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SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
SOSYOLOJİ ANABİLİM DALI
SOSYOLOJİ (İNGİLİZCE) BİLİM DALI

**FROM TRANSNATIONAL POLITICAL MOVEMENT TO A EUROPEANIZED MUSLIM NON-
GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION: THE ISLAMIC COMMUNITY *MİLLÎ GÖRÜŞ* (IGMG)**

Yüksek Lisans Tezi

SÜLEYMAN KIROĞLU

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Danışman: Prof. Dr. NURULLAH ARDIÇ

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ABSTRACT

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GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION: THE ISLAMIC COMMUNITY *MİLLÎ GÖRÜŞ* (IGMG)

Kıroğlu, Süleyman MA in Sociology

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The *Millî Görüş* (National Vision) movement in Germany was founded in 1969 around a mosque in Braunschweig and named the Turkish Union Germany (*Almanya Türk Birliği, Türkische Union Deutschland e. V.*). It was renamed the Union of the *Millî Görüş* in Europe (Avrupa *Millî Görüş* Teşkilatları, AMGT) in 1985 and finally *Islamische Gemeinschaft Millî Görüş* (The Islamic Community *Millî Görüş*, IGMG) in 1995. With the IGMG period, *Millî Görüş* in Germany underwent a remarkable transformation at the leadership level in terms of both personnel and vision. Based on the transnational migration literature, the research question of my thesis is about how the organization has been transformed since the mid-1990s with the establishment of the IGMG. My research has found three main factors effective in this transformation: the IGMG's strengthening and weakening transnational connections with Turkey (including its providing human resources and financial assistance to the Turkish *Millî Görüş*, institutional pressures on the *Millî Görüş* in both Turkey and Germany, and the bankruptcy of the "Islamic" holding companies), the generational shift in IGMG's management, and the impact of German institutional strategies (including the accusations against the IGMG and the IGMG's responses to them). The thesis concludes that the IGMG been transformed from a political movement to a Europeanized Muslim NGO with the impact of these factors. Main methods used in the research include document analysis, interview, archival research, and participant observation. Thus, this thesis hopes to make a contribution to the study of Islamic movements in Europe as well as the transnational migration literature.

Keywords: *Milli Görüş*, IGMG, Transnational migration, Islamic communities, Europeanization, NGOs.



Öz

ULUSAŞIRI SİYASİ HAREKETTEN AVRUPALILAŞMIŞ MÜSLÜMAN BİR SİVİL TOPLUM KURULUŞUNA: İSLAM TOPLUMU MİLLÎ GÖRÜŞ (IGMG)

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Almanya'daki *Millî Görüş* hareketi, 1969 yılında Braunschweig'deki bir mescit etrafında kuruldu ve Almanya Türk Birliği (*Türkische Union Deutschland e. V.*) adını aldı. 1985'te Avrupa Millî Görüş Teşkilatları (AMGT) ve son olarak 1995 yılında *Islamische Gemeinschaft Millî Görüş* (İslam Toplumu Millî Görüş, IGMG) olarak yeniden adlandırıldı. IGMG dönemiyle birlikte Almanya'daki Millî Görüş hem kadro hem de vizyon açısından dikkate değer bir dönüşüm geçirdi. Tezimin araştırma konusu, ulusaşırı göç literatüründen yola çıkarak, IGMG'nin kurulmasıyla birlikte doksanların ortalarından itibaren organizasyonun nasıl dönüştüğüdür. Araştırmam bu dönüşümde etkili olan üç ana faktörü tespit etmiştir: IGMG'nin Türkiye ile güçlenen ve zayıflayan ulusaşırı ağları (insani kaynak ve mali yardım sağlaması, Alman ve Türkiye devletlerinin IGMG'ye yönelik kurumsal baskıları, "İslami" holding şirketlerinin iflası), IGMG yönetiminde nesil değişimi ile Alman kurumsal stratejilerinin etkisi (özellikle IGMG'ye yönelik suçlamaları ve IGMG'nin bunlara karşı verdiği cevaplar). Tez, bu faktörlerin bir sonucu olarak, IGMG'nin siyasi bir hareketten Avrupalılaştırmış Müslüman bir sivil toplum kuruluşuna dönüştüğü sonucuna varmaktadır. Araştırmada kullanılan başlıca yöntemler arasında belge analizi, mülakat, arşiv araştırması ve katılımcı gözlem yer almaktadır. Bu yönleriyle tez, Avrupa'daki İslami hareketlere dair çalışmaların yanı sıra ulusaşırı göç literatürüne de bir katkı sağlamayı amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Milli Görüş, IGMG, Ulusaşırı göç, İslami topluluklar, Avrupalılaşıma, STK'lar.



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AKP: Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*)

AMGT: The Union of the *Millî Görüş* in Europe (*Avrupa Millî Görüş Teşkilatları*)

BfV: Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (*Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz*)

DIK: German Islam Conference (*Deutsche Islamkonferenz*)

DITIB: Turkish-Islamic Union of the Directorate of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet İşleri Türk İslam Birliği – Türkisch- Islamische Union der Anstalt für Religion e. V.*)

Diyanet: The Presidency of Religious Affairs in Turkey (*Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı*)

EMUG: European Mosque Building and Support Organization (*Europäische Moscheenbau- und Unterstützungsorganisation*)

FP: Virtue Party (*Fazilet Partisi*)

ICCB: The Union of Islamic Associations and Communities (*İslami Cemaat ve Cemiyetler Birliği*)

IGMG: The Islamic Community *Millî Görüş* (*Islamische Gemeinschaft Millî Görüş*)

IHH: Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief (*Internationale Humanitäre Hilfsorganisation e.V.*)

IR: The Islamic Council for the Federal Republic of Germany (*Der Islamrat für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland e. V.*)

KRM: Coordination Council of Muslims in Germany (*Koordinationsrat der Muslime in Deutschland*)

MNP: National Order Party (*Millî Selamet Partisi*)

MSP: National Salvation Party (*Millî Nizam Partisi*)

RP: Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi*)

SP: Felicity Party (*Saadet Partisi*)

UETD: Union of European-Turkish Democrats (Union Europäisch- Türkischer Demokraten e. V.)

UID: Union of International Democrats

VIKZ: Association of Islamic Cultural Centers (*Verband der Islamischen Kulturzentren e. V.*)



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Problem and Rationale

When I went to Cologne for an internship in 2019, I was visiting my sister, who lives in a small and quiet town in Baden-Württemberg. During these visits, it was a pleasure to witness the transition between my nephews' languages who spoke German among themselves but in Turkish with me. Once, we went to a Qur'an school affiliated with the *Milli Görüş* in Germany, where they would receive religious education, and I realized that the language of communication between children was now German. This observation did not match "the *Milli Görüş*" and "a Turkish Islamic organization in Germany" connotations I envisioned. While I was in Cologne, I had the opportunity to think many times about Germany's religious/political organizations that were transformed with the new generation. Eventually, I decided to prepare a master dissertation on this topic.

This dissertation aims to contribute to the transnational migration literature by analyzing the transformation of the IGMG (Die *Islamische Gemeinschaft Millî Görüş*, the *Milli Görüş* Islamic Community) from a transnational movement to both a European-centered and global organization. A sociological analysis of the *Milli Görüş* (the National Vision) movement with a focus on its transnational organization experience might be useful to better understand the Muslim communities in Europe. Moreover, such an examination may enhance our knowledge of migrant communities in Europe in general, and the religious Turkish community in Germany in particular. It may also help us understand the complex relations between Muslim minorities and the host society in Germany. Finally, it might contribute to the growing literature on the past and present of the *Milli Görüş* movement, which has stamped its impact on Turkish politics since the 1970s.

I argue that three main factors play a role in the transformation of the IGMG. The first is the weakening of its transnational ties with its mother organization, the Turkish *Milli*

Görüş. The second is the generational shift in the management of the organization since the mid-1990s. A third factor is the increasingly skeptical and often cynical approach of the German institutional structures and public towards IGMG after the 9/11 attacks. My thesis will try to demonstrate that the IGMG's transnational structure has weakened by disconnection with a country of origin, but it has not ended completely. I will also argue that it has become both a Europeanized and Muslim non-governmental organization due to the generational shift in the executive management and the skeptical approaches of the German institutional structures to IGMG.

During the 1960s, Turkey experienced an intense rural-urban migration after the rapid urbanization process. Afterwards, intensive labor migration from Turkey to abroad started due to interaction of the urbanization process with the international labor market. A considerable Turkish immigrant population has since emerged in Europe, thanks to agreements signed with Germany in 1961 and with other European countries in later years (Abadan-Unat, 2011).

In the 1960s and 1970s, migration to Western Europe provided an opportunity for political parties banned in Turkey to mobilize guest workers (Landau, 1974). One of them, the *Milli Görüş*, has an extensive and intricate historical background. The organizational roots of the *Milli Görüş* in Germany go back to 1969. Established in 1969 with the initiative of Turkish students who came to Germany for higher education with a state grant, the Turkish Union Germany (*Almanya Türk Birliği, Türkische Union Deutschland e. V.*) was not fully operational for several years. The first “mosque community” (i.e. a community of religious people gathered around a mosque socially, organizationally, and often physically) in Europe that associated itself with the Turkish politician Necmettin Erbakan (1926-2011), the leader of *Milli Görüş*, was established in Braunschweig in 1972. During the 1970s and 1980s, gradually, other mosque communities that associated themselves with the *Milli Görüş* movement were established across Europe (Schiffauer, 2010).

The first Islamic umbrella organization of the *Milli Görüş* called Turkish Union Europe (Türkische Union Europa e.V), was established in Cologne in 1976. Yusuf Zeynel Abidin (d. 1986), an Iraqi medical doctor, became the head of the organization. The guidance of Necmettin Erbakan, who knew him from his student days in İstanbul, was efficient in his assumption of the organization's leadership (Gündoğmuş, 2017). Erbakan aimed to prevent the potential opposition within the *Milli Görüş* in Europe that could be affected by the resistance of the *Nurcu* and the *Süleymanî* community members within his National Salvation Party (MSP) in Turkey in the 1970s.

This organization was renamed as Islamic Union Europe in 1982 (Lemmen, 2000). In 1983, opposition figure Cemalettin Kaplan's struggle for separation, which he started at the Barbaros Mosque in Cologne, resulted in a significant crisis (Atacan, 1993). Whereby two-thirds of *Milli Görüş* communities in Germany got affiliated with the Kaplan community (Schiffauer, 2010). The *Milli Görüş* was reorganized under the name of the Union of the *Millî Görüş* in Europe (Avrupa *Millî Görüş* Teşkilatları, AMGT) in 1985. The AMGT, established under the leadership of Osman Yumakoğulları, made the concept of the "*Milli Görüş*" (used since the 1970s) official in Europe. According to Mügge (2010), AMGT was organizationally directly linked to the MSP because it was directed by a member of the MSP executive committee in Cologne. The eventual success of corresponding political parties in Turkey contributed to the growth of the organization in Germany. Afterwards, the expansion of AMGT necessitated an institutional restructuring in the mid-1990s. At the organization's 11th General Assembly in Frankfurt in 1995, the AMGT leadership declared that some amendments were made regarding legal personality and legal structure. The AMGT was thus divided into two separate organizations, the European Mosque Building and Support Organization (Europäische Moscheenbau und Unterstützungsorganisation, EMUG) and the Islamic Community *Millî Görüş* (*Islamische Gemeinschaft Millî Görüş*, IGMG). The new structure of the organization was based on the new division of labor between the two organizations:

While EMUG managed the real estates of the *Milli Görüş*, IGMG assumed religious, social, and cultural issues.

In 1999, IGMG moved into a new era when Mehmet Sabri Erbakan, Necmettin Erbakan's nephew, became the leader of Germany's organization. The new generation who grew up in Germany with a different perspective, which Schiffauer (2010) calls "post-Islamist," sparked crucial reforms within the organization. The political movement in Turkey, on the other hand, faced a significant crisis in the mid-1990s though Erbakan's Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi*, RP) was a coalition partner with its leader the Prime Minister. The Turkish army forced the coalition government to resign in 1997 accusing RP of being an anti-secular Islamist party. Then the Constitutional Court closed both the RP and then the Virtue Party (FP), which had been established in its place. Then two groups emerged from within the *Milli Görüş*, known as "innovators" and "traditionalists," which established the Justice and Development Party (AKP) and the Felicity Party (*Saadet Partisi*, SP), respectively. In Germany, in addition to the generational shift in the organization, a positive recovery occurred in the relations between the immigrant organizations and the German state with the reform of the citizenship law led by Alliance 90/The Greens and CDU in 2000. Nevertheless, with the 9/11 attacks the general public's skeptical approach to migrant organizations, including IGMG, grew in Germany and continued to do so in the coming years.

In consideration of this historical background, in this thesis I will examine the process of the transformation of the *Milli Görüş* in Germany from a transnational movement to both a Europeanized and a Muslim NGO. My main research question is how and why this transformation took place. My examination will detail the above-mentioned main problem with the following specific questions: What is the effect of the IGMG's relationship with the *Milli Görüş* in Turkey on the transformation of the *Milli Görüş* in Germany? How did issues such as ideological differentiation, closing down of the RP and the Virtue Party (*Fazilet Partisi*, FP), the division of the *Milli Görüş*, which brought about

the rise of the Justice and Development Party (Ak Parti, AKP) and the decline of the Felicity Party (*Saadet Partisi*, SP) affect this? To what extent did the generational shift in the management of the organization during the 2000s affect its transformation? What were the differential impacts of German institutional structures (e.g., the Office for the Protection of the Constitution, the German Islam Conference (DIK), legal investigations, security policies)?

Regarding these questions, I have several hypotheses: First, the catastrophe experienced by the *Milli Görüş* movement in Turkey caused the organization in Europe to lose faith in the possibility of any Islamic revolution and economic progress in Turkey. Thus, the organization in Germany lost interest in the political issues in Turkey, including the *Milli Görüş* parties. Second, the members of the *Milli Görüş* communities in Germany were disappointed by the Islamic holding companies (e.g., Büyük Anadolu Holding, YİMPAŞ, JetPa) that were founded on immigrant remittances and went bankrupt. I argue that these economic failures, which badly damaged the Turkish migrants' funds, play a crucial role in the weakening of IGMG's transnational ties with the country of origin. Third, the division of the *Milli Görüş* that resulted in the AKP-SP separation signaled a similar division that might occur in the grassroots of the IGMG. The IGMG, thereby, faced the risk of partition and thus avoided taking part in political tensions within the *Milli Görüş* in Turkey. The IGMG preferred to be a European religious community and a Muslim NGO rather than a transnational political movement. Fourth, I propound that the generational shift in the IGMG management transformed the organization significantly. Lastly, I hypothesize that the most decisive factor in the transformation of IGMG is the strategies of German institutional structures.

My main argument in this dissertation is, therefore, that the IGMG has been transformed into a Europeanized Muslim non-governmental organization thanks to these three factors. Instead of being a political organization with strong transnational ties to Turkey, IGMG has ended up being a religious community in which the new generation

dominated its management and is the representative body concerned with the needs of Muslims in Europe.

Thus, the IGMG link with a powerful transnational political movement in Turkey instead of being a political organization, the management of the new generation is the dominant religious community and serves as the representative body. It has also become a Europeanized Muslim non-governmental organization through its activities in Europe and over the world. On a more theoretical level, therefore, the transformation of the IGMG shows the processes of Europeanization and NGO-ization, both at the level of relationships with German institutions and public, and of the organizational structure. My examination will rely on the relevant concepts and arguments in the literature on transnational migration.

1.2. Theoretical Framework

In my dissertation, I draw on the theoretical discussions in the sociology of migration. The concept of diaspora remains limited to explain the experiences of second-generation immigrants. The reason for this is that the diaspora concept usually focuses on the state of belonging and explains immigrants' identities through the strong ties they have established with the sending country. The increasing intensity of globalization of human and labor movement and diasporic changes pointed out that the concept of diaspora was not enough to explain migrants' experiences and necessitated a new concept. New immigration-based connections between societies, which led to the emergence of a new theory on 'transnationalism' and 'transnational communities', gained more attention in 1990s (Castles & Miller, 2008). The debate on transnationalism began by the work of Basch et al. (1994), who argued that the 'deterritorialized nation-states' emerged, with possible serious consequences on international politics and national identity. The concept of transnational migration includes the intersection of networks and activities and the crossing areas within the sending and receiving countries. Transnational immigrants live across national boundaries and compound the two communities in a

social field (Schiller, 1997). This new concept, which emerged to explain the variable nature of migration, was, according to some, nonsense (Waldinger & Fitzgerald, 2004) or not expressing anything new (Portes, 1996). According to some, however, it was considered as a new theoretical concept that should be used (Levitt, 2001).

The concept of transnationalism is accepted as a substantial result of globalization (Faist, 2000; Kivisto, 2001). The link between transnationalism and globalization can be explained through new communication and transportation technologies, Europeanization policies, international rights, global economy and the mobility of people affecting the social relations of immigrants between sending and receiving countries. The concept of transnationalism is defined as the condition in which global relations develop despite the great distances and the presence of international borders (Vertovec, 1999).

There are different perspectives on the relationship between the concept of transnationalism and the nation-state. According to some, the nation-state still shapes social spaces and transnational status remains more fiction than reality. Kastoryano (2003) regards transnational ties as national ties. Transnationalism, therefore, becomes prominent in the theoretical framework of this dissertation that focalize relationship between German nation-state and IGMG, a migrant organization.

Studies conducted in the 1990s emphasized that immigrants can be active in both countries at the same time and that being active in sending country will not cause any problem in their adaptation to the receiving country. In the 2000s, it has been brought to the agenda that transnational ties are formed within fluid social fields, they are reproduced in a continuous manner, and thus create state of being in two different places at the same time (Levitt, 2001).

Some concepts have also been created under the transnationalism such as transnational practices, transnational social spaces and transnational social fields. Transnational practices refer to social networks established over the borders of nation states, to connect with sending and receiving countries and to be economically active in both countries. Portes (1997) focused on the economic side of transnational practices, putting social, cultural and political sides into the background. Sklair (1999), however, takes transnational practices into consideration as economically, politically, culturally and ideologically.

Transnational social fields are acknowledged by Schiller and Levitt (2004). According to them, these fields are defined as places where new ideas and new resources are produced, and many transnational ties intersect. In addition, transnational social fields are accepted as individuals' participation in social networks that allow exchange of ideas and information beyond the borders of nation states. This concept emphasizes the ties with the sending country in transnational social relations, but does not consider the ties with the receiving country (Şimşek, 2016). Therefore it will not be of much use for my examination.

Another term often used in this field is that of “transnational social spaces.” This concept is defined as social spaces that connect at least two geographical areas in migration practices. According to Faist (1999), transnational social spaces are combinations of social and symbolic ties, positions in networks and organisations and networks of organisations that can be found in at least two geographically and internationally distinct places. Faist (2000) also discusses three types of transnational social spaces: transnational reciprocity in small groups, transnational exchange in circuits, and diffused solidarity within transnational communities.

The transnational practices within the immigrant organizations of the *Milli Görüş* started to be seen with the establishment of the first mosque communities in 1972, which is the predecessor of the umbrella organizations of the *Milli Görüş*. I will discuss the second period in which the AMGT was established and Turkish political movements gained strength in Europe, within the framework of transnational social spaces (Amiriaux, 2003; Trautner, 2003; VanWey & Faist, 2000). The notion of “transnational politics” will help to explain the relationship between political Islam in Turkey and the *Milli Görüş* in Germany (Mügge, 2010; Østergaard-Nielsen, 2003a).

While explaining the adventure of the *Milli Görüş* movement in Germany in the nineties through the concepts and theories of transnationalism, I will discuss some of the reasons for its transformation with reference to de Certeau's "strategies" and "tactics" theories (Certeau, 1984). Following the amendments in the organization's structure in mid-1990s, IGMG began to turn into a Europeanized religious community and a Muslim non-governmental organization, rather than being the transnational branch of the *Milli Görüş* in Turkey. The concepts of transnational social spaces and transnational politics, therefore, are insufficient to define this organization. After the weakening of its transnational ties and structural changes, IGMG needed to be regarded as one of cross-border migrant organizations (CBMO) (Pries & Sezgin, 2012). At this point, it might be useful to discuss the relevant literature, including that of both the *Milli Görüş* in general and its European branch in particular.

1.3. Literature Review

I will draw on the secondary literature on the *Milli Görüş* in Europe. As a prominent example of comprehensive studies on IGMG, the monographic work of the German anthropologist Werner Schiffauer, who has been focusing his academic interest on this organization for many years, can be mentioned (Schiffauer, 2010). Contrary to Schiffauer's work which evaluate the IGMG as a pro-integration organization, Vielhaber

(2012) describe the *Milli Görüş* in Germany as a radical Islamist group and closely associated with political Islam in Turkey. Rosenow-Williams (2012) examines the organizational structure of IGMG in detail in his comprehensive study analyzing the organizational strategies and behaviors of Islamic organizations. Bruinessen (2004) has a concise article on the *Milli Görüş* movement in Europe. Pedersen (1999), on the other hand, examines the development of the cultural trend represented by the *Milli Görüş*, which he regards as the most important organization that has Islamist tendency among Turkish minorities in European countries.

There has also been an increasing number of studies on the *Milli Görüş* in Europe and its transnational ties. Amiraux (2003), focuses on the *Milli Görüş* in Germany, in his study, which examines how the RP, the representative of “political Islam” in Turkey in the 1990s, benefits from the transnational structure in Germany. Trautner (2003) examines the *Milli Görüş* as the social channel of the trans-state spaces (*transstaatliche räume*). Sunier and Landman (2015), in their work on the transnational structure of Turkish Islam, always regard the *Milli Görüş* in Europe as an organization that is successful among young Muslims and is the most essential rival of the *Diyanet*. But they do not discuss the transformation in the vision and leadership structure of Germany’s *Milli Görüş*. There have also been other studies on the organization’s transnational ties to Turkey (e.g., Amelina & Faist, 2008; Lemmen, 2000), which are all useful yet usually silent on its transformation, which I will discuss in my thesis.

There are also comparative studies on the *Milli Görüş* in Europe. Academic works on comparisons of the IGMG associations have been produced in German and Dutch contexts (Mügge, 2010; Pervanidis, 2009; Tol, 2009; Yükleven, 2010b). In addition, Arkılıç (2015) compares the organizational structure of the *Milli Görüş* in France and Germany. Recent academic literature also includes the works that compare the *Milli Görüş* with other religious organizations. For instance, the IGMG has been compared with the

Diyanet (Yanaşmayan, 2010; Yurdakul, 2009), the Alevi organizations (Halm et al., 2012), the *Nurcu* community (Jonker, 2006), and the Gülen movement (Andrews, 2011). These works compare them particularly in terms of their organizational structure, follower bases, and political and religious activities. Nevertheless, they do not usually touch upon the IGMG's transformation in recent decades.

Studies on IGMG's relationship with the German state on issues such as security or integration are also included in the academic literature. In his article, Schiffauer (2012) analyzes on how German strategies for radicalization were implemented to punish the IGMG, especially after 9/11. He also scrutinizes the complex relations between German institutional structure and the *Milli Görüş* via security issues (Schiffauer, 2008). Ewing (2003), similarly emphasized the influence of the Turkish state's approach to *Milli Görüş* parties in the German state's pressure on the IGMG. In another study, she claims that the IGMG not only demonstrates organizational features of modernity, but also participates in the discourse of "modernism" (Ewing, 2010). In addition, IGMG activities have been discussed with reference to Turkish Islamic claims making in Germany (Koç, 2007).

It is also necessary to refer the studies that focus on the *Milli Görüş* in Europe which is written around more specific topics. Özkan (2012), Sezgin & Dijkzeul (2013), and Rosenow-Williams & Sezgin (2014) investigate the IGMG's international humanitarian activities and its global structure. Tol (2008) and Tol & Akbaba (2016) examine the organization in the context of Islamism and radicalism. Jonker (2005) describes a public conflict over the building of a mosque by IGMG in Berlin. Gündoğmuş (2017) discusses the socio-political impact of IGMG in Germany context. In addition, Yıldız and Verkuyten (2012) have examined the publications of ethnic and religious organizations through the *Perspektif* magazine. Lastly, the concept of antisemitism is argued in a widespread manner when it comes to the *Milli Görüş* in Europe. In this context, while Jikeli (2015)

compares the antisemitic discourses of far-right and Islamism in Germany, Stremmelaar (2017) raises the issue of antisemitism in the case of the IGMG's Dutch branches.

Schiffauer (2010) revealed the effect of the generational shift within the IGMG and the new rulers, whom he defined as post-Islamists, on the *Milli Görüş* in Germany. I will test their accuracy/validity in terms of the IGMG environment (organization and leadership). I will also claim that the *Milli Görüş* in Germany has become a Muslim NGO through the humanitarian aid organizations of the IGMG discussed by Özkan (2012), Sezgin & Dijkzeul (2013), and Rosenow-Williams & Sezgin (2014). Also, contrary to the antisemitism accusations of Jikeli (2015) and Stremmelaar (2017), and radical Islamism accusation of Vielhaber (2012), my analysis will show the limitation of their argument as the IGMG leadership did otherwise.

1.4. Methodology

The data collection phase of the study has proceeded through four different methods: document analysis, archival research, participant observation, and semi-structured interviews. The document analysis includes that of the media organs of the *Milli Görüş* movement in Germany. These are press releases, Plural Publications located at the headquarters of IGMG and *Perspektif*, *Sabah Ülkesi* magazines that continue their digital and traditional publications under this publishing house. In addition, the bi-weekly *Camia* newspaper published independently from the publishing house and *İslamıQ*, which broadcasts in German digitally, are the media organs of the *Milli Görüş* movement in Germany. Press releases published regularly on the organization's website from 1998 until today will be one of the materials of the document analysis. *Perspektif* or formerly *Milli Görüş Perspektif* carries multi-layered discussions about Islam and Muslims in Europe and social, political, legal and cultural developments regarding Muslims in Europe to their pages every month in Turkish. I carried out a (mostly online) archival research to have access, classify, and analyzed these texts. Then, in the analysis phase, I have

examined them in light of my main and specific research questions mentioned above. Reading between the lines and analyzing the messages scattered in the pages of these publications, I have tried to make sense of the different manifestations of the IGMG's transformation made visible in the attitudes, reactions and discursive strategies of the organization's leadership reflected in these texts.

The third method I have drawn upon is my participant observation during my visits to the IGMG's headquarters in Cologne. This was held as part of the Erasmus+ volunteer internship program, between 4 September and 18 November 2019. I joined the IGMG's formal meetings in the Guidance and Education units, which are responsible for the organization and execution of the educational and cultural activities. During these meetings I set quietly without interrupting their conversations and took notes with their permission. I also joined many informal talks and gatherings in mosques and the IGMG headquarters, where I not only listened to the members of the organization but also asked them questions (in an informal manner) about the activities, vision and changing attitudes of their community. Finally, I also visited mosques and the IGMG branch offices in other cities, including Berlin, Hanover, Goslar, Munich, Mannheim, Nuremberg, Amsterdam, and Beringen where I participated again in formal meetings and informal gatherings, listening to them, asking questions, and taking notes.

The final data collection method I have utilized is in-depth interviews. I have done semi-structured, in-depth interviews with two former and active members of the IGMG, both in elite positions: Mustafa Yeneroğlu and Oğuz Üçüncü. The interviews took place in August and September of 2020, which I did online (through the Zoom software) due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, which also caused a delay in the arrangement of my interviews with them. (For the same reason, I was unable to travel and reach further elite members of the organization. Yeneroğlu's current involvement in Turkish politics with a busy schedule further caused a delay.) Nevertheless, thanks to their cooperative

attitude, my interviews were quite useful and long enough (2 hours each) to reveal rich information on their vision of how the IGMG evolved during the last three decades. I asked them questions about what they did during the years they were involved in the management of the organization, but also how they saw the IGMG's transformation before, during and after their terms. In the analysis of my semi-structured interviews, therefore, I focus not only on their description and rationalization of the IGMG's vision and practices during their tenure, but also on discursive differences between the previous elite group at the headquarters and the current managers. Through these differences, I will try to reveal the transformation that IGMG has undergone in matters such as issues on political, sociological and religious agenda, differences in political discourse, its position in religious debates and relations with German and Turkish states.

Last but not least, I would like to also mention that during the time I spent at IGMG's headquarters I set down and spoke extensively with some of the elite members of the organization, even though I did not formally conduct interviews with them. The people occupying the leadership positions at the IGMG headquarters, from whom I got information, include: Kemal Ergün, the IGMG's current chairman, Bekir Altaş, the secretary-general, Celil Yalınkılıç, the head of the Guidance (*İrşad*) unit, and Yavuz Yaylak, Muhammed Yüksel, Burak Yılmaz, and Gökhan Soysal from the *İrşad* unit, as well as deputy head of the *İrşad* unit Ali Bozkurt, deputy head of education unit Dr. Hakan Aydın, the editor-in-chief of the *Sabah Ülkesi* magazine Ali Çolak, the former head of the university unit Selçuk Çiçek, materials and curriculum specialist Habip Yazıcı, and finally İbrahim Yazıcı of EMUG who is in charge of the bookkeeping of the expenses and maintenance of mosques and the organization's other properties.

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE MİLLİ GÖRÜŞ

2.1. *Milli Görüş* in Turkey

To analyze the structure of the *Milli Görüş* in Germany need to be competent on their roots in Turkey. This could be possible with the focus on the modern Turkish politics in the second half of the 20th century. The developments occurring in Turkey's modernization process since 1950 can be summed up as the transition to the multi-party system in the political field and to capitalism causing sharpening of functional divisions in the economic and social fields. MNP, the National Order Party, was founded by Necmettin Erbakan in a post-coup d'état environment that facilitated the spread of the political ideologies allowed by the 1961 constitution. Another factor in the birth of the MNP was a personal dispute in the Turkish Union of Chambers (*Türkiye Odalar Birliği*) (Sarıbay, 1985). In 1968, due to the opposition of the İstanbul and İzmir chambers to Erbakan, the Minister of Commerce of the Justice Party (*Adalet Partisi*, AP) government was not assign him as the President of the Chambers Union and Erbakan was removed from his office by police force. In addition, his candidacy for deputy from AP was not accepted. Upon this, Erbakan entered the 1969 general elections with the group later to be called the Independence Movement (*Müstakiller Hareketi*) and was elected from Konya joining the parliament. He was the only one candidate from this group who could enter the parliament. He took the support of the small and middle-size entrepreneurs in Anatolia, which had lost its hope from the AP. Erbakan, moreover, gradually built a political movement on religious urban middle classes in Turkey and more intensively on emotions of a social fraction consisting of peasants and notables (Çiğdem, 2005). In addition, during this period, when intellectuals and politicians such as Necip Fazıl (1904-1983), Nurettin Topçu (1909-1975) , Osman Turan (1914-1978), Osman Yüksel Serdengeçti (1917-1983), and Süleyman Arif Emre (1923-2019) indicate their transition from nationalism to Islamism, Erbakan evaluated this environment well (Büyükkara,

2016). Mehmet Zahit Kotku, a leader of the *İskenderpaşa* community, also played a critical role in its formation.

This support reached the dimensions that required it to be organized as a political party and the National Order Party (MNP) was established on January 26, 1970. MNP can be defined as the common action of religious self-employed professionals who graduated from secular educational institutions of modern Turkey, and religious entrepreneurs engaged in trade and industry in the rural areas (Çakır, 1994). Çakır (2005) states that the third social layer of the MNP is the low-income Sunni religious people living in both rural areas and large cities. According to some, the ideology of the party was deeply ambiguous. Since there was no word for the word nation in the Turkish language, the nationalists had embraced the word *millî* (originally meaning “religious”) and used it as the equivalent of the national. The National Order Party also utilized the ambiguity of this term to address the religious feelings of the audience it addresses in a country where the officially legitimate collective identity is Turkish nationality (Tuğal, 2009).

MNP’s vision did not entail the then nascent Turkish migrant community in Europe. The Turkish state had already neglected these immigrants in Europe for many years. For instance, the handbook prepared by the Employment Agency for Turkish workers to adapt to the prevailing culture in receiving countries was not published until 10 years after the start of migration (Türkdoğan, 1984). This issue, likewise, was ignored in the the quite short political life of MNP, the first party of the *Millî Görüş* movement. In the external affairs section of MNP bylaws and manifesto, there was no clause for Turkish migrants in Europe. However, Erbakan had some contacts in Europe before the establishing MNP and after its closure by the Constitutional Court on May 20, 1971. According to Gündoğmuş (2017), while Erbakan had not yet become a political figure and the *Millî Görüş* movement not yet emerged, he stayed for three days at Dr. Fazıl Üveyce's house in Braunschweig in 1968 and met with various Turkish-origin figures and consulted

them about his political career in Turkey. It is claimed that he started publishing the *Tek Nizam* (Sole Order) newspaper and established the *Milli Görüş* organization during his stay in Switzerland after MNP was closed (Yeşilada, 2002). However, there is no definitive information that the *Milli Görüş* in Europe was directed by Erbakan until the ascendance to its presidency of Yusuf Zeynel Abidin in 1976.

In 1971, after the military memorandum, the Constitutional Court closed the MNP on the grounds that it wanted to destroy the secular principles of the state and establish an Islamic order in place of the Kemalist system. The leader of the MNP, Necmettin Erbakan left for Switzerland and stayed there self-exiled until 1972. On October 12, 1972, he established the National Salvation Party (*Millî Selamet Partisi*, MNP) under the presidency of his close associate, Süleyman Arif Emre. Erbakan became a member of MSP in May 1973 and the party participated in the 1973 general elections under the leadership of Emre. After the election, the MSP caucus appointed Erbakan as the party leader (Yavuz, 2003). According to Ahmad (2006), MSP opposed the rise of monopolization and dependence on foreign capital in 1973, projecting a more serious image than its predecessor. Continuing a successful propaganda, MSP became the third party after the Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, CHP) and AP in the 1973 elections. After that, its Islamist ideology and the rising counter elite had to be taken more seriously.

It was surprising to establish a coalition between the representative of Islamism, the MSP, and the social democrat, the CHP in February 1974 following the failed attempts by other, "secular" parties. However, some similarities between the two parties stood out. Both parties were determined to protect the low-income class from monopolies and favored social justice development. They both claimed that they believed in democracy and fundamental rights and freedoms. Thus, disagreements over cultural values was ignored for the coalition (Ahmad, 2006). However, the coalition with the CHP in 1974 did

not have a future. While the coalition between the social democrats and the Islamists ended in September 1974, the MSP's voting base was decreased from 11.8% to 8.5% in the 1973 Turkish general elections (Sarıbay, 1985).

Unlike MNP, there was a clause for Turkish migrants in MSP manifesto: "We are committed to implement an active policy in international boards and circles to protect the rights of Turks abroad."¹ MSP was also able to achieve the organization of *Milli Görüş* movement among workers in Germany, thanks to the ministries it managed in the Nationalist Front (*Milliyetçi Cephe*) coalition governments established in 1975 and 1977. For example, Şevket Kazan (1933-2020), the former Minister of Labor from MSP, increased the effectiveness of labor attaché in the period between 1976 and 1977, and introduced many regulations regarding the social rights of workers and families. During this period, by the same token, religious conservative immigrants who objected to the MSP-CHP coalition were also convinced by Şevket Kazan, who often attended the meetings in Germany (Cebeci, 1979). During the coalition governments between 1973-1978, ministers and MPs of MSP visited the Turkish Union Germany in their overseas trips strengthening MSP's relationship with Turkish workers in Europe (Özdemir, 2014).

Replacing the MSP, which was closed with the September 12, 1980 coup, 33 people led by lawyer Ali Türkmen founded the RP on July 19, 1983. Afterwards, Ahmet Tekdal (1931-2020), the leader of the RP in the absence of Erbakan (he, like all other party leaders, was banned from politics by the military junta at the time) tried to guarantee the continuity of the *Milli Görüş* tradition in the early 80s (Çakır, 1994). After the 1987 referendum, which allowed the banned politicians to return to politics, RP increased its

¹ The original text: "Dış Türklerin haklarının korunması için milletler arası kurul ve çevrelerde aktif bir politika tatbik etmek kararındayız." (MSP, 1973)

voting rate. This was also a period when RP was getting stronger in the organization in Germany.

RP's connections with the European Turks (especially those in Germany) were even stronger than its predecessors, which was made easier by structural factors brought about by migration and by German institutional practices. Political parties and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) seek economic and political support among immigrants (Itzigsohn, 2000; Levitt, 2001). In Germany, preventing immigrants from participating in democratic decision-making processes in the receiving country legitimates their participation in political work in the sending country (Østergaard-Nielsen, 2003a). In most cases, immigrant organizations play a central role in the dialogue between political parties and movements in the sending country and the potential electoral district abroad.

The question that concerns the dissertation here is, how did the RP benefit from the migration capitalizing and mobilizing resources at an individual as well as collective level? During the RP era, although the *Milli Görüş* was anti-Western in its general outlook, it was more tolerant towards Germany. Erbakan's academic training in Germany and the proposed heavy industrialization program for the development of Turkey inspired by the German development mobilization after World War II reinforced the pro-German image of RP (Çakır, 1994). This helped RP to pay more attention to organizing Turkish immigrants in Germany. Undoubtedly, the organization's main aim in Germany was support (especially financially) the political party in Turkey during the electoral process. It is possible to come across examples on this issue at different periods of the RP. In the 1991 parliamentary elections, with which they made an alliance with the Nationalist Task Party (*Milliyetçi Çalışma Partisi*, MÇP) and the Reformist Democracy Party (*Islahatçı Demokrasi Partisi*, IDP) IDP, for instance, the RP was successful with the intense participation of migrant workers in Germany.

In addition, the contributions of the migrant organization, and its transnational politics were noticed in the 1994 local elections in Turkey. Zeki Başaran (Bremen) became mayor of Ağrı, Salih Gök (The Netherlands), mayor of Batman, and Şevki Yılmaz (Cologne) mayor of Rize. In the 1991 and 1995 parliamentary elections, the IGMG's former public relations officer, Abdullah Gencer, and former president Osman Yumakoğulları (1947-2016) were both elected MP from İstanbul and Konya (Amiriaux, 2003). There were also unsuccessful attempts, such as candidacy of Ali Yüksel, who served in the *Milli Görüş* in Europe as general secretary and president. He was forced to withdraw from candidacy by the Turkish state's pressure due to his *Şeyhülislam* (Islamic religious leader) title in Germany.

During the 1990s, the RP got the highest rate of votes and became a partner of coalition government for nine months, when it continued to cultivate the support of the Turks in Europe. On the other hand, the success of the political parties in Turkey often mobilized the Turkish migrants in Europe (Østergaard-Nielsen, 2003a). In this way, the RP used transnational social spaces to designate some of its moves in the political environment in Turkey, until it was closed down as a result of another military intervention in 1999. In the aftermath of this closure, though a reincarnation of it emerged in the form of the short-lived Virtue Party (FP), the *Milli Görüş* movement was divided into two following its immediate closure by the Turkish Supreme Court, giving birth to two fresh political parties: the Felicity Party (SP) representing the old, conservative generation, and the AKP, representing the younger, more reformist generation. Meanwhile, the *Milli Görüş* in Germany had difficulty following the evolution and internal divisions of the RP in politics because the movement's members in Europe had other concerns and interests than the establishment of a coalition government in Ankara (Roy, 2003).

2.2. Labor Migration and the Emergence of Turkish Political and Religious Organizations

During the 1960s, Turkey experienced an intense rural-urban migration parallel to a rapid industrialization and urbanization process. Afterwards, an intense labor migration from Turkey to abroad occurred with articulating the urbanization process to the international labor market. A labor recruitment agreement was signed on September 1, 1961 between Turkey and Germany. Turkish state entered into similar labor recruitment agreements with other European countries in the early 1960s. From then on, Turkish emigration to Europe continued to grow for many years to come.

It would be useful to examine the first stage of labor migration from Turkey to understand the connections between Turkish migrants and the *Milli Görüş*. The individual migrations in the 1950s were replaced by the concept of guest worker, or *gasterbeiter*. The purpose of guest workers who started a new life in Germany and could not bring their families with them was extend the duration of their contract and save money to pursue their welfare when they returned to Turkey. Therefore, rotational migration could not be applied anywhere. A great number of Turkish workers lost their jobs due to the crisis of the German automotive industry in 1966-67. However, this crisis and unemployment could not persuade Turkish workers to return to sending country and some of the Turkish workers left Germany by finding employment opportunity in other European countries, while others remained with their relatives with whom they came to Germany for a while. Comprehending that guest workers insisted on staying on the continent, European countries decided that alien labor was not to be temporary but permanent. However, the oil embargo in 1973-1974, the economic crisis and unemployment widespread in Europe caused a change of plans stopping the recruitment of foreign workers in European countries. According to this decision, while the recruitment of new workers was terminated, foreign workers who were already in the country were asked to return to their countries. However, illegal workers benefited from the amnesty law of Hessen and Rheinland-Pfalz, states of Federal Germany in 1972

(Abadan-Unat, 2011). Furthermore, the Turkish immigrants who postponed return to their country as a result of widespread unemployment and political instability in Turkey, brought their families with them in the early 1970s.

In the 1980s, the ideological and political trends in Turkey increasingly had themselves felt among Turkish immigrants in Germany. Educational problems, ghettoization, association movements, laws of the German state that encourage remigration were among the issues of this decade. In the 1990s, however, law of foreigners, popularization of ethnic and religious associations, and political claims making were to shape the agendas of Turkish immigration in Germany.

In the 1960s, Turkish workers lived in dormitories called *heim*. In these dormitories, they first started demanding the reservation of a room where they could pray. Thus, the first mosque associations were gradually established. These were called *hinterhoffmoscheen* (backyard mosques) (Abadan-Unat, 2011). Islam manifested itself in associations, which intensified especially in the 1970s, and became crucial with activities directed at the sending country rather than Germany and other European countries. In the 1970s, ethnic and religious organizations began to provide social solidarity among immigrants. Following the March 12, 1971, military coup in Turkey, many people went to Europe for political reasons have sought support in Turkish diaspora. Thus, Turkish-Muslim organizations in Europe began to assume a political identity.

The "culture of the backyards" (*Hinterhofkultur*), which characterizes the way Islam develops in Germany, revolves around certain groups that distribute the production of religious beings and compete under the rule of believers. The three most important actors of Turkish migrants in terms of Islamic organization in terms of Islam are the *Süleymancı* community, the *Diyanet* and the *Milli Görüş* (Amiraux, 2003). The oldest of

the religious organizations organized in the mosque center in Germany is the Union of Islamic Culture Centers (*Verband der Islamischen Kulturzentren e.V.*, VIKZ). This union, founded in Cologne on September 15, 1973, was organized in the form of mosques and Qur'an courses because they focused on raising religious cadres (Yükleyen, 2010a). The Turkish-Islamic Union of the Office for Religion (*Türkisch- Islamische Union der Anstalt für Religion e. V.*, DITIB) is an umbrella organization formally established in accordance with German law, but operates in practice under the direction of the Presidency of Religious Affairs in Turkey (*Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı*, *Diyanet*). DITIB was established by Turkish state after the 12 September 1980 military coup in order to break the influence of the religious and political organizations in Germany and to control immigrants and their religious activities. The reason for the *Diyanet*'s late organizing is reaction of Turkish state to successful religious organization in Europe regarded as illegal and independent on the state (Seufert, 1999).

There have been other Sunni and Alevi organizations and branches of Turkish political parties in Europe. Unlike the *Diyanet*, *Milli Görüş* and *Süleymanî* community, the Gülen movement sprawled much later in Europe (Seufert, 2014). The Gülen movement's decision to enter Germany concurred with a broader shift in the institutional structure of the movement. Although the Gülenists operated through private schools in Central Asia, Africa, and the Balkans, complex administrative procedures governed the establishment of private schools in Europe (Andrews, 2011). Apart from the Sunni organizations, there was an intense organizing of Alevi associations in Europe especially in the 1980s. Alevis first came to Germany as guest workers, too. However, the Turkish military coup in 1980 created a new wave of politically motivated leftist Alevis, unlike the previous influx of workers migrants (Sökefeld, 2006). Established in Mainz on 17 January 1991, the European Federation of *Alevi* Unions (AABF) is the strongest Alevi organization in Europe. I distinguish the IGMG from the other communities and organizations mentioned above not only due to its being the main representative body of the largest Turkish migrant organization in Germany (the *Milli Görüş*), but also because of its interesting

transformation from a political movement into a Europeanized Muslim NGO. In the next section, I will examine the historical background of the *Milli Görüş* in Germany, which contains clues about this transformation.

2.3. *Milli Görüş* in Germany

2.3.1. First Organizations of the *Milli Görüş* in Germany

The historical development of the *Milli Görüş* in Germany can be dealt with in three stages. In the first period covering the 1970s, this transnational movement continued its activities under the names of the Turkish Union Germany (*Almanya Türk Birliği, Türkische Union Deutschland e.V.*) and Turkish Union Europe (*Avrupa Türk Birliği, Türkische Union Europa e. V.*). Turkish Union Germany was established in Braunschweig in 1969. Turkish students who went to Germany for higher education with the Turkish state scholarship were useful in the emergence of this union. Following the first masjid established at Braunschweig Technical University, the Muslim Students Association of Braunschweig was founded. The interest of guest workers who did not have suitable venues to perform their worship caused university masjids to be insufficient, especially in Friday prayers. Thus, the mosque communities formed by the initiatives of Turkish students studying at Braunschweig Technical University and crowded with migrant workers' participation came up with the idea of establishing a Muslim organization. This need enables the establishment of Turkish Union Germany, but it took several years to become fully operational as an umbrella organization. Ahmet Rüştü Banaz, one of the founding names of the union, is among the students sent to Germany in 1961 by the Turkish state for education of atomic physics. Mehmet Şener Yücetürk, the deputy president of the union, is a medical doctor working in Germany (Gündoğmuş, 2017). This union has not been established under the control of the *Milli Görüş* in Turkey, resulting from that Turkish wing was not gather in a political party yet. However, while the contacts of Erbakan in Europe will make this organization a part of the *Milli Görüş* in the future, the propaganda of the *Milli Görüş* parties for technical and ethical development made this movement preferable for rural origin guest workers in Germany.

As a result of the military memorandum of March 12, 1971, Necmettin Erbakan stayed in Europe for a while and took steps to strengthen *the Milli Görüş* movement among Muslim immigrants (Yeşilada, 2002). After his attempts in Germany, the first mosque community in Europe associated with Necmettin Erbakan was established in Braunschweig in 1972 (Schiffauer, 2010). Turkish Union Germany also served as an umbrella organization for members of the *Milli Görüş*, *Süleymancı*, and *Nurcu* communities (B. Özkan, 2019). However, internal disturbances of MSP, the second political party of the *Milli Görüş* has affected the organization in Germany negatively. The *Süleymancı* community supported the Justice Party (*Adalet Partisi*, AP) led by Demirel in the 1973 parliamentary elections. After the election, on the other hand, the *Nurcu* MPs in the MSP were uncomfortable with the way the party was led by Erbakan and his close associates (Atacan, 2007). MSP-CHP coalition had a significant impact on the opposition of religious communities in Europe towards Erbakan and MSP. The effect of political unrest in the diaspora in Turkey was mentioned in memories of Şener Yücetürk, an essential figure of the *Milli Görüş* in Germany:

At first, there was complete harmony within the Turkish Union (Germany). But the system infiltrated and ... We had 25 thousand members in Germany. We created a great power... Our union was divided around 1974-1975 in parallel with the political division in Turkey. It was divided into three main groups. First *Nurcu* and *Süleymancı* groups leaved the union. Turkish Union (Germany) remained a large group. Turkish Union Germany identified itself "the *Milli Görüş*" in order to comply with the political view in Turkey.²

Despite this unpreventable political separation among Turkish immigrants, the *Milli Görüş* in Germany had close relations with the Muslim Brotherhood in the West in the

² The original text: "İlk başta Türk Birliği içinde tam bir uyum vardı. Ama Türkiye'deki sistem bunların içine girerek birbirine düşman etti. 25 bin üyeye ulaşmıştık Almanya'da... Ben dönünce, 1974-75 gibi bizim birlik Türkiye'deki siyasi ayrışmaya paralel olarak bölündü. 3 ana gruba ayrıldı. Önce Nurcular, Süleymancılar ayrıldı. Türk Birliği büyük grup olarak kaldı. Bu kalan Türk Birliği Türkiye'deki siyasi görüşe uymak için kendilerine '*Milli Görüş*' dedi." (Tunçay, 2017, p. 127)

early stages of the organization. For instance, some Turkish Union Germany meetings were held at the Bilal Mosque in Aachen (Özdemir, 2014). Erbakan led Yusuf Zeynel Abidin, the Iraqi medical doctor, to become the leader of the *Milli Görüş* in Germany in 1976 to prevent corrupting the organization's integrity in Germany due to this close relationship between Turkish Union Germany and Muslim Brotherhood. At the end of the year, the organization was renamed Islamic Union Europe (Lemmen, 2000; Rosenow-Williams, 2012). Erbakan has ensured that Zeynel Abidin who extraneous to the Turkish political environment to be president. Thus, he has prevented opposition in Turkey spread to Europe thoroughly. Besides, Zeynel Abidin's network in Muslim organizations was a promotive factor in the contacts to be established in Europe with the Muslim Brotherhood, which is considered the sister organization of the *Milli Görüş*. Fazıl Üveyce (d. 2017), the Syrian doctor, was also another Muslim Brotherhood member in the *Milli Görüş* (Gündoğmuş, 2017; B. Özkan, 2019).

In the 1970s, while the *Milli Görüş* in Germany influenced by the social and political environment in Turkey was competing with *Süleymancı* and *Nurcu* communities as a religious organization, it politically affected by violent conflict between Turkish right and left-wing until September 12, 1980. In the beginning, the *Milli Görüş* in Germany has introduced itself as an alternative to Turkish leftist associations that were very active within Turkish workers in the 1970s (Sunier & Landman, 2015). According to Yücetürk, for instance, the concern of affecting of leftist organizations on Turkish workers has been beneficial in the institutionalization of the *Milli Görüş* (cited in Gündoğmuş, 2017). Another example is a conflict between two groups in front of the Mevlana Mosque in Kreuzberg, a *Milli Görüş* place of prayer. In March 1980, the fight that started between the Mevlana mosque community protesting the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and leftist organizations that started counter-protest had resulted in the death of a person (Jonker, 2005). According to Özkan (2019), moreover, West Germany, as a NATO member, was regarded as the Islamists as a way to offset the impact of Turkish left-wing working-class organizations, mostly supported by radio broadcasts by East Germany. To sum up, in the

first period, the *Milli Görüş* associations in Germany had weak ties with the political parties in Turkey vis-à-vis the 1980s. However, the *Milli Görüş* in Germany followed the ideology and program of the party in Turkey, although they had no tight organizational ties with the country of origin during the 1970s. Additionally, the idea of returning to the sending country caused Turkish workers to remain isolated from the German circles (Koç, 2007).

The 1980 military coup had two effects in terms of the *Milli Görüş* in Germany. First, the military regime that holds power after the coup has determined to reduce the religious and political movements organizing in Germany. To become stronger gradually of the *Milli Görüş*, *Süleymancı* and *Nurcu* communities and their impacts on Turkish immigrants exasperated the secularist Turkish state. Following the 1980 coup, DITIB, a state-controlled religious organization as for Turkish immigrants in Germany, was founded under the guidance of Tayyar Altıkulaç, president of the *Diyanet*, and Nurettin Ersin (1918-2005), commander of the Turkish Land Forces with intent to break the power of these communities (B. Özkan, 2019)

On the other hand, the 1980 military coup led to the strengthening of the European branch of the *Milli Görüş* movement. A large part of the well-organized cadres of the MSP fled to exile Europe and joined the organization in Europe. They developed and expanded the local organizations' network, first in Germany and then in other European countries. This network was managed from the headquarters in Cologne (Sunier & Landman, 2015). Besides, through the banning of him from political activities in Turkey until 1987, Erbakan focused on reorganize European branch of the *Milli Görüş*.

In addition to the 1980 military coup and political preferences of religious communities, political developments at the international and global level were also efficient in shaping

the *Milli Görüş* in Germany. The *Milli Görüş* in Germany, which was significantly affected by the Muslim Brotherhood movement in Egypt and Syria in the 1970s, was also influenced by significant events in the Islamic world at the end of this decade: Iranian Islamic revolution, Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and Muslim Brotherhood rebellions against Baas regime in Syria (B. Özkan, 2019). In response to these developments in the Islamic World, mass demonstrations were organized in European cities under the leadership of the *Milli Görüş* associations. In 1979, *Milli Görüş* has organized a protest march in Bonn against US with the intent of support Iran, and a demonstration in Vienne against USSR invasion of Afghanistan (Damar, 2013). The close relationship of the organization with the Muslim Brotherhood in Europe has enabled it to be very responsive to the Muslim Brotherhood opposition to the Baath regime in Syria. In some cities of Germany, several protests were taking place against the Hafiz Assad: “Muslims in Germany also cursed Arab nationalist and Socialist-Nusayri Syrian rulers, with a protest march organized by the *Milli Görüş* organizations.”³

According to Koç (2007), the claims-making by *Milli Görüş* Germany over the years are aimed at joining the universal Islamic ummah community and the Islamic world politics. The moves of the *Milli Görüş* in Germany to identify with the global Islamic community and to participate in the politics of the Islamic world continued to increase in the 1980s. The organization's interest in the issues in the Islamic world and its relations established during these years formed the foundations of it becoming a Germany-based global organization through international aid efforts after 9/11.

³ The original text: “Almanya’daki Müslümanlar da *Milli Görüş* teşkilatlarının organize ettiği bir protesto yürüyüşü ile Suriye’nin Arap kavmiyetçisi, Sosyalist-Nusayri idarecilerini tel’in etmişlerdir.” (Tevhid, 1979, p. 3)

2.3.2. The Union of the *Millî Görüş* in Europe (AMGT)

The organization, which was renamed the European Islamic Union (Islamische Union Europa e. V.) on December 19, 1982, was faced with a significant crisis following year: the Kaplan community. Cemalettin Kaplan (1926-1995), a former mufti of Adana, Turkey and one of the candidates for MSP in the 1977 elections, obligatory retired in 1981 and went to Germany to prevent the divisions in the organization, which increased in the late 1970s. A manifesto distributed on August 13, 1983, at the Barbaros Mosque in Cologne, set off the crisis. Kaplan split off from *Millî Görüş* in Germany due to his proximity to Iran and their radical criticisms of *Millî Görüş* methods in Turkey (Atacan, 1993). Kaplan community appeared as a spin-off from the *Millî Görüş* in 1985, established the Union of Islamic Associations and Communities (Islami Cemaat ve Cemiyetler Birliği, ICCB). According to Schiffauer (2010), two-thirds of the *Millî Görüş* associations were joined to the ICCB. The organization was banned in Germany following September 11, 2001.

With the influence of political refugees exiled Germany after September 12, 1980, *Millî Görüş* has tried to dominate organizations in Europe again as it was in the 1970s. One of the first decisions of administration in the RP, established in 1983, was to take the initiative in Germany. Şevki Yılmaz, the preacher and Osman Yumakoğulları, one of the essential representatives of the party, had sent to Germany to organize the reconstruction of the *Millî Görüş* in Europe. There were frequent visits of celebrities from Turkey to *Millî Görüş* mosques that created enthusiasm among many Muslims in Europe. The RP was able to extend its support among them and raise funds for the political struggle in Turkey (Schiffauer, 2010). AMGT was formally established under Osman Yumakoğulları on May 20, 1985. Thuswise, the loose organizing in Germany was strongly connected to the center in Ankara, and Necmettin Erbakan began to control this strict organizational structure tightly.

2.3.3. The Islamic Community *Millî Görüş* (IGMG)

By 1995 AMGT had undergone a radical change. In the 1996 general congress, the new name of the organization, the Islamic Community *Millî Görüş* (IGMG), was adopted. The purpose was to underline the claim of a religious community:

We changed the name of the organization at the 1996 general congress from the Avrupa *Millî Görüş* Teşkilatları (The Union of the *Millî Görüş* in Europe, AMGT) to Die *Islamische Gemeinschaft Millî Görüş* (The Islamic Community *Millî Görüş*, IGMG). The purpose here was to underline our claim to a religious community. We mentioned the concept of *Millî Görüş* based on the definition of Prophet Ibrahim in all the declarations of the organization. As IGMG, we emphasized the sound Muslim consciousness that had been stripped away from political priorities and went far beyond daily politics. We also had the vision of a community that consisted of individuals with strong Muslim consciousness.⁴

The IGMG operates today with around 518 mosques, 304 of which are in Germany. When several women, youth, student, education, culture and sports associations are added to these branches, depending on the country and region, the IGMG provides services with a total of 2330 branches and 127.000 members. When the people attending the Friday prayers is taken into account, IGMG has under its influence a community of 350 thousand people.

Outside Germany, the IGMG used to operate in the UK under the name of London Islamic Culture and Recreation Society in 1990s (Kucukcan, 1996). Today, it operates in the UK under the name of ICMG (Islamic Community *Millî Görüş*). The *Millî Görüş* also operates in Canada with KMG (Trautner, 2003, p. 67), Anatolia Islamic Center (AIC), the sister

⁴ 1996 genel kongresinde teşkilatın ismini değiştirdik. Avrupa *Millî Görüş* Teşkilatları'ndan (the Union of the *Millî Görüş* in Europe, AMGT) İslam Topluluğu *Millî Görüş* (The Islamic Community *Millî Görüş*, IGMG) haline geldi. Buradaki maksat dini cemaat iddiamızın altını çizmektir. *Millî Görüş* kavramını Hz. İbrahim'in tanımına dayandırarak teşkilatın bütün tanıtımlarında bunu zikrettik. IGMG olarak siyasal önceliklerden sıyrılmış ve güncel siyasetin çok ötesinde kararlı Müslüman bilincinin altını çiziyorduk. Ayrıca kararlı Müslüman bilincine sahip bireylerden oluşan bir topluluk tasavvuruna sahiptik (Yeneroğlu, interview by author, 2020-09-09).

organization of AMGT in North America established in 1998. BIF in Belgium (Yanařmayan, 2010) and CIMG (*Communaut  Islamique Mill  G r ř*) in France (Arkilic, 2015) represent the IGMG. As regards to Scandinavian countries, *Milli G r ř* has also created a Danish branch, the *Danimarka M sl man G  menler Teřkilat * (DMGT). DMGT has no connections with the Turkish state other than being sympathetic to the religious developments. While *Milli G r ř* has been forbidden in Germany, DMGT has lived a more peaceful life in Denmark and one of its earlier leaders Zeki Ko er was a deputy chairman for the Council for Ethnic Minorities (REM) and hence employed by the Ministry of the Interior (J rgensen, 2009; Pedersen, 1999). Unofficial groups affiliated to *Milli G r ř* came together in the 1970s in the Netherlands and in 1981 established their first organization, *Federatie van de Verenigingen en Gemeenschappen van Moslims* (Federation of Associations and Communities of Muslims, FVGM). IGMG has two federations in the Netherlands. 'Dutch Islamic Federation - South' (NIF) was established in 1987. "*Milli G r ř Netherlands - Northern Federation*" (MGN) was founded in 1997 as a branch of the NIF (Canatan, 2001).

Today, IGMG headquarters have a complete organizational structure. The Presidency Council convenes under the chairmanship of the General President and is composed of the General Secretary, Head of Organization, Head of Financial Affairs, Head of Guidance (* rřad*), Head of Education, Head of Women's Organization, Head of Youth Organization, Head of Women Youth Organization and Consultants of the General President. The Presidency Council is the highest decision and management body of IGMG. The Central Executive Committee is in charge of executing the decisions taken after The Presidency Council within the framework of the statutes and regulations. This committee includes the heads of units in the Presidency Council, as well as vice presidents of the General Secretariat, Directorates of Guidance and Organization, Head of Social Services, Head of Hajj-Umrah and Travel, Head of Accounting, Head of Personnel Department and Administrative Affairs, Head of Inspection and Head of Universities.

The IGMG also has various traditional and digital publications. Plural Publications offers publications in Turkish and German with the idea of contributing to the Muslim broadcasting world in Europe and facilitating access to Islamic works on various topics. In the current publication catalog for 2019, 28 works were offered in German and 66 works in Turkish. Books can be classified under the titles of introductory literature, Islamic works, education and guidebooks, children's books, textbooks and activity books. *Perspektif* or formerly *the Milli Görüş Perspektif* carries multi-layered discussions about Islam and Muslims in Europe and social, political, legal and cultural developments regarding Muslims in Europe to their pages every month in Turkish. *Perspektif*, which has been one of the most efficient printed and digital Muslim media in Europe since 1995, offers its readers a cross-section of issues regarding Islam and Muslims in Europe every month with a circulation of 12,500 and invites Turkish readers to look at the European agenda from the perspective of *Milli Görüş* movement.

Since 2003, *Sabah Ülkesi* magazine is published works in philosophy, culture, and art and primarily caters to members of Turkish origin living in Europe. The purpose of the publication of the journal is that Turks living in Europe have the basic infrastructure in the field of culture, art, and philosophy, and they can obtain a minimum accumulation in order to know the origins of both the east and the west and to be selective in this field. In this framework, it is based on a qualified but pedagogical publishing language. The quarterly magazine has reached its 62nd issue by the end of 2019. *Sabah Ülkesi* prefers a more grandiloquent style than other publications of IGMG. IslamiQ is an online platform that continues its publishing activities within Plural Publications. Digital publishing in German makes this platform different from others. The main motivation for IGMG to publishing in German is that despite the intense news with Islam and Muslims in the German media, the German media performs very poorly in conveying their views and Muslims. IslamiQ finds it problematic that only Muslim names that can

produce content that is suitable for the mainstream are visible in the German media environment, however. IslamiQ, the online news and discussion magazine, functions as a tool for Muslims to participate and speak on the agenda. IslamiQ also aims to serve as a platform where non-Muslims can learn about the Islamic community. Since 2012, *Camia* has been serving the members of the community as a bulletin. The bulletin, which has reached its 160th issue by the end of 2019, meets the reader every two weeks. *Camia* is distributed to the regions free of charge by the headquarters and can be followed on the website. The bulletin and their supplement, *Genç Camia*, mostly aim to inform the members of the association's announcements, event news and the latest developments from the headquarters.

To sum up, in this chapter I have endeavoured to explain the *Milli Görüş* movement in Turkey, labour migration to Germany from Turkey in the 1960s and the historical background of the organization of the *Milli Görüş* movement in Germany. In the next chapter, I will try to explain the corporate transformation that IGMG has experienced with the effect of these experiences.

CHAPTER III

WHAT ARE THE REASONS FOR THE IGMG's TRANSFORMATION?

This chapter explores and analyze the reasons for the transformation of IGMG in Germany. There are three reasons for this transformation which I will emphasize, also discussing their implications. Firstly, I will demonstrate the changes in IGMG's transnational ties with Turkey. In the first section below, I discuss the periods that IGMG's strengthening and weakening transnational ties with *Milli Görüş* in Turkey. Here effective elements of the transformation in these ties include human resources, financial assistance, institutional pressures, AKP-SP separation, and bankruptcy of "Islamic" holding companies. The second determinant of IGMG's transformation is the generational shift in management. In this change, Mehmet Sabri Erbakan, Oğuz Üçüncü, and Mustafa Yeneroğlu were significant in terms of representing the effects of this generational shift. I examine their careers and the impact of their different biographical and visionary novelties on the *Milli Görüş* in Germany. The third and final main reason for this change is the influence of German institutions on the IGMG. Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (*Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz*, BfV), police raids and judicial investigations, and the German Islam Conference (*Deutsche Islamkonferenz*, DIK) are structures and maneuverings that provide these effects. Additionally, the accusations made by these structures against IGMG have been strategies that accelerate the organization's transformation. I will examine these events and accusations, as well as the IGMG's responses to them at the end of the chapter. Let us now start with the impact of the changing nature of the organization's relations with the *Milli Görüş* in the origin country.

3.1. Transformation of Transnational Ties

3.1.1. IGMG and the Strengthening Ties with the *Milli Görüş* in Turkey

To explain the transformation of transnational ties, it is necessary to first examine the period that IGMG's strengthening of relations with the *Milli Görüş* in Turkey. In this section, I will be discussing these transnational ties through such topics as activities strengthening ties between the *Milli Görüş* in Turkey and the Turkish mosque communities in Germany, and political participation of guest workers in Germany in the Turkish elections. I will also analyze their support in financial and human resources terms, i.e. *Milli Görüş* members in Germany sending their savings to *Milli Görüş* parties for elections and IGMG and AMGT members' deputy and mayoral candidacy in Turkish elections.

3.1.1.1. Reinforcement of Links

Milli Görüş in Turkey have resorted to various ways in order to strengthen its ties with organizations in Europe. The political determination of the *Milli Görüş* in Turkey in the choice of the organization's leaders in Germany has been an essential factor in empowering political movement. On the other hand, politicians, religious preachers, and intellectuals of the *Milli Görüş* in Turkey have tried to keep this strong bond. The effect of *Milli Görüş* in Turkey to determine the senior executives of the *Milli Görüş* organizations in Germany has been quite prominent. Founded in 1969, the Turkish Union Germany was away from the influence of movements in Turkey. In line with the moves of Erbakan, who came to Europe after the 1971 memorandum, Dr. Yusuf Zeynel Abidin had been inducted as president. Again, when the ICCB, the structure under the leadership of Cemalettin Kaplan, controlled two-thirds of the *Milli Görüş* communities in Germany, Osman Yumakoğulları was sent to Germany by Erbakan himself and thus established AMGT. This political predominance was also influential in the fact that Mehmet Sabri Erbakan, Necmettin Erbakan's nephew, became the chairman of the IGMG. This control mechanism operated relatively effectively until the RP was closed.

Politicians belonging to *Milli Görüş* in Turkey have attended general assemblies, hall programs, and stadium activities held by the *Milli Görüş* movement in Germany. When MSP was the coalition partner in the Turkish governments, deliberate visits were paid to the *Milli Görüş* communities in Germany at the ministerial level (Özdemir, 2014). During the RP period and Osman Yumakoğulları's presidency at AMGT, RP members frequently visited community events in various European countries. These visits had become more frequent in the early 1990s (Mügge, 2010). Even if RP's becoming a coalition partner disrupts these interests, the February 28 process caused *Milli Görüş* in Turkey to incline again toward *Milli Görüş* branches in Europe. The stadium meeting held in Amsterdam in 1998, attended by IGMG members from many European cities, had been among the highlights of activities. (Stremmelaar, 2017, p. 447). In 1998, IGMG organized a big event at the stadium in the city of Dortmund and the *Milli Görüş* politicians from Turkey participated there. In addition, a rally was held with the participation of Erbakan and Temel Karamollaoğlu, the SP current leader, at the Gelredome stadium in Arnhem on June 16, 2002.

Religious preachers have contributed to the strengthening of the relationship of the *Milli Görüş* in Turkey with the mosque communities in Europe. Preachers who adopted the *Milli Görüş* ideology visited mosques in Europe and made religious conversations and occasionally political propaganda activities. For instance, Tahir Büyükkörükçü (1925-2011), a former mufti of Konya, Turkey and MSP senator, visited many mosques in European cities as of 1976 as a religious orator and gave conversations to Turkish guest workers (Özdemir, 2014, pp. 162–164). In addition to Büyükkörükçü, the cassettes of popular preachers of the period such as Necmettin Nursaçan, Timurtaş Uçar, Mustafa Bilgiç, Mustafa Yüceler, and Fethullah Gülen were being sold by the *Milli Görüş* organizations.

Columnists and academicians close to the *Milli Görüş* movement also took part in various activities of *Milli Görüş* in Europe. The book fairs that AMGT started to organize in 1989, besides delivering religious publications to the Turks in Germany, have been events where these visits were intense. For instance, people from party members or close to RP such as Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Arif Ersoy (d. 2020), Resul Tosun, Aytunç Altındal (d. 2013), Sadık Albayrak, Abdurrahman Dilipak participated in the fair held in Osnabrück, Germany in 1995 (Bozkurt, 1995).

In brief, *Milli Görüş* movement of politicians on behalf of the strengthening of ties with the *Milli Görüş* communities in Germany in Turkey moves through his religious preachers and intellectuals housed two purposes: indoctrination and fundraising. *Milli Görüş* in Turkey was successful in this regard in the 1970s and the 1980s. The 1991 and 1994 general and local elections also showed that this connection was vital in augmenting the number of organization members in Germany participating in the election activities and the amount transferred. With the failure experienced after February 28, economic and human resources support between IGMG and the *Milli Görüş* parties decreased gradually. The networks of religious preachers and intellectuals within Germany have turned into a new relationship with different agendas instead of political issues. These human resources and financial assistance will be discussed in the following two sub-sections.

3.1.1.2. Providing Human Resources

In this section and the following, I will focus on the contribution of *Milli Görüş* communities in Germany to the political activities of the *Milli Görüş* in Turkey. Since it was almost impossible to come across educated Turkish immigrants in Germany in the 1970s, most members of the *Milli Görüş*'s mosque communities were rural migrant workers. Under these circumstances, during the period of MNP and MSP, human resources from Germany to Turkey usually took place in the way that pro-*Milli Görüş*

migrant workers synchronized the dates of their annual leaves with the dates of Turkish political elections and supported *Milli Görüş* parties in local and general elections. For instance, Ali Özdemir, the former chairman in the Berlin branch of Turkish Union Germany, conveys the contributions of expatriates to election efforts in his memoirs. In one of the 1970s general elections, after a meeting in Munich attended by Oğuzhan Asiltürk, former interior minister from RP, migrant workers have been involved in electioneering and participating to the meetings of the MSP through the routes of Edirne, Tekirdağ, İstanbul, Bursa, Konya, Adana, and Kayseri in Anatolia (Özdemir, 2014, pp. 144–146).

In the 1980s, political figures belonging to the *Milli Görüş* in Turkey increased their influence within the *Milli Görüş* organizations in Germany. In conjunction with establishing and organizing of AMGT after the arrival of Osman Yumakoğulları to Germany, and removal of the ban on RP from participating in the elections, a *Milli Görüş* with stronger transnational ties emerged in the second half of the 1980s. In the 1991 parliamentary elections, although the contribution of the *Milli Görüş* in Germany to the RP's election campaigns was limited to the help of transportation and money, the candidacy of the AMGT's members would be possible in the following local and general elections.

The local elections in 1994 and the general elections in 1995 can be considered the turning point in that the *Milli Görüş* movement proved itself in Turkish politics. The reasons that make the two elections necessary for this study are that they cover how the *Milli Görüş* members in Germany were heavily involved in RP's election activities. Some members of the IGMG / AMGT were involved in RP's election campaign as both a mayor candidate and a candidate for parliament. In the 1994 elections, two of the IGMG's German branch and one of the Dutch branch were elected as RP mayor. From Bremen, Zeki Başaran became mayor of Ağrı, from Cologne, Şevki Yılmaz became mayor of Rize,

and from the Netherlands, Salih Gök became the mayor of Batman (Amiriaux, 2003, p. 163; Mügge, 2010, p. 158). In the 1995 general elections, RP nominated approximately thirty IGMG members for MP in the Turkish National Assembly (Seufert, 1999, p. 296). Among them, Abdullah Gencer, former IGMG public relations officer, and Osman Yumakoğulları, former IGMG president, were elected as MP from Konya and İstanbul, respectively (Amiriaux, 2003, p. 163). In the 1999 general elections, FP nominated some IGMG members in Europe again, though only one of them was elected as deputy from the FP (Østergaard-Nielsen, 2003a, p. 56).

According to Mügge (2010), RP's interest in the IGMG began to decrease followed by Erbakan's victory in the 1995 elections because it had a sufficient basis in Turkey. Developments that will eliminate the need for fiscal remittance from *Milli Görüş* organizations in Germany, such as the control over the municipal budgets managed by RP or benefit from the public purse, have been effective in this loss of relevance. However, following the MGK decisions on 28 February 1997, as is well known, Erbakan resigned from his post, and RP was closed in the following period. National Security Council (*Milli Güvenlik Kurulu*, MGK) was particularly critical of the Islamic organizations' financial support from Europe to political parties in Turkey. One of the decisions of the MGK in 1997 was to prohibit organizations such as the IGMG in Europe from financing Turkish political parties. Even though this step aimed at breaking the transnational link of the *Milli Görüş* in Germany with the receiving country, the closure of the RP and the banning of Erbakan from politics enabled the *Milli Görüş* cadres to turn to Europe where they thought they could organize more easily. Thus, during the period when Erbakan could not find the opportunity to do politics in Turkey, he worked for the strengthening of the *Milli Görüş* organizations in Europe just like he had done after the 1971 memorandum by the Turkish military. However, IGMG's grassroots was experiencing a similar transformation at the time to that of the voter base in Turkey. Moreover, the power dissipation experienced by the traditionalist wing of the *Milli Görüş* also took

place in Europe. As a result, these negatively affected IGMG's human resources for Turkey's political activities.

3.1.1.3. Providing Financial Assistance

Süleyman Demirel, former prime minister and president, once said: "We need even 70 cents", pointing to the foreign currency need in the country, which had also connotations for political parties that could not get enough share from the state budget. Since the MSP period, economic remittance has been very important for the political activities of the *Milli Görüş* movement in Turkey. For this reason, the proponents of the party during the MSP period visited mosque communities in Germany collecting money from migrant workers. Damar (2013) states that the motivation leading Turkish migrant workers in Germany to support the *Milli Görüş* is Erbakan's propaganda on massive industrialization and the dream of a technically advanced Turkey, a motherland to whom they would one day return. Though in the beginning, these remittances were collected for religious services and the financing of political activities in Turkey, later these funds started to be transferred for incorporation and economic power (Demir et al., 2004, p. 170).

Until the founding of AMGT, financial transfers to MSP were held quite unprofessionally. When Erbakan sent Osman Yumakoğulları to Germany to redesign the organization, this flow of money began to be carried out in a more organized and professional manner. During the parliamentary elections campaign in 1991, 6 million DMs were transferred to be used in the RP election activities, from the *Milli Görüş* members in Germany (Amiriaux, 2003). Financial assistance from organizations in Germany also played a significant role in the 1994 municipal and 1995 general elections, where the RP achieved its most significant election success.

3.1.2. IGMG and the Weakening Ties with the *Milli Görüş* in Turkey

In this section, I will investigate how the relationship between *Milli Görüş* organizations in Germany and political parties in Turkey, which was established after the migration of Turkish workers to Germany, has weakened from the mid-90s onwards. First of all, I argue that both the pressure of the Turkish state on *Milli Görüş* parties and the tense relationship of the German state with *Milli Görüş* communities in Germany are among the main reasons for the weakening of the transnational bond between *Milli Görüş* parties and the IGMG. Second, I examine the decomposition of the AKP-SP which is one of the breaking points of the *Milli Görüş* movement in Turkey. Finally, I argue that the bankruptcy of “Islamic” holding companies that had started to rise in the nineties, after taking the capital of mosque communities in Germany, and the insecurity caused by it is another reason for the rupture between IGMG and the *Milli Görüş* in Turkey.

3.1.2.1. Institutional Pressures on the *Milli Görüş* in Turkey and Germany

On May 21, 1997, Vural Savaş, the Supreme Court of Appeals Prosecutor, claimed a closure case against RP for "acts contrary to the secular Turkish Republic principle." after eight months of trial, RP was closed by the Constitutional Court on January 16, 1998. The following FP period revealed a transformation in the ideology of *Milli Görüş*, which had traditionally had the most vigorous opposition in Turkey to the EU and EU values. After 1997, however, politicians from both the innovative and traditionalist wings such as Şeref Malkoç, Şevket Kazan, Abdullah Gül, and Mustafa Kamalak were regularly going to Strasbourg for the lawsuits in the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) to be filed regarding the closure of the RP (Üçüncü, interview by author).

Despite the decision to close down the RP in the glare of publicity, European countries and institutions did not act as saviors as the FP hoped. *Milli Görüş* suffered the most significant blow in this regard when the ECHR found closure of the RP justified. Kemalist ideology in Turkey affected the rhetoric of German domestic law (Ewing, 2003), and it

was the second shock for the *Milli Görüş* that trying to escape the entrapment in Turkey and open the political field in Europe. During this period, legal measures were taken against organizations with close ties to RP and other Turkish-origin Islamist organizations in Germany. At this time, secular Turkish-German groups and media played an essential role in influencing German policy (Karakas, 2011, p. 11). In its measures against the IGMG, the German state modeled the secular discourse developed by the Turkish state against the RP and the *Milli Görüş* parties; thus clearly, the "ghost of Turkish politics" began to appear in German institutional circles. The anxiety that the IGMG would establish a political party could be accepted as the reflection of the Turkish state reflex in Germany (Ewing, 2003, p. 413). Also, BfV was watching over the IGMG because it did not support the Kemalist notion of secularism (Østergaard-Nielsen, 2003a, p. 57).

For Muslim organizations, who were cornered after the September 11 attacks, relations with a Muslim country would weaken their relations with the German state. The organization's internal dynamics, such as generational shift, have also paved the way for weakening this bond. However, the oppression suffered by the *Milli Görüş* movement in Turkey, problems faced by Muslims at the global level, and the German state's oppressive attitude has caused the decline to the minimum level of relations between Turkey and IGMG. Two specific factors mediated this process: the AKP – SP separation in 2002, and the “Islamic” holding companies going bankrupt causing a significant decline in the flow of remittances from Germany to Turkey.

3.1.2.2. AKP-SP Separation

The crisis in Feb 28 brought to light some of the cracks that had already existed in the RP. This subsection will discuss how this deep crisis has affected the *Milli Görüş* in Germany. We need to focus on the first half of the nineties to see the *Milli Görüş* movement's divergence. In this era, there was a conflict between the İstanbul municipal administration, led by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the RP's former provincial head, and the

headquarters in Ankara. Another reason for turmoil was that ANAP-origin MPs advocated some changes in RP's structure and ideology. Also, some organizations, such as Foundation for Unity (*Birlik Vakfı*), played a critical role during the divide between the new and old generations of *Milli Görüş* leaders (Atacan, 2007, pp. 193–195). These events resulted in the party split into two poles during the FP era, traditionalists and innovators. The defeat of the traditionalist staff that led the *Milli Görüş* during the February 28 process was the main reason for the FP's split, which had been established after the RP. At the FP's congress in May 2000, the traditionalists' candidate Recai Kutan won by a small margin against Abdullah Gül, the innovators' candidate, but the innovative wing led by Gül, Erdoğan, and Bülent Arınç proved their strength within the party. It was already apparent that the FP would be closed by the Constitutional Court and the innovative wing waited for this decision. Following the FP's closure in 2001, while the traditionalists founded the Felicity Party, the SP, innovators found the reasonable ground to establish their political party, Justice and Development Party, or the AKP.

Following the AKP-SP separation, the innovative wing adopted the conservative democratic ideology and declared that it “took off the *Milli Görüş* shirt (ideology)”, while the traditionalist wing went on with their original ideology in the following period. For the *Milli Görüş* in Germany, the post-Islamist ideology (see Schiffauer, 2010) was essential to survive on the ground it stands. However, Erbakan's orientation towards the organizations in Europe towards his death made it difficult for the IGMG to come under AKP control. On the other hand, IGMG did not intend to be under the authority of AKP, as Oğuz Üçüncü, a former secretary-general, emphasized in my interview with him. After the AKP came to power, Union of European Turkish Democrats (*Union Europäisch-Türkischer Demokraten e. V.*, UETD) was established in Cologne in 2004 on the then prime minister Erdoğan's orders. In 2018, it changed its name to Union of International Democrats (UID). Hasan Özdoğan, one of the general managers of the UETD, had also served as the deputy secretary-general at IGMG for a period in the nineties. Even though there were such transitions from IGMG to UETD at the personal level, a mass transition

did not occur. On the other hand, ties between IGMG and SP also remained weak, as the leadership of the former refrained from actively supporting the latter politically, financially and human-resources wise.

Another relevant institution in IGMG's relationship with AKP has been the *Diyanet*'s Germany branch, DITIB. After the 1980 military coup, DITIB was established thanks to the attempts of Tayyar Altıkulaç, the then president of the *Diyanet*, and Nurettin Ersin, commander of the Turkish Land Forces (*Türk Kara Kuvvetleri*), in order to prevent the activities of political and religious structures in Germany. DITIB was aiming to reduce the participation of Turkish migrant workers in mosques and organizations that belonged to the *Süleymancı* and *Milli Görüş* communities. Consequently, DITIB became the voice of Turkey's secular state, and it was not conceivable to collaborate with the *Milli Görüş* communities in Germany. During the February 28 process, the negative attitude of DITIB as the representative of the Turkish state towards the *Milli Görüş* communities revealed itself more clearly. However, after the AKP came to power in November 2003, a more positive relationship began to develop between IGMG and DITIB. The German state's stance against DITIB and its personnel, especially after the July 15 coup attempt in 2016, caused DITIB to establish closer relations with Muslim organizations whose members were mostly Turks such as IGMG (Üçüncü, interview by author). Bruce (2019) states that *Milli Görüş* delegations are invited today to the ceremonies and events organized abroad by DITIB, and the disappearance of the ideological conflict caused many *Milli Görüş* mosques to join the state-linked DITIB networks. On the other hand, German politician Volker Beck claims that Turkish-Muslim associations in Germany, including IGMG, are controlled from Ankara like DITIB and argue a strong link between IGMG, DITIB, and AKP (Frank, 2018). However, Üçüncü, the general secretary of the IGMG until 2014, states that if the German state improves its relations with DITIB again, the religious representative of the Turkish state may once again distance itself from Islamic organizations in Germany:

All of us (Islamic communities) became brothers after beatings by the German state. DITIB was charged with spying after 15 July 2016. When he was isolated from all accepted social areas, he started to work with structures such as IGMG, which he neglected for years. Friends at IGMG say we have a very compatible working environment with DITIB. And I tell my friends that DITIB had no other choice. DITIB will drop us off instantly when the German state wink at them again.⁵

Thanks to establishing networks of the AKP via UETD/UID, and after the death of Erbakan in 2011, in Germany, organizing of the SP via SAADET Europa e.V., and the New Welfare Party (*Yeniden Refah Partisi*) via Erbakan Foundation (*Erbakan Vakfı*), IGMG was able to stay considerably away from the influence of Turkish politics. Also, IGMG expresses on many occasions that it is not related to these structures organized in Europe:

We witness that some organizations use the "*Milli Görüş*" completion or the "Milli" expression for themselves. It is seen that the names of these entities in this way are accepted indiscriminately in the media organs and the political wing, and this is an attempt to give rise to a deliberate picture about the Islamic Community *Millî Görüş* (IGMG). The latest example of this has been seen in Austria. Some newspapers in Austria made the opening news of "associations of the *Milli Görüş*". In this context, the opening of 'European Youth Association' (Avrupa Gençlik Derneği, AGD) was shown as the opening of a youth club of Islamic Community *Milli Görüş*. Over this, it was tried to associate IGMG with the "Felicity Party (SP)". On the occasion of such imputations made over names, we would like to express that; The Islamic Community *Millî Görüş* is not affiliated in any way, directly or indirectly, with the Felicity Party (SP) or any other political party.⁶

⁵ The original text: "Hepimiz (İslami cemaatler) Alman devleti tarafından ortak dayak yiyince kardeş olduk. DITIB, 15 Temmuz 2016 sonrasında ajanlıkla suçlandı. Kabul görmüş olduğu bütün toplumsal alanlardan tecrit edilince yıllarca ihmal ettiği IGMG gibi yapılarla çalışmaya başladı. IGMG'deki arkadaşlar DITIB ile çok uyumlu bir çalışma ortamımız var diyorlar. Ben de arkadaşlara diyorum ki DITIB'in başka bir seçeneği yoktu. Alman devleti onlara yeniden göz kırptığında DITIB bizi anında bırakacaktır." (Üçüncü, interview by author, 2020-08-20)

⁶ The original text: "Bazı oluşumların '*Millî Görüş*' terkiibini veya '*Millî*' ifadesini kendileri için kullandıklarını görmekteyiz. Söz konusu oluşumların kendilerini bu şekilde isimlendirmelerinin medya organlarında ve siyaset kanadında ayırt edilmeksizin kabul edildiği görülmekte, bu da sonuç olarak İslam Toplumu *Millî Görüş* hakkında kasıtlı bir resmin ortaya çıkmasına sebebiyet vermeye çalışılmaktadır. Bunun en son örneği Avusturya'da görülmüştür. Avusturya'da bazı gazeteler '*Millî Görüş* lokallerinin' açılış haberini yapmışlardır. Bu bağlamda 'Avrupa Gençlik Derneği' (AGD) lokallerinin açılışı bir İslam Toplumu *Millî Görüş* gençlik lokalinin açılışı gibi gösterilmiştir. Bunun üzerinden IGMG'nin 'Saadet Partisi' ile ilişkilendirilmesine çalışılmıştır. İsimler üzerinden yapılan bu gibi yakıştırmalar münasebetiyle ifade etmek isteriz ki; İslam

Nevertheless, this does not mean a complete disconnection, because the base of IGMG still has a marginal mass who believe that the organization is the extension in Europe of the *Milli Görüş* movement. Moreover, the fact that Mustafa Yeneroğlu, who held high-level positions such as vice president and general secretary at IGMG, has been elected as MP from the AKP in 2015 also prove the relationship at the headquarters level with the political parties in Turkey. However, this relationship remained relatively weak compared to the network at the nineties. (For example, Yeneroğlu resigned from the AKP in 2019 and later joined the newly-founded opposition party, the DEVA of Ali Babacan in 2020.)

3.1.2.3. The Bankruptcy of “Islamic” Holding Companies and the Decline of the Flow of Remittances

In parallel with the rise of the RP in Turkey, "Islamic" holding companies were also on the rise. For these companies, mostly organized through Independent Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association (*Müstakil Sanayici ve İşadamları Derneği*, MÜSİAD), the funds of religious Turks in Germany meant potential financial resources. Thereby, the savings of migrant workers in Germany returned to Turkey, contributed to an increase in "Islamic" commercial activity, and became a significant source of financial support for the RP. For example, Konya-based Kombassan created a network of firms representing the total capital of more than 30,000 shareholders, most of whom were migrant workers in Germany (Öniş, 1997, p. 758). YİMPAŞ, another company owned by “Islamist” capital, was established as a small commercial company in 1982, but later became a giant company with 20 supermarket chains in Europe. This exceptional growth of the holding was due to its aptitude to incorporate more than 60,000 small investors in Europe and

Toplumu *Millî Görüş*’ün, Saadet Partisi veya herhangi bir siyasi parti ile doğrudan veya dolaylı hiçbir şekilde bağı bulunmamaktadır.” (IGMG, 2019f)

Turkey on Islamic principles of profit and loss sharing (Baki Adaş, 2009, p. 629). Another of these companies was Jet-Pa, headed by infamous Fadıl Akgündüz, which became one of the most notorious companies in Turkey due to fraud in the late 1990s. The company went bankrupt after collecting about 60 million DM from *Milli Görüş* members (Tol, 2008, pp. 121–122).

However, neither the Turkish army nor the bureaucracy were compassionate towards these "Islamic" holding companies. The army perceived powerful Islamist conglomerates in Turkey as part of a capital plan to build an anti-system regime, and therefore there were many holding companies on its blacklist. The army also suspected that the Islamic capital in Turkey was used to finance religious fundamentalism. (Yeşilada, 2002, p. 78). On June 17, 1997, with these effects, a Turkish court froze the assets of the Kombassan and gave a \$101 million repayment order for its shareholders. In October 2000, the Capital Markets Board of Turkey froze the real estate assets of the Kombassan (M. Rubin, 2005). Other companies have also encountered a similar treatment and they were largely bankrupt succession with the effects of the 2001 Turkish economic crisis. The bankruptcy of holdings' pyramid scheme advertised by the imams in the *Milli Görüş* mosques in Germany caused a great distrust among the members.

In addition to this lack of confidence to Islamic holding companies, in the AKP and SP period, which was established by the *Milli Görüş* cadres after the February 28 process, the political preferences of the *Milli Görüş* communities in Germany were one of the factors that reduced the money flow. While most of the IGMG base preferred AKP, AKP continued its diaspora activities mostly through UID / UETD and DITIB. AKP's coming to power in Turkey alone and state and municipal resources channeled into its budget had also obviated the need for future financial support from the IGMG organization. However, the money to be sent by the IGMG has been vital for the SP, which is stuck under the 10% election threshold and cannot receive funds from the public purse. Until

the death of Necmettin Erbakan, this aid was provided, albeit limited, while economic disconnection added to the long-standing political support between the IGMG-SP after 2011. Unsurprisingly, IGMG and SP denied this financial assistance because it was illegal in both German and Turkish state laws.

According to Trautner (2000, p. 74), in the trans-state (*transstaatliche*) economic capital of "Islamic" companies to identify the share has been more difficult than reasoning on the religious affiliation of the Turkish population. The amount and its effect of the transferred financial assistance to the Islamist party in Turkey from the economic capital at stake are more complicated than that. The size of the financial assistance transferred to *Milli Görüş* parties, from MSP until the SP, has not been fully revealed. However, the interruption of this financial assistance flow has a significant effect on the fact that the *Milli Görüş* in Germany has become a religious organization inside Europe rather than an extension of a Turkish political party. With the lack of confidence because of "Islamic" holdings' bankruptcy, and transformation of the *Milli Görüş* political parties, IGMG's financial accumulation flowed to their own activities rather than *Milli Görüş* movement in Turkey. The IGMG spent the money collected from their members on religious education activities in line with its mission of being a religious community. The accumulations at stake are spent in fields such as a vocational school for imams in Mainz (*Berufsfachschule Muslimischer Führungskräfte*, BeMuF), training of imams servicing in IGMG mosques, scholarships to students studying at universities in Europe. Secondly, IGMG serves as a transnational humanitarian relief organization and delivers the collected money from prosperous Muslims in Europe through *kurban* and *zakat* projects to people in need around the world (Halm et al., 2012; M. Özkan, 2012; Rosenow-Williams & Sezgin, 2014; Sezgin & Dijkzeul, 2013). Thirdly, even if IGMG did not divert money to the political parties in Turkey, HASENE foundation continues humanitarian relief activities in Turkey after natural disasters. As a result, this transformation in the economic assistance of IGMG is related to its aim to become a European-centered

religious community and a humanitarian relief organization. A very significant factor influencing this transformation has been the generational shift in its elite cadres.

3.2. Generational Shift in Management of the IGMG

This generational shift has been best represented by the attitudes and activities of three important leaders of the IGMG: Mehmet Sabri Erbakan, who launched a series of reforms to turn it into a European-style NGO, Oğuz Üçüncü, a former secretary general who represented the IGMG as its head attorney during the court trials by German authorities, and Mustafa Yeneroğlu, also an attorney who represented the institution in legal trials but also influenced its public standing and perception particularly in relation to the problems of European Muslims and other minorities, such as Islamophobia and Antisemitism. All three of these figures are German-born, highly-educated, and reform-minded conservative Turkish men, now in their middle ages, who held important positions within the IGMG and tried to change its direction toward a more regular NGO and “global” Muslim humanitarian organization. Let us now take a look at their contributions to the IGMG’s transformation, starting with Erbakan the nephew.

3.2.1. A Reformer Nephew: Mehmet Sabri Erbakan

The generational shift in the management of the *Milli Görüş* in Germany commenced along with the general secretariat of Mehmet Sabri Erbakan, *Milli Görüş* leader Necmettin Erbakan’s nephew, in 1995. His father, Akgün Erbakan, an engineer responsible in the organization for documents in German, was in consultant capacity to the leader of the *Milli Görüş*. Mehmet Sabri Erbakan joined the *Milli Görüş* at the age of 13; his institutional career started when he was charged with managing the AMGT’s real estate and legal affairs following his father's death (Damar, 2013). As AMGT transformed into two separate organizations named IGMG and EMUG, administrative changes also occurred. In 1995, Mehmet Sabri Erbakan took over as the secretary-general after Ali Yüksel. Initially serving as the secretary-general under Dr. Yusuf Işık's proxy leadership

between 1999 and 2001, the young Erbakan became the leader of IGMG as of April 2001. In October 2002, however, he resigned due to some problems in his private life and the organization's internal crisis. Although Erbakan's leadership was short-lived, he was able to set the IGMG's direction towards becoming a European and increasingly global organization.

Unlike the previous managers of the *Milli Görüş* in Germany, Mehmet Sabri Erbakan was a German citizen who was born in Germany and completed his entire education in this country. He was distinguished from his predecessors like Ahmet Rüştü Banaz, Yusuf Zeynel Abidin, Osman Yumakoğulları, Ali Yüksel and Yusuf Işık with his cosmopolitan, Turkish-German/European identity. Under the influence of this identity, he tried to accomplish three basic goals during his administration: help develop a European Islam, a new definition of the relationship with Turkey and the Islamic world community, and a repositioning for the IGMG within Germany (Rosenow-Williams, 2012).

In the *Milli Görüş* in Germany, which served as a mosque-centered religious organization besides being a political movement, Europe and Islam were not the concepts that could go hand-in-hand before Mehmet Sabri Erbakan's leadership. Under his leadership a new understanding of the Muslim presence in Germany surfaced, based on the recognition that German secularism created a space for Islam. IGMG has since tried to develop a "progressive minority *fiqh*" (Nielsen & Otterbeck, 2016). According to Mehmet Sabri Erbakan, the West should not be demonized without justification, and that Europe offered Muslims the opportunity to practice their beliefs and life style freely (cited in Sunier & Landman, 2015). During his term, the IGMG dedicated itself to establish Islam as a minority religion within the legal system of the European states (Schiffauer, 2008). It is possible to come across Mehmet Sabri Erbakan's statements, showing that he is trying to nourish within the IGMG an understanding of Islam that does not conflict with European laws. For instance, he states that men and women are equal before the law in

Islam, and therefore Qur'an's view of gender equality is consistent with the German law. He also thinks that, in the context of the Quran 2:282, the testimony of a “trained woman” will be equal to that of a man:

Similarly IGMG interpreters recognize the need for reinterpretation even of explicit Qur'anic verses. For instance there are key elements of the Qur'an that feminists and Western observers have often used to point out that women are not treated equally in Islam. One of them is Sura 2, verse 282: “And have two of your men act as witnesses, but if two men are not available, then a man and two women you approve, so that in case one of them is confused the other may remind her.” When I asked Mehmet Sabri Erbakan how he understood this verse, he provided an interpretation that was consistent with the idea that men and women are equal before the law and thus consistent with German law. Like some translators of the Qur'an, he contextualized the verse, saying that in this particular case two women's testimony had been needed because they were not themselves merchants and thus not expert in the matter being discussed. In the case where a woman's training is equal to a man's, her testimony would carry equal weight (Ewing, 2010, p. 64).

The fact that his leadership period coincided with that of the 9/11 attacks meant that he had to manage an arduous process. At the same time, however, this process was expedient for IGMG under the leadership of Erbakan, who planned serious reforms towards the organization's Europeanization. The accusations against IGMG for their close relations with Turkey, anti-integration, antisemitism, and Islamism would arise more harshly under former managements. However, the changes after 9/11 failed to ensure that the organization was fully considered legitimate by German officials. This further weakened traditionalists within the organization and strengthened the hand of second-generation administrators such as Mehmet Sabri Erbakan, Oğuz Üçüncü, and Mustafa Yeneroğlu (Koç, 2007).

Against the need to eliminate the negative impression within Germany and Europe against the *Milli Görüş*, Mehmet Sabri Erbakan decided putting younger and educated people into management, rearranging their relations with the German institutional

structures. However, after September 11, the suspicion of the German state affected this process negatively, which led Erbakan to adopt a policy aiming to reduce the pressures on the organization. The IGMG wanted to show that it condemned the 9/11 attacks with press releases and various mosque programs during Erbakan's administration. However, this was not enough to eliminate the German institutional circles' doubts, because this skepticism had been founded on the rhetoric of the secular Turkish state, which suppresses the *Milli Görüş* movement in Turkey (Ewing, 2003). In the annual reports of BfV, for instance, the German state accused the *Milli Görüş* of planning to demolish Turkey's secular state and establish a Shariah order with an Iranian-type regime (cited in IGMG, 2001f). Mehmet Sabri Erbakan, who made a stride on integration, citizenship, and accepting European values, was not fully able to secure reciprocal moves from the German state and therefore left his position quickly due to the crises within the organization (Damar, 2013; Gür, 2012). It prevented him from fully realizing the reforms he intended.

Mehmet Sabri Erbakan also aimed to develop a new kind of relationship with other Muslim communities and the wider Muslim World. This is indicated by the fact that the problems in the Islamic world kept the agenda of the Erbakan administration quite busy. According to him, life in prosperous Europe should make it easier for them to reach out the global community. The organization reacted through press releases on bomb attacks in Kenya and Tanzania (IGMG, 1998a), airstrikes in Sudan and Afghanistan (IGMG, 1998b), and war crimes tribunals on the Balkans (IGMG, 2001b). Also, the IGMG had harsh criticisms and condemnations against the Taliban in Afghanistan. Mehmet Sabri Erbakan accused the Taliban of labeling non-Muslims in Afghanistan, inhumane treatment of women, arbitrary punishment of people, and destroying the cultural heritage of thousands of years of humanity (IGMG, 2001d). The IGMG's reactions to the Taliban were particularly apparent in the case of their attitude towards the Afghani civilians (IGMG, 2001a), and the arrest of Christians (IGMG, 2001e) and humanitarian aid workers operating in Afghanistan (IGMG, 2001c).

Another important point about the IGMG's global reach to the ummah was their humanitarian aid campaigns and the educational programs that followed. For they realized through these aid programs in Muslim countries that migrant Muslims needed to be successful in collective socioeconomic upward mobility in the receiving countries. Thus, education became the main target of IGMG communities during the period of Mehmet Sabri Erbakan (Rosenow-Williams, 2012).

3.2.2. Mediation Actor of the Investigation Era: Oğuz Üçüncü

After Mehmet Sabri Erbakan became a leader in the IGMG, Ali Kızılkaya undertook the duty of secretary-general by proxy for a while. In 2002, when Kızılkaya took over the leader of the Islamic Council for the Federal Republic of Germany (*Der Islamrat für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland e. V.*, IR), Oğuz Üçüncü became the secretary-general of the IGMG. Üçüncü, born in 1969 in Hamm and studied engineering in Dortmund, had been actively involved in the IGMG since 1986. Also, he was the head of the youth department of the local IGMG organization in Hamm-Pelkum. During 1991-93, he was on the executive board of IGMG's youth organization in Eastern Westphalia. He then worked at the youth department of the IGMG's former headquarters in Kerpen. In the ongoing process, he was the assistant of Ibrahim al-Zayat, the director of European Mosque Building and Support Organization (*Europäische Moscheebau und Unterstützungsorganisation*, EMUG). After becoming the president, Mehmet Sabri Erbakan aimed to constitute his staff from the second generation who had received education in Europe. Thus, Erbakan intended to appoint Oğuz Üçüncü as the president of the Youth Department of the Head Office during his consultation in the executive board; however, Üçüncü declined this offer. Then, Üçüncü accepted the offer of being the secretary-general and remained in this post between 2002 and 2014.

Mehmet Sabri Erbakan left the leadership in the year Üçüncü took the post, who continued this responsibility during the period of the new leader Yavuz Çelik Karahan (Osman Döring) and during the first years of Kemal Ergün's term who took over as president in 2011. The German government's legal investigations against the IGMG (see below for details) in which Üçüncü and Ibrahim al-Zayat were at the forefront in 2009 became a turning point for the restructuring of the *Milli Görüş* in Germany. This incident will be briefly discussed in this section and analyzed in more detail in the following parts of the thesis (see 3.3.2 below).

The Üçüncü era had three prominent issues, two of which were related to the German state and society, the other to IGMG's base and Turkish politics. These three issues acted as factors allowing him to navigate the IGMG's direction toward more Europeanization and reform. One of the issues related to the German state was that Üçüncü took the post of general secretary right after the September 11 attacks and took part in the senior position of one of the largest Islamist organizations in this process where Muslims in Europe faced significant problems. Secondly, he was at the center of the corruption investigations started in 2009. Lastly, parallel to the beginning of the Üçüncü era, the AKP, established by breaking with the *Milli Görüş* tradition, came to power as the singly party in Turkey. Just like most of the *Milli Görüş* movement in Turkey, the shifting of the IGMG's base votes to the AKP necessitated a balanced policy monitoring for Üçüncü.

In the post 9/11 period when Mehmet Sabri Erbakan handed over the office, Oğuz Üçüncü experienced a process during which he had been compelled to struggle against the perceptions regarding "Islamism" (in a negative sense) and "Islamic terror" generated against Muslims and Muslim organizations in the world, particularly in Europe. The attacks in Madrid in 2004 and London in 2005 in which Al-Qaeda was held responsible, and murder of conservative politician Pim Fortuyn in 2001 and filmmaker Theo Van Gogh in 2004, caused Muslims in Europe to be identified with fundamentalism,

violence, and terror. In Üçüncü's period, the attacks against Islam, such as the Cartoon Crisis in Denmark in 2006 and the provocative statements of Pope Benedict XVI against Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), led Muslims in Europe to react collectively. This situation provoked the hostile approaches of Europeans who considered immigrant Muslims in Europe as a threat (Kaya, 2009a).

With the effect of the increased tension in Europe, Üçüncü developed a policy against the state and public pressure towards the Muslim organizations within the framework of the concepts of “Islamism” and “Islamist terror”. He considered it as the responsibility of Muslim organizations to quickly condemn the attacks in Europe that implicate Muslims. He also states that they used the facilities of the IGMG not only to condemn the terrorist attacks and violence but also for informing the members of the organization that they will not give any support and exhibit sympathy to terrorism (Laurence, 2012).

Despite these attempts, Üçüncü argued that the security organizations and the policies of federal and state governments do not consider Muslims as being part of Germany (Vielhaber, 2012). He also argued that these policies and the extensive use of the notion of Islamist terror promote Islamophobia and violence against Muslims. For instance, in his statement about the massacre of Marwa el-Sherbini (d. 2009), one of the symbolic cases of racism and xenophobia in Germany, Üçüncü stated that the essential public debates regarding the attacks against Muslims in daily life had not been carried out (IGMG, 2010g).

The prominent issue of Üçüncü's service term was the investigation crisis the IGMG faced within the German institutional environment. In 2009, the judicial investigation into the establishment of a criminal network within the IGMG that had been ongoing since 2007 had expanded by incorporating higher-up people, including IGMG General Secretary

Oğuz Üçüncü, into the process (Schiffauer, 2012). In this investigation, Üçüncü and Ibrahim al-Zayat, the president of the EMUG, were charged with plotting to embezzle charity money. German police that raided the offices belonging to the *Milli Görüş* movement argued the existence of some indications that the funds collected had remitted to HAMAS and Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade organizations (Joppke & Torpey, 2013). However, the court in Munich dropped the case due to the lack of evidence in the investigations in September 2010 (Halm et al., 2012; IGMG, 2010f). Even though an acquitment had reached in the financial lawsuit process against the IGMG, which had begun in 2009, the tax penalty lawsuit against the members of the board continued in this period. Üçüncü resigned from the general secretariat in 2014, since he worried that this case could affect the IGMG:

We have been through tough times in the past years as a congregation. Especially during due to the financial case against IGMG since 2008, our congregation has been under a huge burden. At the end of the financial litigation process against IGMG, a settlement was finally reached. The case of tax penalty against those who were members of the Board of Directors in the relevant period is still ongoing. Due to this criminal case, I have resigned from the position of Secretary General, which I have been holding for 12 years, in order to relieve the burden of my community. I would like to express my gratitude to all my fellow comrades, and especially my brothers and sisters who volunteered at various levels of IGMG for their devoted and fraternal work. May Allah be our helper.⁷

The problems faced by Muslims and Muslim organizations in Europe after the 9/11 and the investigations conducted by the German state about Üçüncü and the IGMG strengthened the tendency towards Europeanization, which had started with Mehmet

⁷ The original text: “Cemaatimiz, geçtiğimiz yıllarda oldukça zor dönemler geçirmiştir. Özellikle 2008 yılından beri IGMG’ye karşı yürütülen mali dava esnasında cemaatimiz çok büyük bir yükün altına girmiştir. IGMG’ye karşı yürütülen mali dava süreci sonunda nihayet bir uzlaşmaya varılmıştır. İlgili dönemde Yönetim Kurulu üyeliği görevinde bulunanlar hakkında yürütülen vergi cezası davası ise devam etmektedir. Bu ceza davası dolayısıyla, cemaatimin yükünü hafifletmek adına, 12 yıldan beri yürüttüğüm Genel Sekreterlik görevinden istifa etmiş bulunuyorum. Bütün dava arkadaşlarıma, yoldaşlarıma ve bilhassa IGMG’nin çeşitli kademelerinde gönüllü olarak görev yapan kardeşlerime fedakâr ve kardeşçe çalışmalarından dolayı şükranlarımı sunuyorum. Allah Teâlâ yâr ve yardımcımız olsun.” (IGMG, 2014g).

Sabri Erbakan. However, it was also essential and had a significant role in this process that the period of Üçüncü coincided with the period of AKP in Turkey. For instance, in the report of Bavarian Intelligence Service, Günther Beckstein, the Interior Minister of Bavaria, asserted that former Turkish Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül sent a letter summoning foreign representatives of Turkey to engage with *Milli Görüş* movement. Besides, Beckstein states that General Secretary Üçüncü offered support to the founders of AKP, Gül, and Erdoğan (cited in Gür, 2012, p. 157). However, as AKP continued its activities towards the Turkish diaspora in Germany through the Union of European Turkish Democrats (UETD, or UID as its new name), founded in Cologne in 2004, and established control over DİTİB, the necessity to develop a connection with IGMG disappeared. The relations established with the traditionalist wing of the Felicity Party (*Saadet Partisi*, SP) remained fragile during the period of Üçüncü. In this fragility, the German state's pressure on the IGMG because of the antisemitic and anti-Western content in the Turkish media organs of the *Milli Görüş* movement was considerably evident. Üçüncü, thus, denies the claimed relations of the IGMG with the SP and the *Millî Gazete* (Johnson, 2004). All these developments have weakened the transnational ties of the organization with both the AKP and the SP and led it to head towards becoming a European institution.

The AKP following a more compromising policy regarding the issues of accession to the EU and the relations with Western countries compared to the traditionalist wing of the *Milli Görüş* was a more suitable political movement that IGMG could establish contact with during its Europeanisation process. To understand Secretary-General Üçüncü's approach to AKP in early years, the *hijra* metaphor should be examined. After stating that the Prophet travelled to the city of Madinah and conquered the city of Mecca but returned to Madinah after the conquest, he symbolizes AKP's accession to power as the conquest of Mecca. Concerning this analogy, Üçüncü points out that the situation of immigrant Muslims in Europe where they migrated is like the Prophet returning to Madinah after the conquest (Yükleyen, 2012, pp. 147–148).

Thus, the security crises in Europe, financial investigations and the emergence of AKP thanks to the transformation of Islamism in Turkey shaped significantly the period during which Üçüncü performed as the secretary general and increased the activities of the organization towards the Muslim population in Europe. Thus, the period of Üçüncü was an opportunity for the IGMG to complete the reforms that Sabri Erbakan could not fully realize. However, tensions with the German institutional environment affected this adversely.

3.2.3. Claim for Representation: Mustafa Yeneroğlu

Even if the IGMG stressed that it is not connected to Turkey's political movement, it has lost credibility in this discourse because Mustafa Yeneroğlu was elected MPs from AKP in the 2015 general elections. However, in the following process, Yeneroğlu intensified his internal criticism within AKP, and as a result, his resignation was requested by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the AKP leader. Yeneroğlu, who resigned from the AKP in 2019 and remained an independent deputy in the parliament for a while, acted as the founder of the Democracy and Progress Party (Demokrasi ve Atılım Partisi, Deva Party) in March 2020, and still serves as the Head of the Law and Justice Policies. It is necessary to look for the roots of Mustafa Yeneroğlu's political attitude, which is difficult to accept in Turkish politics, in the environment where he grew up in Germany, and in the atmosphere of IGMG, where he served at various levels for thirty years.

Born in Bayburt in 1975, Yeneroğlu came to Germany with his family when he was a year old and completed his law education at the University of Cologne in 2000. Yeneroğlu entered the *Milli Görüş* organizations in 1981-1982, starting his Qur'anic education in the Fatih Mosque in Nippes, the headquarters of the *Milli Görüş* organizations. He participated in the educational activities of youth branches in the period 1986-87. He took part in the management of Kalk branch in 1989, a duty that lasted for six months.

With the advantage of being talented on German, he served at various levels of the regional youth organization from 1989-1990. In 1991, he was appointed as the executive member of youth branches in the headquarters becoming responsible for official legal affairs. He then became a member of central executive committee in the AMGT during the presidency of Osman Yumakoğulları in 1993, where he served until 2014. Also, he became the vice president in the department of the organization, where he was responsible for legal affairs, during this period, when he ensured the establishment of legal entities of the *Milli Görüş* organizations both in Europe and in other continents. In 1996, he left the department of the organization in the central executive committee and became the assistant secretary-general. Later, he headed the human resources management in the general secretariat unit of the organization.

Yeneroğlu was predominantly focused on the secularism and religion-state relations in European countries, the legal agenda of the organization, the establishment of anti-Islamophobia mechanisms, the struggle of Muslims in Europe, especially in Germany, for public legal personality, the criminalization of the IGMG after the September 11 attacks, and determining the style of communication in the organization's public opinion in this process. For this reason, he did not take part in positions related to the internal functioning of the organization, except for educational activities, until 2011. In this respect, it differs from Oğuz Üçüncü, the long-time secretary general, and Mehmet Sabri Erbakan, the former chairman. In other words, Yeneroğlu continued its activities in an area far from the restriction of its organization. While he did not work in the organization for six months after Kemal Ergün became the chairman, he became the head of corporate communications in November 2011. In this process, he aimed to reform *Perspektif* magazine, and establish online and traditional publications such as *Camia*, *İslamıQ*, *Plural Publications* and planned to "bring IGMG to a strong point institutionally".

He became IGMG's Vice President between 2011-2014 and finally IGMG Secretary General after the resignation of Oğuz Üçüncü in 2014. Shortly after, Bekir Altaş was appointed in June 2015 to the position vacated by Yeneroğlu when he was elected as deputy from AKP in 2015. Yeneroğlu is an important figure representing the generational shift in the management of the organization. The establishment of a law office by him at the headquarters was the move that started a new era in the legal struggles of the community with the German institutional structures. As the head of the legal unit during the period of assistant secretary-general, Yeneroğlu dealt with both the law of associations for the institutionalization struggle of Muslims in Europe and the cases of Muslims exposed to discrimination. With the beginning of the general secretariat period, Yeneroğlu signalled a policy towards solving the problems Muslims faced in the German society, such as the establishment of Islamic Theology chairs in European universities, training of imams there, the ability to teach religion in public schools, elimination of obstacles in the construction of mosques, equal participation of Muslims in consultation and decision-making mechanisms in all official institutions, the establishment of nurseries, schools, hospitals, nursing homes and other needed institutions (IGMG, 2014f).

One of the areas that Yeneroğlu struggled within the legal field was the attribution of a negative meaning to the concept of Islamism and thus rescuing the IGMG from accusations. The law office under the presidency of Yeneroğlu often took action against the construction of the forms of behaviour protected within the framework of freedom of religion as Islamism and anticonstitutionalism (IGMG, 2007a; Vielhaber, 2012). The said law office actively participated in decisions that prevented Muslims' freedom of religious worship in the public sphere. For example, Yeneroğlu made statements supporting the legalization of male circumcision in Germany (IGMG, 2012g; Yurdakul, 2016). The law office also pushed forward arguments to get the IGMG accepted as a religious community within the framework of the associations law:

Yeneroğlu stated that the answer to the question of whether umbrella organizations can be religious communities or not lies in the decision of the Federal Administrative Court (BVerwG) dated 02.23.2005. Accordingly, if the lowest level of the union consists of real individuals, the umbrella organization can also be a religious community. The requirement for comprehensive religious recognition also applies to the umbrella organization level. The criteria developed by the BVerwG can only be discussed as the self-understanding of religious communities and the positioning of religious life based on this, not in general. By adapting the criteria of the Federal Administrative Court (BVerwG) to the IGMG, Yeneroğlu stated that the IGMG is clearly a religious community.⁸

In addition to his legal struggles in Germany under the roof of his law office, he represents the reformist wing advocating the cessation of relations with a political movement in Turkey. Yeneroğlu, in an interview with a newspaper in Turkey, illustrates this view of his generation:

We had very different socialization. They [*Millî Görüş* members in Turkey] were not really aware of it. We were against antisemitism and objecting to the generalist hostility to the West. We had a cosmopolitan European vision, and supported EU membership. As Muslim minorities there, we were paying the price for headlines of the *Millî Gazete*. They (headlines) were immediately going into Germany's internal security reports to the detriment of the *Millî Görüş*. So for us, there was no distinction between innovation and traditionalism. The RP was our last party. We always told the people in Turkey about the social changes of the Muslims in Europe. Moreover, we tried to explain that the organization was now focusing on Muslims' issues in Europe rather than being a structure that supports Turkey, working at the point of institutionalization of Islam in Europe rather than confined to Turkey, and being precursor structures of European Muslims. Nevertheless, they did not want to understand this. So we tried to keep the balance.⁹

⁸ The original text: "Yeneroğlu çatı kuruluşlarının dini cemaat olup olamayacağı sorusunun cevabının ise Federal İdare Mahkemesi'nin (BVerwG) 23.02.2005 tarihli kararında yattığını belirtti. Buna göre birliğin en alt tabakası gerçek kişilerden oluşuyorsa bir çatı kuruluşu da dini cemaat olabilir. Kapsamlı dini tahakkukun gerekliliği çatı kuruluşu katmanında da geçerlidir. BVerwG tarafından geliştirilen kriterler genel olarak değil, aksine yalnızca dini cemaatlerin kendini kavrayışı ve buradan yola çıkarak dini yaşamın konumlandırılması olarak tartışılabilir. Yeneroğlu, Federal İdare Mahkemesi'nin (BVerwG) kriterlerini IGMG'ye uyarlayarak, IGMG'nin açık bir şekilde dini cemaat olduğunu belirtti." (IGMG, 2010c)

⁹ The original text: "Biz çok farklı bir sosyalizasyon geçirmiştik. Onun çok farkında değillerdi. Antisemitizme karşıydık, genellemeci Batı düşmanlığına itiraz ediyorduk. Kozmopolit bir Avrupa tasavvuruna sahiptik, AB

As opposed to the *Milli Görüş* movement in Turkey that opposed Turkey's accession to the European Union, Yeneroğlu supported Turkey's progress towards the EU. Indeed, as it is understood from the above expression of Yeneroğlu, following the RP's closure, there was no longer a political party in Turkey supported by the IGMG. In this period, the reformist wing represented by Yeneroğlu, Üçüncü, and Mehmet Sabri Erbakan occupied the senior positions in the IGMG. The IGMG refrains from even to come alongside phrases of "antisemitism" and "anti-western" and rejects a relationship between the organization and *Millî Gazete* due to the German state's charges. Yeneroğlu also previously expressed his concerns about *Millî Gazete* (see Yükleven, 2010b). There were occasional debates between Yeneroğlu, who criticized the headlines of *Millî Gazete* about the Christmas, and Mustafa Kurdaş, the editor-in-chief of *Millî Gazete*.

Yeneroğlu's reformist identity at the headquarters can be summarized in three points. First, his perspective on the relationship between the organization and the *Milli Görüş* movement in Turkey. According to Yeneroğlu, party members who lived in Turkey did not realize the transformation of the IGMG with the generational shift in Germany because they positioned the organization as an extension of *Milli Görüş* in Turkey. Yeneroğlu also rejects that IGMG has experienced a transformation due to pressure. Secondly, when he was interested in the law office, he took part in the organization's external positions and assumed positions in contact with European states and societies, which enabled him to focus on issues such as pluralism and religion-state relations.

üyeliğini destekliyorduk. *Millî Gazete*'nin Türkiye'deki manşetlerinin bedelini orada biz Müslüman azınlık olarak ödüyorduk. Almanya'nın iç güvenlik raporlarına *Milli Görüş* aleyhine giriyordu hemen. Yani bizim için yenilikçilik gelenekçilik diye bir ayrım yoktu zaten. Refah Partisi son partimizdi. Biz hep Türkiye'dekilere Avrupa'daki Müslümanların sosyal değişimini anlattık. Ve teşkilatın artık Türkiye'ye destek veren bir yapı olmaktan daha ziyade Avrupa'daki Müslümanların meselelerine odaklanan, Türkiye'ye hapsolan değil, Avrupa'daki İslam'ın kurumsallaşması noktasında çalışmalar yapan, Avrupa Müslümanlarının öncüsü bir yapı olduğunu anlatmaya çalışıyoruz. Ama pek anlamak istemediler bunu. Dolayısıyla biz de dengeleri korumaya çalıştık." (Karar, 2019)

Finally, after 2011, he aimed to develop the institution to a professional NGO in the structure.

3.3. Effects of German Institutional Strategies

In this section, the impact of the German state on the organization, which is the third factor in the transformation of IGMG, will be discussed. I evaluate this effect from two angles. In the first part, the strategies that the German state has established on IGMG through various organs will be presented. I limit these strategies to three institutions/cases: the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution and the reports prepared by this institution, the police raids and subsequent investigations in the IGMG headquarters for various reasons in the late 2000s, and finally, the policies for the IGMG in the German Islam Conference, which was implemented by the German state to put the integration under state control. In the second part, I will focus on the tactics developed by the organization against the accusations made by these state bodies against the IGMG.

3.3.1. Pressures of the German State on the IGMG

The German state tried to put pressure on the IGMG with its various organs, especially with the September 11 attacks. I consider these pressures in the form of reports, police raids, investigations, isolation from events organized at the state level within the framework of de Certeau's strategy concept. Drawing attention to the distinction between strategy and tactic, de Certeau says:

A distinction between strategies and tactics appears to provide a more adequate initial schema. I call a strategy the calculation (or manipulation) of power relationships that becomes possible as soon as a subject with will and power (a business, an army, a city, a scientific institution) can be isolated. It postulates a place that can be delimited as its own and serve as the base from which relations with an exteriority composed of targets or threats (customers or competitors, enemies, the country surrounding the city, objectives and objects of research, etc.) can be man-aged. As in management, every "strategic" rationalization seeks first

of all to distinguish its "own" place, that is, the place of its own power and will, from an "environment." A Cartesian attitude, if you wish: it is an effort to delimit one's own place in a world bewitched by the invisible powers of the Other. It is also the typical attitude of modern science, politics, and military strategy (Certeau, 1984, pp. 35-36.)

Based on de Certeau's conceptualizations of strategy and tactics, I will evaluate the strategies developed by the German state against the IGMG in the following sections within the scope of BfV, police raids, investigations and DIK.

3.3.1.1. Surveillance of the IGMG: Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (BfV)

Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (*Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz*, BfV), a branch of the Federal Ministry of the Interior (*Bundesministerium des Innern*), considers itself responsible for ensuring that no group in Germany violates the constitutional principles. BfV, which controls and observes immigrants and immigrant organizations, is not an independent security agency, and the Federal Ministry of Internal Affairs prepares published reports. BfV represents the absolute power of the state and forms the basis of all state institutions' actions (Kortmann & Rosenow-Williams, 2013; Schiffauer, 2012, p. 364). Initially, the main targets of BfV were Neo-Nazis, and the German Democratic Republic regime (Özyürek, 2015, p. 106). Today, the annual report of the office focuses on the groups under surveillance for years. It is mainly concerned with right-wing extremist groups and Islamists but also includes some leftist extremist groups, foreign spies, and the Church of Scientology sections (Ewing, 2008, pp. 202–203).

Schiffauer (2006, pp. 98–99) states that BfV conceptualizes "Islamism" under three subcategories. Subcategory A refers to groups that threaten the global order and prioritize "jihad" by "terrorist attacks." Subcategory B concerns the groups that want to change their country of origin due to violence and come to Germany as political refugees.

Finally, subcategory C refers to organizations that fight for Islamist attitudes in the context of the Federal Republic's social life or at least try to create spaces for organized Islamist participation. IGMG and the Islamic Community in Germany (*Islamische Gemeinschaft in Deutschland e. V.*, IGD), the Muslim Brotherhood's branch in Europe, is considered among the Islamist organizations in the subcategory C. Organizations belonging to this subcategory declare their commitment to the German constitution and avoid violence as a tool for political action. However, according to BfV, these organizations work secretly to achieve their main goals and aim to establish an Islamist state through legal means. The description of BfV is reminiscent of Said's argument (1978, pp. 285–286) that popular anti-Jewish spirit has been transformed to a spirit against the Arabs after the Second World War (Hernández Aguilar, 2018, pp. 167–168).

BfV has been observing the IGMG since 1985 including it in its annual reports. In its most recent report, the *Milli Görüş* movement and related associations are classified under the heading “Islamism / Islamist Terrorism.” The institutions belonging to the *Milli Görüş* movement are listed as *İsmail Ağa Community (İsmail Ağa Cemaati, IAC)*, *SAADET Europa e.V.*, *Erbakan Foundation in Germany (Europavertretung der Erbakan-Stiftung)*, *Millî Gazete* and IGMG. According to this report, the IGMG cleans itself from the influence of the *Milli Görüş* movement in Turkey increasingly. The report states that although references made by IGMG to extremism have been encountered in various regions, it has weakened in Germany in recent years, and IGMG chairman Kemal Ergün aims to draw an independent profile for the IGMG. Also, it accepts that the focus of IGMG's activities is on expanding appropriate educational institutions in the religious field (BfV, 2020, pp. 226–228). Despite this transformation, BfV avoids evaluating IGMG autonomously, associating it with institutions such as *Millî Gazete*, *Saadet Europe*, *İsmail Ağa Community*, and *Erbakan Foundation* under the title of the *Milli Görüş* movement, and accusing the organization of being antisemitic and anti-Western. Though the IGMG describes other organizations as Turkey-based and denies the connection between itself and these structures (IGMG, 2010h), BfV has had a very radical profile of IGMG in its

reports. For instance, the IGMG was depicted as "wolf in sheep's clothing" in some BfV reports. Also, BfV reports contain allegations on the IGMG such as communicating with the Islamist groups and political Islam in Turkey, having an unconstitutional ideology and antisemitic attitudes, preventing the integration of Muslims, displacing the secular system in place in Turkey and establishing an Islamic theocracy, providing power for an Islamic state, creating parallel societies, and infiltration of German elections by demanding German citizenship (Stremmelaar, 2017, p. 447).

In the crisis environment after the 9/11 attacks, BfV defined the IGMG as a transnational organization with strong ties to the *Milli Görüş* in Turkey. By 2010s, specific changes occurred in state and federal reports. For instance, the annual report of the federal state of Rhein Pfalz in 2014 stated that IGMG's connection with the political movements in Turkey is weakening, and it is now focusing on religious services and social works. In the same year, IGMG was not included in the annual reports of the federal states of Brandenburg, Bremen, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, North Rhine-Westfalia, Saarland, Sachsen, Sachsen-Anhalt, and Thüringen. In the annual report of Hamburg in 2014, it was stated that the watching of the IGMG was stopped because the branch in Hamburg was away from the "anticonstitutional" thoughts. In the report of Schleswig-Holstein, it was stated that the organization could not be defined as the "anticonstitutional" by drawing attention to the renewal process within the IGMG. BfV, which examines the developments in Lower Saxony, stated that there are no extremist trends in the IGMG. However, Baden Württemberg, Bavaria, Berlin, and Hessen continued their accusations against IGMG in their BfV reports (Altaş, 2015). All these accusations and the general hostile attitude by BfV's have had a lot of legal and psychological pressure upon the IGMG leadership, possibly pushing them more and more away from Turkey, Turkey's *Milli Görüş* and other Turkish organizations deemed "radical" by German authorities.

3.3.1.2. Police Raids and Judicial Investigations

One of the most violent periods in the confrontation between the IGMG and German security structures was 2008-2010, of which the first symptoms appeared in 2007. Subsequently, the raids, investigations, and lawsuits continued until 2019. An investigation was initiated in 2007 on the suspicion that some association executives had supported the "Islamist groups" around the city of Munich and Ulm with the money they obtained by laundering money and committing fraud (DW, 2009). After these investigations, in August 2008, approximately twenty locations were raided, including the headquarters of the IGMG in Kerpen, near Cologne, the city of Dortmund, and some other offices and houses in the state of Bavaria. Günther Feld, former Cologne Attorney General, said that the searches were done on the suspicion of tax charges. The raids were thought to be related to the three IGMG executives: Yavuz Çelik Karahan (Osman Döring), Oğuz Üçüncü and Ali Bozkurt. The Public Prosecution Office, the police, and financial authorities conducted three raids to IGMG facilities between August 2008 and November 2009 due to accusations such as undeclared income from pilgrimage organizations, understatement of income from rent and lease agreements, miscalculation of donations made to the IGMG from the *kurban* projects, and failure to pay the social insurance of imams. In an investigation conducted by the Cologne prosecutor's office, the IGMG was accused of not paying tax for the pilgrimage organization's income duly between 1996 and 2005. Also, EMUG e.V. was accused of underpaying corporate and business taxes between 2002 and 2006 and defrauding many victim donors and a travel insurance company (IGMG, 2009c). After these charges, IGMG funds were frozen significantly. In August 2008, a seizure order of EUR 8 million was issued. EUR 10 million were confiscated for donation fraud and another EUR 10 million due to suspicion of not paying social insurance. EUR 28 million was frozen in total, and the IGMG was thus prevented from performing the most straightforward accounting procedures, including salaries (Schiffauer, 2012, p. 373).

In March 2009, another investigation was launched on IGMG secretary general Oğuz Üçüncü, Ibrahim al-Zayat, and five association executives. Üçüncü and Ibrahim al-Zayat were accused of conspiring to defraud and embezzlement donations for Islamist purposes. The police raided offices and private businesses, claiming that there were indications that the money collected would be transferred to the HAMAS organization. The accusations are specially listed as a severe case of fraud, forgery in the document, false documentation, fraudulent bankruptcy, money laundering, supporting prohibition organizations, and violating the German Foreign Trade and Payments Law by supporting groups specified in the EU foreign terrorist list (Schiffauer, 2012, p. 372). Most of these charges were about an Islamic school that had been run since 1981. Until 2003, the IGD, where Ibrahim al-Zayat served, supported the German Islamic school and kindergarten. In 1999, when IGD started to be included in BfV reports, its public service organization status was revoked. The suspects continued the school's activities through a different association until 2006, but the school was closed due to the report of BfV. All of the charges were still linked to the transfer of public funds to pay teachers' salaries. There were also false signatures, money laundering, and fraudulent bankruptcy charges after the school went bankrupt. The strong relationship between IGD and IGMG caused the investigation to jump to the *Milli Görüş* in Germany. Their embodiment is Ibrahim al-Zayat, who is married to Sabiha Erbakan, sister of Mehmet Sabri Erbakan, Necmettin Erbakan's nephew. As discussed above, Mehmet Sabri Erbakan has been a leading functionary in the IGMG in the 1990s and, from April 2001 until October 2002, headed the organization. All three have been active in the German Muslim Students Association. When Zayat became its head in 1992, Mehmet Sabri Erbakan became his deputy (Steinberg, 2010, p. 155). Later, Zayat worked in EMUG e.V. for a while before Üçüncü assumed the assistantcy of Zayat. With the effect of this network, the investigations were extended to Üçüncü. He was accused of running some illegal business with Zayat in the EMUG e.V.

In September 2010, the court in Munich dropped the case as investigations did not reveal any evidence of criminal activity. The Munich First Prosecutor's Office suspended the investigation in which the Üçüncü was accused of establishing an organization to commit a crime following paragraph 2 of Article 170 of the German Criminal Procedure Code. However, two months before the investigation was stopped, the Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief (IHH), an organization closely tied to the *Milli Görüş*, was banned by the Ministry of Interior for allegedly supporting the HAMAS organization in Germany. The money was not going to HAMAS, but to two humanitarian organizations named Islamic Society and Charitable Society. However, some controversy was raised to strengthen this claim. The Ministry of Interior claimed that sponsoring charities was a way to legitimize HAMAS, the organization behind them. IHH filed a lawsuit against the Federal Ministry of the Interior's decision to suspend its activities. The case was heard at the Federal Administrative Court in Leipzig on 25 May 2011. According to the compromise decision of the court, IHH accepted its obligation to refrain from further helping Palestine. In return, the ban order was suspended, and if IHH fulfilled all obligations, the charges would be withdrawn entirely within three years. However, the Federal Ministry of the Interior, which opposed the compromise decision, brought new evidence and subsequently convinced the court to ban the IHH.

A consensus has been reached in the financial litigation process against the IGMG since 2009. The tax penalty case against those who served as members of the Board of Directors in the relevant period continued. During the trial process, chairman Yavuz Çelik Karahan resigned in 2011, and Kemal Ergün took over the task. In 2014, due to this criminal case, Üçüncü resigned from his post of Secretary-General, which he had held for 12 years (IGMG, 2014g). The trial, which started in Cologne on September 28, 2017, lasted about 18 months. In the lawsuit concluded in March 2019, it was decided that there was negligence because the tax returns put before the former administrators in the claim of tax evasion were signed without checking. Yavuz Çelik Karahan was sentenced to two years, Oğuz Üçüncü to a year and ten months, Ali Bozkurt to a year and

nine months, and İsa Erdener to a year and two months. The sentences were later suspended based on the defendants' good conduct and assistance to the court.

According to Schiffauer (2012), the main aim of these moves of German institutional structures to suppress the IGMG was to weaken the post-Islamist reformist wing in the *Milli Görüş* in Germany. The state was planning to discredit those who could make “post-Islamism” acceptable to society through investigations. Because post-Islamists such as Mehmet Sabri Erbakan, Mustafa Yeneroğlu, and Oğuz Üçüncü insisted on applying an Islam that complied with German laws, defending the right to be different and emphasizing the necessity of conscious Islamic identity. This approach within the IGMG was forcefully destroying German Islam created by DIK. The closure decision on IHH in Germany was also considered to be related to the reformist wing within the association. For instance, Mustafa Yoldaş, the Frankfurt-based IHH's former chairman, was promoting the breaking of links of the *Milli Görüş* in Germany with political structures and leaders in Turkey: “For large parts of the *Milli Görüş* movement here in Europe, Erbakan is somewhat of a patriarch, the uber-father, the one you don’t like to contradict, but basically we all know: He has to go, his time is up.”¹⁰

At the beginning of the process, IGMG was claiming that the raids and investigations were political. According to the IGMG, the criticism of the *Milli Görüş*' attitude towards integration and the security units' policy of security measures against Muslims played a significant role in these moves. The IGMG, which cannot be controlled through political means and especially security units, is tried to be brought into line through tax law (IGMG, 2009c). The organization stated that the sensational raids generally caused to the blacklisting of Muslims in general and the IGMG in particular. However, in the following

¹⁰ The original text: “Für große Teile der Milli-Görüş-Bewegung hier in Europa ist Erbakan so etwas wie der Patriarch, der Übervater, dem man ungern laut widerspricht, aber im Grunde wissen alle: Er muss weg, seine Zeit ist um.” (Wiese, 2010)

period, Üçüncü, the leading actor in the lawsuit process admitted that the organization was negligent: "The court revealed that there is no personal interest, that we serve the public, that we serve for the general public, and that we made mistakes on this occasion."¹¹ Also, the IGMG paid back EUR 2.2 million of tax debt to the finance ministry during the investigation process. Pressures on the IGMG by the German authorities were not, however, limited to court cases, but also included those they exerted for the "integration" of it (among others) into the German religious field.

3.3.1.3. Official Integration Pressures: The German Islam Conference (DIK)

In this section, I examine the German Islam Conference (*Deutsche Islamkonferenz*, DIK) as the third of the German institutional strategies that pressure and shape the IGMG. I will discuss this issue because IGMG criticizes the DIK's unbalanced politics in determining the participants and claims that DIK contains content that conflicts with the values defended by the IGMG in their topics (*Leitkultur*, Islam-Islamism differentiation, etc.). Another reason I evaluate the DIK as one of the German state strategies, which was influential in the transformation of IGMG, is that *Milli Görüş*/Islamrat was isolated from the conference for a period due to the police raids and investigations I explored in the previous section. In light of these discussions, I will justify the transformation of IGMG through DIK by analyzing its periodically changing approaches and tactics against the German authorities.

After the 9/11 attacks, the German government reacted against the alleged threats represented by Muslims and Islam with national security and integration policies. Regarding the integration of Muslims and Islam, the German state's most comprehensive

¹¹ The original text: "Kişisel bir menfaatlenmenin sözkonusu olmadığını, amme hizmetinde bulunduğumuzu, toplumun geneli için hizmet ettiğimizi, bu vesileyle yanlışlar da yaptığımız mahkeme ortaya koymuş oldu." (Yıldırım, 2019)

project was the establishment of the DIK. The conference's declared aim was the integration of Muslims living in Germany into the German community, as well as the institutional integration of Islam (Hernández Aguilar, 2018). According to Schiffauer (2012, p. 363), the overriding idea behind the DIK was to ensure that a large Sunni Islamic organization, suspected of creating a parallel society, would accept a European Islam in harmonization with the Federal Republic of Germany's comprehension.

The first step of the conference was taken in 2006 and has been hitherto held four phases. In DIK I, where the opening meeting was held in September 2006 with the participation of Interior Minister Wolfgang Schäuble, three working groups were formed in the first gathering: (1) the German social system, (2) religious issues in the German understanding of the constitution, (3) and the economy and media as bridge builders. It was decided to discuss "Security and Islamism" as a round table meeting apart from the working groups. Other meetings of this phase took place in May 2007, March 2008 and June 2009, respectively, and Islamic education in public schools and Islamic theology in higher education institutions were on the agenda. However, one of the most frequently discussed topics about the conference was the representation problem of Muslims in Germany. In organized Muslims side, the first conference was attended by representatives of five mostly Sunni Muslim organizations: The Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs (DITIB), the Central Council of Muslims in Germany (ZMD), the Union of Islamic Cultural Centers (VIKZ), the Islamic Council for the Federal Republic of Germany (IR), and the the Federation of Alevite Unions in Germany (AABF). Besides, ten people who were not affiliated with any organized Muslim structure were invited. Sociologist Necla Kelek and lawyer Seyran Ateş, who were known with their anti-Islamic criticism, discourses, and acts, were among these invitees.

DIK II started with the plenary session held in May 2010. While the topics in the previous conference remained, three more critical problems were raised: (1) prompting

institutional co-operation and integration, (2) fostering gender equality as a shared value, (3) and preventing extremism, radicalization, and social polarization. In the second phase of DIK, four general meetings were held in total. In May 2010, DIK's new structure and plans, in March 2011, the definition of Islamic education in public schools, Islamic theology in German universities, and imam educations, in April 2012, gender equality, and in May 2013, the prevention of social polarization and extremism were discussed. DIK III started in 2014 under the concepts of welfare and care of souls, and these concepts were also the main topic of the first general assembly meeting in 2015. Phenomenally, non-organized Muslims did not take part in this conference. DIK IX, after that, convened in November 2018. A panel on three topics took place at this meeting: (1) on-site integration support, (2) imam educations in Germany and (3) Muslims in Germany and German Muslims.

As for the relationship between the *Milli Görüş* in Germany and DIK, there is a bumpy process in the history of the conference, which is about 15 years. *Milli Görüş*, which is the largest Islamist group in Germany and has tens of thousands of members, was not included in the DIK under the name of the IGMG because the German institutional environments did not consider the *Milli Görüş* as a direct interlocutor. The organization representing the *Milli Görüş* at the conference has been the Islamic Council for the Federal Republic of Germany. IR was designed and established in Cologne in 1986 as a larger umbrella organization to cover the *Milli Görüş*. IR, which was established to coordinate Islamic sects and has more than 400 mosque communities and 60,000 members (Machtans, 2016, p. 89), represents 37 organizations, the largest of which is IGMG. Apart from IGMG, the *Nurcu* communities and the Alevi groups are also members of this umbrella organization. However, most observers see this structure as a front organization of the IGMG (Steinberg, 2010, p. 155). Because while Ali Kızılkaya, one of the key figures of the *Milli Görüş* in Germany, was the chairman of the council between 2002-2015, Burhan Kesici, who took over leadership after 2015, was also connected with the IGMG.

With the influence of this ambiguous structure of the IR, the *Milli Görüş* in Germany was accepted as a point of contact by policymakers. Later, IGMG had the opportunity to be represented in DIK via IR. However, the separating parties of the first two phases of DIK that started in 2006 and 2010 are critical for the *Milli Görüş* in Germany. DIK I was regarded as a watershed in terms of *Milli Görüş* despite all its deficiencies and was understood as a phase in which the German state transitioned from talking about Muslims to talking with Muslims (Kızılkaya, 2016). However, in the following period, severe tensions occurred between DIK and the *Milli Görüş* on the grounds of fiscal investigations, lawsuits, and police raids referred to in the previous section. IR and ZMD, who were hopeful before the conference, criticized the DIK I because it displayed an inconsistent attitude towards Muslim representation. Thanks to DIK I, for instance, people who were not familiar with the Muslim community and who did not have a base were presented as representatives of the Muslim community. Although five seats were reserved for Muslim organizations, ten chairs were provided for non-organized Muslims. As a matter of fact, in the last general assembly meeting of the first chapter, the IR president of the period criticized DIK's decision. In DIK II, radical changes occurred in representatives of Muslim organizations. German media criticized Wolfgang Schäuble's invitation of the *Milli Görüş* to the conference, and IR's involvement in DIK II was suspended by the then Federal Interior Minister Thomas de Maizière, citing allegations of financial corruption and support for international terrorism. IR, on the other hand, left the membership by not accepting the offer to freeze DIK membership. Üçüncü, former secretary-general of the IGMG, criticized the attitude of Maizière and DIK as follows:

It is the Minister of the Interior's own choice, whom he wants to talk to who, or whether he wants to see the Islamic Council (IR) at the meeting table. The exact causes of the decision are well known. Even the topics identified indicate that the problem is not an intimate integration policy. Nevertheless, political decisions

cannot be justified by usual excuses and false information. One of the minimum conditions of the libertarian rule of law is mutual respect.¹²

IGMG also criticized DIK, stating that during the first phase, the conference made Islamic communities humiliated, inviting Muslims who insulted Islam and that its aim was not to encourage integration but to discuss further *leitkultur* (leading culture) discussions on a new platform. Also, *Milli Görüş* argues that DIK excludes unwanted internal debates by Islamicizing them. This exclusion emerges in the "Islamism" debates, which are considered essential agenda of the conference. In these discussions, it is stated to prevent the political abuse of religion is a purpose, while in reality, Muslims are seen as potential danger without concrete reasons. Thus, DIK follows the steps that justify the German state's practices, claiming that religiosity prevents integration (IGMG, 2010b).

Another criticism made by IGMG during the DIK process was the attitude of other Islamic organizations participating in the DIK I. Although IR insisted on correcting the records of conference sessions at DIK I, the representatives of the Turkish-based Islamic organizations such as DITIB and VIKZ had the view that it should be avoided to face the state apparatus. In terms of two organizations, it was necessary not to let the dialogue stops. They were also afraid that if the dialogue ceased, the primary society would be consolidated in its prejudice that it was impossible to cooperate with Muslims (Schiffauer, 2012, p. 370).

¹² The original text: "Kiminle konuşmak istediği veya İslam Konseyi'ni toplantı masasında görmek isteyip istemediği İçişleri Bakanı'nın kendi tercihidir. Alınan kararın gerçek sebepleri yeterince bilinmektedir. Tespit edilen konular bile, meselenin samimi bir entegrasyon politikası olmadığını göstermektedir. Fakat siyasî kararlar, sıradan bahanelerle ve yanlış bilgilerle gerekçelendirilemez. Özgürlükçü hukuk devletin asgari şartlarından birisi de karşılıklı saygıdır." (IGMG, 2010d)

The attitude of these organizations in DIK II, which did not want to face German institutional structures, also caused IGMG's reaction. In 2011, by the cooperation of Islamic organizations, the early detection of Islamists was targeted by the German Interior Minister Hans-Peter Friedrich within the establishment of the "Precaution Summit," "Security Partnership Initiative" and the fake missing posters as initiative's project (Yilmaz, 2016). Although all the Islamic organizations that took part in it, except the Alevi community, left the initiative, IGMG accused the Islamic communities of cannot reaching maturity that could claim citizenship rights and avoid being putty in politicians' hands. On the other hand, the *Milli Görüş* considered it problematic for the representatives of the Islamic communities to attend the conference to participate in a project carried out against the legalist Islamism around the struggles against Islamophobia, antisemitism, and Islamism (IGMG, 2013c).

In the DIK III phase, which started in 2014, social services and spiritual guidance issues were determined, and IR and ZMD rejoined the conference. IGMG embraced Maizière's announcement that the ideas of Islamic communities about the future of DIK and its content will be received in advance (IGMG, 2014b). However, unlike the previous DIK phases, the fact that the security issue was not at the center during this period was among the approaches that satisfied IGMG.

However, DIK IX, which started in 2018, had details that made it feel like returning to beginning in the crisis between the German state and the Muslim communities. The invitations to non-organized people to the conference such as Seyran Ateş, Necla Kelek, and Hamad Abdal-Samad, who do not represent a remarkable mass in Germany, the decisions on the topic selection by being influenced by current politics, and blunders such as pork service in the conference have been caused reactions of Muslim organizations, including IGMG (Mete, 2018). This situation also changed IGMG's positive view of 2014-2018 towards DIK. The fourth phase, which started with the initiative of

Horst Seehofer, the Minister of Interior, which seemed in media with the words "Islam does not belong to Germany," continued in the shadow of the discussions on educating and financing of imams in Islamic organizations. Issues such as German Islam, the definition of German Muslims, and Muslims belonging to Germany have been another focus of DIK IX. Fundamentally, the current content of the topics discussed at the conference can also be considered as a reflection of tensions between Germany and Turkey.

On the other hand, the transformation occurring in IGMG indicates that a balance that reduces the tension experienced in the first two conference phases has been caught, especially in the approaches of IR, which represents the *Milli Görüş* at the conference. According to Peucker and Ceylan (2017, p. 85), IR's definition of itself reflects the idea of German Islam. Indeed, the council regarded itself as an Islamic community in a state that is fully committed to the principles of liberal democracy and social rule and structured as a secular and pluralist. This approach is also evident in the statements of Kesici, council leader, in the fourth phase of the DIK, which is focused on the imam education. Kesici states that IR wants to train the imams who will work in Germany. Apart from these institutional struggles and attempt at navigating them, the IGMG leadership had to face various accusations by German authorities and to develop tactics to counter them.

3.3.2. Accusations of the German Institutional Structures and IGMG's Tactics

One of the German state's most prominent strategies is to put pressure on the IGMG by making various accusations through state organs. One of these accusations is that IGMG has been strongly associated with the *Milli Görüş* in Turkey. Secondly, the German state thinks that the IGMG creates problems against the integration policies and that it is also related to its opposition to the German constitution. Another accusation is that the IGMG is an Islamist group with anti-Semitic tendencies. The IGMG has developed various tactics in response to these accusations. Just as in the previous section, I will make use

of de Certeau's theoretical conceptualizations. Michel de Certeau explains the concept of tactics as follows:

By contrast with a strategy (whose successive shapes introduce a certain play into this formal schema and whose link with a particular historical configuration of rationality should also be clarified), a tactic is a calculated action determined by the absence of a proper locus. No delimitation of an exteriority, then, provides it with the condition necessary for autonomy. The space of a tactic is the space of the other. Thus it must play on and with a terrain imposed on it and organized by the law of a foreign power. It does not have the means to keep to itself, at a distance, in a position of withdrawal, foresight, and self-collection: it is a maneuver "within the enemy's field of vision," as von Billow put it, and within enemy territory. It does not, therefore, have the options of planning general strategy and viewing the adversary as a whole within a district, visible, and objectifiable space. It operates in isolated actions, blow by blow. It takes advantage of "opportunities" and depends on them, being without any base where it could stockpile its winnings, build up its own position, and plan raids. What it wins it cannot keep. This nowhere gives a tactic mobility, to be sure, but a mobility that must accept the chance offerings of the moment, and seize on the wing the possibilities that offer themselves at any given moment. It must vigilantly make use of the cracks that particular conjunctions open in the surveillance of the proprietary powers. It poaches in them. It creates surprises in them. It can be where it is least expected. It is a guileful ruse (Certeau, 1984, pp. 36-37.)

Based on this concept, I evaluate the IGMG's denial of its relationship with *Milli Görüş* movement in Turkey, its statements and activities supporting integration, its positive references to the German constitution, and efforts to be levelheaded on issues related to Islamism and antisemitism – discussing each of them in the following sections.

3.3.2.1. Connections between IGMG and *Milli Görüş* in Turkey

One of the main charges of the German institutions posed through reports, politicians and media for the IGMG was that the organization was contaminated with links of the *Milli Görüş* parties in Turkey for many years. The accusations against the organization on this matter vary. BfV reports, for instance, was claiming that the primary purpose of the IGMG is to displace the government system in Turkey and establish an Islamic theocracy.

(Göktürk et al., 2007, p. 207). BfV reports also were associating the *Milli Görüş* in Germany with political/social events in Turkey. For example, in the December 2001 brochure¹³, the Ministry of Interior of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) made allegations against IGMG with using quotes of "The killing of 37 people in Sivas had wildly celebrated at a meeting of the IGMG" and "Islam prevailed in Sivas." (IGMG, 2005)

Necmettin Erbakan, unsurprisingly, was the most influential figure in the relationship between the IGMG and the *Milli Görüş* in Turkey. BfV reports claimed that the organization adopted Necmettin Erbakan's just order (*adil düzen*) ideology. (Halm et al., 2012, p. 71). On the other hand, in 2002, the Bavarian Office for the Protection of the Constitution claimed that in the meetings and programs held by the IGMG, the slogan of "(Erbakan) Hoca! If you let fight we will fight, if you let kill we will kill" was used (IGMG, 2006a). In 2004, the Hamburg Office for the Protection of the Constitution's brochure in Turkish named "Turks and Germans in Hamburg: Together for Democracy!" stated that IGMG stands close to the SP and Necmettin Erbakan:

In the IGMG - especially after the last elections in Turkey - there is a debate among the innovators and traditionalists. The new Saadet Party (SP), which emerged from the FP, also follows the goals of the *Görüş*. In parallel, the IGMG remains unchanged and close to the Saadet Party and its spiritual leader, Erbakan.¹⁴

In the following process, IGMG's links with the AKP has also come to the fore. One of the reasons for this accusation is that a significant portion of the IGMG base's vote preferences inclined to the AKP. Another reason to blame *Milli Görüş* in Germany is that

¹³ "Islamism in North Rhine-Westphalia - Using Religion to Political Objectives"

¹⁴ The original text: "IGMG'nin içerisinde - özellikle Türkiye'deki son seçimlerden sonra - muhafazakârlarla yenilikçiler arasında bir istikamet tartışması vardır. Fazilet Partisi'nin içinden çıkan yeni Saadet Partisi (SP) aynı şekilde yine *Milli Görüş*'ün hedeflerini izlemektedir. Buna paralel olarak IGMG Derneği, değişmeksizin Saadet Partisi'ne ve onun manevi önderi Erbakan'a yakın durmaktadır." (*Hamburg'taki Türkler ve Almanlar: Birlikte Demokrasi İçin!*, 2004)

during the AKP era, a positive change occurred between IGMG and DITIB. (Bruce, 2019; Frank, 2018). However, the IGMG-AKP network did not have an appreciable effect than the German state's accusations of the connection between DITIB or the UID and AKP.

German institutions developed a discourse on the connection between IGMG and Turkish politics over *Millî Gazete* headlines and activities of Saadet Europe and Erbakan Foundation after 2013. Especially the importance of *Millî Gazete* in the analysis of BfV reports lies in the assumption that this newspaper is not only closely related to the SP but is the mouthpiece of the IGMG. These reports also associate the IGMG with the developments related to Turkey's domestic agenda (Karahan, 2014). However, in response to BfV's allegations, IGMG representative states that Turkey's political parties or publications have no right to represent IGMG in Europe (IGMG, 2012d). IGMG officials also claimed that their relations with Turkey should be considered as cultural rather than ideological (Pervanidis, 2009, p. 21).

Østergaard-Nielsen (2003b) states that many immigration organizations' focus has shifted from homeland issues to the current situation in Germany, and eventually, a double agenda emerges. In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, BfV perceived such official statements by IGMG officials as a part of their double agenda in the environment of distrust towards Muslim organizations (Pervanidis, 2009). Indeed, in the Office for Protection of the Constitution's approach, Turkey's side of the dual agenda has become a source of insecurity.

Apart from its transnational ties with Turkey, the German state discourse defined the IGMG as an organization with strong links with the Taliban in Afghanistan and the Iranian revolution (Ewing, 2008, p. 210). In the 1990s, transferring financial aid from Germany to these regions to be used in the civil war in Algeria and Bosnia provided the basis for

the German state's accusations of a transnational organization towards the *Milli Görüş* in Germany. BfV perceived these activities as an attempt to create a separate space in Germany (Laurence, 2012, pp. 101–102).

In response to these accusations, the IGMG developed two main tactics: refuting the allegations via public statements, and filing lawsuits against German authorities. The first one often took the form of press releases, online statements posted on their website, articles they published in their magazines. Although these reports or media outlets did not save the IGMG from accusations completely, the German institutions did not make as severe accusations as in previous periods. For instance, in the last BfV report published, it is accepted that the media organs of IGMG were *Perspektif* magazine and *Camia* bulletin, not *Millî Gazete* (BfV, 2020).

3.3.2.2. Anti-Integration and Anticonstitutionalism

This subheading will include the German institutional circles' accusation of being anti-integration against IGMG and the relationship between the organization's incompatible structure with the integration and anticonstitutionalism as claimed. BfV sees IGMG's opposition to integration as a threat to German society. Although BfV had separated this organization from violent organizations, it thinks IGMG threatens German society's internal harmony. Another accusation by BfV against immigrants in general and IGMG in particular, is the aim of creating a parallel society (*parallelgesellschaft*). This concept first appeared in a newspaper article by Wilhelm Heitmeyer (1996). In the following period, a growing concern arose in Germany about Turkish Muslims' refusal to integrate into German society and the emergence of a self-sufficient parallel society developing in the heart of German cities (Ewing, 2006, p. 265).

Another accusation against immigrants is that they threaten the *leitkultur* (leading culture) of Germany. The IGMG, as one of the largest Islamic organizations in Germany, is one of the targets of this accusation of Christian Democrats in response to the new immigration law. This view was first formulated by the Arab-German sociologist Bassam Tibi (1998), who believed that a unified Germany should base itself on European values such as democracy, modernity, secularism, enlightenment, human rights, and civil society. Tibi claimed the exact opposite of what the IGMG says in terms of its standing in the Euro-Islam debates and has an essential role in determining IGMG's approach to this concept. Following the citizenship law in 2000, this concept was adopted by the Christian Democratic Union of Germany (*Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands*, CDU) leaders such as Friedrich Merz and Jörg Schönbohm, who opposed multiculturalism and the assimilation of existing immigrants (Özyürek, 2015, p. 15).

German institutions discuss the accusations mentioned above, such as opposition to integration, creating a parallel society, and threatening *the leitkultur*, around the constitution's principles. BfV thinks itself as the attendant of ensuring that no group violates constitutional principles and argues that IGMG behaves against the constitution due to its incompatible structure with integration and brings up anticonstitutionalism. Thus, IGMG is considered as an enemy of the constitution because it creates a parallel society. Schiffauer (2008, p. 58) argues that the perspectives here are not constitutional. He also defends that there may be political objections to parallel societies, but constitutional qualities cannot be derived from them since the line between constitutional and unconstitutional is getting blurred and opening the door to arbitrariness.

IGMG sets out a strategy to promote citizenship against anti-integration accusations. Following the legal reform in the field of citizenship in 2000, IGMG launched a campaign in 2002, encouraging members of mostly Turkish citizens to become German citizens.

The Ministry of Interior and BfV continued their skeptical attitude towards IGMG in their reports and statements and perceived it as the IGMG's double agenda. According to BfV, the IGMG's citizenship encouragement are not a part of the integration effort, but to control German politics with an Islamist party by using the acquired citizenship rights (Ewing, 2003, p. 413; Pervanidis, 2009). On the other hand, some approaches consider IGMG as an alternative that prioritizes integration against structures that can be considered the Turkish government's voice, such as DITIB:

Alongside this official Turkish government network of prayer spaces, which explicitly seeks to "instill love of [Turkish] fatherland, flag and religion," there is the *Islamische Gemeinschaft Milli Görüş* (National Vision, IGMG), an independent alternative ("arch rival") to the official Turkish directorate, that encourages long-term integration of Turkish-German Muslims and the use of German language in mosques and Islamic schools. (Haddad & Golson, 2007, p. 510)

In line with the above quote, I argue that the IGMG differs from other Turkish-origin organizations in subjects such as Islamic education in German and this has been a factor influencing its Europeanization.

The *Milli Görüş* in Germany also criticize the accusations of parallel society and *leitkultur*. Although currently not officially affiliated with IGMG, the European edition of *Millî Gazete* stated that IGMG aims to build a multicultural, multi-religious, multi-lingual, multi-ethnic and pluralistic society, not a parallel society (Ewing, 2010, p. 65). IGMG's criticisms of *leitkultur* accusations can be seen in their evaluations on the DIK. According to IGMG, the aim of the DIK, determined by the Federal Ministry of Internal Affairs, is to continue pioneering cultural debates on another platform rather than an incentive for integration. The *leitkultur* debate, on the other hand, serves to exclude Muslims in the political arena and construct a homogeneous indigenous people identity. With this discussion, a homogeneous system of values, defined according to the conjuncture and marginalizing those who do not accept identification, is illustrated (IGMG, 2010b).

3.3.2.3. Legalistic Islamism and Islamist Antisemitism

My discussion in this section concerns the meanings attributed to the concepts of Islamism, Islamist terrorism, legalist Islamism, and antisemitism by German institutions and the accusations under these labels against Muslim organizations in Germany in general and IGMG in particular. By distinguishing between Islamism and Islam, BfV aims not to accept the IGMG, which it calls Islamist, as a representative of Muslims in the country. For this reason, German politicians and BfV differ from each other by accepting Islam as a religion and Islamism as an ideology. However, the concept of "Islamism" is cast so vast that the right to intervene in security units for simple reasons arises. From this point of view, the goal of IGMG, which is evaluated within the scope of legalist Islamist organizations by German institutions, is accepted as the society's Islamization (Schiffauer, 2006, p. 99).

IGMG states that German security units should stop using terms such as "Islamism" and "Islamist terror." According to IGMG, this terminology legitimizes the struggle to prevent Muslims' religiosity and causes Muslims to be separated from the center of society by evoking a constant danger:

If the words terrorism and Islam are used together in this way for so many years, it should not be surprising that the word 'terror' is associated with the word 'Islam' among the public, as the Sinus-Environment Research entitled 'Discrimination in Daily Life' (Diskriminierung im Alltag) revealed in 2009. All those responsible for the matter should have been aware that the seed hidden in such concepts will reveal one day itself as violence. In light of far-right terror, it must be understood at least now, how immense results this issue can have. The fact that 4.5 million Muslims living in Germany are pushed into the frame of an enemy image is a great example of negligence and indifference.¹⁵

¹⁵ The original text: "Terör ve İslam kelimeleri bunca sene, bu şekilde, birlikte kullanılagelirse, 2009 yılında 'Günlük Yaşamda Ayrımcılık' (Diskriminierung im Alltag) isimli Sinus-Çevre Araştırması'nın da ortaya koyduğu gibi, 'terör' kelimesinin halk arasında 'İslam' kelimesini çağrıştırmasına şaşırmamak gerekir. Konuyla ilgili tüm sorumluların bu tür kavramların içerisinde saklı olan tohumun, kendisini bir gün ortaya çıkararak, şiddet şeklinde göstereceğinin farkında olmaları gerekirdi. Aşırı sağcı terör ışığında, bu konunun

Making Muslims' religiosity a problem in general and the use of concepts such as "Islamism" and "Islamist" brings Muslims under suspicion because it renders differences invisible and implies that the threat stems from Islam, that is, the religion of Muslims (IGMG, 2012h). For instance, at the end of the three-year-long lawsuit filed by the IGMG at the Düsseldorf Administrative Court against the NRW State's publication of the false accusations in its brochure December 2001, it committed to not disseminating the false accusations against the IGMG to the public. (IGMG, 2005). In sum, the use of the concept of Islamism, which is not legally clear, in a negative sense, is a situation objected by IGMG.

Another accusation the *Milli Görüş* faces most frequently in Germany is its alleged antisemitic ideology. These accusations come to the fore in BfV reports, the DIK process, legal investigations, German and European media, and academic literature. The rise of Muslim-based antisemitism in Germany with 9/11 had been put forward to be related to the Muslims holding Jews responsible for 9/11. On the other hand, Western secular Turks separated themselves from Arab immigrants and cooperated with Jews in Germany after 9/11. This cooperation crystallized by the synagogue attack in İstanbul in 2003 (Bodemann & Yurdakul, 2008, pp. 81–83). However, it has not been easy for the Islamists in Germany to get rid of the charges of antisemitism against them compared with the Western secular Turks. In particular, it has become more difficult for IGMG due to the antisemitism and Zionism discussions of the *Milli Görüş* in Turkey (see Aviv, 2017; Landau, 1988).

ne kadar büyük sonuçlar doğurabileceği en azından şimdi anlaşılmış olmalıdır. Almanya'da yaşayan 4.5 milyon Müslüman'ın böylece düşman imgesi çerçevesine itilmesi çok büyük bir ihmalkârlık ve kayıtsızlık örneğidir." (IGMG, 2011h)

In its latest report on antisemitism in Islamism, BfV classifies the *Milli Görüş* under the heading "Antisemitism of Islamist Organizations and Trends". However, this text does not include the IGMG. The accusation of antisemitism is based on the SAADET Europe members' statements, which started operating in Germany in 2013. For example, BfV presents as evidence the derogatory words on Israel of Turkish poet Necip Fazıl shared on social media on 20 July 2017, by an association based in East Westphalia, which is a part of the *Milli Görüş* movement (BfV, 2019, pp. 32–34).

BfV had constructed antisemitism accusations against the IGMG over the ideology and discourses of Erbakan and the content of the *Millî Gazete*. For example, according to Jikeli (2015a, p. 185), Holocaust denial and blunt conspiracy theories are seen in the *Doğuş* newspaper based in the Netherlands or *Millî Gazete*, based in Frankfurt, has been the source of antisemitism criticism against IGMG. Also, during Erbakan's visits to Europe, there were discussions over Erbakan's anti-Zionist discourse. In June 1998, Center for Information and Documentation on Israel (CIDI) reacted when the *Milli Görüş* communities in Europe held a meeting with Necmettin Erbakan at the Amsterdam Arena, the stadium of Ajax football club. Mehmet Sabri Erbakan, IGMG general secretary of the period, said that his uncle (Necmettin Erbakan) did not know the difference between antisemitism and opposition to Israel, because Turkey did not have a Holocaust experience. However, CIDI director Ronny Naftaniel denied that Erbakan, who had been educated in Germany, could not know what antisemitism was (Stremmelaar, 2017, pp. 447–449). On the other hand, one of the two main accusations of the financial investigations against the IGMG that began in 2009 was related to antisemitism. As a consequence of IGMG's relationship with the international aid organization IHH in Germany, IHH's pro-HAMAS affiliation and this network continued after HAMAS was declared illegal in Germany, the inclination of *Milli Görüş* towards antisemitism had frequently brought to the agenda (Jikeli, 2015b, p. 199).

There are several tactics adopted by IGMG against these accusations. First, IGMG put some distance from the discourses and speeches of the SP, *SAADET Europa e.V*, *Europavertretung der Erbakan-Stiftung*, *Millî Gazete*, and declared that it had no transnational ties with the *Millî Görüş* in Turkey:

No settled political party or media outlet in Turkey has authority to represent us in Europe. There are some people still trying to make the IGMG criminal with accusations. These people justify the accuse by attributing the statements and opinions in their organ located in Turkey to us. We firmly reject them.¹⁶

Second, IGMG tried to strengthen his relations with the Jewish community in a positive way by congratulating the Hannuka holidays:

(Kemal) Ergün also said: “Holidays are means to live and perpetuate basic human values such as love, affection and compassion. Holidays are also the times when people make peace, forgive each other, strengthen family ties, gather, and cultivate a strong sense of responsibility towards others. With these thoughts, on behalf of IGMG, I congratulate all citizens of the Jewish faith on the Hanukkah Festival, and wish it to bring peace and happiness.”¹⁷

In addition, concerning the Holocaust, the IGMG made the following statement, linking the horror of it with the contemporary far right attacks on Muslims:

January 27, 2013 is the day to commemorate the people whose rights were usurped, persecuted and who were killed by a totalitarian regime in a period of

¹⁶ The original text: “Türkiye’de yerleşik hiçbir siyasî partinin veya yayın organının Avrupa’da bizi temsil etme yetkisi yoktur. IGMG’yi halen ithamlarla kriminal gösterme gayreti içinde olanlar vardır. Bu kimseler ithamlarını Türkiye’deki yayın organlarında yer alan beyan ve görüşleri bize atfetmek suretiyle gerekçelendirmektedirler. Biz bunları kesin bir dille reddediyoruz.” (IGMG, 2012d)

¹⁷ The original text: “(Kemal) Ergün ayrıca şunları söyledi: “Bayram günleri sevgi, şefkat ve merhamet gibi temel insani değerleri yaşamak, yaşatmak için birer vesiledir. Bayram günleri aynı zamanda insanların barıştığı, birbirini affettiği, ailevi bağların kuvvetlendiği, birarada yaşamın ve başkalarına karşı sorumluluk duygusunun güç kazandığı zamanlardır. Bu düşüncelerle, İslam Toplumu *Millî Görüş* adına, Yahudi inancına mensup tüm vatandaşların Hanuka Bayramı’nı tebrik ediyor, bayramın huzur ve mutluluk getirmesini diliyorum.” (IGMG, 2011e, 2013h)

national socialism. In this connection, flags will be hung half-mast high on official buildings. Organizing many events dealing with today's far-rightism, xenophobia and antisemitism point out that a commemorative culture has now settled. The conclusion from this is clear; It is everyone's collective responsibility to keep the memory of the past alive. Especially nowadays we have seen with our own eyes what far-rightists can do when they are allowed. In order to take lessons from the mistakes made in the past and to be determined and permanent against all kinds of racist threats and dangers, we have to constantly remember what happened in the past. For this reason, we need to take the remembrance day as an opportunity and transfer the culture of remembering to our children.¹⁸

The IGMG leadership also clearly denounced antisemitism and explicitly condemned antisemitic attacks by far-right groups in Germany:

Official figures show that in Germany, about a hundred antisemitic crimes are committed each month and as a result many people are injured. In this context, it raises the question of whether antisemitic crimes are shown less in statistics, as in xenophobic crimes, and in fact the numbers are much higher. For this reason, in this period when xenophobic crimes are put on the table again, it is imperative to take a closer look at the antisemitic crimes.¹⁹

¹⁸ The original text: “27 Ocak 2013, nasyonal sosyalizmin hüküm sürdüğü dönemde, totaliter bir rejim tarafından tarihte eşi benzeri görülmemiş bir şekilde hakları gasp edilen, zulmedilen ve öldürülen insanları anma günüdür. Bu münasebetle resmî binalara bayraklarasılacak ve bayraklar yarıya indirilecektir. Günümüzdeki aşırı sağcılığı, yabancı düşmanlığını ve antisemitizmi konu edinen birçok etkinliğin düzenlenmesi, artık bir anma kültürünün yerleşmiş olduğuna işaret etmektedir. Bundan çıkan sonuç ise açıktır; geçmişin anısını diri tutmak herkesin ortak sorumluluğudur. Aşırı sağcılara izin verildiğinde, neler yapabileceklerini özellikle bugünlerde kendi gözümüzle de gördük. Geçmişte yapılan hatalardan ibret alabilmek ve her türlü ırkçı tehdit ve tehlikeye karşı kararlı ve kalıcı bir şekilde önlem alabilmek için, geçmişte yaşananları sürekli suretle hatırlamak zorundayız. Bu sebeple anma gününü bir fırsat bilip, hatırlama kültürünü çocuklarımıza da aktarmamız gerekmektedir.” (IGMG, 2012f, also see IGMG, 2013f)

¹⁹ The original text: “Resmi rakamlar, Almanya’da antisemitizm motifli her ay yaklaşık yüz suç işlendiğini ve bunun sonucunda birçok kişinin yaralandığını gösteriyor Bu bağlamda yabancı düşmanlığı içeren suçlarda olduğu gibi, antisemitizm motifli suçların istatistiklerde daha az gösterildiği, aslında rakamların çok daha yüksek olup olmadığı sorusunu akla getiriyor. Bu sebeple yabancı düşmanlığı içeren suçların yeniden masaya yatırıldığı bu dönemde, antisemitizm bağlamındaki suçlara da daha yakından bakılması bir zarurettir.” (IGMG, 2011d)

However, international political crises prevented this festive mood from continuing. The events that increased political tension in the Middle East, such as the second *Intifada* in 2000 and the Gaza attacks in 2009, strengthened the *Milli Görüş*' anti-Israel stance in Europe. No doubt, in their press releases, IGMG has taken sides with the Palestinian side:

The Secretary General of the Islamic Community *Millî Görüş* (IGMG), Oğuz Üçüncü, strongly condemned the attack of Israeli soldiers against a civilian group in the Gaza Strip: "This act of Israel is a state terrorism against the Palestinian people." Seven people, including women, children and a baby, died in Israel's attack on civilians. Üçüncü warned and condemned Israel: "The killing of civilians has nothing to justify and destroys all peace efforts. As natural as it is to condemn suicide attacks, such a state terrorism should definitely be condemned as well. We hope that this attack will not cause an increase in violence in Palestine. This attack should rather be an occasion to end the conflict at the negotiating table rather than trying to resolve it with weapons and bombs."²⁰

IGMG's open support for the Palestinian side in the Israeli-Palestinian turmoil emerged at various times, and its reactions to Israel caused Jewish communities and organizations in Germany to distance themselves from IGMG. Oğuz Üçüncü said in my interview that:

As the general secretary of the IGMG, we arranged an appointment with the general secretariat of The Central Council of Jews in Germany (*Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland*). At that time, the Gaza War broke out. Since everyone chose their side, there was no meeting. But in the end, international developments affect us. During my term, we personally experienced how difficult it was to establish this relationship due to international developments.²¹

²⁰ The original text: "İslam Toplumu *Millî Görüş* (IGMG) Genel Sekreteri Oğuz Üçüncü, İsrail askerlerinin Gazze Şeridi'nde sivil bir gruba saldırıda bulunmasını, "İsrail'in bu hareketi Filistin halkına yönelik bir devlet terörüdür" sözleriyle şiddetle kınadı. İsrail'in sivillere yönelik saldırısında içlerinde kadınlar, çocuklar ve bir bebeğin olduğu yedi kişi hayatını kaybetti. "Sivillerin öldürülmesinin haklı çıkaracak bir tarafı olmadığı gibi tüm barış çabalarını da mahvetmektedir" uyarısında bulunan Üçüncü, "İntihar saldırılarını kınamak ne kadar doğal ise, böyle bir devlet terörü de mutlaka kınanmalıdır. Umuyoruz ki bu saldırı Filistin'de şiddet olaylarının artışına neden olmaz" dedi ve ekledi; "Bu saldırı daha çok, aradaki ihtilafı silahlarla ve bombalarla çözmeye çalışmak yerine müzakere masasında görüşmelerle sonlandırmak için bir vesile olmalıdır." (IGMG, 2006b, see also IGMG, 2008a, 2008b, 2010e, 2012e, 2014e)

²¹ IGMG genel sekreterliği olarak Almanya Yahudi Merkez Konseyi'nin (The Central Council of Jews in Germany, Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland) genel sekreterliği ile randevu ayarlamıştık. Tam o dönem

In addition to these symbolic gestures toward the Jewish communities, IGMG tried to actively cooperate with them in the problems they encountered in Europe. In this manner, the organization continued its demand to collaborate against the far-right (see Bodemann & Yurdakul, 2008, p. 83) and to fight Islamophobia and antisemitism together. IGMG also considered it reasonable to cooperate with the Jewish communities on religious rights and freedoms, such as the right to circumcision. Mustafa Yeneroğlu, law office's former head, thinks it was natural to act together with the German Jewish community regarding religious rights. He quotes an anecdote from a public debate he participated in about the sacrificial worship of Muslims:

I have talked to them [panellists] for hours. I gave them all rational arguments. They are arguing harshly against us. [They say] you have to integrate into this society. So for them, my arguments are invalid. Then the rabbi, sitting next to me, started to talk. He said 'you [Germans] have no right to speak. You have massacred my ancestors.' Then the Germans were quiet. They could not say anything. But this is his [the rabbi's] capital. They [Germans] killed six million people, they cannot dare to leave [while the rabbi is speaking]. It would be a scandal in the newspapers. [The Germans] listened to [the rabbi] until the end. When we left the meeting, I told him 'Thank you very much. This is how you do business. We don't know how to do it.' He said 'I know that these Germans have grudges against me. This is almost in their genes. The best thing that you can do is to stand close to us [Jews]. We can struggle [against Germans] together. Because our word is valid here, your word is not (cited in Bodemann & Yurdakul, 2008, pp. 87–88).

According to the former IGMG general secretary Üçüncü (2020), the experiences of Jews in Germany and Europe should have been taken as an example by today's European Muslims. In this way, he thinks it is in European Muslims' interest to focus on and imitate the Jewish institutional structures to recognize religious rights. However, German

Gazze Savaşı ortaya çıktı. Herkes tarafını seçtiği için görüşme söz konusu olmadı. Ama netice itibariyle uluslararası gelişmeler bizi etkiliyordu. Kendi dönemimde uluslararası gelişmeler sebebiyle bu ilişkiyi kurmanın ne kadar zor olduğunu bizzat tecrübe etmiş olduk (Oğuz Üçüncü, interview by author, 2020-08-20).

institutional structures and academic literature could not be convinced despite the new antisemitic mindset of the new generation taking over the IGMG administration and strategies to fend off antisemitism accusations like denying transnational ties with the *Milli Görüş* in Turkey, developing intimate relations with Jewish communities and organizations, be them aiming cooperation or imitation. For example, it is claimed that there is still little known about the methods of transmitting antisemitic stereotypes among supporters of *Milli Görüş* in Europe (Stremmelaar, 2017, p. 451). On the other hand, according to Schiffauer (2010), the need for antisemitic explanations that associate all adverse events with a single evil force has decreased with the departure of a new generation from Islam and Western dichotomy.

CHAPTER IV

TRANSNATIONAL POLITICAL MOVEMENT TO A EUROPEANIZED MUSLIM NGO

In the previous chapter, I have discussed the reasons for the transformation of IGMG. I have also argued for the two results of the transformation of the IGMG, which I will demonstrate in this chapter. First, the Europeanization venture of the organization will be the case. In the following section, I touch upon identity debates, the IGMG's perception of the European Union, political integration, and its role in political contestations. Second, I will discuss on the NGO-ization of the IGMG, by focusing first on the professionalization of humanitarian aid activities and religious services, and then on the organization's representation of Muslims in the context of religious rights.

4.1. Europeanization of the IGMG

One of the main conclusions of my thesis is that IGMG has become a Europeanized institution – at least at the leadership level – as a consequence of its transformation. In this section, I discuss the IGMG's Europeanization in terms of various topics. I will first examine the IGMG's point of view on the issue of identity in its Europeanization trend. Further, I intend to put this issue of identity in the context of the debates on the accession of Turkey as the country of origin to the European Union and European Muslims' denial or rejection of European values. A second indicator of the Europeanization of IGMG is the significant transformation of the organization's political participation in Germany. Below I examine the IGMG's alienation from the political atmosphere in Turkey and its relations with political parties in Germany, participation in elections, its candidacy attempts and apart from these its protest-like reactions against political and social issues that emerge in Europe which might be called 'contestations'. But let us begin first with identity question.

4.1.1. Identity Discussions and the Perception of the European Union

Identity discussions occupy an essential position in IGMG's Europeanization venture. Citizenship, religious identity, and linguistic identity shape these discussions. First of all, it is necessary to touch on the religious identity adopted by the *Milli Görüş* in Germany. The understanding of Islam by Muslim organizations in Europe varies. The Euro-Islam debates initiated by names such as Bessam Tibi and Tariq Ramadan, and German Islam, Dutch Islam, French Islam, or the understanding of Turkish-Islam affected the religious understanding of Muslim elites and their organizations in Europe. IGMG has a somewhat different definition of religious and ethnic identity from other Turkish-origin organizations. According to Adıgüzel (2011, p. 148), IGMG defines itself as "European Muslim", unlike other Turkish-origin organizations (excluding ABAF).

The concept of Euro-Islam has an inappropriate content for IGMG administrators. The former IGMG secretary-general, Üçüncü, asked the IGMG members to take a clear stance against what Muslims call moderate Islam or Euro-Islam (IGMG, 2007b). Yeneroğlu, the leader of the law office during the 1990s and 2000s, also prefers not to use the term European Islam because of its ambiguity and implication of an assimilated form of Islam limited to the spiritual life of the individual (cited in Yükleven, 2012, pp. 173–174). The understanding of Islam, seen as a distortion and corruption of belief in terms of IGMG, is not limited to Euro-Islam and moderate Islam. While European political authorities support the Euro-Islam project and call for the development of "French, German or Dutch Islam" in their own countries, the IGMG also avoids using the concept of German Muslim and German Islam. Yildiz and Verkuyten (2012), who examined the issues of *Perspektif*, the periodical magazine of IGMG between 2002 and 2009, state that the most used concept in the magazine is "Muslims in Europe" (99), then "Muslims living in Europe" (68). The term "European Muslims" used eight times, while no term such as "German Muslim" used. In terms of the IGMG, the concepts of 'Muslims in Europe', 'Muslims living in Europe' or 'European Muslims' are all terms that describe Muslims who understand and accept European democracy, secular understanding and the rule of law

and have chosen their country of residence as their new and permanent homeland (Yildiz & Verkuyten, 2012, p. 367). In the following period, the concept of European Muslim also strengthened its place in IGMG's discourses and became an adjective that the organization frequently uses in defining itself and its members.

Another argument in identity discussions IGMG-involved is the language issue. Speaking German in Islamic circles of the 1990s was a radical innovation (Özyürek, 2015). Today, accepting German as one of the common languages of the organization remains a radical undertaking for many Turkish-origin organizations. However, IGMG has been taking steps to ensure the use of German as the common language and communication tool of the organization for a long time. Reading Friday sermons in German/Turkish and sometimes only in German at the headquarters, translation of the sermons into the language of every country where IGMG organized, producing content in German on websites such as İslamıQ, publishing press releases in Turkish and German, are examples of IGMG's tendency towards accommodating the German language.

However, some demands of the state weaken this orientation of IGMG towards the German language. For instance, IGMG rejected the mandatory status of German for Turkish religious officials (IGMG, 2019e). Bekir Altaş, its current secretary-general, expressed the attitude of the organization on this issue in his speech at the 11th General Assembly of IGMG in Hagen in 2019 as follows:

...Moreover, nobody sitting here has an agenda like Euro-Islam, German Islam, French Islam, Dutch Islam, and liberal Islam. For sure, German will be spoken at my mosque whenever necessary; in Khutba, education, Islamic studies... However, not by banning the Turkish language. For sure, my imam will know the sociology of the land we live in; He will not be a foreigner to Germany. However, not at the cost of breaking off contact with the Islamic world. Neither language issue nor identity discussions cannot be conducted in an exclusionary manner in the form of 'either

you are with him, or you are from me'. Above all, it is could not conducted through imams.²²

In order to notice the position of IGMG in the identity issue, one needs to examine the issues that occur around the citizenship law in Germany. The Germans have traditionally defined citizenship in terms of the principle of ancestry (*jus sanguinis*), that is, a *Volksgehörigkeit* based on the lineage of German ancestors. Even the children of immigrants who were born and raised in Germany could not have citizenship directly until the beginning of 2000. Foreigners who were willing to renounce their citizenship of the country they belong to could be naturalized after living in Germany for at least fifteen years. The Social Democrat and Greens coalition government, which was in power between 1998-2005, partially changed the *jus sanguinis* that Germany had applied in the process of naturalization until then, with a new law they enacted in January 1, 2000 (Kaya, 2009b).

IGMG encouraged its members to acquire German citizenship with posters and notices prepared after the amendment of the citizenship law (Ewing, 2003, pp. 412–413). *Milli Görüş* in Germany used to transport its members to Turkey to vote in elections in the 1990s. However, the fact that it now demands its members to acquire German citizenship indicates a significant change in the aims of the organization. German institutional structures did not understand this transformation as a sign of its integration or Europeanisation, but rather as part of a secret agenda to control German politics by establishing an Islamist party. As a result of this approach of the German state, the

²² The original text: “...Ve burada oturan kimsenin Euro-Islam, Alman İslam’ı, Fransız İslam’ı, Hollanda İslam’ı, liberal İslam gibi bir gündemi yok. Evet, benim camimde yeri geldiğinde Almanca konuşulacak; hutbede, eğitimde, İslami ilimlerde... Ancak Türkçe dilinin yasaklanması suretiyle değil. Evet, benim imamım yaşadığımız topraklardaki sosyolojiyi bilecek; Almanya’ya yabancı olmayacak. Ancak İslam dünyasıyla irtibatını koparmak pahasına değil. Ne dil mevzu, ne de kimlik tartışmaları ‘ya ondansın, ya bendensin’ şeklinde dışlayıcı bir tarzda yürütülmez. Hele hele imamlar üzerinden hiç yürütülmez.” (IGMG, 2019g)

applications of IGMG members who wanted to become German citizens were rejected. IGMG reacted to these decisions at the headquarters level:

The Court of Appeal repeats the Supreme Administrative Court of the State's error to view the IGMG's past and present only from the perspective of the Office for the Protection of the Constitution. The evaluations of the Offices for the Protection of the Constitution are nourishing by sources that cannot be attributed to IGMG. IGMG has neither pursued anticonstitutional goals in the past nor does it pursue a goal in this direction today. Expecting our members and officials consistently to isolate themselves from the so-called "anticonstitutional attitudes" set up by the security forces means leaving these people to the arbitrariness of the security units.²³

It is possible to notice the transformation that *Milli Görüş* has experienced in the sense that it attributes to the concept of Europeanization, in the attitude it has taken against European unity and values since the first period of the movement. In the statements of Necmettin Erbakan and Süleyman Arif Emre about the European Economic Community (EEC) during the MNP and MSP periods, there was a very radical opposition towards the *Milli Görüş*'s participation in a union in Europe and accepting its values (Landau, 1980). This opposition continued during the RP period all the way to the late 1990s (Taniyici, 2003). After the closure of the RP, the *Milli Görüş* movement on the EU during the FP period made a change of opinion, albeit for a short time. Because the main difference between RP and FP was about foreign policy (Hale & Özbudun, 2010, p. 10). In the process after 28 February, the *Milli Görüş* in Turkey has applied to the European Court of Human Rights. During the process, FP defended EU membership and expected support from the EU for the solution of the headscarf issue. Also, FP advocated the need for

²³ The original text: "Temyiz Mahkemesi, Eyalet Yüksek İdare Mahkemesi'nin, IGMG'nin geçmişini ve bugününü sadece Anayasa Koruma Dairesi'nin bakış açısıyla görme yanlışını temelde devam ettirmektedir. Anayasa Koruma Daireleri'nin değerlendirmeleri, IGMG'ye isnad edilmesi mümkün olmayan kaynaklardan beslenmektedir. IGMG ne geçmişte anayasa karşıtı hedefler gütmüşdür ne de günümüzde bu yönde bir hedef gütmektedir. Üye ve görevlilerimizden sürekli olarak, güvenlik güçlerince kurgulanan sözde 'anayasa karşıtı tavırlardan' kendilerini soyutlamalarını beklemek, bu insanları güvenlik birimlerinin keyfiyetine terk etmek anlamını taşımaktadır." (IGMG, 2009b)

Turkey to fulfil the Copenhagen criteria (Ülger, 2017). One of the AKP's most comprehensive foreign policy aims was the participation and harmonization of Turkey in the EU during the 2000s. Interestingly, in the early years of the SP, which was supported by traditionalists and Erbakan, the party program in its establishment also had content supporting EU accession: "We believe that the continuation of Turkish-EU relations and Turkey's becoming an EU member within a reasonable time, will make significant contributions to the establishment of a new world based on truth and justice. The realization of the Copenhagen criteria in Turkey, namely to achieve the universal dimension of democracy, and balancing the economy, will relieve the world as well as Turkey."²⁴

However, IGMG did not find these as sincere attempts in the *Milli Görüş* in Turkey. Oğuz Üçüncü states in my interview with him that IGMG, supporting Turkey's EU membership bid, suffered severe criticism by the RP in the nineties. Therefore they do not see stability in FP, SP, and even the AKP's vision of the EU (Üçüncü, 2020). IGMG, in contrast to the *Milli Görüş* in Turkey, firmly maintained that Turkey should become an EU member, an attitude that is connected with the idea of Europeanization. Furthermore, it is necessary to explain IGMG's preference for "Europeanness" rather than "Germanness" in the context of integration-assimilation. For the IGMG leadership, Germanness, Dutchness, Frenchness etc. imply renouncing Turkishness, while Europeanness evokes the protection of authentic values by locating them under this umbrella identity. This discursive distinction has been a significant factor in adopting the European Muslim identity, which also lies at the heart of the IGMG's perspective on, and efforts for, political participation and integration in Germany.

²⁴ The original text: "Biz Türkiye-AB ilişkilerinin devam etmesi ve Türkiye'nin makul bir sürede AB üyesi olmasının, hak ve adalete dayalı yeni bir dünyanın kuruluşuna çok önemli katkılarda bulunacağına inanıyoruz. Türkiye'de Kopenhag kriterlerinin yaşama geçmesi, yani demokrasinin evrensel boyutlara ulaşması, ekonominin sağlıklı dengelere oturması, Türkiye'yi olduğu kadar dünyayı da rahatlatacaktır." (SP, 2001)

4.1.2. Political Integration: Participations and Contestations

Political integration is one aspect of a broad structural integration process. In this sense, it means access to political status, rights, opportunities and representation for immigrants and the equalization of these conditions between local and immigrant populations. On the other hand, political integration is also about the activities and participation of immigrants and their acceptance of laws, institutional framework and political values that "integrate" a political system. The political integration of immigrants can be divided into four dimensions: political rights, identification, norms and values, and participation. The more rights they enjoy, the more they identify with the society in which they live and the more they share its political values and norms; and the more they are involved and represented in the political system, the better they will be integrated (Baubock et al., 2006, pp. 66–67).

The political integration of IGMG in Germany can be explained with the concepts of political participation and political contestation. Political participation involves two main elements: voting and election. IGMG encouraged its members to vote as a right of citizenship, especially after the citizenship law. The fact that the far-right and racist parties' propaganda against immigrants and Islam were accepted by the voters of both German and other European countries made it necessary for the IGMG to take a position in local and national elections. IGMG's approach to political parties in Germany, and its warnings to the community members about the election of the Integration Council, elections to the European Parliament, German federal elections and state council elections can give an idea about the organization's stance toward political integration in Germany.

Due to the low turnout in the European parliamentary elections, it is easier for far-right and right-wing populist parties to gain seats at the parliament. For this reason, IGMG

encourages its community members to vote in these elections in order to prevent these parties from entering the parliament. The organization often tries to convince its members to "vote against racism" in these elections (IGMG, 2019c). In its press releases, IGMG promotes voting in the state and European parliamentary elections which are simultaneously held, by claiming that voting is "killing two birds with one stone" (IGMG, 2014h). Before the European parliament elections in May 2014, IGMG asked its members to vote in the elections:

IGMG fulfilled its duty in this regard. The community and society throughout Europe are invited to learn about parties and to vote in the elections. In this context, *'Perspektif'* magazine prepared a comprehensive election file that included interviews with the top candidates of the parties, the responses of the parties to the expectations of them, and articles introducing the party groups in the European Parliament and submitted it for readers' consideration. We are a part of European society and therefore we must fulfill our responsibility by participating in elections across Europe between 22nd and 25th May.²⁵

Due to the administrative structure of the Federal Republic of Germany, state elections are important in terms of the relations that IGMG organizations at local level will establish with German institutional structures. For this reason, the headquarters encourage its members, who live in the region and have the right to vote, to vote in state elections. In the parliamentary elections of Lower Saxony, Brandenburg, Thuringia, Hessen, Saxony-Anhalt, Baden-Württemberg, Rhineland-Palatinate, North Rhine-Westphalia, Schleswig-Holstein states, the headquarters administration of the IGMG warned its community members to vote. German federal elections, on the other hand, bring more detailed campaigns and announcements. For example, IGMG organized a

²⁵ The original text: "IGMG bu hususta üzerine düşen görevi yerine getirmektedir. Avrupa genelinde cemaat ve toplum, partiler hakkında bilgi edinmeye ve oyunu kullanmaya çağrılmaktadır. Bu bağlamda *'Perspektif'* dergisi, partilerin liste başı adaylarıyla yapılan röportajlar, partilerin kendilerinden beklenenler karşısında verdikleri cevaplar ve Avrupa Parlamentosunda yer alan parti gruplarını tanıtan makaleler eşliğinde kapsamlı bir seçim dosyası hazırlayıp okuyucularının takdirine sunmuştur. Bizler Avrupa toplumunun bir parçasıyız ve bu sebeple 22 ile 25 Mayıs tarihleri arasında tüm Avrupa'da seçime katılarak üzerimize düşen sorumluluğu yerine getirmeliyiz." (IGMG, 2014c)

campaign in 2017 German federal election. Through an eight-part video series using the hashtag *#SözBizde*, the organization made demands that addressed problems such as restrictions on freedom of religion, not duly enlightening the National Socialist Underground (*Nationalsozialistischer Untergrund*, NSU) murders, discrimination in business life, or inability to develop Islamic social work approach from the government to-be-elected (IGMG, 2017d). In the same year, IGMG organized a banner contest in order to encourage community members and European Muslims to vote in the federal parliamentary elections in 2013 (IGMG, 2013a).

These steps taken by IGMG administration regarding voting to increase political integration had three major purposes. First, the main purpose of the organization, as a requirement of being a religious community, is an attempt to prevent anti-Islamic parties (IGMG, 2017g). Secondly, the organization aims to weaken the far right movements and strengthen the center parties in general (IGMG, 2016b, 2016c, 2016d). Last purpose of IGMG in encouraging voting is explained as an attempt to contribute to the public interest (IGMG, 2013d). The striking point in these declared aims is that IGMG does not think that there is a particular party to vote in Germany (IGMG, 2017d). However, the fact that there is no political party that is ideologically close to IGMG does not mean that the organization approaches all political parties in Germany from the same distance. As a Muslim organization that is naturally opposed to the politics of the parties of the far right ideology, the IGMG has not been able to fully adopt the central parties' ideologies, either. In addition, its relations with these parties differ from time to time. For the IGMG; The Alternative for Germany (*Alternative für Deutschland*, AfD), which failed to send representatives to the parliament with a narrow share of 4.8 percent in the Federal Parliamentary elections that was the first election it entered in 2013 and then doubled its votes in the Federal Parliamentary elections held in 2017 and entered the parliament with 12.6 percent, is a political movement that should be prevented from entering the parliament. This danger was pointed out in the state elections in Thuringia in the following period (IGMG, 2019h) Another far-right party is The National Democratic Party

of Germany (*Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands*, NPD) and the IGMG has expressed its concerns about this political movement at various times (e.g. IGMG, 2013e, 2017f). In its evaluations of the center parties, IGMG criticizes the fact that these parties have parallel views to those of extremist parties such as the AfD and NPD when it comes to Islam and immigrants:

The AfD's party program is a mixture of issues that were frequently raised and discussed for a variety of pretexts long before the AfD. These discussions, which were held in an anti-Islamic tone, were always carried out through mainstream parties; sometimes representatives of the CDU / CSU Union parties, sometimes of Social Democrats, sometimes of the Greens and the Left Party. The only thing the AfD did was to melt these issues in one pot. In this context, the mainstream parties have done such a 'good' job that the AfD does not even need to add a point on its own. It is very clear that the AfD took the idea that Islamic communities should not have public legal personality from the Greens. However; it is clearly understood that it was inspired by the Union parties while forming its arguments on "*ithal imamlar*" and was inspired by the SPD-governed states in their demands regarding the headscarf ban.²⁶

On the other hand, IGMG preferred to develop a closer relationship with social democrats compared to other parties. For example, (SPD) Bavaria state parliament Diana Stachowitz and an accompanying delegation with her visited the IGMG Southern Bavaria Regional Center (Camia, 2020). In addition to all these, Üçüncü explains the IGMG's attitude intended not only making the far-right parties lose in the elections in Germany, but also making some candidates win as follows:

²⁶ The original text: "AfD'nin parti programı, AfD'den çok önce çeşitli bahanelerle sıklıkla gündeme getirilerek tartışılan meselelerin bir karışımı mahiyetinde. İslam düşmanı bir tonla gerçekleştirilen bu tartışmalar bazen CDU/CSU Birlik partilerinin, bazen Sosyal Demokratların, bazen de Yeşiller ve Sol Parti'nin temsilcileri olmak üzere hep ana akım partiler maharetiyle sürdürüldü. AfD'nin tek yaptığı da bu konuları tek potada eritmek oldu. Bu bağlamda ana akım partiler öylesine 'iyi' bir iş çıkardılar ki, AfD'nin kendi başına bir madde eklemesine gerek bile kalmadı. AfD'nin İslami cemaatlerin kamu tüzel kişiliğine sahip olmaması gerektiği fikrini Yeşiller'den aldığı çok açıktır. Bununla beraber; 'ithal imamlar' konusundaki argümanlarını oluştururken Birlik partilerinden, başörtüsü yasağı ile alakalı taleplerinde de SPD tarafından yönetilen eyaletlerden ilham aldığı bariz bir şekilde anlaşılmaktadır." (IGMG, 2016d)

You are going to be a social group and you will be content with just participating in the elections. Nobody is doing this. Why would you do it? Maybe you cannot make a statement publicly through a press conference, but the elections in Germany are now determined with a very small difference of votes and it is usually we who determine this difference. For this reason, the best is to make an active choice. It is not correct to say just participation. For example, you can ask this Belit Onay, who is elected as mayor of Hanover.²⁷

For IGMG members, to ensure their political participation through being a candidate in elections and making politics has not been as easy as voting. In the mid-nineties, the German media criticized the fact that Ertan Taşkıran, a member of CDU Berlin, originally comes from *Milli Görüş* movement (Der Spiegel, 1996). In the early 2000s, Turkish origin secular politicians were complained to the German public due to their IGMG background and these figures had to resign for this reason (Allievi, 2013, p. 204). These pressures have been among the problems faced by politicians of IGMG origin in recent years. When Selvet Kocabey, who is the spokesperson of the Brackwede *Milli Görüş* Hicret Mosque in Bielefeld, Germany, was nominated from the Green Party in the municipal elections to be held in September 2020, there sparked political reactions. Mona Neubauer, state chairwoman of the Greens in North-Rhine Westphalia argued that it is not possible to be a part of *Milli Görüş* organization and also do politics in the Green Party. North Rhine-Westphalian state parliament of the same party, Berivan Aymaz, stated that while adopting the ideology of *Milli Görüş* on the one hand, taking part in politics in a pluralist and libertarian party is a contradiction (Kaplan, 2020). Such examples show that the political participation of IGMG-origin figures in German political parties is unlikely.

As for contestation, which is another dimension of political integration, it can be claimed that a transformation has occurred in the focus of activities by IGMG over the years.

²⁷ Toplumsal bir grup olacaksınız ve sadece seçime girmekle yetineceksiniz. Bunu kimse yapmıyor. Siz niçin yapacaksınız? Belki alenen basın toplantısı vasıtasıyla bir açıklama yapamazsınız fakat Almanya'daki seçimler artık çok az oy farkıyla belirleniyor ve bu farkı belirleyen de genelde biz oluyoruz. Onun için en doğrusu aktif tercihte bulunmaktır. Sadece katılım demek doğru değil. Örneğin bunu Hannover'de belediye başkanı seçilen Belit Onay'a sorabilirsiniz (Üçüncü, Üçüncü, interview by author, 2020-08-20).

Political contestation refers to the more active dimension of citizenship and includes actions such as protests, demonstrations, sit-ins. These non-parliamentary forms of political participation generally presume the formation of a collective actor characterized by a shared identity and some degree of organization through a process of mobilization (Mügge, 2010, p. 28). *Milli Görüş* movement in Germany organized its protests in the 70's and 80's mostly within the framework of the problems in the Islamic world. In the first half of the nineties, the focus was on the country of origin with the rise of *Milli Görüş* movement in Turkey. The forms of non-parliamentary political participation of *Milli Görüş* have changed since the mid-nineties. In addition to issues concerning the Islamic world, such as the Israeli-Palestinian turmoil, the agenda of Muslims in Europe could now be the source of these protests. Thus, European Muslims' problems such as the headscarf ban, Islamophobia, Pegida (Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the Occident, *Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes*), NSU murders were the topics that the IGMG reacted in protests and demonstrations.

4.2. NGO-ization of the IGMG

One of the consequences (and accelerators) of the IGMG's transformation is its significant professionalization in its headquarters. In my thesis, I attempt to explain this evolution with reference to the concept of NGO-ization. The IGMG's professionalization is seen more visibly in humanitarian aid activities and religious services. I examine its professionalization in humanitarian aid activities within the framework of the relationships it has established at the global level, whereas the organization's religious services are limited to its activities towards Muslims in Europe. A third issue that I will discuss about the IGMG's NGO-ization process is related to the mission the organization undertakes especially regarding Muslims' representation in Europe. In the second section of this chapter, I argue that especially with the breakthroughs brought about by the launching of the law office after September 11 attacks, the IGMG has increasingly become a non-governmental organization that aims to deal with the social, political and legal problems of Muslims in Europe, rather than simply being the central institution of

local and regional mosque communities. Let us now turn to its humanitarian efforts and religious services.

4.2.1. Professionalization of Humanitarian Activities and Religious Services

One of the areas that reveal the corporate transformation and professionalization of IGMG is the new activity fields. These fields have emerged as a result of NGO-ization. The *Milli Görüş* movement in Germany sent financial aid to Afghan Muslims during the Soviet Occupation or to Bosnian Muslims during the Bosnian War. Until 2010, it continued its aid activities under the name of IHH. As discussed above, following the police raids and investigations towards IGMG in 2008, IHH was closed due to its assistance to HAMAS. Subsequently, the need for a charity organization to replace IHH arose and to make humanitarian aid activities more professional and the IGMG Support and Social Association (*Hilfs- und Sozialverein e. V.*, HASENE) was established on October, 2010 (Rosenow-Williams & Sezgin, 2014, p. 343). In addition to more than ten countries of Europe, HASENE has opened branches in Australia, Canada, and Turkey and has continued to expand its service areas with the agency network it has established voluntarily.

Aware of the German institutional circles' doubts and expectations discussed above, the IGMG adopted professionalization in the direction of neo-institutionalization as a fundamental organizational goal and a way to legitimize its humanitarian activities. As a result, it went through a professionalization process that increased its organizational efficiency (Sezgin & Dijkzeul, 2013). With its NGOization and related professionalization, IGMG, became an organization that carried out humanitarian aid activities worldwide. It carried out humanitarian aid activities for the Bam earthquake in Iran in 2003, the tsunami disaster in Southeast Asia (IGMG, 2004b, 2004a), the Kashmir earthquake in 2005, the Haiyan typhoon in the Philippines in 2013 (IGMG, 2013g), and the

humanitarian crisis in Somalia (IGMG, 2011f, 2011b) . Apart from humanitarian aid, IGMG's work also include development projects. Orphanages and schools were opened in Pakistan or African countries with the initiatives of IGMG (Dawn, 2012). In these initiatives, they collaborated with, and received serious support from, partner organizations such as Read Foundation and *Cemiyetul Hayr* Relief Organization. IGMG also nurtures the idea of a global ummah thanks to the network it has established with these organizations:

As many as 400,000 flood victims were provided meat under Hasene IGMG project and the IGMG also announced to finance the eye cataract operations of 2,000 deserving persons in the first phase. The Muslim brethren from Turkey settled across European countries including Germany, Australia, Britain, Belgium and other countries this time celebrated Eidul Azha with the flood victims across four provinces, Gilgit-Baltistan, and Azad Kashmir and distributed sacrificial meat among people. Working under the banner of IGMG-HSV, the eight-member delegation exhibited their true love for the people of Pakistan by sharing with the affected communities on this holy festival. They sacrificed 2,470 cows having 17,290 shares in all the provinces, Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Kashmir with the cooperation of its partners READ Foundation and Help in Need Pakistan (The News, 10.10.2011).

The Cemiyetul Hayr Relief Organization(CHRO) in collaboration with IGMG HASENE, a Turkish relief and Islamic organization based in Germany on Thursday 11th July 2013, distributed bags of rice and sugar, gallons of cooking oil amongst others which were valued at GMD 1,250.000 at a brief presentation ceremony held at the Tallinding Islamic Institute in the Kanifing Municipality. Cemiyetul Hayr Relief Organization was established in 2001 aimed at alleviating poverty, helping needy and vulnerable Muslims. Since its inception, they have been embarking on series of donations of food items, construction and pumping of wells and supporting orphans. Speaking on the occasion, Musa Jallow, country coordinator of CHRO expressed delight and appreciation to their donors IGMG HASENE for their laudable gestures; adding that "whenever we knocked their doors they responded beyond our imagination (Foroyaa Newspaper, 07.16.2020)

These efforts were questioned in terms of whether the *Milli Görüş* movement and its international humanitarian aid activities in Germany were a real humanitarian activity in three occasions. The first is efforts to help Muslim communities oppressed as a result of their Islamist attitudes. In particular, the IGMG delegation's visit to the Gaza region and

aid activities against Israel's attacks in Gaza were the reasons for the accusations of antisemitism and the financing to HAMAS in Germany (IGMG, 2008b). Second, it has a structure centered on religious worship such as charity, *zakat*, *kurban*, and also responds to internal expectations and aims to maintain legitimacy against its members (Rosenow-Williams & Sezgin, 2014, p. 343). The source of the problem here is considered the strong dependence of IGMG on its members' financial support, which prevents organizational independence (Sezgin & Dijkzeul, 2013). Thirdly, IGMG's humanitarian aid activities are concentrated in Muslim regions, rather than a more general and inclusive frame of activity. Following the police raids and investigations in 2008, IGMG tried to balance internal and external expectations with the HASENE organization and continued to ensure its legitimacy towards its members but also tried to respond to external expectations. As regards criticisms of inequality in humanitarian aid, statements by Bekir Altaş, the secretary-general, about the aid of IGMG mosques after the flood disaster in the state of Lower Saxony in 2017 are remarkable:

The imageries from the flood disaster in the state of Lower Saxony pretty impressed us. As an Islamic religious community, we are responsible for offering all kinds of assistance to people with whom we live together when they need help. Mosque societies are inseparable elements of the cities and districts, and taking action for everyone suffering from this challenging time is a natural part of their social responsibility.²⁸

Providing services in 12 countries in Europe, as well as Australia and Canada, IGMG operates with 518 mosques, 304 of which are in Germany. The organization, has a total of 2330 branches and 127,000 members, as well as a congregation of 350,000 people, considering the number of people attending Friday prayers. The second largest Muslim organization in Germany where its headquarters is located, IGMG has expanded its

²⁸ The original text: "Aşağı Saksonya eyaletindeki sel felaketinden görüntüler bizleri oldukça etkiledi. İslami bir dinî cemaat olarak bir arada yaşadığımız insanların yardıma ihtiyaç duyduğu anlarda onlara her türlü yardımı sunmak sorumluluğuna sahibiz. Cami cemiyetleri şehir ve ilçelerin ayrılmaz birer unsurudur ve bu zor zamanda sıkıntı çeken herkes için harekete geçmeleri de onların toplumsal sorumluluklarının tabii birer parçasıdır." (IGMG, 2017e)

activities in such a wide geography that its professionalism appeared as an inevitable conclusion. However, the organization's transformation from a transnational political movement to a religious community was not enough for it to control such a large base. For this reason, it evolved to a professional non-governmental organization in the field of religious service. At this point, I would like to examine the transformation process of IGMG into a non-governmental organization and its resulting professionalization in the context of religious services.

When we look at the historical trajectory of German Turkish Muslims, we see that until the 1980 coup and the appointments by the *Diyanet*, it was prerogative of *Süleymanî* and *Millî Görüş* communities to take care of religious needs of the migrant workers. Since Turkish state's authority to determine and control religious life of the Muslim community had little effect on Muslims in Germany, organizations such as *Millî Görüş* were able to continue their activities in the field of religious service even after the *Diyanet* was organized in Europe. During the 1990s, one of the fundamental interests for *Millî Görüş* movement in Turkey was to come to power while *Millî Görüş* communities in Europe had to deal with religious needs including performing prayers, sighting the crescent moon and pilgrimage. This was one of the reasons why the dissidence between the IGMG and *Millî Görüş* movement in Turkey emerged during this time (Üçüncü, interview by author).

Unlike the *Millî Görüş* organization in Turkey, as is well known, Germany's *Millî Görüş* movement has been organized through mosques rather than political party organizations or youth associations since its beginning. Mosques also serve as centers in the field of religious services. For this reason, the organization, which underwent a transformation in the second half of the 90s, took steps regarding the mission of mosques and their public image. While the 1970s and 1980s were important periods for Muslim and Turkish communities in terms of organizing associations, there was an

obvious rupture between these communities and German society in those years. Thus, IGMG initiated a project called Open Mosque Day (*Tag der Offenen Moschee*) in order to correct this situation and make mosques, which are the centre of religious services, an important structure of the society.

The first Open Mosque Day in Germany took place in 1997. In 2007, Coordination Council of Muslims in Germany (*Koordinationsrat der Muslime in Deutschland*, KRM) took over the organization (IGMG, 2015). According to the IGMG data, approximately 100,000 visitors visit 1000 mosques every year within the scope of this project. As part of these days, certain themes and slogans are chosen in line with the social and political agenda of Germany as well as religious issues in general. These include: History of the presence of Muslims in Europe (IGMG, 2009a), 1400th anniversary of the Qur'an (IGMG, 2010a), The Prophet Muhammad (IGMG, 2011a), arts and culture (IGMG, 2012a), environmental awareness (IGMG, 2013b), social responsibility (IGMG, 2014a), Muslim youth in Germany (IGMG, 2015), migration and *hijra* (IGMG, 2016a), preventing German society from shifting to the far-right through promoting good neighborliness and mosques (IGMG, 2017a), eliminating drawbacks against visible religiosity (IGMG, 2018a), emphasis on the priority of man over the country against the claim of right-wing populism (IGMG, 2019a). All these headings show that the themes of the Open Mosque Day by IGMG in the last decade have been shaped by Germany's agenda and that it has no purely religious content.

IGMG has also taken steps towards making mosque communities local actors. In 2015, when *Stadt. Land. Moschee* in Stuttgart city was chosen as a pilot mosque, it was aimed to make the activities of mosque communities visible and to meet and encourage cooperation with municipalities and local authorities. In addition, IGMG aimed to show itself as a strong partner to other communities and various non-governmental organizations.

Another area of religious services concerns the appointment and training of imams to serve in IGMG mosques. Most of the Turkish-origin Islamic organizations in Germany were finding short-term solutions to fulfill the need for imams by assigning retired imams in Turkey to serve in the mosques in Germany for a period of three months. However, it has recently been realized that the Turkish diaspora's problem of the religious officials cannot be solved in this way. In 2006, Turkish government launched a program called the International Theology Programme (*Uluslararası İlahiyat Programı*, UIP) with the aim of encouraging Turkish diaspora youth to receive education in Islamic sciences in Turkey and then to serve in the institutions affiliated to the *Diyanet*. However, not all students participated in this program took part in *Diyanet*. The results in Bruce's study show that UIP graduates do not have to work only in the *Diyanet* affiliated associations, but they generally adopt the same religious field vision as the Turkish state adopts. UIP graduates are generally very positive towards *Milli Görüş*, refusing to cooperate with the Gulenists and refraining from collaborating or working with non-state religious movements such as the *Süleymanlılar*, but they are more positive to others such as the *Ülkücüler* (Bruce, 2020, p. 13). Taking advantage of this opportunity, IGMG tries to achieve a transformation in its mosques by employing young imams born in Germany and graduated from UIP who completed their education until university in Germany, in mosques throughout Germany with a program called "Young Imams Project".

IGMG continues its educational activities in Germany in order to train religious personnel who know the German society and the IGMG community. In 2015, BeMuF officially started its educational activities and produced its first graduates in 2019. IGMG, which has not yet opened a university-level institution, supports undergraduate, graduate and Ph.D. students by granting scholarships or by providing job opportunities in the Guidance Unit at the head office or at the local level. The organization chooses to raise awareness of its members instead of training political organizers; thus it has abandoned its

commitment to Turkey in the field of religious service over time. However, although the headquarters developed such a principle; religious preachers, theology professors and imams are still invited to the activities of IGMG in Europe upon request from the base. Despite the Europeanization efforts and professionalization steps of the headquarters; ongoing contacts are maintained with the country of origin, Turkey, due to both demands from the base and the lack of religious personnel.

4.2.3. Representation of Muslims: Religious Rights and Reactions

Another indicator in IGMG's venture of NGO-ization is that it assumes the representation of the Muslim community in Europe and defends its rights. Before IGMG's NGO-ization and professionalization, the agenda of *Milli Görüş* movement in Europe included the problems of Muslim/conservative people faced or reactions against the Islamic world and contestation. The Palestinian issue, the Soviet occupation, the Gulf War, the *Ba'ath* regime in Syria and the struggles among Islamists have been the subject of the protests of *Milli Görüş* communities in Europe. IGMG has continued to organize various protests against the problems that occur in the Islamic world today. For example, protests have been organized in European countries and in the USA against the policies of the People's Republic of China regime towards Uyghur Muslims. In addition to this, IGMG took various steps in institutional terms with NGO-ization and professionalization. One of them was the establishment of the legal unit. The second was to strengthen and control the umbrella organizations where Muslim organizations are represented through Islamrat. Religious organizations complained that they did not have the opportunity to form a suitable representative organ. Accordingly, IGMG began to use legal instruments to gain recognition and filed a wide range of lawsuits regarding the protection of Muslim rights, such as worship of sacrifice or religious education (Hesselmans, 2014, p. 157). Thus, in addition to the problems of the Islamic world, the IGMG tried to form public union and find solutions to the problems and rights struggles faced by Muslims in Europe with the initiatives of the legal unit.

One of the problems encountered by Muslims in Europe regarding religious rights has been the headscarf ban and double standards that Muslim women with headscarves face in the public area. The headscarf issue was first hotly debated in France, and the French National Assembly banned both teachers and students from wearing headscarves in public schools in February 2004 (Bowen, 2006). This controversy and ban later spread to Germany. IGMG defended the rights of Muslim women who were discriminated against in the field of work, by bringing them to the agenda through the releases by the headquarters and filing a lawsuit (IGMG, 2009d, 2012b, 2014d, 2017h, 2018b, 2019d, 2019b). The positive steps taken by the states and the federal government were appreciated (IGMG, 2017b, 2017c, 2018c).

The issue of religious education within the scope of the European Muslims' religious rights is a serious problem that IGMG emphasizes and brings to the agenda. IGMG claimed that the root cause of this problem was the lack of political will. The former secretary-general of the IGMG, Üçüncü, stated that Coordination Council of Muslims in Germany (KRM) was responsible for this issue. Because the IGMG thought that if the provincial religious communities could be established, the arguments of the politicians who prevent the process would be in vain (IGMG, 2011i). In many states in Germany, the Muslim communities and the state opposed to each other on the issue of Islamic religious education in various periods. For instance, the IGMG reacted to the preparation of a special law draft for Muslims in 2011, while other religious communities in the state of NRW were implemented on the basis of Article 31 of the NRW School Act (SchulG). According to IGMG, this draft both proves that Muslim communities are subjected to a second-class status, and opens the constitutional religious law to discussion by implying that the constitutional religious law is not in line with the conditions of the time. IGMG, on the other hand, requested equal treatment, not special treatment:

With this law draft, Muslim communities are asked to renounce their identity and rights as a religious community and, furthermore, to exercise only a limited right to be active in faith-based religion lessons under constitutional guarantee. This

right is foreseen to be entrusted only partially to a council consisting of representatives of religious communities. Underlying trust and interest of Muslim families and students in religious lessons is primarily cause of the desire to protect their beliefs. The State Government should take seriously the expectations of the Coordination Council of Muslims in Germany (KRM) as soon as possible and consider better alternatives available to implement the Islamic religion lesson.²⁹

The organization also struggles on the issues of worship of sacrifice and male circumcision, which are among the basic religious duties of Muslims. For example, due to the decision of the Cologne State Court in 2012 that considered male circumcision as a crime of injuring, IGMG made efforts to form a block against this decision in the public opinion. The IGMG claimed that with this decision, the freedom of religion and worship of Muslims and Jews were prevented and accordingly these two communities were criminalized (IGMG, 2012g). As a result of these reactions, the IGMG welcomed the Bundestag's decision:

There has been a distrust among Muslims and Jews towards the judiciary since the Cologne State Court considered circumcision as a physical violence (injury). There was also an atmosphere of distrust between the circumcision doctors and the Jewish Mohels. However, the Bundestag found a solution by making a small change in the scope of the custody rights regulations in the German Civil Code and acting relatively quickly on this issue. The decision taken was also gratifying with regard to another background issue. Circumcision controversy that was put forward by certain groups, again was abused by those certain groups to denigrate Muslims and Jews, such that while under normal conditions such defamation attempts could not be made directly, it became possible after the decision. The displeasing dispute ended with this decision of the Bundestag. We hope that the regulation, which is well-thought when evaluated as a whole but still has uncertainties in some

²⁹ The original text: "Bu yasa tasarısı ile Müslüman cemaatlerden, dini cemaat olarak kimlik ve haklarından vazgeçmeleri ve bunun da ötesinde anayasal garanti altında olan inanç esaslı din dersi konusunda etkin olma hakkını yalnızca sınırlı bir şekilde kullanmaları isteniyor. Söz konusu bu hak, sadece kısmi olarak dini cemaatlerin temsilcilerinden oluşan bir konseye tevdi edilmesi öngörülüyor. Müslüman aileler ve öğrencilerin din derslerine yönelik güven ve ilgisinin altında öncelikle inançlarını koruma isteği yatmaktadır. Eyalet Hükümeti bir an evvel Almanya Müslümanları Koordinasyon Konseyi'nin (KRM) beklentilerini ciddiye almalı ve İslam din dersinin uygulanabilmesi için en kısa sürede var olan daha iyi alternatifleri dikkate almalıdır." (IGMG, 2011g, also see IGMG, 2011c)

parts, will not lead us to a distrust in terms of legality by causing different applications due to different interpretations.³⁰

Islamophobia, racism and xenophobia have an important place in the struggle to protect the rights of European Muslims through the IGMG's legal unit and media organs, xenophobia has increased especially since 2013. As a matter of fact, the demonstrations which have been repeated every Monday since the last months of 2014 by Pegida in Dresden, Germany; bring together a large number of people and resemble the racist movements of the Hitler period (Abadan-Unat, 2015, p. 269). IGMG tries to prevent racist attacks against European Muslims by reacting to these demonstrations and keeping the NSU case, the Marwa al-Sherbini murder and the previous massacres of Mölln and Solingen on the agenda. As a result, IGMG in line with its transformation has become a professional non-governmental organization that defends the Muslims' religious rights with its legal unit and umbrella organizations such as Islamrat and KRM.

³⁰ The original text: "Köln Eyalet Mahkemesi'nin, sünneti, müessir fiil (yaralama) olarak değerlendirmesinden bu yana Müslümanlar ve Yahudiler arasında yargıya karşı hukukî bir itimatsızlık oluşmuştur. Sünnet yapan doktorlar ve Yahudi Mohel'ler arasında da bir güvensizlik ortamı oluşmuştu. Ancak Federal Meclis, Alman Medenî Kanunu'nda yer alan velayet hakkı düzenlemeleri kapsamında küçük bir değişiklik yaparak ve bu konuda nispeten hızlı davranarak meseleye bir çare bulmuştur. Alınan karar, aynı zamanda, arka planda yatan diğer bir hususla ilgili olarak da sevindirici olmuştur: Belli çevrelerin ortaya atmış olduğu sünnet münakaşası, yine belirli çevreler tarafından Müslüman ve Yahudileri karalamaya yönelik olarak kötüye kullanılmıştır, öyle ki normal şartlarda bu tarz karalama girişimleri doğrudan yapılamazken, karar sonrası mümkün hale gelmişti. Federal Meclis'in bu kararıyla sıkıcı bir münakaşa da sona ermiş oldu. Umuyoruz ki, bir bütün olarak değerlendirildiğinde iyi düşünülmüş olan, ancak bazı kısımlarında hâlâ belirsizlikler barındıran düzenleme, farklı yorumlamalardan dolayı farklı uygulamalara yol açarak bizleri tekrar hukukî bir güvensizliğe itmez." (IGMG, 2012c)

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

How has the IGMG, the main organizational body of the *Milli Görüş* (National Vision) movement in Germany, changed in the last two decades? Has it ceased to be a transnational movement and turned to a Europeanized Muslim NGO? In this thesis, I have discussed the transformation that the *Milli Görüş* communities in Germany went through after being named IGMG and the results of this transformation. My answer to this question is essentially yes. I have analyzed this transformation process through an examination of both primary and secondary sources. I have analyzed the IGMG's official publications (press releases, *Perspektif*, *Camia* etc.) and interviewed two of its prominent leaders who were effective in this process of institutional change.

Milli Görüş communities, which were first established around a mosque in Braunschweig in 1969, became associations in many cities of Europe in the 1970s. In the 1980s, *Milli Görüş* communities in Europe were divided due to the effective propaganda of Cemalettin Kaplan and restarted their activities in 1985 under the name AMGT. In 1995, it changed again and became the Islamic Community *Millî Görüş* (IGMG). Since then, the IGMG has shown quite a dynamic structure, which has undergone relatively significant changes in terms of both personnel and organizational features on the one hand, and institutional identity construction and its vision of Turkish politics (both the state and the Turkey's *Milli Görüş* movement), German politics and society, European Union and other faith communities.

In my analysis of these changes, I have tried to emphasize the role of both structural factors (e.g. the rise of the AKP in Turkey, increasingly hostile legal environment in Germany etc.) and the agency of the IGMG leadership, particularly the efforts by the

new, reformist generation who ran the organization in the last two decades. Thus, I have tried to present a balanced picture of the power dynamics involved in this process. For instance, I have examined the contentious relations between the German legal and political authorities and the IGMG leadership in particular with reference to de Certau's useful conceptual pair, taking the former's efforts as "strategies" and the response by the latter as the "tactics" they have adopted to counter these institutional pressures.

The first reason for the transformation of IGMG concerns the changes in their relations with the country of origin, Turkey. Since the mid-eighties, with the influence of RP's rising in Turkish politics, the *Milli Görüş* communities in Germany had established strong transnational connections with political parties in Turkey. In this period, *Milli Görüş* in Germany strengthened and continued these relations by providing human resources and financial assistance. Institutional pressures of German and Turkish states towards the Islamist political movements and the IGMG, the separation of the traditionalists (*gelenekçiler*) and the innovators (*yenilikçiler*) wings of the FP to establish the AKP and SP, and the collapse of the "Islamic" holding companies established with the funds of Turkish migrants caused these relations to weaken.

Secondly, the generational shift in the IGMG's headquarters is another factor in the transformation of IGMG. Following the 1995 parliamentary elections in which Osman Yumakoğulları was elected as a deputy from the RP and handed over the leadership of the *Milli Görüş* to Ali Yüksel, it seemed as though there would be fundamental changes in the organization. The ideology of the second generation in the IGMG can be defined with the concept of post-Islamism. Post-Islamism is the rethinking of Islamism by new generations that entailed a return from state-centered politics to a civil-society based ideology. The IGMG's second generation, who grew up in Germany and completed their education in Europe, tried to carry out reforms in the organization in Germany since the mid-1990s. I examine the generational shift in the IGMG through the examples of the

three reformers, namely Mehmet Sabri Erbakan, Oğuz Üçüncü and Mustafa Yeneroğlu, who actively participated in the position of the general secretariat, which is the organization's outer face; for their agency deeply shaped the institutional choices and standing of the IGMG. After 9/11, the sceptical attitudes of German institutional circles and the broader society towards IGMG strengthened the reformist wing of the organization against traditionalists. They have also held critical positions in IGMG, such as chairman, vice presidency, and head of legal office in some periods. I discussed the effects of the post-Islamist and reformist wing on the IGMG's transformation as a result of the generational shift, starting with the chronologically first reformer, Erbakan, the nephew.

Thirdly, the strategies of the German institutions and the tactics that the IGMG developed against the accusations against it played an essential role in its the transformation, as touched upon above. The Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (BfV) under the control of the Ministry of Interior has been monitoring the IGMG for many years. Also, the police raids and judicial investigations towards the IGMG in 2009 have been one of the strategies of the German state. Attitudes towards IGMG in the German Islam Conference (DIK), which is the product of Germany's official integration policy, are also counted among the state's organizational strategies. The German state has accused the IGMG with the relations with political parties in Turkey, anti-integration, anticonstitutionalism Islamism and antisemitism and the *Milli Görüş* in Germany has responded to these accusaitons by further drifting away from Turkey and adopting a more “Europeanized” stance, gradually turning itself a humanitarian aid organization and a true NGO.

I have thus tried to explain the three main factors in Germany's transformation from a transnational movement to a Europeanized Muslim non-governmental organization. As a result of these factors, I explained the current situation of IGMG within the framework

of two concepts: Europeanization and NGO-ization. Within the framework of Europeanization, I have discussed the IGMG's differences of opinion with *Milli Görüş* in Turkey on EU accession, identification, political integration. In terms of NGO-ization, I have focused on the steps were taken by the IGMG in humanitarian aid, religious services and the representation of European Muslims and the defence of their religious rights.

Like all academic studies, my examination has its limits, of course. These limitations also refer to the themes which further research could be done to enhance our understanding of the IGMG in particular, and the *Milli Görüş* in Turkey and Germany, in general. First, I could not compare the IGMG's transformation with other *Milli Görüş* and non-*Milli Görüş* organizations in Germany, such as the *Diyanet's* branch (DITIB), the *Süleymancılar*, the *Gülenists* etc. A comparative research on these different groups can reveal finer information on how they differed (or not) in terms of their relations with the German local and federal authorities, Turkey, Turkish parties, and other Muslim communities in Germany. Secondly, a comparative study on the IGMG with other *Milli Görüş* communities in the rest of Europe would be very useful in terms of understanding both the IGMG's transformation itself, and that of other Turkish muslim immigrant groups in Europe, which could make a nice contribution to the literatures on transnational migration, (Turkish) muslim migrants in the West, and Turkey – EU relations. Third, a more detailed and comparative analysis of transformation of the *Milli Görüş* in Turkey (ie. The leadership and support base of the *Refah*, *Fazilet* and *Saadet* Parties) vs. *Milli Görüş* in Germany (perhaps also in other European countries) could be quite helpful in understanding of the similarities and differences in the evolution of “political Islam” in both contexts. Finally, my study could be greatly improved by expanding its focus to include the ordinary members of the IGMG as well as its leadership and their official discourse, which would require a much more detailed and closer examination of their everyday activities as well as their own, “grassroots” characteristics through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and discourse analysis. That is what I intend to do in the next phase of my academic journey.

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