianity to Islam was regarded as an imminent danger by many

14 The order promised by the movement. Just Order/Just Economic Order (Adil Düzen/Adil Ekonomik Düzen) describes the current economic system as a system of modern colonization lead by Zionists, since Just Order claims the system to be based on interests which are forbidden in Islam. Just Order depicts itself as a system that is moral and just. Just Order targets forbidding interest and increasing the share of labor in the economy. While Just Order supports private ownership, it promises to be against monopolization. So Just Order supports the idea of state intervention into market, but Just Order is still against communism as it is also seen as brutal and unjust (Erbakan, 1991).

15 “This is not new. The fight between right and wrong has continued since Adam” (Interview 2)

16 Journal connected with National Outlook movement.

countries, especially the European countries (Engin 2017). A similar emphasis was also observed in the interviews. One interviewee reported likewise “The western people are in a void. Looking at which religions are getting the most attention, the most conversions are into Islam. The implication of terrorism here is to prevent this” (Interview 4). Another interviewee, who thought that Islamophobia is a project aimed at preventing the spreading of Islam, centers these efforts on a “Zionist project of a Greater Israel”. He claimed that “other Western countries support this project” because “they believe that when the Greater Israel is established, the Messiah will come back to the face of the earth” (Interview 7). These remarks indicate that the National Outlook movement, when defining the Jewish and Christian civilizations, uses conspiracy theories.

Another emphasis is on “Leaving the Muslims on the defensive”. Engin states that in this way, Muslims are put under pressure and kept under control (Engin 2017). Another interviewee emphasized the same point and stated that this is why Muslims had to submit to the West, in the following sentences (Interview 4):

And the most important of all is to keep Muslims on the defensive. What does it mean? Someone comes at you and says that you are a terrorist, that you are savage and blood-thirsty. Then you have to prove that you are not like that. They oppress you, and you are then forced to make yourself liked. It goes on like that “then release this law”, “do this thing about women’s rights” and so on and you are then left in a position to prove yourself to be different.

The National Outlook movement assumes that Islamic countries are lagging in terms of civilization and should look for ways to advance themselves scientifically and technologically. Many interviewees who moved forward from this point emphasized that Muslims are also responsible for the growth of Islamophobia. To them, what Muslims did wrong is failing to improve themselves and therefore remaining unable to deal with the negative perception that is connected to Islam. The report titled “Islamophobia and the European Countries” states that Muslims are not sufficiently concerned with Islamophobic attacks targeted against them, and they do not defend themselves well enough (Göydeniz 2018, 3).

One of the general attributes of Islamophobia is, as emphasized above, the view that Islam is of a manipulative and hostile nature. Looking at the movement’s remarks about Islamophobia, it is observed that the speakers use similarly hostile references towards the Christian/Jewish/Western civilizations which they use interchangeably. According to them, Islamophobia was intentionally produced by the West (which is the opposite of Islam). Another similarity of this point of view to Islamophobic approaches is that it takes Islam as a separate entity from the West, and it even takes Islam as a homogenous whole. However, both European countries and Islamic countries differ and both are far from being a homogenous whole (Kamali 2015, 228).

Policy recommendations regarding Islamophobia

Within the movement, the core of the resolution against Islamophobia is for the Islamic world to develop and get stronger. The report titled “Islamophobia and the European Countries” similarly emphasizes that the world of Islam needs to read and research to

“break away from the exploitation and ignorance which restrains its mind” (Göydeniz 2018, 4). Likewise, the interviewees emphasized that Muslims must get better and be stronger. One interviewee’s words “All Europe knows is power. We, as Muslims, must increase our power against this” (Interview 2) has given an indication of the common point in all of the interviews. However, it does not refer to any war or conflict. At this point, the fundamental emphasis is that Muslims must develop themselves by establishing factories and doing trade¹⁷. Because according to the interviewees, a civilization or a country only gains respect or attention from other countries if it is strong enough to compete. The opinion that a strong Muslim community can cure Islamophobia is not completely disconnected from truth. This thought is similar to the previously mentioned remark that, since Muslims are very few in number, they are not strong enough in economic, financial and physical terms, to defy the stereotypical labeling against them, which Pedziwiatr made when mentioning the situation in Poland (Pedziwiatr 2016, 426).

The emphasis on the fact that Muslims can become a force does not reject the possibility of using conflictual force. Because according to them, the established order in the world is not a fair and just order. According to them, the owners of the established order, that is the people of other religions, have established such an orderliness that they can do whatever they please. Here, Judaism and Christianity are identified with negative attributes as wholes. What’s more, the discourse mentioned earlier in this study, that one of the characteristics of Islamophobia is regarding Islam as an entirely different and hostile religion, rather than a religion of similar nature, works precisely in reverse at this point. The same negative perspective is now used against the Western community, namely Christians and Jews. An interviewee commented on Jews and Christians (Interview 3).

The minds of Jews and Christians work with power, not justice. Their beliefs and cultures are motivated by power. On what grounds does Israel invade Gaza? The West invades everywhere for its own benefit.

As seen here too, the West is homogenized to include all different religions and nations and is taken as one whole, despite all the differences it holds within. However, Israel’s policies in Gaza face criticism in many European countries and also from Jews around the world.

Another interviewee points out that the injustice in the established order stems from the fact that Muslims do not rule the world. According to him, other belief systems cannot rule in the right way (Interview 4)¹⁸ Therefore, according to them, one has to be “strong” to defend oneself in this order, and if Muslim countries are strong, then there cannot be an Islamophobia which could target their citizens.¹⁹ Since “mercy” and a “just order” is only possible under Muslim rule, the ultimate objective in the discourses which prompts Muslims to become strong is to strengthen Islamic Unity, which consists of eight developing Muslim countries, further, in order to improve their relations economically and political-

17 A developmental understanding of the economy is among the essential attributes of the National Outlook movement. The discourse of “building factory-building factories” is one of the best wordings to show the mentality of the movement.

18 I3 similarly states that order is based on power:

19 “Even if Turkey were in a different condition today, also if it turned back to its roots, no one could be able to do any Islamophobic acts because they would have to deal with immense power” (Interview 5).

ly.²⁰ According to the interviewees, in this way Muslims can emerge as a force.²¹ The report titled “Islamophobia and the European States”, prepared by Anadolu Youth Association’s International Youth Strategy Research Center emphasizes that Muslim countries should act together to be able to fight Islamophobia (Milli Gazete 2018). It is reported that the purpose of the unity is to help all victims in the world, not just Muslim victims (Interview 4; Interview 5; Interview 6; Interview 8). An emphasis of “all victims in the world” implies that other civilizations can oppress their members too.

Another fundamental discourse regarding what can be done to fight Islamophobia is for Muslims to set good examples by living in line with their religious requirements in order to create the perception of “Good Muslims” (Interview 8). It is also thought that this would bring more people to Islam. This task is given especially to Muslims living in Europe or America.

If we change our lifestyle to comply with how Islam deems it fit, if the Turks and Muslims over there, live their lives as how Islam sees fit, the people there would think that Muslims are great people. Inshallah, because in our belief, it is your duty to do good for your neighbor. They don’t have to be Muslims. If you do this, those people will flock to Islam, and Islamophobia will disappear (Interview 7).

What Muslims need to do is to fight against those who try to create the “Bad Muslims” perception, by showcasing the true nature of Islam through their behaviors.²² Some remarks attach bad adjectives to the Western culture, but it is also possible to think that the efforts to create a wrong impression of Muslims using Islamophobia have not really succeeded and that Westerners still have a positive attitude towards Muslims.²³ Also, it was emphasized by an interviewee that Western civilization should be reminded of genocides and massacres in their history as well (Interview 4). Thus, to prove that the real bad ones are not Muslims but themselves.

Another essential point that emerged in the interviews is that state officials in Turkey should refrain from statements which could lead to an increase of Islamophobic attitudes.²⁴ Other state officials are expected to be diligent in their discourses too (Interview 8)²⁵.

20 National Outlook movement always sought for Islamic Union against to NATO or EU. For this aim, they perceived D8 (Developing Eight) Organization for Economic Cooperation as the first step of bigger union which was also assumed to have a military function. What’s being mentioned here is the D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation which consists of Bangladesh, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Egypt, Nigeria, Pakistan and Turkey. The idea about cooperation is mentioned by Prof. Dr. Necmettin Erbakan who is the founder and ideological leader of National Outlook movement. The organization aims at improving relations of member states between each other economically and politically and thus allowing themselves to become more effective in international relations.

21 “Inshallah D-8 will come together and Islamic unity will be established. There will be a Islamic common market, and the Islamic dinar will be the currency. A unit that makes its planes and cannons must be formed. When we counter power with power, Islamophobia will stop” (Interview 2).

22 “Muslims of the world should establish a think tank” (Interview 4).

23 “Because we see social experiments. Here I am a Muslim, he says, can I hug you, and the European doesn’t hesitate, they hug back. Therefore, I don’t believe that they completely achieved their ideals (the dream of strengthening Islamophobia) in society, in the base.” (Interview 6)

24 “So when you are in a crisis with Holland you don’t go threatening everyone.” (Interview 6)

25 „At this point, the politicians in Europe, Turkey and other Islamic countries should refrain from increasing tension with their religions, approaches, tones and instead make it possible that the people li-

Conclusion

Islamophobia targets Muslims, which is a religious community. It began to emerge as a result of the marginalization of Muslim migrant workers in the aftermath of the economic crisis in which European economies entered in the 1970s. The most important milestones in the emergence of Islamophobia are Ayatollah Khomeini coming to power in Iran, Islam being made the new enemy of Western Civilization after the end of the Cold War, the rise of the Radical-Islamist terror organizations, and a sizeable Muslim refugee flood to the European countries due to the Arab Spring. In some case, the news, books, social media posts, researches, political discourses and conspiracy theories aim to create a negative impression about Muslims and also help Islamophobic attitudes to spread and deepen.

There is no consensus on the concept of Islamophobia within the National Outlook movement. While some members reject this claim as a biased concept, other members personally use the idea of Islamophobia. Though it can instead be said that there is a consensus on the reasons for Islamophobia. The concept is approached within the framework of “conflict between Islam and Western Civilization” or “conflict between right and wrong”. There’s the thinking that Islamophobia is “intentionally produced”. According to the National Outlook movement, those who intentionally produce Islamophobia are imperialists, Western Civilization, Christians and particularly Zionists, who want to rule the world. These groups were often used interchangeably. For the National Outlook movement, the aims of these groups always been to suppress the Muslims and to force them to make changes they want to dominate the world, prevent conversions to Islam in Europe, and to create public opinion to justify their war against Islam.

The fundamentals of the movements suggested that the policy about Islamophobia is for Muslims to become strong to stand against those who try to create a perception of Islamophobia. At this juncture, it was pointed out that the Islamic Unity can be a Muslim focus of power against Western civilization, which is regarded as an oppressor and a tyrant. The second point is that it is essential for Muslims to comply with the requirements of their religion and create a positive image of Islam. Thus, there will be an increase in the conversions to Islam. Another policy proposal is the production of anti-Islamophobia theses in think tanks.

The main reference point of the National Outlook movement is Islam, and the movement defines itself on this foundation. In this case, when the movement represents its own “other” based on a religious fundamental, its perception of the West and its views on Islamophobia is also founded on the same fundamentals. Islamophobia involves creating enemies and “others” out of Muslims as an ultimately dispatched, uniform and inert group. The perception of the National Outlook movement of Islamophobia and its causes also includes a similar approach, but in the opposite way against Jewish and Christian civilizations. According to Islamophobes, Islam is a civilization which challenges Western culture and is hostile towards it, but according to the National Outlook movement, Jewish, Christian or Western civilization as a whole is unrighteous, exploitative and oppressive to the whole world, including Muslims. To support the claims, the National Outlook movement taunts Christian and Jewish cultures with conspiracy theories in the same way Islamophobes ridicule Islam to create a wrong impression of it. According to the Islamo-

ving there can protect their identities and at the same time integrate with the society that they’re living in without being assimilated.” (Interview 1)

phobic point of view, and the National Outlook movement alike, Islam, as a holistic and unchanging system which has existed for many centuries and sets up the opinions of its members in regard to politics, gender equality or society independently from the communities they live in and their economic and education standings (Halliday 1996, 111). However, in truth, no religion, including Islam, is a homogeneous whole in itself. Like other religions, Islam is a religion with significant behavioral differences among its subgroups. Even today, there are diplomatic disagreements and even wars between Muslim countries and also between Christian countries (Halliday 1996, 114).

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