

The role of Islam in foreign policymaking*

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Abstract

Religion has often been an ignored dimension of statecraft, particularly so by realist or neorealist schools. This article explores the question of how a number of states, in which all or a considerable part of the population is Muslim, incorporate Islam as a guiding principle into their broader foreign policy. In this regard, it reviews a selected number of foreign policy cases using individual, domestic and international levels of analysis in which diverse Islamic incentives from major theoretical perspectives interplay with foreign policy. Its ultimate objective is to provide a deeper synthesis of the literature on Islam in foreign policymaking and relating it to major IR theories.

Key words: Foreign policy, Foreign policy analysis, Islam and diplomacy, Islam and foreign policy

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Introduction

Foreign policy is generally associated with a state's formal relations with other states and international actors in the system.¹ This policy includes specific activities of national governments defined and taken through their official representatives such as heads of state, foreign ministries, embassies, diplomats, or other authorized agents to achieve specific foreign policy goals. James N. Rosenau speaks more specifically about three aspects of foreign policy: (1) principles and orientations, (2) commitments and decisions, and (3) behaviour and actions.² Wilkenfield and others define foreign policy as official actions and reactions which state governments initiate or receive and subsequently react to, for the purpose of altering or creating a condition outside their territorial sovereign boundaries.³ Brian White explains that foreign policy is formulated within the state, but unlike domestic policy is directed and implemented in the environment external to that state.⁴ In this respect, William Wallace sees it as a boundary issue between domestic politics and the international environment.⁵

Foreign policy analysis (FPA) is a complex inquiry about diverse sources of influence that describe, explain or predict a state's external relations. It is a complex inquiry because it employs, as suggested by various scholars, multilevel assessments with diverse frameworks, methodologies, and theories. David Singer thus introduced scholarly approaches by discussing two levels of analysis. According to him, foreign policy could be explained either at the level of nation-states or at the level of the international system.⁶ Snyder, Bruck and Sapin viewed decision-makers "as operating in dual aspect setting so that apparently unrelated internal and external factors become related in the actions of the decision-makers."⁷ James N. Rosenau identified a sequence of explanatory variables and divided them into five categories: idiosyncratic, role, governmental, societal, and systemic.⁸ In a specific case study,

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- 1 M. Fatih Tayfur, "Main Approaches to the Study of Foreign Policy: A Review", *METU Studies in Development*, Vol. 21, No.1 (1994), p. 113.
 - 2 J. N. Rosenau, "The Study of Foreign Policy", in *World Politics: An Introduction*, J. Rosenau et al. (eds.) (New York: The Free Press, 1976), pp. 16-19.
 - 3 J. Wilkenfield et al., *Foreign Policy Behavior, The Interstate Behavior Analysis Model* (Beverly Hills: Sage publications, 1980), p. 22.
 - 4 B. White, "Analyzing Foreign Policy: Problems and Approaches", in *Understanding Foreign Policy*, M. Clarcke and B. White (eds.) (Hants: Edward Elgar, 1989), p. 5.
 - 5 W. Wallace, "Establishing the Boundaries", in *The Nature of Foreign Policy: A Reader*, J. Barber and M. Smith (eds.) (1974), pp. 12-17.
 - 6 David Singer, "The Level of Analysis Problem in International Relations", in *The International System: Theoretical Essays*, K. Knorr and S. Verba (eds.) (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1961), pp. 72-92.
 - 7 R. C. Snyder, H. W. Bruck and B. Sapin, *Foreign Policy Decision Making: An Approach to the Study of International Politics* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1962), p. 74.
 - 8 J. N. Rosenau, "Pre-Theories and Theories of Foreign Policy", in *Approaches in Comparative and International Politics*, R. Barry Farrell (ed.) (Evanston: IL, 1966), p. 122. See also: James E. Harf et. al., "Systemic and External Attributes in Foreign Policy", in *Comparing Foreign Policies*, James N. Rosenau (ed.) (USA: Sage Publications, 1974), pp. 236-237.

Graham Allison constructed different models – the rational actor, organizational process, and governmental politics models – to explain the guiding principles that the Kennedy administration applied during the Cuban Missile Crises.⁹ Kenneth Waltz offered three ‘images of analysis’ as three different categories in understanding the causes of conflicts between states. While the first (human nature) and the second one (domestic make-up) describe forces for state policies, the third category (international system) offers the framework for international politics.¹⁰ Valerie M. Hudson compiled different factors from the micro level with political psychology of world leaders to the international systems as the most abstract foreign policy assessment. As she argues, variables at different levels of abstraction ultimately interact in the real world.¹¹ What influences foreign policy, therefore, “depends on the situation at hand, on the one hand, and on how the researcher formulates his explanatory framework, on the other.”¹²

Mainstream theories, such as realism and liberalism, generally ignore religion as a source of influence in international relations. Even constructivism, which highlights ideational factors such as collectively held beliefs, norms and identities, underestimates the role of religion. Founding fathers of these three theories as well as their contemporary scholars mostly use secular terminology and hardly adopt religious notions and frameworks. As Carolyn M. Warner and Stephen G. Walker propose: “religion’s influence in the interactions of states is one of the great and least understood security challenges of the twenty-first century.”¹³ Islam as an intervening variable that facilitates the formulation and implementation of specific foreign policies is overlooked as well. Different reasons can be given for limited literature on the subject. First of all, this is not unexpected from the Western perspective, for the West lacks a discourse on religion in international relations.¹⁴ For this reason, as Elizabeth S. Hurd argues, it fails to understand the Islamic argument.¹⁵ Second, the study of how Islamic faith affects political activity has been more the domain of social or political sciences and far less the domain of foreign policy analysis. In other words, Islam has gained dominance within the national boundaries, and little of it is seen in the area of international relations. Third, Islam is not tangible and easily

9 Graham T. Allison, “Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis”, *The American Political Science Review* 63, no. 3 (1969), pp. 689-718. Accessed February 13, 2021. doi:10.2307/1954423.

10 Kenneth Waltz, *Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001).

11 Valerie M. Hudson, *Foreign Policy Analysis, Classic and Contemporary Theory* (Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007), p. 165.

12 Tayfur, “Main Approaches to the Study of Foreign Policy: A Review”, p. 138.

13 Carolyn M. Warner and Stephen G. Walker, “Thinking about the Role of Religion in Foreign Policy: A Framework for Analysis”, *Foreign Policy Analysis* (2011) 7, p. 113.

14 Maurits Berger, *Religion and Islam in Contemporary International Relations*, Netherlands Institute of International Relations ‘Clingendael’, 2010, p. 31., accessed December 20, 2020: https://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/20100400_cdsp_book_mberger.pdf

15 Elizabeth S. Hurd, “Political Islam and Foreign Policy in Europe and the United States”, *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 3, no. 4, (2007), pp. 345-367.

observable in foreign policy so as to be explored systematically. Mehmet Ozkan and Kingshuk Chatterjee even contend that “it is not possible to essentialize any single set of values (except in very generalized terms) that can be identified as exclusively Islamic (i.e., found in no other belief system), or even generally understood as such across the Muslim world.”¹⁶

However, this elusive role of Islam in broader foreign policy needs further elaboration. First, Islam evolves in constant interaction with specific historical conditions. It is also in continuous interplay with diverse Muslim leaders. For example, Kemal Atatürk’s Turkey attempted to expel Islam from the Turkish Republic and Turkish leadership from the Islamic world. However, in Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s Turkey, Islam appears to be a more important tool in foreign policymaking. Second, Islam as a religion has a different status in different Muslim states. Turkey clearly declared a separation of politics from religion; Saudi Arabia distinctly integrated royal power, religion, and the ruling family; Iran regards itself as an Islamic republic; Pakistan was founded in the name of Islam even though the state separates its political system from religion; Egypt, Syria, and Indonesia tacitly separate politics from religion without a clear declaration.¹⁷ Third, unlike Catholic Church, Islam is not attached to any transnational institution. For that reason, its impact on foreign policy cannot be explored in the same way that Catholic religion can. Fourth, historical interpretations vary as different Muslim states follow different madhhabs, faith practices, and traditions. In some cases, these interpretations are rather dramatic. For example, Iran’s foreign policy occasionally focuses on traditionally inherent religious methods of Twelver Shi’ism, namely *taqiyyah*¹⁸. Fifth, Muslim diplomacies may differently value foreign policy ends which their Islamic ethics are well suited for. For example, while Saudi Arabia and Iran both define themselves as Islamic, the differences between their foreign policies could hardly be more dramatic.¹⁹ Sixth, Islamization in the Muslim world is also a complex interaction of attributing values, wishful thinking, true beliefs, devotional, and oppressive instruction.²⁰ As Berger suggests, “it may very well be the discourse of the true

16 Mehmet Ozkan and Kingshuk Chatterjee, “Islamic Values in Foreign Policy – Perspectives on ‘Secular Turkey and ‘Islamic’ Iran”, in *Values in Foreign Policy: Investigating Ideals and Interests* (2019), p. 116.

17 WU Yungui, “The Influence of Islam over the Foreign Policies of Contemporary Islamic Countries”, *Journal of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies* (in Asia) Vol. 5, No. 3, (2011): 2-3, accessed January 10, 2021: http://mideast.shisu.edu.cn/_upload/article/dc/a8/516b324541b397b494938cdfd3f4/04f9994d-bbd1-4321-bc7d-d58c6c689e39.pdf.

18 From one side, the doctrine of *taqiyyah* was fashioned as an instrument to safeguard the faithful and protect their lives while keeping alive the Shi’a claim to the spiritual primacy and leadership of the Islamic community. Carel M. Landsberg and Hussein Solomon, “How do Iranian Diplomats Negotiate?”, *American Foreign Policy Interest*, 32:1, (2010): 14-15, DOI: 1080/1080392090354808. Amir Taheri defined *taqiyyah* as ‘double dealing’ or the ‘pursuit of two different objectives at the same time.’ See: Amir Taheri, *The Spirit of Allah—Khomeini and the Islamic Revolution* (London, 1985), p. 110 and p. 232.

19 W. Andrew Terrill, “The Saudi-Iranian Rivalry and the Future of Middle East Security,” *Strategic Studies Institute*, Dec (2011), p. ix, accessed January 10, 2021: <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/142831/pub1094.pdf>.

20 Berger, *Religion and Islam in Contemporary International Relations*, p. 8.

believer, but also of the shrewd politician.” Seventh, Muslim countries that claim their foreign policies are being guided by Islam may have different motivations for their claim. On some occasions, it can be a particular understanding of Islam in a given situation (contextual); on others, Muslim states may also use Islam to legitimize any other course of action (instrumental).²¹ Eight, Muslim states vary widely in size, geography, ideology, economic output, military or soft power. In practical terms, it makes it “difficult to find any two Muslim countries pursuing similar policies motivated by similar considerations of the faith in exclusion of other factors.”²² Indeed, rather than making a general assessment, we ought to ask what country is picking what elements from the Islamic faith to pursue a foreign policy.

Alternative option would be to deny all those differences and pursue general foreign policy trends or seek its regularity-seeking nature. Such preference would be based on the uniformity status of Islam within the Muslim world. In other words, Muslim states would be unrestricted by any other barriers related to diverse geographies, ethnicities, cultures, faith practices, or madhabs. An often-presented assumption from this methodology is that Muslim countries with Islamic discourse as their common force would have radically different foreign policy goals, commitments or actions from those of Western countries. In this realm, Samuel Huntington most famously wrote his influential book on the ‘clash of civilizations’ and generalized Islamic civilization as a single variable or meta-force in international affairs. He also argues that a country’s religious heritage determines its enemies and allies in the post-Cold War era. Another similar hypothesis “is that a common religious heritage may provide common norms which, in turn, might facilitate convergence on policy, including international treaties.”²³ This scholarly approach to find regularity-seeking nature may also reveal some specific foreign policy issues such as common diplomatic efforts by Muslim countries within international bodies to have the defamation of Islam criminalized at the international level – efforts largely opposed by the EU member states on the grounds of protecting the rights to freedom of expression. However, this setting of the Muslim world against the Western world leaves out an important question, namely the role of Islam in relations within the Muslim world.²⁴ Huntington’s approach also leaves out individual, domestic or any other diversity within states with a Muslim majority. From that perspective, it is not easy to analyse Islam as monolithic entity because it is comprised of different interpretations, communities, and practices. Thus, an effort to assess the influence of religion in a particular case, for example, “Islam and the foreign policy making in Afghanistan,” might miss differences within Islamic tradition of that particular state and their potential varied influences on Kabul’s foreign policy.

21 Ozkan and Chatterjee, “Islamic Values in Foreign Policy...”, p. 116.

22 Ozkan and Chatterjee, “Islamic Values in Foreign Policy...”, p. 116.

23 Warner and Walker, “Thinking about the Role of Religion in Foreign Policy...”, p. 119.

24 Berger, *Religion and Islam in Contemporary International Relations*, p. 3.

Three levels of analysis

This article explores the question of how several Muslim states, restricted by their particularities, have incorporated Islam into their foreign policy. The issue at hand is not only about Islam as a religion *per se*, but Islam as an identity, culture, a belief system, or any other major element derived from the social tradition of Islam. The article excludes politics, norms or values that are claimed to be 'Islamic' by violent and outrageous groups such as Da'ish (or the Islamic state). This study approaches three major levels in foreign policy analysis - individual and domestic (within nation-states), and international (between nation-states) - and looks for specific occasions of any major impact using diverse theoretical frameworks, methodologies and literature on the subject. In the first part, the article selects few prominent Muslim leaders and reviews the relationship between their Islamic leanings on the one side and foreign policy views, commitments, and actions on the other. Certainly, in reviewing the recent diplomatic history across the Muslim world, it would be difficult to portray all major events as simply a consequence of geopolitical realities, ignoring the impact of Muslim leaders such as General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq, Suharto, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, Mahathir Mohamad, Saddam Hussain, Recep Tayyip Erdogan and others. Their often-debated individual attempts to Islamize or de-Islamize their states domestically is not our subject and is therefore largely ignored in this part. The second part selects a few Muslim countries and reviews how their shared Islamic ideas, identities, norms, symbols or regime ideology shape their foreign policy preferences. In some specific cases, it also reviews local Islamic groups with a profound impact on foreign policymaking. Again, their impact on social or domestic environments is not the subject of this article and is therefore largely ignored. In the third part, the article reviews, in both directions, the relationship between Islamic incentives and pressures within selected Muslim states, on the one hand, and sudden geopolitical changes from the external environment, on the other. The emphasis here is on the international system or the regional subsystem in which more powerful Muslim states operate mainly by the rules of balancing behaviour.

Indeed, there are limits to what each level of analysis can offer in this regard. For example, neither the human nature of Saudi King Faisal nor the Saudi domestic context during his reign in the mid-60s can fully explain the Islamic unity and solidarity that Saudi Arabia's foreign policy promoted in the regional subsystem at the time. In this regard, it is expected to find many occasions in which Islamic constraints from different levels interplay and interact with or reinforce each other. Thus, individual traits of Ayatollah Rouhollah Khomeini have interacted with domestic attributes inaugurated by the 1979 Islamic Revolution and external realities from the international system to promote Iranian foreign policy of "Neither East, nor

West, Islamic Republic”. It is also important to highlight here that all the Islamic related constraints throughout this text are treated as they appear in a given time in each specific case. The study does not attempt to characterize them as more or less religious or more or less Islamic; nor does it attempt to moralize the field of foreign policy by declaring specific diplomatic moves contrary to Islamic discourse or in conformity with it. Instead, it brings various and, on some occasions, opposing views on the subject as different foreign policies that are being labelled as Islamic may be Islamized for other underlying purposes.

Muslim leaders and Islamic related constraints on foreign policymaking

Foreign policy is ultimately formulated and implemented by individuals in leadership positions, “suggesting that obvious and important avenues of research in the role of religion in foreign policy are the beliefs of leaders.”²⁵ The behavioural school also equated the state with concrete decision-maker(s) whose behaviour can easily be observed in a systematic way.²⁶ Therefore, the question of who draws what Islamic ideas among prominent Muslim leaders to pursue certain foreign policies must be essential.

It is generally accepted that the influence of the political elite is hierarchical. The higher the rank of the individual in the state, the greater influence he or she exerts. Though he was not effective and long serving, Turkey’s first Islamist prime minister Necmettin Erbakan “openly called for the creation of an Islamic version of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, an Islamic United Nations, an Islamic common market, and a group of eight developing Islamic nations (D-8) to counter the industrialized Group of Seven (G-7).” He also “turned down invitations to Europe and opted instead to visit Muslim countries throughout Asia and Africa, including decidedly anti-Western nations like Iran and Libya.”²⁷ In some cases, if an individual can make a difference in the foreign policy of a given state it will stem from how he or she sees the world.²⁸ The way Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini saw the world around him at the peak of his political authority strongly, if not exclusively, shaped the Islamic Republic’s foreign policy. According to James H. Kruse, Khomeini’s world was divided into oppressors and the oppressed. “The US and the Soviet Union were clearly the leading oppressors and divided the world

25 Warner and Walker, “Thinking about the Role of Religion in Foreign Policy...”, p. 126.

26 Tayfur, “Main Approaches to the Study of Foreign Policy: A Review”, p. 120.

27 Gregory A. Burris, “Turkey-Israel: Speed Bumps”, *Middle East Quarterly*, Fall 2003, Volume 10, pp. 67-80, accessed March 4, 2021 <https://www.meforum.org/569/turkey-israel-speed-bumps>.

28 Tayfur, “Main Approaches to the Study of Foreign Policy: A Review”, p. 131.

between their capitalist and socialist views.”²⁹ His world was also divided into “those who follow the ‘right path’, the ‘path of God and belief’ and those who follow the ‘corrupt path’, the path of Satan and disbelief”.³⁰ This led to Khomeini’s support for an isolationist foreign policy of “neither east, nor west.”³¹

M. Hermann identifies other circumstances in which leadership assessment is more important. According to her, it is more suitable when the head of state is charismatic.³² General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq, the ruler of Pakistan (1977-1988), was a charismatic political figure responsible for turning his country into a global centre for political Islam.³³ His motivation possibly included Zia’s piety that came from his religious family.³⁴ It was also reinforced by strong incentives from local Islamic organizations. During his reign, religion and politics were the most closely connected in Pakistan’s history.³⁵ In his case, individual and domestic constraints largely interplayed. Notwithstanding his intention to Islamize Pakistan domestically and enforce often argued and disputed Nizam-e-Islam, no less significant was Zia-ul-Haq’s interest in promoting the unity of Muslim Ummah. Thus, he drew on Pakistan’s Islamic, trade, and military ties to the Middle East, including stationing Pakistani troops in Saudi Arabia and training missions in several other countries. He played a prominent role in the OIC by serving on committees concerning the status of Jerusalem and the Iran-Iraq war. He also played a key role in the readmission of Egypt to the OIC at the 1984 summit at Casablanca.³⁶

On the opposite side was the Indonesian leader Suharto (1965-1998). Even though he ruled over a state with the largest number of citizens professing the Islamic faith in the world, his authoritarian regime repressed political Islam at home and banned it from Indonesian foreign policy.³⁷ With a strong human agency that interplayed with a strong and secular military, Islamic attributes

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- 29 James H. Kruse, “Determinants of Iranian Foreign Policy: The Impact of Systemic, Domestic and Ideological Factors” (Unpublished Master thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, California, 1994), p. 53, accessed 10, 2021, <https://calhoun.nps.edu/bitstream/handle/10945/28116/determinantsofir00krus.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.
- 30 Shireen T. Hunter, *Iran and the World, Continuity in a Revolutionary Decade* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), p. 37.
- 31 Kruse, “Determinants of Iranian Foreign Policy: The Impact of Systemic, Domestic...”, p. 53.
- 32 M. Hermann, “Circumstances under Which Leader Personality Will Affect Foreign Policy: Some Propositions”, in *In Search of Global Patterns*, J. Rosenau (ed.) (New York: Free Press, 1976), pp. 326-32.
- 33 Husain Haqqani, *Pakistan: between mosque and military* (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2005), p. 131.
- 34 Haqqani, *Pakistan: between mosque and military*, p. 132.
- 35 Yungui, “The Influence of Islam over the Foreign Policies of Contemporary Islamic Countries”, pp. 2-3.
- 36 Sabiha Hasan, “The Casablanca Islamic Summit”, *Pakistan Horizon* 37, no. 1 (1984), pp. 74-87, accessed February 14, 2021: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41403909>. See also: Defense Journal, *Special Report* (April 1998), accessed January 10, 2021: <http://www.defencejournal.com/april98/ziairegime.htm>.
- 37 Ann Marie Murphy, “Islam in Indonesian Foreign Policy: The Limits of Muslim Solidarity for the Rohingya and Uighurs”, *The Asan Institute for Policy Studies* (Dec 08, 2020), p. 1, accessed December 25, 2020: <http://en.asaninst.org/contents/islam-in-indonesian-foreign-policy-the-limits-of-muslim-solidarity-for-the-rohingya-and-uighurs/#2>.

could not constrain Indonesian relations with other Muslim or non-Muslim states in any meaningful way. Only with his resignation in May 1998 did Islam become noticeable in the policymaking process. Some changes were already visible under President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (2004-2014), whose operational and psychological environments were seemingly different from Suharto's. In a speech in Saudi Arabia, Yudhoyono reviewed many problems the Muslim community faced, including "Islamophobia," and argued that Muslims should respond by embracing "technology and modernity and a culture of excellence." Noting that Islam was not only a religion of peace, but also one of progress, Yudhoyono also called for an Islamic renaissance and urged his Muslim brethren to embrace globalization, reach out to non-Muslims, and cooperate against terrorism.³⁸ His motivation to include an Islamic reference in the Indonesian foreign policy also interplayed with more important emergence of Islam as a political force in the Indonesian domestic politics. In the same light, individual inputs of Yudhoyono's successor Joko Widodo, who called for a "middle way" form of Islam (*wasatiyyah Islam*)³⁹ in Indonesia's foreign policy, were expectedly reinforced by much stronger domestic factors that we will discuss in the next part.

If ever there was a Muslim leader whose foreign policy performance also called for qualitative interpretation, surely it is the Mahathir Mohamad's Administration in Malaysia. He promoted an Islamic image of the country internationally but he did that "over and beyond any of its predecessors."⁴⁰ The significance of Islam in his foreign policy has to be understood in terms of Mahathir's understanding of the significant role that Islam plays in the mindset and values of the Malays.⁴¹ To Mahathir, according to Ahmad Faisal Muhamad, "the problems of Muslim Malays are not unique to them, but typical of the Muslim *ummah* as a whole."⁴² In this regard, individual and domestic constraints in this particular case interacted and reinforced each other. In terms of foreign policy commitments, the Malaysian

38 President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, Speech at Islamic University of Iman Muhammad Bin Sa'ud, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. See: Murphy, "Islam in Indonesian Foreign Policy: The Limits of Muslim Solidarity for the Rohingya and Uighurs", p. 2.

39 Evan Laksmana, "Will religious sectarianism change Indonesian foreign policy?", *The Strategist* (December 11, 2018), accessed February 25, 2021, <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/will-religious-sectarianism-change-indonesian-foreign-policy/>. See also: KH Ma'ruf Amin, "Emergence of Wasatiyyah Islam: Promoting 'Middle Way' Islam and Socio-Economic Equality in Indonesia", An excerpt of his Distinguished Lecture at RSIS in Singapore on 17 Oct 2018, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Singapore, accessed February 25, 2021, <https://www.rsis.edu.sg/rsis-publication/rsis/emergence-of-wasatiyyah-islam-promoting-middle-way-islam-and-socio-economic-equality-in-indonesia/#.XAbIsy2ZM1g>.

40 Shanti Nair, *Islam in Malaysian Foreign Policy* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 269.

41 Ahmad Faisal Muhamad, "The Struggle for Recognition in Foreign Policy: Malaysia under Mahathir 1981-2003", A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in International Relations, 2008, p. 245.

42 Ahmad Faisal Muhamad, "The Struggle for Recognition in Foreign Policy: Malaysia under Mahathir 1981-2003", p. 245.

Prime Minister was outspoken on issues where Muslim people were victimized by non-Muslim states. His sentiments can be summarized by the following words: ‘We are all Muslims. We are all oppressed. We are all being humiliated.’⁴³ He also raised the issue of a pitiful state of Muslim affairs and concerns of contemporary conditions of Muslim ummah and Islam. Mahathir’s opening remarks at KL Summit from December 2019 illustrate his deep-seated concerns:

The Muslims are running away from their own countries to seek refuge in non-Muslim countries. We cannot deny that we are largely dependent on the non-Muslims for most of our needs. In fact, although the Quran enjoins us to be prepared to protect the ummah, we are unable to do so because for a long time we cannot even equip ourselves with means to ward off attacks by others... If the future remains as we are now, we will suffer continues oppression, we will decline further, and our great religion will be denigrated as a religion of a failure...⁴⁴

In terms of specific foreign policy actions, Mahathir repeatedly raised in multilateral and bilateral forums the challenges of his time, in particular the issues of Palestine and Bosnia and Herzegovina. For example, Mahathir announced that his administration would accord the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) diplomatic status in 1981, making Malaysia the only country in Southeast Asia and the second in the world, after Pakistan, to do so at the time.⁴⁵ He also emerged as an outspoken champion of the Bosnian cause. Driven by his principles, he severed relations with Belgrade and used any opportunity to vocally criticize the West for tolerating rampant injustices towards the Bosnians. Similar expressions of solidarity were made by other Muslim leaders. Tansu Çiller caused a stir when, without Israel’s approval, she visited the Palestinian headquarters in eastern Jerusalem known as the Orient House and met with a Palestinian delegation in 1994.⁴⁶ In the same year, Çiller and Benazir Bhutto, then prime minister of Pakistan, also visited Sarajevo under siege and demonstrated their political support for the besieged Bosnian government.

Some may look for more empirical approaches in assessing the relationship between individual decision-makers from Muslim-majority states and their foreign policy outcomes. In such cases, it is not an easy task to define a notion of what it means to be a Muslim foreign policy leader guided by his or her Islamic faith. For this reason, analysts may look for other individual attributes that can reveal

43 Prime Minister Mahathir bin Mohamad at the opening of the tenth session of the summit of the Organization of Islamic Conference, 16 October 2003; See also: Berger, *Religion and Islam in Contemporary...*, p. 20.

44 Prime Minister Mahathir bin Mohamad at the opening of the KL Summit, December 19, 2019, accessed March 10, 2021: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w2CagBqqZns>.

45 Nair, *Islam in Malaysian Foreign Policy*, p. 269.

46 Burris, “Turkey-Israel: Speed Bumps”, pp. 67-80.

some sensitivities with Islam or expose their absence from foreign policymaking. Leadership and cognitive theories come close to this conceptualization of mutually interwoven elements of culture, worldview, and religion. Hermann, for example, involves psychological traits to yield fruitful insights into the nature of leadership. As a result of her framework, one can systematically learn whether decision-makers from Muslim-majority states score low or high on nationalism. This particular score indirectly discloses whether the same decision-makers perceive their “ingroup” more or less as fellow Muslims. Hermann also demonstrates that combinations of related traits define a specific leadership style.⁴⁷ In this regard, one might explore what Muslim leader has an evangelistic profile that is characterized by “persuading others to join one’s mission and mobilizing others around one’s message”.⁴⁸ These characteristics that interrelate with religious constraints may predispose a person to a certain type of foreign policy action.

Different authors have already measured the influence of these traits on foreign policymaking in Muslim-majority states. Aylin S. Gorener and Meltem S. Ucal investigated Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s worldview to evaluate its impact on his foreign policies in 2009.⁴⁹ In comparison with the reference group consisting of 214 political leaders from around the world, Erdogan’s low scores on nationalism indicate that he defines his “ingroup” more as fellow Muslims. For Gorener and Ucal “Erdogan perceives Islamic identity as one that subsumes all other differences among people and nations”. Hakan Yavuz similarly claims that “Erdogan has no special sense of nationalism or of being a Turk... From Erdogan’s perspective, a nation is a religious community and the people of Turkey constitute a nation by sharing Islam.”⁵⁰ Among different foreign policy moves that reflected his style is Ankara’s interest within the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and its intention to utilize religious diplomacy at the institutional level.⁵¹ With the election of Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu as the OIC secretary-general in 2004, Turkey upgraded its role within the OIC structure to the highest level.⁵² In addition to Erdogan’s low score on nationalism, his high level of distrust of others “leads him to approach

47 Margaret G. Hermann, “Assessing Leadership Style: A Trait Analysis”, in *The Psychological Assessment of Political Leaders - With profiles of Saddam Hussein and Bill Clinton*, Jerold M. Post (ed.) (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), p. 185.

48 Hermann, “Assessing Leadership Style: A Trait Analysis”, p. 195.

49 The profile of Erdogan is derived from 53,629 words collected from interviews and press conferences from January 1, 2004, to December 31, 2009. See: S. Gorener and Meltem S. Ucal, “The Personality and Leadership Style of Recep Tayyip Erdogan: Implication for Turkish Foreign Policy”, *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (2011), p. 366, accessed Dec. 10, 2014 DOI: 10.1080/14683849.2011.604216.

50 M. Hakan Yavuz, *Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 120; Deborah Sontag, “The Erdogan Experiment”, *New York Times* (May 11, 2003), Yavuz (2009), p. 131.

51 Ozkan and Chatterjee, “Islamic Values in Foreign Policy...”, p. 119.

52 Mehmet Ozkan, “Turkey in the Islamic World: An Institutional Perspective”, *Turkish Review of Middle East Studies* 18 (2007), pp. 159–93.

politics as a battle between good and evil and as a struggle to defend his kind.”⁵³ His aggressive policy toward Israel is “an exemplar of his attitude toward those whom he does not perceive as reliable dialogue partners”. In this regard, “there is no denying that his religious sentiments play a significant part in who he deems as friends or foes”.⁵⁴ Gorener and Ucal have finally concluded that Erdogan exhibits behaviour consistent with *evangelical* leadership style. Such leaders are the least sensitive to the political context. Their most important goal is to attract as many people to their cause as possible.

Former Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad also scores low on nationalism in comparison to the reference group and shares some features of evangelistic leadership style as well.⁵⁵ On different occasions, he used religiously inspired terminology and presented himself as a spiritual leader and messianic missionary. An example of it is a rather vague 18-page letter that he sent to President Bush in Farsi on May 9, 2006. In this letter, Ahmadinejad quoted holy verses and discussed religious values and history. The following part is very illustrative:

We increasingly see that people around the world are flocking towards a main focal point - that is the Almighty God. Undoubtedly through faith in God and the teachings of the prophets, the people will conquer their problems. My question for you is: Do you not want to join them?

Interestingly, Ahmadinejad does so by avoiding words like ‘Islam’ or ‘Muslim’. “He actually does not take the position of a Muslim speaking on behalf of an Islamic republic, but as a member of the international community who argues for the introduction of ethical values - preferably monotheistic values - into international relations.”⁵⁶ Part of his much longer statement at the UN from September 19, 2006 is a good illustration: “The Almighty and Merciful God, who is the Creator of the Universe, is also its Lord and Ruler. Justice is His command. He commands His creatures to support one another in good, virtue, and piety, and not in decadence and corruption. He commands His creatures to enjoin one another to righteousness and virtue and not to sin and transgression.”⁵⁷

53 Gorener and Ucal, “The Personality and Leadership Style of Recep Tayyip Erdogan: Implication for...”, p. 375.

54 Gorener and Ucal, “The Personality and Leadership Style of Recep Tayyip Erdogan: Implication for...”, p. 373.

55 Selected data that the author of this analysis conducted included 36.107 words. All selected transcripts focused primarily on foreign policy issues. They involved 4 of his speeches at UN forums and 6 of his interviews for international media throughout his presidency. Data analysis was conducted with *Profiler Plus*.

56 Berger, *Religion and Islam in Contemporary International Relations*, p. 21.

57 Statement of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad before the Session of the UN General Assembly, September 19, 2006, accessed March 11, 2014: <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=6107339>, also accessed on official web site of Iranian Embassy at United Nations on March 10, 2014, <http://iran-un.org/en/2006/09/19/19-september-2006/>.

Given the common leadership style between Erdogan and Ahmadinejad, this article finds it possibly instrumental for cordial and brotherly relations between Turkey and Iran in the late 2000s and early 2010s. For example, referring to the Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Erdogan says, “there is no doubt he is our friend ... as a friend so far we have very good relations and have had no difficulty at all.”⁵⁸ On the other hand, the Iranian government led by Ahmadinejad trusted Turkey more than other nations and therefore selected Istanbul as the venue for important nuclear talks with five permanent UN Security Council members, the USA, Russia, China, Britain and France, plus Germany in January 2011. Iran, Turkey and Brazil also signed the Tehran declaration in May 2010 whereby Iran agreed “to deposit 1200 kg LEU (Lightly Enriched Uranium) in Turkey”.⁵⁹ This event was joyfully marked at the end of the signing ceremony when then Prime Minister Erdogan crossed the room, joined group of journalists and made photos of smiling at then presidents Ahmadinejad and Lula. As for other issues, Erdogan and Ahmadinejad also made complementary complaints about the functioning of the existing international order and the UN system based on an unequal distribution of power. As Erdogan famously stated in his speech at the 74th UN General Assembly, “the world is bigger than five”, his doctrine entered textbooks. Ahmadinejad also called throughout his presidency for the veto power in the UN Security Council to be removed.

This chapter may be concluded with leadership traits of then Iraqi president Saddam Hussein. His profile was compiled from an overview of 21,000 words from compiled interviews he had given since 1979. Given his high scores on nationalism and distrust of others, he was likely to take actions on his own, different from those of other leaders with lower scores on nationalism. Furthermore, he likely perceived the world as highly anarchic and full of threats. As Hermann explains, all the scores of Saddam Hussein suggested that he had an expansionistic orientation in politics.⁶⁰ However, his high scores on nationalism and distrust of others also resembled his eccentric interpretation of Islam that Ba‘thist intellectuals had developed in the mid-twentieth century. For Saddam Hussein and many other Ba‘thists, Islam was the religion of Arabs.⁶¹ As Samuel Helfont maintains, Saddam Hussein considered non-Arab Muslims to be lesser Muslims and expected them to recognize the special role of the Arab people.⁶²

58 “Iran is Our Friend” says Turkish PM Recep Tayyip Erdogan”, *Guardian*, October 26, 2009.

59 Julian Berger, *The Guardian*, accessed December 10, 2020: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/julian-borger-global-security-blog/2010/may/17/iran-brazil-turkey-nuclear>.

60 Saddam Hussein’s profile was derived from an assessment of 21,000 words compiled interviews he had given since 1979. His trait results were compared with leaders from the Middle East representing the first reference group and a group of 87 heads of state representing the second norming group. Hermann, “Assessing Leadership Style: A Trait Analysis”, p. 185.

61 Samuel Helfont, “The Legacy of Saddam’s Islam”, *The Caravan*, Hoover Institutions: December 4, 2018, accessed January 13: <https://www.hoover.org/research/legacy-saddams-islam>.

62 Helfont, “The Legacy of Saddam’s Islam”.

Though Islamic constraints on foreign policymaking are not limited to the selected Muslim leaders from this analysis, they are sufficient to present the diversity of their foreign policy views, commitments and actions. The selected leaders are also sufficient to demonstrate that a strong and charismatic leadership may act as an intervening variable in a limited number of foreign policy issues - promoting relations within the Muslim world, boosting Islamic solidarity, voicing out violations of human (Muslim) rights, calling for a “middle way” (*wasatiyyah Islam*), addressing the pitiful state of Muslim affairs, in short, putting related Islamic issues on their foreign policy agenda.

Domestic level and Islamic-related constraints on foreign policymaking

In addition to their individualities, leaders almost always face domestic constraints on foreign policymaking.⁶³ At this level, it largely concerns two theoretical frameworks. On the one hand, it is about domestically shared ideas, beliefs and identities, which is more related to constructivist approach in IR. On the other, it brings common ideology, interests and institutions into foreign policy analysis, which is more related to liberalism. In this paper, it seems appropriate to limit the scope and delve into the pressures placed by: (1) attributes embedded in shared Islamic symbols, principles or norms on the one hand, and (2) Islamic ideas, interests and institutions from local Islamic organizations, parties and pressure groups with access to policymakers, on the other.

Following the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran, virtually all of the domestic attributes that theorists argue are important in foreign policy formulation radically changed, in particular the ideology which affected values and objectives, the institutions which developed and implemented foreign policies, and the political elite with new conceptions of national goals and interests.⁶⁴ Such radical domestic change in any given state is also expected to alter conditions outside of its sovereign territorial boundaries, which was what the Islamic Republic of Iran did in 1979 in its relations to the systemic powers of the US and Soviet Union and regional powers in the neighbourhood, which is why the same year was marked as a turning point in the history of Islam and international relations.

Constructivist IR scholars have been the main proponents of collective ideas and norms as sources of influence. Furthermore, these ideas and norms construct

63 Marijeke Breuning, *Foreign Policy Analysis – A Comparative Introduction* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 116.

64 Kruse, “Determinants of Iranian Foreign Policy: The Impact of Systemic, Domestic and Ideological Factors.”

identities and interests and eventually shape foreign policy preferences. Islamic religion embedded in a country's national identity is quite compatible with these propositions. For example, in a typical theocratic state, such as Saudi Arabia, Islam is enacted as the faith of citizens. This faith reflects their collective Islamic identity that, according to constructivist approach, is expected to result in specific foreign policy preferences. Saudi Arabia is also "a state of monarchy operating in a system that integrates politics with religion, where there is no constitution, no political party, and no secular legal system."⁶⁵ Speaking of principles and orientations in its foreign policy, the fundamental objective appears to carry forward the "orthodoxy" of Islam, achieve its national interests through Islam, and even consolidate its status as a leader of faith in the Islamic world.⁶⁶ In one of his public speeches, King Faisal emphasized Saudi foreign policy as being based on religious doctrine: "The affair of Israel and usurped Palestine is neither political nor economic. It is an affair putting in question the basics of Islam."⁶⁷ These foreign policy orientations were also the guidelines for specific foreign policy actions, however limited they were. In some cases, Saudi Arabia spent its financial resources and used its political leverage to defend the rights of Islamic faith and protect the interests, dignity and national rights of Muslim majorities or minorities in countries that were occupied or exposed to external powers, such as those in Palestine or Bosnia and Herzegovina. For example, Saudi Arabia has at numerous occasions offered its good offices to help mediate the PLO-Hamas divide.

At the same time, the Saudi dependency on the US for security reasons was deemed un-Islamic and occasionally challenged domestically by dissidents, clergy and religious scholars. This is another example of how their shared ideas and beliefs impact the Saudi foreign policy preference, however limited their success might be. In September 1992, over 100 members of religious and political opposition groups jointly presented a "memorandum of expostulation," which described their viewpoints of the Saudi Arabian foreign policies since the beginning of the Gulf War. They also requested that the Saudi Arabian royal family should listen to commoners' opinions and suggestions and avoid the political alliance with the US which, according to them, violated the religious law of Islam.⁶⁸ In the light of these pressures, the Saudi government tended to separate its foreign policy from domestic policy. At home, it would maintain a harder line on issues like the Arab-Israeli conflict and solidifying the unity of the Muslim *umma*.⁶⁹ In the international arena, it could slightly adjust its behaviour from time to time. One

65 Yungui, "The Influence of Islam over the Foreign Policies of Contemporary Islamic Countries", pp. 3-4.

66 Yungui, "The Influence of Islam over the Foreign Policies of Contemporary Islamic Countries", pp. 3-4.

67 William Ochsenwald, "Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Revival", *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 13.3 (1981), p. 276 (271-28). See also: Altorai, p. 121.

68 Yungui, "The Influence of Islam over the Foreign Policies of Contemporary Islamic Countries", pp. 13-14.

69 Altorai, "Understanding the Role of State Identity in Foreign Policy Decision...", p. 121.

such example was the bilateral agreement with the US for it to retreat its air forces from the Saudi Arabian airbases after 9/11.⁷⁰ The story becomes even more complicated when the domestic context pushes Saudi Arabia to act as a defence wall of Sunni Muslims in the Middle East or Central Asia region against the surging expansion of Shia-dominated Iran. In this respect, the thin line that separates Islamic from sectarian constraints becomes even thinner.

If the state's identity is defined as strictly Islamic, as was in Iran after 1979, it is likely that religious factors will strongly affect its foreign policy. The Islamic Republic of Iran also changed the focus of diplomacy after the Islamic revolution to emphasize the religious dimensions that remained largely alien to the international community.⁷¹ As Douglas Johnston notes, the world suddenly came "face to face" with religion as the missing and (often) ignored dimension of statecraft.⁷² Various other authors also discussed new normative doctrines that originated in the Iranian/Islamic revolution. First, the constitution of 1979 granted supremacy to the supreme leader based on Khomeini's principle of the *velayat-e faqih*. Under this principle, the supreme leader was the ultimate authority and the earthly trustee of the Shia "Hidden Imam" until his reappearance near the Day of Judgment.⁷³ Second, the Preamble of the 1979 Constitution of the IRI declared other essential but contentious elements:

With due considerations to the Islamic content of the Iranian revolution, which was a movement for the victory of all the oppressed people over their oppressors, the Constitution paves the way for the perpetuation of this Revolution in and outside of the country, particularly in the area of expansion of international relations with other Islamic and peoples' movements; it tries to prepare the ground for the creation of a single world community and the perpetuation of the struggle for delivering all the deprived and oppressed nations of the world.

Article 152 of the Iranian Constitution also underlines the foreign policy based on "defence of the rights of all Muslims." While it refrains from the interference in internal matters of other nations in Article 154, it supports just struggles of the Mustad'afun (oppressed) against the Mustakbirun (oppressors) in any corner of the world.⁷⁴ In light of these principles, it is easier to understand Iran's foreign

70 Yungui, "The Influence of Islam over the Foreign Policies of Contemporary Islamic Countries", p. 14.

71 Landsberg and Solomon, "How do Iranian Diplomats Negotiate?", p. 13.

72 Douglas Johnston, "Introduction— Realpolitik Expanded", in *Faith-Based Diplomacy - Trumping Realpolitik*, D. Johnston (ed.) (New York, 2003), pp. 3–4.

73 David E. Thaler et al., *Mullahs, Guards, and Bonyads: An Exploration of Iranian Leadership Dynamics* (Santa Monica: Rand Corporations, 2010), p. 24.

74 "Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran 1979"; accessed on March 11, 2016, <http://en.parliran.ir/index.aspx?siteid=84&pageid=3053>. http://en.parliran.ir/UploadedData/previmages/iran-parliament_English_SHR01.pdf.

policy commitments and behaviour. Amir M. Haji-Yousefi found their impact on Iran's external relations in the realm of goals and strategies.⁷⁵ The Iranian negotiating approach becomes also faith-based according to Landsberg and Solomonn. It focuses on religious methods that are traditionally an inherent part of Twelver Shi'ism, namely *taqiyyah*⁷⁶, *tanfiḥ*⁷⁷, and *khod'eh*.⁷⁸ Anoushiravan Ehteshami and Mahjoob Zweiri speak of Iran's support for Islamic resistance and undertakings to portray itself as the heart of the Muslim world.⁷⁹ However, critical voices would link these doctrines with threatening and contentious activities - that is exporting the Iranian revolution to other Muslim countries in the region, at least in the initial stage. According to James H. Kruse, Iran sought to expand its revolution to the neighbouring states and encouraged the "oppressed peoples" to rise up against their "corrupt illegitimate governments."⁸⁰ Noof Rashid ALDosari links the Preamble of the Iranian Constitution with global aspirations of the Iranian state that advocates for a single world community ruled by the Supreme Leader. As he argues, it offered Iranian Islamic imperialism against Western imperialism.⁸¹ Rakel highlights a dilemma in the Iranian geopolitical culture of whether the Iranians should identify with the ummah (Islamic community), as was proclaimed by Ayatollah Khomeini, or with Iran as a nation-state, as former Presidents Rafsanjani and Khatami see it.⁸² Roger M. Savory holds that new ideology was employed to generate political activism in foreign affairs. It was also used as the basis for attempts to subvert the governments of other states. Countries from the region soon realized that the ideology of the Islamic Revolutionary Movement which had brought Khomeini to power had an external as well as an internal dimension.⁸³

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- 75 Haji-Yousefi, "Iran's Foreign Policy during Ahmadinejad: From Confrontation to Accommodation", p. 3.
- 76 The doctrine of *taqiyyah* was fashioned as an instrument to safeguard the faithful and protect their lives while keeping alive the Shi'a claim to the spiritual primacy and leadership of the Islamic community. Landsberg and Solomon, "How do Iranian Diplomats Negotiate?", p. 14; Amir Taheri defined *taqiyyah* as "double-dealing" or the "pursuit of two different objectives at the same time", Amir Taheri, *The Spirit of Allah—Khomeini and the Islamic Revolution* (London, 1985), p. 110 and p. 232.
- 77 The key message is that a given country must wait, doing nothing until it becomes centre of gravity by default. By employing this indirect and static tactic, Iran intends to weaken the enemy's position and take the sting out of (its) potential enemies. Landsberg and Solomonn, "How do Iranian Diplomats Negotiate?", pp. 14-15; Amir Taheri defines *tanfiḥ* as a strategy of aloofness that suggests that one is "judiciously doing nothing", see also: Taheri, *The Spirit of Allah—Khomeini and the Islamic Revolution*, p. 109 and p. 233.
- 78 Amir Taheri defines *khod'eh* as the historic Shi'a tradition of tricking one's enemies to benefit from them. The frequent use of half-truths instead of direct lies is a well-known *khod'eh* tactic. Landsberg and Solomonn, "How do Iranian Diplomats Negotiate?", p. 15; See also: Taheri, *The Spirit of Allah—Khomeini and the Islamic Revolution*, p. 233.
- 79 A. Ehteshami and M. Zweiri (ed.), *Iran's Foreign Policy / From Khatami to Ahmadinejad* (Reading: ITHA-CA Press, 2011), Introduction xiii.
- 80 Kruse, "Determinants of Iranian Foreign Policy: The Impact of Systemic, Domestic..." p. 109.
- 81 N. Rashid ALDosari, "Foreign Policy from Khatami to Ahmadinejad: There is One Foreign Policy in Iran, which is Khamenei's Foreign Policy", *Foreign Policy* 2, no. 1 (2015), p. 49.
- 82 E. P. Rakel, "The Iranian Political Elite, State and Society Relations, and Foreign Relations since the Islamic Revolution", PhD dissertation, Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research (AISSR) (2008), p. 45.
- 83 Roger M. Savory, "Religious Dogma and the Economic and Political Imperatives of Iranian Foreign Policy", in *Iran at the Crossroads*, Routledge, (2019), p. 52.

The second emphasis of this part is on countries in which local Islamic organizations appear to impact foreign policy. They generally carry out social, political and economic functions and, in some Muslim-majority societies, they are quite active. Indonesia is, again, a good reference point. It is also a country where individual and domestic constraints were interacting and reinforcing each other. In addition to the resignation of Suharto in 1998, the Indonesian political system also changed by becoming less authoritarian and more democratic. Islamic political parties and pressure groups were not only mushrooming but also playing a wider domestic role in the policymaking process. Many of them adopted Islam as their shared ideological orientation and utilized Islam as their political linkage between the party, Muslim communities, and the state.⁸⁴ Anak Agung Banyu Perwita believes this phenomenon was one of the crucial indicators of dramatic changes in Indonesia's domestic political map and of the re-emergence of Islam as a political force in Indonesia's domestic politics and foreign policy.⁸⁵ Ann Marie Murphy also agrees that only during the democratic era did Islam play a role in Indonesian foreign policy. "Incorporating it into foreign policy is at once a reflection of domestic values, a result of bottom-up domestic pressure, and a strategic response to a post-September 11 environment in which Indonesia's democracy, reputation for toleration, and moderate form of Islam were perceived as domestic assets that could be leveraged in foreign policy."⁸⁶

New ideational factors in Indonesia brought new items to the Indonesian foreign policy agenda. Islamic factor was argued to manifest itself most prominently "in efforts to promote the rights of Muslims persecuted abroad" or "policies toward conflicts in which Muslims are victimized" since these are issues that resonate with Islamic domestic constituencies.⁸⁷ Traditionally, this impetus manifested itself mostly in Indonesian policy toward the Middle East, particularly in support of Palestinian independence, opposition to the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan, opposition to the 2003 Iraq War, and condemnation of Israel's use of force against Lebanon and in the Gaza strip.⁸⁸ In the recent past, Indonesia is a strong advocate of the Palestinian cause in the UN. It also offered, at numerous occasions, its good offices to help mediate the PLO-Hamas divide.⁸⁹ Today, public opinion expressed by Islamic organizations on issues of their interest can serve again as a constraint on Indonesian foreign policy. For example, when the US moved its Israeli embassy to Jerusalem, the American embassy in Indonesia became the site of massive street protests. Similarly, Indonesia protested

84 Anak Agung Banyu Perwita, "Islam 'Symbolic Politics', Democratization and Indonesian Foreign Policy" in *Centro Argentino de Estudios Internacionales*, p. 13, accessed February 5, 2021: https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/125059/AP_04.pdf.

85 Banyu Perwita, "Islam 'Symbolic Politics', Democratization and Indonesian Foreign Policy", p. 2.

86 Murphy, "Islam in Indonesian Foreign Policy: The Limits of Muslim...", p. 1.

87 Murphy, "Islam in Indonesian Foreign Policy: The Limits of Muslim...", pp. 12-13.

88 Rizal Sukma, *Islam in Indonesian Foreign Policy* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 117.

89 Murphy, "Islam in Indonesian Foreign Policy: The Limits of Muslim...", p. 3.

Australia's December 2018 announcement of its plan to follow the US lead and delayed signing a free-trade agreement with Australia until after Canberra announced its support for a two-state solution with the Palestinian capital in East Jerusalem.⁹⁰

Other Muslim countries have their own domestic contexts. In states like Turkey, in which there is a formal and institutional separation of religious and state authority, it is generally assumed that impact of Islam on foreign policymaking is lower. However, Turkey has a powerful Islamic civil society and religious groups with strong religious identity that can easily mobilize the public on some foreign policy issues, especially in last two decades. Thus, Turkish people regularly denounce Israel's aggressive incursions into Palestinian-controlled areas. In 2000, even Turkish intellectuals and celebrities launched a campaign urging people to turn out their lights for one minute every evening at 9 P.M. to show solidarity with the Palestinian people.⁹¹ Interestingly, in October 2000, Turkey voted in favour of a UN resolution condemning Israel for using excessive force against the Palestinians and, later that month, President Ahmet Sezer harshly denounced Israel at an Islamic economic conference in Istanbul.⁹² When Turkish foreign policy takes demands of Turkish society into consideration, Ozkan and Chatterjee call it "an Islam-sensitive foreign policy, but not an Islamic one per se."⁹³

Though a secular state, Turkey's external relations are also shaped by religious institutions such as Turkey's Presidency of Religious Affairs (Diyanet). With the budget of 1.4 billion Euros and 100,000 employees, Diyanet's influence is most relevant when it comes to Turkish soft power projection capabilities in areas of common cultural and religious heritage controlled in the past by the Ottoman Empire. For example, having Diyanet in their central focus, Ahmet Erdi Öztürk and İftar Gözaydın presented Turkey's increasing involvement and activism in the Balkans between 2002 and 2016.⁹⁴ In another article, Ahmet Erdi Öztürk and Semiha Sozeri advance a similar claim that Diyanet serves as a primary foreign policy tool of Turkey in countries with a significant Turkish-Muslim minority.⁹⁵ Apparently, Diyanet went far beyond the neighbouring states and organized large religious leaders' summits with Muslim representatives from African countries in 2006 and 2011, and Latin America in 2014.

Turkish political parties inspired by shared Islamic norms, such as the Welfare Party, Justice and Development Party or Felicity Party, played their role as well.

90 Tani, Shotari, "Indonesia and Australia Finally Sign Free Trade Deal", *Nikkei Asian Review*, March 4, 2019, accessed Feb. 25, 2021: <https://asia.nikkei.com/Economy/Indonesia-and-Australia-finally-sign-free-trade-deal>.

91 Cengiz Candar, "Turkey: An Unexpected Response", *Journal of Palestine Studies* 31, no. 4 (2002), p. 63.

92 Middle East News Agency (Cairo), Oct. 26, 2000; See also: Burris, "Turkey-Israel: Speed Bumps", pp. 67-80.

93 Ozkan and Chatterjee, "Islamic Values in Foreign Policy...", p. 121.

94 Ahmet Erdi Öztürk and İftar Gözaydın, "A Frame for Turkey's Foreign Policy via the Diyanet in the Balkans", in *Journal of Muslims in Europe*, Vol 7, Issue 3, October (2018), <https://doi.org/10.1163/22117954-12341370>.

95 Ahmet Erdi Öztürk, and Sozeri, Semiha, "Diyanet as a Turkish foreign policy tool: evidence from the Netherlands and Bulgaria", *Politics and Religion*, 11 (3). (2018), pp. 624-648. ISSN 1755-0483.

Interestingly enough, the AKP, as the ruling political party in Turkey for almost 2 decades, maintains a moderate path in foreign policy. Its government has not brought many Islamist tendencies in its professional diplomatic service but has allowed new ambassadors to express their religiosity. For example, the current Turkish Ambassador to Malaysia, Merve Safa Kakakçi, wears the Islamic headscarf, a practice that was previously much restricted by secular norms. The AKP government also demonstrates a strong sentiments and concerns over Muslim solidarity and did so remarkably well with regards to refugees from Syria. Among other thought-provoking issues, it engaged in diplomatic discussions with Hamas representative Khaled Meshal to help Palestinian people in Gaza, and the AKP-dominated Turkish parliament refused to allow US soldiers to use Turkish bases in attacking Iraq.⁹⁶

Significant aspects of international relations within Islamic world are not always shaped by material factors. Ideational factors, norms, identities, which are historically and socially constructed, play their role as well. Pakistan, for example, maintains its secular identity of the state that “is separated from Islamic religion, where Islamic organizations are regarded as non-government religious organizations that are not permitted to participate in political games of elections in the name of a political party.” However, the ideology of Islam “is revered as the ideological foundation of Pakistan, so Pakistan’s right-wing religious groups often pose heavy pressure on secular political parties and government in the name of Islam, with an attempt to turn Pakistan into a “real” Islamic country that takes on Islam as the supreme divine principles guiding its domestic and foreign policies.”⁹⁷ These groups, for example, have taken a great effort to support the military government of Zia-ul-Haq in their common mission to promote a process of Islamic transformation over the system and institutions of the Pakistani state, including its foreign policy.⁹⁸ It was a powerful domestic force that shaped the foreign policy orientation of his successors too – Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sherriff.

The influence of Islamic opposition groups, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, is another illustrative example of the domestic influence on foreign policymaking. The Muslim Brotherhood has taken on distinctly different shapes and strategies in Egypt, Jordan, Sudan, Kuwait and Syria, as has the *Jamaat-i-Islami* in Pakistan and Bangladesh.⁹⁹ Omar al-Bashar, who held the office of president in Sudan for a long time, cooperated with the Muslim Brotherhood and adhered to their Islamic principles as the major guiding principle of Sudan’s foreign policy.¹⁰⁰

96 Burris, “Turkey-Israel: Speed Bumps”, pp. 67-80.

97 Yungui, “The Influence of Islam over the Foreign Policies of Contemporary Islamic Countries”, pp. 4-6.

98 Yungui, “The Influence of Islam over the Foreign Policies of Contemporary Islamic Countries”, pp. 5-6.

99 Berger, *Religion and Islam in Contemporary International Relations*, p. 4.

100 Yungui, “The Influence of Islam over the Foreign Policies of Contemporary Islamic Countries”, p. 11.

Their protagonist Hassan Abdulla Turabi sponsored the “Islamic Arab People’s Conference” in Khartoum among like-minded Islamists from various Muslim countries to promote similar agenda internationally. However, the impact of the Muslim Brotherhood on foreign policymaking has been different in Egypt. Before the Arab Spring, for example, it largely opposed, criticized or advised government affairs in Egypt through different channels. During the Gulf War, together with other religious groups, it questioned the righteousness of Arab countries’ alliances with the US.¹⁰¹ When Muslim Brotherhood shortly ruled Egypt from 2011 to 2013, given the strong regional and international constraints, its foreign policy changed more in terms of principles and far less in terms of actions. For example, Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi “preserved the movement’s anti-Israel agenda,” stood by his principal refusal “to meet Israelis by outsourcing those negotiations to Egyptian intelligence officials,” and his political party “drafted legislation to unilaterally amend the 1979 treaty.” At the same time, the US administration “took comfort in Morsi’s handling of the Gaza War” from November 2012. From Washington’s viewpoint, “the Egyptian president resisted using the conflict as a pretext to break relations with Israel, and instead authorized negotiations with the Jewish state to achieve a relatively speedy ceasefire.”¹⁰² President Barack Obama told his aides that “he considered Mr. Morsi a straight shooter who delivered on what he promised and did not promise what he could not deliver.”¹⁰³

Though domestic context within which foreign policy is formulated is distinct in each Muslim state, with diverse Islamic pressure groups, identities, and ideas, a similar reference points occasionally appear on their foreign policy agenda. Such similarity among Muslim majority states usually derives from collectively held norms and beliefs that construct their collective interests. It is usually about Islamic solidary, pro-Palestinian agenda, the protection of religious symbols and other similar views, orientations and actions. For example, diverse and occasionally rival Muslim states were united in their support of Bosnia and Herzegovina when the besieged country faced external aggression and internal insurgence in early 1990s.

101 Yungui, “The Influence of Islam over the Foreign Policies of Contemporary Islamic Countries”, p. 14.

102 Eric Trager, “Think Again: The Muslim Brotherhood”, *Foreign Policy*, January 28, 2013; See also: Peter Baker and David D. Kirkpatrick, “Egyptian President and Obama Forge Link in Gaza Deal”, *New York Times*, November 21, 2012; “FJP drafts amendment to Israel peace treaty for Morsi, Parliament to review”, *Egypt Independent*, November 13, 2012.

103 Baker and Kirkpatrick, “Egyptian President and Obama Forge Link in Gaza Deal”, *New York Times*, November 21, 2012.

International level and Islamic-related constraints on foreign policymaking

Realists pay little attention to human or domestic factors in foreign policy analysis and focus, instead on states as unitary and rational actors who primarily act to survive in an anarchic international system. Structural realists, for example, underline the balance of threat among states as the major reference point.¹⁰⁴ As such, it is expected that statesmen will behave in accordance with limits imposed by external attributes such as power distribution, regional order or other factors that arise outside of national borders. Statesmen from Muslim-majority states should not act differently in this regard. Whatever their guiding Islamic ideology, whatever their domestic makeup, and no matter what Islamic ideas and cognitive beliefs shadow the minds of their foreign policymakers, Muslim states are also constrained by the anarchic nature of their wider international environment.

Nevertheless, international realities occasionally interact with domestic pressures. Some even contend that Islam has emerged with a 'political profile' to the international scene.¹⁰⁵ As Reza Simber argues, "we cannot understand the politics of the Middle East without some reference to it."¹⁰⁶ "If Islam is driving force behind political phenomenon", according to him, "it must also have a role in international politics."¹⁰⁷ In terms of Islam and international relations, according to Maurits Berger, the year 1979 was a turning point. "A post-colonial period where socialism and secularism had reigned dominantly in the Muslim world was abruptly ended, and a new period started where the forces of Islam - religiously, politically and ideologically - gained momentum."¹⁰⁸

The international level of analysis is only about the great power politics. This discussion may, therefore, focus only on powerful Muslim states that merge religion with national interests or merge Islam with rules of balancing behaviour. On some occasions, these states seem to have incorporated Islam as an effective tool to pursue their external goals and agendas. In this regard, we may discuss how Saudi Arabia as a status quo power boosted Islamic unity and solidarity to address external challenges faced by revisionist powers in the system in the mid-1960s, how Iran after the Iranian revolution combined revolutionary Islam and regime interest to promote its influence abroad or even challenge dominant powers in the system, or how Turkey combined Othman Islamic heritage and national interest to expand its strategic

104 Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979), pp. 102–12

105 Reza Simber, "Political Islam and International System: Impacts and Implications", *Journal of International Area Studies*, Volume 16, Number 2, (2009), p. 107.

106 Simber, "Political Islam and International System: Impacts and Implications", p.119.

107 Simber, "Political Islam and International System: Impacts and Implications", p.107.

108 Berger, *Religion and Islam in Contemporary International Relations*, p. 1.

depth in its neighbourhood.

There are times, particularly in the wake of great systemic or subsystemic changes, when a nation-state may encounter profound uncertainty on this point.¹⁰⁹ For example, Pan-Arabism and its commitment to revolutions throughout the Middle East was an attempt by Egypt and a few other countries to make serious changes in the regional subsystem. Nasser overthrew the Egyptian monarchy already in 1952 and pledged ever since to oppose the remaining monarchies who were “self-serving tools of foreign interests”.¹¹⁰ It is well known that threatened Muslim states, such as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, opposed the secular nature of revisionist powers and their commitments to radicalism and revolutions. However, to encounter a profound external uncertainty, Saudi Arabia promoted a powerful idea of Islamic unity and solidarity. For example, it founded the Muslim World League (Rabtah al-'Alam al-Islami) in 1962. By 1965, then-King Faisal had also emerged as a serious contender to Nasser and the Ba'athists by using Pan-Islamism as a foreign policy tool; specifically, he advocated an “Islamic Entente” after the failure of the Jeddah Agreement designed to bring peace to Yemen.¹¹¹ Without being side-tracked by the Islamic rhetoric, one can easily unwrap new ideas of Islamic unity and solidarity and interplay them with the rules of balancing behaviour. Thus, Saudi Arabia acted rationally for the purpose of counter-balancing Egypt and for a display of its status as a spiritual leader in the Islamic world.¹¹² According to Wilson and Graham, King Faisal's response to Nasserism was to advocate for Muslim solidarity in an attempt to promote Saudi Arabia's role as the cradle of Islam and protectorate of the Muslim cause.¹¹³ Saudi King also perceived Islam as the source of Arab advancement as a people and civilization according to Adel Altorai. Therefore, Islamic unity would empower Arab unity and would serve Arab interests at the international level.¹¹⁴ Sullivan also found the explanation in the nature of the Arab state system and the challenge posed by Cairo rather than in the style of Saudi Arabia or its leader, King Faisal.¹¹⁵ Later on, Saudi Arabia and Egypt reconciled their relations because Egypt suffered a disaster in the third Arab-Israel War of 1967 and urgently needed Saudi Arabian economic aid. Since then, Saudi Arabia has repeatedly emphasized the significance of its leadership in religious affairs and converted it into its diplomatic tool to expand its influence in the Islamic world.¹¹⁶

109 Hudson, *Foreign Policy Analysis, Classic and Contemporary Theory*, p. 105.

110 R. B. Reppa, Sr., *Israel and Iran Bilateral Relations and Effect on the Indian Ocean Basin* (NY: Praeger, 1974), p. 92.

111 Robert R. Sullivan, “Saudi Arabia in International Politics”, *The Review of Politics*, 32.4 (1970), p. 439.

112 Yungui, “The Influence of Islam over the Foreign Policies of Contemporary Islamic Countries”, pp. 4-5.

113 Peter W. Wilson and Douglas Graham, *Saudi Arabia: The Coming Storm*, (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1994), p. 98.

114 Altorai, “Understanding the Role of State Identity in Foreign Policy Decision...”, p. 119.

115 Sullivan, “Saudi Arabia in International Politics”, p. 440; See also: Altorai, “Understanding the Role of State Identity in Foreign Policy Decision...”, p. 118.

116 Yungui, “The Influence of Islam over the Foreign Policies of Contemporary Islamic Countries”, pp. 4-5.

An in-depth historical account of diplomatic relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia also points to a systemic recurrence of their friendlier behaviour at the time. It is because Iran and Saudi Arabia in their common subsystem feared their rivals among Arab nationalists, socialists, or communists far more than they feared each other. This fear was great enough that it not only drew together Saudi Arabia, a Wahhabi Islamist state, and Iran, then a nationalist and pro-secular Shia state, but also made them more receptive to Islamic political movements, such as the Muslim Brotherhood.¹¹⁷ As Iran and Saudi Arabia accepted American dominance in the international system, they complemented each other and set aside the sectarian divide. The strength of their collaboration in 1950s was expressed in different arenas, such as converging Saudi-Iranian interests in Egypt after Gamal Abdel Nasser overthrew King Farouk in the socialist-republican coup; joint support for Jordan when revolts threatened the continuity of the Hashemite monarchy in 1958; and preventing a socialist coup in Lebanon in 1958. In 1960s, Iran and Saudi Arabia founded the Organization of Islamic Cooperation with other Muslim states and established the Arab–Iranian Friendship Organization. Iran also supported Saudi Arabia in a proxy war against Egypt in Northern Yemen from 1962 to 1965. When King Faisal turned for help to the shah to counter south Yemen’s air raids in Saudi Arabia in 1969, the Shah ordered round-the-clock flights for two days to deliver military equipment. In 1970s, the two states exchanged high-level visits, contained Iraq’s aggressive aspirations, and supported other pro-Western governments, such as Oman, against internal revolutionary elements. It is also indicative that Iran declared a week of mourning when King Faisal was assassinated in 1975.¹¹⁸

However, when Iran departed from their shared order and contested the status of the Saudi state in the regional subsystem or confronted an old Saudi monarchy’s claim to the leadership of the Muslim world, Saudi’s vision of the role of religion in the foreign policy was revised as well. Two choices were presented to Saudi authorities, according to Abir Mordechai. The first was to moderate the state, revising the strict Wahhabi practice advocated by senior ulama’. The second choice entailed pursuing a more conservative religious path. The Saudi policy-makers would decide to take the latter option, embarking on a campaign to promote Wahhabi Islam in the face of Shi’ite expansionism at home and abroad.¹¹⁹ As Nevo Joseph argues, “By employing religion for this purpose, the Saudi monarchy has actually availed itself of Islam to change the situation in which religion constitutes the predominant provider of the regime’s legitimacy.”¹²⁰ It was also a

117 Emir Hadzidakunic, “Iran-Saudi Ties: Can History Project Their Trajectory?”, *Insight 2015*, Middle East Institute, National University of Singapore, (2019), page 5, accessed January 20: 2021 <https://mei.nus.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Insight-215-Saudi-Iranian-Ties.pdf>.

118 Hadzidakunic, “Iran-Saudi Ties: Can History Project Their Trajectory?”, p. 5.

119 Mordechai Abir, *Saudi Arabia: Government, Society, and the Gulf Crisis* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 13.

120 Joseph Nevo, “Religion and National Identity in Saudi Arabia”, *Middle Eastern Studies*, 34.3 (1998), p. 34.

policy that would make Saudi Arabia the leading Arab country to instrumentally employ Sunni political Islamic movements - such as the Egypt-based Muslim Brotherhood International Organization - as a shield against its political opponents in the system.¹²¹ The Saudi strategic interest at the time combined two segments, according to WU Yungui. The first was to construct a defence barrier of Sunni Muslims that could effectively obstruct the surging expansion of Shiite-dominated Iran. The second was to seek an appropriate agent of its own strategic interest in Central Asia through its support and assistance to some specific factions or groups of Afghanistan's Mujahedeen, including the Taliban, who later seized Afghan national regime.¹²² Following the logic of structural realism, Saudi Arabia also sought to balance the perceived Iranian threat by expanding its own military and economic capabilities.¹²³

In the case of Iran, individual, domestic and international incentives interplayed with and reinforced each other in the wake of the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Driven by Khomeini's own religious zeal at the individual level, new Islamic constitutional doctrines at the domestic level, the Islamic Republic of Iran declared and pursued a daring and challenging foreign policy objectives in the regional subsystem. The essence of Iranian foreign policy toward the United States became a defiance and challenge of its presence, and its principal objective: the demonstration of US impotence to stem the rising tide of Islam.¹²⁴ Khomeini also vowed to fight "the Great Satan until the absolute annihilation of its interests in that part of the world."¹²⁵ As the structural theory holds, the introduction of a new threat to the existing order will result in a change to the status quo, and this turning point arrived on 4 November 1979, when 52 American diplomats were taken hostage at the US Embassy in Tehran. With this act, in addition to efforts to consolidate the clerical rule domestically, the Islamic Republic of Iran also abandoned its alliance with Americans, the one that was shared with Saudi Arabia. It is not coincidental that, in that same month, sectarian riots in the Saudi eastern province of Al-Sharghiya erupted. It was also during this time that Ayatollah Khomeini argued that "...the Islamic world must turn to Iran's leadership to win its freedom and independence".¹²⁶ In addition to opposing the American military presence in the subsystem, Tehran also ignored the Soviet pole, initiating a new foreign policy - "Neither East, nor West - but the Islamic Republic!" The Soviet Union

121 Oliver Roy, Antoine Sfeir and John King, *The Columbia World Dictionary of Islamism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), p. 290.

122 Yungui, "The Influence of Islam over the Foreign Policies of Contemporary Islamic Countries", pp. 3-4

123 Kruse, "Determinants of Iranian Foreign Policy: The Impact of Systemic, Domestic...", p. 104.

124 Hunter, *Iran and the World, Continuity in a Revolutionary decade*, p. 59. See also: Kruse, "Determinants of Iranian Foreign Policy: The Impact of Systemic, Domestic and Ideological Factors", p. 70.

125 David Menashri, *Iran, a Decade of Revolution* (New York and London: Holmes and Meier, 1990), p. 205.

126 Parsi, T. *Treachorous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the United States* (New Haven: Yale University, 2007).

was just “the lesser satan whose godless communist ideology was abhorrent.”¹²⁷ Iran also withdrew from its formal alliances with Turkey within the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) that included the United States, the United Kingdom and Pakistan, and attempted to isolate itself from the international system. Turkey remained a NATO member, serving the “US regional interests,” whose commitment to secular nationalism was “anathema to” Iran’s “ideology of Islamic revolutionary universalism”.¹²⁸ Within CENTO, Pakistan was one of the few nations with which Khomeini honoured the previous regime’s formal relations.¹²⁹ In this respect, Islamic Republic showed little sensitivity to the limits imposed by the international system.¹³⁰

However, some argued that Iranian foreign policy in the post-revolutionary stage, despite its professedly Islamic orientation, was predominantly motivated by realpolitik.¹³¹ For Kruse, “neither domestic politics, composition of the political elite, nor regime made any difference.” He contends that “Iran engaged in balancing behaviour, allying with Syria, a secular state based on Arab nationalism,” abandoned its initial efforts “to isolate itself from the international system and sought arms from its most repugnant ideological enemies, the US, Israel and the Soviet Union,” when confronted with the Iraqi invasion.¹³² Iranian adaptive behaviour in the system happened on many other occasions. For example, as American military intervened in Afghanistan and removed Taliban from power in 2002, Iranian diplomats gave an essential contribution in the formulation of the post-Taliban government of Hamid Karzai. According to James Dobbins - the US special envoy to Afghanistan and America’s senior official at the talks - no delegation was more helpful.¹³³

Turkey faced different external realities in different phases and Islam as a reference point expectedly played different roles. During the Cold War, Turkish state followed “a strictly Western orientation in foreign policy, leaving almost no space for religion.” At the same time, security concerns and the Soviet threat have denied Islam “any space, even in cultural terms.”¹³⁴ However, toward the end of the bipolar world, and especially after the end of the Cold War, Ankara began to interplay the assets of its geography, historical legacy and religion. As argued, this transformation also hinges upon a growing embrace of the philosophy of neo-Ottomanism.¹³⁵ For example, then prime minister and later president Turgut Ozal popularized the Ottoman heritage

127 Kruse, “Determinants of Iranian Foreign Policy: The Impact of Systemic, Domestic...”, pp. 78-79.

128 Hunter, *Iran and the World, Continuity in a Revolutionary decade*, p. 134.

129 Kruse, “Determinants of Iranian Foreign Policy: The Impact of Systemic, Domestic...”, p. 95.

130 Stephen Walt, *Revolution and War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), p. 264.

131 Ozkan and Chatterjee, “Islamic Values in Foreign Policy...”, p. 116.

132 Kruse, “Determinants of Iranian Foreign Policy: The Impact of Systemic, Domestic...”, p. v.

133 D. Murray, *US Foreign Policy and Iran, American – Iranian relations since the Islamic revolution* (Routledge, 2010), p. 122.

134 Ozkan and Chatterjee, “Islamic Values in Foreign Policy...”, p. 117.

135 Alexander Murinson, “The Strategic Depth Doctrine of Turkish Foreign Policy”, *Middle Eastern Studies* 42, no. 6 (2006): 945, accessed March 10, 2021: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4284512>.

both domestically and in Turkish neighbourhood. Then Prime minister Tansu Çiller gave Turkey the essential status in the world by promoting it as a model country among 52 Muslim states. Interestingly, in the interview for PBS in 1995, she compared Turkey with the Iranian model as the remaining option for Muslim countries.¹³⁶ The Islamic reference and geopolitics strongly interplayed with the premiership of Necmettin Erbakan (1996-97), at least rhetorically. He went as far as to call for the creation of an Islamic version of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Given new international circumstances and the boost provided by a potent leadership of the Justice and Development Party (AKP), Turkish foreign policy reached out to previously neglected regions such as the Balkans, the Middle East, the South Caucasus and even wider areas in Asia and Africa. This foreign policy shift was, on a much bigger scale, a part of a new doctrine that Ahmet Davutoğlu had already proposed academically as a viable Turkish grand strategy. According to the intellectual who soon after served as chief adviser to Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan (2003-2009), Turkish foreign minister (2009-2014), and finally prime minister (2014-2016), Turkey possesses a “strategic depth” which allows it to implement a pro-active and multi-dimensional foreign policy and claim a central role in international politics. “Instead of letting other countries use Turkey to promote their regional and global strategic role, Turkey should develop a proactive policy commensurate to its historic and geographic depth, which is amplified by its Ottoman legacy.”¹³⁷ Davutoğlu argued that “Turkey is the natural heir to the Ottoman Empire that once unified the Muslim world and therefore has the potential to become a Muslim regional power.”¹³⁸ Even though he no longer serves in the government, his foreign policy discourse - conceptual repertoire and geographically prominent areas from Turkey’s strategic depth - remain untouched with new Turkish governments.¹³⁹

The position, status and foreign policy behaviour of Saudi Arabia, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Turkey in the international system have clearly demonstrated that Islam is not completely isolated from their security dilemmas. Considering their centrality, each of them has attempted to expand its influence by promoting common Islamic heritage in their neighbourhood. By extension, attached smaller states with common religious values would strengthen the centre’s capability, build closer friendships, possibly build alliances. This chapter also implies three models of Islamic leadership - Saudi, Iranian and Turkish - each inspired by its own historical heritage and rationalized by its own geography and balancing behaviour.

136 Interview with PBS (Public Broadcasting Company, USA), 18 April 1995, See: Kesgin, “Tansu Çiller’s Leadership Traits and Foreign Policy”, p. 42.

137 Ioannis Grigoriadis, *The Davutoglu Doctrine and Turkish Foreign Policy*, Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy, Working Paper No-8 (2010), pp. 1-12.

138 Walker, “Learning Strategic Depth: Implications of Turkey’s New Foreign Policy Doctrine”, pp. 33-34.

139 Bezen Balamir Coskun, “The Post-Davutoglu Era in Turkish Foreign Policy”, *E-International Relations*, June 3, 2016, accessed March 10, 2021, <https://www.e-ir.info/2016/06/03/the-post-davutoglu-era-in-turkish-foreign-policy/>.

Conclusion

The objective of this article was to provide an overview of the role of religion in Muslim-majority states, in this case the religion of Islam, in their foreign policy-making. Notwithstanding the complex relationship with international affairs, the article revisited specific foreign policy cases restricted by Islamic constraints at the individual, domestic and international levels of analysis.

At the individual level, we could not speak of issues of religious incentives and pressures in foreign policymaking without making reference to charismatic and powerful Muslim decision-makers. In some countries where domestic and international political environments have been more stable for longer periods, a strong individual leadership has had an opportunity to act as an intervening variable in a limited number of foreign policy issues. The impact of Mahathir Mohamed on Malaysia's foreign policy is a strong reference point. He was especially outspoken on issues where Muslim people were victimized by non-Muslim states. Yet in other cases, Muslim leaders inspired by Islamic incentives could not make any major foreign policy impact due to opposite pressures from domestic and international environments. Examples of Turkish prime minister Erbakan and Egypt's president Mursi are most visible instances.

Some may look for more empirical approaches to explore specific human attributes that can reveal Islamic sensitivities or expose their absence from foreign policymaking. Cognitive theories come close to this conceptualization of mutually interwoven elements of individual belief systems, on the one hand, and foreign policy decision-making, on the other. They possibly suggest that specific philosophical and instrumental beliefs of leaders interrelate with religious constraints in foreign policy making. They may even predispose a person to a certain type of foreign policy action. This article establishes that, by using this or other similar methodologies, new insights on Muslim states foreign policies could be explored. For example, what the influence on foreign policy is by different Muslim leaders who score low on nationalism and who consequently value their "ingroup" as fellow Muslims high. Literature on this or other similar idiosyncratic factors is quite limited.

At the domestic level, we could not speak of issues of religious incentives in foreign policymaking without reference to shared beliefs and norms. Identity of a state also implies its preferences and consequent actions. This article reflects that Muslim majority states share many religious and nonreligious diversities. Some countries, such as Saudi Arabia, operate in a system that integrates politics (House of Saud) and religion (House of Al-Wahhab) without specific constitutional guidelines. Yet, in others we find normative impact more important. Constitutional guides of the Islamic Republic of Iran are illustrative examples. Different

local groups also play their part in foreign policy making. Islamic political parties and pressure groups in Indonesia after 1998; ulema and religious scholars in Saudi Arabia; Diyanet in Turkey after 2000s are a few selected examples of many others that exist. Islamic religion, which became a revived element in some countries, such as Indonesia in late 1990s and Turkey in early 2000s, has shown a strong transformative power of these groups.

Depending on conditions from the external environment, the role of Islam in foreign policy making also tends to fluctuate. In some countries, Islamic incentives were boosted by sudden changes of geopolitical realities at the regional or international level. For example, Saudi Arabia deliberately designed a specific foreign policy of Islamic unity and solidarity in 1960s to meet new external challenges in the regional subsystem. In some other cases, Islamic incentives at the individual and domestic levels boost changes in external realities. Driven by Khomeini's religious zeal and new Islamic constitutional doctrines, the Islamic Republic of Iran pursued bold foreign policy objectives of "Neither East, nor West - but the Islamic Republic!" Iran also opposed American military presence in the subsystem, ignored the Soviet pole, withdrew from its formal alliances with Turkey, and challenged Saudi leadership in the Middle East. In Turkey, systemic factors have interacted with domestic attributes, especially since Erdogan came to power in 2002. Their mutual interplay added religion as yet another element in shaping what Ahmet Davutoglu called Turkish strategic depth. All these examples suggest that Muslim states face different geopolitical realities. It is quite possible that different Islamic traditions might also develop different strategic cultures that shape choices within the Muslim world. This article identifies literature gaps in this particular area.

In conclusion, Islam as an intervening variable receives less attention within the confines of the international domain. At this level of analysis, it is more elusive and not easily observed in a systematic way. Of all the possible topics, it is anticipated that Islamic incentives only play more active role in issues of religious solidarity, relations within Muslim world, human (Muslim) rights, pro-Palestinian views, promotion of the soft power, aid-programs, state of Muslim affairs and the like. Of three major features of foreign policy - principles, commitments and actions - Islamic constraints are also more effective in the realm of views and orientations. In other words, they are rather part of Islamic vocabulary, speeches or declarations. In the realm of concrete foreign policy outcomes, with an exception of aid programs, protection of Islamic symbols and other similar activities, Muslim states are more vulnerable to their national interests. In patterns of conflict and alliances, Muslim states are still exposed to traditional power politics and balancing behaviour that emanate outside of national borders.

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Uloga islama u kreiranju vanjske politike

Sažetak

Religija kao faktor u analizi vanjskih poslova uglavnom je imala podređen status u oblasti međunarodnih odnosa, pogotovo u školama realizma ili neorealizma. Ovaj članak istražuje koliko islam može utjecati na proces definiranja, artikuliranja ili vođenja vanjske politike u državama s muslimanskom većinom. Značaj islama kao vodećeg principa na kreiranje vanjske politike predstavljen je na tri nivoa: individualnom, nacionalnom i međunarodnom. Glavni cilj jeste ponuditi detaljniju sintezu dostupne literature o islamu u kreiranju vanjske politike, te je dovesti u vezu s glavnim teorijama međunarodnih odnosa.

Ključne riječi: vanjska politika, analiza vanjske politike, islam i diplomatija, islam i vanjska politika