

BILATERAL AND REGIONAL DIMENSIONS OF THE RELATIONS
BETWEEN TURKEY AND BANGLADESH

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BETWEEN TURKEY AND BANGLADESH**

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ABSTRACT

BILATERAL AND REGIONAL DIMENSIONS OF THE RELATIONS BETWEEN TURKEY AND BANGLADESH

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This thesis seeks to examine the bilateral and regional dimensions of the relations between Turkey and Bangladesh. The thesis explores the relations between Turkey and Bangladesh in the diplomatic, security, economic and socio-cultural dimensions. This thesis argues that contrary to the views of those scholars who think that relations between Turkey and Bangladesh are insignificant because of the geographical distance between these two countries, Turkey and Bangladesh have developed their both bilateral and regional relations significantly in the last two decades as these countries have broadened their foreign policy orientation globally. The thesis is composed of five chapters, including the introductory and concluding chapters. After the introductory first chapter, the second chapter examines the historical evolution of the relations between Turkey and Bangladesh. The third chapter analyzes the bilateral relations between these countries by focusing on the diplomatic, security, economic and socio-cultural dimensions. The penultimate chapter deals with the international and regional aspects of their relations by focusing on their

cooperation in the frameworks of OIC, D-8 and ASEAN. The fifth and last chapter concludes the thesis.

Keywords: Turkey, Bangladesh, Cooperation, Bilateral Relations, International Organizations.

ÖZ

TÜRKİYE VE BANGLADEŞ İLİŞKİLERİNİN İKİLİ VE BÖLGESEL BOYUTLARI

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Yüksek Lisans, Uluslararası İlişkiler Bölümü

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Bu tez, Türkiye ve Bangladeş arasındaki ilişkilerin ikili ve bölgesel boyutlarını incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Tez, Türkiye ve Bangladeş arasındaki ilişkileri diplomatik, güvenlik, ekonomik ve sosyal-kültürel boyutlarda incelemektedir. Bu tez, Türkiye ile Bangladeş arasındaki ilişkilerin bu iki ülke arasındaki coğrafi uzaklık nedeniyle önemsiz olduğunu düşünen bazı bilim adamlarının görüşlerinin aksine, Türkiye ve Bangladeş dış politika yönelimlerini küresel olarak genişlettikçe, bu ilişkilerin hem ikili hem de bölgesel yönlerinin neredeyse son yirmi yılda önemli ölçüde geliştiğini savunulmaktadır. Tez, giriş ve sonuç bölümleriyle birlikte beş bölümden oluşmaktadır. Giriş bölümü olan birinci bölümün ardından ikinci bölüm, Türkiye-Bangladeş ilişkilerinin tarihsel gelişimini incelemektedir. Üçüncü bölüm, bu ülkeler arasındaki ikili ilişkileri diplomatik, güvenlik, ekonomik ve sosyal-ekonomik boyutlara odaklanarak incelemektedir. Sondan bir önceki bölüm, İİT, D-8 ve ASEAN çerçevelerindeki işbirliğine odaklanarak, ilişkilerinin uluslararası ve bölgesel yönleriyle ilgilenmektedir. Beşinci ve son bölüm tezi sonlandırmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Türkiye, Bangladeş, İşbirliđi, İkili İlişkiler, Uluslararası Örgütler.

*To my **Father**, who has devoted himself since the beginning of my education
life.*

*To my **Mother**, who hid the tears behind her smiling face when she sent me
out of the home for education.*

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PLAGIARISM.....	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
ÖZ.....	vi
DEDICATION	viii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	ix
TABLE OF CONTENTS	x
CHAPTERS	
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1. Scope and Objective.....	2
1.2. Research Questions	2
1.3. Literature Review	3
1.4. Argument.....	11
1.5. Research Method.....	11
1.6. Organization of the Thesis	12
2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF RELATIONS BETWEEN TURKEY AND BANGLADESH.....	13
2.1. Introduction	13
2.2. Bengal During the Turkish Rule	17
2.3. Turkish-Bengali Relations During the Ottoman Period.....	21
2.4. Establishment of the Republic of Turkey.....	27
2.5. Turkish-Bengali Relations During Ataturk's Period.....	30
2.6. Establishment of the East Pakistan.....	35
2.7. Turkey-Pakistan Relations During the 1947-1971	38
2.8. Establishment of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.....	39
2.9. Conclusion.....	45
3. MAJOR DIMENSIONS IN TURKEY-BANGLADESH BILATERAL RELATIONS.....	46

3.1. Introduction	46
3.2. Diplomatic and Political Dimensions.....	46
3.3. Military/Defense Dimensions.....	54
3.4. Economic Dimensions.....	58
3.5. Social-Cultural Dimensions	65
3.6. Conclusion.....	69
4. INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL DIMENSIONS OF TURKEY-BANGLADESH PARTNERSHIP	71
4.1. Introduction	71
4.2. OIC (Organization of Islamic Cooperation).....	71
4.3. D-8 (Developing-8)	78
4.4. ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations)	83
4.5. Potential Areas of Regional Cooperation Between the Two Countries ...	90
4.6. Conclusion.....	100
5. CONCLUSION	101
REFERENCES.....	105
APPENDICES	
A. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET.....	122
B. THESIS PERMISSION FORM / TEZ İZİN FORMU	134

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The relations between the Turkish and Bengali nations are based on deep-rooted historical, religious, and cultural foundations. People from both countries have been in contact since the medieval time. The Bengali living in South Asia supported Turkey during the First World War. After the independence of Pakistan in 1947, Turkish-Bengali relations continued through Pakistan. However, Bangladesh became independent from Pakistan in 1971. Since then, bilateral relations between Turkey and Bangladesh have continued. Bangladesh supported Turkey in the 1970s and 1980s when Turkey's Cyprus problem was discussed worldwide. In return, Turkey provided technical and financial assistance to Bangladesh in the process of state formation and the development of a stable and sustainable economic system. Turkey's diplomatic relations with Bangladesh started in 1974 with the official recognition of Bangladesh. After establishing diplomatic connections, Turkey-Bangladesh relations developed, and Bangladesh became Turkey's diplomatic supporter in international affairs. Turkey formed the "Asia Anew" initiative in 2019, which aims to strengthen the country's relations with Asian countries. The initiative covers various fields such as trade, culture, defense, and investment. Bangladesh could be a key focus in this initiative because of its booming economy and strategic value. For example, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu said, "Bangladesh, with its thriving economy and young population, is one of Turkey's key partners in the "Asia Anew" initiative."

1.1. Scope and Objective

The scope of this thesis covers both the bilateral and regional dimensions of the relations between Turkey and Bangladesh. Although the thesis deals with the relations between Turkey and Bangladesh from their historical origins to the present, it focuses mainly on the latest two decades when these relations have developed significantly. In this context, this thesis seeks to explain the dynamics behind the recent development of the relations between Turkey and Bangladesh by focusing on the diplomatic, security, economic and socio-cultural dimensions of these relations. In addition, this thesis also aims to contribute to the academic literature on Turkey-Bangladesh relations by demonstrating some of the gaps in the academic literature.

1.2. Research Questions

In order to understand and explain both bilateral and regional aspects of Turkey and Bangladesh relations, this thesis attempts to answer the following research questions:

1) Does the Turkey-Bangladesh relationship take place adequately in the academic literature? 2) What are the bilateral and regional aspects of the Turkey-Bangladesh relationship? 3) How has the Turkey-Bangladesh relationship developed historically? 4) What are the diplomatic and political, Military/defense, economic and social-cultural dimensions in bilateral relations?

This thesis will examine these questions. This thesis also examines how both countries entered such a remote region and how they responded to regional and international issues despite the geographical distance between them.

1.3. Literature Review

In order to examine the Turkey-Bangladesh relations, it is necessary to look at the foreign policy literature of the two countries. It is seen that Turkish Foreign Policy (Vol. I, II, III), edited by Baskin Oran, and William Hale's Turkish Foreign Policy since 1774 are the two most well-known books in the literature on Turkey's foreign policy. In their works, Oran and Hale define Turkey as a country that has traditionally adopted and implemented a 'balanced policy' in foreign policy. In addition, both works define Turkey as a medium-sized state in the international system and reveal the limitations and possibilities in Turkey's foreign policy based on this definition.¹

Baskin Oran, however, identified two elements of Turkey's foreign policy: Westernism and the Status quo. He said that "Westernism is a determinant in Turkish foreign policy as a result of the newly established state's concern to find a place in the international system and the desire to reach the civilization level of the West in line with the modernization movement."² The second determinant factor in the Turkish Foreign Policy is status quo which means the existing order that has been established. According to Oran, 'Status quo', in the context of Turkey, means that the newly established state protects its borders and maintains the existing balances in international relations.³

When Baskin Oran's book "Turkish Foreign Policy (Vol. I, II, III)" is analyzed, it is seen that Oran mainly emphasizes Turkey-Pakistan relations in the South Asian Region. According to Oran, relations between Turkey and Pakistan are

¹ Balci, Ali. "Türkiye dış politikası: ilkeler, aktörler, uygulamalar." *İstanbul: Etkileşim Yayınları* (2013).

² Baskın Oran, "Türk Dış Politikasının Teori ve Pratiği", *Türk Dış Politikası Cilt I: 1919-1980*, Ed. Baskın Oran, 15. bs., İstanbul, İletişim Yayınları, 2009, p. 46-53.

³ Oran, "Türk Dış Politikasının Teori ve Pratiği", p. 46.

mostly friendly. On April 2, 1954, Turkey and Pakistan signed a Treaty of Friendly Cooperation, which formalized their friendship. The cooperation between these two countries has gradually increased over the years.⁴ Today, Turkey maintains its relations with Pakistan in the fields of military, trade, defense, and diplomacy. On the other hand, Oran also included the historical relations between Turkey and India. During the First World War, it is seen that Indian Muslims declared their support to the Ottoman Empire.⁵

At the same time, when we examine the “*Turkish Foreign Policy: 1774-2000*” book of William Hale’s, it is seen that the relations between Turkey and Pakistan are discussed. Hale underlined that the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) founded between Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan in 1964 strengthened relations between the two countries. According to Hale’s, with the inclusion of Pakistan in the D-8, which was established under the leadership of Turkey, the cooperation between the two countries in the fields of economy, trade and diplomacy gained further momentum.⁶

Bangladesh became an independent country in 1971. Despite being a new state, Bangladesh has considerable importance in the world due to its population and location. In an interdependent world system, just as Bangladesh helps other countries in various ways, it also receives much support from other countries. In modern times, national relations are built based on mutual acceptance. Bangladesh’s foreign policy is therefore successful in this regard. Bangladesh believes in friendship with everyone and does not want to get involved in disputes with anyone. That is why it has joined the Non-Alignment movement.

⁴ Oran, Baskın. *Türk dış Politikası: Kurtuluş savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar* Cilt I-III: 1919-1980, İletişim, 2009.

⁵ Oran, Baskın. *Türk dış Politikası: Kurtuluş savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar* Cilt I-III: 1919-1980, İletişim, 2009.

⁶ Hale, William. *Turkish Foreign Policy: 1774-2000*. Cass, 2001.

The intention of Bangladesh is to build cooperative relations with neighboring countries. For this purpose, Bangladesh took the initiative to form 'SAARC' with the countries of South Asia and has achieved success in this regard. Bangladesh not only maintaining good relations with its neighbors but also committed to establishing friendly relations with the Muslim world. Bangladesh is playing an essential role in strengthening the religious and traditional ties by becoming a member of the OIC. Despite being an underdeveloped and small country, Bangladesh's role in world politics is significant. In particular, Bangladesh's position in maintaining world peace and security is apparent. Due to this, it has been able to obtain a dignified seat in the World Assembly.⁷

The main aims and objectives of Bangladesh's foreign policy can be defined as follows: Self-preservation: Like other states, self-preservation is the most vital interest of Bangladesh. Generally, a state's self-preservation means maintaining its sovereignty, political independence, and territorial integrity. It is inevitably linked to the protection of national security.⁸

Economic Progress: The next objective of Bangladesh's foreign policy is economic progress. Apparently, Bangladesh is a poor country, but there is a large reserve of resources in it that could bring economic prosperity to Bangladesh in the near future. Continuous efforts from national policymakers will be required to undertake the task of promoting economic development. The reason for economic progress would be better served by the procurement of

⁷ Bhardwaj, Sanjay K. "Bangladesh in SAARC: Identity Issues and Perspectives." *India International Centre Quarterly*, vol. 41, no. 3/4, 2014, pp. 128–141.

⁸ Bateman, Christopher H. "National Security and Nationalism in Bangladesh." *Asian Survey*, vol. 19, no. 8, 1979, pp. 780.

significant raw materials and other goods and obtaining favorable foreign manufacturers for our export products.⁹

Preservation and growth of national power: Another major objective of Bangladesh's foreign policy is to pay special attention to the preservation and growth of national power. National power here means the country's overall power, which can make a significant contribution to the conduct of foreign policy. It takes into account the number of elements, including natural resources, food, and energy production. Bangladesh needs to exercise full control over its total assets. At the same time, it can prevent any foreign claims on other resources, including those located within its seafloor and territorial waters. Thus, it will be the constant responsibility of foreign policymakers to conserve national power elements and strive to enhance them by realizing the time and opportunity.¹⁰

Ideology: Every modern state follows an ideology or at least adhere to any major ideology prevalent in the contemporary world. In the case of Bangladesh, it could be said that it does not fully follow either the two opposing ideologies, capitalist or socialist rather, it follows a mixed economy with the good aspects of the two approaches.¹¹

National dignity: After Bangladesh emerged as an independent nation, it had to face many problems, mainly because its economic condition was substandard. Bangladesh fell into a deep economic crisis after independence due to the massive devastation in the nine-month war and the suspension of production

⁹ Ahmed, Ashraf. "Potential for Progress: Opportunities for Economic Growth in Bangladesh." *Harvard International Review*, vol. 33, no. 3, 2011, pp. 28–29.

¹⁰ Hossain, Delwar. *Bangladesh in 2015*. Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, 2015.

¹¹ Mondal, Lipon Kumar. "Social Formation in Bangladesh: An Essay on the Political Economy of State, Class and Capitalism". *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh (Hum.)*, vol. 59, no. 2, 2014, pp. 343-365.

activities. Nevertheless, it cannot go on forever. Therefore, one of the objectives of Bangladesh's foreign policy is to make efforts for achieving economic development so that Bangladesh can maintain its dignity and remain with a glorious image in the world.

The importance of foreign policy elements may increase or decrease relatively, but no element becomes insignificant. Therefore, it is necessary to consider all the factors in determining foreign policy. The conventional elements of Bangladesh's foreign policy are:

Geo-strategic location: Bangladesh is located in South Asia in terms of geographical location. Bangladesh is bordered on the east, north, and west by India and south by the Bay of Bengal and Myanmar. India is essential in Bangladesh's foreign policy, as Bangladesh is surrounded on three sides by India, and the main rivers flow into Bangladesh through India. It has become imperative to develop relations with India and pursue a policy of peaceful resolution of disputes. The coast of Bangladesh is considered as the connection of South and South-East Asia. Therefore, Bangladesh's position is crucial from a strategic point of view. Taking advantage of this opportunity, Bangladesh has formulated a favorable foreign policy to achieve economic benefits, which has resulted in BIMSTEC. As the Bay of Bengal adjacent to the southern part of Bangladesh is connected with the Indian Ocean, Bangladesh is trying to keep the Indian Ocean out of military competition. Since Bangladesh's security is strategically linked to a peaceful environment in the Indian Ocean, Bangladesh's foreign policy is regulated towards that goal.¹²

Population: Bangladesh's population is neither more than China and India nor less than Bhutan and the Maldives. Bangladesh is a middle-class country in the world in terms of population. The population of this country is mainly

¹² Andersen, Walter. "The Geostrategic Importance of Bangladesh: From the Perspective of the U.S." *Vibrant Bangladesh*, Washington, DC: Bangladesh Embassy publication, vol. 25, 2012, pp. 72-77.

homogeneous. This homogeneous population has increased the national strength of Bangladesh and enhanced its value in the world. As a result, Bangladesh's security fears and existential crisis did not intensify as in smaller countries. Therefore, Bangladesh's foreign policy and its security system are not dependent on anyone. In addition, a large portion of Bangladesh's population has entered the international labor market as manpower. Many developed countries of the world are dependent on Bangladesh for their workforce. Hence, the bargaining power of Bangladesh with developed countries has increased a lot. The population is, therefore, more significant in determining the foreign policy of Bangladesh.¹³

Level of economic development: Bangladesh is economically underdeveloped. On the one hand, the industry has not developed in this country. On the other hand, agriculture is still dependent on conventional technology. As a result, both industrial and agricultural production shortages exist. Bangladesh does not even have the capacity to extract all the natural resources that are underground. Development efforts are not being accelerated mainly due to a lack of capital formation and modern technology. Thus, Bangladesh has to depend on developed countries for capital and technology. For this reason, Bangladesh sets its foreign policy in such a way as to obtain loans, aid, and technical assistance through the establishment of good relations with the developed world. If Bangladesh's level of economic development had improved, Bangladesh would indeed not have adopted a foreign policy of economic aid.

Ideological environment: The ideological environment often serves as a significant determinant in foreign policy. In the pre-75 political context, Bangladesh was the influence of socialist ideology and was close to India and the Soviet Union. Later, as a result of following the liberal and Islamic ideology,

¹³ Etzold, Benjamin & Mallick, Bishawjit. "International Migration from Bangladesh" Bundeszentrale Für Politische Bildung, November 30, 2015, <https://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/migration/laenderprofile/216104/international-migration-from-bangladesh>.

the country's relations with Muslim countries and the Western world increased. However, the recent upheaval of socialist ideology and the widespread liberal democratic ideology has led to a pro-Western trend in Bangladesh's foreign policy.

Military capability: Neighboring state India has more military power than Bangladesh. That is why there is always a fear of security in Bangladesh. In this situation, Bangladesh's foreign policy reflects its desire to avoid conflict with India and resolve disputes through bilateral negotiations. However, better military training and efforts to procure modern weapons for self-defense in water, land, and air are essential aspects of Bangladesh's foreign policy. Accordingly, Bangladesh gives particular importance to its foreign policy in its relations with the United States, China, and other countries.¹⁴

Neighboring countries' behavior and the international environment: Bangladesh's foreign policy's nature depends on India's behavior as a neighbor state and other South Asian countries and Myanmar in general. Bilateral and regional relations are determined by neighbors' behavior on border-related animosity, population migration, maritime demarcation, and trade gaps. If the behavior of the neighbors is restrained and friendly, Bangladesh also became interested in expanding cooperation. Otherwise, the policy of protecting the national interest has to be adopted with the support and cooperation of the United Nations and the world community. Besides, the international environment, especially nuclear tensions, is troubling Bangladesh. Therefore, the desire to build a nuclear-free world environment for world peace is reflected in Bangladesh's foreign policy.¹⁵

¹⁴ Ahamed, Emajuddin. "The Military and Democracy in Bangladesh." *The Military and Democracy in Asia and the Pacific*, edited by R.J. May and Viberto Selochan, ANU Press, Canberra, 2004, pp. 101–118.

¹⁵ Ahsan, Abul. "Bangladesh's Foreign Policy: In Search of Security and A New Role." *World Affairs: The Journal of International Issues*, vol. 3, no. 1, 1999, pp. 50–59.

When Bangladesh's foreign policy and literature are examined, it is seen that Bangladesh barely mentions Turkey-Bangladesh relations. This exclusion is evident at the leading book of the Bangladeshi literature, "Bangladesh Foreign Policy: Realities, Priorities, and Challenges," written by Harun Ur Rashid. The relationship between Turkey and Bangladesh is covered very briefly in this book. However, the relationship between the two countries have developed significantly on bilateral and regional levels.

According to Rashid, Bangladesh's relations with Turkey can be described as excellent and mutually supportive. As a mutually supportive relationship, Bangladesh supported Turkey on the Cyprus issue. As Rashid stated in his book:

Bangladesh was one of the only six countries to support the Turkish invasion of Cyprus during a UN vote on the matter. On the issue of Cyprus, Bangladesh at multilateral organizations such as the UN, use this as an opportunity to defend the rights of the Turkish minority.¹⁶

Rashid also added that, Bilateral trade between Turkey and Bangladesh is increasing, and collaborative projects are being discussed. Bangladesh exported 29.77 million dollars to Turkey in 2002-2003. Bangladesh's exports totaled 101.6 million dollars in 2005-06. According to reports, the Turkish minister predicted that trade between the two countries would reach \$2 billion by the end of 2022.¹⁷

By examining the foreign policy literature of Turkey and Bangladesh, we saw that although the books of Baskın Oran and William Hale are significant in Turkish literature, they do not mention Bangladesh adequately. Somehow Bangladesh has been neglected. Similarly, Turkey has not been adequately mentioned in the literature of Bangladesh. Although Harun Ur Rashid has briefly

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 275.

¹⁷ Rashid, Harun Ur. *Bangladesh Foreign Policy: Realities, Priorities, and Challenges*. Academic Press and Publishers Library, 2015. p. 274-275.

expressed the relationship between the two countries, it is not enough. However, this thesis argues that relations between these two countries have developed significantly despite the fact that it does not take place in literature.

1.4. Argument

This thesis argues that contrary to the views of some scholars who think that relations between Turkey and Bangladesh are insignificant because of the geographical distance between these two countries, this thesis argues that both bilateral and regional aspects of these relations have developed significantly almost the last two decades as Turkey and Bangladesh broaden their foreign policy orientation globally.

1.5. Research Method

This thesis analyzes the relations between Turkey and Bangladesh in the post-independence period of Bangladesh. It examines the political and diplomatic, military/defense, economic and social-cultural dimensions of the relations between the two countries. The thesis argues that economic, political, defense, social, and cultural factors have played a determining role in developing relations between Turkey and Bangladesh. The thesis demonstrates that if both sides continue to base their relationships on economic links, cooperation, and friendship between these two countries could flourish.

In this respect, the thesis aims to examine the nature of the relations between the two countries. Therefore, it was necessary to investigate the evolution of relations. In order to achieve the aim of the thesis, a comprehensive literature review was made, library resources, books, academic articles, reports from research institutions, journals, Newspaper articles, and statistics were examined.

1.6. Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of five main chapters. The introduction is the first chapter of the thesis, and it covers the scope and objective, research questions, the argument, and the research method. The second chapter illustrates how Turkey-Bangladesh relations have evolved throughout history. The historical background is categorized according to substantial improvements in Turkish-Bengali relations. In this regard, Turkish-Bengali relations in the Ottoman period were examined. In addition, the establishment processes of the Republic of Turkey, Pakistan, and Bangladesh are also discussed in this section. Moreover, Turkish-Bengali relations during Atatürk and Pakistan period were examined.

The third chapter analyzes the major dimensions of Turkey-Bangladesh bilateral relations. This section shows how the political and diplomatic, Military/defense, economic, and social-cultural dimensions have played a significant role in developed Turkey-Bangladesh relations.

The fourth chapter explains international and regional dimensions of Turkey-Bangladesh partnership. In this part, it is seen that both countries play a strategic role by participating in regional and international organizations, and both parties support each other in the international arena. In addition, there are also discussed the potential areas of regional cooperation of these two countries. The fifth chapter of this thesis is the conclusion, which summarizes the thesis' main findings.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF RELATIONS BETWEEN TURKEY AND BANGLADESH

2.1. Introduction

Historically, the relations between Bangladesh and Turkey date back to early times. At present, the cultural and social spheres of the two countries bear witness to this. Relations between Bengali and Turks first started in 1204 with establishing a Muslim government in the Bengal region by the Turkish commander, Ikhtiyar al-Din Muḥammad Bakhtiyār Khalji, who came from Central Asia.¹⁸ Then, a new trend was created in Bengal in the cultural exchange of the Turks, which lasted for the next 500 years. The arrival of Muslim merchant ships in Bengal had been going on for a long time. Before Bakhtiyar Khalji, Al-Biruni (973-1050) was an Iranian scholar and polymath during the Islamic Golden Age, described the entire Indian subcontinent in detail in his famous book, *Tārīkh al-Hind* (History of India).¹⁹

Al-Biruni wrote in his book about the environment, culture, and mentality of the people in the ‘Bengal’ region, which later made the Muslim world more interested in trading in Bengal. Later, great numbers of traders came to the

¹⁸ Rahaman, Md. Shah Noorur. “Islam and its Early Introduction in Bengal.” Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, vol. 56, 1995, pp. 425–434.

¹⁹ Khan, M. S. “The Indica of Al-Biruni as A Source for The Political History of Eleventh Century India (Summary).” Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, vol. 47, 1986, pp. 128–129.

Chittagong and Sylhet areas of Bengal via Malabar.²⁰ Considering the geopolitical aspects of the period, it can be seen that the political influence of the Muslims in Bengal increased considerably after the conquest of Sindh by Muhammad bin Qasim (695-715). At the same time, all the powerful states around the map of Bengal, such as the western part of India, Afghanistan, Sindh, Multan, were under Muslim rule. Consequently, there was an undeniably strong geopolitical influence on Bengal. The Turks led all the military operations in all the areas around Bengal. As a result, the Turks came to Bengal through the arrival of the victorious Bakhtiyar Khalji in Bengal. The influence of the administrative system established through Bakhtiyar Khalji is still visible in Bengali society.²¹

The Turkish rule in Bengal, which witnessed various ups and downs since the conquest of Bengal by Bakhtiyar, lasted till the arrival of the British. Although Bengal initially emerged as an autonomous region, the rulers of Bengal later merged with the Mughal Emperor Babar (1483-1530). Therefore, the Bengal rulers at that time considered it better to accept his allegiance in terms of political ability, which continued until 1757. That is, for 554 years, the whole of Bengal was under Turkish rule.²²

The mixing of Turkish ethnicity with the geopolitical arena of Bengal, before the British rule, opened a new horizon in the Bengal region. The development in the economic sphere was unparalleled. The riverine region of Bengal was one of the centers of the world economy. Dhaka was the heart of that business. Dhaka was the origin of the famous muslin cloth and the only environmentally useful place

²⁰ Khan, Abbas Ali. *Banglar MUSALMANDER Itihas*. Bangladesh Islamic Centre, 1994. pp. 18.

²¹ Rahaman, Md. Shah Noorur. "Islam And its Early Introduction in Bengal." *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, vol. 56, Indian History Congress, 1995, pp. 425–34.

²² Heitzman, James, and Worden, Robert L. *Bangladesh: A Country Study*. U.S. Gov. Print. Off., 1989. p. 4-5.

for production and henceforth Bengal region became one of the main regulators of trade in India. With the British coming to power, the Bengal region became isolated from the entire Muslim world. Rule of Delhi was under Turkish control for another half-century, but it was fragile. The throne of Delhi during this period became the puppet government of the Britain. The results were conceivable. The Bengal Muslims pledged their allegiance to the Ottomans. Nevertheless, friendly relations between the Muslims of Bengal and the Turks were revived during the Ottoman-Russian war of 1877-1888. For this war, Bengal Muslims prayed in the mosques of Kolkata and collected funds to support the Turkish army.²³

The friendly relations that started during this war continued during the Italo-Turkish War (1911-1912), the Balkan War (1912-1913), the First World War (1914-1918), and the war of independence (1915-1916). Although the Bengal Muslims were under the control of the British, they supported the Turks materially and morally in their hard times.²⁴ This support and close relations continued during the founding process of the Republic of Turkey. Bengali Muslims showed great interest and remarkable love for Turkey and especially for Mustafa Kemal. The most notable example of this is the 368-line poem 'Kemal Pasha', written by the national poet of Bangladesh, Kazi Nazrul Islam, in 1921, at the age of 22, out of respect and admiration for the first President of modern Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881-1938). This poem was published in the journal "Calcutta" in 1921. In addition, this poem was later included in schoolbooks in Bangladesh.²⁵

²³ Sarısır, Serdar. "Türkiye'nin Bangladeş'i TANIMASI ve Türkiye-Bangladeş ilişkilerinin ilk Yılları (1974-1980)." *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Tarih Bölümü Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi*, vol. 38, no. 66, 2019, pp. 565-594., doi:10.35239/tariharastirmalari.619685.

²⁴ Hardy, P. *The Muslims of British India*. Cambridge University Press, 1972.

²⁵ Ataöv, Türkaya. "*Bangla Literature- in Brief*." *Emerging Bangladesh Beckons*, Ankara: Embassy of Bangladesh, 2017.

The subsequent abolition of the Istanbul caliphate and the establishment of the new Turkey played an influential role in changing the political context of the Bengal region. Consequently, Pakistan was founded in 1947 based on the two-nation theory, which strengthened the historical ties between the two countries. On the other hand, when the British colonial rule ended in August 1947, the Bengal region was divided between the two newly formed countries. West Bengal was given to India and East Bengal (now Bangladesh) to Pakistan as an Eastern province. From then until 1971, the history of Bangladesh was written under the name of Pakistan. However, after the war that started due to the political dispute between East and West Pakistan, on 16 December 1971, 'East Pakistan' gained its independence under the name of Bangladesh. Due to Turkey's deep friendship ties with Pakistan, Turkey was cautious about recognizing Bangladesh. Later Turkey recognized Bangladesh on the occasion of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (formerly Organization of the Islamic Conference) Summit held in Lahore on 22 February 1974.²⁶ Afterwards, Turkey's Dhaka Embassy was opened in 1976 and Bangladesh's Ankara Embassy was opened in 1981. Prime Minister of Turkey Bülent Ecevit summed up the Turkey-Bangladesh relations at that time as follows:

The bonds of friendship between the Bangladeshi nation and the Turkish nation stem from history. Even in the last periods of the Ottoman Empire, when the Turkish nation was facing great difficulties, Bangladesh showed its closeness to the Turkish nation on every occasion before the world. Now we see with gratitude and pride that today the young State of Bangladesh stands by Turkey in all international forums with a sense of brotherhood and understanding.²⁷

Although diplomatic relations have continued since 1974, deep economic and political relations between the two countries could not be sufficiently established until 2010. However, after 2010, an increase was observed in the two countries' political, trade, and cultural relations.

²⁶ Hussain, Munir. "*Pak-Turkey Relations: On the Common Ties*". *Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relations*, vol. 7, no. 2&3, 2008, pp. 67-85.

²⁷ *Milliyet*, 4.10.1978, p. 3.

In this chapter, the thesis will discuss Turkish rule in Bengal, Turkish-Bengali relations during the ottoman period, foundations of the Republic of Turkey, Turkish-Bengali relations during Ataturk's era, creation of the Pakistan and Bangladesh, and both countries' relations with Turkey.

2.2. Bengal During the Turkish Rule

The beginning of Muslim rule in Bengal is called the birth of the Middle Ages in Bengal. In order to enter from one era to another in history, some special groundbreaking changes are required. The conquest of Bengal by the Muslims did not only change the political landscape of Bengal. Consequently, revolutionary changes took place in the life of the people of Bengal in various fields, including society, religion, economy, language and literature, and arts.

The Turks arrived in Bengal at the beginning of the thirteenth century, led by Ikhtiyar Uddin Mohammed Bakhtiyar Khalji, the first Muslim conqueror. Bakhtiyar Khalji belonged to the Khalji tribe of the Turkish nation. He defeated Sena ruler Lakshmana Sena in 1203 AD and ended the Sena rule by establishing Muslim rule in northern and northwestern Bengal. Earlier, Islam was spread in Bengal through saints, Muslim traders, and Sufis, but it was not established politically. The conquest of Bengal by Bakhtiyar Khalji was the first political establishment of the Muslims in this country. The then King of Bengal Lakshman Sen was staying at Nadia, the capital of Bengal. Nadia was considered the most protected area. However, Bakhtiyar Khalji conquered Nadia and later advanced towards Lakshnavati (Gaur) and established his capital there.²⁸

Bakhtiyar Khalji was a good ruler. He laid the foundation of Muslim society in Bengal. He divided his kingdom into several regions and entrusted their rule to his chief ministers and military chiefs. They are tasked with maintaining peace

²⁸ Rahman, Mahmudur. *The Political History of Muslim Bengal: An Unfinished Battle of Faith*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2019, p. 1-27.

and order, collecting revenue, promoting education and culture, and focusing on the earthly and moral well-being of the people. Bakhtiyar Khalji established mosques for the prayers of Muslims, madrasas for teaching, and khanqahs for the Sufis for the convenience of preaching. He realized that the defense of a state depended not only on military might but also on internal order for complete peace. Therefore, he tried to create a just Muslim society with the stability of his established Muslim state.²⁹

Bakhtiyar Khalji was a skilled and adventurous soldier, as well as a just, pious, and pragmatic ruler. By establishing Muslim rule in Bengal, he paved the way for the spread of Islam and the development of Muslim culture in the region. Due to the development of Muslim culture, large-scale conversions took place in this country. Hindus from lower castes, in particular, are attracted to Muslims. As a result, the attempt to establish the Bakhtiyar Khalji kingdom in Bengal can be considered a blessing for the spread of Islam in the country. Although Bakhtiyar Khalji initiated Muslim rule in Bengal, his untimely death prevented him from consolidating the system of governance here. As a result, after the death of Bakhtiyar Khalji, a power struggle arose between his three generals, Muhammad Shiran Khalji, Ali Mardan Khalji, and Husamuddin Iwaz Khalji. They came to power one after another.³⁰

Muhammad Shiran Khalji was the ruler of Lakhnauti in 1206-1206 AD. By joining the army of Bakhtiyar Khalji, Shiran Khalji soon attained the rank of commander through his bravery and prudence. Bakhtiyar Khalji trusted him so much that he entrusted him with the responsibility of Lakhnauti on the eve of the expedition to Tibet. After Bakhtiyar Khalji's death, his troops elected Shiran Khalji as their leader. Although Shiran Khalji served as the ruler for only one year, he took some steps, including capturing Ali Mardan Khalji on his own

²⁹ Karim, Abdul. *Social History of the Muslims in Bengal: (Down to A.D. 1538)*. Asiatic Soc. of Pakistan, 1959.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

merits, and some order was restored in Bengal. However, the political position of Bengal was weakened when the cunning Ali Mardan Khalji escaped and took refuge with Sultan Qutbuddin Aibak of Delhi. Shiran Khalji sought to establish his position firmly and maintain unity among Khalji leaders. With this objective in mind, he followed the policy of appeasement towards the people belonging to Ali Mardan's group and retained the nobles of Bakhtiyar Khalji in their former positions. In order to avoid hostility from the Delhi rulers, Shiran followed the policy of enjoying the freedom of Bakhtiyar Khalji without taking the royal designation. Although Shiran Khalji initiated good governance, his authority did not last long due to Ali Mardan's hostility.³¹

Husamuddin Iwaz Khalji (1206-1210 AD) became the ruler of Devkot as the subordinate ruler of Delhi after Shiran Khalji's death. However, only two years later, Ali Mardan Khalji returned to Devkot with the help of the Sultan of Delhi, and Iwaz Khalji voluntarily relinquished power. Ali Mardan Khalji (1210-12 AD) was appointed ruler without any hindrance. Sultan Qutbuddin Aibak of Delhi appointed Ali Mardan Khalji, but after Qutbuddin's death, he took the title of Alauddin and declared independence. He extended the boundaries of the state. Anarchy prevailed in his kingdom. In order to resolve this situation, many Khalji Amirs lost their lives on his orders. Poor, weak, and peace-loving people fall into extreme misery. As Ali Mardan ruled the state very arbitrarily, dissatisfaction against him gradually increased. Eventually, his rival Amirs, annoyed by Ali Mardan's activities, assassinated him and appointed Husamuddin Iwaz as the ruler of Bengal.³²

Husamuddin Iwaz Khalji took the title of 'Sultan Ghiyasuddin Iwaz Khalji' (1212-27 AD) and re-ascended the throne of Lakhnauti in 1212 AD. He set out

³¹ "Shiran Khalji." *Banglapedia*, 2014, https://en.banglapedia.org/index.php?title=Shiran_Khalji (Accessed 22.1.2022).

³² Karim, Abdul. *Social History of the Muslims in Bengal: (Down to A.D. 1538)*. Asiatic Soc. of Pakistan, 1959. p. 19-22.

to strengthen the Muslim state of Bengal. Sultan Iwaz Khalji was undoubtedly the greatest of the Khalji rulers. He sought to strengthen and consolidate the Muslim kingdom of Bengal established by Bakhtiyar. He shifted the capital from Devkot to Gaur or Lakhnauti for the convenience of administration. In addition, Lakhnauti was situated on the riverbanks, which facilitated trade. A fort was built at Bosankot to strengthen the defenses of the capital. Moreover, Iwaz Khalji realized that it would not be possible for the cavalry alone to expand the kingdom in riverine Bengal without a strong navy. The navy was needed to maintain the rule of Bengal. Therefore, it can be said that among the Muslim rulers in Bengal, Iwaz Khalji was the founder of the navy. For the security of the capital, deep and wide trenches were constructed on its three sides. He dug many canals and built bridges to protect Lakhnauti and surrounding areas from annual floods. He built roads and facilitated the movement of troops and goods. The construction of this highway has not only benefited the state government and trade but has also been a blessing to the people of the country. It kept their houses and crops protected from the annual floods. Ghiyasuddin Iwaz Khalji has established himself as a good ruler by his suitable roles.³³

Sultan Shamsuddin Iltutmish of Delhi did not favor the expansion and power of Ghiyasuddin. Ghiyasuddin Iwaz Khalji is also seen as a threat to the Delhi Sultanate by denying Delhi's subjugation and declaring independence. Therefore, Sultan Iltutmish himself proceeded to suppress Ghiyasuddin. Iwaz Khalji marched on land with his troops and the warship on the waterway. He signed a truce after a clash with Delhi forces. Later Iwaz Khalji was involved in the battle when Nasir Uddin Mahmud, son of Iltutmish, attacked Lakhnauti. In battle, he was defeated, taken prisoner, and later killed. Lakhnauti's political power again fell to Delhi. As a result, Sultan Ghiyasuddin Iwaz Khalji's

³³ Eaton, Richard Maxwell. *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier, 1204-1760*. University of California Press, 1996. p. 23-40.

significant and beneficial reign came to an end with this. He was one of the key actors in establishing Muslim rule in Bengal at an early period.³⁴

Bengal became a province of the Delhi Sultanate for sixty years, from 1227 to 1287 AD, after Ghiyasuddin Iwaz Khalji was defeated and killed by Sultan Shamsuddin Iltutmish of Delhi. At that time, Bengal was ruled by 15 provincial rulers nominated by the Sultan of Delhi. Ten of them were Mamluks or slaves. However, it is reasonable to call this period the Turkish period because they were all Turks. During the Turkish rule in Bengal, there were internal riots in Delhi. The sultans of Delhi did not have the opportunity to move towards a distant province like Bengal. Therefore, the Turkish rulers of Bengal ruled the country very independently. The first Turk to be mentioned in the history of Muslim governance in Bengal is Ikhtiyaruddin Muhammad bin Bakhtiyar Khalji. As a result of his efforts, the country's first Muslim rule was established. This reign lasted for more than 500 years (1201-1757 AD).³⁵

2.3. Turkish-Bengali Relations During the Ottoman Period

Historically, Bengal was loosely attached to the Delhi Sultanate, established in 1206, and paid tribute in the form of war elephants to maintain autonomy. Bengal gained its independence from Delhi in 1341, and Dhaka was designated as the capital of the independent Bengal governors. Before the Mughal emperor Akbar, the Great (1556-1605) conquered Dhaka in 1576, Turks governed Bengal for several decades. Bengal was a Mughal province until the fall of the Mughal Empire in the eighteenth century. Bengal's political unification with the rest of

³⁴ "Iwaz Khalji." *Banglapedia*, 2014, https://en.banglapedia.org/index.php?title=Iwaz_Khalji (Accessed 22.1.2022).

³⁵ Eaton, Richard Maxwell. *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier, 1204-1760*. University of California Press, 1996.

the subcontinent began during the Mughals, but Bengal was never really subjugated. It was always very far from the government headquarters in Delhi.³⁶ When analyzing its geographical location and population, Bengal's influence on the throne of Delhi can easily be understood and this region reflected the economy of the Mughal Empire. Bengal was the wealthiest province during the Mughal era.³⁷ However, history has always referred to the main center, so in most cases, India has been mentioned instead of Bengal. Therefore, although the Ottoman Empire's relationship with the Mughal region is strongly presented, the particulars of the Ottoman Empire's relationship with the Bengal region were not explicitly addressed. The cultural and economic development of the region through the rulers, armies, and Sufis who came from the Turkish ethnic group was because the Turkish rulers intermingled with the people of Bengal. In other words, Sufism deeply influenced Bengali Muslims. However, the Ottomans were also great supporters of Sufism. Mevlana Rumi (1202-1207) is also an influential figure in the cultural field of Bangladesh. In addition, Hazrat Shahjalal (1271-1346), one of Rumi's disciples in the thirteenth century, was an important religious figure in the Eastern region of Bengal during the spread of Islam through Sufism. As a result, within 100 years, the rulers of this region considered themselves as the children of Bengal and, in fact, attached it to their own entity. The rulers turned this region into their homeland and did not make the slightest distinction in terms of court and justice. Thus, the region gained a distinct identity in the fifteenth century. On the other hand, the Ottoman Empire expanded at an incredible pace. The Ottomans' relationship with Muslim states in India dates back to the fifteenth century. However, with the rise century of the Ottoman Empire from the end of the fourteenth century, it is seen that there was

³⁶ Heitzman, James, and Robert L. Worden. *Bangladesh; a Country Study*. U.S. G.P.O., 1988. p. 5

³⁷ Majumdar, R. C., and Jadunath Sarkar. *The History of Bengal*. University of Dacca, 1948.

a great interest and curiosity in India to get to know the Ottoman Empire and to understand the Ottoman glory.³⁸

As one of the reflections of the excitement created by the conquest of Istanbul in the Islamic world, Turkish-Indian Muslims diplomatic relations started when the Bahmani Sultan Muhammad Shah Bahmani III (1463-1482), one of the Indian rulers, sent the vizier Mahmud Gawan to congratulate Fatih Sultan Mehmed (1432-1481) for the conquest of Istanbul. In the sixteenth century, during the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent (1520-1566), the relations between the two countries were quite active. This relationship was at its peak during the reign of Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb (1658-1707), and at that time, the Mughal Empire itself was at the top of its history. Later, however, their relations were confined to the commute of a few embassy delegations until the second half of the eighteenth century.³⁹

Europe surpassed the rest of the world due to the Industrial Revolution of the sixteenth century. Although the Ottomans were still considered a symbol of great power on the world map, Britain entirely occupied the economic center of the Mughal Empire in 1757. In a short period, the entire Mughal Empire came under the control of Britain. Despite having good relations with Britain, the Ottoman Empire became embroiled in diplomatic tensions over trade with Britain in the late eighteenth century. France was an ally of the Ottoman Empire, therefore, diplomatic relations with the Ottomans deteriorated further due to Britain's political hostility and war with France at that time. Meanwhile, the Mysore ruler Tipu Sultan (1785–1802) sent envoys to the Ottomans and asked for help in the fight against the British. Tipu Sultan's main purpose was to get the Ottoman Empire's political and military assistance to expel British from India. The main strength in Tipu Sultan's anti-British movement was the Ottoman Empire;

³⁸ Khan, Abbas Ali. *Banglar MUSALMANDER Itihas*. Bangladesh Islamic Centre, 1994. pp. 24.

³⁹ <https://ataturkansiklopedisi.gov.tr/bilgi/ataturk-doneminde-turkiye-hindistan-iliskileri/>
(Accessed 12.7.2021)

therefore, he wanted to enhance Mysore's trade and commerce network with the Ottoman Empire. However, when Tipu Sultan's envoys arrived in Constantinople, it was not an appropriate time to seek Ottoman help as they had wished for. After the unsuccessful siege of Vienna in 1683, the Ottoman Empire began to lose its power against the Europeans. Russia and Austria had declared war on the Ottoman Empire, which crippled the Ottoman Empire. In this war, the British were the only nation that supported the Ottomans against Russia and Austria. In this condition, Sultan Abdul Hamid I did not want or afford to oppose the British by allying with Tipu Sultan. However, the Tipu sultan and the Mughal emperors of the eighteenth century had cordial relations with the Ottoman Empire.⁴⁰

For over 150 years, Muslims in the subcontinent had been struggling for their rights. The most notable of these is the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, known as the Indian Rebellion. This was simultaneously the period of the fall of the Mughal Empire. Britain then experienced the hardest times in the Indian subcontinent. They had to face strong obstacles from the Bengal region. With the support of the Ottomans, the anti-British movement grew more substantial. However, this movement did not see the face of success. The British government succeeded in suppressing the sepoys' revolt. As a result, diplomatic relations between the two countries officially ended with the disintegration of the Mughal Empire. Since the Muslims had no central power, the Ottomans thousands of miles away were their last hope.⁴¹

In the early twentieth century, the pan-Islamism initiated by Sultan Abdul Hamid II shook the world. Pan-Islamism propaganda occupied an important position

⁴⁰ Fernandes, Praxy. *Storm over Seringapatam the Incredible Story of Haider Ali & Tipu Sultan*. Bombay, 1969.

⁴¹ Yadav, Sanjay. "The Indian Mutiny of 1857: Why Britain Succeeded and The Rebels Failed." *Journal of Asian History*, vol. 28, no. 2, 1994, pp. 136–153.

based on the historical relations between the Ottoman empire and the Muslim rulers of the Indian subcontinent. Pan-Islamism propaganda greatly influenced Muslims in the Indian subcontinent (current Muslims from India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh), which was under British colonial rule. In addition, the Muslims of these regions, which were persecuted by the British, saw the Ottoman caliphate as a symbol of Islamic unity.⁴² When there was a war between the Ottomans and other countries or powers, Muslims in the Indian subcontinent organized financial aid and prayers for the Ottomans. In 1912, during the war between the Balkan Union and the Ottoman Empire, Indian Muslims sent a team of doctors to assist Turkey.⁴³

After the Ottoman defeat in the First World War, when European powers tried to break up the Ottoman Empire, Muslims in the Indian subcontinent, including the Bengal region, organized intense protests against the British government and started the ‘Khilafat Movement’ to protect and re-establish the Ottoman Caliphate.⁴⁴ The ‘Khilafat Movement’ issue was discussed for the first time at the 11th session of the All India Muslim League held in Delhi on 30 December 1918. In the presidential speech of the session, Abul Kasem Fazlul Huq, who came from the Bengal region, expressed his great concern about the attempt by the European powers to break up the Ottoman Empire. Nevertheless, the ‘Khilafat Movement’ received support from Mahatma Gandhi, who preached anti-British policies after the First World War. Along with other Muslims in the Indian subcontinent, the Muslims of the Bengal region also participated in the ‘Khilafat Movement’ and played a significant role. Along with these, the Bengal

⁴² Ullah, Rahmat. ‘*Bangladeş ve Türkiye: İkili İlişkilerin bir Analizi*’, Sosyal ve Beşerî Bilimleri Dergisi, Vol.9, No. 1, 2017, pp.32.

⁴³ Hasan, Rubab. *Pakistan-Turkey Relations*, Ph.D. Thesis. University of Karachi, 2001. p. Xi.

⁴⁴ Burke, Samuel Martin, and Salim al-Din Quraishi. *The British Raj in INDIA: An Historical Review*. Oxford University Press, 1995. p.227.

caliphate committee collected aid from each house for the Ottoman caliphate and his army. A receipt was given by the caliphate committee to prove every aid collected.⁴⁵



Picture 1. Receipt given to aid donors by the caliphate committee of the Bengal region

Source: Symes 2014⁴⁶

The total money sent to the Ottoman army by the Indian Caliphate Committee from December 26, 1921, to August 9, 1923, was 781,570 Turkish lira. Some of

⁴⁵ Symes, Peter. "Khilafat Movement Receipt." Khilafat Movement RECEIPT, Feb. 2014, www.pjsymes.com.au/articles/Khilafat.htm#end_1.

⁴⁶ www.pjsymes.com.au/articles/Khilafat.htm#end_1.

this money was used in the establishment of Türkiye İş Bankası. The Bengal Muslims' sacrifice and commitment in the movement to defend the Ottoman Empire's integrity proved how close the relations were at that time. Although the movement weakened after the abolition of the caliphate in Turkey on March 3, 1924, the relationship between Turkey and Indian Muslims that began in Bengal formed a dynamic and new relationship with the new Republic of Turkey.⁴⁷

2.4. Establishment of the Republic of Turkey

The 1916 Arab Revolution weakened Turkey. By the end of 1918, the Ottoman Empire had lost all of Arabia, except for Yemen, the present-day city of Medina and Asir in Saudi Arabia, and parts of northern Syria-Iraq. The rest of these places also had to be handed over to Britain within three months. Although the Ottomans annexed Georgia-Armenia-Azerbaijan in 1918, they had to give them back due to the Treaty of Sèvres (1920).⁴⁸

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Turkey had undergone tremendous changes due to various circumstances. When the First World War broke out in 1914, Turkey joined the war on behalf of Germany and was defeated. Earlier, the Ottoman Empire suffered a major blow in the Balkan Wars (1912-1913). The Allies (England, France, and Russia) made separate agreements with all the states that joined Germany against the Allies in the First World War. The Allies crippled Germany by signing the Treaty of Versailles (1919) with defeated Germany. The treaty with the Ottoman Empire was planned to disintegrate Ottoman Empire. After this, Sultan Mehmed VI (1861-1926) was forced to sign the Treaty of Sèvres in 1920. The Treaty of Sèvres marked the beginning of the

⁴⁷ Ullah, Rahmat. '*Bangladeş ve Türkiye: İkili İlişkilerin bir Analizi*', Sosyal ve Beşerî Bilimleri Dergisi, Vol.9, No. 1, 2017, pp.35.

⁴⁸ Karsh, Efraim, and Inari Karsh. "Myth in the Desert, or Not the Great Arab Revolt." *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 33, no. 2, 1997, pp. 267–312.

division of the Ottoman Empire, and thus the Ottoman Empire turned from a large empire into a small one. The Treaty provoked strong reactions from the freedom-loving and patriotic Turks. According to the agreement, most of the territory of the Ottoman Empire was occupied by Britain and France. British rule was established in Hejaz, Palestine, and Mesopotamia, and Syria became a French mandate.⁴⁹

Mustafa Kemal Pasha, a nationalist leader, and general who appeared in Turkey during the First World War, tried to protect declining Turkey from external attacks. At that time, the failure of the Sultanate to maintain the integrity of the Ottoman Empire and its subsequent failure to take appropriate action in the war against the Greeks caused the people to lose trust in the Sultanate. On the other hand, the Grand National Assembly, under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal, became popular all over Turkey. Meanwhile, in Anatolia, the Kemalists continued to popularize anti-Sultanate doctrines. Mustafa Kemal and his followers continued to preach that a national government should be formed by breaking the central structure of the dilapidated caliphate and Sultanate to prevent the country's integrity. Given this, on November 1, 1922, in the session of the Grand National Assembly, there was a protracted discussion on dual administration.⁵⁰

Mustafa Kemal's numerous military and political capacities saved Turkey from destruction. He was later awarded the title of Atatürk (Father of the Turkish Nation) for his essential contribution to the defense of Turkey's independence and sovereignty. Turkey proceeded to a critical turning point between the Treaty of Sèvres of 1920 and the Treaty of Luzon of 1923. Atatürk was planning to defend Turkey in Anatolia when Turkey was confronted by a hateful conspiracy

⁴⁹ Ahmad, Feroz. *The Making of Modern Turkey*. Routledge, 2005.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

by the Allies after the first World War. While the Ottoman Empire was under siege in Istanbul on the western edge of Turkey, Mustafa Kemal continued to strengthen his position in eastern Anatolia through various activities. Meanwhile, a new political organization, Turkish National Movement, was established in Anatolia under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal.⁵¹ Atatürk was the major spokesperson, public personality, and military leader of the movement, which sought to unite autonomous movements to form a unified voice across the country. During this time, Kemal's political ideology and thought became very popular in Anatolia. In 1919, Kamal was elected president of a session of the movement. Later, in the 1920 National Assembly elections, the Turkish National Movement won the majority. Shortly afterward, Mustafa Kamal was elected Speaker of the Grand National Assembly. During this time, the Sultanate's silence and Mustafa Kemal's decisive role in defending Turkey made Mustafa Kemal and the Grand National Assembly more trustworthy and popular among the Turkish people than the Sultanate and Caliphate. Gradually, instead of the Istanbul-centric sultanate, Anatolia's Ankara-centric Grand National Assembly began to represent Turkey. Thus, the popularity of Mustafa Kemal and the Turkish Grand National Assembly gradually increased throughout Turkey.⁵²

On 24 July 1923 Treaty of Lausanne was signed. In this treaty, Turkey was represented by the Grand National Assembly. The Treaty of Lausanne was a turning point in Turkish history. The Sultanate had already collapsed in 1922, although the caliphate still existed. The Treaty of Lausanne gave Turkey some relief from the Treaty of Sèvres. As a result of this agreement, Turkey's sovereignty was established in all parts of present-day Turkey and gained international recognition. On 13 October 1923, the Grand National Assembly

⁵¹ MacFie, A. L. "British Views of the Turkish National Movement in Anatolia, 1919-22." *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 38, no. 3, 2002, pp. 27-46.

⁵² Giritli, İsmet, *Kemalist Devrim ve İdeolojisi*, İstanbul Üniversitesi Hukuk Fakültesi Yayını, İstanbul 1980.

declared Turkey a republic. Following this declaration, Turkey became an independent and sovereign republic. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was elected President of the newly formed Republic, and İsmet İnönü was elected Prime Minister. Atatürk turned post-Ottoman Turkey into a Western state through some reforms.⁵³

2.5. Turkish-Bengali Relations During Atatürk's Period

The Bengali Muslims' sacrifice and dedication in the movement to defend the Ottoman Empire's integrity proved how connected the two countries were at the time. However, in order to understand the Bengali-Turkish relations in Atatürk's period, first of all, Atatürk's perspective on foreign policy should be known. It is seen that after the announcement of the Republic of Turkey on October 29, 1923, the land was freed from occupation, and a new order was tried to be established in the country. The Turkish foreign policy of the Atatürk period includes the agreements and works made to establish the Republic of Turkey and the survival of this republic since the end of the wars. For this reason, the Turkish foreign policy of the Atatürk period, which is very important for the Republic of Turkey, shaped the country's future. Turkish Foreign Policy during the Atatürk's era was shaped within the framework of the sensitivity of keeping western imperialist states away from regional problems in order to maintain the dominant political existence of Turkey and its neighbors. For this purpose, Turkey pioneered alliances that brought together the region's states, such as the Balkan Pact in the west and the Saadabad Pact in the east.⁵⁴

⁵³ İrmak, Sadi, Atatürk Devrimleri Tarihi, Yapı ve Kredi Bankası Yayını, 1981.

⁵⁴ Başaran, Doğan. "Atatürk Dönemi Türk Dış Politikasında Savunmacı Realizm Anlayışı ve Üçüncü Dünyacılık". Hacettepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi, vol. 2, no. 1, 2020, pp. 83-99.

Under Atatürk's leadership, Turkish Foreign Policy is based on protecting its own territorial integrity and gaining independence. In short, Turkish foreign policy has come from the point of having global claims to the point of being modest, the only purpose of protecting the borders of the nation-state and maintaining its existence. Atatürk desired other states to respect Turkey's national sovereignty and territorial integrity. It has been in favor of living in friendly relations with states that only respect the principle of equality of states and do not interfere in their internal affairs. In this context, Atatürk, who argued that peace would benefit every state, shaped Turkish foreign policy particularly in line with the principle of "Peace at home, peace in the world."⁵⁵

Turkish foreign policy in Atatürk's period should be seen as an effort to adapt to regional and universal changes within the framework of foreign policy towards the West.⁵⁶ Atatürk wanted to make Turkey a modern and western country; therefore, he made many reforms to westernize the Turkish state and society. He established a foreign policy in line with the standards of Western civilization, and his sincere desire was to see Turkey among the Western countries. Consequently, during Atatürk's era, Turkey has turned its face from East to West, internally and externally.⁵⁷ In addition, Turkish foreign policy of the period was, on the one hand, to obtain money and weapon aid in order to ensure the survival of the newly established Republic, and on the other hand, to make agreements with the Western countries to fortify Turkey's national borders.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Dinç, Sait, Atatürk Döneminde (1920- 1938) Türk Dış Politikasında Gelişmelere Genel Bir Bakış; İkili ve Çok uluslu İlişkiler. http://turkoloji.cu.edu.tr/ATATURK/arastirmalar/sait_dinc_ataturk_donemi_turk_dis_politikasi.pdf.

⁵⁶ Sandar Oral. Türkiye'nin Dış Politikası. Ankara: İmge, 2006.

⁵⁷ Çalış, Şaban, Bağcı, Hüseyin. "Atatürk's Foreign Policy Understanding And Application". Sosyal Ekonomik Araştırmalar Dergisi, 3 (6), 2003, pp. 195-228.

⁵⁸ Yıldırım, Bilal. "Türkiye Dış Politikası: İlkeler, Aktörler, Uygulamalar". Türkiye Ortadoğu Çalışmaları Dergisi 1, 2014, pp. 183-189.

Atatürk's foreign policy was realistic and aimed to stay away from adventurism. While determining the foreign policy in the founding period of Turkey, national and international realities were considered, and Turkey preserved its independence and sovereignty thanks to its realistic foreign policy. The marks in the National Pact were set realistically. The externalization of Pan-Islamist and Pan-Turkish policies was the consequence of the realistic policies of Atatürk.⁵⁹ The most crucial element for Atatürk was the absolute independence of the state. This independence, according to Atatürk, was political, economic, financial, military, and cultural, and these could not be compromised. He stated, "When it is called complete independence, it means full independence and freedom in all matters such as political, financial, economic, judicial, military, cultural, and similar. Deprivation of independence in any of the above-mentioned means depriving all independence of the nation and country in the real sense".⁶⁰

Atatürk's foreign policy was based on peace. The principle of "Peace at home, peace in the world" indicates the value of peace for Atatürk. The best example of this was given during the years of the war of independence. Even in war environments, every endeavor was made to ensure peace through negotiations.⁶¹ However, this attitude does not mean maintaining peace at all costs. As it was evident during the War of Independence, Atatürk showed that Turkey would approve of peace provided that the primary goals and rights were achieved. Atatürk believed that the young Turkish Republic should take the necessary security measures to defend itself against threats from external; therefore, he built military and economic reforms on strong foundations based on the Turkish

⁵⁹ Gönlübol, Mehmet. Atatürk'ün Dış Politikası: Amaçlar ve İlkeler, (Atatürk Yolu adlı kitaptan ayrı bası), İstanbul, Gün Matbaası, 1981, pp. 258.

⁶⁰ Balıkel, Ali Eren, and Ölçekçiler Fatih. Teorik çerçevede geçmişten günümüze Türkiye dış Politikası. Kerasus, 2017, pp. 46.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p.47

nation's own potency. It aims to ensure the country's security by establishing alliances for the establishment and security of regional peace in matters where power may be insufficient to guarantee the country's own security. Atatürk also formed the necessary alliances for this purpose and assumed an influential role in the balance policy carried out at the international level.⁶²

The Bengal Muslims expressed the same compassion and love for Turkey after the caliphate was abolished on March 3, 1924. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the heroic leader of the Turkish War of Independence, was the hope of salvation for the people of Bengal, as well as for all colonial peoples. He had been accepted as a leader by all the peoples of Asia and Africa who had strived for liberation, taken up arms, and fought. The national leaders, who unfurled the flag of liberation and independence against Western colonialism, tried to take Mustafa Kemal Atatürk as an example and follow in his footsteps. Having destroyed the myth of the invincibility of Western imperialism, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was a hero in the eyes of the peoples of Asia and Africa. He was a great man who was also respected, beloved, and glorified in Bengal.⁶³

Kazi Nazrul Islam's poem "Kamal Pasha" by a Bengali poet shows love and affection towards Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, which made him a symbol of the anti-British movement in India. Nazrul Islam was a "rebel poet" who succeeded in establishing a throne in the hearts of all Indian youth who fought for independence by forming a united front against British colonialism regardless of religion, sect, and ethnicity. As Nehru said, Nazrul Islam set the Turkish soldier

⁶² *Ibid.*, p.48.

⁶³ Davaz, Kemal Özcan. "Kemal Paşa Adlı Destan-Şiirin Yazarı Bangladeş Milli Şairi Gazi Nazrül İslam Doğumunun 100. Yılında." *Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi*, 1999, www.atam.gov.tr/wp-content/uploads/K.-%c3%96zcan-DAVAZ-Kemal-Pa%c5%9fa-Adl%c4%b1-Destan-%c5%9eiirin-Yazar%c4%b1-Banglade%c5%9f-Milli-%c5%9eairi-Gazi-Nazr%c3%bcl-%c4%b0sl%c3%a2m-Do%c4%9fumunun-100.-Y%c4%b1l%c4%b1nda.pdf (Accessed 23.1.2022).

as an example to all Indian freedom fighters and first introduced and popularized Mustafa Kemal Pasha as an exemplary hero.⁶⁴

Atatürk's untimely death deeply shook the peoples of Asia and Africa, as well as the people of Bengal. Bengal seemed to have lost its leader. The Bengal people wept bitterly over Atatürk's death with the Turkish nation. The people of yesterday's Bengal and today's Bangladesh truly mourned for Atatürk collectively. Condolences are conveyed to the Turkish people. While sharing the mourning of the Turkish nation, the Bengali writers also called for the memory of Atatürk to be kept alive. Mustafa Kemal's and the War of Independence's impact on Bengal does not stop there. For example, only 54 days after Mustafa Kemal's death on 10 November 1938, and the news of his death reaching Dhaka, a high school named "Atatürk Model High School" was opened for the first time in Bangladesh on 6 January 1939.⁶⁵

Although the Bengalis expressed their love for Atatürk, Turkey did not show interest in relations with Bengal at that time. Because Bengal and India were under the control of the British colony. Furthermore, Atatürk wanted to make Turkey a modern state, and therefore his foreign policy had turned towards the west. However, relations with the Republic of Turkey, which was established after the War of Independence, were maintained in the form of agreements and visits. Turkey-India relations during the Atatürk Period continued in a very sincere and friendly manner. During the Atatürk period, Turkey had an extraordinary influence and reliability in the eyes of the eastern nations and governments and set a model for them on the way to reach modern civilization, at which point Atatürk's universal personality comes to the fore. The closeness

⁶⁴ Tevetoğlu, Dr. Fetih. "Türk'e ve Atatürk'e Tutkun Şair: Gazi Nazrul İslam." *Anasayfa*, <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/1833390> (Accessed 23.1.2022).

⁶⁵ Şimşir, Bilâl N. "Doğu Bengal'de 'Atatürk LİSESİ.'" *Belleten*, vol. 43, no. 170, 1979, pp. 415-426.

of Indian Muslims to Turkey stems from the fact that they feel religiously connected to Turkey.⁶⁶

2.6. Establishment of the East Pakistan

There have been several changes in Indian politics since the beginning of the twentieth century. Besides showing loyalty and cooperation to the British, there was an awareness among the Indians about the realization of their own interests and rights. During the period 1905-1947, the history of East India and Bangladesh progressed at a different pace. At this time, religious nationalism was gaining momentum in both the Hindu and Muslim communities. The Muslim nationalism that emerged among the Muslims and the Hindu religious nationalism of the Hindus disrupted the harmony between the two communities. As a result of religious detachment, the two communities gradually drifted away from each other. Consequently, after the partition of Bengal in 1905, it did not take long for the issue to take a religious form.

The foundation of East Pakistan was laid through the Partition of Bengal. The Partition of Bengal (1905) was a provincial reorganization of the Bengal Presidency executed by the authorities of the British Raj. Bengal was divided into eastern and western sectors in 1905 by the British governor-general, Lord George Curzon (1859-1925), to develop administrative control of the vast and populated province. Curzon formed Eastern Bengal and Assam as a new province, with Dhaka as its capital. At that time, West Bengal was an old province whose capital was Calcutta (now Kolkata), also the capital of British India.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Duman, Selçuk. "Atatürk Dönemi Türkiye-Hindistan İlişkileri." *Turkish Studies*, vol. 9, no. 4, 2014, pp. 389-399.

⁶⁷ Hamid, Abdul. *Muslim Separatism in India: A Brief Survey, 1858-1947*. Oxford University Press, Pakistan Branch, 1967, p. 52-53.

The newly formed province was rich in natural resources and the heart of the Eastern economy, where Muslims were the majority. East Bengal's long-neglected Muslim population made significant progress in education and communication over the next few years. Many Bengali Muslims saw the partition as the first recognition of their cultural and political separation from the Hindu majority population. However, The Partition of Bengal caused a headache for the educated and predominantly Hindu upper class of Kolkata. The Indian National Congress, a Hindu-dominated political organization, founded in 1885 and backed by the Kolkata aristocracy, launched a well-planned campaign against Curzon, condemning him of trying to weaken the Bengal-led nationalist movement. West Bengal Hindus accused that this partition would make them a minority in a province.⁶⁸

Hindus were enraged at what they saw as a "divide and rule" policy, despite Curzon's assurances that it would increase administrative efficiency. Holding the Hindu extremists to a small province and calling it a "blow to national unity" further intensified the hostility. The slogans of "establishment of Muslim authority," "British government's bias towards Muslims," and "Holy Bengal is divided into two parts" became poisonous in the atmosphere of harmony in Bengal.⁶⁹

The key reason for the opposition to this newly formed province was the Muslim majority. Due to Kolkata being the capital, Hindus had a majority in various administrative posts, but their dominance in the newly formed province was lost. Because of the Muslim majority in the new Bengal province, the Muslims were liberated from the subjugation and defeat of the Hindus for hundreds of years.

⁶⁸ Worden, Robert L., and James Heitzman. *Bangladesh- a Country Study*. U.S. Gov. Print. Off., 1989.

⁶⁹ Afghani. "The Reaction to the Partition of Bengal and the Swadeshi (Terrorist) Movement in Hindu Society." *Https://Www.okkhorblog.com*, 14 Apr. 2020, www.okkhorblog.com/blog/1702.

They got back the right to speak about their rights that they did not have earlier. Following this, the people of Bengal began to turn out to be politically aware. The Partition of Bengal and the formation of a new province in 1905 caused a great stir in the Muslim community in East Bengal. These developments reached Dhaka. They had been an impact on various fields, including trade, commerce, and education. An account of progress in education shows that in the five years from 1905-1911, the number of Muslim students increased by 35%. Especially for educated Muslims, the path to increasing economic, political, and educational benefits became easier. However, in 1911, due to opposition and strong movement from the Hindu community, the partition of Bengal was canceled in just six years. The tension between the Hindu community and the British government disappeared with the abolition of the Partition of Bengal. Nevertheless, after the abolition, the Muslims lost faith and trust in the British.⁷⁰

The All-India Muslim League (known as the Muslim League), the new Muslim political party founded in 1906 after the partition of Bengal, became the sole spokesperson for the interests of Muslims. On the other hand, Congress became the spokesperson of the Hindus. However, there was a central rivalry between both the Muslim League and the Congress against the Bengal leadership, which began to deteriorate in the 1940s.⁷¹ Hindu-Muslim unity (1916-1922) was established for a short time, and there was also a unified movement for self-rule. This unity was against the British Government's policy of divide and rule in India. However, the union broke down again with the emergence of the possibility of election under the Government of India Act in 1935. Political consciousness arose among the Muslims. Because of the Muslim majority in Bengal, the establishment of provincial autonomy under this Act saw an

⁷⁰ Ray, Anil Baran. "Communal Attitudes to British Policy: The Case of the Partition of Bengal 1905." *Social Scientist*, vol. 6, no. 5, 1977, pp. 34-46.

⁷¹ Schendel, Willem Van. *A History of Bangladesh*. Cambridge University Press, 2009. p. 79-87.

opportunity for Muslim leaders to establish political dominance in the province and opportunities for public improvement. A.K. Fazlul Huq (1873-1962) formed the cabinet after winning the 1937 elections. Then a decade later, (until 1947), Muslim leaders formed a cabinet.⁷²

This time is crucial in the history of Bengal and India. During this time, the Muslim community emerged and flourished in politics. In 1940, the Muslim League and Muslim leaders demanded a separate state for Muslims through the Lahore Resolution, known as the Pakistan proposal. The Lahore resolution ensured the division of religion-centered India. However, at the last moment, a section of the Hindu-Muslim leaders of Bengal tried to prevent the partition of India by establishing a united Bengal. Nonetheless, it failed due to the lack of cooperation of the central leaders of the Congress and the Muslim League, and in August 1947, India and Bengal were finally partitioned. East Bengal became part of Pakistan, and West Bengal became part of India. Later, East Bengal was renamed East Pakistan.⁷³

2.7. Turkey-Pakistan Relations During the 1947-1971

Relations with Pakistan, one of the most populated countries in the Islamic world and the only Muslim country with nuclear weapons, are gaining importance. The two countries have long had close and good relations. When it declared its independence from Britain in 1947, Turkey was the first state to recognize Pakistan. During the Cold War, the two countries wanted to form a bloc against communism with the Baghdad Pact, and together they resisted the invasion of Afghanistan by Soviet Russia. In addition, it is an essential advantage for Turkey

⁷² Aiyar, Sana. "Fazlul Huq, Region and Religion in Bengal: The Forgotten Alternative of 1940-43." *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 42, no. 6, 2008, pp. 1213-1249.

⁷³ Worden, Robert L., and James Heitzman. *Bangladesh- a Country Study*. U.S. Gov. Print. Off., 1989.

that the administration, which Central Asian Turks dominate, has common cultural and religious values due to the spread of Islam in the Indian continent. The closeness of Turkey and Pakistan as states and peoples has been demonstrated by mutual support in every natural disaster or crisis experienced until today. With a population of around 215 million, Pakistan has an important place in Asian geopolitics. For this reason, since both countries were dealing with military coups, their peoples experienced oppression and poverty. Bilateral, regional cooperation creates an effect that connects Asia and Europe, the Mediterranean and the Pacific. However, although the economic relations between the two countries are not at a sufficient level, they are gradually spreading to fields such as education, security, and tourism. Especially in the military education and defense industry, many collaborations will be even more critical in the chaotic period we are going through.⁷⁴

2.8. Establishment of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

The formation of Bangladesh was proposed before the creation of Pakistan, which is famous in history, and the people of Bengal made the greatest contribution to the establishment of Pakistan. The state of Pakistan was formed in 1947 in response to the strong demands of the people of Bengal. Before Pakistan, the demand for a united Bengal as an independent state arose in 1947, which did not materialize later. As a result, subsequent political differences, inequality, power-sharing, and unethical interventions led to the creation of a new state called Bangladesh.

The Muslim League, which played a significant role in the formation of Pakistan, came to power in Pakistan. Autocratic attitudes of various leaders began to emerge in the formulation of political policy. The decision-making body consisting of the central provincial councilors of the Muslim League was

⁷⁴ Uysal, Ahmet. "Türkiye ve İslam Dünyası ilişkileri." *Cihannüma*, www.cihannuma.org/duyuru/prof-dr-ahmet-uysal-turkiye-ve-islam-dunyasi-iliskileri.html (Accessed 24.1.2022).

kept immobile without any meeting. Even during the formation of the constitution, some proposals were made to show the people, which were actually captive in the hands of their own people. The expression of authoritarian attitude in the party and administrative work caused much opposition. But high-ranking leaders have regarded the Muslim League as a single national institution since the founding of Pakistan. Some people tried to develop the concept that “opposition to the Muslim League means opposition to Pakistan” and “opposition to Pakistan means opposed to Islam,” that is, hostility to the Muslim League equals opposition to Islam. Suddenly the center of all things and power began to revolve around Pakistan, but the doors of the government and the Muslim League were closed for the people of Bengal who contributed so much during the independence.⁷⁵

All these political problems exacerbated the situation, especially when the decision was made to exclude a language as rich as Bangla from the state language. From the beginning of the twentieth century, the Bangla language had absolute dominance in terms of the subcontinent’s speaking population. Bangla was the famous language of the entire Indian subcontinent in terms of history, tradition, and culture. Demographically in 1900, more than 100 million people spoke Bangla. Dr. Mohammad Shahidullah (1885-1969) declared at a meeting in 1918 that he was in favor of making Bangla the state language of India at that time and said: “Why only India, the Bangla language will have the highest place in all the Asian continents. The Bangla language is unique among the Asian language groups in terms of thought resources and literature.”⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Islam, Nasir. “Islam and National Identity: The Case of Pakistan and Bangladesh.” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 13, no. 1, 1981, pp. 55–72.

⁷⁶ “1971 Liberation War, Birth of Bangladesh and Comparison with Present Day Pakistan.” *EFSAS-European Foundation for South Asian Studies*, 2017, www.efsas.org/publications/research-dossiers/1971-liberation-war,-birth-of-bangladesh-and-comparison-with-present-day-pakistan/. (Accessed 12.8.2021)

From a historical point of view, at that time, Bangla was the greatest of all the provincial languages. But this issue was entirely disregarded by the then rulers of Pakistan. The recognition of Bangla as a state language could have further strengthened the unity of the Pakistani state, but the rude mentality of the Pakistani ruling class prevented this. When Urdu was recognized as the state language in 1947, the people of East Pakistan saw it as a blow to their own existence as Bangla was not given any status. In Pakistan, at that time, 56% of people spoke Bangla. The ruling class's domination further weakened the ideological basis of the Pakistani state; therefore, language-based Bangladeshi nationalism became popular throughout the Bengal province. The ruling party's firing on the students protesting for the state language on February 21, 1952, complicated the matter forever. The people of Bengal wanted recognition of Bangla as the state language along with Urdu. No one had any objections to Urdu. Deprivation of a nation's language rights resulted in the birth of a new country on the world map.⁷⁷

After Jinnah's (1st Governor-General of Pakistan) sudden death on 11 September 1948, East Bengal Prime Minister Khawaja Nazimuddin (1894-1964) was appointed as the Governor-General of Pakistan, and Liaquat Ali Khan (1896-1951) became the Prime Minister. In 1951, Ayub Khan (1907-1974) was appointed Chief of Army Staff. Khawaja Nazimuddin was elected Prime Minister when Liaquat Ali was assassinated on 16 October 1951. The United Front, led by Fazlul Huq (1873-1962), won the 1954 election with a massive vote, and formed a cabinet. However, that cabinet did not last long. Ayub Khan, the army chief, came to power in 1958 amid a shift in power and a political crisis. Ayub Khan made his debut as President in the 1960 votes of confidence. In the Meantime, when public opinion was formed against the army rule, in January 1961, Ayub Khan arrested Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy (1892-1963),

⁷⁷ Rahman, Syedur, and Craig Baxter. *Historical Dictionary of Bangladesh*. Scarecrow Press, 2010. pp. 53.

one of the leaders of Bengal. The presidential system was introduced on March 1, 1972. The following month, on 27 April, Sher-e-Bangla Fazlul Huq died. The ‘death procession’ of the people of Dhaka with his body started the anti-authoritarian movement. Martial law was finally lifted on 6 June, and Ayub Khan was re-elected president. When the ban on all political parties was lifted on July 14, the political arena became heated again. The whole of Pakistan reawakened in the movement to save democracy centered on Suhrawardy. Shortly after Suhrawardy’s mysterious death in a hotel in Beirut on December 5, 1963, the Awami League was revived on January 25, 1964, under the leadership of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (1920-1975).⁷⁸

Great frictions arose between the two countries, which are 1000 miles apart, due to political disagreements, rights violations, and inequality. Geographically, it was impossible for the two countries to coexist. The reality is that the two countries had to be divided but staying together as one country for 23 years came as a surprise to many. Economic reasons also became intense. Although Dhaka was the economic hub of Pakistan, there were numerous inequities throughout the country, particularly the ruling class’s reluctance to develop the Bengal region. During the Indo-Pakistani War in 1965, the East Bengal Regiment soldiers gained fame everywhere in Pakistan for their unprecedented sacrifices and bravery in the struggle for national defense. In this war, the consciousness of Islam and the Muslim nation was revived. Many began to dream of a new constitutional state. The extraordinary success of the Bengal Army in the airspace shook all of Pakistan, the effects of which were widely observed at the national level.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 54-56.

⁷⁹ Asadullah, Mohammad Niaz. “Educational Disparity in East and West Pakistan, 1947-71: Was East Pakistan Discriminated Against?” *The Bangladesh Development Studies*, vol. 33, no. 3, 2010, pp. 1–46.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman called for a six-point program at the All-Party National Conference in Lahore in 1966. Pakistan's politics was divided over the six-point question. It created a great reaction not only in the government but also among the opposition parties. Many parties fighting in the context of the fair rights issue in East Pakistan termed these six points as separatist initiatives. Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani (1880-1976), known as Maulana Bhasani, the leader of the Bengali people, was also fiercely opposed to the six-point program and in June of that year called for a counter movement based on a 14-point program. On the Six-point question, the politics of East Pakistan were divided into two parts. In this heated situation, in 1968, Ayub Khan's government filed a lawsuit against East Pakistani leaders, including Sheikh Mujib, alleging separation of East Pakistan, known as the Agartala Conspiracy Case.⁸⁰

Ayub Khan's policy of repression eventually became unbearable, so a movement consisting of the Pakistan Democratic Movement, the six-point Awami League, the pro-Moscow NAP, and the Pakistan Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam was called to defend democracy. In the face of this bloody mass uprising, which had been going on since January 7, 1969, Ayub Khan was finally forced to resign on March 25 and handed over power to Army Chief Yahya Khan (1917-1980). General Yahya Khan imposed martial law and dissolved the cabinet. He announced the start of public political activities from 1 January 1970 and declared that the National Assembly elections would be held on October 5, 1970. However, with the lifting of the political ban, the popularity of the Awami League skyrocketed among the people of Bengal. National and provincial elections were held on 6 and 17 December 1970. In the elections, the Awami League won all the seats in East Pakistan (Bangladesh) except for two seats in the National Assembly. Out of 310 seats in the provincial council, 298 went to

⁸⁰ Hasan, K. Sarwar. "Political Background of The East Pakistan Crisis." *Pakistan Horizon*, vol. 24, no. 2, 1971, pp. 3-12.

the hand of the Awami League. On the other hand, Bhutto's People's Party won most of the seats in West Pakistan.⁸¹

As a result of the Awami League's monopoly on voting throughout Pakistan, General Yahya Khan came to Dhaka and declared Sheikh Mujibur Rahman a "potential Prime Minister of Pakistan." The handover of power to Sheikh Mujib was a matter of time. At that time, however, a new era of a conspiracy began in Pakistani politics. A kind of inferiority began to work between the military and civilian bureaucrats and rulers of Pakistan regarding the transfer of power to the hand of the Awami League. They supported Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (1928-1979) to become Prime Minister. Bhutto completely unjustly opposed the transfer of power to the Awami League and demanded an equal share in power.⁸²

Almost all leaders of West Pakistan condemned this unethical claim of Bhutto. However, Yahya Khan bowed to Bhutto's pressure and postponed the March 3 session of the National Assembly. The decision sparked protests among the people of East Pakistan. The non-cooperation movement started all over Bangladesh. The entire civil administration continued to be run under the direction of Sheikh Mujib. This non-cooperation movement has a massive impact on Pakistan's economy, as a large part of Pakistan's economy depended on Bangladesh. Seeing no other option, Bhutto and Yahya Khan came to Dhaka on March 15 and held meetings with Sheikh Mujib for several days in a row. While the whole country was waiting for the outcome of the talks, the Pakistani rulers launched a military operation on March 25 to quell the insurgency. The

⁸¹ Hossain, Mokerrom. "Bangladesh War of Independence: A Moral Issue." *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 44, no. 5, 2009, pp. 26–29.

⁸² *Ibid.*

military arrested Sheikh Mujib, a possible prime minister of Pakistan, and took him to Pakistan on the same night.⁸³

Long-standing anger erupted among the Bangladeshi army as well. On March 26, Major Ziaur Rahman (1936-1981) declared independence through radio. As a result, the East Bengal Regiment, the Police, and the Ansar spontaneously resisted the military operation. Demands for independence spread like wildfire throughout Bangladesh in response to the Pakistani army's surprise attacks on unarmed Bangladeshis, indiscriminate killings, and barbarism. Pakistani forces were forced to surrender with the support of India after a long 9-month war. Eventually, on December 16, 1971, a new country appeared on the world map named Bangladesh.⁸⁴

2.9. Conclusion

To conclude, this chapter explored the relations between Turk and Bengal since the first Turkish commander arrived in Bengal. These two nations maintained their relations at different times. Therefore, Historical cases and examples were used to make a comprehensive and proper discussion to analyze their relations. This chapter shows that both nations later became two republics and maintained their relations as independent countries. In the following chapters, Turkey-Bangladesh diplomatic, security, economic and socio-cultural dimensions will be discussed.

⁸³ Ludden, David. "The Politics of Independence in Bangladesh." *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 46, no. 35, 2011, pp. 79–85.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

CHAPTER 3

MAJOR DIMENSIONS IN TURKEY-BANGLADESH BILATERAL RELATIONS

3.1. Introduction

Official relations between Turkey and Bangladesh started in 1974 after Turkey recognized Bangladesh. Although relations between the two countries continue in their regular course, diplomatic, economic, defense, and cultural relations between the two countries have expanded since 2010. This chapter will discuss the factors behind the recent development of Turkey-Bangladesh relations, concentrating on diplomatic, security, economic, and socio-cultural dimensions.

3.2. Diplomatic and Political Dimensions

Diplomatic relations between Turkey and Bangladesh started when Turkey officially recognized Bangladesh on February 22, 1974. The establishment of diplomatic relations with Bangladesh and the opening of the Embassy in Bangladesh was decided by the Council of Ministers on April 9, 1974. As a result, Turkey opened an Embassy in Dhaka in 1976, and Bangladesh opened an Embassy in Ankara in 1981.⁸⁵ According to Gürol Baba, it is impossible to say that Turkey-Bangladesh relations have been intense and robust in the field of foreign policy. Because, until the AKP's policy change, Turkey's foreign policy was mostly focused on the West-centric rather than the Asia-Pacific region.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ Sarısır, Serdar. "Türkiye'nin Bangladeş'i Tanınması ve Türkiye-Bangladeş İlişkilerinin ilk Yılları (1974-1980)". *Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi* 38, 2019. p. 565-594.

⁸⁶ Baba, Gürol. "The Waves of Turkey's Proactive Foreign Policy Hitting South-Asian Coasts: Turkey-Bangladesh Relations." *Journal of Administrative Sciences*, vol.15, no.30. p. 573-584.

However, in August 2019, Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu introduced the “Asia Anew” initiative, signaling Ankara’s desire to be more effective in Asia.⁸⁷

Diplomatic relations between Turkey and Bangladesh developed with the official visit of the then President of Bangladesh Ziaur Rahman to Ankara in 1978. Ziaur Rahman met with the then Prime Minister of Turkey, Bülent Ecevit, and said in a statement at the end of the visit, “This brief visit was very successful, and we have agreed to improve our relations in various fields.” “We have agreed to support each other in the international arena because we have the same views on various international issues,” he added.⁸⁸ Bangladesh supported Turkish dissertations in the international arena, especially on issues such as Cyprus, Continental Shelf, and Economic Zone Delimitation. For example, Bangladesh President Mujibur Rahman visited Egypt in November 1974. At the end of the visit, the Cyprus problem was mentioned in the joint statement published on behalf of the two countries, and it was stated that Egypt and Bangladesh were in favor of a solution based on the island’s independence and territorial integrity, as well as the protection of both communities’ rights.⁸⁹

The official visit of the high-level officials of the two countries has nourished further strengthen relations. Kenan Evren, the then President of Turkey, in 1982, and 1986, then Prime Minister Turgut Özal visited Bangladesh. In addition, in 1997, the then President of Turkey, Süleyman Demirel, attended the silver anniversary (25 years) celebrations of Bangladesh’s independence with Nelson

⁸⁷ Temmuz Yigit Bezmez and Selma Bardakci for The Diplomat. “Turkey’s Turn to the Asia-Pacific.” The Diplomat, 23 Sept. 2020, <https://thediplomat.com/2020/09/turkeys-turn-to-the-asia-pacific/>, (accessed 22.09.2021).

⁸⁸ *Milliyet*, 5.10.1978, p. 1, 3-4.

⁸⁹ *Cumhuriyet*, 12.11.1974, p. 1, 7.

Mandela and Yasser Arafat.⁹⁰ In that year, Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina visited Turkey at the founding Summit of D-8 (Developing-8), an economic cooperation initiative established in 1997 under the leadership of Turkish Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan. Following this, President of Turkey Süleyman Demirel attended the “Second Summit Meeting” of the heads of state and government of eight “D-8” member countries in Bangladesh in March 1999. In October of the same year, the then President of Bangladesh, Shahabuddin Ahmed, also visited Turkey.⁹¹ Later, Bangladesh President Zillur Rahman visited Turkey on 7-10 November 2009 upon the invitation by President Abdullah Gül to attend the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC). Following these visits, various agreements were made between Turkey and Bangladesh until 2009. Trade, economic and technical cooperation, culture, military education and training, banking, shipping, and double taxation are all covered by the agreements. In 2007, the Turkey-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry was founded.⁹²

President of Turkey Abdullah Gül visited Bangladesh on 12-13 February as part of Turkey’s Asian opening in 2010. During this visit, the authorities of Turkey and Bangladesh decided to establish a Turkey-Bangladesh Business Council to develop bilateral trade and industrial cooperation.⁹³ After that, on 13-14

⁹⁰ Rashid, Harun Ur. *International Relations and Bangladesh*. The University Press Limited, 2015. p. 350.

⁹¹ Ullah, Rahmat. ‘*Bangladeş ve Türkiye: İkili İlişkilerin bir Analizi*’, Sosyal ve Beşerî Bilimleri Dergisi, Vol.9, No. 1, 2017, pp. 37.

⁹² Baba, Gürol. “The Waves of Turkey’s Proactive Foreign Policy Hitting South-Asian Coasts: Turkey-Bangladesh Relations.” *Journal of Administrative Sciences*, vol.15, no.30. pp. 579.

⁹³ “Turkey–Bangladesh Relations.” Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey%E2%80%93bangladesh-relations.en.mfa>, (accessed 23.09.2021).

November 2010, Turkey's then Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan visited Bangladesh and became the first Turkish Prime Minister to visit Bangladesh after 21 years. Thus, high-level visits to Bangladesh by two prominent individuals in the same year contributed to the consolidation of relations between Turkey and Bangladesh. During the bilateral meeting, joint decisions were taken between the two countries on health, training, tourism, and defense industry. In addition, both countries pledged to work closely in various international forums to combat all forms of terrorism and maintain world peace and security.⁹⁴ As a result of this visit, Turkish Airlines has started direct flights between Dhaka and Istanbul since December 2010. In addition, the bilateral trade volume, which was only 47 million dollars in 2002 thanks to high-level visits, reached 658 million dollars in 2009, and this figure is expected to reach 3 billion dollars by 2015.⁹⁵

Although the trade relations between Turkey and Bangladesh could not reach 3 billion dollars by 2015, Import and Export values doubled in 2016, and the trade volume increased to 1 billion dollars. According to Guröl Baba, the visit of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is a clear depiction of AKP's proactivity in Bangladesh. His arguments and agenda revealed that Turkey's new foreign policy is trade oriented. Therefore, Erdoğan did not open up the problematic issues of the past, namely, the problems between Pakistan and Bangladesh but used cultural partnerships to achieve greater commercial output. Moreover, this visit was also welcomed by Bangladeshi government. As a continuation of this, Bangladesh Prime minister Sheikh Hasina and the former Foreign Minister Dipu Moni visited Turkey to join the Fourth UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries between 9-13 May 2011. On the summit occasion, Turkey-Bangladesh Business Council was appointed as the official actor to strengthen bilateral trade

⁹⁴ Kaler Kantho, *Agreement with Turkey on health cooperation*, 14 Nov. 2010, <https://www.kalerkantho.com/print-edition/Court/2010/11/15/104526> , (Accessed 23.09.2021).

⁹⁵ Özkan, Mehmet. "Turkey's 'New' Engagements in Africa and Asia: Scope, Content and Implications." *Perceptions: Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 16, No. 3, 2011, pp. 131.

and industrial cooperation, primarily by increasing the presence and network of Turkish companies in Bangladesh.⁹⁶

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina paid an official visit to Turkey on 10-13 April 2012 at the invitation of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. During this visit, the signing of seven agreements between the two countries added a new dimension to bilateral relations. The agreement on cooperation in customs matters was signed by the Minister of Customs and Trade Hayati Yazıcı, and the agreement on mutual promotion and protection of investments was signed by the Minister of Industry and Technology Nihat Ergün. While the Minister of Food, Agriculture and Livestock Mehdi Eker signed the scientific and technical cooperation agreement in the field of agriculture; Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu signed the agreement on the abolition of visas in diplomatic, official, service, and special passports and Turkey's declaration of intent to join the International Jute Working Group. In addition, during the same visit, a sister city protocol was signed between the cities of Konya and Sylhet, and the mayors of the two cities also signed the agreement.⁹⁷

Turkey-Bangladesh diplomatic relations were strained between 2012 and 2016 when Turkey strongly condemned the execution of the leaders of Jamaat-e-Islami, the largest Islamist party in Bangladesh. However, relations between the two countries quickly revived when Bangladesh condemned the attempted coup to overthrow Erdoğan's government on July 15, 2016. Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina sent a message of support to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Sheikh Hasina expressed sincere condolences for the people who lost their lives, backed the democratically elected government and the rule of law. Yet, despite the political setbacks between the two countries,

⁹⁶ Baba, Gürol. "The Waves of Turkey's Proactive Foreign Policy Hitting South-Asian Coasts: Turkey-Bangladesh Relations." *Journal of Administrative Sciences*, vol.15, no.30. pp. 580.

⁹⁷ <https://www.haberler.com/sylhet-sehri-ile-kardes-sehir-protokolu-3535571-haberi/> (Accessed 30.09.2021.)

Bangladesh's State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam left the door open for normalization. Alam believed that no domestic issues could harm the historic Dhaka-Ankara partnership. In 2017, the President of Bangladesh Md. Abdul Hamid came to Turkey to attend a special summit of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) on Palestine. In the same year, the then Prime Minister of Turkey Binali Yıldırım visited Dhaka and Cox's Bazar. As part of his visit, Binali Yıldırım met with President of Bangladesh Abdul Hamid, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, and leader of one of the opposition parties, Khaleda Zia, and laid the foundation stone for the new service building of the Turkish Embassy in Dhaka. This high-level official reciprocal visit of the two countries indicates that relations have started to improve. In the process of reviving relations, a delegation consisting of the Bangladesh Export Promotion Bureau, Investment Development Agency, and Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry visited Turkey in April-May 2017. At that time, 140 people, consisting of Turkish businesspeople, industrialists, and investors, attended various seminars on trade and investment in Turkey. On the other hand, although the diplomatic relations between the two countries were tense, the socio-cultural and historical closeness ensured that the bilateral relations did not break. According to former Bangladesh Ambassador Allama Siddiki, the political-cultural affinity between Turkey and Bangladesh during the previous crisis was much stronger than any bilateral issue.⁹⁸

High-level political contacts and visits developed the relations between the two countries. A delegation headed by former Deputy Prime Minister Bekir Bozdağ attended the 45th OIC Council of Ministers Meeting hosted by Bangladesh on 5-6 May 2018. In the same year, Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali, Former Foreign Minister of Bangladesh, attended the OIC Extraordinary Summit held in Istanbul on May 18, 2018. A delegation headed by Bangladesh Minister of Expatriates'

⁹⁸ Baba, Gürol. "The Waves of Turkey's Proactive Foreign Policy Hitting South-Asian Coasts: Turkey-Bangladesh Relations." *Journal of Administrative Sciences*, vol.15, no.30, 2017, pp. 581.

Welfare and Overseas Employment Mosharraf Hossain and Minister of Shipping Shajahan Khan visited Turkey on 31 May-1 June 2018 and exchanged views on war and martyr memorials and practices related to war veterans.⁹⁹ Bangladesh Liberation War Affairs Minister A.K.M Mozammel Haque visited Turkey on 8-12 October 2018 to exchange views on war and martyr monuments and practices related to war veterans and had a meeting with the Minister of Culture and Tourism, Mehmet Ersoy.¹⁰⁰ The Political consultations between Turkey and Bangladesh were held on 20 May 2019 in Ankara between the delegations led by Deputy Minister Ambassador Sedat Önal and Bangladesh Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs Md Shahidul Haque. During the consultations, bilateral relations, regional and global developments, and cooperation in international organizations were discussed.¹⁰¹

As part of the relations between the two countries, Bangladesh Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen visited Turkey on 14-16 September 2020 and attended the inauguration ceremony of the Bangladesh Embassy in Turkey. During the visit, he met with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu. In a meeting with Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen, Erdoğan showed interest in increasing trade with Bangladesh from one billion dollars to three billion dollars and engaging in various development activities in Bangladesh. In addition, the President of Turkey proclaimed to build a state-of-the-art Turkey-Bangla Friendship Hospital in Dhaka or near Dhaka.¹⁰² In

⁹⁹ Haziran / T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı (mfa.gov.tr) (Accessed 27.09.2021).

¹⁰⁰ <https://www.milliyet.com.tr/yerel-haberler/canakkale/banglades-kurtulus-savasi-isleri-bakani-akm-mozammel-huq-canakkalede-13087629> (Accessed 27.09.2021).

¹⁰¹ <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey%E2%80%93bangladesh-relations.en.mfa> (Accessed 27.09.2021).

¹⁰² Alam, Sorwar. “Exclusive: Stage Is Set for Stronger Turkey-Bangladesh Ties: Top Diplomat.” *Anadolu Ajansı*, 17 Sept. 2020, www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/exclusive-stage-is-set-for-stronger-turkey-bangladesh-ties-top-diplomat/1976443 (Accessed 28.09.2021).

continuation of this Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu visited Bangladesh on 22-23 December 2020 upon the invitation of Bangladesh Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen. During the visit, Çavuşoğlu met with Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Foreign Minister Ak Abdul Momen and inaugurated the new building of the Turkish Embassy in Dhaka. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu told reporters in Dhaka, “Bangladesh is now the rising star of Asia. Bangladesh is one of the critical partners in Turkey’s Asian policy. The progress that Bangladesh has made in the economic sector in a short period is commendable. The prominent businessmen of Turkey want to take the opportunity to invest in different sectors of Bangladesh.”¹⁰³

Turkey-Bangladesh relations, unfortunately, started a serious tension between Dhaka and Ankara at the end of 2012. The reason for this is the unpleasantness between Turkey and the Bangladesh government regarding the procedure of the “Bangladesh International War Crimes Tribunal,” which was established in 2010 to try cases of certain crimes committed during Bangladesh’s independence war in 1971. This situation caused the relations between the two countries to cool down. However, following Bangladesh’s denunciation of the attempted overthrow of Erdogan’s government on July 15, 2016, relations were immediately restored. On the other hand, Turkey’s aid activities to the region increased due to the humanitarian crisis experienced after Rohingya Muslims took refuge in Bangladesh in a new wave of migration in 2017. In this context, First Lady Emine Erdoğan, Minister of Foreign Affairs Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, and Minister of Family and Social Policies Fatma Betül Sayan Kaya visited Bangladesh on 6-7 September 2017. As a result, relations between Turkey and Bangladesh were re-established.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ “Turkish Foreign Minister: Bangladesh A Rising Star in South Asia.” *Dhaka Tribune*, 23 Dec. 2020, www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/2020/12/23/turkish-foreign-minister-bangladesh-a-rising-star-in-south-asia. (Accessed 28.09.2021).

¹⁰⁴ <https://www.bbc.com/bengali/54189784> (Accessed 26.02.2022).

Turkey-Bangladesh relations are in a much better position than earlier. The high-level official visit of the two countries further strengthened relations. Recently, there has been an increase in mutually beneficial political agreements and engagements between Bangladesh and Turkey in both bilateral and multilateral relations. Moreover, there is a Parliamentary Friendship Union between Bangladesh and Turkey. The two parties are currently working on several contracts. Bangladesh also cooperates significantly with Turkey in the fields of international foreign policy, technical assistance, defense, and education. Professor Delwar Hossain, a professor in the Department of International Relations at Dhaka University, said about the new trend in developing Bangladesh-Turkey relations, “Bilateral relations work in many ways. Bangladesh has a historical relationship with Turkey, although there were geopolitical and political differences at one time. However, in the last two decades, the relationship between Bangladesh and Turkey has taken a new turn due to economic and military changes.”¹⁰⁵

3.3. Military/Defense Dimensions

Bangladesh and Turkey have powerful and disciplined armed forces. An important platform of cooperation between Bangladesh and Turkey is the Defense industry. Relations between Bangladesh and Turkey have gained new momentum through cooperation between the two countries in the field of defense. Turkey attaches great importance to Military Financial Cooperation Agreements and Implementation Protocols, renewed every year with Bangladesh. Since Turkey is a NATO member, defense industry products also comply with NATO standards. Therefore, Bangladesh prefers to buy Turkish products. According to Masoud bin Momen, Undersecretary of the Bangladesh

¹⁰⁵ <https://www.newsbangla24.com/national/119122/বাংলাদেশ-তুরস্ক-সম্পর্কের-বরফ-গলছে> (Accessed 28.09.2021).

Foreign Ministry, Bangladesh supplies military equipment from Turkey because it is high quality.¹⁰⁶

Military/Defense relations between Turkey and Bangladesh were discussed for the first time in 1978 during the visit of Bangladesh President Ziaur Rahman to Turkey. During this visit, a meeting was held between the technical representatives of the two sides on 3 October 1978 to determine the policy of military education cooperation relations between Turkey and Bangladesh.¹⁰⁷ Following this, the Turkish-Bangladesh Military Training Cooperation Agreement was signed in Dhaka on March 10, 1981, during the official visit of Foreign Minister İlter Türkmen to Bangladesh. Through this agreement, Turkey and Bangladesh will benefit from each other's military training skills.¹⁰⁸

Turkey's naval special forces taught Bangladesh Navy's special forces in Special Warfare Diving and Salvage as part of this agreement. Bangladesh Navy has developed a particularly close relationship with its Turkish counterpart. Along with South Korea and the United States, Turkey provides military training to SWADS, Bangladesh's most advanced naval unit. Within the scope of Military Field Training, Technical and Scientific Cooperation, and other agreements between the two countries, numerous Bangladesh Army officers receive training at the Turkish Armed Forces Academy every year. However, the number of Turkish soldiers trained by the Bangladesh Armed Forces is not very small. Turkey provides military material support to Bangladesh. Within the scope of a

¹⁰⁶ <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/dunya/banglades-disisleri-bakanligi-mustesari-momen-askeri-techizatleri-kaliteli-oldugu-icin-turkiyeden-tedarik-ediyoruz/2282522> (Accessed 05.10.2021).

¹⁰⁷ Sarısır, Serdar. "Türkiye'nin Bangladeş'i Tanınması ve Türkiye-Bangladeş İlişkilerinin İlk Yılları (1974-1980)". *Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi* 38, 2019. p. 578.

¹⁰⁸

https://www5.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/MGK_/d01/c006/mgk_01006098ss0367.pdf (Accessed 05.10.2021).

military agreement signed between the two countries in 2008, Turkey regularly provides material and equipment support to a military unit of Bangladesh once a year.¹⁰⁹

Bangladesh Army received the Otokar Cobra light armored vehicles from Turkey in 2013. In a major Government-to-Government (G2G) contract in 2015, Turkey offered Bangladesh-guided missile frigates. After two years, a 1 billion dollars order for 680 light armored vehicles was given to the Turkish company Delta Defence. In March 2019, Turkish ROKETSAN signed an agreement to provide Bangladesh with multiple medium-range rocket launchers regiments. Bangladesh Army received TRG-300 KAPLAN multiple launch rocket system (MLRS) developed by ROKETSAN.¹¹⁰ In addition, 41 members of the Bangladesh Armed Forces participated in military training in Turkey on the missile system in the first week of June 2021. A Turnkey 105 and 155-millimeter Cannonball Body and Shell Production Line Establishment Agreement were signed in June 2021 between REPKON and Bangladesh Engineering Factories, specializing in the metal forming industry and establishing turnkey production facilities. According to Uğur Cem Gürpınar, Responsible for Business Development and Corporate Communications at REPKON, “Bangladesh preferred REPKON because of its technology that is leading of its competitors in the world.”¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ Ullah, Rahmat. ‘*Bangladeş ve Türkiye: İkili İlişkilerin bir Analizi*’, Sosyal ve Beşerî Bilimleri Dergisi, Vol.9, No. 1, 2017, pp. 39.

¹¹⁰ “Rocketsan Delivers TRG-300 Kaplan Multiple Launch Rocket System to Bangladesh Army.” *MilitaryLeak*, 7 June 2021, <https://militaryleak.com/2021/06/07/rocketsan-delivers-trg-300-kaplan-multiple-launch-rocket-system-to-bangladesh-army/> (Accessed 05.10.2021).

¹¹¹ Yıldırım, Göksel. “Bangladeş’in Top Mermilerinde Türk İmzası.” *Anadolu Ajansı*, 24 June 2021, www.aa.com.tr/tr/bilim-teknoloji/bangladesin-top-mermilerinde-turk-imzasi/2283912#. (Accessed 05.10.2021).

Cooperation between Bangladesh and the Turkish Armed Forces has recently been strengthened. Turkey's support for repairing Bangladeshi naval ships damaged in the Beirut bombing of Lebanon in August 2020 was an example of strengthening defense ties. According to the Bangladesh-based defense analysis site 'Defseca,' the Bangladesh Navy has ordered three dive support boats of Turkish design from the state-owned defense manufacturer Khulna Shipyard on June 16.¹¹² In addition, Bangladesh Naval Forces Commander in chief Admiral M. Shaheen Iqbal led a delegation that visited Turkey between May 27 and June 4 in 2021. Air Force Chief Marshal Masihuzzaman Serniabat also visited Turkey between 19-25 April 2021 upon the invitation of his Turkish counterpart. During the visit, Lieutenant Colonel Abdullah Ibn Zaid, director of Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the media unit of the Bangladesh army, met with Turkey's air and naval forces officials and the Head of Defense Industries İsmail Demir. Abdullah Ibn Zaid said that issues such as increasing mutual cooperation in the fields of training, shipbuilding, and cyber security were discussed during the meetings.¹¹³ Following this, Bangladesh Army Chief General SM Shafiuddin Ahmed also paid an eight-day visit to Turkey from 18-26 August 2021, where he met with senior Turkish military officials, including the defense minister and the head of the Turkish Defense Industry Presidency, and possible defense cooperation issues, training and exchanges were discussed.¹¹⁴

For developing defense relations between the two countries, a Government-to-Government (G2G) defense memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed

¹¹² "Bangladeş, Türkiye ile Savunma Alanında İş Birliğini Güçlendiriyor." *SAVTÜRK*, 22 June 2021, www.savturk.com/tr/banglades-turkiye-ile-savunma-alaninda-is-birligini-guclendiriyor. (Accessed 07.10.2021).

¹¹³ Sakib, SM Najmus. "Bangladesh Stepping up Defense Ties with Turkey." *Anadolu Ajansı*, 21 June 2021, www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/bangladesh-stepping-up-defense-ties-with-turkey/2280868. (Accessed 07.10.2021).

¹¹⁴ Palma, Porimol. "Ties with Turkey Finding New Turfs." *The Daily Star*, 4 Sept. 2021, www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/ties-turkey-finding-new-turfs-2167826. (Accessed 07.10.2021).

between Bangladesh and Turkey on 29 June 2021. According to İsmail Demir, president of the Presidency of Defense Industries, an export agreement was signed with Bangladesh for various ROKETSAN products.¹¹⁵ All these are signs of the healthy development of Bangladesh-Turkey defense cooperation. According to Shahab Enam Khan, a professor in the Department of International Relations at Jahangirnagar University, Turkey and Bangladesh are “natural friends” and should have a strategic relationship. Khan said innovations in the Turkish defense industry could be beneficial for Bangladesh, which plans to diversify its military equipment in this regard. On the other hand, Khan noted that military cooperation between the two countries would contribute to peace and stability in the region.¹¹⁶ As a result, Bangladesh became the fourth country to purchase the most weapons from Turkey in the first four months of 2021, importing \$60 million worth of weapons from Turkey.¹¹⁷ However, Bangladesh is preparing to become one of Turkey’s largest defense equipment customers in the next five years.

3.4. Economic Dimensions

Bangladesh and Turkey are one of the mutual trade partners. The first contact in the economic field between the two countries started on July 27, 1976, when an economy and trade delegation from Bangladesh came to Ankara. As a result of the negotiations with this delegation, a trade agreement was signed between the two countries. Moreover, an agreement was reached on the signing of a cultural

¹¹⁵ Canlı, Zeynep. “Roketsan Bangladeş’E İHRACAT Yapacak.” *Anadolu Ajansı*, 29 June 2021, www.aa.com.tr/tr/ekonomi/roket-san-banglades-e-ihracat-yapacak/2288878. Accessed 07.10.2021).

¹¹⁶ “Bangladeş, Türkiye ile Savunma Alanında İs Birliğini Güçlendiriyor.” *SAVTÜRK*, 22 June 2021, www.savturk.com.tr/banglades-turkiye-ile-savunma-alaninda-is-birligini-guclendiriyor. (Accessed 07.10.2021).

¹¹⁷ Sakib, SM Najmus. “Bangladesh’s Army Chief to Visit Turkey to Enhance Defense Ties.” *Anadolu Ajansı*, 20 Aug. 2021, www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/bangladeshs-army-chief-to-visit-turkey-to-enhance-defense-ties/2341332. (Accessed 07.10.2021).

agreement alongside economic and technical cooperation. According to the agreement, both countries will facilitate imports and exports to each other's territories in accordance with their respective laws, rules, and regulations. The two countries agreed to set up a mixed economic commission to explore opportunities to enhance cooperation. During this time, Bangladesh delegation held constructive meetings with the Ministries of Transport and Commerce, representatives of the State Planning Organization, and Istanbul Chambers of Commerce and Industry.¹¹⁸

Following the Trade Agreement signed in Ankara on July 27, 1976, a Turkish delegation was sent to Dhaka between 3-10 March 1979, under the chairmanship of the Minister of State Economic Enterprises, Kenan Bulutođlu, to hold talks in order to improve the trade and economic relations between the Republic of Turkey and the People's Republic of Bangladesh. The establishment of a joint trade council between the two nations was decided during the meetings between the Minister of State Economic Enterprises Kenan Bulutođlu, and the Bangladeshi authorities.¹¹⁹ Furthermore, The Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement signed in Dhaka on March 9, 1979, between the Republic of Turkey and the People's Republic of Bangladesh was approved by the Council of Ministers on June 3, 1979. Through this meeting, the two countries desired to strengthen their existing friendship and brotherhood further. However, when it comes to 1980, the trade relations between the two countries seem to have become more active with the initiatives of private capital. For example, a company called 'Northern Trades Ltd' in Bangladesh applied to the Turkish Embassy in Dhaka to purchase durable consumer goods from Turkey.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ "Bangladeř, Trkiye ile Savunma Alanında İř Birliđini Gçlendiriyor." *SAVTRK*, 22 June 2021, www.savturk.com/tr/banglades-turkiye-ile-savunma-alaninda-is-birligini-guclendiriyor. (Accessed 07.10.2021).

¹¹⁹ *Milliyet*, 09.10. 1979, p. 11.

¹²⁰ *Cumhuriyet*, 17.01.1980, p. 6.

Trade relations between Bangladesh and Turkey developed between 1975 and 1980. Turkey's imports from Bangladesh: 4 million 638 thousand dollars in 1975, 6 million 153 thousand dollars in 1976, 7 million 65 thousand dollars in 1977, 9 million 833 thousand dollars in 1978, 5 million 895 thousand dollars in 1979, and 4 million 981 thousand dollars in 1980. Most of these imports were jute, cross-stitch, and sacks. However, Turkey's exports to Bangladesh started in 1977, and a foreign exchange income of 7 million 650 thousand dollars was obtained by selling 49 passenger wagons and some cotton to Bangladesh.¹²¹ The July 1976 Trade Agreement was effective in increasing trade volume, particularly after 1976; however, it is observed that Turkey imported mostly from Bangladesh at that time. To further strengthen the economic relations in the two countries, an agreement on 'The Reciprocal Encouragement and Protection of Investments' was signed between Turkey and Bangladesh on 12 November 1987. The agreement's purpose was to promote greater economic cooperation between the two countries, mainly to encourage investments by the investors of the party country in the other country, contribute to the growth of the economies of these countries, and protect the investors against expropriation and other damages.¹²²

Turkey-Bangladesh trade relations did not develop as expected. Therefore, to strengthen the economic and trade relations between the two countries, the Joint Economic Commission (KEK) was established in 1979 and the DEİK/Turkey-Bangladesh Business Council in 2011. These two institutions play a vital role in increasing investment, trade, exports, and imports between Turkey and Bangladesh. Apart from these, 'The Turkey Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce & Industry (TBCCI)' was established in June 2007 to improve the trade,

¹²¹ Milliyet, 4.10.1978, p. 3.

¹²² "T.C. Ticaret Bakanlığı." <https://www.ticaret.gov.tr/yurtdisi-teskilati/guney-asya/banglades/ikili-anlasmalar/iki-ulke-arasinda-arasinda-ticaretin-altyapisini-olusturan-anlasma-ve-protokoller> (Accessed 14.08.2021).

economic and social relations between the two countries. With the guidance of TBCCI, Bangladeshi businesspeople have been participating in the Turkey-World Trade Bridge since 2008. However, TBCCI was closed in late 2016 due to its links with the Gülen Movement, which was declared a terrorist organization in Turkey.¹²³

Trade between Turkey and Bangladesh has gained momentum since the 2000s. The trade volume, which was 47 million dollars in 2002, increased approximately 21 times in 8 years and exceeded 1 billion dollars in 2010. Considering the exports from Turkey to Bangladesh, it is noteworthy that since 2009, Turkey's exports have been over \$100 million. However, exports to Bangladesh exceeded 200 million USD for the first time in 2012 and decreased between 2013 and 2014. Turkey exported a total of 149 million dollars to Bangladesh in 2014. In the same year, Bangladesh exported 1 billion 29 million dollars to Turkey. In 2015, Turkey's exports to Bangladesh increased by 34.7% and reached 200 million dollars. In the same year, Bangladesh exported 996 million dollars to Turkey. However, this increase continued in 2016, and Turkey's exports to Bangladesh increased by 32.7% and reached 264 million dollars. On the other hand, in 2016, Turkey's imports from Bangladesh decreased by 13.1% compared to the previous year and amounted to 881 million US dollars. Finally, the trade volume between the two countries in 2016 was approximately 1.2 billion US dollars, and there was no significant change compared to the previous year.¹²⁴ While the trade volume between Turkey and Bangladesh was 1 billion dollars from 2010 to 2017, the trade volume from 2018 to 2020 fell below 1 billion dollars. In addition, the trade volume between the two countries in 2020 increased by 13.5% compared to the previous year and

¹²³ The Independent. "Gülenists Exist in Bangladesh." [Theindependentbd.com](https://m.theindependentbd.com/printversion/details/104302), 16 July 2017, <https://m.theindependentbd.com/printversion/details/104302>. (Accessed 14.08.2021).

¹²⁴ "Bangladeş Ziyaret Notları (2018)". Dış Ekonomik İlişkiler Kurulu (DEİK) <https://www.deik.org.tr/uploads/banglades-ziyaret-notlari.pdf> (Accessed 14.08.2021).

reached approximately 918 million dollars. As of 2020, Turkey's imports from Bangladesh increased by 21.1% compared to last year and reached 569 million dollars. When looking at Turkey's foreign trade numbers with Bangladesh, exports increased from more than 200 million dollars in 2012 to 349 million dollars in 2020.¹²⁵

Table 1. Turkey-Bangladesh Foreign Trade Values (Million US Dollars)

<i>Year</i>	<i>Export</i>	<i>Import</i>	<i>Volume</i>	<i>Balance</i>
2007	63,0	245,7	308,7	-182,7
2008	69,5	447,7	517,2	-378,2
2009	134,7	523,6	658,3	-388,8
2010	169,5	844,7	1014,2	-675,1
2011	132,2	896	1028,2	-763,8
2012	214,1	766,3	980,5	-552,1
2013	195,5	1004,4	1199,9	-808,8
2014	148,5	1028,7	1177,2	-880,2
2015	199,9	996	1195,9	-796,1
2016	264	881	1145	-617,0
2017	294,5	737,5	1032	-442,9
2018	373	484	857	-111
2019	427	508	935	-81
2020	349	569	918	-220

*Source: TURKSTAT, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Republic of Turkey-Ministry of Trade.*¹²⁶

¹²⁵ Bangladeş Ülke Profili “T.C. Ticaret Bakanlığı.”
https://ticaret.gov.tr/data/5f1ff69513b87604785508c9/Banglade%C5%9F_%C3%9Cİke_Profil_i_2021.pdf (Accessed 14.08.2021).

¹²⁶

https://ticaret.gov.tr/data/5f1ff69513b87604785508c9/Banglade%C5%9F_%C3%9Cİke_Profil_i_2021.pdf (Accessed 14.08.2021).

On August 5, 2019, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşođlu emphasized the importance of increasing dialogue between Turkey and Asian countries in the fields of trade, investment, education, defense industry, technology, culture, and politics within the multidimensional foreign policy approach “Asia Anew.” The ‘Asia Anew’ initiative aimed to diversify the geographical distribution of Turkey’s financial investments, expand the trade capacity of the private sector, improve academic cooperation, and increase social interaction. In this context, Bangladesh is expected to be one of the key partners of Turkey in the region in terms of its economic growth rate, young population, and strategic importance.¹²⁷

Turkey’s ‘Asia Anew’ policy aims to strengthen ties with Asian countries, but it also recognizes that Turkey’s relations with Europe will be maintained. In the opening speech of the “Asia Anew” workshop held in December 2019, Minister of Foreign Affairs Mevlüt Çavuşođlu said, “On the one hand, we will continue to take our place in the European integration process, and we will maintain our key position in NATO, the strongest alliance in the world. At the same time, we will continue to assume our key role as the westernmost Asian and the easternmost European in the re-flow of history towards Asia”, also reveals Turkey’s position and role in this opening.¹²⁸

According to Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşođlu, Bangladesh has become the rising star of South Asia and a model of sustainable development for the whole world. Therefore, he believed that Bangladesh would be one of the most critical

¹²⁷ Islam, Nazmul. “Bangladesh: Turkey’s Key Partner in Asia Anew Initiative: Opinion.” Daily Sabah, Daily Sabah, 24 Dec. 2020, www.dailysabah.com/opinion/op-ed/bangladesh-turkeys-key-partner-in-asia-anew-initiative. (Accessed 14.08.2021).

¹²⁸ Buyar, Cengiz. “Yükselen bir değer olarak Asya ve Türkiye’nin rolü.” Anadolu Ajansı, <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/analiz/yukselen-bir-deger-olarak-asya-ve-turkiye-nin-rolu/2208459#!>. (Accessed 26.02.2022).

partners of Turkey's Asian initiative.¹²⁹ The trade volume between Turkey and Bangladesh was approximately 1 billion dollars last year. However, both counterparties were aiming to increase their trade volume by 2 billion dollars next year. Regarding Turkey-Bangladesh relations, Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu said, "We need to increase our trade to at least 2 billion dollars as soon as possible."¹³⁰ However, Bangladesh and Turkey have been negotiating a free trade deal since 2012, but the deal's signing was stalled due to complications in Turkey's EU membership process.

Recently, Turkey's textile companies have been increasing their investments in Bangladesh. Some companies open offices in Bangladesh, while others move their factories to Bangladesh. In this framework, Turkish companies operate in Bangladesh in textiles, ready-to-wear, carpets, training, and software. In 2018 Turkish Koç Holding entered Bangladesh in the field of energy and household appliances, purchased approximately 57 percent of the shares of Singer Bangladesh Limited for 75 million dollars, which has the largest retail network in Bangladesh. In addition, Koç Holding subsidiary Aygaz, which has the largest share and the fastest growing trend in domestic LPG consumption, decided to enter the Asian market with Bangladesh. A partnership agreement was signed in 2020 for the company, which will be managed in a 50-50 partnership with United Enterprises for LPG supply, filling, and distribution in Bangladesh.¹³¹

¹²⁹ Islam, Nazmul. "Türkiye'Nin Yeniden Asya Girişimi ve Bangladeş." Anadolu Ajansı, www.aa.com.tr/tr/analiz/turkiye-nin-yeniden-asya-girisimi-ve-banglades/2008381. (Accessed 14.08.2021).

¹³⁰ <https://www.haberler.com/bakan-cavusoglu-turkiye-banglades-iliskileri-13599616-haberi/> (Accessed 14.08.2021).

¹³¹ <https://www.aygaz.com.tr/kurumsal/basin/aygaz-ve-united-enterprises-bangladesin-aygaz> (Accessed 14.08.2021).

Bangladesh is identified as a potential area for Turkish investments in the shipbuilding industry. Turkey to Bangladesh mainly exports legumes, borates, iron, marble, semi-finished products from non-alloy steel, iron-steel bars, aluminum plates, sheets, strips, washing, drying, ironing machines, and weaving materials, new and second-hand textile machinery, textile chemicals, and glass. The leading items in Turkey's imports are jute, sacks, and bags used in packing goods, ready-made clothing, shoes, and ceramic products. The Bangladesh-Turkey Joint Economic Commission meets every two years to discuss increasing bilateral trade and investment.¹³²

3.5. Social-Cultural Dimensions

The relations between the Turkish and Bengali nations have deep-rooted historical and cultural foundations. They have a lot in common in terms of culture and society. According to Ataöv, the first Turkish settlers who came to Bengal in 1203 intermarried with local people. Thus, a new "Bengal-Turkish" society had emerged. Moreover, the coexistence of independent religious beliefs, Islamic values, and secular consciousness can be seen in Turkey and Bangladesh's cultural, social, and political history. According to Ataöv, successive Turkish rulers who came to Bengal ensured the political unity of Bengal. The arrival of the Turks and their rule was a blessing for Bengal.¹³³

Islam entered Bengal both by land and sea. Turkish conquerors came by land with their religion, culture, and notion of government, while Arab traders came by waterway. The Turks came intending to establish political power. The Arabs came to trade during the trading season and left when the season was over.

¹³² <https://www.atonet.org.tr/Uploads/Birimler/Internet/Alt%20Tan%C4%B1t%C4%B1m/2020-08-20-%C3%9Cİke%20Raporlar%C4%B1/Banglade%C5%9F.pdf> (Accessed 14.08.2021).

¹³³ Ataöv, Türkkaya. "Bangla Literature- in Brief." *Emerging Bangladesh Beckons*, Embassy of Bangladesh, Ankara, 2017, pp. 33–44.

However, the situation was different for the Turkish conquerors. They conquered, built a kingdom and a government, and took further steps to strengthen their position.¹³⁴ According to Sabuj, the spread of Islam in the region occurred in several distinct phases, such as the first transmission of the religion's message to Bengal by 9th century Arab traders and saints and then the conquest of Turkish soldiers in the 13th century. Islamization in the history of Bengal first started in 1204, when the Turkish commander Ikhtiyar Uddin Muhammad bin Bakhtiyar Khalji, who came from Central Asia, established a Muslim government in the Bengal region. Then, until June 23, 1757, various Muslim kings are known to have ruled Bengal.¹³⁵

Although Turkey and Bangladesh are geographically far from each other, there are interesting similarities in the social and cultural elements of the two countries. Moreover, cultural partnerships and influences between the two countries are stronger than institutional and political ties. The most valuable of such partnerships is that the Bengalis have adopted the Turkish-Islamic model. Sufism profoundly influenced Bengali Muslims. Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi is also an influential figure in the cultural field of Bangladesh. Hazrat Shah Jalal (1271-1346), one of Rumi's disciples in the 13th century, was an influential religious figure in the Eastern region of Bengal during the spread of Islam through Sufism. According to Turkish Ambassador Devrim Öztürk, Sufism established a spiritual bond between the Bengal and Anatolian regions. In addition, Turkey participated in the second "International Sufi Fest" held at Dhaka Shilpakala Academy in 2018 with a fascinating group of whirling dervishes. Devrim Öztürk added that this festival was an excellent opportunity to present our own Sufi legacy to a very passionate Bengali audience and learn more about the cultural dimension of Bengali Sufism. Furthermore, formerly known as "Zia International Airport," Bangladesh's second busiest airport was

¹³⁴ https://en.banglapedia.org/index.php?title=Islam,_Bengal (Accessed 10.10.2021).

¹³⁵ Ahmed, Mr. Sabuj. "Islamic Archeological Heritages in Bangladesh." *Emerging Bangladesh Beckons*, Embassy of Bangladesh, Ankara, 2017, pp. 53–54.

renamed “Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport” in 2010 to honor Hazrat Shah Jalal. In 2012, a sister city protocol was signed between the cities of Konya and Sylhet. On the other hand, according to Devrim Öztürk, the main elements that form the basis of the brotherly relations between the Bengal and the Turkish nation are the social ties with the common cultural and religious values between the two nations. In addition, the two countries are determined to maintain and further develop this relationship in many ways. Based on this, great importance is attached to the continuation of regular cultural activities among the relevant institutions at full pace. For example, Turkey hosted many students from Bangladesh Children’s Academy on the occasion of the April 23 Children’s Festival organized by the Turkish national broadcaster TRT.¹³⁶

Recognition of Bangladesh by Turkey in 1974 strengthened the social and cultural ties between the two countries. For example, one of the main roads in Bangladesh was named ‘Mustafa Kamal Atatürk Avenue’ in 1982 as a sign of social and cultural friendship between the two countries. On the other hand, two roads in Ankara, the capital of Turkey, were named subsequent two former Presidents of Bangladesh, ‘Sheikh Mujibur Rahman’ and ‘Ziaur Rahman.’ In addition, the name of the Turkish language center in Dhaka Military Barracks was named “Mustafa Kemal Turkish Learning Center.” Bangladesh’s inclusion as one of the D-8 members in 1997 further strengthened the ties between the two countries.¹³⁷

Although diplomatic relations have continued since then, economic, and political relations between the two countries could not be sufficiently established until 2010. After 2010, besides the deep political and commercial relations between

¹³⁶ “Exclusive Interview of The Ambassador Devrim Öztürk To the Daily Observer.” <http://dhaka.emb.mfa.gov.tr/Mission/ShowAnnouncement/341482> (Accessed 10.10.2021).

¹³⁷ Ullah, Rahmat. “*Bangladeş ve Türkiye: İkili İlişkilerin bir Analizi*”, Sosyal ve Beşerî Bilimleri Dergisi, Vol. 9, No. 1, 2017, pp. 30-44.

the two countries, an increase was observed in cultural relations as well. For example, Turkish TV series, which are seen as Turkey's soft power in Bangladesh media, have profound effects. According to Turkish Ambassador Devrim Öztürk, Turkish TV series ranks second among the countries that export the most TV series after American TV series. Turkish TV series are broadcast in more than 140 countries. Some TV serials are also very popular in Bangladesh.¹³⁸ These are primarily historical dramas depicting the time of the mighty Ottoman Empire. Thanks to the Turkish TV series, the Bangladeshi audience's interest in Turkey has increased even more. So much so that Bangladeshi audiences follow Turkey's history, touristic places, culture, famous dishes, actors, and even ordinary news about Turkey, whether from traditional media or social media. In addition, the news about Turkey in the Bangladesh media is more on the agenda than in the past. More than five dramas a week air on four channels in Bangladesh. These serials are broadcast after being dubbed in Bangla.¹³⁹ In addition, the influence of Turkish TV series is also reflected in the consumption culture of Bangladesh. For example, it has been observed that a few stores in shopping centers are named "Turkey Fashion," "Hurrem Sultan Fashion," "Turkee Avaya," "Turkee Hizab." The purpose of these names is to attract the attention of customers. Intercultural relations have shown significant improvement in recent times with the spread of marriages between Bengalis and Turks. Thus, the relations between Turkey and Bangladesh turn into individual relations beyond the cultural, political, and economic fields.

There are also developments in the education sector between the two countries. After 2010, there has been an increase in the number of students coming to Turkey for education (both with scholarships and self-funding). Turkey has been offering various opportunities to Bangladeshi academics for a long time. For

¹³⁸ <http://dhaka.emb.mfa.gov.tr/Mission/ShowAnnouncement/341482> (Accessed 10.10.2021).

¹³⁹ "Bangladeşli Gençlerin Türkçe Merakı Artıyor." *Sondakika.com*, SonDakika.com, 1 June 2018, <https://www.sondakika.com/haber/haber-bangladesli-genclerin-turkce-meraki-artiyor-10905877/?yodk> (Accessed 10.10.2021).

example, The Council of Higher Education of Turkey (YÖK) and the Bangladesh University Grant Commission (UGC) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) in July 2017 during the YÖK President's visit to Dhaka. On this occasion, a total of 12 doctoral scholarships were awarded. This MoU also allows the parties to increase the number of students and fields of study. Turkey granted state scholarships to 379 Bangladeshi students between 1992-2018. In addition, the "Turkey Scholarship" was awarded to 68 Bangladeshi students for the 2017-2018 period.¹⁴⁰ Turkish students also study in Bangladesh by their own means, but this number is very small.

Bangladeshi students who come to Turkey to study achieve great academic success in their education process. According to Bangladesh Ambassador M. Allama Siddiki, "Bangladeshi students are basically doing well here. They are well-mannered, hardworking, peace-loving, and also, they have some opportunities in Turkey." He acknowledged that in the last three years, Bangladeshi students succeeded to be named among the top 20 international students in Turkey and were deemed worthy of the presidential award in the country. "Also, there are five Bangladeshi students-turned-teachers in different Turkish universities." Bangladeshi students who come to Turkey to study by winning 'Türkiye Scholarships' and other scholarships further strengthen the cultural relations between the two countries.¹⁴¹

3.6. Conclusion

To sum, bilateral relations between Turkey and Bangladesh have developed despite some setbacks. Diplomatic relations between Turkey and Bangladesh have been generally friendly and cooperative since its establishment in 1974. In

¹⁴⁰ <https://www.observerbd.com/details.php?id=126418> (Accessed 10.10.2021).

¹⁴¹ Zorlu, Faruk. "Turkey Is My 2nd Home": Bangladeshi Envoy's Bittersweet Farewell." *Anadolu Ajansı*, 17 Oct. 2020, www.aa.com.tr/en/life/-turkey-is-my-2nd-home-bangladeshi-envoys-bittersweet-farewell/2009702 (Accessed 10.10.2021).

addition, with Bangladesh President Ziaur Rahman's first visit to Turkey in 1978, diplomatic relations between the two countries gained momentum. It is seen that right after Turkey's recognition of Bangladesh, it tried to support Bangladesh in the international arena. With Ziaur Rahman's visit to Turkey, it was decided that the two countries should support each other politically and develop economic relations in the international arena, and it became more concrete. Bangladesh also supported Turkey in the international arena, especially on the Cyprus issue. Since the beginning of 2010, the relationship has progressed in a positive direction for both parties. The main features of Turkish-Bangladeshi ties include economic and trade contacts, as well as collaboration in the defense industry and military training.

CHAPTER 4

INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL DIMENSIONS OF TURKEY- BANGLADESH PARTNERSHIP

4.1. Introduction

Turkey and Bangladesh have strengthened their relations by supporting each other in the international arena. Both countries are members of the OIC, D8 and some other organizations. In this chapter deals with the international and regional aspects of Turkey-Bangladesh relations by focusing on their cooperation in the frameworks of OIC, D-8 and ASEAN.

4.2. OIC (Organization of Islamic Cooperation)

The Organization of Islamic Conference was founded by a resolution made at the inaugural Islamic Summit Conference in Rabat on September 22-25, 1969, in response to the outrage sparked in the Islamic world by Israel's occupation of Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque on August 21, 1969. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation is the second-largest intergovernmental organization after the United Nations, with 57 member states from four continents. The main purpose of the OIC is to address the Muslim people's problems and create a common position that will represent the Muslim world. The organization's name was changed to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) at the 38th Council of Foreign Ministers held in Astana in June 2011. Turkey became a member of the OIC in 1969.¹⁴² Bangladesh got the OIC membership in 1974.¹⁴³

¹⁴² https://www.mfa.gov.tr/OIC_en.en.mfa (Accessed 20.12.2021).

In the aftermath of World War II, several Muslim countries were freed from colonization and took their place on the stage of history as independent states in the international arena.¹⁴⁴ Third-world countries had attempted to build new forms in reaction to the bipolar world system. The most popular of these was the Non-Aligned Movement.¹⁴⁵ Many Muslim countries also took part in this formation, as they had just gained their independence. The Arab League was established as an alternative to this formation. Arab League is a regional in nature and does not include non-Arabs. This movement took on a negative identity under the influence of Nasserist Arab nationalism. The World Islamic Congress and the World Islamic Union organizations¹⁴⁶ also draw attention in this period. Nigerian Prime Minister Ahmet Bello put forward the idea of establishing an organization representing all Muslims in 1965. This idea was later developed by Saudi leader Faisal and Moroccan King Hassan II, and negotiations were held with Muslim countries. For this purpose, Faisal held meetings in Iran, Jordan, Sudan, and Pakistan. Some countries initially suspected these actions of Faisal. Some radical nationalist Arab states saw these attempts of Faisal as a Pan-Islamic movement and perceived them as a threat. For example, according to Egypt, this formation was a movement established under the leadership of the USA, just like the Baghdad Pact.¹⁴⁷ The defeat of countries

¹⁴³ Raihan, Md Saikat. "The Role of OIC as an International Donor Agency and Bangladesh." *Academia.edu*, 1 Jan. 2018, https://www.academia.edu/36568121/OIC_and_Bangladesh. (Accessed 28.12.2021).

¹⁴⁴ Emerson, Rupert, and Ataöv Türkkaya. *Sömürgelerin uluslaşması: Asya ve Afrika Halklarının Ortaya çıkışları*. Türk Siyasi İlimler Derneği, 1965.

¹⁴⁵ Willetts, Peter. *The Non-Aligned Movement: The Origins of a Third World Alliance*. F. Pinter, 1982.

¹⁴⁶ Qureshi, M. Naeem. "Dünya islâm Kongresi- TDV islâm Ansiklopedisi." *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/dunya-islam-kongresi> (Accessed 21.12.2021).

¹⁴⁷ Ahsan, Al 'Abdullah. *OIC, the Organization of the Islamic Conference: An Introduction to an Islamic Political Institution*. The International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1998, pp. 17-18.

such as Egypt and Syria in the Six-Day Wars of 1967 caused the Arab nationalist secular states to lose their power, while the hand of conservative states such as the Saudis became stronger. In these wars, the eastern side of Jerusalem was also captured by Israel. After the Arab Israeli war in 1967, the desire to burn down the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem by a Jew on August 21, 1969, was caused outrage. Consequently, with the participation of 24 Islamic countries, the First Islamic Conference was held in Rabat on 22-25 September 1969, and the foundations of the Organization of the Islamic Conference were laid.¹⁴⁸

The objective of the OIC is to maintain international peace and harmony and contribute to the resolution of disputes and conflicts between member states. The most influential economic organs of the Organization are the Economic and Commercial Cooperation Committee, the Permanent Financial Committee, the Economic, Cultural, and Social Issues Committee, and the Islamic Development Bank. In this context, the Organization's ultimate economic goal is to establish the Islamic Common Market. OIC adopts strategies to increase economic and commercial cooperation between Islamic countries in order to achieve its goals. The Common Market expresses economic, social, and political cooperation in the short term and an integration process in the long term. This process requires the member states to come together around some basic principles. The most significant of these principles is respecting the member states' sovereign rights and their equality in rights and responsibilities. Member States strive to promote good governance, democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law at the national and international levels.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸ Acar, Merve. "Uluslararası Bir Aktör Olarak İslam İşbirliği Teşkilatı". *Barış Araştırmaları ve Çatışma Çözümleri Dergisi* 7, 2019, pp. 51-68.

¹⁴⁹ Öztürkler, Harun. "İslam İşbirliği Teşkilatı: Amaç ve Bütçe Yönünden Bir Değerlendirme." *ORSAM*, 2016, www.orsam.org.tr/tr/islam-isbirligi-teskilati-amac-ve-butce-yonunden-bir-degerlendirme/. (Accessed 22.12.2021).

The OIC has achieved significant success in many areas since its founding. However, considering the size of the member countries' population and their broad geography, it can be said that OIC has performed far less than its potential and has not been able to provide the desired level of benefits to the member countries.¹⁵⁰

Turkey has been an active country in the OIC since its establishment. The period in which the Organization of Islamic Cooperation was established coincides with the years when Turkey decided to pursue a multidimensional foreign policy instead of a one-sided policy on the western axis. With the Johnson Letter in 1964, Turkey's disappointment with the United States on the Cyprus issue and leaving the Cyprus issue alone in the UN Platform in 1965 revealed that alternative strategies should be followed in foreign policy. In this context, Turkey, together with the entire Islamic world, reacted to the burning of the Qibla Masjid in 1969, condemning the event, and decided to participate in the Islamic Summit. However, the perception of the Summit as a platform to discuss a religious issue based on the "Islamic Jihad" has led to debates on secularism in Turkey's domestic politics.¹⁵¹ For this reason, Turkey attended the first Islamic Summit with a low profile at the level of the foreign minister and stated that it would comply with the conference decisions to the extent that it complies with the principles of the constitution and foreign policy.¹⁵²

Turkey-OIC relations, which developed increasingly in the 1980s and 1990s, reached the highest level in the 2000s with Turkey's policies aimed at taking an

¹⁵⁰ Sey, Nurbay. İslam İşbirliği Teşkilatı Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme: Ekonomik Sorunlar Ve Fırsatlar. *İslam Ekonomisi ve Finansı Dergisi*, 6, 2020, pp. 57.

¹⁵¹ Ankara Haber. "Sunay, İslam Zirvesi'ne Katılmıyor". *Cumhuriyet Gazetesi*. 16 Sept. 1969. Cumhuriyet Arşivi.

¹⁵² Doğan, Soner. "İslam İşbirliği Teşkilatı Ve Türkiye'nin Dönem Başkanlığı." *İNSAMER*, 4 Dec. 2016, pp. 15, <https://www.insamer.com/tr/uploads/pdf/rapor-islam-isbirligi-teskilati-ve-turkiye-nin-donem-baskanligi.pdf>.

active and directing role in the OIC platform. In this context, the AK Party's coming to power in 2002 marked a significant turning point in bilateral relations. Since this period, the AK Party has started a new opening process in Turkey's relations with the Middle East countries and the Islamic world. As part of this process, Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu was elected as the General Secretary of the OIC with the support of the AK Party. Thus, Turkey has become a directly active actor in the OIC platform. One of the most critical foreign policy goals of the AK Party was that Turkey, as an "order-creating actor," should play a leading role in establishing and shaping the regional and international order and be directly involved in solving problems.¹⁵³

With İhsanoğlu's secretariat, the AK Party has achieved significant gains in its goals to restructure the OIC with some reforms and bring a new dimension to bilateral relations in which Turkey is more active and direct. During İhsanoğlu's term as the OIC Secretary-General, the significant issues that OIC focused on are as follows: Developing the dialogue mechanisms among Islamic countries and coordination between religious authorities, combating separatist movements such as the sectarian conflict in the Islamic world, fighting against Islamophobia and working for the actual learning of Islam, making reforms regarding the institutional structure and functioning of the OIC, and developing inter-religious dialogue.¹⁵⁴

During İhsanoğlu's secretariat tenure, significant steps were taken regarding the targets mentioned above, and some developments were achieved in matters concerning the Islamic world. However, considering Turkey's active role in the OIC, significant gains have been made in terms of increasing Turkey's regional

¹⁵³ Köktaş, Rumeysa. "Türkiye'nin Ortadoğu'daki Bölgesel Örgütlerle İlişkileri: İİT, KİK, D-8, ARAP LİĞİ VE ECO." *Bilgi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 20, 2018, pp. 52.

¹⁵⁴ İhsanoğlu Ekmeleddin. *Yeni Yüzyılda islam dünyası islam Konferansı teşkilatı (1969-2009)*. Timaş Yayınları, 2013. pp. 306-314.

and international effectiveness. Therefore, Turkey's relations with the OIC have created an important platform to become an active country in the regional and global arena.¹⁵⁵

Bangladesh is the third-largest country in the Muslim world. Bangladesh's Muslim community makes up roughly 90% of the country's population. However, it took time for Bangladesh to take its place in the Muslim world for some reason. The Muslim world's misconceptions regarding Bangladesh's liberation war and Pakistan's support in 1971 were mainly responsible for this. Bangladesh achieved independence from Pakistan in 1971. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman tried to build friendly relations with the Arab world. Therefore, Bangladesh provided a medical team and humanitarian supplies to Arabs and Palestinians during the 1973 Arab-Israeli war. The Arab countries highly praised it, and their attitude towards Bangladesh changed significantly. They allowed Bangladesh to join the NAM (Non-Aligned Movement) in exchange. Since nearly all Muslim countries were members of the NAM, the membership of NAM automatically facilitates Bangladesh's entry to the OIC. Thus, Bangladesh got the OIC membership in 1974.¹⁵⁶ Delegates from Bangladesh attended the conference and discussed various issues and activities related to OIC and Bangladesh in particular. The Bangladesh delegation played a leading role in various conferences. In the 70s, Bangladesh's membership in Al Quds Committee and the OIC Peace Committee demonstrated its key role in the affairs of Islamic countries. Bangladesh participated in all the Summits of OIC including the Special Summits and played a crucial role in the OIC in promoting the Muslim Ummah's (brotherhood) interests. When Iraq and Iran were at war

¹⁵⁵ Köktaş, Rumeysa. "Türkiye'nin Ortadoğu'daki Bölgesel Örgütlerle İlişkileri: İİT, KİK, D-8, ARAP LİĞİ VE ECO." *Bilgi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 20, 2018, pp. 53.

¹⁵⁶ Raihan, Md Saikat. "The Role of OIC as an International Donor Agency and Bangladesh." *Academia.edu*, 1 Jan. 2018, https://www.academia.edu/36568121/OIC_and_Bangladesh. (Accessed 28.12.2021).

from 1980 to 1988, it attempted multiple times with other countries to bring peace to the two countries. Bangladesh considers Islamic countries' policies when it comes to international and national affairs. Bangladesh has a fundamental policy of not supporting an Islamic country in a conflict with another Islamic country. Instead, Bangladesh encourages them to resolve the conflict peacefully among themselves or through the OIC peace committee.¹⁵⁷

Bangladesh has made significant contributions in certain areas, Such as the Islamic Common Market, Islamic University of Technology, Islamic Solidarity Games, Islamic Solidarity Fund, Insurance and Reinsurance, Food Security, and Agricultural Development. Furthermore, Bangladesh has played a notable role in some crises in the Muslim world, such as the Iraq-Iran war, the Palestinian crisis, the Afghan crisis, and the Bosnian crisis. It has been expressing strong support for establishing an independent Palestinian state and restoring Arab lands from Israeli occupation. The OIC has created a lasting image of Bangladesh in the Muslim Ummah (brotherhood) and positively reflects bilateral and multilateral relations with Islamic countries.¹⁵⁸

When examining Turkey's and Bangladesh's roles in the OIC, it is seen that both countries have significant influence over the organization. However, there are insufficient studies on Turkey-Bangladesh cooperation in the OIC. Although Turkey and Bangladesh have geographical distance, it is seen that they are close to each other due to their Muslim identities. Therefore, they cooperate with each other by establishing economic, diplomatic, and cultural relations. Both countries often support each other in the international and national arena as they share

¹⁵⁷ Rashid, Harun Ur. *Bangladesh Foreign Policy: Realities, Priorities, and Challenges*. Academic Press and Publishers Library, 2015. pp. 273-280.

¹⁵⁸ Md. Syfullah. "Relations between OIC and Bangladesh." *University Of Dhaka*, 2014, <http://repository.library.du.ac.bd:8080/bitstream/handle/123456789/716/Syfullah.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y> (Accessed 28.12.2021).

similar views on some issues such as Kashmir, Palestine, Terrorism, and Rohingya. Consequently, cooperative activities between the two countries could be seen as a catalyst for utilizing Bangladesh's and Turkey's potential resources.¹⁵⁹

4.3. D-8 (Developing-8)

The D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation is an international economic organization established under the leadership of Turkey following the Istanbul Summit on June 15, 1997, and consists of eight countries, including Bangladesh, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Egypt, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Turkey. At the same time, countries that are members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation are in a critical position due to their natural resources, demographic structures, and existing potential markets.¹⁶⁰

The organization's goal is to utilize the specified countries' potentials and resources in commercial relations between the eight countries. From this point of view, objectives such as catching new opportunities among member countries, shaping commercial relations, and having a voice at the international and local level are included in the scope of the organization. Based on this, the organization aims to improve and strengthen the situation of developing countries in the world economy by putting forward concrete projects.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹ Rashid, Harun Ur. *Bangladesh Foreign Policy: Realities, Priorities, and Challenges*. Academic Press and Publishers Library, 2015. pp. 273-280.

¹⁶⁰ Ozkan, Mehmet, Turkey in the Islamic World: An Institutional Perspective. *Turkish Review of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 18, pp. 180.

¹⁶¹ "Gelişen Sekiz Ülke (D-8)." *T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı*, www.mfa.gov.tr/gelisen-sekiz-ulke-_d-8_.tr.mfa. (Accessed 18.12.2021.)

The fact that the name that brought the organization together is Necmettin Erbakan, the 54th Prime Minister of the Turkish Government, reveals Turkey's leading role and main philosophy in the organization. The ideal of the "Islamic Union" has an important place in the vision of the Milli Görüş (National Vision) Movement.¹⁶² This movement adopted the ideals of "A Livable Turkey," "A Greater Turkey Again," and "A New World" and acted within this framework. Therefore, the D-8 Cooperation Organization is of great importance in the movement, Erbakan's statement "D-8 is the key to the new world" emphasizes this situation, and one of the cornerstones of this philosophy is the haste to oppose imperialism.¹⁶³ The symbols on the D-8 flag, which are expressed as; Justice instead of double-standard; Peace instead of conflict; Dialogue instead of confrontation; Equality instead of discrimination; Co-operation instead of exploitation; Human rights, freedom, and Democracy instead of domination and oppression, are also the reflections of this rush.¹⁶⁴

The decision to make Istanbul the D-8 Permanent Secretariat at the D-8 summit held in Kuala Lumpur is also a development that supports Turkey's leading role. Another indicator of the importance given to the organization for Turkey is the Wise Men Group (AAG) Process. Turkey's undertaking the task of coordinating cooperation on the industry, health, and environment issues in 2007 is an example of Turkey's active work.¹⁶⁵ In addition, the Ministry of Industry and Technology of the Republic of Turkey established an industrial inventory,

¹⁶² Tuğrul, Talip. "Millî Görüş Hareketi'nin Temel Karakterleri." *e-Makalat Mezhep Araştırmaları Dergisi*, vol. 10, no. 2, 2017, pp. 617–657.

¹⁶³ Tuğrul, Talip. "Millî Görüş Mefkûresinde İslâm Birliği ve D-8 -Teori ve Pratik." *Din ve Bilim- Muş Alparslan Üniversitesi İslami İlimler Fakültesi Dergisi*, vol. 2, no. 2, 2019, pp. 23-49.

¹⁶⁴ <https://diabgm.adalet.gov.tr/Resimler/SayfaDokuman/542021164131B%C3%BClten22.say%C4%B1web.pdf> (Accessed 18.12.2021).

¹⁶⁵ "Gelişen Sekiz Ülke (D-8)." *T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı*, www.mfa.gov.tr/gelisen-sekiz-ulke-_d-8_.tr.mfa. (Accessed 18.12.2021).

“www.d8coop.com,” which can serve as a “Google of the industry” for D-8 countries.¹⁶⁶

The establishment of the “Istanbul Declaration,” “Istanbul Action Plan,” and “D-8 Project Support Fund” at the 9th Summit, which was also held in Turkey on October 20, 2017, are examples of concrete projects carried out under the leadership of Turkey. Implementing the Preferential Trade Agreement for the development of trade based on free trade principles among the member states can be considered a successful step of the organization. The granting of observer status to the UN General Assembly on 10 December 2014 after Turkey’s attempts to expand the organization’s scope is valuable in raising the organization’s voice at the international level.¹⁶⁷

Erbakan was the leading actor who pioneered the establishment of this organization, and his goal was to unite the Islamic countries on the basis of an economic organization and to have a voice in the world economy. In fact, in order to reflect this goal, it was decided to establish an organization called “Muslim Eight (M-8)” to represent eight Islamic countries for the first time. However, Necmettin Erbakan’s fall from power and his ban from politics in Turkey, the arrest of Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister Anwar İbrahim, the overthrow of Nawaz Sharif by coup, and Suharto’s resignation caused instability and weakness for the D-8. Although the organization has the feature of being an instrument in international policy for Turkish foreign policy, the organization’s functionality, and effect in terms of foreign policy have remained far below expectations.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁶ <https://www.sanayi.gov.tr/assets/pdf/plan-program/STB-2019Y%C4%B1%C4%B1FaaliyetRaporu.pdf> (Accessed 18.12.2021).

¹⁶⁷ Taştekin, Mesut. “TÜRK DIŞ POLİTİKASINDA “D-8””. *Gazi Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi* 7, 2005, pp. 225-244.

¹⁶⁸ Taştekin, Mesut. “TÜRK DIŞ POLİTİKASINDA “D-8””. *Gazi Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi* 7, 2005, pp. 242.

However, in addition to these negativities and the organization's ineffectiveness in practice, as it can be understood from the establishment process, D-8 has a structure that reflects the political goal of Turkey of the period and can be considered a role model among Islamic countries. The organization seems to have found an effective and wide field of practice depending on the amount of cooperation and trade between the member countries. In addition, during the AK Party period, the organization has covered a significant distance in terms of both its corporate identity and activities. However, it should be said that today the organization is far from its founding purpose and is only a forum that offers the member countries the ground to develop cooperation.¹⁶⁹

Bangladesh is a key member of the D-8 Organization of Developing Muslim Countries, founded under Turkish Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan's leadership. Bangladesh has taken an important place in establishing the D-8 by accepting Turkey's offer to establish a strong economic and commercial cooperation with the leading countries regarding technological and economic development levels, commercial potential, and population among Muslim countries.¹⁷⁰ Bangladesh has been closely associated with D-8 since its inception in 1997. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has a personal friendship with this significant multilateral organization. Sheikh Hasina participated in the first D-8 Summit held in 1997 and successfully organized the second D-8 Summit in Dhaka in 1999. During the challenging time of Covid-19, Bangladesh organized the 10th Summit and reflected the firm commitment to making the organization more visible and effective globally. The Foreign Minister of Bangladesh said that Bangladesh would take pragmatic initiatives to open new avenues of

¹⁶⁹ "Gelişen Sekiz Ülke (D-8)." *T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı*, www.mfa.gov.tr/gelisen-sekiz-ulke-_d-8_.tr.mfa. (Accessed 18.12.2021).

¹⁷⁰ Ullah, Rahmat. "Eleştirel Jeopolitik Çerçevesinde 1971-2006 Yıllarında Bangladeş'in DİŞ Politika Çalışmalarının Analizi." *ISPEC International Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities*, vol. 4, no. 5, 2020, pp. 546–547.

cooperation among the D-8 member countries in order to make this organization more vibrant, active, and effective.¹⁷¹

Bangladesh has developed new dynamics and innovative concepts of D-8 through the 10th Summit. In the meantime, it has presented two documents on the theme ‘Partnership in a Changing World: Youth Empowerment and Technology Preparation’, one of which is ‘D-8 Destination Roadmap 2020-2030’, and the other is ‘Dhaka Declaration 2021’. These two are thought to be plans for the future of D8. The D-8 member states have significance in the field of geopolitics and strategy. Bangladesh’s active participation and the current role of the presidency will increase the bargaining power of the country and the group in negotiations with China, the United States, India, Japan, and the EU. Bangladesh has already called on D-8 leaders to support the repatriation of Rohingya to Myanmar. It has also created new opportunities for Bangladesh to raise the issue on the platform and gain support to put pressure on the Myanmar rulers. D-8 is an appropriate forum to highlight examples of Bangladesh’s success in socio-economic progress. In addition, it will strengthen Bangladesh’s image around the world.¹⁷²

Turkey was the driving force behind the formation of the D-8 commission, which comprises eight Muslim-majority countries. Bangladesh is a crucial member of this organization. Therefore, D-8 plays a beneficial role in expanding the economic relations between Turkey and Bangladesh. In addition, The D-8 Commission has identified cooperation in areas such as rural industrialization and microcredit, human resources development, industrial and technological data bank work, designing and production of agriculture aircraft prototypes. Although

¹⁷¹ <https://www.dinbodolbd.com/editorial/news/19897> (Accessed 29.12.2021).

¹⁷² <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/sub-editorial/558544/ডি-৮-দিয়ে-নতুন-বলয়ের-সূচনা?> (Accessed 29.12.2021).

the two countries support each other in the international arena, the number of studies on Turkey-Bangladesh cooperation in the D-8 is insufficient.¹⁷³

4.4. ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations)

ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) was founded in 1967 in Bangkok, the capital of Thailand, with the signing of the Bangkok Declaration between Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand. Brunei, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar, and Cambodia were also included on different dates, respectively. It was formed to develop mutual cooperation and enhance economic, political, security, military, educational, and socio-cultural integration among its members and other Asia countries. ASEAN's main objective is to accelerate economic development in Southeast Asia while promoting social progress and cultural development. The second objective is to achieve regional peace and stability in accordance with the principles of the rule of law and the UN Charter. The United States, China, Canada, Russia, the European Union (EU), Japan, South Korea, India, Australia, and New Zealand are among the dialogue partner countries where Papua New Guinea and East Timor enjoy observer status.¹⁷⁴

ASEAN is an organization built on political beliefs. The general fear of communism inspired the main reason for forming the ASEAN organization in the region. Following a shift in the balance of power after the Vietnam War in 1975, the organization gained greater unity. The first ASEAN summit was held in Bali, Indonesia, in 1986. A number of industrial projects and friendship and

¹⁷³ Rashid, Harun Ur. *Bangladesh Foreign Policy: Realities, Priorities, and Challenges*. Academic Press and Publishers Library, 2015. pp. 273-280.

¹⁷⁴ Fifield, Russell H. "Southeast Asian Studies: Origins, Development, Future." *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, vol. 7, no. 2, [Cambridge University Press, Department of History, National University of Singapore], 1976, pp. 151-61.

cooperation agreements were signed at the conference. The end of the Cold War allowed ASEAN countries to exercise greater political independence in the region. In the 1990s, ASEAN appeared as a leading alliance on regional trade and security issues. On December 15, 1995, the Southeast Asia Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty was signed, transforming Southeast Asia into a nuclear-free zone. ASEAN has been an influential framework in establishing regional order and prosperity in the post-Cold War years and one of the region's core building blocks in terms of both economy and security.¹⁷⁵

The end of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union in 1990 gave ASEAN countries the freedom to exercise greater political independence in the region, and since the 1990s, ASEAN has emerged as a leading voice in regional trade and security issues. ASEAN, for example, adopted a declaration on dispute resolution in the South China Sea, promoted the dialogue on regional security through the establishment of the ASEAN Regional Forum in 1994, and worked to resolve the conflict in East Timor. Its members reduced international trade tariffs and established the ASEAN "Free Trade Area" in 1992, which also eased foreign investment restrictions. In addition, ASEAN's member states signed the ASEAN Charter in 2007 to recognize their commitment to international diplomacy, human rights, and democratic values. After ratification by ten member states, the Charter came into force in December 2008. In 2003, ASEAN agreed to form a three-pillar ASEAN community, following the European Union's pattern. For example, 1. ASEAN Security Community, 2. ASEAN Economic Community and 3. ASEAN socio-cultural community. ASEAN also includes countries in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond. The ASEAN Alliance is a global powerhouse and a central alliance for cooperation in Asia-Pacific. As a result, it is considered a leading and influential

¹⁷⁵ Temiz, Süleyman. "ASEAN ve Güneydoğu Asya Belgeselciliği üzerine Etkisi." *Kafkas Üniversitesi İntifada ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi*, vol. 10, no. 20, 2019, pp. 1086–1116., doi:10.36543/kauibfd.2019.046.

organization. The organization has been involved in numerous international affairs and conducts diplomatic missions worldwide.¹⁷⁶

Turkey, until 1999, established its first official relations with the states in the Southeast Asian region under the umbrella of the D-8 organization, with the initiatives of the then Prime Minister of Turkey, Necmettin Erbakan. In addition, at that time, it was decided to develop political and economic relations with ASEAN as part of the following process. Turkey has notified ASEAN of its intention to become a partner through discussion or sectoral dialogue. During Ahmet Davutoğlu's tenure as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Turkey signed the Friendship and Cooperation Agreement (TAC) at the 43rd ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting summit held in Vietnam on 19-23 July 2010, as the first step to develop institutional relations with ASEAN. This agreement demonstrates Turkey's strong commitment to regional peace and stability, as well as the TAC as an essential code of conduct governing interstate relations. In the same year that Turkey became a party to the agreement, the Turkish Embassy in Jakarta was accredited by ASEAN.¹⁷⁷

Turkey was invited as a special guest of Term President Brunei to the ASEAN Summit and Foreign Ministers' Meeting for the first time in 2013. Ahmed Davutoğlu attended the meeting as Foreign Minister. On the invitation of Malaysia, the term President of ASEAN, Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Davutoğlu's successor, attended the 48th ASEAN Regional Forum Foreign Ministers Meeting

¹⁷⁶ David B. H. Denoon, and Evelyn Colbert. "Challenges for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)." *Pacific Affairs*, vol. 71, no. 4, Pacific Affairs, University of British Columbia, 1998, pp. 505–23, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2761082>.

¹⁷⁷ Temiz, Süleyman & Aydoğdu, Erdal Taha. "ASEAN ve Türkiye İlişkilerine Bir Bakış: Güneydoğu Asya'nın Yükselen Birliği Olarak ASEAN." *Iğdır Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, no. 29, 2019, pp. 581.

in August 2015.¹⁷⁸ Finally, on the invitation of the Philippines, the term president, Turkey, attended the 50th ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting, which took place in Manila from August 5-8, 2017. As a result of the more intensive and productive cooperation established between Turkey and ASEAN countries, the total trade volume with ASEAN countries, which was 1.3 billion dollars in 2002, increased to 8.7 billion dollars in 2016. However, another organization that makes Turkey's presence felt in the region is the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA). The total aid provided by TIKA to Southeast Asia between 2005 and 2015 was determined as 147.8 million USD. In addition, Turkey became an observer member of ASEEANAPOL, the police organization formed by ASEAN member states, in 2014. In addition, Turkey became an observer member of ASEEANAPOL, the police organization formed by ASEAN member states, in 2014.¹⁷⁹

Turkey and ASEAN members have a long history of bilateral socio-cultural partnerships. Turkey has also begun collaboration with ASEAN by hosting a Training Program for ASEAN Diplomats at the Diplomacy Academy of Turkey in Ankara and Istanbul from July 2 to 7, 2018. The Turkish Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA) has been involved in development cooperation with the several ASEAN Member States, notably in the humanitarian field, since 2008. Non-regional countries will not be able to join ASEAN as full members. Dialogue Partnership is the most advanced status in the institutional relations of the organization with non-regional countries. It is the ultimate goal of Turkey within the framework of establishing institutional relations with ASEAN. In order to take more serious steps in Turkey-ASEAN relations, efforts to establish

¹⁷⁸ *Overview ASEAN-Turkey Sectoral Dialogue Partnership*. 2018, <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/4-Overview-of-ASEAN-Turkey-Sectoral-Dialogue-Relations-as-of-July-2018-fn.pdf> (Accessed 25.1.2022).

¹⁷⁹ Temiz, Süleyman & Aydoğdu, Erdal Taha. "ASEAN ve Türkiye İlişkilerine Bir Bakış: Güneydoğu Asya'nın Yükselen Birliği Olarak ASEAN." *Iğdır Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, no. 29, 2019, pp. 582.

a Sectoral Dialogue Partnership (SDO) with ASEAN were initiated in 2015. Turkey aspires to build mutually beneficial relations with ASEAN, formed a sectoral dialogue partnership in 2017, and inked a five-year strategy to promote mutual collaboration in 2019.¹⁸⁰ Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan underlined Turkey's interest in strengthening ties with ASEAN during his visit to Indonesia in 2015. He said,

We aim to boost our relations with the region. Indonesia, due to the size of its economy and its leading position in ASEAN, has a special place in our eyes. We, Turkey, would like to be a member of ASEAN, not a dialogue partner. I would like to express that we are ready for this.¹⁸¹

Turkey is becoming increasingly interested in cooperating with ASEAN, and it is the moment for Ankara to pursue this goal. Turkey has many influences when it comes to engaging with other multilateral institutions because it is the current chair of the G20 and has served on the organization's troika for three consecutive years. In 2019, Turkey launched the Asia Again Initiative, which aims to strengthen its ties with Asian countries in diverse ways. The proposal offers a new stance on Turkish foreign policy that could have far-reaching implications. It aims to strengthen its ties with ASEAN member countries in education, defense, investment, trade, technology, culture, and political dialogue.¹⁸²

¹⁸⁰ <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/guneydogu-asya-ulkeleri-birligi.tr.mfa> (Accessed 26.1.2022).

¹⁸¹ <https://asiatimes.com/2015/08/turkey-keen-on-partnering-with-asean/> (Accessed 26.1.2022).

¹⁸² Aslan, Dilara. "Turkey Aims to Enhance Cooperation with ASEAN Countries: Envoy." *Daily Sabah*, Daily Sabah, 17 Sept. 2021, www.dailysabah.com/politics/diplomacy/turkey-aims-to-enhance-cooperation-with-asean-countries-envoy (Accessed 26.1.2022).

Bangladesh plays a vital role in bridging the gap between South Asia and Southeast Asia due to its geopolitical location. Efforts were made to consolidate the country's bilateral diplomatic relations by adopting a priority policy and a regional cooperation policy, particularly in developing relations with ASEAN and neighboring countries. Bangladesh became a member of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) in 2006. However, Bangladesh is not a member of ASEAN. It is seen that Bangladesh and Myanmar, a Southeast Asian country, have a short yet common border. Therefore, it follows a policy of strengthening ties with Southeast Asia and East Asia. Bangladesh is a member of BIMSTEC, a sub-regional organization of South and Southeast Asian countries committed to economic cooperation. Bangladesh is also a member in the Track II Kunming Initiative, which includes Myanmar, Bangladesh, China, and India.¹⁸³

Bangladesh desires to build closer ties with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), a regional alliance of 10 Southeast Asian countries. Essentially, Dhaka wants to save its own interests by increasing its closeness with the ASEAN alliance. In particular, it seeks to increase economic engagement with these countries by adding multidimensionality to bilateral relations and bringing more investment in the country. It is seen that many Bangladeshi workers work in Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei, which increases the bond between ASEAN countries.¹⁸⁴

Bangladesh is determined to make the best possible contribution to the ASEAN member countries through its cooperation. Bangladesh is viewed as having a lot of opportunities and potential to expand trade, investment, and comprehensive economic links with ASEAN countries due to its location between ASEAN and

¹⁸³ Shira, Dezan. "Bangladesh as a Gateway between ASEAN and SAARC." *ASEAN Business News*, 14 Sept. 2021, www.aseanbriefing.com/news/bangladesh-as-a-gateway-between-asean-and-saarc/ (Accessed 26.1.2022).

¹⁸⁴ <https://businessbangladesh.com.bd/article/235871> (Accessed 26.1.2022).

SAARC. With the completion of the Asian Highway and the Trans-Asian Railway, South and Southeast Asian countries will use Bangladesh as a primary transit hub, which is expected to increase their economic connectivity.¹⁸⁵ Therefore, Bangladesh can play a key role in determining the course of economic connections between the two developing regional groups if adequate policies and infrastructures are in place. Bangladesh may use the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) as a critical tool for realizing its goals and objectives, such as finding common ground for mutual economic benefit. Bangladesh's participation in the ASEAN Regional Forum has given them a global platform to address security challenges in turbulent areas. Bangladesh will benefit from its international reputation in courting the goodwill of potentially hostile neighbors to attract more foreign investment in various areas, including power and disaster management, to build up future Bangladesh. It is seen that Bangladesh has applied for the ASEAN Sectoral Dialogue Partnership (SDO) designation, which will boost Bangladesh's position in linking these two key international regions if approved. Bangladesh, on the other hand, hopes to benefit from Rohingya repatriation by enlarging its ties with ASEAN.¹⁸⁶ Foreign Minister Dr. AK Abdul Momen underlined the significance of Bangladesh in ASEAN, "we want to build a bridge between South Asia and Southeast Asia. Bangladesh can be a source of competitive imports for ASEAN countries. We have the opportunity to further enhance our air connectivity with Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore, and Malaysia. This alliance is our hope to solve the Rohingya crisis."¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁵ <https://mofa.gov.bd/site/page/5fc70c54-68dc-496b-aa22-1966a755830e> (Accessed 26.1.2022).

¹⁸⁶ Shyla, Shawon. *ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF): What Can Bangladesh Expect from This Security Platform?* [www.files.ethz.ch/isn/164389/Focus-ARF\(1\).pdf](http://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/164389/Focus-ARF(1).pdf) (Accessed 26.1.2022).

¹⁸⁷ <https://www.dhaka.com/national/71176> (Accessed 26.1.2022).

ASEAN has an essential place in the foreign policy of Turkey and Bangladesh. Both countries are keen to strengthen their relations with ASEAN members. With the 'Asia Anew' initiative, Turkey plans to expand economic and diplomatic relations and desires to be an influential actor in this region. As a Sectoral Dialogue Partnership (SDO), which is the most advanced status in the institutional relations of the organization with non-regional countries, Turkey seeks to establish mutually beneficial relationships with ASEAN members. Similarly, Bangladesh's geopolitical position plays a vital role in developing relations with ASEAN. Being a key member of SAARC and a country bordering Myanmar, Bangladesh can be a bridge between ASEAN and SAARC countries.¹⁸⁸ Bangladesh is only a member of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). Recently, however, Bangladesh has been trying to get a Sectoral Dialogue Partnership (SDO) to improve relations with ASEAN. Since Turkey and Bangladesh are Muslim countries and have good bilateral relations, they can act together in ASEAN by supporting each other.

4.5. Potential Areas of Regional Cooperation Between the Two Countries

ECO is a regional economic cooperation organization established between Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan. These countries' economic and trade relations were based on the Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD) established in 1964. RCD carried out some economic, technical, and cultural projects. In the Cold War era, the leaders of these countries believed that historical, cultural, geographical, and religious ties were adequate to establish close cooperation among member states to contribute to efforts to achieve economic development and increase living standards. The West and the United States generally supported this plan strategically to prevent Soviet influence in the region. Despite this, all organizational activities were suspended in 1979 after the Islamic Revolution in Iran. As a result, RCD, an international organization, was

¹⁸⁸ <https://businessbangladesh.com.bd/article/235871> (Accessed 26.1.2022).

dissolved in 1980.¹⁸⁹ Recognizing the need for regional cooperation and integration, the Organization's founders agreed to reactivate the RCD in 1985 but changed the name to the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO). This new organization became active in 1990 when the foreign ministers of the three founding members signed the Amendment Protocol in addition to the original of the Izmir Treaty during an extraordinary meeting in Islamabad. In 1992, Afghanistan and Azerbaijan joined the Organization as well as the Central Asian Republics (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan).¹⁹⁰ As a result, the ECO, which has ten members, gained international recognition and prestige.

The organization's main objectives are to ensure the sustainable economic development of the member countries, stimulate trade in the ECO region, and increase this region's role in world trade, liberalize and privatize the economy, and use the region's economic potential. In order to achieve these goals on a healthy basis, the necessity of developing the transportation and communication infrastructure that connects the member countries both within themselves and with the outside world is emphasized in ECO's vision.¹⁹¹ In addition, the objectives of "preventing drug trafficking, protecting ecology and the environment, and strengthening historical and cultural ties among the peoples of the ECO Region" are also included in the ECO's program.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁹ Ozkan, Mehmet, "Turkey in the Islamic World: An Institutional Perspective", *Turkish Review of Middle East Studies*, 18, 2007, pp. 159-193.

¹⁹⁰ Javaid, Faisal, and M. A. Khan. "The Role of Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) in Central Asia: An analytical study." *Research Journal of Social Studies*, 2015, pp. 59.

¹⁹¹ https://www.mfa.gov.tr/ekonomik-isbirligi-teskilati-_eit_.tr.mfa (Accessed 24.11.2021).

¹⁹² Seçkin, Selim "Ekonomik İş Birliği Teşkilatı: Potansiyeli ve Geleceği". Avrasya İncelemeleri Merkezi, <https://avim.org.tr/tr/Analiz/EKONOMIK-ISBIRLIGI-TESKILATI-POTANSIYELI-VE-GELECEGI> (Accessed 24.11.2021).

For Turkey, the ECO has been in a vital position throughout history. Turkey's inclusion in the ECO as a founding member in 1985 was on the initiative of the then Prime Minister Turgut Özal, who tried to follow a foreign policy within the framework of the principles of "multidimensional foreign policy" and "economic interdependence." Özal thought that the way to reduce dependency on the West, especially the USA, was through diversification of foreign policy and trade relations with neighbors. In this context, Turkey has seen the ECO as a platform where it can both diversify its commercial relations and improve its relations with its neighbor Iran. The participation of Turkish States in ECO in 1992 increased the importance of the organization for Turkey. Because after the collapse of the Soviet Union, ECO offered an essential field of activity for Turkey, which was trying to be effective in Turkish states. In addition to these developments, the ECO's growing importance in Turkish politics and Turkey's active role in relations with the organization coincided with the post-2000 period. The two main reasons for this situation are the active-multidimensional foreign policy followed by the AK Party and Turkey's significant developments in the economic field.¹⁹³

Considering that Turkey has achieved significant developments in its relations with the ECO after 2000, there are three main issues in which Turkey follows an active policy in this relationship and initiates the institutional development of the organization. These are the ECO Trade and Development Bank, the ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA), and the ECO Transport Corridor.¹⁹⁴ Within the scope of the "Asia Anew" initiative, the importance of the ECO has reached a different point for Turkey. The "Asia Anew" policy will yield positive regional stability and cooperation results in enhancing Turkey's cooperation opportunities in Asia.

¹⁹³ Köktaş, Rumeysa. "Türkiye'nin Ortadoğu'Daki Bölgesel Örgütlerle ilişkileri: İİT, KİK, D-8, Arap LİĞİ ve ECO." *Bilgi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, vol. 20, no. 2, 2018, pp. 67-68.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 68

Economically, Turkey's economic relations and trade growth with ECO member countries can generally be considered a positive development. In connection with a trade, ECO especially emphasized and stood on communication and transportation areas, bringing a critical potential for Turkey.¹⁹⁵

The Turkic states' cooperation foundations were laid with the summit held in Ankara in 1992. Following the summit, decisions on economic cooperation were made, and the Ankara Declaration was published. The Turkic Council (previously known as) is a linguistic and cultural union founded by Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkey. However, the original name of the Council was announced as the "Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking Countries." Rather than the political aspect of the council, today's "soft power" elements came to the fore. Furthermore, Kazakhstan's honorary President Nursultan Nazarbayev, as the father of ideas, took on pioneering the development and survival of the Organization of Turkic States.¹⁹⁶ The Organization of Turkic States was also desired to transform cultural affinity into the business world through the Turkish Business Council, where it is aimed to ensure the interaction of states of Turkish origin with the contributions of Turkish language and culture.

The Second Turkic Council was held in Bishkek between 22-23 August 2012 with the participation of the heads of state, and institutional steps were taken with the theme of "Education, Science and Cultural Cooperation." After this summit, the activities of the Organization of Turkic States are carried out in a predictable way and with a budget. At the summit held each year, different

¹⁹⁵ Seçkin, Selim. "Ekonomik işbirliği teşkilatı: POTANSİYELİ ve Geleceği." *Avrasya İncelemeleri Merkezi-AVİM*, <https://avim.org.tr/tr/Analiz/EKONOMIK-ISBIRLIGI-TESKILATI-POTANSIYELI-VE-GELECEGI> (Accessed 24.11.2021).

¹⁹⁶ Aslan, Murat. "Perspektif: Türk Konseyi: Fırsatlar ve Algılar." *SETA*, 30 Nov. 2021, <https://setav.org/assets/uploads/2021/11/P321.pdf> (Accessed 16.12.2021).

themes were brought to the fore, and an admissible line of activity was followed with a phased approach. Indeed, in the third summit, the field of transportation was discussed, and physical communication between the Turkish states was emphasized. The Council is involved in cooperation areas such as politics, education, youth and sports, economy, transportation, customs, tourism, diaspora, information and communication, media, and information.¹⁹⁷

The Organization of Turkic States' primary objective is to provide, develop and deepen comprehensive communication, harmony, and cooperation among member states and contribute to regional and global peace and stability. Moreover, while the member states reaffirmed their commitment to fundamental principles such as democracy, human rights, the rule of law, and good governance, they also stressed that collaboration would be built on a specific basis of solidarity based on a shared history culture, identity, and language.¹⁹⁸

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Turkey's view of countries of Turkish origin was nostalgic and emotional. Today, cooperation between countries of Turkish origin is constantly moving towards creating new state institutions. TÜRKSOY (Joint Administration of Turkish Culture and Arts), TÜRKPA (Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic Speaking Countries), Turkic Council... Even the 20th-anniversary events were organized by state institutions.¹⁹⁹ Moreover, the fact that the general secretariat of the organization is in Istanbul and the International Organization of Turkic Culture is in Ankara, and Turkish representatives take an active part in the summits indicates the significance of

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹⁹⁸ Mert, Osman. "Türk Konseyi (Keneşi) Türk Üniversiteler Birliği Ve Türk Üniversiteler Birliği I. Genel Kurulu." *Journal of Turkish Research Institute*, no. 53, 2015, pp. 276–277.

¹⁹⁹ Kanbolat, Hasan. "Türk Dili Konuşan Ülkeler İşbirliği Konseyi Zirvesi." *ORSAM*, 19 Oct. 2011, <https://www.orsam.org.tr/tr/turk-dili-konusan-ulkeler-isbirligi-konseyi-zirvesi/> (Accessed 18.12.2021).

Turkey in the organization. The member countries expressed their gratitude to Turkey for the new historical building granted by the Republic of Turkey to the Secretariat of the Organization of Turkic States in the declaration of the summit held in 2021. Member countries also praised Turkey for hosting the Antalya Diplomacy Forum for the first time since the pandemic, the positive operations of the Turkish Maarif Foundation (TMF) schools in the Turkic World, and TOBB University of Economics and Technology's opening of a Tashkent campus.²⁰⁰ At the summit, upon the proposal of the Republic of Turkey, studies were initiated to establish a disaster response unit under the name of "Turkish States Civil Protection Mechanism" in order to reduce the effects of natural disasters, and Turkey's intention to organize a regional conference on the subject was welcomed.²⁰¹ It was also agreed to establish a network hosted by the Turkish Red Crescent online on April 1, 2021. These expressions are essential in terms of expressing satisfaction towards Turkey and showing Turkey's achievements within the organization. The statement reiterated that they had accepted the request of the Turkish Cypriot people to participate in the relevant activities of the organization.²⁰² This is a positive development for Turkey in terms of reinforcing solidarity with the Turkish Cypriot people. The Sister Ports initiative of the Organization of Turkic States is a project that will benefit Turkey economically. The Turkish Space Agency's Space Technology Projects within the Organization of Turkic States have also provided an example of Turkey's activity within the organization. In summary, it is seen that the organization has the potential to develop economic and commercial cooperation based on

²⁰⁰ *Türk Devletleri Teşkilatı Sekizinci Zirve Bildirisi*. <https://tccb.gov.tr/assets/dosya/2021-11-12-turkkonseyi-bildiri.pdf> (Accessed 18.12.2021).

²⁰¹ "Türk Devletleri Teşkilatı Sivil Koruma Mekanizması' Kurulmasını Teklif Ediyoruz." *Türk Milletinden Taraf*, 12 Nov. 2021, <https://sehrisiyaset.com/turk-devletleri-teskilati-sivil-koruma-mekanizmasi-kurulmasini-teklif-ediyoruz/> (Accessed 18.12.2021.)

²⁰² *Türk Devletleri Teşkilatı Sekizinci Zirve Bildirisi*. <https://tccb.gov.tr/assets/dosya/2021-11-12-turkkonseyi-bildiri.pdf> (Accessed 18.12.2021).

practices that center the culture of member countries, and this situation is also in favor of Turkey. It is promising that the decisions taken by the organization in recent years have become more concrete, applicable, and sustainable, and some of them have found a place in practice.²⁰³ Establishment of the Turkish Business Council and Business Forums, the aim of accelerating and increasing commercial interaction, the permanent Secretariat of the Turkish Chamber of Commerce and Industry to be operational in Istanbul in 2021, the active continuation of the efforts to establish the Type Investment Fund, the promotion of the road in accordance with world tourism standards and the work of Ankara-based institutions such as UKDA and TÜRSOY in the cultural field indicate that the Organization of Turkic States has used its potential in the region covering its member states and; therefore Turkey has also benefited from this situation.

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) has been formed to promote peaceful coexistence and social, economic, and cultural cooperation among the seven countries of South Asia. SAARC is based on regional development strategies. It is a regional organization of economic and social cooperation. Its main objective is to complement the concept of South Asian regional cooperation through inter-state cooperation. With this philosophy in mind, in 1979, the then President of Bangladesh Ziaur Rahman undertook the initiative to establish a regional cooperation organization in the South Asian region.²⁰⁴

In May 1980, Ziaur Rahman presented a formal proposal in this regard to the governments and heads of state of seven South Asian countries. Ziaur Rahman

²⁰³ *Sekizinci Beş Yıllık Kalkınma Planı- SBB. Ankara, 2000*, https://www.sbb.gov.tr/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/08_TurkiyeileTurkCumhuriyetliriveBolgeUlkeleri.pdf (Accessed 18.12.2021).

²⁰⁴ Heitzman, James, and Worden, Robert L. *Bangladesh: A Country Study*. U.S. Gov. Print. Off., 1989. Pp. 198-199.

wanted to further strengthen the overall development and potential of the people of the region by establishing easy and normal communication in the fields of economy, technology, education, science, and culture. The heads of state and government of seven South Asian countries responded to the proposal by overcoming the initial dilemma. The first Foreign Secretary's Conference of the South Asian States, held in Colombo from 21 to 23 April 1981, took some necessary steps to form the desired organization. Then, in August 1983, the foreign ministers of seven countries in the region met for the first time at their official meeting in Delhi. At the meeting, the ministers adopted a program called the Integrated Program of Action (IPA).²⁰⁵ Under this program, nine areas have been identified for various activities as a means of cooperation among SAARC countries. The official organizational structure of SAARC was approved by the Dhaka Conference on 7-8 December 1985. Although SAARC started its journey with seven states, at present, it has eight members. Its member states are **1. Bangladesh, 2. India, 3. Pakistan, 4. Nepal, 5. Sri Lanka, 6. Bhutan, 7. Maldives, 8. Afghanistan.**²⁰⁶

In the long three decades, SAARC has done some limited but commendable work. For example, signing a memorandum of understanding on counterterrorism; Creating regional food security; Assistance in transportation and communication; Mutual cooperation in the fields of biotechnology, environment, meteorology, forestry, and media; Preparation of regional poverty profile; Formation of SAPTA and SAFTA. Moreover, SAARC Agricultural Information Center, SAARC Tuberculosis Center, SAARC Documentation Center, SAARC Meteorological Research Center, SAARC Energy Center are symbols of SAARC's success. Therefore, SAARC seems to have shown enough potential to survive. SAARC works in various fields to cooperate on non-

²⁰⁵ Bhardwaj, Sanjay K. "Bangladesh in SAARC: Identity Issues and Perspectives." *India International Centre Quarterly*, vol. 41, no. 3/4, India International Centre, 2014, pp. 128–41.

²⁰⁶ https://mfasia.org/mfa_programs/advocacy/south-asian-association-for-regional-cooperation/ (Accessed 28.12.2021).

political issues in the region. Everyone in the region, from political leaders to the public, is provided the opportunity to get closer to each other. As a result, they learn about each other's problems, hopes and aspirations, creating an environment to end many misunderstandings.²⁰⁷

Since its formation, SAARC has signed nearly three dozen agreements and many declarations, but most of them have not been implemented. Just as SAARC's pledge to educate every person in the region by 2000 has not materialized, so the announcement of poverty-free South Asia by 2002 remains a dream. Despite agreements like SAPTA aimed at boosting trade, international trade in South Asia has grown by only 5.8 percent in the last 30 years.²⁰⁸ Although they are supposed to work together to curb terrorism, there is a web of mutual distrust and suspicion among member countries over the spread and source of terrorist activities. Ordinary people in member countries, on the other hand, think that if the crucial decisions taken by the SAARC leaders since its inception were implemented, the face of South Asia could have changed. Hence, mutual distrust, incompatibility, and power conflict between member states such as India and Pakistan rendered SAARC ineffective.

Bangladesh has played a leading role in the establishment of SAARC. Former Bangladesh President Ziaur Rahman was the dreamer of SAARC. This regional organization was formed mainly with the assistance and enthusiasm of Bangladesh and other countries. Therefore, Bangladesh's role in SAARC is essential. As an entrepreneur of SAARC, Bangladesh has played a strong and vital role in various SAARC conferences and meetings. The Food Reserve System has been developed as per the recommendations of Bangladesh to address the food shortage in South Asia. In addition, the South Asian Preferential

²⁰⁷ Rashid, Harun Ur. *Bangladesh Foreign Policy: Realities, Priorities, and Challenges*. Academic Press and Publishers Library, 2015. Pp. 370-376.

²⁰⁸ Haider, Zaglul. "Crises of Regional Cooperation in South Asia." *Security Dialogue*, vol. 32, no. 4, Dec. 2001, pp. 423-437.

Trading Agreement (SAPTA) was signed at the 7th SAARC Summit in Dhaka in 1993 to alleviate poverty and expand trade.²⁰⁹ Bangladesh's specific proposal to take adequate steps to stop trafficking in women and children has been adopted at the SAARC Summit. Besides, Bangladesh is vocal in counterterrorism and drug control. The 13th Summit held in Dhaka in 2005 is a significant conference in the history of SAARC. In this conference, the 53-point Dhaka Declaration was adopted, including the declaration of 'SAARC Decade Free from Poverty' in 2006-2015.²¹⁰ Thus, Bangladesh has always been sincere efforts to make SAARC an effective body for regional cooperation and economic development.

Turkey is a member of two major international organizations. One of them is the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), and the other is the Organization of Turkish States. Potentially, it is thought that Bangladesh's participation in both organizations will add a different dimension to the relations between Turkey and Bangladesh due to Bangladesh's economic, cultural, and political potential. By evaluating the trade volume of Bangladesh through the Economic Cooperation Organization, this organization has the potential to have severe economic exchange with its member countries and Turkey. In addition, since Bangladesh does not have significant relations with the Central Asian Turkish states, Bangladesh's relations with the Turkish Central Asian states will be enhanced through the Organization of the Turkish States, and cultural and trade interaction will be ensured. Thus, new potential areas of cooperation between Turkey and Bangladesh will be emerged.

For Bangladesh, which is a member of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the inclusion of Turkey in this organization is considered

²⁰⁹ Wadhva, Charan D. "Assessing SAARC Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA)." *South Asian Survey*, vol. 3, no. 1-2, Mar. 1996, pp. 173-195.

²¹⁰ Amin, Dr. Md. Nurul. "SAARC: Initial Evolution and Success-Failure Review/সার্ক: সূচনা ক্রমবিকাশ ও সাফল্য-ব্যর্থতার পর্যালোচনা." *The Daily Sangram*, 2014, <https://dailysangram.com/post/167570-সার্ক-সূচনা-ক্রমবিকাশ-ও-সাফল্য-ব্যর্থতার-পর্যালোচনা> (Accessed 28.12.2021).

to be a significant step within the framework of Turkey's "Asia Anew" Initiative policies. There are two main reasons for this. The first is that, in the tense relationship between SAARC members India and Pakistan, Turkey may act as a mediator and develop a political link in the area. Secondly, considering the population of SAARC member countries, it has a significant commercial potential for Turkey. Given these two considerations, it is seen that it would be beneficial to include Turkey in these organizations in order to strengthen its political and commercial involvement in the region.

4.6. Conclusion

This chapter analyzed the relations between Turkey and Bangladesh in the international and regional arena. While analyzing this, it is seen that both countries support each other in domestic and international issues. Bangladesh's becoming a member of the D-8 (Developing Eight) organization upon Turkey's call shows that both countries are willing to increase their economic and diplomatic relations. This chapter discovered that Turkey regards Bangladesh as a prospective country for their regional collaboration as part of their 'Asia Anew' initiative. Although the two countries support each other in regional and international arena, the number of studies on Turkey-Bangladesh cooperation in the OIC, D-8 and ASEAN is insufficient.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, bilateral and regional dimensions of the relations between Turkey and Bangladesh have been analyzed from a historical perspective. Contrary to the views of some scholars who think that Turkey-Bangladesh relations are insignificant due to their distant geographical locations, this thesis shows that the bilateral and regional aspects of this relationship had improved significantly in the last two decades. In this thesis, the dimensions of the relations between the two countries and the foundations on which the relations are based have been discussed, and thus the gap in the literature has been tried to be filled. Overall, it was demonstrated that a mutually beneficial approach brought these two countries closer to each other.

This thesis explored the relations between Turkey and Bangladesh in a historical perspective. It can be said that the Bengal Region started with the conquest of Turkish origin Muḥammad Bakhtiyār Khalji in 1204. This historical adventure, which started between the Turkish and Bengali peoples, continued with the mutual interaction between the states that ruled in the Bengal geography, particularly during the Ottoman Empire period. Since the transfer of the caliphate institution to the Ottoman Empire during the reign of Yavuz Sultan Selim, the trajectory of interactions has taken shape within the framework of the Caliphate. This process, which dates back to the Ottoman Empire's last years, continued until the Caliphate Movement, which impacted the whole Indian subcontinent, gathered public support and financial aid for the Ottoman Empire during the First World War.

After the abolition of the caliphate on March 3, 1924, it is seen that the Muslims of Bengal expressed the same compassion and love towards Turkey as well as Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Turkey's victory in the struggle against the West gave the Bengalis at that time the motivation to fight against the British. Relations with Indian geography were continued after the Republic of Turkey, and after the partition of Pakistan and India in 1947, relations with the Bengal region were carried out through Pakistan. Bangladesh was known as eastern Pakistan at that time. It is seen that Turkey imported some raw materials such as jute from the Bengal region at that time. However, following Bangladesh's declaration of independence in 1971 under the name of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, it is seen that the relations between the two countries have increased diplomatically and have reached the present day.

In order to understand the relationship between the two countries in this historical process, the foundations of both countries' foreign policy understanding should be addressed. Although the Republic of Turkey has determined different foreign policy understandings at different periods, the founding leader Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's "Peace at Home, Peace in the World" approach and the founding leader of Bangladesh Mujibur Rahman's "Friendship to All, Malice towards None" approach is seen as necessary in terms of determining the border of the two countries' relations in the historical process.

This thesis analyzes the Turkey-Bangladesh relationship from political and diplomatic, military/defense, economic, and social-cultural perspectives. These are the essential concerns in relations between the two countries.

As analyzed in chapter three, diplomatic relations between Turkey and Bangladesh have developed dramatically after 2000. It is seen that the importance of Bangladesh for Turkey has increased with the foreign policies determined by the current government in Turkey towards Asia and the Asian Initiative. In addition to these concerns, it is understood that Turkey's

cooperation with Bangladesh on the Rohingya issue in the international arena, as well as Bangladesh's support for Turkey in the Cyprus Peace Operation, has strengthened diplomatic relations between the two countries. The visits of high-ranking officials also helped to strengthen ties between the two countries.²¹¹

As examined in the third chapter, defense relations between Turkey and Bangladesh remained normal until 2008. However, Turkey's increasing production in the defense industry and the Asian Initiative policies have brought a different dimension to the relations between the two countries in the field of defense. Bangladesh's search for diverse countries to purchase arms has been another aspect that has shaped this relationship. Thus, Bangladesh's purchase of weapons from Turkey shows the development of defense relations between the two countries.

Regarding economic Relations between Turkey and Bangladesh it is stated in chapter three that the economic relations between Turkey and Bangladesh have been developed significantly. Following the President and Prime Minister of Turkey's visit to Bangladesh in 2010, the two countries' economic ties grew more robust with the start of Turkish Airlines flights, the establishment of DEİK, and reciprocal trade agreements. This visit carried the process between the two countries to a different dimension and increased mutual interaction in every field. Some Turkish companies have recently become stockholders in Bangladeshi enterprises. It is seen that it contributes to the increase of economic relations between two countries.

As analyzed in chapter three, the historical and cultural ties that exist between the Turkish and Bengali peoples are profound. In terms of culture and society, they have a lot in common. In the thesis section, it has been determined that Turkish TV series are watched in Bangladesh, and this increases the cultural ties

²¹¹ Baba, Gürol. "The Waves of Turkey's Proactive Foreign Policy Hitting South-Asian Coasts: Turkey-Bangladesh Relations." *Journal of Administrative Sciences*, vol.15, no.30. pp. 580.

between the two countries. As a cultural bond, the students of the two countries are studying at each other's universities.

As analyzed in chapter four, Bangladesh and Turkey have brotherhood relations, they support each other in international and national issues. Accordingly, Bangladesh and Turkey promised to work closely at international platforms to combat all forms of terrorism to establish and maintain world peace and security.²¹²

To conclude, despite the fact that Turkish and Bengali societies and nations exist in two separate geographies, it is apparent that they have been in close interactions since the 13th century as the world has become a “global village”. The study examined the two countries' foreign policy from such a global perspective. Although the bilateral ties between Turkey and Bangladesh have expanded dramatically in the recent two decades, this development has not been adequately reflected in the academic literature. Of course, there had been some ups and downs in their relations due to political and geographical conditions from time to time and in the relations between any two countries. The thesis has shown that the relations between these countries and nations have developed steadily and surely since their historical origins. It can be argued that these countries have great potential in promoting their relations in diplomatic, security, economic, and social-cultural spheres. This could enable them to play a more active role in the international and regional arena too. All in all, the analysis in this thesis has demonstrated that the relations between Turkey and Bangladesh have strengthened considerably and will continue to do so in the foreseeable future too.

²¹² Rashid, Harun Ur. *Bangladesh Foreign Policy: Realities, Priorities, and Challenges*. Academic Press and Publishers Library, 2015. pp. 273-280.

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APPENDICES

A. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRİKÇE ÖZET

Bu tez; Türkiye ile Bangladeş arasındaki ilişkilerin, bu iki ülke arasındaki coğrafi uzaklık nedeniyle önemsiz olduğunu ileri süren görüşlerinin aksine, Türkiye ve Bangladeş dış politika yönelimlerini küresel olarak genişlettikçe, ilişkilerin hem ikili hem de bölgesel yönlerinin neredeyse son yirmi yılda önemli ölçüde geliştiğini öne sürmektedir.

Bu bağlamda Türkiye ve Bangladeş arasındaki ilişkilerin uluslararası ilişkiler disiplini açısından herhangi bir akademik çalışmaya rastlanılmamış olmasından dolayı her iki ülke arasındaki ilişkilerin boyutları ve ilişkilerin dayandığı temeller ele alınmış ve böylelikle literatürde var olan boşluk doldurulmaya çalışılmıştır. Türkiye-Bangladeş ikili ilişkileri farklı alanlardaki fırsatlar açısından değerlendirilirken, iki ülke arasındaki siyasi ve diplomatik, askeri/savunma, ekonomik ve sosyal-kültürel yaklaşımlar uluslararası ilişkiler bağlamında incelenmiştir. Bahsi geçen bu alanlar Bangladeş'in bağımsızlığından bu yana bu iki ülke arasındaki ilişkilerin gelişmesinde belirleyici bir rol oynamıştır. Sonuç olarak, bu tezde, her iki taraf da ilişkilerini geliştirmek için siyasi ve diplomatik, askeri/savunma, ekonomik ve sosyal-kültürel ilişkileri temel almaya devam ederse, bu iki ülke arasındaki işbirliği ve korelasyonun daha da geliştirilebileceğini ortaya konulmuştur.

Bunların yanı sıra Türkiye ve Bangladeş arasındaki ilişkilerin doğası keşfedilmeye çalışılmıştır. Bu kapsam çerçevesinde; Türkiye ve Bangladeş arasındaki ilişkileri ele aldığımızda karşımıza tarihsel köklere dayanan çok kapsamlı bir süreç çıkmaktadır. Bu sürecin tarihi temeli; Bengal Bölgesi'nin 1204 yılında Türk asıllı Muhammed Bakhtiyâr Khalji tarafından fethedilmesi ile

başladığı söylenebilir. Bengal'in Bahtiyar tarafından fethinden bu yana çeşitli iniş çıkışlara sahne olan Bengal'deki Türk hâkimiyeti, İngilizlerin gelişine kadar sürmüştür. Bengal başlangıçta özerk bir bölge olarak ortaya çıkmasına rağmen, Bengal hükümdarları daha sonra Babür İmparatoru Babar (1483-1530) ile birleşmiştir. Böylelikle 554 yıl boyunca Bengal'in tamamı Türk egemenliği altında kaldı. İngiliz egemenliğinden önce Türk etnisitesinin Bengal'in jeopolitik sahasına karışması, Bengal bölgesinde yeni bir ufuk açtı.

Böylelikle ciddi bir ekonomik atılım sağlanması söz konusu oldu. Bengal Nehir Bölgesi, dünya ekonomisinin merkezlerinden biriydi Dakka ise bu işin kalbiydi. Dakka, ünlü muslin kumaşının merkeziydi ve üretim için çevresi elverişli tek yerdi ve bundan böyle Bengal bölgesi, Hindistan'daki ticaretin belirleyici unsurlarından birisi haline geldi. İngilizlerin iktidara gelmesiyle birlikte Bengal bölgesi tüm İslam dünyasından izole oldu.

Delhi yönetimi ise bir yarım yüzyıl daha Türk kontrolünde kaldı, ancak bu dönem kendi içerisinde kırılmalı arz ediyordu. Bu süreç içerisinde Delhi tahtı, İngiltere'nin kukla hükümeti oldu. Bengal Müslümanları Osmanlılara biat ettiler. Bununla birlikte, 1877-1888 Osmanlı-Rus savaşı sırasında Bengal Müslümanları ile Türkler arasındaki dostane ilişkiler yeniden canlandı. Bu savaş için Bengal Müslümanları Kalküta camilerinde namaz kıldı ve Türk ordusunu desteklemek için para topladı.

Türk ve Bengal halkları arasında başlayan bu tarihsel serüven özellikle Osmanlı Devleti döneminde Bengal coğrafyasında hüküm süren devletler arasındaki karşılıklı etkileşimle devam etmiştir. Hilafet kurumunun Osmanlı Devleti'ne devredilmesi ile de ilişkilerin seyri, Yavuz Sultan Selim döneminden itibaren Hilafet çerçevesinde şekil almıştır. Osmanlı Devleti'nin son dönemine kadar giden bu süreç Hint coğrafyasının tamamına etki eden Hilafet Hareketi'nin I. Dünya Savaşı'nda Osmanlı Devleti için aleni destek ve maddi yardım topladığı döneme kadar devam etmiştir. Bu savaş sırasında başlayan dostluk ilişkileri,

İtalyan-Türk Savaşı (1911-1912), Balkan Savaşı (1912-1913), Birinci Dünya Savaşı (1914-1918) ve Kurtuluş Savaşı (1915-1916) sırasında da devam etti. Bengal Müslümanları İngilizlerin kontrolünde olmalarına rağmen zor zamanlarında Türklere maddi ve manevi destek vermişlerdir.

Cumhuriyet ilanından sonra ise Bengal Müslümanlarının Türkiye'ye karşı aynı şefkat ve sevgiyi Mustafa Kemal Atatürk'e karşı gösterdikleri görülmektedir. Türkiye'nin Batı'ya karşı mücadelede kazandığı zafer, o dönemde Bengallilere İngilizlere karşı savaşma motivasyonu verdi. Hindistan coğrafyası ile ilişkiler Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nden sonra da devam etmiş, 1947'de Pakistan ve Hindistan'ın bölünmesinden sonra Bengal bölgesi ile ilişkiler Pakistan üzerinden yürütülmüştür. Bangladeş o zamanlar doğu Pakistan olarak biliniyordu. Türkiye'nin o dönemde Bengal bölgesinden jüt gibi bazı hammaddeleri ithal ettiği görülmektedir. Ancak Bangladeş'in 1971 yılında Bangladeş Halk Cumhuriyeti adı altında bağımsızlığını ilan etmesinin ardından iki ülke arasındaki ilişkilerin diplomatik olarak arttığı ve günümüze kadar geldiği görülmektedir.

Bu tarihsel süreçte iki ülke arasındaki ilişkiyi anlayabilmek için her iki ülkenin dış politika anlayışının temellerine değinmek gerekmektedir. Türkiye Cumhuriyeti farklı dönemlerde farklı dış politika anlayışları belirlemiş olsa da, kurucu lider Mustafa Kemal Atatürk'ün "Yurtta Sulh Cihanda Sulh" yaklaşımı ve Bangladeş'in kurucu lideri Mujibur Rahman'ın "Herkes Dostluk, Hiç Kimseye Kin" yaklaşımıdır.

Batı emperyalizminin yenilmezliği efsanesini yok eden Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Asya ve Afrika halklarının gözünde bir kahramandı. Bengal'de de saygı duyulan, sevilen ve yüceltilen büyük bir adamdı. Kazi Nazrul İslam'ın Bengalli bir şairin şiiri "Kamal Paşa", Mustafa Kemal Atatürk'e sevgi dolu bir anlayışın simgeleri olur ve bu onu Hindistan'daki İngiliz karşıtı hareketin sembolü haline getirir.

Nazrul İslam, din, mezhep ve etnik köken gözetmeksizin İngiliz sömürgeciliğine karşı birleşik bir cephe oluşturarak bağımsızlık için savaşıyan tüm Hintli gençlerin kalbinde taht kurmayı başarmış bir “asi şair” idi. Nehru’nun dediği gibi: “Nazrul İslam, Türk askerini tüm Hint özgürlük savaşçılarına örnek göstermiş ve Mustafa Kemal Paşa’yı örnek bir kahraman olarak tanıtmış ve sevdirmiştir.” Atatürk’ün zamansız ölümü, Bengal halkı kadar Asya ve Afrika halklarını da derinden sarstı. Bengal sanki kendi liderini kaybetmiş gibiydi. Bengal halkı, Atatürk’ün ölümüne Türk milletiyle birlikte gözyaşı döktü. Dünün Bengal halkı ve bugünün Bangladeş halkı topluca Atatürk için yas tuttu. Türk halkına taziyeler iletildi. Bengal yazarlar, Türk milletinin yasını paylaşırken, Atatürk’ün anısının yaşatılması çağrısında bulundular.

Mustafa Kemal’in ve Kurtuluş Savaşı’nın Bengal’e etkisi bununla da sınırlı kalmadı. Örneğin 10 Kasım 1938’de Mustafa Kemal’in vefatından sadece 54 gün sonra ve ölüm haberinin Dakka’ya ulaşmasından sonra, 6 Ocak 1939’da Bangladeş’te ilk kez “Atatürk Model Lisesi” adında bir lise açılmıştır. Fakat Bengalliler Atatürk sevgisini dile getirse de Türkiye o dönemde Bengal ile ilişkilere ilgi göstermedi. Çünkü Bengal ve Hindistan, İngiliz kolonisinin kontrolü altındaydı. Ayrıca Atatürk, Türkiye’yi modern bir devlet haline getirmek istemiş ve bu nedenle dış politikası batıya yönelmiştir. Ancak Kurtuluş Savaşı sonrasında kurulan Türkiye Cumhuriyeti ile ilişkiler, anlaşmalar ve ziyaretler şeklinde sürdürülmüştür. Atatürk döneminde Türkiye-Hindistan ilişkileri çok samimi ve dostane bir şekilde devam etmiştir. Atatürk döneminde Türkiye, doğu milletleri ve hükümetleri nezdinde olağanüstü bir etkiye ve güvenilirliğe sahip olmuş ve çağdaş medeniyete ulaşma yolunda onlara model olmasıyla Atatürk’ün evrensel kişiliği ön plana çıkmıştır.

Türkiye ile Bengal halklarının ilişkileri Pakistan ülkenin altında sürmektedir. İslam dünyasının en kalabalık ülkelerinden biri ve nükleer silaha sahip tek Müslüman ülke olan Pakistan ile ilişkiler önem kanmıştır. İki ülke uzun zamandır yakın ve iyi ilişkilere sahip. 1947’de İngiltere’den bağımsızlığını ilan

eden Türkiye, Pakistan'ı tanıyan ilk devlet oldu. Soğuk Savaş döneminde iki ülke, Bağdat Paktı ile Komünizme karşı bir blok oluşturmak istediler ve birlikte Sovyet Rusya'nın Afganistan'ı işgaline karşı direndiler. Ayrıca Orta Asya Türklerinin hâkim olduğu yönetimin, İslam'ın Hindistan kıtasında yayılması nedeniyle ortak kültürel ve dini değerlere sahip olması Türkiye için önemli bir avantajdır. Türkiye ve Pakistan'ın devletler ve halklar olarak yakınlığı, bugüne kadar yaşanan her doğal afet veya krizde karşılıklı destekle ortaya konmuştur. 215 milyona yaklaşan nüfusuyla Pakistan, Asya jeopolitiğinde önemli bir yere sahip. Bu nedenle her iki ülke de askeri darbelerle uğraştığı için halkları baskı ve yoksulluk yaşadı. İkili, bölgesel işbirliği, Asya ile Avrupa'yı, Akdeniz ile Pasifik'i birbirine bağlayan bir etki yaratmaktadır. Ancak iki ülke arasındaki ekonomik ilişkiler yeterli düzeyde olmasa da giderek eğitim, güvenlik, turizm gibi alanlarda artış gözlemlenmektedir. Özellikle askeri eğitim ve savunma sanayiinde, içinde bulunduğumuz kaotik dönemde birçok iş birliği daha da kritik hale gelmektedir.

Bu tez, Türkiye-Bangladeş ilişkisini siyasi ve diplomatik, askeri/savunma, ekonomik ve sosyal-kültürel açılardan analiz etmektedir. Bunlar, iki ülke arasındaki ilişkilerdeki temel kaygılardır.

Türkiye ile Bangladeş arasındaki diplomatik süreç, Türkiye'nin Pakistan ile olan sıcak ilişkileri nedeniyle 1971-1974 yılları arasında aralıklı olarak devam etmiştir. Türkiye nihayet 1974'te Lahor'daki İslam İşbirliği Teşkilatı toplantısında Bangladeş'i tanıdı. Bu dönemden sonra Türkiye ile Bangladeş arasındaki diplomatik ilişkilerin resmileştirilmesi amacıyla 1976 yılında Türkiye'nin Dakka Büyükelçiliği, 1981 yılında Ankara'da Bangladeş Büyükelçiliği açılmıştır. Türkiye ile Bangladeş arasındaki diplomatik ilişkiler 1974'ten 1997'ye kadar rutin olarak devam etmiş, her iki ülkenin devlet adamları ve yetkilileri karşılıklı ziyaretlerde bulunmuş, bunun ötesinde ciddi bir diplomatik adım atılmamıştır ancak 1997 yılında Türkiye'nin öncülüğünde kurulan D8, iki ülke arasındaki ilişkileri hızlandırdı.

2002 yılından sonra Türkiye’de mevcut hükümetin Asya’ya yönelik belirlediği dış politikalar ve Asya Girişimi ile Bangladeş’in Türkiye için önemini arttığı görülmektedir. Bu endişelere ek olarak, Türkiye’nin Bangladeş ile uluslararası arenada Rohingya konusunda yaptığı işbirliği ve Bangladeş’in 1974 Kıbrıs Barış Harekâtı sırasında Türkiye’ye verdiği desteğin iki ülke arasındaki diplomatik bağları güçlendirdiği anlaşılmaktadır. Türkiye Cumhurbaşkanı Abdullah Gül, 2010 yılında Türkiye’nin Asya girişimi kapsamında Bangladeş’i ziyaret etti. Bu ziyaret sırasında Türk ve Bangladeş hükümetleri, ikili ticaret ve yatırımı teşvik etmek için bir Türkiye-Bangladeş İş Konseyi kurmaya karar verdiler. Bu ziyaretin iki ülke arasındaki diplomatik ilişkileri hızlandırdığı görülüyor. Buna karşılık, Bangladeş Başbakanı Şeyh Hasina, Başbakan Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’ın davetlisi olarak 10-13 Nisan 2012 tarihlerinde Türkiye’yi ziyaret etti. İki ülke bu ziyaret sırasında yedi anlaşma imzalayarak ikili ilişkilere yeni bir boyut kazandırdı.

2012’den 2016’ya kadar, Türkiye, Bangladeş’in ana İslamcı örgütü Cemaat-i İslami’nin liderlerinin ölümünü alenen kınadığında, Türkiye ile Bangladeş arasındaki diplomatik ilişkiler gerildi. Ancak Bangladeş Başbakanı’nın 15 Temmuz 2016’da Erdoğan hükümetini devirme girişimini kınaması üzerine iki ülke arasındaki ilişkilerin hemen düzeldiği görülmüştür.

Üst düzey siyasi temaslar ve ziyaretler iki ülke arasındaki ilişkileri geliştirdi. Bangladeş Başbakanı Şeyh Hasina, Türkiye Cumhurbaşkanı Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’a destek mesajı gönderdi. Şeyh Hasina, hayatını kaybedenler için başsağlığı diledi, demokratik olarak seçilmiş hükümeti ve hukukun üstünlüğünü destekledi. Ancak, iki ülke arasındaki siyasi aksiliklere rağmen, Bangladeş Dışişleri Bakanı Shahriar Alam normalleşme için kapıyı açık bıraktı. Alam, hiçbir iç meselenin tarihi Dakka-Ankara ortaklığına zarar vermeyeceğine inanıyordu.

2017 yılında Bangladeş Devlet Başkanı Abdul Hamid, İslam İşbirliği Teşkilatı'nın (İİT) Filistin konulu özel zirvesine katılmak üzere Türkiye'ye geldi. Aynı yıl dönemin Türkiye Başbakanı Binali Yıldırım, Dakka ve Cox's Bazar'ı ziyaret etti. Binali Yıldırım, ziyareti kapsamında Bangladeş Devlet Başkanı Abdülhamid, Başbakan Şeyh Hasina ve muhalefet partilerinden Khaleda Zia ile bir araya gelerek Türkiye'nin Dakka Büyükelçiliği'nin yeni hizmet binasının temellerini attı. İki ülkenin bu üst düzey resmi karşılıklı ziyareti ilişkilerin düzelmeye başladığını göstermektedir. İlişkilerin canlanması sürecinde, Bangladeş İhracatı Geliştirme Bürosu, Yatırım Geliştirme Ajansı ve Büyükşehir Ticaret ve Sanayi Odası'ndan oluşan bir heyet, Nisan-Mayıs 2017'de Türkiye'yi ziyaret etti. O dönemde Türk işadamları, sanayiciler ve yatırımcılardan oluşan 140 kişi Türkiye'de ticaret ve yatırım konusunda çeşitli seminerlere katıldı.

Öte yandan iki ülke arasındaki diplomatik ilişkiler gergin olsa da sosyo-kültürel ve tarihi yakınlık ikili ilişkilerin kopmamasını sağladı. Eski Bangladeş Büyükelçisi Allama Siddiki'ye göre, önceki kriz sırasında Türkiye ile Bangladeş arasındaki siyasi-kültürel yakınlık, herhangi bir ikili meseleden çok daha güçlüydü. Üst düzey siyasi temaslar ve ziyaretler iki ülke arasındaki ilişkileri geliştirdi. 5-6 Mayıs 2018 tarihlerinde Bangladeş'in ev sahipliğinde düzenlenen 45. İİT Bakanlar Konseyi Toplantısı'na eski Başbakan Yardımcısı Bekir Bozdağ başkanlığında bir heyet katıldı. Aynı yıl Bangladeş Eski Dışişleri Bakanı Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali de düzenlenen İİT Olağanüstü Zirvesi'ne katıldı. 18 Mayıs 2018'de İstanbul'da. Bangladeş Dışişleri Bakanı AK Abdul Momen 14-16 Eylül 2020 tarihlerinde ülkemizi, Dışişleri Bakanı Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu ise 22-23 Aralık 2020 tarihlerinde Bangladeş'i ziyaret etti. Ziyareti sırasında Bangladeş Başbakanı Şeyh Hasina ve Dışişleri Bakanı Ak Abdul Momen ile bir araya gelen Çavuşoğlu, Türkiye'nin Dakka Büyükelçiliği'nin yeni binasının açılışını gerçekleştirdi.

Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Dakka'da gazetecilere verdiği demeçte: "Bangladeş artık Asya'nın yükselen yıldızı. Bangladeş, Türkiye'nin Asya politikasındaki kritik

ortaklardan biridir. Bangladeş'in ekonomik sektörde kısa sürede kaydettiği ilerleme takdire şayandır. Türkiye'nin önde gelen işadamları, Bangladeş'in farklı sektörlerine yatırım yapma fırsatını değerlendirmek istiyor." dedi.

Bangladeş ve Türkiye'nin güçlü ve disiplinli silahlı kuvvetleri bulunmaktadır. Bu sebeple Bangladeş ve Türkiye arasındaki önemli bir işbirliği platformu Savunma sanayiidir. Bangladeş ve Türkiye arasındaki ilişkiler, iki ülke arasında savunma alanındaki işbirlikleri sayesinde yeni bir ivme kazandı. Türkiye, Bangladeş ile her yıl yenilenen Askeri Mali İşbirliği Anlaşmalarına ve Uygulama Protokollerine büyük önem vermektedir. Türkiye NATO üyesi olduğu için savunma sanayi ürünleri de NATO standartlarına uygundur. Bu nedenle Bangladeş, Türk ürünlerini satın almayı tercih ediyor.

Bangladeş Dışişleri Bakanlığı Müsteşarı Mesud bin Momen'e göre Bangladeş, yüksek kaliteli olduğu için Türkiye'den askeri teçhizat tedarik ediyor. Türkiye ile Bangladeş arasındaki savunma ilişkileri, 1978 yılında Bangladeş Devlet Başkanı Ziaur Rahman'ın Türkiye'yi ziyaret etmesiyle başladı. Bu ziyaret sırasında iki ülke arasında askeri eğitim konusunda anlaşmaya varıldı. Bunu takiben 10 Mart 1981'de Dışişleri Bakanı İlder Türkmen'in Bangladeş'e yaptığı resmi ziyaret sırasında Dakka'da Türk-Bangladeş Askeri Eğitim İşbirliği Anlaşması imzalanmıştır. Ancak askeri alandaki ilişkiler 2008 yılına kadar eğitim düzeyinde kalmıştır. Türkiye'nin savunma sanayiinde artan üretimi ve Asya Girişimi politikaları, iki ülke arasındaki ilişkilere savunma alanında farklı bir boyut kazandırmıştır. Bangladeş'in silah satın almak için çeşitli ülkeler arayışı, bu ilişkiyi şekillendiren bir başka unsur oldu. 2013 yılında Bangladeş Ordusu, Türk yapımı Otokar Cobra hafif zırhlı araçlarına kavuştu. Türkiye, 2015 yılında önemli bir Hükümetler Arası (G2G) işleminde Bangladeş güdümlü füze firkateynlerini teklif etti. İki yıl sonra, Türk şirketi Delta Defence, 680 hafif zırhlı araç için 1 milyar dolarlık bir sözleşme imzaladı. Böylece, Bangladeş'in 2021'de Türkiye'den 60 milyon dolarlık silah satın alması, iki ülke arasındaki savunma ilişkilerinin gelişimini göstermektedir.

Türkiye-Bangladeş Ekonomik İlişkileri, Türkiye'nin Bangladeş'i tanınmasıyla başladı. İlk ekonomik temas, 1976 yılında Bangladeşli bir heyetin Türkiye'yi ziyareti ile başlamıştır. Ekonomik ilişkiler 1976 yılında başlasa da bu dönemin verimli bir süreç olduğu söylenemez. Türkiye-Bangladeş ticari ilişkileri beklenildiği gibi gelişmedi. Bu nedenle iki ülke arasındaki ekonomik ve ticari ilişkileri güçlendirmek amacıyla 1979 yılında Karma Ekonomik Komisyonu (KEK), 2011 yılında DEİK/Türkiye-Bangladeş İş Konseyi kurulmuştur. Türkiye ve Bangladeş arasındaki ihracat ve ithalat. Bunların dışında iki ülke arasındaki ticari, ekonomik ve sosyal ilişkileri geliştirmek amacıyla Haziran 2007'de 'Türkiye Bangladeş Ticaret ve Sanayi Odası (TBCCI)' kurulmuştur. Bangladeşli iş adamları, TBCCI'nin rehberliğinde 2008 yılından bu yana Türkiye-Dünya Ticaret Köprüsü'ne katıldı. Ancak TBCCI, Türkiye'de terör örgütü ilan edilen Gülen Hareketi ile bağlantıları nedeniyle 2016 yılının sonlarında kapatıldı.

Türkiye ile Bangladeş arasındaki ekonomik ilişkiler, AK Parti'nin 2002'de iktidara gelmesiyle ivme kazandı. Bu durumu rakamlarla özetlersek; 2007 yılında 308 milyon dolar, 2010 yılında 1 milyar dolar ve 2016 yılında 1 milyar 195 milyon dolar ticaret hacminin olduğu ifade edilebilir. Türkiye Cumhurbaşkanı ve Başbakanının 2010 yılında Bangladeş'e yaptığı ziyaretin ardından Türk Hava Yolları uçuşlarının başlaması, DEİK'in kurulması ve karşılıklı ticaret anlaşmaları ile iki ülkenin ekonomik ilişkileri daha da güçlendi. 2010 yılında gerçekleştirilen bu ziyaret, iki ülke arasındaki süreci farklı bir boyuta taşımış ve her alanda karşılıklı etkileşimi artırmıştır. Koç Holding gibi bazı Türk şirketleri yakın zamanda Bangladeşli işletmelerde yaklaşık 75 milyon dolara hissedar oldular. İki ülke arasındaki ekonomik ilişkilerin artmasına katkı sağladığı görülmektedir.

5 Ağustos 2019'da Türkiye Dışişleri Bakanı Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, çok boyutlu dış politika yaklaşımı "Asya" çerçevesinde ticaret, yatırım, eğitim, savunma sanayi, teknoloji, kültür ve siyaset alanlarında Türkiye ile Asya ülkeleri arasındaki diyalogun artırılmasının önemine vurgu yaptı." 'Yeniden Asya' girişimi,

Türkiye'nin finansal yatırımlarının coğrafi dağılımını çeşitlendirmeyi, özel sektörün ticaret kapasitesini genişletmeyi, akademik işbirliğini geliştirmeyi ve sosyal etkileşimi artırmayı amaçlıyordu. Bu bağlamda Bangladeş'in ekonomik büyüme hızı, genç nüfusu ve stratejik önemi açısından Türkiye'nin bölgedeki kilit ortaklarından biri olması beklenmektedir.

Daha önce de belirtildiği gibi, iki ülke arasında tarihi bağlar bulunmaktadır. Türk-Bengal toplumu bu etkileşimin somut bir örneğidir. Dini ve kültürel yakınlıkları İslam bağlamında karşılaştırılabilir ve Sünni düşünce iki ulus arasındaki ilişkilerin gelişmesinde önemli bir faktördür. Türkiye ve Bangladeş coğrafi olarak uzak olmasına rağmen, iki ülkenin sosyal ve kültürel yönleri çarpıcı biçimde benzer. Ayrıca, kültürel bağlar ve etkiler, iki ülke arasındaki kurumsal ve siyasi ilişkilerden daha güçlüdür. Bengalliler bu ittifakların en önemlisi olan Türk-İslam modelini benimsemişlerdir. Bengal Müslümanlar Sufizm'den büyük ölçüde etkilenmiştir. Bu etkileşimde özellikle mutasavvıf dervişler belirleyici rol oynamışlardır. Anadolu'nun ünlü mutasavvıfı Mevlana'nın talebesi Şah Celal'in Bengal bölgesine gelmiş olması bu etkileşimi güçlendiren unsurlardan biridir.

Bugün Türkiye'de birçok sokak ve caddeye Bangladeşli liderlerin adları verilirken, Bangladeş'te okullara, sokaklara ve caddelere Mustafa Kemal Atatürk'ün adı verilmesi iki halkın karşılıklı etkileşimini göstermektedir. İki halk arasındaki bağlantılar açısından bir diğer kilit unsur, Türk TV programlarının Bangladeş'te yumuşak güç politikasının bir parçası olarak izlenmesidir. Bangladeşli seyircinin Türkiye'ye olan ilgisi Türk dizileri sayesinde daha da arttı. O kadar ki Bangladeşli izleyiciler Türkiye'nin tarihi, turistik yerleri, kültürü, ünlü yemekleri, oyuncularını ve hatta Türkiye ile ilgili günlük haberleri ister geleneksel ister sosyal medya aracılığıyla öğrenmekle ilgileniyor. Diğer bir yönü ise iki ülke arasında burslu öğrenci gönderme girişimleridir. Türkiye, Bangladeşli bilim adamlarına farklı fırsatlar sunmuştur. Temmuz 2017'de YÖK Başkanı'nın Dakka ziyareti sırasında, Türkiye Yükseköğretim Kurulu (YÖK) ve

Bangladeř Üniöersite Hibe Komisyonu (UGC) arasında bir mutabakat zaptı (MoU) imzalandı. Türkiye Bursları ve diđer burslarla Türkiye'ye gelen Bangladeřli öđrenciler, iki ÷lke arasındaki kültürel bađları geliřtirmiřtir.

Türkiye ve Bangladeř, gör÷ldüđü gibi kendi bölgelerinde iki önemli ÷lkedir. Her iki ÷lke de İİT ve D8 üyesi olmanın yanı sıra, kendileri diđer uluslararası kuruluşlarda önemli aktörlerdir. Ekonomik olarak Türkiye, İKT ve D8 ÷lkeleri arasında lider ÷lke konumundadır. Dolayısıyla Türkiye'nin bu kuruluşlardaki konumunun oldukça güçlü olduđu gör÷lmektedir. Bangladeř geliřmekte olan bir ÷lkedir. Bangladeř, İslam dünyasının çıkarlarını geliřtirmede İKT ve D8'de çok önemli bir oyuncudur. Bu bağlamda Bangladeř ve Türkiye kardeşlik ilişkisi içinde olduklarından uluslararası ve ulusal konularda birbirlerine destek olmaktadır. Buna göre Bangladeř ve Türkiye, dünya barışını ve güvenliđini tesis etmek ve sürdürmek için her türlü terörle mücadele için uluslararası platformlarda yakın çalışma sözü verdi.

Bu tez, Türkiye'nin Kıbrıs sorununun dünya çapında tartiřıldığı 1970'ler ve 1980'lerde Bangladeř'in Türkiye'yi desteklediđini göstermektedir. Öte yandan Bangladeř, en yakın iki müttefiki Hindistan ve Çin'den desteđini kaybedince, Türkiye'nin Rohingya mülteci krizine verdiđi destek bu iki ÷lke arasındaki ilişkileri güçlendirdi. Türkiye'nin BM, G20, MIKTA ve İslam İşbirliđi Teřkilatı (İİT) ile Rohingya mültecileri için yürüttüđu çok taraflı diplomatik mücadele, Bangladeř ve Rohingyaların haklı taleplerini uluslararası topluma sunmalarına yardımcı oldu.

Türkiye ve Bangladeř'in stratejik konumu ve durumu da önemli olmuřtur. Türkiye'nin Avrupa ve Asya arasındaki stratejik konumu, bođazları ve NATO, D8 ve İslam İşbirliđi Teřkilatı gibi örgütlere üyeliđi, ÷lkenin jeopolitik konumunu ve rolünü vurgulamaktadır. Ayrıca Bangladeř'in Müslüman nüfusunun Hindistan için önemi, Bangladeř'in Çin'in BRI Projesi'ndeki cođrafi avantajı ve Bangladeř'in Myanmar'daki rolü ile Bangladeř'in de stratejik olarak

önemli olduđu SAARC organizasyonudur. Bu noktada Türkiye-Bangladeş ilişkilerinin kesiştiđi nokta İİT ve D8'dir.

Türkiye, Ekonomik İşbirliđi Teşkilatı (EİT) ve Türk Devletleri Teşkilatı'nın önemli bir üyesi olduğundan, Bangladeş'in her iki kuruluşta da yer almasının, Bangladeş'in kültürel ve ekonomik yapısı nedeniyle Türkiye-Bangladeş ilişkilerine yeni bir boyut kazandırma potansiyeline sahip olduğü değerlendirilmektedir. Türkiye için SAARC, Asya'da rol oynayacak potansiyel bir varlık olarak ortaya çıkabilir. Türkiye'nin SAARC'a katılımının Bangladeş ile Türkiye ve diđer SAARC üyeleri arasındaki ilişkileri geliştirebileceđi söylenebilir. Türkiye, bu ülkelerle değerli ikili ilişkilere sahip olduğundan, SAARC üyeleri arasındaki ihtilafın çözümünde arabuluculuk yapabilir.

Sonuç olarak, yaşadığımız dünyada Türk ve Bengal toplumları ve milletleri iki ayrı coğrafyada bulunmasına rağmen, dünyanın tarihin her döneminde küresel bir köy olması sebebiyle 13. yüzyıldan itibaren karşılıklı etkileşim içinde oldukları görülmektedir. Çalışmada, iki ülkenin dış politikasını küresel ölçekte incelenmiştir. Özellikle ikili bağlar son yirmi yılda çarpıcı biçimde genişlediđi görülmektedir; ancak araştırma sırasında bu gelişmenin literatüre yeterince yansımadađı tespit edilmiştir. Bu etkileşimde zaman zaman siyasi ve coğrafi koşullar nedeniyle bazı kısıtlamalar olsa da son zamanlarda her iki ülke ve halk arasındaki ilişkilerin arttığı görülmektedir. Her iki ülkenin de mevcut potansiyellerini tam olarak kullanabilmeleri halinde siyasi, askeri, ekonomik ve sosyal-kültürel alanlarda karşılıklı etkileşim ve dayanışmanın iki ülkeye fayda sağlayacağı, uluslararası ve bölgesel saha çalışmalarına ait literatürde Türkiye-Bangladeş ilişkilerine önem verilmesine de bu ilişkilerin güçlendiđi ve gelecekte de güçlenerek devam edeceđi görülmektedir.

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