

# The Relationship between Islam and Globalization in Turkey in the Post-1990 Period: The Case of MÜSİAD\*

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**Abstract:** The aim of this paper is to elucidate globalization's impact on religion in Turkey in the case of a business association with an Islamic orientation, namely MÜSİAD, whose prominence has increased since the November 2002 elections. It is important to investigate MÜSİAD as a case study within this question because this Association, which has pointed Islam as their economic and cultural identity, acts as a strong internal economic actor of globalization in Turkey in the post-1990 period. The main goal is to find out how and in what terms globalization has affected the democratization and secularization processes in Turkey since the 1990s. This paper challenges the view that globalization and the economic, political and cultural changes it carried have led to the process of secularization or the declining role of religion in the Turkish society. The contention of this paper is that globalization altered the relations between religion, economy and state; however, the change cannot be regarded as secularization. Instead it can be regarded as the sacralization as opposed to secularization with assertion of new (Islamic) identities in the economic and cultural spheres in Turkey.

**Key Words:** MÜSİAD, Islam, globalization, Turkish political economy, secularization, sacralization, democracy, Turkey.

## Introduction

With the globalization processes, the nation-state's "position as the locus of modernity's cultural program and collective identity has lost its grounds" (Bamyeh 2000). In such a context, new political, social, and civilization visions are being developed. As Eisenstadt claims, the contemporary resurgence of religion can be interpreted as an outcome of restructuration of the classical model of the nation-state and the increased global interconnectedness allowing for new interpretations of the cultural programme of modernity as it has developed in Western Europe (Eisenstadt 2001). In this vein, the issue of secularization and the relationship between state and religion has become a contested question. As Thompson asserts, "the function of the concept of secularization as a useful tool to analyze the passage from traditional to modern society has become redun-

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dant in the analysis of culture with the collapse of the meta-narratives at the end of the twentieth century". He claims that, in this context, for this concept to serve any useful function, "it has to be redefined as an ongoing cultural process in a dialectical relationship with its opposite-sacralization-rather than equating it with the decline of the influence and scope of religion as an institution" (Thompson 1990: 161).

For the sake of clarity, I will define what I mean by secularization and sacralization. As Dobbelaere points out, the term secularization is a multidimensional notion. It can refer to "three dimensions, that of societal systems (laicization), that of religious organizations, and that of religious involvement" (Dobbelaere 1981: 3). In this paper, I adopted Lechner's definition of secularization as "a nineteenth-century notion according to which modernity adversely affects religion by taking the wonder and mystery out of the universe-a process of demystification that is supposed to have reduced the credibility of the old traditional forms of religion" (1991: 1107).<sup>1</sup> Relatedly, sacralization here is used to refer to the emergence of new spiritualities which are not only quite different from the traditional forms of religion but are rearticulated in new ways that are not opposed to the modernity.<sup>2</sup>

In the post-1980 period, Turkish political economy has experienced liberalization efforts with the adaptation of the 1980 structural adjustment and economic reform program and become more open to the influences of globalization, and these influences have had significant social, political, economic and cultural repercussions, particularly in terms of the state-economy-religion relations.<sup>3</sup> The impact of the globalization processes and the related changes in Turkish political, economic and cultural life paved the ground for the resurgence of Islam in Turkey in the 1990s. It also altered the nature of Turkish modernity which is staunchly defined within the framework of western modernization that shaped the state's stance against religion as strictly secular.

As Keyman puts it, at the end of the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s, Islamic identity claims voiced in political terms by the Justice and Development Party (AKP) and in economic terms by MÜSİAD (2007: 216-217), which is consisted of the emerging "Muslim" entrepreneurs, a new urban middle class (Demir, Acar and Toprak 2004: 168). The new class "that consisted of the traditional class of artisans and traders, the small and medium-sized entrepreneurs often originated from provincial towns and their parents were often self-employed small traders, small shopkeepers, merchants and agrarian capitalists" (Narlı 1999, Insel 2003: 297). They desired to assert their provincial identity and preserve their values and traditions. Therefore, this class consisted of culturally conservative and economically liberal entrepreneurs have been called "Anatolian Tigers" to denote the sharp rise within

Anatolia in terms of economic enterprises due to their own dynamics that were not directly supported by the state (İnsel 2003: 298, Keyman and Koyuncu 2005). Hence, they claimed to be an alternative to the existing hegemonic “secular” Turkish business association namely TÜSİAD (The Turkish Industrialists’ and Businessmen’s Association).

The rise of this new middle class has been advocated by the AKP which became the political representative of them since its victory in November 3, 2002 elections. Thus, 2002 general elections should be regarded a turning point for Turkish politics, the victory of the conservative new middle class who were excluded from the political and economic careers over the traditional westernization-oriented upper class (İnsel 2003: 299, 306).<sup>4</sup> What is ironic is that this distance from the state, what Insel calls “as the normalization of politics and democracy” has been achieved by this new middle class rather than the westernizing elite of Turkey (İnsel 2003: 306).

The aim of this paper is therefore to elucidate globalization’s impact on religion in Turkey in the case of a business association with an Islamic orientation, namely MÜSİAD whose prominence has increased since the November 3, 2002 elections.<sup>5</sup> It is important to investigate MÜSİAD as a case study within this question because this Association, which has referred to Islam as their economic and cultural identity,<sup>6</sup> acts as a strong internal economic actor of globalization in Turkey in the post-1990 period. In addition to this, as Öniş and Türem emphasize, the fundamental difference between MÜSİAD and TÜSİAD is their different stance against secularism in the sense that while MÜSİAD questions what it conceives as the authoritarian secularism of the Turkish state and demands the extension of rights and freedoms, TÜSİAD is the prominent defender of secularism in Turkey (Öniş and Türem 2001: 101). By focusing on the case of MÜSİAD, the main goal is to find out how and in what terms globalization has affected the democratization and secularization processes in Turkey since the 1990s. This paper challenges the view that globalization and economic, political and cultural changes it carried have led to the process of secularization or the declining role of religion in the Turkish society. The contention of this paper is that globalization altered the relations between religion, economy and state. However, as Thompson argues, the change cannot be regarded as secularization. Instead, it can be regarded as the sacralization with assertion of Islamic identities in the economic and cultural spheres in Turkey.

In what follows, I will briefly touch upon the complex issue of secularization in Turkey to provide a background what has changed or not changed under the impact of globalization in Turkey concerning the relationship between religion (Islam) and Turkish state/society. Then, I will provide a historical background

and development of MÜSİAD to reveal the discourse of the Association in terms of its economic and social development model which enables it to achieve a successful integration into the globalization process. In the following part, I will focus on MÜSİAD's discourse on democracy issue in Turkey. In conclusion, in the case of MÜSİAD, I will try to discuss the implications of globalization in terms of Turkish democratization and secularization processes.

**Globalization and Religion in Turkey: The Changing Nature or Crisis of Secularization in Turkey?** As Güalp notes, state-religion relations can take different forms in different historical and social contexts. Turkey is argued to be a peculiar case which is supposed to achieve secularization by remaining as a Muslim country, and in this regard, Turkey is pointed out as an exemplary model of secularization for other Muslim countries (Güalp 2005: 351). As Güalp puts it, "Turkish political culture, modernization, development, westernization, and catching up with global civilization are all interchangeable concepts" and they are all associated with de-Islamization of Turkish politics and society (Güalp 2003: 388). In that regard, it is expected that "the nation's trajectory from Islamic traditionalism to Western modernity is to be replicated in the lives of individual Turks" (Güalp 2003: 389). Göle thus regards the Kemalist modernization as a civilizational shift from an Islamic to a secular western civilization (Göle 1996: 22-3). The effort was to displace religion from the public sphere and relegate it into the private realm. However, the displacement of religion took place by regulating its public appearance by the state. The most significant measure in this regard is the establishment of the Presidency of the Religious Affairs directly attached to the prime ministry.

However, since the 1980s, there has been massive discussion concerning the nature of secularization in Turkey due to the questioning of the Kemalist modernity-including its economic policies and secularist tenets- which is strictly based on western modernization and heavily tied to the secularization principle. Keyman argues that what has been experienced in Turkish political and cultural life recently "exemplifies the tension between the universal and the particular, where at stake is the clash between the secular national identity as the bearer of cultural homogenization and the revitalization of language of difference through the rise of Islam" (Keyman 1995: 95). According to Keyman (2007), the persistence of Islam in political, cultural, and economic spheres in Turkey and the failure of Turkish secularism to adopt the principles of impartiality and neutrality have pointed to the recent legitimacy crisis of Turkish secularism. He argues that as a result, one can observe the process of sacralization and deprivatization of religion in Turkey. At this juncture, borrowing the distinction between objective and subjective secularization from Berger (1967), Keyman (2007) claims that the crisis does not take place in the objective secu-

larization process, an institutional quality of religion's being removed from the authority and legitimacy of the state. Instead, he contends that the crisis is related to the other functions of secularism concerning the process of subjective secularization, secularization of consciousness of a modern self which refers to the adoption of secular explanations rather than religious dogmas to understand the world. He highlights that this crisis has been voiced by political, cultural, and economic Islamic actors in Turkey and, therefore, economic Islam should be regarded as a resistance to subjective secularization (Keyman 2007: 226). I argue that at this point it is meaningful to concentrate on MÜSİAD as the strongest Islamic economic actor in Turkey to reveal the impact of globalization on secularization.

**The Historical Background and the Development of an Islamic Business Association:** MÜSİAD<sup>7</sup>, the business association of the small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) mainly in Anatolia, was founded on May 5, 1990 in İstanbul by a group of conservative businessmen with the purpose of contributing to the entrepreneurship in Turkey and Turkish economic development by being open to the international economy and by employing an export-oriented free market economy. The Association developed as a network organization based on trust relations claiming to protect and further the interests of SMEs. To achieve this goal, they try to get integrated into the globalization in economic terms by holding onto their Islamic identity in cultural terms. In its former years, they adopted the East Asian model of development because this model “is seen to present a model of transforming political and economic structure to the benefit of Muslim community without creating disruptive tensions in society” (Buğra 2003: 16).<sup>8</sup>

Erol Yazar, one of the founders and the first chairperson of MÜSİAD, explained the reasons for the establishment of MÜSİAD by putting the Association's difference from TÜSİAD. These differences can be gathered under three features of MÜSİAD. The first difference of MÜSİAD from TÜSİAD is its scope of interest which has been directed to receive the support of small and medium-size establishments all over Turkey. Unlike TÜSİAD, MÜSİAD has spread all over Turkey with 28 branches mainly located in Central and South-Eastern Anatolian cities. Yazar contended that MÜSİAD does not aim to be interested in neither the big firms in İstanbul nor the business firms in particular regions of Turkey. At this point, it can be argued that MÜSİAD was formed as a network organization to protect and further the interests of the SMEs. Thus, unlike the elitist and selective view of TÜSİAD towards membership, MÜSİAD advocates plurality and variety in terms of its member profile.<sup>9</sup> MÜSİAD, with members in small, medium and large size industries is the largest voluntary organization for businessmen in Turkey.

The second difference appears in the priority and worldview of MÜSİAD founders concerning economic, social and cultural life. MÜSİAD criticizes the modern/capitalist civilization for undermining the concepts of morality, family, and cooperation and replacing them with the interests of an individual. Yasar complained that “the beautiful things that were once gained with the Quran were lost one by one as Muslims moved away from it and the degeneration that appeared in political, economic and social life—immorality, self-interest, and injustice—dried up their tree of civilization” (*MÜSİAD Bulletin, Fair-Forum Special Issue* 1999: 31). The hedonistic philosophy, which stands contrary to altruism and creative cooperation between individuals, has deformed the social structure, and turned life into a meaningless play. Thus, they claimed that for a substantially rational reconstruction, they need a vigorous moral foundation with family ties and spiritual values (*MÜSİAD Bulletin, Fair-Forum Special Edition* 1997: 38).

To restore the order, both economically and socially, Yasar claimed that there was a need to provide that “Muslim people” are effective in the business life; that is why MÜSİAD was established. He stated that as Muslim businessmen, as the followers of Muhammad known as “*El Emin*”, they must add a new dimension to the world economic struggle by bringing up trustworthy people and institutions in the industrial, trade and financial fields (Tercan 1993). Therefore, the distinguishing feature of the association is the claim to hold on to unity around morality and spirituality as the utmost significant principles (Yanmaz and Şahin 1994). In this vein, they emphasized the significance of cooperation, the importance of family, and a society that consists of prudent, industrious, and moral individuals.

Thus, they decided to coordinate their trade activities, build solidarity between themselves, communicate information, and lead the businessmen—who had turned inside for many years to international markets—(Special Supplement of the *Turkish Daily News*, 1997: 12). Under the impetus of globalization processes, as Buğra states, MÜSİAD’s activities concerning cooperation and solidarity are very important “because they all take place in a cultural frame of reference where Islam significantly contributes to the establishment of a shared understanding concerning business ethics, corporate responsibility, and commonality of interest” (Buğra 1998: 529). Buğra contends that at this point Islam appears as a binding force as it seems to be compatible with “certain trends in global production and trade patterns that are emphasized by MÜSİAD administration” (Buğra 1998: 530).

The third difference of MÜSİAD from TÜSİAD is MÜSİAD’s overemphasis that it does not owe its rise to the protectionist policies of the state that lasted from the early Republican era to the 1980s and it does not represent a type

of monopolist and oppressive businessmen who have used the sources of the state and country for their interests and tried to influence the policies of the government in that regard.<sup>10</sup> They assert themselves as the representatives of those earning money on the basis of production instead of interest gain.

MÜSİAD criticizes the existing state-businessmen relationship in Turkey by referring to a privileged group of businessmen in İstanbul, who owes their existence to the state and who get, majority of the benefits provided by the state. They complain that although the state supported secular businessmen in Turkey, Turkish state undermined Anatolian businessmen, “an army of dynamic entrepreneurs who are patriotic, industrious, dispersed all over the country, with moral values based on a strong foundation” and regarded those businessmen who can dream a future for Turkey without breaking its ties with its own history as its dangerous rival. Vorhoff claims that at this point, MÜSİAD's criticism is on “the unjust attitude of the state in always favoring the same industrial conglomerates, which in turn feel no need to improve the quality of their products since they monopolize the market in Turkey” and make enormous profit from high inflation by giving expensive loans to the “hopelessly indebted state” (Vorhoff 2000: 168). In addition to this, they stress that there is a polarized relationship between these businessmen-who emerged with the help of state incentives and credit, without taking any risks and by means of a tax-free borrowing system-and these dynamic (Muslim) businessmen in Anatolia. It is contended that the businessmen represented in TÜSİAD perceive themselves as an elite group and their own desires superior to the values and interests of the nation. In that regard, to MÜSİAD, this group constitutes the greatest obstacle to Turkey's becoming a strong country (*MÜSİAD Bulletin*, 1998: 58).

MÜSİAD advocates a competitive market economy but insists on making a distinction between Western capitalist system and free market economy. They perceive capitalism as a system whose operating mentality is based on the maximization of profit and individual interest (*MÜSİAD Bulletin*, January 1995: 9-10, *Çerçeve*, January-February 1994: 33-35). It is argued that for the salvation of humanity, the understanding of “happiness for all human-being” as against to “individual interest” should be consolidated (*MÜSİAD Bulletin*, January 1995: 9). Consuming one's wealth for the well-being of humanity rather than individual interest is one of the characteristics of East Asian form of capitalism. At this point, MÜSİAD proposes the replacement of *Homo Economicus* of neo-liberal capitalist system with *Homo Islamicus* as a solution to the corruption in commercial life. It is believed that *Homo Islamicus*, the man type in Islamic economy, ornamented with the Islamic principles, the orders of God and the advices of the Prophet would behave within the frame-

work of moral values if he were left to market economy (Zaim 1994: 101-102). The difference between two different models of men is stated as that the understanding of interest in Islam is not limited to material benefits in this world; it is also based on spiritual benefits in the other world (Balcı 1994: 113). They claimed that the only thing they desire is the capital's being in the hands of "moral" businessmen; Muslim men who should be brought up with the synthesis of moral values on the one hand, and the technological and scientific information on the other and act according to the "just" principle (*Milliyet* 17 August 1993). Buğra asserts that such interpretation of Islamic economic order provides the ground for MÜSİAD's position against state regulation in "culturally embedded business practices" and in capital and labor markets "which are said to function better on the basis of personal relations governed by Islamic norms of conduct" (Buğra 1998). Here, it should be noted that MÜSİAD tries to protect itself from the "unjust practices of the state".

Influenced by the East Asian economic development which advocates developmentalist state, MÜSİAD argues that the government should adapt and preserve the well-functioning of the market powers (*MÜSİAD Bulletin*, July-August 1998: 58). To MÜSİAD, instead of being a body superior to the people, the state should act as an entity to coordinate and fulfill the basic needs of the people. Regarding the point of representation, the state should take into consideration the NGOs' views on the people's needs and it must orient itself to be a guiding agent which prevents unfair practices and monopolistic tendencies (*MÜSİAD Bulletin*, July-August 1998: 58). At this juncture, they find the function of state too significant in terms of providing the just redistribution of value added, finding out the sectoral priorities by the help of researches, and preventing the abuses concerning resources through supervision (*MÜSİAD Research Reports-6*, 1993: 11).

In terms of its history, there are three turning points. In the first period between 1990 and 1997, they tried to be recognized in Anatolia and to become a brand name. MÜSİAD expanded so that its number of members reached its peak of 2900 establishments and expanded its activities in 1997. The development of MÜSİAD gained impetus by the external and internal dynamics of the time both of which are related to the globalization processes in two ways. The external factor is related to a development in global economy, the dramatic restructuring of production or the shift from the Fordist mass production to flexible customized production. This shift forced companies to locate segments of the production process in lower wage countries or subcontract to local companies. In this new context, the significance of small and medium-size enterprises has increased as they can easily and quickly adapt themselves to the changing conditions. In the 1990s, the reflection of



this shift in the production system on the Turkish economy is the emergence and increasing significance of “small and medium enterprise development in relation to the employment opportunities they provide as well as their contribution to industrial progress and export growth” (Buğra 1997). Then, it can be argued that MÜSİAD owed its emergence to the conditions in the economic terrain created by the globalization processes.

Besides, other important factor, the internal factor that led to the rise of MÜSİAD, is the increasing identity claims which now easily find the fertile ground to flourish with the rise of the Welfare Party (WP) to political power as one of the partners of the then leading *Refah-yol* coalition government. In this regard, MÜSİAD, a business association with Islamic tendencies, attributes a positive quality to globalization. This success story of MÜSİAD in terms of its integration into globalization can be explained by the fact that they see no tension between globalization and Islam.<sup>11</sup> On the contrary, they believe that Islam is compatible with globalization.<sup>12</sup> The contention is that MÜSİAD appropriates economic globalization with emphasis on cultural values.<sup>13</sup> Therefore rather than observing the decline of religion in the social, economic and political spheres, as Sarbay contends, religion continues to perform a powerful source of social identity in the global world as a network society. He argues that particularly in the non-Western societies, religion approaches globalization and directs itself toward shaping the content of globalization (Sarbay 2004: 12).

The second turning point in MÜSİAD history is the “post-modern coup” of February 28, 1997. As Öniş argues, Islamists have been in heavy retreat in Turkey since 1997 under stable pressure following the collapse of the coalition government in which the WP was the dominant partner and the closure of the party in 1998 (Öniş 2001: 13). After “February 28 Process”, Islamist businessmen were also taken under close scrutiny as “conservative entrepreneurs associated with the dramatic rise of Anatolian capital during the 1990s” and they were thought to be the key element in the WP's constituency (Öniş 2001: 16). Thus, MÜSİAD was negatively affected by the collapse of the *Refah-yol* government and the closure of the WP. According to Öniş, the post-Welfare period represents a period of self-evaluation on the part entrepreneurial groups with an Islamist orientation (Öniş 2001: 17-18). The Islamist businessmen have adopted a strategy of co-existence not to confront with the state which would mean a retreat towards the social and cultural dimension of Islamic business activity, downgrading the overtly political dimension in the process (Öniş 2001: 18) and attracting attention to the shortcomings with regard to democracy, freedom of speech, thought and religious practice (Vorhoff 2000: 163).

The third turning point in MÜSİAD history is the beginning of the 2000s when MÜSİAD aimed at the institutionalization of the Association as a busi-

ness association and civil society organization.<sup>14</sup> At the tenth anniversary of its establishment, Yazar argued that as a businessman association, MÜSİAD has been successful in terms of educating entrepreneurs how to obtain a passport, how to go abroad and how to participate in an international fair; in short, how to integrate themselves to the global economy (*MÜSİAD Bulletin*, April-June 2000: 12). He asserted that on the other hand, most of the time, they have failed to implement what they proposed or presented to the government. Yazar found this failure important as a civil society organization could not be regarded as a civil society organization if it was not successful in making the government take its suggestions and proposals into account (*MÜSİAD Bulletin*, April-June 2000: 12). In terms of this transformation of the Association, the victory of the AKP in 2002 national elections is a supportive development. To understand whether MÜSİAD has achieved to create an opportunity for itself to be an influential civil society organization, one should look at the Association's discourse on democratization and secularization in Turkey. This will also help us to capture the effect(s) of globalization on the relationship between Islam and the Turkish state.

#### **MÜSİAD's Perspective on Democracy Issue: A Changing Discourse?**

As stated before, owing its existence to globalization processes, MÜSİAD's appropriation of globalization is positive. They advocate globalization for not being isolated from the global economy and the benefits it will provide economically. Their aim is to integrate themselves into globalization to trade and sell more. Yazar explained the reason for their will to sell and trade more by stating that as Muslim businessmen, they supported globalization because the more their products circulate around the world, the more they would have manpower in the other countries. He argued that today's raiders are businessmen, as the weapon of a country is the well-educated manpower (*MÜSİAD Bulletin*, March-April 1998: 100). He argued that a Muslim should be the one who supports globalization the most, for globalization provides the most significant opportunity for the Muslims to propagate.

But, they try to achieve this while preserving their cultural values. The formula they have developed to be integrated into the globalization is that they will achieve economic globalization through free market economy while establishing solidarity by Islam and advocating morality. As Buğra puts it, "in current political manifestations of Islam, different interpretations often appear together in regional responses to the challenges of globalization. Since they together support and give strength to Islam as a social force, it often becomes difficult to dissociate the appeal of religion to those who seek an alternative economic order embedded in an Islamic society and to others who are seeking integration in the world market" (Buğra 1998). Islam plays an

important role in MÜSİAD's discourse on globalization. At this point, it is important to explore the impact of globalization processes on MÜSİAD's discourse concerning democracy which, it is believed, will provide us hints about whether globalization has changed the nature of secularization in the Turkish context.

**MÜSİAD and Turkish Democracy at the Axis of Secularization:** In its former years, MÜSİAD's discussions about democracy were restricted to only freedom of expression, religion and belief and human rights, which means that MÜSİAD has a narrow understanding of democracy. Mostly, the debate revolved around the issue of compulsory eight-year-education adopted by the ANASOL-D Government in 1997. They were against compulsory eight-year-education which they regarded as an attempt to restrict the freedom of religion and belief and furthermore to abolish the religious life under the name of westernization. They contended that this law is a violation of democracy and human rights (*MÜSİAD Bulletin*, August-September 1997: 21-4).

The other harsh reaction of MÜSİAD regarding democracy came out to the decision concerning the abolition of the WP in 1998. As noted before, MÜSİAD's demand for improvements in democracy became more vocal after the "February 28" intervention. They conceived this education policy as an outcome of an elitist social engineering project aiming at bringing up one type, uniform human-being, which will harm Turkish democracy (*MÜSİAD Bulletin*, March-April 1998: 5). MÜSİAD evaluated the "February 28" as an intervention to the request of change (*undertook by the new middle class*) under the tide of the globalization processes (*MÜSİAD Bulletin*, January-March 2000: 30). Turkey's EU membership process played a transformative role in MÜSİAD's discourse on democracy.

It is important to make a distinction between two periods -pre-1997 period and post-1997 period- in MÜSİAD history to understand the Association's views on Turkey's integration efforts to the EU.<sup>15</sup> Against a reserved attitude towards EU membership in the former period, MÜSİAD has adopted a pro-EU position in the latter period. It should be underlined that even in the former period, MÜSİAD is not directly opposed to Turkey's EU membership because EU countries provide a big market for MÜSİAD to export its products. MÜSİAD contends that close cooperation between countries and working under unities are the requirements of the globalization process (*MÜSİAD Research Reports* 19, 1996: 121). As Buğra claims MÜSİAD always criticizes the efforts for European integration as a unidirectional foreign policy strategy (Buğra 2003: 9).

As mentioned before, "February 28" constitutes a turning point in MÜSİAD history. Öniş and Türem (2001) contend that MÜSİAD has adopted a positive

attitude towards Turkey's EU membership in the post-1997 period as one can come across MÜSİAD's declarations where the Association clearly states its support for Turkey's EU membership. In one of his speeches, Bayramoğlu stated that being a member of the EU will help Turkey to become a global actor (Bayramoğlu, February 15, 2002). Thus, MÜSİAD is one of the 175 civil society organizations that put its sign under a declaration that demanded not to lose any time on the road towards EU membership on June 7, 2002 (Yuva, June 6, 2002). MÜSİAD also supported the 6th Harmonization Package to the EU which included regulations in 10 laws regarding democracy ([www.ekocerceve.com](http://www.ekocerceve.com); [www.nethaber.com](http://www.nethaber.com)). Hence, in addition to economic benefits, MÜSİAD expected to get from Turkey's EU membership, it can be argued that the Association aims at contributing to the improvement of Turkish democracy which, they believe, will provide them with the necessary platform to express their (Islamic) identity claims that have been considered as threats to secularism as the foundation of the Turkish Republic.

According to MÜSİAD, the symbol law that constitutes an example for the violation of human rights and freedom in Turkey is the 312<sup>th</sup> article of the Constitution. This article is about the violation of law regarding openly inciting hostility by employing differences in terms of religion and sect as a lot of writers, intellectuals, politicians and “now active businessmen” were convicted by the application of that law (*MÜSİAD Bulletin*, April-June 2000: 37). MÜSİAD is sensitive to this article of the constitution as Yazar was convicted by the State Security Court to one-to-three years' imprisonment for violating this article on the basis of the speech he made in Kızılcahamam. The content of his speech were related to compulsory eight-year-education where he called this type of education as an irreligious education and the 163<sup>rd</sup> article of the constitution which was repelled before and tried to be made effective. He claimed that if the 163<sup>rd</sup> article of the Constitution was made effective, even the ritual of circumcision would be considered as religious activity and would be punished (*Sabah*, May 25, 1998). Also, the leader of the closed WP, Necmettin Erbakan, was also sentenced to one-year imprisonment for violating this article. MÜSİAD showed its reaction to this decision by a written declaration that the penalty for Erbakan was too heavy and they proposed the adaptation of this article to the democratic standards or its abolition (*MÜSİAD Bulletin*, July-September 2000: 11).

MÜSİAD defines democracy as a regime where truths were spoken and struggles were made for it but where people were not oppressed under the name of truths (*MÜSİAD Bulletin*, July-September 2000: 11). They claim that those who harm democracy in Turkey were the civil people, some part of the media, business community, the “intellectuals”, and bureaucracy who

should aim at developing it. In fact, they here refer to the segment of Turkish society who is staunchly defender of secularism. They seek to organize a civil initiative to voice those (Muslim) people who have been oppressed under “the guise of democracy”. In that regard, MÜSİAD had a report titled “Constitutional Reform and the Democratization of Governance” prepared and declared it in April 2000. In the preface, the prohibitive system of law and the bureaucracy were criticized because they were regarded as the main obstacles in front of the development of Turkish economy. It was stated that for Turkey to open to the outer world, some improvements should be realized with regard to issues concerning democracy. To them, the most significant changes should be achieved by limiting the fields of activity of the state, decreasing the pressure on civil society organizations, and democratizing the prohibitive system of law (*MÜSİAD Research Reports 37, 2000: 4*). What MÜSİAD endorses is an “optimal state” with a small size. MÜSİAD accepts the idea that there is a need to draw the state into the legal circle for establishment of the law-abiding state appears to be necessary to be competitive in the global market and be in conformity with the global norms. For MÜSİAD members, the most important characteristic of the constitutional state is the respect for the human rights and performance of a democratic management. MÜSİAD contends that, at this point, there are important problems in these areas in Turkey. It is argued that the most important problem related to the state in Turkey is that the principal of the supremacy of law has not been settled yet and that the organizational structure of the state and its operation do not conform to the universal legal rules and norms. MÜSİAD criticizes the authorities of the state in Turkey that in the name of supervising and inspecting people’s lives for security concerns, the state limits individual rights and freedoms in many areas. The Association claims that the number of the lawsuits reflected to the European Human Rights Court illustrates that Turkey has still been experiencing problems related to the freedom of expression and thought (*MÜSİAD Research Reports 39, 2002*).

The other proposals concerning democratization of governance are the establishment of internal democracy within political parties and autonomy of the Presidency of Religious Affairs, the guarantee of the individual and economic rights and freedoms, the establishment of the autonomy of the judiciary, the annulment of the penalty for freedom of thought, the prevention of unjust competition of media (*MÜSİAD Research Reports 37, 2000*). The report was said to be different from other democratization reports published in the past years by MÜSİAD because it included a wide range of issues and was very extensive and it would contribute to democratization in Turkey ([www.turkishdailynews.com](http://www.turkishdailynews.com), 2000). However, it fails to provide a detailed analysis as it only reflects MÜSİAD's priorities for constitutional reform and

democratization of governance. The report does not include any part concerning the issue of civil and cultural rights. Here, the striking point is about individual rights and freedoms. Under this title, they mention freedom of belief by stating that the demand of citizens for taking religious education should be accepted without any age restriction and summer courses for learning the Quran should be open to everybody. Freedom of education is considered to remove the obstacles that exist for professional schools -such as preacher schools- toward university entrance. MÜSİAD raised no demand for the right to learn different languages within the framework of right to education. In terms of freedom of dress, MÜSİAD believes that the prohibition of wearing headscarf in the universities is against the rule of law and violates individual rights and freedoms (*MÜSİAD Research Reports 37*, 2000: 21). But MÜSİAD has not brought any demand regarding the improvements in women's issues. In contrast, Yazar argued that the ideas, which seem to defend the rights of women but in fact only discuss how women can easily get divorced from their husbands, should be fought with as they challenge the "sacred" family institution (*MÜSİAD Report- Internal Service Training Works for Organization and Commissions*, February 1998: 1).

Still, contending that Turkey now faces the task of adjusting to the values dominantly and universally agreed by the effects of globalization processes, MÜSİAD has recently, attempted to broaden its democracy definition. They state that, today, the reference to the human rights, the supremacy of law and the democratization are imposed as a requirement. If Turkey understands this requirement and performs the changes by the consensus within the country not by outside pressures, it will achieve the economic and democratic development rapidly (*MÜSİAD Research Reports 39*, 2002). At this point, it is observed that globalization processes combined with the transformative force of the EU are the most important outer factors that led MÜSİAD to demand more democracy, which is believed to include the universal norms that Turkish business associations should adopt to be integrated with the global world.

MÜSİAD members believe that the Copenhagen Criteria that Turkey tries to adopt for being accepted to the EU do not bring any significant changes in the Constitution. They contend that apart from them, it is a reality that particularly the provisions 146, 159, and 312 of the Turkish Penal Code and provision 8 of the Anti-terrorism Law can be abused and shown as a reference to justify the Turkish democracy as an artificial democracy. They also stated that these provisions created victims in great numbers under the label of "criminal of thought". MÜSİAD believes that in Turkey, it is necessary to move the center of decision-making process to the parliament and to put the political initiative under the Turkish Grand National Assembly's will. The Association expresses

its view that in a democratic country, in which the policies are performed in the normal periods and under the legal conditions, the wishes of the nation dominate the general policies of the state, and the demands of the society finds the equivalent in the constitution with compromise. However, because of the continuation of the abnormal periods in Turkey, the understanding of the dominant state whose interests precede the interests of the nation could not be replaced by the state which serves for the nation. The parliament, the political parties and the civil societies should do their best in order to bring into life a constitution that will leave aside the abnormal periods, and create a balanced, participatory society based upon the principal of living together in peace. In order to arrange a democratic, civil and conformist constitution by uniting the 1000-year-old history depending on the religious and moral values with the possibilities and the experiences of the modern age, all ideas of every people should be utilized. Each individual living in this country whatever their thoughts and beliefs may be should have the right to live in justice and have the same rights as everyone else. Without any discrimination in terms of their beliefs, social class and status, all citizens should have the rights of freedom of thoughts and beliefs, freedom of enterprise, freedom of expression and organization. In order to provide these rights and freedoms, affecting and directing the authorized people is the duty of everybody who is aware of the responsibility (*MÜSİAD Research Reports 39, 2002*).

In autumn 2007 the AKP government intended to propose further changes to the 1982 Constitution. The debate started with the proposal of Zafer Üskül, a professor of law and a member of parliament from the ruling AKP, to overhaul the constitution which at the beginning stresses the significance of the Kemalist principles, secularism being the most prominent one, and taking them out because it refers to an ideology which should not take place in a democratic constitution. In this vein, MÜSİAD released a report on their quest for a more civilian constitution where the military-civilian balance in Turkish politics should be altered so that the influence of military will be minimized. It is striking that they heavily put emphasis on the issue of secularism and the role of military in Turkish politics, the issues which have been determining the trajectory of religion. Ömer Bolat stated that the freedom to express one's belief and perform the requirements of one's religion should be completely secured in the constitution because such freedom of people cannot be limited due to the secularism principle of a state (*Sabah*, December 13, 2007). Hence, the report of MÜSİAD points to the support of the Association for more civil and participatory constitution, which will discard any one ideology, here they refer to Kemalism, and will allow the political competition of different point of views. It is contended that there is a need for a new constitution that will take into account the progress with regard to

democratization during the AKP government and which will advocate the primacy of individual against the state (*MÜSİAD Research Reports* 52, 2008). But this request cannot be associated with individualism of liberalism because they advocate communitarian view with an emphasis on collective rights. Instead, their effort is to realize their Islamic identities freely which have been tried to hold under the state control. In this report, it is obvious that they demanded an overhaul of the state mentality, which, they argue, tries to legitimize any intervention to the private lives of people, particularly in their decisions to what to wear, in the name of providing societal integration (*MÜSİAD Research Reports* 52, 2008). In fact, their point is that the existing secularism principle should be questioned because they argue that any claim related to religion is conceived as reactionary in Turkey and thus, secularism has been interpreted as the limitation of the freedom of religion and, conscience. Hence, this point of view of MÜSİAD is clear evidence that, as Keyman (2007) argues, Turkish secularism has been experiencing a crisis in terms of subjective secularization process.

## **Conclusion**

Throughout this study, I have tried to reveal how MÜSİAD developed as an Islamic business association, and transformed itself under the tide of globalization processes. Instead of pursuing a resistance toward globalization, MÜSİAD has utilized globalization processes as a chance to further their interest. By integrating itself to globalization processes, MÜSİAD has expected to take advantage of economic benefits of globalization which means that they want to sell and trade more. MÜSİAD's strategy is based on the articulation of economic globalization with an emphasis on cultural values and collectivism justified and supported by Islamic principles. It is manifest in the case of MÜSİAD that, as Sarıbay claims, religion continues to function as a powerful source of identity in the global world as a network society (2004: 12) and tries to shape it by holding on to Islamic identity.

However, it should be contended that this is not a one-dimensional process; instead, this reciprocal relationship both feeds and shapes the other side. In that regard, it is argued that globalization processes have changed the relationship between religion, state and economy since the 1980s but more evidently 1990s. On the one side, MÜSİAD pushes the state to broaden the content of democracy in Turkey to include the raising in fact the more and more consolidated (Islamic) identity claims after the strengthening position of the AKP particularly by the overwhelming victory in the last July 22, 2007 national elections.<sup>16</sup> On the other side, globalization and MÜSİAD's effort to be integrated into this process, forced the Association to change its discourse on democracy. While the Association had a narrower understanding of de-



mocracy in the former years of its establishment because their concern for the improvement of democracy comes out when a challenge is felt on the freedom of expression and religion and human rights entailing MÜSİAD members, in the post-1997 period, parallel to its support for Turkey's EU membership, MÜSİAD worked hard to force improvements in democracy, especially, for extending the individual rights and freedoms to include the cultural rights. Until 2002, MÜSİAD, being one of the actors that was negatively affected by the “post-modern” military intervention of February 28, 1997, has requested improvements in Turkish democracy.

Turkey is at the edge of a new period in terms of Turkish democracy and secularism since the spectacular victory of the AKP in the 2007 national elections. The axis of discussions in the election period was predominantly the secularism issue which was regarded seriously under threat by the secularists in Turkey due to the insistence of Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan to nominate Abdullah Gül, the ex-minister of Foreign Affairs and whose wife wears a headscarf, to be a president. In this context, the post-election period has been seriously observed to see whether the AKP will obey to their promise that they will protect secularism in Turkey. However their attempt to “solve the ban on the headscarf” by making an amendment to the existing constitution has agitated the secularism-sensitive segment of Turkish society and led to further polarization between the secularists and the Islamists in Turkey. At this point, as stated above, MÜSİAD's views and suggestions asserted in the last report on the constitutional amendment highlight that the Association still define democracy very narrowly. Their emphasis on democracy continues to be restricted into the rights and freedoms concerning religion, particularly the freedom of covered girls to have university education with their headscarves. It is strange that they did not mention the hot and contentious issues of either the Kurdish issue or the Armenian question in Turkey when they talked about the need for the expression of differences. Although they seem to advocate the rights and freedoms of individuals, they did not express their views concerning cultural and minority rights in Turkey. Therefore, their support for democracy in Turkey seems to be very instrumental. In doing so, they reveal that Turkish secularism is in a serious crisis in terms of the subjective secularization process and, as Keyman very rightly puts it, we have been manifestly observing sacralization in Turkey since 2002. Therefore, this study concentrating on MÜSİAD, - an Islamic business association in Turkey - as a case revealed that as Thompson claims, in today's context whose conditions are determined by global developments, it is more helpful to adopt the concept of secularization as an ongoing cultural process with its opposite – sacralization.

## Notes

- \* This paper was presented at the Ninth Mediterranean Research Meeting of the Mediterranean Programme of the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies at the European University Institute, Florence and Montecatini Terme, March 2008.

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1. One has to acknowledge different approaches to and practices of secularism. The French type of laicism connotes a different practice from the American type of secularism. For the differences in the practices of secularism, see Monsma and Soper, 1997. For different approaches to and definitions of secularization see Dobbelaere, 1999: 229-247. For a useful discussion on secularism and laicism see, Davison, 2003.
2. For examples of sacralization as new spiritualities see Partridge, 2005.
3. For the impact of globalization processes on Turkish economy and culture, see Koyuncu, 2003: 66-128.
4. Toprak asserted that as a consequence of republican secularism, two diverge groups emerged. One group was committed to minimize the influence of religion in public life and the second group stood in contrast to the former consisted of the marginalized who were expelled from the centers of political power because of their provincial and religious backgrounds (Toprak, 2005: 171).
5. To indicate this increasing prominence of the Association, the visit request of the IMF at an institutional level to MÜSİAD for the first time in 2003 is meaningful in that regard (Keyman and Koyuncu, 2005).
6. For example, they open their general meetings by reading the Quran and then singing the national anthem. Another example is their decision to suspend their economic relations with Denmark due to the caricature crisis. Ömer Bolat, the current chairperson of MÜSİAD, declared that they cannot continue their relations with such a country who is disrespectful towards Islam (Yeni Şafak, February 5, 2006).
7. The first letter "Mü" in the acronym of the Association's name "Müstakil" (Independent) is mostly spelled as "Müslüman" (Muslim) though the members do not like the name of the Association to be affiliated with Muslim. They explained that they gave the association the name "Independent" to declare their difference from any group in the society (Sadık 1994: 44). In fact, what this independence refers to be free from the state and in that regard, they frequently criticize the secular business elite in Turkey that was supported by the protectionist policies of the state since the early Republican Period.
8. The development experience in the East Asian region is different from the western type of capitalist development. This particular form of capitalism has two distinguishing features: one is the role of the strong developmentalist state which supports industrial sectors for achieving a comparative advantage in the global economy and the other is the significance of culture which directs economic relations to have concern for community and harmonious social order. The East Asian model of development advocates "collective capitalism" in contrast to the individualism of neo-liberalism (Coleman and Underhill, 1998).

9. For a detailed information about the socio-economic profile of MÜSİAD membership, see Alkan 1998: 159-164; Buğra 1999.
10. By doing so, as Buğra argues, MÜSİAD employs certain elements of minority psychology, manifested in the expression of a feeling of being excluded from economic life controlled by a big business community supported by the secularist state (Buğra, 1998: 529). Thus, in the organizing rhetoric of MÜSİAD, such feelings of exclusion and socioeconomic disadvantage have an important place (Buğra, 1997).  
About the emergence of the businessmen in Turkey and their close relationship with the state, see Buğra (1994).
11. Özbudun and Keyman argue that “cultural globalization is not a unitary process, but a multi-dimensional process generating different impacts and consequences, which makes possible both the clash and the co-existence of the modern values and Islamic traditional norms, symbols and discourses” (Özbudun and Keyman, 2002: 304).
12. In his opening speech to the Sixth Financial General Assembly, Yazar claimed that the essence of globalization, which refers to openness, erosion of borders and spreading trade, took place in Islam. He argued that with nearly 3,000 members all over Turkey, MÜSİAD has accomplished to integrate itself to the global economy and by doing so, it constitutes the best example for globalization (MÜSİAD Bulletin, June-July 1997: 28).
13. See Koyuncu 2003.
14. Between the period 2004 and 2008, Ömer Bolat, the previous general secretary of the Association, was the chairperson of MÜSİAD. His being elected to this position is one of the attempts of the Association to become institutionalized because whereas the former chairmen were businessmen, Bolat was a professional manager.  
MÜSİAD suggests that Turkey’s development needs establishing an effective co-operation between the industrialist, state and university to produce technology, as they believe that high technology and high morality can be the only salvation for Turkey. This means that they should give importance to quality when producing and justice when selling (MÜSİAD Bulletin, February 1997: 11).
15. For a detailed analysis of MÜSİAD's position in terms of European integration, see Keyman 2002.
16. In the national elections held in July 22, 2007, the AKP received the 46,58 % of all votes and obtained 341 seats in the 550 seated-parliament.

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# 1990 Sonrası Türkiye’de İslam ve Küreselleşme İlişkisi: MÜSİAD Örneği

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**Özet:** Bu çalışmanın amacı, küreselleşmenin Türkiye’de din üzerine etkisini “Müslüman” bir işadamları derneği olan ve Kasım 2002 seçimlerinden itibaren önemi artan MÜSİAD (Müstakil İşadamları Derneği) örneği üzerinden incelemektir. Bu sorunsal çerçevesinde MÜSİAD’ı incelemek gereklidir çünkü ekonomik ve kültürel kimliği olarak İslam’ı işaret eden bu dernek, 1990’lı yıllardan itibaren Türkiye’de küreselleşmenin güçlü bir aktörü olarak rol oynamaktadır. Buradaki temel amaç, küreselleşmenin 1990’lardan itibaren Türkiye’de demokratikleşme ve sekülerleşme süreçlerini ne şekilde etkilediğini bulmaktır. Bu makale, küreselleşme ve küreselleşmenin sebep olduğu ekonomik, siyasal ve kültürel değişimlerin sekülerleşmeye veya Türk toplumunda dinin rolünün azalmasına yol açtığı görüşünü sorgulamaktadır. Makalenin temel argümanı, küreselleşmenin Türkiye’de din, ekonomi ve devlet ilişkisini değiştirdiği, ancak bu değişimin sekülerleşme olarak değil, Türkiye’de ekonomi ve kültürel alanlarda İslami kimliklerin ortaya konması nedeniyle sakralizasyon (sekülerleşmenin yerine geleneksel din formundan farklı moderniteyle eklemlenmiş yeni dini kimliklerin ortaya çıkması) olarak değerlendirilmesi gerektiğidir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** MÜSİAD, İslam, Küreselleşme, Türk politik ekonomisi, sekülerleşme, sakralizasyon, demokrasi, Türkiye.

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# Отношение между исламом и глобализацией в Турции после 1990 года на примере MUSIAD

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**Резюме:** Целью данной работы является исследование влияния глобализации на религию в Турции на примере MUSIAD (Независимая Ассоциация Предпринимателей), являющегося ассоциацией бизнесменов-мусульман и значение которого возвысилось после выборов 2002 года. Необходимо исследовать MUSIAD в качестве примера в этом вопросе так как представляющая ислам с экономической и культурной стороны эта ассоциация, с 1990 годов играет роль значительного актера в процессе глобализации в Турции. Основной целью является выяснение влияния глобализации на процессы демократизации и секуляризации в Турции с начала 1990 годов. Эта статья оспаривает мнение, что глобализация и повлекшие экономические, политические и культурные изменения привели к процессу секуляризации или снижению роли религии в турецком обществе.

Основным аргументом статьи является то, что в условиях глобализации изменились отношения религии, экономики и государства в Турции, однако это изменение не может рассматриваться как секуляризация, это нужно рассматривать как сакрализацию (в отличие от секуляризации вместо традиционных форм религии, появление отличной новой религиозной идентичности), связанную с утверждением исламских ценностей в экономической и культурной сферах Турции.

**Ключевые Слова:** MÜSIAD, ислам, глобализация, турецкая политическая экономия, секуляризация, сакрализация, демократия, Турция.

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