



## Analyzing the Turkish Islamist elites Attitudes about the Islamic revolution of Iran: change or countinuty

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**Abstract:** According to this research based on historical research methods, different conditions, and various events can lead to a change in the views of Turkish Islamist elites on the meaning of the Islamic revolution of Iran. The research shows that the dominant understanding of Iran's Islamic Revolution has changed in three different periods: In the first period, under the influence of the thoughts of Shariati and Imam Khomeini, the Islamic Revolution as a utopia; in the second period, under the influence of the Umm al-Qura theory and the Iran-Iraq war, the Islamic revolution as an model of Islamic governance; and in the third period, under the influence of the Syrian crisis, the understanding of Islamic revolution of Iran as a Shia revolution. In this third period, two main viewpoints appear: The first viewpoint understands the Islamic revolution as a Shia revolution from the beginning, and the second viewpoint, by dividing the history of the Islamic revolution of Iran into two eras, introduces the era of Imam Khomeini as the era of "Islamic revolution" and calls the era of Ayatollah Khamenei as the era of "Shia" revolution.

**Keywords:** Islamic Revolution of Iran, Turkish Islamism, Necmettin Erbakan, Justice and Development Party, the Syrian crisis.

## **Introduction**

Following the outbreak of the Cold War and the expansion of Islamic movements in Turkey, Turkish Islamic currents realized their theoretical vulnerability regarding contemporary issues and Islam. These currents faced questions that they couldn't answer. Hence, they initiated communication with Islamic movements outside Turkey to reconstruct the social-political aspect of Islam. Turkish Islamic movements didn't initially prioritize Iran and its Islamic political ideology. After a while, the Islamic Revolution and Iranian Islamic thinkers became the center of attention for the views of Turkey's Islamic elites. These elites' perceptions and interpretations of the Islamic revolution were a reflection of understanding them from the society of Iran that emerged from the Islamic revolution. This research seeks to answer the question: What was the understanding of Iran's Islamic Revolution among the Turkish Islamic elites? The research began with the belief that the perception of the Islamic Revolution by the elites can be influenced by time and the context of different events. This was used to explore and reflect on the answer. Using the document-library method, researcher used historical data to provide a reliable answer to the question by depicting the historical trajectory of Islamic elites of Turkey interaction with the Islamic revolution of Iran for forty years.

### **1. Islamic Revolution as utopia: The first period**

#### **1.1. The inception of discourse and the establishment or definition of Utopia.**

Before getting acquainted with the books of Ali Shariati, Iran was classified as an Alevi country by the Islamic currents of Turkey. The Muslim elites of Turkey considered the uprisings and demonstrations that began in Iran in 1977 as communist rebellions. The perception of the Iranian revolution was largely unfavorable due to the activities of Iranian leftist student groups in Turkey.

A group of Islamists (led by Ali Bulaç) who published the *Düşünce* monthly and the *Şura*, *Tevhid*, and *Hicret* weekly newspapers, focused on the political events of the Iranian revolution in 1977. they also observed Protesting women with Islamic hijab and

Islamic slogans such as Allahu Akbar and thought that the uprising was an Islamic uprising, contrary to popular belief. In interaction with Abdulbaghi Golpinarli and Hossein Hatemi, this group altered their perspective on Shia and Iran while viewing the Iranian people's uprising as an Islamic revolution. Through meetings with Abdulbaghi Golpinarli and Hossein Hatemi, this group's perspective on Shia and Iran was altered, and they saw events in Iran as an Islamic revolution.

Bulaç and his like-minded friends had been involved in meetings of Nurettin Topçu from 1970 to 1973 before becoming acquainted with what happened during the Islamic Revolution of Iran. Despite receiving his doctorate in philosophy from France, Topçu was an Islamist thinker who opposed Soviet Communism and American capitalism while advocating for Islamic socialism in Turkey. However, he was disregarded by many Islamic movements in Turkey at that time. (Sadr-mohammadi, 2018). Following the news of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, Bulaç and his like-minded companions were able to get acquainted with Shariati's opinions and became interested in him due to their shared intellectual backgrounds with Topçu. In 1979, the movement of translating Shariati's books from English to Turkish (under the supervision of Hatemi and adapting them to the Persian version) began, and the books "Civilization and Modernity, Haj, Islam and Western Ideologies, Islamic Sociology, Culture and Ideology, etc" were published by Düşünce magazine in a few months. Before the emergence of Ali Shariati in the Islamic and socialist context of Turkey, Islamists translated and published works by Sayyid Qutb, Abul A'la al-Maududi, and Hassan al-Banna. Turkey began to pay more attention to Shariati's works due to his way of presenting topics and the impact of Shariati's views on the Islamic Revolution of Iran. The 1980s saw Shariati taking center stage among Turkish Islamic intellectuals, leading some Islamist thinkers, including Cemil Meriç, to express their aspiration to resemble Ali Shariati. (Öz, 2018)

Understanding the significance of Shariati for Turkish society during that period can assist us in envisioning the ideal Islamic revolution from the perspective of Turkish Muslim thinkers. The focus on justice, the Theory of return to self, and the difference between Alevi/Safavid Shiism were among the concepts that Turkish Islamist

intellectuals accepted from Shariati. Shariati taught Turkish Islamic society that it is possible to create a third way based on Islam by rejecting both communism and capitalism, ultimately leading to the development of an Islamic civilization. Also, The Ottoman Empire period and the ideal Islamic civilization were differentiated by Shariati's theory of Alevi/Safavid Shiism. (Bulaç, 2018)

#### **1.1.1. Akıncılar Movement and Metin Yüksel**

While Iran's Islamic Revolution was known with Shariati in Turkey, Turkish Islamists also identified two other notable personalities on its path: Morteza Motahari and Imam Khomeini. Although Imam Khomeini's unique personality made him a favorite among Turkish Islamists, Morteza Motahari was presented as an ordinary thinker who didn't achieve much. Turkish Islamists identified Imam Khomeini and aligned him with the image that Shariati had for him, which was fundamentally distinct from the prevailing view of Ulama (taken from the role of Ulama in the late Ottoman Empire). The Turks viewed Imam Khomeini as a cleric who reconciled mysticism and jurisprudence, after self-improvement and successfully navigating the mystical journeys towards God and into God, he embarked on the third mystical journey towards creatures and followed it with a mystical journey into creatures. Although Imam Khomeini was an Alevi Shiite scholar (according to the definition of Shariati), his ideology was Islamic Ummah which led him to reject nationalism. Imam Khomeini rejected the oppression by advocating the establishment of an Islamic Republic based on justice, which was attractive to the unequal society of Turkey at that time.

Through the lens of Metin Yüksel, one can observe how Imam Khomeini influenced the Islamic youth in Turkey during his reign. In 1976 Metin Yüksel, a devout Sunni man, founded the Fatih district branch of the Akıncılar movement in Istanbul. This movement, which was centered on providing social services to the poor, had its origins in the youth division of Necmettin Erbakan's National View. (Islamianaliz, 2022)

In his Islamic Ummah ideology, Yüksel was actively involved in the issues of the Islamic world, including struggles against the occupation of Palestine. He was attacked and injured by the communists in 1977.

When he heard about Iran's Islamic uprising in Turkish newspapers under the name of Muslim Communist demonstrations, Yüksel consulted his father who was a Sunni scholar. His father told him that these struggles were not communist rebellion but Islamic revolution. Sheikh Sadrettin Yüksel, the father of Metin Yüksel, was a Sunni Kurdish religious scholar who could speak Persian and believed that Shia is one of the religions of Islam.

The Akıncılar Movement of Fatih district reached out to Iranian Muslim students in Istanbul, including Behrouz Amin, Abbas Takbazi, and Habib Emami. In addition Hujjat al-Islam Aliakbar Mahdipur, imam of Valide Han Mosque (the mosque of Iranians living in Istanbul). (Tevhidhaber, 2019)

In Şura Weekly, Hojjat al-Islam Mahdipour translated Imam Khomeini's speeches into Turkish and published them. Yüksel's actions at the head of the Akıncılar movement in line with Imam Khomeini's propaganda began by designing and distributing posters with headlines such as "Long live Iran's Islamic struggle" and by writing articles and specials in support of the Islamic revolution in Şura Weekly and then Tevhid Magazine. Yüksel continued to make speeches in various cities of Turkey defending the Islamic Revolution, including a speech made by him that declared Iran as his country: "You will break the chains from the other side and I from this side. We will eventually join hands. To reach the light, for unity, for Islam... The Muslim people of Turkey, in this struggle of the people of Iran, will not be a spectator and no Muslim will be a spectator." (yeniakit, 2020)

For some time, Turkish police kept tabs on the Akıncılar movement members and apprehended Yüksel and others. Imam Khomeini's arrival in Iran coincided with a group of leftist Iranian students who were against the Islamic struggle and attacked the consulate of the Shah's regime in Istanbul. The members of the Akıncılar Movement attended the consulate and expelled the leftist students from there and the consulate was given to Islamist Iranian students.

Metin Yüksel was shot by two members of the Gray Wolves group (the ultra-nationalist paramilitary organization) as he left the Fatih Mosque on March 4th, 1979, and martyred 6 days later. (tevhidhaber, 2019) Yüksel became one of the symbols of the political Islamic Movements

during that time in Turkey and can be a guide for this research. His name connects us to movements and persons in Turkey who recognized and pondered the Islamic Revolution from the two perspectives of Imam Khomeini's words and Shariati's views. Perhaps It is not an overstatement to say that the most important of these movements was Necmettin Erbakan's National View, we should know that at that time many political people of Islamic movements were in association with the National View.

### **1.1.2. Islamic publications**

Düşünce Monthly, which started covering Iran in 1977, (Düşünce, 1977, p. 3) published the first comprehensive article about the Islamic Revolution in the summer of 1978. This article was translated from an article in Al-Bayan magazine that covered the history of the Iranian uprising. (Düşünce, 1978, p. 22) It is important to note that the Düşünce Monthly was not the primary source of news on the Islamic revolution in Turkey, Its writers began to translate Shariati works as per its main context. Most of the news of the Islamic Revolution was first reflected in the "Yeniden Milli Mücadele" magazine published by Several Muslim students of the Konya Law School, their organizational name was "Mücadele Birliği". During the Islamic revolution, the members of the "Mücadele Birliği" lived in Istanbul and were in favor of Ibn Taymiyya and Ahmad Sirhindi (one of the spiritual masters in the Naqshbandi Tariqa). (Belviranlı, 2018)

After that, we should refer to the magazines "Tevhid", "Hicret", "Sebil", "Islami Harekat", "Mavera", "Tabligh", "Akıncılar", "Şura", "Hilal", and "Hareket". Check out the writings of some Islamist publications, including Şura, which show Imam Khomeini was understood based on the views of Ali Shariati in Turkey. Şura Weekly in 41 issues in 1978 was published. The title of the last issue of the Şura Weekly was: "Islamic state is not possible without the caliphate". The Turkish government banned Şura Weekly and Islamists published Tevhid Weekly instead. (Tevhid, 1978, p. 1)

Islamic publications during that time were focused on Islamic campaigns in Afghanistan against the communist regime and Palestine. During the same period, However, the Islamic Revolution of Iran was emphasized by the being a neighbor, rapid development, and

power grab of Iranian revolutionaries as well as the close acquaintance with Imam Khomeini and Shariati from Turkish Islamists during that period. Despite the lack of a clear and systematic approach, Turkish Islamists in Iran continued to focus on the Islamic Revolution, with many still supporting Erbakan's National View movement.

Bulaç and his like-minded friends issuance of Shariati's works greatly contributed to the understanding of the Islamic Revolution from an intellectual standpoint. A lot of Turkish Islamists were enthusiastic about the Islamic revolution. The Islamic Revolution was hailed as a means of freeing Islamic communities from disappointment and boosting their self-assurance, as it also demonstrated that Islam, in addition to being an individual religion, is also a social and even civilizational religion.

Some of the photographs of the Islamic revolution in Turkey were manifested a lot. Included in these photographs was the mention of the presence of veiled women in the revolution, While in Turkey at that time hijab was introduced as a symbol of backwardness. Also photographs of Ulama who either carried weapons or were the pioneers of demonstrations. (Yalçıntaş, 1979, p. 3).

Following the triumph of the Islamic revolution in Iran, Islamic publications held a positive view of changes in Iran. Among these changes were the nationalization of industries, Writing a constitution based on Islam, Taking an independent foreign policy (slogan neither East nor West), and supporting Islamic movements in other countries. Not paying attention to the difference between Shia and Sunni and empathizing with Muslim revolutionaries in Iran were among the hidden characteristics of the writings of that era. (Sarı, 2017).

### **1.1.3. People-centered diplomacy.**

In the period before the Islamic revolution, Hojjat al-Islam Mahdipur was a crucial source of information for Islamists about the Islamic movement in Iran. Following the triumph of the Islamic revolution in Iran and the Seizing of Iranian diplomatic buildings in Turkey by Iranian Muslim revolutionaries, Turkish Islamists assisted Iranian revolutionary diplomats in activating Tehran's diplomatic efforts. Their quick activation in foreign policy issues is remarkable considering their lack of experience in this area.



There was a correspondence between what revolutionary Iranians wanted to say and what Turkish Islamists wanted to hear. By communicating with the Turkish Islamists, the Iranian revolutionaries were able to convey their message that included concepts emphasized by the Islamic Revolution, such as the Islamic Ummah, Islamic unity, and Islamic governance, as well as the revolution, Imam Khomeini, anti-tyranny, authentic Islam, and some Sunni questions about Shiism. (Mahdipur, 1979, p. 10)

Leaving diplomatic restrictions and interacting with the general Turkish society were two key factors that caused the success of the revolutionary diplomats of the Islamic Republic of Iran. In the initial years following the Islamic Revolution, Iran's diplomatic approach that was centered on people gained momentum and disregarded Turkish official institutions. Iranian diplomats paid little attention even to religious groups such as tariqats and considered the masses of Turkish Muslims as their aim. However, it should be kept in mind that Erbakan's national view played an unspoken role in the success of this model of diplomacy. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Abdullah Gül, Ali Bulaç, Mehmet Gormez, and Abdurrahman Dilipak can be mentioned among those who established relations between Iranian diplomats and Islamic movements in Turkey in that period.

Turkish Alevis were also the attention of Iranians, But the perception of Turkish Alevis towards Iran was altered by the Islamic revolution. The Turkish Alevis once praised Iran as one that would defend their rights, but after the Islamic Revolution, they were confronted with an Islamic government that sought to expand Shi'ism. So the secular forces were not the only ones who opposed the Islamic Republic of Iran, as the Turkish Alevis also opposed it. (Ismailzadeh, 2014, pp. 71-78).

To understand the image of Iran as a utopia in the minds of Turkish Islamists, one must consider the Islamic Revolution's General framework, which includes the concepts of Islamic Ummah (Tevhid, 1979, p.10), social and civilizational Islam (Hatemi, 1979, p. 11), anti-Westernization (Hicret, 1980, p. 14) and assisting Islamic movements in other countries to regain self-confidence (and even establish an Islamic government). (Suleri, 1979, p.16) Turkish who viewed the Islamic Revolution of Iran as a utopia were labeled Iranist in Turkish



media literature, The utopia of the Islamic Revolution was also interpreted as Iranism.

## **2. Islamic Revolution as a model: The second period**

### **2.1. Transition from utopia to model**

Following the 1980 coup in Turkey, the political Islamic movements were heavily influenced and the activities of political Islamic groups were pursued underground. Pressures led to a sharp reduction in the activity of Iranian diplomats, with Iranian diplomacy being under the control of Turkish security agencies. Both the Islamic movements and the Iranian revolutionary diplomats were subjected to the secular political system and military government that emerged after the 1980 coup, resulting in isolated relations between both groups.

On the other hand, with the crisis of the American embassy in Iran, Iran's unfavorable economic condition, and the war between Iran and Iraq, most of the Iranians' attention was drawn to the country's internal issues, and with the explanation of Umm al-Qura theory on the part of Mohammad Javad Larijani and its inclusion in the foreign policy structure of the Islamic Republic, the idea of exporting the Islamic Revolution lost its previous power. Umm al-Qura theory emphasized the Islamic Revolution's civilizational aspect, but also its relationship to domestic and international norms, and Iran as a nation-state unit. This theory differed greatly from the idea of exporting the Islamic Revolution. (Ezghandi and Rashid Kurdestani, 1399, p. 183) Iran is Umm al-Qura and deemed worthy of the leadership of Islamic Ummah, as per Umm al-Qura theory. As a result, Iran is called Dar al-Islam by Umm al-Qura theory. The defeat or victory of Iran is the defeat or triumph of Islam and the religious mission of Muslims is to preserve Umm al-Qura. It is preferable to maintain Umm al-Qura. (Larijani, 1990, pp. 48-20) According to this theory, if there is a conflict between the goals of supplying the needs of the Islamic Republic of Iran and exporting the Islamic Revolution, the priority should be towards supplying its needs. (Larijani, 1990, p. 116)

The spread of this theory meant that reducing the pressure of the coup in Turkey and the resumption of Islamist activities in that country meant that there was no communication from Iran. Although the Iran-Iraq war, Imam Khomeini's fatwa on Salman Rushdie's

execution, and the commemoration of Quds Day were significant issues for Turkish Islamists, their perception of Iran gradually shifted from an ideal revolution towards a revolutionary "state". This led to the question of whether Iran would become ideal again. Iran was targeted by those who supported the secular system in Turkey to create an image of Iran as a backward society with strict religious regulations in the population's mind.

Following the conclusion of the Iran-Iraq war in the early 1990s, Mehmet Metiner, an Islamist politician who was interested in the Islamic Revolution of Iran at that time and is currently a member of the Justice and Development Party of Turkey, traveled to Iran. The report of his trip to Iran in *Giriş* magazine with the two titles "The Iran we know in Turkey is not the Iran known in Iran" (Metiner, 1989, pp. 30-31) and "The Problem of Misunderstanding of Islamic Revolution of Iran" (Metiner, 1989, pp. 32-34) It was printed. These two notes reveal that Turkey's intellectual community was characterized by two very positive and very negative perspectives on the Islamic Revolution during that period. This is significant. The very positive (idealistic) view tries to understand Iran as an Islamic utopia, and the very negative view sees Iran as the most hostile of the Turkish secular system. according to this view Iran was believed to have sought to establish a Shiite empire or convert Sunnis to Shiites. According to Metiner, this was the Western view of the Islamic revolution that was deemed an unoriginal interpretation of Turkish thinking. The very positive (idealistic) view aimed to portray the Islamic Republic of Iran as a government away from religious disputes and was based on Islam. This view was trying to redefine the history of Islam and challenge Sunni opinions about the Companions of the Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.w.), while also downplaying the importance of the Sufis. Because Believers in this view, the Sufis did not follow the Qur'an and the Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.w.). Such efforts also had a significant negative impact on many Muslims, who saw Sufiya as essentially prelates. (Metiner, 1989, pp. 32-34)

Islamic Revolution of Iran garnered significant attention in 1979, but over time it became less of a focus among the people of Turkey. Apart from attractive figures like Imam Khomeini and Shariati, Presenting the Islamic interpretation of revolution and the

unexpectedness of the revolution made the Islamic revolution of Iran attractive to the people of Turkey. The Left Communism ideology, which considered religion as related to the past and an unimportant concept, experienced growth during the 1970s in Turkey. This ideology suddenly encountered an Islamic revolution with ideals and slogans such as endorsing oppressed people and fighting against imperialism, which were explained using the Islamic concepts of Mustad'af and Mustakber. The Left Communists in Turkey failed to analyze the Iranian Islamic Revolution of Iran, therefore their claims about the role of religion and the path to prosperity in Turkish society were discredited. Moreover, the Islamic Revolution in Iran represented a new path for Turkish thinkers. Because it was a third way that was not an imitation of the West, unlike capitalism and communism. (Sari, 2017)

#### **2.1.1. Reasons for the collapse of Utopia**

The secular state of Turkey endeavored to extend a kind of non-political moral Islam in Turkey to counter political Islam and communism at the same time. Proponents of laicism tried to present a negative image of the Islamic Revolution as a symbol of political Islam. Turkish public opinion on the Islamic revolution was influenced by the lack of freedom in Iran and the issues that reinforce it, such as the mandatory hijab law, the death penalty, unfavorable conditions for Sunnis in Iran, and tension-causing foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Based on this image, the Islamic Republic system in Iran developed as a model of political Islam which brought about chaos in Iran put added pressure on the people, and caused backwardness in Iran. The Turkish perspective's historical background, which identified as being not the East but the West, was a key factor in the success of the effort. Furthermore, can be mentioned to the Turkish People's limited and steady awareness of global issues and Turkey's economic and security problems. (Metiner, 1989, pp. 30-31) Metiner's two notes portrayed very positive (idealist) and very negative views, but none of them had a realistic understanding of Iran after the Islamic Revolution and faced multiple problems over its interpretation.

Despite this, Iran also did not have a religious-political context to resolve problems and maintain the perception of post-Islamic revolution Iran as a utopia. The cultural export of the Islamic Revolution was influenced by both Umm al-Qura theory and the conflict between different institutions. These institutions were competing to take over the interaction channels between Turkey and Iran. It is important to mention that rather than capacity, the abundance of institutions indicated a deficiency in organization and differentiation. The multiplicity of institutions made the Turkish government more sensitive to Iran's activities and confused potential audiences of the Islamic Revolution in communicating with them. After the Iran - Iraq war ended In addition to the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the affiliated consulates, Turkey has seen the presence of various governmental and non-governmental institutions of Iran such as Al-Mustafa University, the Office of the Supreme Leader, Islamic Culture and Communication Organization, Ahl al-Bayt World Assembly, World Assembly of Approximation of Islamic Religions, Offices of Shia Marja's, Cultural departments of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, Overseas departments of security institutions, etc. (Esmailzadeh, 2014, p. 81) Based on these institutions, it is possible to conclude that Iran attempted to connect with Turkey as a Sunni community through mainly Shiite institutions.

After the 1980 coup, the Islamic revolution was supported by the temporary coalition government of Erbakan during the two years. Although the participation of the Erbakan Islamic movement in the Turkish government had an impact, not as much as expected due to the government's fragmentation and instability. Erbakan faced opposition from religious people who had anticipated the implementation of Sharia in politics, while seculars sought scutes and indications of political Islam to remove Islamists from the government. Also, Erbakan by coalition with a conservative secular party, created a government with two divergent tastes in culture, education, and foreign policy that hindered the government's mobility. Erbakan tried to focus on social and less political areas. However, it must be said Islam was a monolithic religion, it couldn't be completely separate political aspects from its social aspects. (Kaplan, 2011)

after the 1997 post-modern coup against the Erbakan government, the appointment of Hojjat al-Islam Seyyid Hamid Kazemi to the cultural consultation of Iran in Turkey helped to resolve some of the conflict between the institutions of Iran about Turkey. Cultural consultation and communication channels were adapted to the new approach, which targeted Shiites and groups close to them. (Esmailzadeh, 2014, p. 76) Turkish Islamist political groups were experiencing their most significant changes during that decade, which included the separation of different currents of Erbakan's national view and the establishment of the Justice and Development Party (abbreviated AK Party). Following the post-modern coup against Erbakan's coalition government and the closure of his Refah Party, it was replaced by the Fazilet Party. Merve Safa Kavakcı, the Fazilet Party member and MP from Istanbul entered the Grand National Assembly in 1999 wearing a headscarf. This event caused a political crisis in Turkey. Kavakcı was sentenced to deprivation of citizenship and used it as an excuse to shut down the Fazilet Party by Turkey's secular state. Due to accusations of incorporating religion into political affairs, the Turkish Constitutional Court decided to close down the Fazilet party. (Özdemir, 2015, pp. 188-189)

A split among political Islamists was uncovered by the closure of the Fazilet Party. The Saadat Party was founded by politicians loyal to Erbakan, Led by Mehmet Recai Kutan. and The Justice and Development Party was founded by politicians critical of Erbakan including Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Abdullah Gül, Ali Babacan, Binali Yıldırım, and Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu and others. The positive actions of the members of the Justice and Development Party in the municipalities, acceptance of political and marginal minorities of Turkish society such as Kurds as party members, and introduction of the Party as an oppressed party (important in Turkish political culture) caused Turkish people to pay attention to Ak Party. The AK Party expanded its members beyond political Islamists linked to Erbakan's national view. and was able to attract the opinion of the conservative segment of Turkish society. (Yavuz, 2009, pp. 270-285)

## **2.2. The main focus of the second period**

The AK Party was established by Turkish Islamic politicians, who sought to use the Islamic Revolution as a model of Muslim governance. However, the main focus was whether social Islam could effectively govern modern society. The time frame of the AK Party governance is divided into three parts; dual governance from 2002 to 2007, unified governance from 2007 to 2016, and Erdoğan's powerful rule that began in 2016 until now. During the dual governance of the AK Party cultural relations between Iran and Turkey were further developed (Madadlou, 2017, p. 64).

### **3. The Islamic revolution as a Shia revolution: The third period**

Cultural relations between Iran and Turkey in the AK party's unified governance period faced a challenge: Turkish Muslim politicians were unwilling to engage in one-sided cultural interactions with Iran and demanded to increase their cultural activities in Iran. This presented an obstacle to the continuation of model-oriented interactions in these relationships. Turkish Islamism felt that it could offer a Turkish answer to the question of how to govern modern society through social Islam, which led to reducing the significance of the Islamic Revolution as a model for them. Even so, the most significant setback to recognizing the Islamic Revolution as a model was the start of the Syrian crisis. Due to the Syrian crisis, the Sunni-Shia split became a fundamental element of the analytical apparatus of Turkish Islamists, leading to Shiite political Islam in Iran and Sunnite political Islam in Turkey. Some of Turkey's political Islamists began to reread the Islamic Revolution of Iran and recognized it as a Shiite revolution and foundation for building a new Shiite empire.

This interpretation had two main viewpoints:

A. from the beginning the Islamic Revolution of Iran was based on the Shiite revolution, (onat, 2013, pp. 224-225)

B. the post-Islamic revolution was divided into two periods: The first: the period of Imam Khomeini and the second: the period of Ayatollah Khamenei.

The period of Ayatollah Khamenei was marked by change and the Shiite revolution. Because Shiite and national concepts prevailed over Islamic concepts. (Elhan, 2016, p. 46) Recognizing the Islamic

revolution as a Shia revolution caused its alienation from the Sunni Muslim society of Turkey(Afacan, 2012, p. 172).

It should be noted the interpretation that the Islamic revolution is a Shiite revolution and not Islamic, was raised in the triumph of Islamic revolution by some Turkish Islamists. (Refref, 1986, pp. 13-16) However after the Syrian crisis, it became the prevailing interpretation, and the "Iranist" was used to accuse the Islamic thinkers who were interested in the Islamic revolution of Iran. (Böhürler, 2013) A number of these thinkers perceived Iran's involvement in the Syrian crisis as a component of the Islamic Republic of Iran fighting against Israel and the United States in the Middle East. This interpretation was not convincing in Turkey. (Çamurcu, 2013, p. 83)

### **Conclusion**

The historical review of the meaning of the Islamic Revolution of Iran in the opinion of the Turkish Islamic elite shows that conditions and events can change the prevailing interpretation of a concept. Based on this, understanding of the Islamic Revolution has been through three historical-semantic periods. In the first period, the Islamic Revolution was depicted as a utopia to confront the West and based on Islamic and non-nationalism concepts. The opinions of Shariati and Imam Khomeini were crucial in this understanding. In the second period, the emergence of the Umm al-Qura theory in Iran, which was caused by economic issues, the Iran-Iraq war, and the American Embassy crisis, also Turkey's economic and security problems led to an acceptance of the Islamic Revolution as a model for Turkish Islamists. This understanding of the Islamic revolution became the context of the cultural interactions of Turkish Islamist politicians with the Islamic Republic of Iran during the two terms of the government of Erbakan and the unified governance of the Justice and Development Party. In the third period, with the beginning of the Syrian crisis, Turkish Islamism reinterprets the Islamic revolution as a Shia revolution. This interpretation had two main viewpoints: A. From the beginning, the Islamic Revolution of Iran was based on the Shiite revolution. B. the post-Islamic revolution was divided into two periods: The first: the period of Imam Khomeini and the second: the period of Ayatollah Khamenei was marked by change and the Shiite revolution.





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**65 Islamic Political  
Thought**

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