

**THE INTEGRATION OF ISLAMIC MOVEMENTS TO THE NEO-
LIBERAL ECONOMY IN TURKEY: THE CASE OF GULEN
MOVEMENT**

MA Thesis

By

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ABSTRACT

The religious (Islamic) movements have always been active in the region of Anatolia. During their history, they have always been in conflict with the state or the current political mainstream rulers. However, this thesis reveals that this nature of religious groups in Anatolia has changed in favor of those groups. The paper identifies the stages of the success of those groups. Firstly, the stage of change and moderation of their ideological backgrounds is done in order to be compatible with neo-liberal doctrines by those groups themselves. Secondly, they aimed to create their alternative society within the Turkish society to sustain their position and credibility. Lastly, the paper reveals the embedded power relations and hierarchies within their groups, which represents their organizational behavior. All in all, today, instead of being in a state of conflict with the state, they are trying to be on good terms with it, and pursue a leading role in the current economic system in Turkey by acting as a corporation, which is integrated into the neo-liberal economy of Turkey.

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INTRODUCTION

The subject background and the research question

As Turkish people define themselves, Turkey is a great ‘mosaic’. However, it is not solely because of its ethnic and cultural variety, but also because of having a mosaic of political dilemmas and controversies. Throughout the history of Turkish Republic, people of Turkey became communists and liberals, supporters of coup d’états and democracy seekers, Turkish nationalists and Kurdish rebellions, and now today’s political dilemma trend is on being Islamist and secularist.

In this study, the nature and influence of certain religious groups will be critically analyzed partly in order to reveal their economic and political power over mainstream politics. In other words, one of the main aims of this study is to identify and describe how these religious groups turned into interest groups rather than continuing their mainstream ideology which is based on teaching people and spreading Islam. Among these religious groups, I will mainly concentrate on the Fethullah Gulen Movement because unlike the other religious groups in Turkey, the Gulen movement’s mission goes beyond Turkey and it is a major economic force as well. Gulen’s doctrines state that the importance of a dialog in between the major monotheist religions, Islam, Christianity, and Judaism (Michel 2005). One example for such dialog is the famous meeting of John Paul II and Fethullah Gulen. Moreover, as Öktem (2003) argues, this dialog extends this dialog’s limits by indicating that Christianity, and Judaism are not the only focus of the movement. There is a huge variety of religious and ethnic communities that Fethullah Gulen is seeking to reach and create a positive link between the modern day Islam and their values. This variety, as he states, includes many politically and geographically distant and inapproachable nations for Turkey, which are targeted by the Gulen movement, such as, Indonesia from the east, countries from

the south of Africa, or the symbol of neo-liberalism, the United States. The movement clearly has big goals to achieve in terms of achieving a rank of being an Islamic movement that manages to find the missing piece link between Islam and other religions. On the other hand, this external mission is not the only role that the movement is trying to achieve. According to *Yeni Asya Gazetesi*, which has close relations with the movement, Fethullah Gülen's ideas based on Said-i Nursi doctrines, has a synthesizer role for the religious groups in Turkey in terms of being a role model for them. Moreover, the success of Gulen Movement, both international and domestic, illuminates the path of other groups and increases people's attraction to Turkish religious groups.

Overall, the Gulen Movement is a shield for Turkish religious groups. Even though, the other groups criticize the movement, the benefits that they receive from the Gulen movement make them to respect the Gulen movement. Due to all these indicators and within the light of information given, this thesis will take the Gulen Movement as the main case study of the religious groups in Turkey and will seek to find an answer to the ways in which Islamic movements integrate into the current economic system of Turkey.

The case studying research method that this paper is going to use is focused on Gulen movement as an indicator for religious group variable. On the one hand, for the economic influence that they have over Turkish economy, this paper mentions a case; Deniz Feneri Association event, which refers to a multinational financial fraud event based on a faith-based organization in Europe. On the other hand, in chapter 3, two interviews are examined. These interviews have been conducted with two regionally important member of Gulen movement. One of the interviewee is responsible with sustaining the relationship between the parties (internal and external members) and delivering the message of the community to their members. The other interviewee is a so-called student leader who is responsible with organizing the students who are members of this religious community or someone with a

potential and sympathies to the group. The methodology and other relevant information is listed in the sub-section, Methodology and Analysis, of this part of the thesis. Moreover, there are also some information regards to the interviews in chapter 3.

Literature Review

The research question's theoretical background could be best illustrated by reflecting on the link between economy and civil society. The nature of the religious groups, that of a social movement representative allows them to act according to their preferences which are based on their responsibilities to both their mission and to their members. Therefore, in order to explain why they seek to be integrated into neo-liberal economy of Turkey can be explained via two theories; the political economy theory and the social movement theory, to be mentioned respectively.

The political economy theory, as Tugal (2009, 20) states, can explain the reason behind the existence of Islamic movements. In his study, Tugal reviews some of the social scientists' studies which try to explain this phenomenon. These studies belong to Abrahamian (1989, 1991), Ayubi (1991), and Keddie (1991) who are focused to explain the phenomena by stating the inadequacy of the secular modernization in satisfying some of the social sectors and classes. 'University graduates without jobs, provincial businessmen who are not supported by the state, and rural-to-urban immigrants without secure employment are the primary factors underlying the rise of Islamism in their explanation' (Ibid).

As the perspective of political economy theory in Tugal's study points out, the reason of this shift of unsatisfied population towards Islamic religious movements is the property structure and the class balances in the Middle East region (Ibid). Therefore, this disconnection between the secular modernization and the unsatisfied population has caused a 'gap' inside of the society that prompt rise of the religious groups.

In this case, the best explanation to be found in the social movement theory with regards to political Islam and religious groups in Turkey, would be ‘resource mobilization’ (Cohen et al, 1992; McCarty et al, 1977; Edwards et al, 2004). This theory and its focus aim to understand the ways that social movement activists manage to control and mobilize both the resource and attendance of their members.

According to McCarty et al (1216-1217), there are three main stages in the resource mobilization; support base (1), strategy and tactics base (2), and relations to larger society base (3). In the first base, the social movements achieve the necessary resources and population support from the society. These supports may come from a supporter that may be or may not be directly or indirectly committed to the movement. In this thesis, I am going to mention the uncommitted members in the selected case movement by the words of an interviewee. The second base includes the tactics and strategies of the movements to deal with the authorities or any other obstacles on their way. They can apply to mobilize the resources and their members’ themselves in order to apply their strategies and goals which are modified according to the ideas of the movement. To illustrate this point, this paper indicates a case event that includes enormous amount of financial transaction to Turkey from mostly EU countries in order to achieve a goal of high strategic importance. The last base is the base that brings together the activists within the social movement and other people who are not a part of the social movement. Moreover, McCarty explains the selected case group’s strategy that aims to create a media bourgeoisie in Turkey as explained; “The aspects utilized include communication media and expense, levels of affluence, degree of access to institutional centres, pre-existing networks, and occupational structure and growth” (Ibid).

Overall, what these two theories demonstrate can be traced in this thesis, which analyzes dynamics of the power of the group over its members who are located in mostly in Europe and in Turkey. This power of the movement is based on the Islamic dictates to local

Turkish people and Turkish migrants in Europe in order to organize and unionize them and mobilize their assets into Turkey, where these financial resources can be converted into various entrepreneurial projects. Moreover, by describing the Gulen movement's members' behaviour and decisions (chapter 3) with regards to their reason to join the movement and the movements' power over its members abroad to lead them to mobilize their financial resources to Turkey (chapter 2), I contend that social movement theory's bases above reveal the selected case study's success within the standards of social movement theory.

Additionally, the political economy theory, in this paper, is also proven by the information in chapter 1, which shows that the mainstream ideological source of these groups are pro-private property supporters and highly correlated with neo-liberal market strategies and implementations. This correlation, therefore, bounds the Islamic social movements to itself, which needs to be explained.

The existence of a neo-liberal economic structure is also highly beneficial for the religious groups. After the changes in the current economic system of Turkey (from 1980's onwards), the market was set free according to the neo-liberal doctrines. In other words, an untouched, highly valuable market with promises of a good potential became publicly available for those including the previous high elite industrial bourgeoisie, *TÜSİAD* (Turkish Industrialist and Businessmen Association, founded in 1973), and new players in this economic game.

These new members are the ones who could not receive the secular state's support and appreciation in order to achieve an economic position in the closed economic period of Turkey. Right after the blessings of neo-liberal economic implementations in Turkish market, they gained a chance to be unionized and gather power to hold a position in this fresh market. Therefore religious groups, who have been excluded from the public arena by the secular

state, started to appear on stage appeared through economic liberalizations; the new pro-Islamic bourgeoisie based on educational, economic, and media institutionalization of political Islam which is embedded in religious movements (Kuru 2011, 390).

To state in other words, the neo-liberal, global and entrepreneurial spirit atmosphere in Turkey has provided the missing ring in the chain of religious groups to get the power and authority that they have hitherto desired to possess. This missing link is the new public sphere that they can farm their ideologies.

The other dimension of their benefits from the neo-liberalism in Turkey is the point that connects them into today's political mainstream ideologies. This connection provides them a new way to prove themselves as an ideological mainstream that is open to international relations and also, rejects the previous fundamentalist case groups' Islam-centred ideas and ideologies. On the one hand, in terms of international relations, according to Kuru (Ibid), the engagement of the new liberal system with globalisation has created new Islamic dimensions in Turkey. This globalisation force has been benefited by the Gulen Movement in three ways that he lists; weakened state monopoly by globalisation (1), role modelling other transnational movements and non-government organisations (2), international alternative sources for the movement whose opportunities in Turkey is repressed by the state. On the other hand, to demonstrate this new anti-fundamentalist Islamic movements, the words of the leader of Gülen Movement, Fethullah Gülen, supports the latest so-called 'light coup d'état' by stating that military has done what it has to do according to democratic ways. He clearly implemented that this military move, which is done to avoid so-called 'the Iranization of Turkey', was a democratic way to interfere in the corrupted political situation in Turkey (CNN Turk, 13 April 2012). These words of Fethullah Gulen summarizes his points regards to seeing themselves as a separate movement from the existing fundamentalist Islamic groups in Turkey, who were the main targets of this so-called light coup d'état.

From the information above, we can extract and finalize the two crucial reasons for the religious movements to support neo-liberal economy in Turkey; the space for institutionalization, and good reputation in terms of being perceived and accepted as liberal rights supporter. Now, pointing out the existing mainstream religious groups require to be explained in order to underline this difference between this new type of Islamic movements and rooted old-fashioned unpopular ones.

Methodology and Analysis

The interpretivist approach does not have to seek an objective truth in its understanding toward the event, which is, on the contrary, correlated with the patterns of subjective understanding (Roth and Mehta 2002, 132). Moreover, the approach assumes that viewer's perception and understanding of their world have direct influence over shaping of all versions of what the truth is (Ibid.). The nature of this statement comes from their strategy of studying the phenomena in its own unique context, in other words, in its own environment which requires great acknowledgement to be understood. This is the main reason why I am pursuing interpretivist approaches. The religious groups and their relationship with neoliberalism in Turkey in this paper, is examined within the context of both historical and sociological background of these groups in order to make healthy economical interpretation regards to their position. Therefore, what interpretivist approach adds to this thesis can be summarized as focusing on the environment that these groups occurred and interpreting and predicting their actions.

The research question is going to mentioned by the dimension that it offers. One is the financial ability of these groups which is based on mobilizing Turkish migrants' economic resources to Turkey. The other dimension is their ability to recruit or, in other words, employ its loyal members to specific institutions which offers a unique attraction capability of

attracting newly graduated young people to the community. In order to express my thoughts regard the topic and its dimensions, I have pursued interpretive approach which is strengthened by case researches based on events and interviews.

Within the light of using historical-descriptive/interpretive approach, in order to critically analyze the relationship between their historical existence of these religious groups, and their contemporary economic and political influences over the modern Turkey, sociological methods fits into the mainstream of this thesis. This descriptive/interpretivist approach puts the dimensions of this paper into a logical and sensible order since it approaches to the object not only by the topic itself but also covers the whole context that they have settled in. For instance, I am not going to focus only on interpreting the religious groups according to current conditions; instead, the paper will include the whole context based on the experiences in the time line of these groups, and their founders' ideologies.

The interpretivist approach that this study is pursuing is going to be supported by case studies and interviews in order to catch the link between these religious groups and their economic power in Turkey. As Cavaye (1996, 227-28) states the different ways of conducting a case research;

Case research can be carried out taking a positivist or an interpretive stance, can take a deductive or an inductive approach, can use qualitative and quantitative methods, can investigate one or multiple cases. Case research can be highly structured, positivist, deductive investigation of multiple cases; it can also be an unstructured, interpretive, inductive investigation of one case; lastly, it can be anything in between these two extremes in almost any combination.

The case research method is an empirical enquiry which aimed to investigate a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context (Yin 1994, 13). Moreover, it is especially more important when the boundaries between the event and its context are not obviously provable or observable (Ibid.). In this case, this contemporary phenomenon is the

rise of religious groups in Turkey, and its context and itself is not clearly evident, in some of the cases, even their existence is not evident. Therefore, the case selection becomes more important and requires more effort and detail to analyze and interpret.

This study will be structured in three chapters. This first chapter will be divided into two main parts; ideological, and historical background of these tariqas, which created today's religious groups, within the context of economic thoughts of Islam and their stands in it. The essence of their ideology based on, naturally, the Qur'an, however, the important distinction is that each tariqas have their own unique 'Seyh' (Şeyh) who is responsible with dictating and interpreting the content of Qur'an according to timeline that is studied. For instance, for the main religious group case study, Gulen Movement which belongs to 'Nur' tariqa, the economic studies of Said Nursi, also known as 'Risale-i Nur', will be examined in order to point out how and why this community and religious group supports neoliberalism in Turkey, which is first implemented by the politicians who supported by these tariqas. After this part, the study is going to mention that firstly, how they restructured itself in this neoliberal economy and became a business model acting as corporations.

The second chapter mentions a case studies related with religious groups and their control over their members wealth and the relation of this wealth and the new bourgeoisie in Turkey. This case is the Deniz Feneri Association event. The case represents a great amount of cash flows collected from Turkish people who are directly or indirectly connected to religious groups across Europe. What makes the case special about is that its common dimension is the religious sentiments manipulated by Turkish religious groups in order to collect significant amounts of money and turn it into various types of investment in the Turkish market. This real-life case event directly shows how they successfully became a part of business life and start running profitable corporations originally funded by their members.

The third chapter and the last chapter starts with describing Gulen movement in terms of organizational structuring of the group in Turkey, and key factors and definitions related with its functioning. Then, the thesis continues with the main focus which is focused on analyzing of the two interviews conducted with two active members of Gulen movement. The first interviewee is a senior Gulen movement area manager who is responsible with organizing the quarters of this movement, giving religious speech to participants, and most importantly, providing the link between the Gulen movement's power in the Turkish job market and labor force (mostly the new graduates).

The expected contribution of this thesis will be to point out the relationship of religious groups in Turkey with capitalism that has been ignored or undermined throughout the history of modern Turkey. In this thesis, I am especially interested in investigating people's attraction to the economic facts related with these groups rather than approaching the topic as a conflict between Turkey's secular system and anti-secular Islamic groups. More specifically, these groups are not only interested in religious dialogs or subjects but also become an economic player in this game who can fund itself as a corporation and lead its way to international platforms. Therefore, I will start the discussion with neo-liberalism in Turkey which I believe that religious groups have significant importance on establishing it in Turkish market and becoming a part of it over time.

CHAPTER I: NEO-LIBERALISM, POLITICAL ISLAM, and RELIGIOUS GROUPS in TURKEY

1.1 Neo-Liberalism

During the early 1980's, capitalism shifted strategy to replace Keynesianism with neo-liberalism which is seen as a new accumulation method. In order to set up its own hegemonic project, neoliberal orthodoxy began to propose its hegemonic position implemented by Reagan in the United States, or, meanwhile, by Margaret Thatcher in Great Britain. Right after the neoliberal storm in the early 1980s, the neoliberal movement had turned into a hegemonic project in the late 1980's through the projects of major international monetary agencies, International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and Washington Consensus (Harvey 2005; Tugal 2009). As Patton (2009, 438) states; 'this new Orthodoxy onto Fordist welfare states and deeply entrenched import-substitution industrialization (ISI) regimes via economic reform measures that include trade and financial liberalization, privatization and the withdrawal of the state from many areas of social provision'. During the last three decades, neoliberal orthodoxy aimed to restructure world economies in the interest of world capitalism by simply spreading towards developing countries from developed-advanced capitalist western societies.

Moreover, the words of Bourdieu (1998) could deepen this neoliberal restructuring. He states that this 'infernal machine' has its own goal which targets 'destroying collective structures which may impede the pure market logic'. To foster these ideas, we can say that neoliberal orthodoxy has come up with a new hegemonic project of world capitalism which has a bigger agenda in terms of forming through all political and social institutions in which it is implemented. In order to be able to follow up its hegemonic agenda in terms of political and social institutional restructuring, it has implemented a set of strategies that include

privatization, financial deregulation, flexible exchange rate regimes, and fiscal austerity to the reduction of public expenditures and labour costs (Bourdieu 1998; Cizre and Yeldan 2005).

On the other hand, in order to be sustainable in the world politics, orthodox neo-liberalism had to clear its way out in the world politics to show its true meaning. Therefore, they used their motto, there is no alternative-TINA, to legitimize themselves on global scale by saying that ‘increased pace of capital accumulation would generate sustained growth and the adaptation of neo-liberal policies would raise economic efficiency and restore the growth rates and stability’ (Cizre and Yeldan 2005, 388). Overall, the mainstream of neoliberal orthodoxy depends on the intensification of the influence and rule of capital which is described as follows; ‘it is the elevation of capitalism, as a mode of production into an ethic, a set of political imperatives, and a cultural logic. It is also a project: a project to strengthen, restore, or, in some cases, constitute a new the power of economic elites’ (Thompson 2005, 23).

1.1.1 Neo-liberalism in Turkey: The State Perspective

Neo-liberalism became successful in Turkey in the early 1980’s by Turgut Özal whose leadership and transitional development strategy model brought success to Turkey. In this very first stage, neo-liberalism was shaped via liberalization of commodity trade and flexibilization of labour markets. This first stage of neo-liberalization was accomplished in Turkey with the successful implementation of capital account deregulation which was fully opened in August 1989. Moreover, this first stage had brought positive incentives to the Turkish market and ‘swift recovery from the deep economic crisis that the country had found itself in during the late 1970s’ (Öniş 2004, 113). However; once we examine the big economic crises that Turkey had to face (1994, 1999, 2000, and 2001), a doubt occurred

among the public about the precipitated causes of neo-liberalism on these crises because, these crises were total deadlocks on Turkish economy.

The main reasons behind these economic crises with huge impact can be explained via a wide range of factors, which can be listed from the insufficiency of economic policies to support and backup domestic capital holders in order to develop export based strategies, to the choice of implementation of growth strategy that is embedded into short term foreign capital inflow to the market. More specifically, due to the high tendency towards the accumulation and investment which are highly dependent upon short term-profit seeking capital flows; high domestic interest and low exchange rates, a major economic crisis was triggered (Cizre and Yeldan 2005). Naturally, there was little to do for the foreign cash inflow-dependent Turkish economy to overcome every economic crisis, which was raising the domestic indebtedness, privatization of public enterprises, and getting loans from international fiscal agencies.

All in all, the problem of and the solutions to be offered to this problem within Turkish economy speeded up the transformation into a more fragile economy which has increased the dependency even further towards foreign capital flows; fiscal discipline and structural reform programmes dictated by international monetary funds, IMF and World Bank, generally.

This transition period of neoliberal restructuring in Turkish market has also changed the formation of power relations within the country. One of the effects on the power relations is visible in the purchasing power of Turkish people. This effect is basically seen in the constraints on wages of both blue and white collar workers and the rise on the prices of all consumer goods and household bills. Another effect of neoliberal reforms is the agricultural backwardness of the country, which in turn caused a chain reaction. The collapse of agricultural sectors caused huge amount of migration flows from countryside to urban areas, therefore, in urban areas, this migration caused a competition within the working class, urban versus rural proletariat. Naturally, this process ended up with high unemployment rates in

urban areas. Additionally, neoliberal transformation targeted the restructuring among the distribution in the mid-sized and large capital groups relations. During the transformation, a storm of bankruptcy occurred in markets in which small and middle sized local firms positioned. They were more fragile to this globalisation trend in the market that neoliberal repositioning brings because of being unable to develop export oriented strategies and having not enough capital to be able to compete with international firms with significantly larger capital. This incompetency leads the small and middle sized enterprises to reorganise themselves and they have managed this by implementing ideological transformations as well strengthen with Islamic capital (Dogan 2006). Therefore, the neoliberal restructuring in Turkey has fostered the fundamental inequalities between various classes and inevitably, has caused a conflict between the labour and the capital.

Overall, when we bring all these effects together and view them from a broader perspective, it becomes obvious that a great amount of the population, as it was negatively tied to the neoliberal restructuring, it was affected by it for a long period of time. This gap between the political & economic system in Turkey and the population prepared a perfect space for the political Islam. This wave could see the gaps and dysfunctional parts in the system and, therefore, could create its policies in order to fill these gaps, taking the support of people who had been negatively affected by it. This gap and its consequences in Turkish society, is mentioned in the next section.

1.1.2 The Connection of Islamic Movement with Neo-Liberalism in Turkey

In his study ‘Politics and Islam in Turkey 1920-1955’, Rustow (1957) defines three ideologically different types of people in Turkey: ‘Secularists’, ‘Moderates’, and ‘Clericalists’. Secularists are the ones who want minimum level of engagement in religious activities, while the Moderates are ready to engage in the ideas of both being secular and

faithful at the same time. On the other hand, Clericalists are highly uncomfortable with secular reforms in Turkey which were done under the impression of Western positivism and they carry the will of removing them from the society. Surprisingly, throughout the history of Turkish republic, these Clericalists had many chances to organize themselves legally within political parties. At the outset of 1970's, the first attempt was conducted by the party called Milli Nizam Partisi (National Order Party) which was formed by Necmettin Erbakan (1926-2011). The party was represented by two deputies in the parliament and was supported by the Nakshibendi tariqa because Erbakan had had good relations with this tariqa during his education in Istanbul University (Shankland 1999, 88). The second attempt, on the other hand, occurred right after the second military coup, which closed down the Milli Nizam Partisi, under the name of Milli Selamet Partisi (National Salvation Party). This time the party became unsurprisingly successful in 1973 elections and achieved 11.8% of the votes and managed to get 48 deputies, and 3 senators. During the following year, Erbakan became the Deputy Prime Minister (Ibid.). However, owing to the political instabilities within the Turkish political system, party lost its strength over time. These instabilities in political Islam continued until the political gap which was created by the neoliberal transformation in Turkey. Now, they had the chance to become a major player in the Turkish political scene. The first political structuring that took the advantage of the perfect space created for political Islam by neo-liberalism is the Welfare Party which is emerged in late 1980s, and reached its momentum in early 1990's. According to Patton (2009, 441), the main concern of the party was to meet the material needs of the post-1980 victims who suffered from neoliberal economic reforms. Welfare Party was not only successful in gaining the support of the rural population of Turkey at that time, but also in getting the support of people who lived in poor conditions in the city peripheries, especially migrants from the rural areas to these urban areas, and of small local business owners.

The party founded itself to get these supports by channeling the financial support of conservative businessmen and industrialists, whose success in the business life comes from the new neoliberal economy. The party mobilized these supports via charities and other organizations of the party within the principles of Islamic solidarity ethic codes in order to support people who lived in poor conditions. ‘Party activists established an extensive welfare network that delivered food, fuel, and clothing to families in dire straits; helped family members find jobs; and often paid school fees and hospital bills for those with insufficient income’ (Ibid.). This description of the situation by Patton points out that Welfare Party really deducted a lesson from the failure of the early transition period of Turkish political system. In other words, it shows that Welfare Party capitalized and set up its political strategy on the negative outcomes of neo-liberalism and managed to attract large numbers of people into its ideology, on these grounds. This ideology made references to the principles of Islamic solidarity codes. The economic agenda of Welfare Party, also known as; Just Order (Adil Düzen) aimed, as Patton (Ibid.) states, ‘to restore social solidarity by reinvigorating Islamic spiritual and moral values, to secure social welfare and justice income distribution, and to endeavour to bring about greater unity of the Muslim umma’.

This successful strategy that aimed at embedding the party policies into its supporters’ daily routine life brought positive outcomes for the Welfare Party’s election results both in 1994 local elections and in 1995 nation-wide elections. The founder of the party, Necmettin Erbakan’s and the party’s socio-economic vision, Just Order, is described by Çınar and Durhan in Patton (2009, 442) as a utopian construction of an alternative economic construction which aims to take the bests of capitalism (in that sense; private property, and individual initiative), and the bests of socialism, including being a leading role for the state in planning the economy. However; the Welfare Party’s and Erbakan’s vision of Just Order did not directly target neoliberal economy as an opposite side in terms of private property

ownership and free enterprise. The Just Order was implementing a retreat from neoliberal and turning into more state-developmental model. In this economic model, they simply pursued state-led economic activities within a populist Islamic framework which centralized the moral unity of the family. They called this model; *Milli Görüş*- National View (Shankland 1999, 99).

In general, Welfare Party's highly unorthodox capitalist economic persuasions and Erbakan's constant confrontations with the secular establishments of Turkey, primarily the military, 'alienated pro- globalization, liberalizing Muslim bourgeoisie, whose green capital had contributed considerable financial backing for the Islamist movement' (Patton 2009, 442). This series of actions brought serious consequences in terms of the alienation of the conservative Islamic bourgeoisie whose reflected actions caused the reshaping of the structure and strategies of Islamist movements and their relationship with neo-liberalism.

It is true that neoliberal transformation put many struggles into Turkish market which has great intentions to brace itself to deal with the obstacles. One of the struggles that assigned into Turkish political system, as it is mentioned, is the political gap that raised the political Islam in Turkey. However, when we look at the ideologies of the followers and the founders of political Islam, we see a great conflict in between their economic and political ideologies and neoliberal disciplines. What did actually change between the two in the past two decades to create a unique combination of the political Islam and neoliberalism? The answer is the case model of this thesis; the Gulen Movement which has managed to successfully implement the differentiations offered by Nurcu Path. This path offers the chance of an 'understanding of Islam and its strategy for transforming society by raising individual consciousness' and including the ideas of Said Nurdi, who put more globalised and modernized insights into modern day Islam interpretations (Yavuz 1999, 585-86). Thus, through enormous individual supports to political Islam, they have managed finally to make

peace with neoliberalism, and clean up the road that stuck by the neoliberal transition period. Now, Turkey was ready to progress.

1.2 Religious Groups and Their Background: Links to Neo-Liberalism

Said Nursi, the founder of Nur Movement and a Kurdish Scholar, wrote six volumes of a series of Qur'an interpretation which consists of around six thousand pages, and known as *Risale-i Nur Külliyyatı* (The Epistles of Light). This study is widely accepted as the most powerful written faith movement declaration, and most of its parts were written during his exile and imprisonment years. The main aim of the study is to raise and foster the religious consciousness in human nature which, Said Nursi believes, is filled with 'intellectual weakness and failure to create a permanent harmony in his life and society' (Ibid, 589). He believed that, since there is a conflict between a person's unlimited desires and his/her limited resources, individuals are always going to be in a state of tension between desire and reality and this can be solved via creating an ultimate connection with God. In the study and later on the aims of Nur movement, is to develop and create new ways that defines a new understanding in Islam and society which is under the high influence of positivist epistemology such as Turkish secularism. His reforms, readings of Islam and strategies that combine Islam and his reforms, constituted a powerful Islamic movement in contemporary Turkey (Ibid).

The understanding of Islam and strategies that the movement conducts to transform the society in terms of individual consciousness are the factors that differentiate the Nurcu Movement from other Islamic movements (p. 586). Moreover, the ideology put itself forward as a reaction to Kemalist modernisation in Turkey, however, it is considered as a forward looking movement. This unorthodox Islamic movement has centred three key facts into its enemies list; 'ignorance, poverty, and dissension-internal enmity' (p.592). Moreover, Nurcu

Movement supports Turkey's role in EU and NATO by following the words of its creator, who divides EU into two sides. One side follows the path of serving mankind beneficial industries for the life and justice via following true Christianity, while the other side holds the unbeneficial industries and meaningless philosophies which harms the civilizations. These ideas also show that he is radically against secularism which is referred to as 'meaningless philosophies' and on the contrary, appreciates the progressive industrialization of Europe. Nurcu movement might not be considered as a political Islamic movement by some of the social scientists such as Yavuz (1999) but the movement that was born after Said Nursi's death, Fethullahçılar (Gülen Movement), has managed to gain enormous amount of political and economical power worldwide.

The founder of Gülen Movement, Fethullah Gülen, had more or less the same life as Said Nursi had. He had a life which consisted of imprisonments and exiles due to the clandestine activities. His career started as a simple preacher at a mosque in Edirne. However, he gained his first communal power in İzmir which is known as the castle of secular nationalist people. His community, known as an 'İzmir Community', has basically been formed by middle classed pro-Western business men who are influenced by the free market ideas of Fethullah Gülen. His ideas are basically a follow up of the ideas of Said Nursi who put the first roots of modernisation among religious groups by supporting education, ethnically defined activities and global relations (Yavuz 1999, 592). Gülen has more unorthodox thoughts as an Islamic leader. He is definitely against fundamentalism and indicates liberal thoughts. As Park (2008) sums up the ideas of Fethullah Gülen;

For Gülen, the state has a functionally secular responsibility to provide internal and external security and stability for its citizens. Gülen's state-centrism even led him to sympathize with Turkey's 1980 military coup, regarding it as appropriate that the state protect itself and its citizens against the chaos that was threatening to engulf Turkish society. Thus, Gülen is not in favor of the political implementation of Shari'a, though the freedom to express one's faith should be respected. He is opposed to "political Islam," and even sympathized with Turkey's 1997 "post-modern coup" that removed Necmettin Erbakan's Welfare Party from power,

although Gulen was himself caught up in the crackdown on religious activity that came in its wake. He believed that Erbakan and his followers were embarked on the first steps towards an "Iranianization" of Turkish political and social life.

These ideas are about, as it is called, tolerant Islamic discourse which aims to foster the integration of its followers to existing neoliberal political system in Turkey. In fact, they are highly avoiding from taking public debates against the opposite ideas in order not to seem as a group with a secret political agenda, unlike the radical Islamic groups (Aras and Caha 2000). His liberal ideas regarding Muslims in Anatolia are on the phase of peace. By his own words, "no one should condemn another for being a member of a religion or scold him for being an atheist." (p.144). Moreover, his Islamic tolerance and dialogues are not only limited to Muslim groups, but cover Christian and Jew groups. He also has progressive ideas on Gender discourse, supporting that women should not be forced to wear the clothes that are dictated to them and they can be administrators in the society. Even though this is a clear progress for Islam, arguing these ideas on gender is enough to be protested by the modernised side of the society.

"O children of Adam, take your adornment at every masjid, and eat and drink, but be not excessive. Indeed, He likes not those who commit excess." (Qur'an, Surat, Al-A'raf-7:31).

This very basic but illustrative Surat, widely accepted by Said Nursi in order to shape one of the volumes of Risale-i Nur study, named as, *İktisad Risalesi* (Risale on Economy) which is dedicated to illustrate and interpret how economic life should be implemented in people's life in accordance with Islamic codes. In his column, Sami Uslu (2009) briefly explains the theoretical framework of Said Nursi's economic views. According to Uslu, Said Nursi states that in this universe, all resources have been distributed well enough as it should have been in. There is a perfect balance between our needs and the resources that we got, in other words, all resources in this universe neither distributed 'widely' or 'scarcely'. Therefore,

the best appropriate economic system that fits into this balance is the system that seeks out the importance of usage of resources as a matter of giving no room for excessive usage.

Moreover, as a mean of production, Said Nursi centralizes the three economic dimensions; Trade, Industry, and Agriculture. His ideas regarding industry are about seeing it as a tool that gives meaning to raw resources. During the study, he mentions the mining workers and the resources that they extract from the mines and how the big factories use these resources to produce the metals. For agricultural matters, he gives most of his focus on them by describing it as the most crucial sector since it feeds us all. On the other hand, he supports and encourages trade as an economic activity that gives meaning to production, especially agricultural ones (Ibid). After Said Nursi's distribution of resource and production based ideas, we should look at his finance oriented ideas.

As Uslu (Ibid), mentions, according to Said Nursi, banking or banking like industries should be avoided by people since they encourage people to earn money in *Haram* (religiously not appreciated and forbidden) ways. The banking industry is especially not approved by Islam, since it includes 'interest rate' in almost every single financial activity which makes people earn money without effort. Moreover, as many of Nur followers do, Uslu takes the ideas of Said Nursi and carries them to the next stage, foresights. Uslu cites that today's economic crisis caused huge economic based political disorders which, eventually, will lead to global financial war are predicted by Said Nursi, during the years after World War One, who says 'The light wars fought by states and people will give its place to heavy wars fought for class distinction' (Sözler- Lemeât, 649). Another Lemeat (Shining words) of Said Nursi can finalize the ideological perspective of Nur Movement towards finance; 'In order to close the door of fights, close the door of banks' (Uslu 2009).

On the other hand, Said Nursi comes with a three staged Islamic solution to this financial struggle of capitalism (Ibid.). Firstly, as it is the major rule, people should not work

and live with interests. Then, he states that if people need financial resources, they should take it by not implementing interest oriented *Haram* ways. The demand and supply of this *Halal* (approved by Islam) way comes from the people who should give *Zekat* (giving alms, according to Islam it should be one fortieth of one's income) and people who take *Sadaka* (taking alms) in order to avoid interest rates dictated by terms of loans released by banks. Therefore, this alternative method to interests can bypass the financial necessities with regards to the banking industry, which fosters every sort of conflicts within a society, according to Islam and Said Nursi. Thirdly, people should avoid prodigality and be abstinent according to available resources. Moreover, people should also not be too ambitious which can disturb this cycle and create negative consequences for the unity in the society (Ibid). Therefore, the following doctorines of Said-i Nursi's represents his basic daily life economic perspectives that enlighten its followers. The solution that he seeks for the financial issues that might occur in a community, is, therefore, solved according to his ideas by trying to create a financial solidarity within the followers of Nurcu path. Hence, a created economic solidarity is directly represents the issues discussed in chapter 3 which includes a direct example for this economic solidarity inside of Gulen movement.

Generally, the founder of Nurcu Movement, Said Nursi is against most of the fundamental rules of liberalism, especially the ones related with finance. However, we cannot say either, that he is totally against capitalism. In his economic system, as Uslu (Ibid.) sums up;

The economic system that Bediüzzaman builds up is neither capitalism nor socialism. It carries its own preferences which are based on rejecting the negative aspects of these two economic systems and takes their positive and productive sides. For instance, from capitalism, he takes the income aspect but rejects its sides that lead people towards high consumption which, according to his ideas, destroys moral values of the society. On the other hand, he is pleased with side of socialism that does not harm moral values, however, he does not accept the side of socialism that makes people to wait everything from the state which stagnates people. These are the main and brief ideas of Nur Movement toward capitalism and its latest main stream idea, neoliberalism. Moreover, the other movement that

arised from the ashes of Nurcu ideas, Gulen Movement, have more tolerated and positive perspectives toward neoliberalism.

The relationship between neoliberal school and Gulen Movement has been built upon more positive relations than the core group, Nurcu Movement, from which Gulen Movement is inspired. The movement is considered as a development booster for Turkish political and economical markets, since it carries out a political balance between the secular identity of Turkish politics and Islamic beliefs of people of Turkey within the neoliberal modernity (Keskin 2009, 88-89). This balance is a unique combination which is so far the only one to be achieved by Gulen Movement in Turkey, in which the movement rejected the fundamental doctrines of Political Islamic channels (such as Welfare Party). Welfare Party's essence directly targeted capitalism as a system that destroys the moral values in human nature, whereas the Gulen Movement learned from the mistakes that Nurcu Movement had made which led to the movement's dramatic end (the conflict with the state and all the exiles of Said Nursi had bare with). Therefore, Gulen Movement followed a different economical and political path that differentiated the movement from the former ones. As Keskin states a part of the interview he conducted with Deniz Tahsi, a professor at Yeditepe University; "The Gulen movement uses the modern capitalist system as a tool to fulfil its goals and objectives and has developed profitable firms able to benefit from privatization and the modern economy." Moreover, he continues to add that the movement can be explained by Gramscian ideologies that aims to reform a new type of hegemony that does not conflict with neoliberalism and in fact, centralizes itself in capitalism's leading country, the United States (p. 92). This alliance between capitalism and Islam in this hegemonic project turned out to be quite profitable for the movement.

The power of the group is summarized by Yavuz (1999, 596);

Gülen's community is based on a complex web of business networks and controls a large media empire. It owns Sizinti (a scientific monthly), Ekoloji (an

environment-related magazine), Yeni Umit (a theological journal), Aksiyon (a weekly magazine), Zaman (a daily newspaper), The Fountain (English language religious publication), Samanyolu TV, and Burch FM. In addition to these media outlets, the community controls one of the fastest growing financial institutions, Asya Finans, which is backed by sixteen partners and has over half a billion US dollars in capital. Moreover, a powerful association of businessmen, ISHAD (İş Hayati Dayanışma Derneği), which includes over 2000 businessmen and merchants, supports Gülen's educational activities. This infrastructure also includes universities and colleges, high schools, dormitories, summer camps, and over 100 foundations.

The source of such a power can be explained by various reasons, a face-to-face interview between Keskin and Mustafa Yildirim, writer-public intellectual, mentioned in Keskin (2009)'s study. According to Yildirim, Gulen Movement is one of the most complex, powerful, and multi-dimensional global Islamic movement because of its structure and variation of its activities. "This is a result of the neoliberalist process, and due to important changes in market conditions, such as the widespread privatization and deregulation of the Turkish economy after January 24, 1980 (Keskin 2009, 93).

Overall, we can summarize the neoliberal economic ideologies of Gulen Movement by relying on Hakan Yavuz's interview on Religioscope (21 Jul 2004). He states that Gulen Movement rooted in the ideologies of Said Nursi's Nur Movement, however, there are obvious differences that have been created by Fethullah Gulen himself to make it, as Hakan Yavuz names, a neo-Nur Movement. When we look at the case from a nationalist perspective, we see that Gulen is a state oriented Turkish nationalist. On the other hand, as market policies, he clearly underlines and follows neoliberal policies. Therefore, according to Hakan Yavuz, these three key characteristics of Gulen movement added by Gulen himself carries the Nurcu Path within, in terms of spreading the ideology of being a Muslim who gained his place in modern world by supporting and implementing; democracy and its institutions, the rule of law, a free-market economy and so forth (Religioscope 2004).

As the economic and political gaps listed in this chapter demonstrate, transition to neo-liberal economy has played a major role in the appearance period of these economic gaps inside of the Turkish society. First gap is the high cash inflow necessity in Turkish market to support the post-privatization era and feed the financial hunger of the market, which made it highly dependent to international financial institutions. In order to overcome this problem in Turkish market, and collect the revenues from this achievement, Islamic movements found and digged out a financial mine that was always right in front of Turkey, which will be mentioned in chapter II. However, in order to secure their position in the neoliberal economy of Turkey, Islamic movements had to create their own bourgeoisie in the society, in the same way as all power groups have to achieve. Thus by that necessity, they have created ‘Anatolian Tigers’ supported by the Green Capital of political Islam whose resources are funded by the Turkish migrants in across Europe. After these two tools to heal the wounds caused by neo-liberal transformation, they seek to centralize themselves inside of this newly formed market and becoming a part of it overtime. Therefore, they have started to follow up a strategy of ‘organising within organisations’ which is the mainstream of chapter III. In this oncoming chapter, the paper is going to study corporate level religious group activities in Turkey, which are aimed to be a new type of bourgeoisie by bringing high amount of cash inflows to Turkish financial market.

CHAPTER II: FILLING THE GAPS IN NEO-LIBERAL ECONOMY; CREATING A ‘MUSLIM’ BOURGEOISIE AND CASH INFLOWS TO TURKEY FROM EUROPE

2.1 The Necessity of a ‘Muslim’ Bourgeoisie

The main momentum to the rise of Anatolian capital has been triggered by a powerful member of Naqshibendi order, Prime Minister (1983-89) and President (1989-93), Turgut Özal. In the early phase of liberalization in Turkish political and economical system formatted by Özal, many niches occurred as opportunities for new political ideologies. We learn from Yashin (2002, 224)’s summary about Özal and the meanings of his liberal missions in Turkey that Özal belonged to a conservative family in Malatya. He had strong ties with Naqshibendi order and had been a former member of National Salvation Party, which transformed itself to Welfare Party overtime. Özal’s main aim was to create a link between the international and Turkish capital, which consisted of only the secular type of Turkish capital. Therefore, he encouraged international Islamic-conservative capital to come to Turkey in order to compete with secular Turkish bourgeoisie which had close links with Western Capitalism (Ibid). This support to international Islamic capital has also been positively reacted by domestic conservative groups.

As Yavuz (1999, 585) states, religious groups had successfully managed to use these opportunities offered by neoliberalism in order to create their own “parallel society” based on the ideas of trying to attract culturally and economically left out groups. For instance, one of the political reforming in Turkey is the deregulation of broadcasting in Turkey, in other words, liberalising the right of broadcasting by removing the state-based rule over the media channels. This deregulation gave the chance of raising Islamic voices, expressing their ideologies via both written and oral-visual media tools. However, the most important strategic move of the religious groups provided by the gaps is the desire of creating a formal and internationally known ‘Anatolian bourgeoisie’ group, known as ‘Anatolian Tigers’. This

desire led this growing Anatolian bourgeoisie to form an association called Müstakil Sanayici ve İş Adamları Derneği (Independent Industrialist' and Businessmen's Association, MUSIAD). As Yavuz (Ibid) states; 'new alternative spaces, such as MUSIAD and the new TV stations, have served to empower Islamic groups in Turkey'.

Most of the industrial firms are generally, located in the Marmara region of Turkey. Due to the various reasons such as; transportation, landscape advantages and closeness to Turkey's biggest city Istanbul, industrial activities are located in this part of Turkey. However, as the word 'Anatolian Tigers' suggests, there are some cities in Turkey which accommodate a number of relatively small or medium-sized firms located especially in Denizli, Kahramanmaraş, Çorum, Gaziantep, and Şanlıurfa. The firms in these locations have significant export orientations in the world market, even though they have little or no subsidies provided by Turkish state (Öniş 1997, 759).

The characteristics of these cities and businesses positioned therein are quite important, since not all of these Anatolian Tigers are associated with conservative or religious activities supported by political Islam. In fact, in terms of Turkish-Anatolian capital, they carry major differences in both their business characteristics and dynamics. In their study Demir et al. (2004, 169), the types of Anatolian Tigers are divided into three forms; conservative, religious business capital holders (1), firms which are directly held by religious groups- tariqas (2), and companies run by many shareholders (3). Eventually, neo-liberalism in Turkey had managed to create a new bourgeoisie with conservative roots linked with small and medium sized Anatolian firms. As Demir (173-74) summarize the characteristics and business dynamics of this new bourgeoisie;

- 'Being loyal to religious values, while being open to change'. They call themselves as 'Progressive Conservatives'.
- Supporting institutional change since carrying the hope of the new institution will be more beneficial to their interests.

- Having a class of businessmen who has more profit oriented economic identities on the focus of material-value addable goods rather than cultural and art goods.
- Supporting right-wing parties, while not giving the impression of being a part of a political party.
- Giving high priority to education of their children by establishing private-conservative schools with qualified education level.
- They are against state interventions in the market since they have a lack of bond with the state who is going to subsidies more to its supporters rather than the ones with less or no mutual bounds.
- Their entrepreneurial behaviour fosters the capital accumulation due to the choice of using their own resource or personal loans to make investments.
- Due to the no state relations, they are unable to turn government power to financial assets. There is a huge distance between this new bourgeoisie and state bureaucracy, unlike today's case which shows that this new bourgeoisie had managed to establish a strong link with the state bureaucracy (chapter 3).

Overall, what we can say is that, the blessing of neo-liberalism for political Islam was more than generous. By examining this generosity, in fact, one of the answers to the research question of this thesis is answered. The religious groups have managed to find a peace maker and centralized it among the part of the society dominated by conservative feelings and thoughts, and the productive power of Anatolia. This peace maker is based on creating a new type of bourgeoisie that fosters the free-spirit of neo-liberalism in terms of free and open market, modernization via abandoning fundamentalist ideas as Gulen and Nur movements always stand for, and high quality education. In other words, this new bourgeoisie is the new kind that perfectly absorbs the societal, economical, and political requirements assigned by neo-liberalism. These groups well examined this new global political trend and acted according to its necessities, which in turn brought positive outcomes.

In order to express the sustainability tool that enables religious groups to become more central and rooted in Turkish political system, the next chapter examines the three case studies related with cash inflows to Turkey to back up this new type of bourgeoisie, and therefore, it has vital importance.

2.2 Funding the Turkish economy by sustaining the ‘Muslim’ bourgeoisie

After explaining the relationship between the religious groups who are politically active in Turkey and its neo-liberal system, this paper underlines that neo-liberal transformation has caused a gap in Turkish economy that has never been truly healed by the economic reforms occurred in this post transformation period. This economic gap is resulted from the foreign cash inflow necessity, which is turned into a big dependency for Turkish economy. In the following years of the rise of political Islam in Turkey, this problem is absorbed as the problem of these groups. Especially, it is absorbed by the ones that ideologically support neo-liberal free market based economies, which, of course, refers to Gulen Movement on the behalf of Nurcu Path. Therefore, they seek a solution that at least can strengthen and support the small and mid-sized firms in Turkey, which need more subsidies in order to achieve competitiveness in international export markets. In order to make their power relations sustainable in Turkey, they needed financial resources to trigger their bourgeoisie to take more initiative in the society. Therefore, without not thinking so much on what the best solution would be, they found it; Turks in Europe.

2.2.1- Turks in Europe

When one travel across the E.U., she/he can observe that Turkish immigrants in Europe are the more in number to compare with other immigrants in the Union. Then, the person can see that all the Turkish words have been accepted by the culture of the region in which Turkish people are located, such as Döner Kebab in, especially, in Germany and rest of the Europe. According to TAM Association (Turkey Research Center), there are 4.2 million ethnically Turkish people, who live in the borders of the European Union. After the memberships of Greece and Bulgaria, this number upgraded to 5.2 million Turkish people. In fact, the study also points out that 42.1% of the Turkish immigrants in the region applied and been accepted to the citizenship of the host country. This percentage underlines that they are no longer the ‘Turks in Europe’, but ‘Turkish-Europeans’.

Overall, the sum of the population of ethnically Turkish people are more than the other ethnic groups in the eight member countries of the Union, which underlines the importance of Turkish ethnicity in the relation of Turkey and E.U. (TAM Association 2007, 18).

As the president of Eurasia Economic Relations Association, Hikmet Eren describes the importance of the capital accumulation held by Turkish migrants in the European Union, the labor force trade between the EU and Turkey has a historical background (Sabah Gazetesi, n. d.). It all started with the labor force agreement with Germany who wished to reconstruct the country's economy which collapsed after the World War II. The agreement was signed in 1961 and followed up by other agreements with the other countries in Europe, Belgium (1964), The Netherlands (1964), and France (1965). The most of these legal migrants were, basically, under the category of unskilled labor force, which mostly consisted of male workers (Ibid). However, throughout the almost 50 years old Turkish history in Europe, Turkish migrants had achieved great amounts of labor force which in turn brought an important portion of capital accumulation to Turkish migrants.

Economic factors that the study finds out are remarkable: the average population of a Turkish household has the average of 4 members in one family. The average number of people responsible for the role of 'bread winner' is 1.36 with a monthly income average of 2.130 Euro. The biggest portion of this income goes to consumption of livelihood expenses of the family, 1800 € and the rest for the saving, 330€ Since the total Turkish household number in Turkey is, according to the research, 1.054.000, the total saving of the household is, approximately, 4.2 billion Euro, annually (TAM Association 2007, 20).

The role of the financial transactions from Turkish migrants in the Union is quite important in today's economy of Turkey which significantly expanded in the last decade. Akkoyunlu and Kholodilin (2006, 1) state the statistical data for the case;

'Turkish workers' remittances from Germany constitute a large share (80%) of total emittances to Turkey. During the 1970s and 1980s total remittances reached

4% of Turkish GDP and remittances from Germany were 3% of Turkish GDP. [...] During the period 1964-2005 Turkish workers' remittances from Germany totaled to 47.5 billion euros, whereas the capital inflows and foreign direct investments from Germany only totaled to 17.8 billion euros and 4.2 billion euros, respectively.

As the numbers in the last two paragraphs support our argument, the temptation of this enormous annual saving amount Turks in Europe is such bliss for the groups seeking financial resources.

2.2.2 Emerging Turkish Groups in Europe

Having that much capital accumulation among Turkish people in Europe (with almost 5 billion of Euro potential per year), it is not surprising to see the existence of many social networks inside the Turkish groups in the region. Moreover, the migrant psychology supports the tendencies towards the groups among Turkish migrants. Since most of these people come from a distant and isolated region mainly based on agricultural production, their survival instincts caused by this situation have been fostered by the protectionist feelings of these people who, now, had to survive in industrialized-capitalist geographies. Naturally, they cared too much for their values which were centered on one point: religious; and in this case; Islam.

In the light of these protectionist ideas with regards to their Islamic identity, most of the social groups formed by the Turkish migrants focused on religious matters. On the other hand, the protectionist ideologies of these migrants are not the only initiators in this race, the liberalist social policies of the host country had also had a positive impact on this grouping. Moreover, throughout this almost 50 years old Turkish migrants in Europe history, religion based groups had managed to mobilize the migrants money into flowing to Turkey via various channels such as charities, investment projects, or offering significantly better interest rates than the European banks. What they have done with the money of the migrants is the main argument of this chapter: *creating their own bourgeoisie with significant economic power.*

Yavuz (1999, 597) clearly points out the financial resources of the Gulen Movement; 'The combination of mobilized money, knowledge, media and students has already molded the educational landscape in Turkey and Central Asia. Gulen relies on merchants, teachers, journalists, and students to enact the realization of his Turko-Ottoman ethos. These educational activities are largely supported by Anatolian and Istanbul-based merchants.' There is no doubt that these socioeconomic groups implement a division of the group. For instance, teachers are the direct staff of the group whose agenda is dependent upon its internationally located schools. Therefore, the students in this model are the customers of the group, who are, one day, either going to be in the staff division or join the active supporters. On the other hand, the merchants and the journalists are the outsourcing power of the group in terms of economical and ideological source, respectively. Therefore, the role of a strong bourgeoisie holds a key position in terms of sustaining and providing the physical, both financial and humanitarian, necessities of the group.

Due to the conflict between the Islamist portion of the society and the secular state structure of Turkey, bourgeoisie with Islamic background had never been able to develop their market share. Therefore, creating an economic power means that the movement had achieved the link between the rest of the population and the ideologies of the group. The money mobilized from the migrants, as Demir et al (2004, 170) states, used in the establishment of the some of the specific firms grew rapidly, such as Kombassan, Büyük Anadolu Holding, Edüstri, Sayha, Ittifak, and Jet-Pa. Therefore, in the next section, the paper is going to mention some of these firms that have been funded by the financial resources extracted from the Turkish migrants. Therefore, in this section of this chapter, the paper is going to examine the next case which aimed to create financial resources for this new bourgeoisie.

2.3– CASE: Deniz Feneri Derneği (Light House Association)

Unlike the previous two cases, what was the main target of this case cannot go beyond interpretations, since it was blocked by the German government in 2008. The attack of the German justice hit the project in their premature phase. Moreover, the ban of the ministry of Justice in Turkey on the share of the documents of court is also a factor that makes the case hard to interpret. However, within the virtues of descriptive/interpretivist approach, we can interpret this scenario by looking at the two dimensions of the case; time period and possible receivers who seek financial support at that period in connection with the religious group.

Very drastically, the roots of this case go back to a television program, which is called as the same name of the case, Deniz Feneri (Light House). The program basically aimed to find out people or small communities who have very poor living conditions, such as people from the squatter settlement areas around the country, especially the ones in the peripheries of the big cities. After finding these people, the program uses its own resources to provide temporary subsidies such as food stocks or some limited amount of money. However, the key tool that the program used, which became the essence of this multinational financial sourcing, is the openness of the program to external resources provided by the audience. For instance, people were donating clothes, foods, and other provisions. Additionally, the program accepted many monetary resources from the public who had shown great support to the mission of the program. Notice that the television channel that the program was launched is a controversial one with regards to political Islamic tendencies. The channel is called *Kanal 7* (Channel 7), which is publicly known to have a random relationship between political Islam. From its establishment in 1994 onwards, the channel has supported every form of political Islam, starting with the Welfare Party, continued with the Virtue Party, and empowered by the Justice and Development Party.

Turkey's relation with the European Union has always been on thin lines. The application process of Turkey has never been truly internalized by Europe's non-

compromised and disciplined view and Turkey's less effort- Big gain philosophy. Therefore, the most recent German court decision, Frankfurt, became another spot on this application process. However, according to an online certified translation of court indictment, Deniz Feneri Association's transactions began in 2002 with the amount of 1.8 million euro and continued until the outset of the investigation in 2008 with the amount of 1.9 million Euros. In this seven years' period, the association managed to collect 41 million euro donations in total, transferred to Turkey. According to the court decision, 14.5 million euro portion of the donations that have been collected by the Deniz Feneri Association was transferred illegally to the Islamist television channel, Kanal 7 (Channel 7), and 'pro-Justice and Development Party (JDP)' Businessmen (Banu 2010, 270). These transactions made by a non-profit organization consist of donations done on the purpose of helping the poor in Turkey. They were used for other secret agendas of the organization, which is about creating more resources for their media channels to make them more competitive among their rivals.

'Yandaş Medya' (Partial Media), this word is quite popular these days. It is first used by the Prime Minister Erdogan, right after the questions proposed to him in regards to his name in the Deniz Feneri investigation which is accepted by the secular media leaded by Dogan Yayın Grubu (Dogan Media Group)-(Banu 2010, 271). By saying this, Erdogan automatically divided the Turkish media into two categories. According to his statement, one is the side that always stands in the opposition side against JDP government's actions, and represents the secular identity of Turkish people. Moreover, according to Erdoğan, this side, as Banu (Ibid) states, is so willing to mislead the actual facts about the Turkish government and makes subjective media outcomes. On the other hand, according to this statement, there should be another side which either makes high quality objective media outcomes, or, clearly makes subjective news in favor of the government. Therefore, Erdogan himself draws the

attention to a clash between the secular and non-secular media channels, which directly concern political Islam in order to sustain its political stability in Turkey.

One of the key suspects of the investigation is Aykut Zahid Akman who was the head of *Radyo ve Televizyon Üst Kurumu* (Supreme Board of Radio and Television, RTUK). His background reveals his close link with the Islamic groups in Turkey. His name is cited in the investigation as a courier who carries the donation moneys from Germany to Turkey by using his diplomatic immunity granted by his position as the supreme in Turkish media control council. According to Serpil Yılmaz's article on *Hürriyet Gazetesi* (25 September 2008), Akman changed his name by adding a middle-name, 'Zahid' which means 'a person who donates his life solely for the activities related with Allah'. The key factor here is that this middle name is also the name of an Islamic group in naksibendhi tariqa, *Iskenderpasa Dergahı*. This community is founded by Mehmet Zahid Kotku. According to Yılmaz (Ibid.) the relationship of this prime suspect with the community goes back to his degree years in which he had close relations with Mehmet Esad Çoşan who got the leadership after the death of the founder.

Moreover, this relationship between the association and religious groups is not limited with this Nakshibendhi group. The support of another religious group is also linked with this association which, so far looks like a pool that either small or big Islamic groups in Europe is located inside. This group is the main subject of this thesis, Gulen Movement. According to Kozinoğlu, who is the head of Milli İstihbarat Teşkilatı –Asya Başmüşteri (Turkish Intelligence Office- Head of Asia Department), German government has been keeping the track of Gulen Movement's assets in Germany for five years (Aydınlık, 25 December 2011). He continues to explain that there is going to be a second wave in the Deniz Feneri Investigation for the parties related with Gulen Movement which is going to be triggered by a hold on the assets of the movement. This information provided by an executive in Turkish

Intelligence Office directly points out that this association and its illegal activities are not only linked with local religious groups but also a movement that has enormous powers worldwide.

The support of Gulen Movement is shown also in their official website. In their official website, denizfeneri.org.tr, an article of Fethullah Gülen is presented. In the article, he supports the mission of the association by saying that ‘If these people would not carry good and holy views, they could not have achieved such a great holiness’. Additionally, as it is represented in an article in *Birgün Gazetesi* (11 June 2011), there are direct transactions from Asya Finans Bank, which is known as the bank of the Gulen Movement, in the name of Aytac Co., which, according to the statement, sold foods to the association for the amount of 500.000€ which is not in the accounting documents of the association. Even though it is hard to point out the direct relation with the movement and its association, the links lead to prove the relationships among these groups.

2.3.1 The Consequences

As I mentioned in the previous chapter of this thesis, Gülen Movement are trying to modernize its community on different channels. As Hakan Yavuz (1999, 601) states; ‘He is trying to introduce his religiously conservative community to a level of modern society. A decade ago, this religious community was not even willing to allow their daughters to go to secondary or high schools.’ The Islamic communities were that much radical in terms of their daily life which can even go beyond and limits a basic right of their daughters. However, Fethullah Gulen got over this high level of fundamentalism via using mass media channels. For instance, as in programs that are aired on one of his television channels, Samanyolu TV, he gives speeches about the Islamic daily life and its requirements. After seeing the outcomes of his actions, he naturally saw the power of media over Turkish people. Therefore, in this case, the link between the financial inflows from Germany from Turkey into specific receivers, Kanal 7, is nothing but about the necessity of ‘keeping the media business running’.

Overall, they have to fund their ‘Yandaş Medya’ in order to keep them compatible with the secular media channels. To achieve this, they used the Turks in Europe and their financial wellness to support their bourgeoisie; in this case, it is the Kanal 7.

Overall in this section, it has been demonstrated that, religious groups are quite successful in using the gaps in the Turkish-European immigrants’ psychology; their vulnerable points related with Turkey and national - traditional values. However, the most important contribution comes from the points that show the positive match between the theoretical frameworks, social movement and political economy theories, and the findings gathered from the case study.

As the research focus of this thesis is set to find out; what lies behind these groups, (mainly Gülen Movement), how they mobilized their powers to achieve their current position in Turkish political and economical system; the answer this chapter indicates is that they are approaching to their members as a potential financial resource which can be utilized anytime. These findings also construct the main ideological background of social movement theory’s ‘resource mobilization’ focus. Within the light of the information about three main stages of resource mobilization, the findings of this chapter have an answer for each stage (McCarty 1977). For the first base, ‘support base’, the chapter illustrates that the necessary resources that Islamic movements require comes from the society under the name of ‘donations’, which are given to Deniz Feneri Association. On the other hand, for the second base, ‘strategy and tactics base’, the paper reveals the findings regards to the link between the use of this ‘donations’ and new ‘Muslim’ bourgeoisie in Turkey, which, in this case, consists of media channels. The last base, ‘relations to larger society’, is supported via this media channels and the undeniable influence of media channels over the society, which are controlled by this new ‘Muslim bourgeoisie’, who serves for the benefits of their founders, which is the political Islam in Turkey. In the next chapter, the issue of the relationship between these groups and

their members and the members' financial liabilities with regards to these groups will be given some space. Moreover, this chapter points out that by harvesting their farms in Europe, which consists of their radical followers, they create financial pools for their bourgeoisie in Turkey. This bourgeoisie mentioned in this chapter is the bourgeoisie that holds the power of media which has direct effect over the population and the best tool to attract or maintain their effect upon their existing members. As Iskenderpasa community founder, Mehmet Zayid Kotku, says 'A society's most clever ones are the ones who makes the business of media' (Yılmaz 2008).

CHAPTER III: THE FRIENDS WITH BENEFITS; MEMBERS AND THE COMMUNITY

3.1 Members in Gulen movement

The overall aim of this thesis has been to describe the actual sub-text economic aims behind the religious group structuring in modern Turkey, which centres its members into its economic foundation orientations. In the first chapter, this thesis has analysed the historical roots of liberalism and political Islam in Turkey within the context of 'Cemaat'. It revealed that the origin of the Gulen Movement, Nurcu Path, had many contradictions with the neo-liberal school, while its reformed and modernized version, the Gulen Movement itself, is for pro-neoliberal economic doctrines. In the second chapter, the study focused on the implementation strategy of the religious groups aimed to mobilize the financial wellness of Turks in Europe. This mobilized financial resource has been used to sustain their economic grounds in Turkish competitive economy by subsidizing the freshly emerging conservative bourgeoisie, which in the selected case represents the 'Media Bourgeoisie'. This chapter aimed to find and point out the undeniable existing among those religious groups and their ideologies which sometimes clashes or support liberal doctrines. The aim of this chapter is clear and straightforward with lots of academic contribution promising to current academic literature in terms of providing qualitative data and interpretations.

The main source of the attractions towards the religious groups can be explained by the high level of religious characteristic of Turkish people. According to the quantitative sociological study of Dr. Halil Nalçaoğlu, which is conducted on nearly 16.000 participants in 34 cities of Turkey, the answer of 'Yes' to the question of 'Does your faith lead your daily life?' is around 66% of the participants. Moreover, %84 percent of the participants say that their faith gives them peace in their usual lives (2012, 108). In this chapter, in addition, the paper is going to point out the details of this bond between the religious perspectives and

daily life in the context of ‘Cemaat’, the religious communities. The chapter is mainly based on two interviews which have been conducted via online communication tools. The information provided by the first interviewee releases the embeddedness of religion in people’s minds, why they want to become a part of a religious group, which restricts most of their social lives and personal freedoms, since they have now responsibilities towards other members of the community or to the community codes. The information gathered from the second interviewee who holds a regionally significant authority within the Gulen Movement, presents how this group responds to the needs and expectations of its members. Moreover, it also underlines the domestic economic sourcing of the group which is in a mutual relation with intensive political authority of the group in Turkish institutions.

3.2 Interviews: Information with regards to methods of the interviews

Both interviews took enormous amount of time, since the topic is so debateable and my questions had to be answered carefully, because of the relatedness of the questions with the interviewees’ highly sensitive codes and values. These values make up a significant portion of their life, in some cases these lives are simply dedicated to the service for these religious groups. Therefore, the topic should be approached by understanding their conditions in these groups.

Additionally, both interviewees have accepted to make the interview under one and reasonable condition, no electronic recording and being an anonymous interviewee. This request is understandable once the current political condition of Turkey is considered: lack of democracy and national tensions within different parts of the society, especially around the secularism issue. The long lasting conflicts in Turkey with the help of weak Turkish democracy made people scarier from the state and other parties of the society. Therefore, in this case, both interviewees clearly run away from any possible conflict they might face,

either from the community which they are a part of or from other external parties which might target their community.

Interviewee A, as I named him, is a 28 years old, senior university student, who is a so-called ‘student leader’ or in their lexicon, ‘Abi’ (elder brother), from one of the most reputable university of Turkey, located in the capital city of Turkey-Ankara. He is the head of Gulen Movement’s student council in his university within the responsibilities of organising all student meetings, finding new members with a potential to become a reliable member, in other words, sustaining the existence of the movement at the university. Briefly, he is the link between the university and the movement. The main reason to choose him to make this interview is his position in such a university where people from all parts of Turkey come together, presenting such an ethnic, ideological, and cultural mosaic of Turkey. The online interview with the interviewee A took 2 hours which was done in one session without any disruption.

Interviewee B, on the other hand, is a senior responsible in the movement, whose duties are as he says:

“Yes, everyone in the Hizmet (Service, which represents the mission of the movement) has a duty and responsibility. For instance, one of my duties is to find out the issues and taking necessary actions to fix them. An example would be the local elections which require necessary arrangements in order to make our elective to be the winner. On the other hand, my daily responsibility is to manage my region which consists of 20 lighthouses where approximately 5 university students accommodates in each house, who are responsible with the education of 3 high school student. Moreover, there are in between 25-30 small merchants and their families that I have to take care of. Overall, beside of the unusual responsibilities, I am responsible with 300-350 people.”

He is 35 years old, never married. Both during and after the university years of him has been spent in the movement and, naturally, became a part of it over time. He holds a Chemical Engineering Degree from a reputable university, which he has never used for any occupational reasons.

Unlike the interview with interviewee A, this online interview took seven to eight hours, which was conducted in two sessions in the same day. The sceptics and biased characteristic of the interviewee and the other daily activities of him are the main reasons behind this unexpectedly long interview. However, after achieving the full trust of him, he revealed huge amount of qualitative data which are gathered from a first person witness in this case.

3.2.1 Interviewee A, Why do people want to become a part of the Gulen Movement?

The interviewee A became a part of the movement in 1999 when he was 15 years old. Overtime, as he describes, he climbed the steps of the hierarchy in the movement by giving himself more to his faith. Today he is 28 years old, and achieved the position of being an ‘Abi’, in his case, it refers to being the student leader. However, he is still studying at the senior year of an engineering department. The reason of this academic failure is about, as he sarcastically says; ‘it is too much finite business for me’. However, he gives many important information regards to Gulen Movement’s organisational structuring and behaviours which are also confirmed by the Interviewee B. Indeed, the most important information revealed by my questions is the member behaviour in this group. In the theoretical framework of this study, it refers to the source of the economic power that religious groups hold.

First findings from the interview with interviewee A for one of the purposes of this thesis is the reason why people wants to be a part and how these groups, especially Gulen Movement, manages to reach them. I asked a series of question about the story of him and the others around him in terms of how they decided to join the movement and how it is happened. According to him, like he did, most of the people that he contacted so far have decided to join the movement simply because of the sympathy in his family towards the movement’s cause. He adds that the others, whose families have no sympathy but decided to be a part of this cause, are simply influenced by their friends who are a part of the community. To demonstrate

this social environment attraction of the community, he gives the examples of free lessons taught by Abi, picnics, other entertainment and trip activities for young students and families in the community.

Furthermore, he gives an example of how each member in the community is responsible with finding a new member(s) for their cause. As he states ‘ the elder brothers (abi) always repeat that if a person meets with a *temiz fikirli* (morally upright) person, he or she should always ask her or him to come to our light houses in order to listen at least one of our *sohbet* (in-house community speeches).’. Moreover, he states that if one of members won the university they achieve his name and get contact with him easily. On the other hand, he adds that they are making member hunting of fresh students. Members of the community join up to the orientation programs in the university to find out new possible members who gives the signal of having a conservative background. As he says ‘70% percent of these newly registered conservative students do not hesitate to join us. I think it is also because of the increasing reputation of the community as well’. As this characteristic of the movement presents that the movement wants to keep sharp its entrepreneurs in the community for the purpose of making new members to expand the movement. This strategic manoeuvre clearly is aimed to serve the purpose of starting a chain reaction in the society that is clearly going to end up with offering huge benefits to the movement.

As it is mentioned in chapter two by the words of Yavuz (1999), it is hard to talk about these groups and their members in the society since there is no formal membership or a formal structure. However, as interviewee A says about the structure in the university area;

“Inside of the university, we have different respondents for each faculty. However, due to the small number of our friends in specific departments such as sociology and philosophy, we sometimes had to merge two groups. If we talk about the city, I can say the same thing. Each neighbourhood has its own senior level Abi and Abla (Elder Brother and Sisters). In big cities, such as Istanbul, it is not a surprise to see that each street has its own lower level Abi and Abla. It is

exactly the same thing in the university where big departments, such as Business Administration or Mechanical Engineering Department, have its own number of Abi which depends on the size of class.”

As he continues to speak about this structuring, he mentions that the rank of Elder Brother or Sister depends on the length of your service which is correlated with your productivity and loyalty. Addition to current academic literature about the organisational structuring of Gulen Movement, we can say that it shows very professionally structured vertical hierarchy within the group. On the other hand, as he indicates, the reason behind why people want to become a part of the group shows varieties.

After mentioning their links with the Turkish neo-liberal economic system in Turkey where they have managed to achieve a great link with the economic doctrines of the school, the thesis has focused on their ability to create financial resources whenever they require. It is so far obvious that economic requests within the group are not an unusual way. The main argumentation of this paper is about describing the economic relations of the religious groups with both the economic system and its members. Therefore, the relationship between these two friends with benefits, members and the movement’s itself, has to be explained. At this point, interviewee A describes some of the members’ important behaviours in the student group. He states that;

“One of our roles is to prepare our members to next level, which refers to professional business life. However, I can clearly say that the most of the members, who joined us after their third or last year, do not really care the community. Some of them do not even know how to perform the *Namaz* (pray) and often they had struggles with the rules of the house. Their main intention often comes to the surface when we gather for a *Sohbet* in which sometimes, we host guests from private or public sectors. These members manage to get a reference from the guests, or directly ask any job opportunities that the guests can offer to them. However, the members, or as we call each other; *Kardeş* (brothers), depends on volunteer works. It is not our business to despise to another one just because he has other intentions.”

He underlines the movement’s power over the labour market by saying that ‘our elder brothers who managed to make a good career’. Like an alumni service, members of the

movement support each other in the job market. Moreover, during the interview, when I raised the question of ‘What kind opportunities does the movement provide you?’ He answered that we do not pay any bills or rent, they brings us food and other stores as well. Sometimes, our merchant brothers give pocket money to the ones who need financial back up.

In this section, the information gathered by a member with a position in the movement, underlines that the economic relationship between the members and movement. On the one hand, there are the members of the group who have certain expectations in regards to career opportunities, some conditions that can make difference in their university years, such as free accommodation and basic supplies, and educational support from their senior brothers who have strong academic conditions. On the other hand, there is the movement’s itself who expects to make more members via its members’ well-behaved characteristic which is accepted and approved by the society. The information up to this point have been gathered from the interviewee who is in the lower level of the movement and still be seen as a member of the organisation. The next section’s interviewee, on the other hand, is a senior and upper level movement respondent who organizes and communicates with nearly 400 people for various reasons.

3.2.2 Interviewee B, How does the movement manage its resources; Members and their donations?

Interviewee B has donated his life to the movement. Like Interviewee A, he became a part of the movement in his teenage years. Now he is 35 years old, a life spent in the service of the movement in different parts of Turkey which follows his educational career. He was also attracted to the movement by a friend. Surprisingly, when a asked his occupation, he said that ‘ I have no occupation, actually, I graduated from Chemistry Engineering but there is not enough people in the community, while a lot of works to do’. By saying these words, he underlines the basic necessity of the group, lack of personnel in the movement, who knows and bounded to the ideology of the movement. Moreover, he does not claim that he has a

‘role’ in the movement, on the contrary, he states that he has a ‘mission’ in the movement which makes him feel more responsible to the community. He defines the community as a social club or an association that seeks to enlighten Turkish society via societal development.

Throughout the interview, he gave directly confirming information about the highly economical activities of the Gulen movement. He gives important information about the donations which includes how the donations are collected and for what purposes they have been used;

“In my region, there are some merchants that make many attributes to our community by simply giving donations. They give donations anytime they want. We do not make any request or reminder. They give the donations because, simply, they want to. They know that we spend them in the name of Allah. They do not only donate money. They also donate some goods or services that their businesses are related with. For instance, we have a brother who merchandises ceramics. As a donation, he made ceramic coating to our two houses. For the monetary matters, I cannot say much about it, I am afraid it is confidential. We collect the entire city’s donations at one hand, and make the necessary arrangements accordingly.”

As for the second chapter’s argument about the movement’s power on mobilizing the financial resources, we can put forward this previous strategy that the movement implements continuously. The following questions of mine were related with second chapter’s argument, which aimed to enlighten the amount of the donations and for what purposes the donations are used for. He did not say anything about the amount and kindly, asked me to not ask this question again. For the purposes, he said most of the expenses of the houses in entire movement are covered via these donations and gives me a very interesting example of this spending. According to him, all Gulen Movement schools in entire Indonesia region are financed via the donations collected from a city in Turkey, called Şanlıurfa which is, publicly, known as; the city of prophets. I asked another example he gave the Istanbul case, which is responsible for the Europe region. He summarizes that some of the cities in Turkey host too

much *hayırsever* (philanthropists), which creates a budget surplus that can subsidize or totally reconstruct some of the regions.

Moreover, he verifies some of the information proposed by Interviewee A. He states that the most of the members come up with different requests. He says that ;

“The most Eastern-Anatolian students that come to us are in economically bad conditions. We accommodate them to our houses and offer generous conditions such as free accommodation, food and etc. Additionally, sometimes, after graduated, they make the request of getting married, which means that ‘find us a decent and well-mannered lady’. Moreover, they often request to get in touch with businessmen or bureaucrats who are members of our community.”

Interviewee B also points out the mutual relationship between the members and the community. One side requests new members and donations in order to sustain its existence, while the other side is seeking to gain the blessings offered by the current positions of the movement. To pursue this relationship, I asked him that how he, generally, respond these requests He says that ‘World is changing, so as Turkey. Today, religious people can find job opportunities in public sector, which was totally restricted to these people once. This changing is achieved by our patient religious elder brothers, who also help these young students’. Therefore, he clearly says that they do not decline these offers. But what about the movements counter request for such a generous favour? The question is directly aimed to enlighten the process after these young people achieve the position that they seek. He answered as;

“We do not normally make any request after the recruitment. However, a tradition occurred inside of our young people, which make them give *Burs* (scholarship) in the amount of 10-15% of their monthly income. Moreover, there are also some incidents like a businessman troubled himself in a country. The community finds him and helps him out. After that they generally give some donations to the community. But as I said, those things are normal.”

Moreover, he adds that this job market request does not only come from the labour side. Some of the conservative businessmen request labour from the community. He defines them as ‘faithful and trustful labours’.

In this interview, the most important contribution of the Interviewee B was gathered from a question asked without any expectations of getting answered. During the Interview, in order to gain his trust, I have used many proper Islamic lexicons to create the feelings of ‘I am one of you’. The interview took so long and overtime, this strategy has come up with the following answer to the research question of this thesis; ‘Do you see the movement as an economic player with a significant power over Turkish economy, and see the *Hocaefendi* (Fethullah Gülen) as a leader with economic authority and decision maker?’;

“Of course, we are a major economic player in Turkey. Just imagine for a second, our faith bounds us together with full-strength that has been attacked many times by various enemies but we survived from all of them. Today, our ideology is in the mind of future workers’, bureaucrats’, and administrators’ mind. Those people are going to be the capital owners in Turkey and they will shape the Turkish economy. For instance, there is an unpopular economic society in Turkey. Probably, you and many people have no idea about their existence, but it is getting known and increasing its successes in both domestic and international markets. It is called Türkiye İş Adamları ve de Sanayicileri Konfederasyonu (Turkish Confederation of Businessmen and Industrialist, TUSKON). Most of the staff is recruited with our references and its industrial relations are getting expanding in each day. It is first started with a parallel organisation to MÜSİAD, with the focus on countries with Islamic population, but now its expanding to Europe and attracts many European Industrialists to Turkey.”

He continues to give me advices on how a talented student like me would be beneficial in the organisation and, in case of a reference matter, he states that he can call a few people in the organisation to ‘arrange’ an job interview for me. Moreover, he answers the question in my mind, before I ask him. He states, ‘if we would conduct this interview a decade ago, I would not have answered your question as honestly as I have done now’. This statement could bring our discussion to another debateable off-topic discussion. Therefore, I will leave this statement untouched.

In order to confirm the second chapter’s case study, Deniz Feneri Association, I asked a series of questions. First question was ‘Do you believe that Deniz Feneri event is a fraud case?’ He directly and sharply said ‘No’ and explained that these people (Turks in Europe)

voluntarily give money to these people. They actually know what is going to happen, he claimed, that they will take those amounts of money into their private accounts and spend it in the name of Allah. He spoke as a fundamentalist on this issue. He indicated that Deniz Feneri ended up with more power than before after the charges made against it. He says that it would only happen if the people still trusted in them. Even though he might have a point here, the Deniz Feneri case is still far from being nothing but a big puzzle.

Overall, in this last chapter of my thesis, the paper tried to point out a few important things about the community. Firstly, by the help of Interviewee A, the paper has revealed some of the ideas in the young people's minds, who are seeking to become a part / member of the movement. It turned out that a significant portion of them attend the movement without any religious reasons. They solely aimed to benefit from the political and social influence of the community to secure a position in the labour market. Secondly, Interviewee A and B have shown that structurally, the movement resembles that of a state. It has governors, majors, and local headmen. Demographical distribution of the movements members are as both interviewees indicated from all parts of Turkey, with the dominance of people from South-Eastern and Eastern parts of Turkey, who as interviewee B says, are the people of Bediüzzaman, Said-i Nursi. Thirdly, interviewee B mentioned that the donations are collected on voluntary basis. His examples were with regards to the donations and their function in the economic orientation of the movement. He, finally, revealed their projections: being an economic player. To support their ideas he gave the example of labour mobilization factor and capital power that the community is going to capture over time.

These ideas served to the research question of this thesis and finalized the paper's first and second chapter with an actual proof from first person speakers in the community. It seems that they have met the key responsibilities of being an active and strong economic player in this game by fulfilling the requirements of mobilizing the labour and capital, and creating a

cohesive society that backs up each other. As from the information of both interviewees, they have managed the first requirement, mobilized labour, by supporting the educational institutions in Turkey on the basis of students, like the actual position that interviewee holds today. For the second cause, they have used their influence based on trust over the people. It is demonstrated in the example of Deniz Feneri, or as the second interviewee indicates, donations in the name of Allah. Last requirement, which is correlated with their successful newly formed conservative Turkish bourgeoisie, they have used media channels to create a new type of mid-sized and small sized industrialists in Turkey who would be a role model for this society and provide new resources to recruit members. In order to demonstrate this link, the paper has examined the Deniz Feneri Case and its consequences over the Turkish market. Overall, this chapter is about to demonstrate and verify the knowledge and argumentations presented in the first and second chapter.

CONCLUSION

The opening chapter of the thesis has pointed out the economical thoughts of the founders of today's Gulen Movement. The founder, Said-i Nursi, has carried out mixed thoughts regards to economy and how an economic life of a Muslim's should be. His idea that illuminates the way of many religious communities today has a conflict in between the liberal and socialist economic models. His ideas that conflict with free market economy perspective are the point that shows the danger of excessive consumerism caused by free market ideologies. According to him, *israf* (wasting) is the reason that makes people selfish and, eventually, makes them ambitious and the rest, in his thoughts, follows the fall of the moral values in the society. On the contrary, he supports the trade and the hard working that this economic system brings, while he criticize socialism, which makes people lazy and state depended beings. However, it leads them to protect their moral values. On the other hand, Fethullah Gülen, the Gulen movement's founder, eliminates the existence of the socialist sympathy in the Nurcu Path. Contrary, he establishes an economic faith based community that holds a bank, various media channels, and a chain of internationally positioned schools network. Overall, the discussion in this part of the thesis reveals neoliberal-capitalist doctrines of the movement, who took many lessons from the fallen similar movements who could not find a way to make peace with the political mainstream ideology in the world.

During the next step of this paper, the momentum turn into the necessity of a bourgeoisie with conservative characteristic which bounds them to the religious activities, and eventually, to the movement. Founding a new type of bourgeoisie in an already settled economy is always hard to achieve, since the other interest groups always counteract to your moves. Therefore, the movement required significant power, which it is found in the assets of Turks in Europe. As the media part of this new type of bourgeoisie represents after the

investigation made by German courts, the link in between the triangle of Turks, religious groups and this new type of bourgeoisie is revealed.

The last and strong power that the Gulen Movement holds is the power to attract people into its cause. In both interviews, it is shown that a significant portion of the members became a part of the movement with economic expectations. On the other hand, the both interviewees also point out some of the important inside economic activities within the group. The inside activities are mainly focused on; the structural positioning within the group, the member portfolio, donations after employment, and some further information regards to regional responsibilities. The part reveals the economic orientation of the movement for its members which, mainly focuses on providing a link between the junior members and senior members who hold a business or bureaucratic position. Another economic orientation that revealed is the financial sourcing inside of the group who is open to donations based on members' free will.

Like all research studies, this study is also bounded into its own limitations. Throughout the research, the most important limitation that restricted the paper is the lack of empirical researches about the topic. Almost, all researches are conducted theoretically based on interpretations and assumptions. However, it is an inevitable consequence that these researchers had to bare if they want to pursue a research on this issue. I have also influenced by the interpretive-descriptive approaches in this paper. However, in the last section, in order to break this inevitability in this research, I have conducted two comprehensive interviews, which were not arranged easily. Until I found and convinced them to make the interviews, I have used 10 different agents and asked approximately 30 different people who hold a reasonable position in the movement. However, only two of them responded positively to my requests.

The main contribution of this thesis could be the point that it represents in terms of being a starting point for someone who wants to study the economic effects of religious groups in Turkey. Some could argue that, as it is discussed in chapter 2, they have huge power over the society in terms of being accepted as some sort of life coach, who can easily mobilize these people's financial assets and bring those assets to Turkey and turn them into investment. It is shown in the example of Turks in Europe, whose many mobilized from Europe to Turkey and used for various reasons. On the other hand, some can use the contributions from this thesis to argue that these groups are, actually, mobilizing these money only for the purpose of increasing the power that they got as a strong interest group in Turkey's both economical and political systems. Moreover, an insight look into the structural schema of those groups and general member behavior and psychology that have been represented in chapter 3 also deserves to be counted as a significant contribution since the lack of information available in the academic research world.

Overall, the paper answers its research question on three main dimensions. One is their 'finally achieved peace' with neo-liberal economic doctrines which makes them globally acceptable and puts them in a distance position with being perceived as a fundamentalist group. Second point is the level of the desire to sustain their economic existence on the ground of mobilizing the financial assets of its members. The last point is the point that how they sustain the relationship in between its members who can help each other for various reasons. This organizational coherence has so far managed to attract many outsiders into the group. Within the light of these dimensions, it is undeniable that they have managed a significant economic position in Turkish economy. Their system enables them to settle more strongly day by day into the Turkish economy. Especially, during the interviews, both interviewees reveal the deviation in the mainstream of the movement. As I observed, both interviewee are highly unsatisfied because of the members' economy oriented requests and

actions rather than devoting themselves to faith and the movement. The discussion exposes this shift in the mainstream of the movement, which can only be explained by being an economic player with a role in the Turkish market. Indeed, their role in current economical performance of Turkey is highly argumentative. Their closely embedded new type of bourgeoisie, spreading the reputation of Turkey globally, mobilizing financial sources to Turkey have naturally some positive effects on Turkish economy. Turkish economy is still measuring the actual outcome of the movement, which can only be truly seen in the long-run in terms of bringing positive or negative outcomes to Turkish economy.

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