Does the Islamic World have a Platform to Express its International Public Opinion?: Case Studies on Jordan and the OIC (Organization of Islamic Cooperation)

IKEHATA Fukiko[*]

Introduction

This study analyses the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) as part of a Study of the Islamic World, by introducing the theory of the Study of International Organizations. In the Muslim's world view, the Islamic World is based on the notion of "Ummah." The author has been studying this from the point of view that the OIC represents the Ummah of Islam in some aspects. The aim of this paper is to introduce the concept of 'international public opinion' in the area of International Organization Studies, to adopt this concept for the OIC, and to show how Islamic international public opinions related to problems opposing religion were created by the OIC.

In 1969, Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem was set on fire by a young arsonist and this became the main motive for holding the First Islamic Summit in which the establishment of the Organization of Islamic Conference (Munaẓẓama al-Muʾtamar al-Islāmī) was decided. In 1972, the Charter of the OIC was adopted and the framework of an international governmental organization (IGO) began to be established. In 2011, the OIC changed its name to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (Munaẓẓama al-Taʿāwun al-Islāmī), as one part of its reformation.

The OIC regards itself as the second largest inter-governmental organization after the United Nations with a membership of 57 states spread over four continents, including the state of Palestine. It also regards itself as the collective voice of the Muslim world and endeavours to safeguard and protect the interests of Muslims in the spirit of promoting international peace and harmony globally, as is stated on its official homepage.

Nevertheless there is considerable criticism of the OIC from within. The press and media of OIC member states have mockingly named it 'Oh, I see', implying that the OIC can identify a problem but lacks commitment (to the solution) [Khan 2001: 181]. They point out the OIC's laxity, slackness, or softness. Indeed, the OIC's resolutions have no power to bind the member states strongly and it also lacks the ability to execute its plans. In the academic area, some studies also criticise the non-functioning of OIC [al-Ahsan 2006; Akbarzadeh and Connor 2005]. As for its status in the study of International Organizations, the OIC has been considered as an exception because it is based on a religion, Islam, and hence the number of studies on the OIC itself is very limited. On the other hand some studies consider the OIC has

---

    * Graduate School of Asian and African Studies, Kyoto University, Japan.

an important role in the politics of the Islamic world. For example, Bianchi [2004] clarified that the OIC created a new international regime through the process of building a quota system for Hajj. Bianchi showed that the OIC provided a forum where negotiators could link hajj reforms to bargaining over many issues [Bianchi 2004: 254]. He insisted that "[c]ountries that learned to cooperate in managing the Hajj learned to cooperate in other fields" and "[g]uided by a combination of faith and interest, they produced an international regime and an international organization that fitted into the United Nations system without simply mimicking Western models" [Bianchi 2004: 258]. This study shows that the OIC has another important role which is to create Islamic international public opinions.

This paper at first defines the concept of international public opinion, relying on Nishitani [2003]'s definition and then shows 3 key concepts in the area of International Organization Studies for understanding international public opinion. After that, this paper applies these concepts related to international public opinion to the OIC, and using some interesting examples to formulate 'Islamic' international public opinion, shows how the OIC's resolutions about terrorism have been developed and how Jordan's religious rapprochement initiatives entered the international sphere and came to fruition as an Islamic international public opinion through international conferences including the OIC summits.

International Organization Study and International Public Opinion
In order to consider how international public opinion is created by International Organizations, the following three key concepts would be useful; consensus decision-making, common profit, and soft-law, all of which are used in the area of International Organization Studies.

(1) Consensus decision-making (adoption without a vote)
There are two ways to make a resolution in International Organizations. One is adoption by a vote, including a majority vote or a unanimous vote, which has many forms. Another is adoption without a vote, in the other words, consensus decision-making. Consensus decision-making means the established method of adopting a resolution if there are no specific objections. This method is often used in the UN and its related associations. In the UN General Assembly and the Security Council, it has been used frequently since the 1960s. For example in the 70th UN General Assembly, about 77% of the resolutions, or 229 of 299 resolutions adopted from September 2015 to July 2016, were agreed upon by consensus decision-making, and it has been hovering at almost the same percentage recently [Mogami 2016: 282–283].

The OIC has adopted this form of consensus decision-making, which is expressed in 2008's new Charter of the OIC, no. 33(2) [Samuel 2013: 91–92]. Almost all the resolutions of the OIC are made by consensus. A negative characteristic of such a decision by consensus

is the inevitable softness of the contents of its final resolution, which is not only a demerit of the OIC but also of other international organizations including the UN. On the other hand, a positive characteristic is that it does not cause splits between the member states. Decision making by a vote means victory for some and defeat for others, thus there exists the possibility to cause or even deepen divisions between the member states. On this point, consensus decision-making can be highly effective for avoiding such divisions. Despite the softness of the contents of its resolutions it can be pointed out that the member states can continue to participate in the forum of the OIC.

One example of this merit is shown by the success in making resolutions or joint statements at OIC conferences that have included feuding states. For example, although Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Qatar have broken-off diplomatic relations at the present time, they have still joined together with the other member states at OIC conferences on the troubles in Jerusalem, such as the problem of the moving of the US embassy, and they have succeeded in making joint statements or resolutions.

(2) Common profit

Promotion of a 'common profit' is the important essence which is always mentioned as the motivation to create an international organization. However, this notion of 'common profit,' while it seems self-evident, is really neither super-historical nor super-political, and it is a concept that should be defined and redefined continuously [Mogami 2016: 231]. Therefore, to begin with, it is a question of what the common profit inside of an international organization actually is. In other words, an international organization has to place importance on establishing what the common profit itself is rather than to promoting the common profit. This means international organizations including the OIC have the function of making an issue both official and international.

This notion of 'common profit' also assumes there is a profit which is more than a profit in terms of utilitarianism. This means a profit which is greater than the sum of individual national interests or a common profit which matches the national interests of all member states. Mogami [2016] named this as 'objective common profit,' including dealing with problems outside the realm of the member states [Mogami 2016: 234]. Regarding the OIC, the problem of the Rohingya is one prominent example of 'objective common profit.' In dealing with the problem of the oppression of the Muslim minority in Myanmar, which is not a member state, the OIC holds conferences and makes resolutions or declarations, and this fact shows that the OIC is making what is a matter of concern to Muslims inside each of its member states into an official and international issue. In summary, only after the establishment of an international organization, can a definition of what the common profit is be made, and can this common profit become an official and international matter. Therefore

what is the common concern or profit of the Islamic World could be defined and made official only since the OIC has been established and passed its resolution.

(3) Soft-law

In order to understand the concept of soft-law, let me explain the opposite concept, legally binding law. In the theory of IGOs there are two functions of an IGO for making an opinion; one is its normative function and the other is its rule creating function.

The normative function involves the definition and declaration of standards. This function does not involve instruments, which have legally binding effects, but proclamations that are designed to affect the environment in which domestic and world politics are conducted.

Rule-creating functions similarly involve the definition and declaration of standards; however, the purpose is to frame instruments that can have a legally binding effect. For IGOs to have legally binding effects, such instruments usually must be signed and ratified by a specific number of member states, and the instruments generally apply only to those states that have taken such action. In a few IGOs, however, some decisions can be taken that are legally binding without the necessity of implementing the action by member states. There are a few IGOs that have a clear rule-creating function. One example is the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), which makes the safety standards for international aviation. A second example is the World Health Organization (WHO), which determines ways to isolate persons with an infectious disease. A third example is the International Labour Organization (ILO), which makes international labour treaties.

These are the examples of IGO's that have legally binding power. However, the OIC does not have such a solid rule-creating function. Khan [2001] pointed out its "deficient legal framework" as one of the so many problems of the OIC and continued as follows:

> The Charter of the Organization very loosely defines the broader contours of the objectives and principles. It is vague in explaining how they are to be attained, what are the responsibilities of the Muslim states and what is the mandate of the Organization in this respect. It is probably taken for granted that the member states would have altruistic motives and everything would be worked out through consultations. Such idyllic assumptions can hardly withstand the stark truth of the world realpolitik. [Khan 2001: 186].

Of course, it may be a weakness of the IGO, but I would like to instead emphasize the power of its normative function, including making resolutions, declarations, final communiqués, and so on made through the OIC conferences.

To understand the meaning of the non-legal normative function of the IGO, let me introduce 'soft law,' or in other words, unrestrained consensus. This is one point of view that emphasizes the fact that the IGO's resolution has various legal effects or meanings even if it does not have a legal binding force. This is because when a resolution is unanimously adopted, many of the member states observe it and a certain norm is created. With the passage of time, some resolutions or some processes have the possibility of becoming a type of law, such as customary law. Moreover, when an IGO decides how to deal with an issue or a common profit, it has some legal effect which raises a level of countermeasure from that of one state to an international one. Thus the IGO has significance in setting up its issue and common profit, making it official, internationalizing it, legitimising it, and raising the level of countermeasure of it. When it comes to the OIC, the OIC has significance in setting up Muslim's public opinion as the greatest common devisor from the masses, creating an "issue or common profit which is common in the Islamic World," and legitimising it. This paper defines such opinions which are created by the IGO and then become international, as "international public opinion."

It should be pointed out that these notions like soft law have been emphasized by constructivist researchers who stress an IGO's ability to create international norms, against a realistic point of view like the "billiards model," which sees the IGO as an arena for conflict with the states bouncing against each other. Through this key concept of soft law, I suggest the hypothesis that one significant feature of the OIC is the power of soft law, which is creating international opinions in an Islamic manner.

What is International Public Opinion?

The notion or concept of so called 'international public opinion' has not been well considered. This paper relies on Nishitani [2003]'s definition of International public opinion. Nishitani [2003] tried to make this broad concept to enable its use in the area of political study. In this process, Nishitani [2003] first of all pointed out the need to differentiate the opinion of state actors and that of non-state actors. Nishitani [2003] differentiates public opinion as shown below.

Figure 1

Subject of public opinion / Public space	Nation state（state actors）	Individuals/groups (non-state actors)
International society	International public opinion	The sum of domestic public opinion/ transnational public opinion
Regional society	Regional public opinion	The regional sum of domestic public opinion/ Transregional public opinion
Global society	World's public opinion	World's public opinion

[Nishitani 2003: 109]

As the above figure shows, Nishitani [2003] restricts the definition of international public opinion to a state actor's one. In this realm of definition, international public opinion means the opinion of a state, which is concerned with diplomatic policies and is a political phenomenon. There should be different arguments about the power of numbers such as in voting on a UN resolution, and about the size of powers such as France and Germany, which were against the Iraq War and objected much to it. This paper focuses on the international public opinion which is formed and constructed as one assemblage of its diplomatic policy by the OIC member states.

As a prerequisite, this paper views that there is sphere or arena of international public opinion. Speaking of the state actor's international public opinion alone, it can be said that the OIC is the biggest sphere or arena in the Islamic world. When we presuppose a notion of Ummah, an imagined community, international public opinion made by the OIC can include much more than that of a state actor, as long as the OIC expresses its opinion using the word Ummah. It must surely be considered that there are some criticisms, which claim the OIC has not been able to represent Ummah of Islam. Some of them would simply point out that Muslim dominant countries such as Ethiopia and Tanzania have not joined the OIC. Some would point out that opinion of the OIC is not always the consensus of the Ummah, based on the existence of conflicts between the OIC countries themselves. These indications are of course pertinent remarks and show some aspects of the OIC, although the OIC does hold up the interest of the Ummah as its founding principle and this fact itself should also be considered. In the new OIC charter accepted in 2008, the word Ummah is used 5 times in its articles 7, 9, 10, and 27, as quoted below:

Article 7: The Islamic Summit shall deliberate, take policy decisions and provide guidance on all issues pertaining to the realization of the objectives as provided for in the Charter and consider other issues of concern to the Member States and the Ummah.

Article 9: Extraordinary Sessions will be held, whenever the interests of the Ummah warrant it, to consider matters of vital importance to the Ummah and coordinate the policy of the Organisation accordingly. An Extraordinary Session may be held at the recommendation of the Council of Foreign Ministers or on the initiative of one of the Member States or the Secretary-General, provided that such an initiative obtains the support of a simple majority of the Member States.

Article 10: 3. The Council of Foreign Ministers may recommend convening other sectorial Ministerial meetings to deal with the specific issues of concern to the Ummah. Such meetings shall submit their reports to the Islamic Summit and the Council of Foreign Ministers.

> Article 27: The Member States, parties to any dispute, the continuance of which may be detrimental to the interests of the Islamic Ummah or may endanger the maintenance of international peace and security, shall seek a solution by good offices, negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement or other peaceful means of their own choice. In this context good offices may include consultation with the Executive Committee and the Secretary-General.

As one prominent example, the OIC put the problem of the Rohingya, which exists in a non-member state of the OIC, Myanmar, on the agenda as an important issue to discuss. Thus the OIC does take up such problems as issues of the Ummah of Islam, in reality. Although these sentences in its charter do not necessarily reflect the entire reality of the OIC, its establishment of such an ideal itself should be considered in the academic area. Analysing the OIC resolutions in the next chapter, this study investigates whether it can be said that there is "Islamic" international public opinion or not.

'Islamic' International Public Opinion against Terrorism in the Case of the OIC

This paper presents interesting facts about the meaning of the OIC's existence, with respect to how it creates international public opinion with an Islamic point of view. One example of the OIC creating international public opinion is about terrorism. In the history of international governmental organizations, non-state actor's terrorism is raised as one of the new issues, which had not been assumed before. Figure 2 shows the simple number of times the words 'terrorism' or 'terrorist' were used in the all statements published after each of the 13 OIC summits such as resolutions, declarations, final communiqués and so on. This chapter shows how 'terrorism' is raised as issue, and is made official and international, in other words, how it is created as international public opinion.

Figure 2
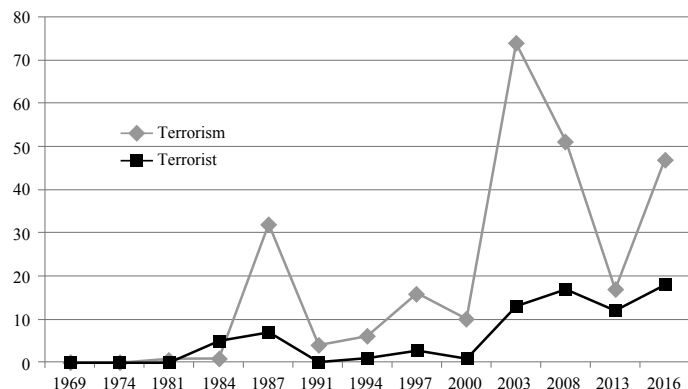
These resolutions show that the debates on terrorism or terrorists have been developed through the 13 OIC summits.

In the statements of the first OIC summit and its second summit, no word of terrorism or terrorist appears. In the third summit, the word terrorism appears once as seen below:

> "CONSIDERING that the Zionist enemy persists in denying the inalienable national (waṭanīya) rights of the Palestinian people particularly their right to their homeland and possessions; and the fact that the enemy continues to harass the Palestinian people, subjecting them to persecution and terrorism (al-irhāb) of the fiercest kind."

Through the its summits after this, the OIC has been defining what terrorism is and why it rejects terrorism and terrorists. At the 5th Summit, it declared that Israel is conducting "organized state terrorism"[1] and accused them, and also insisted the following in order to support Palestine: "(t)he world must however differentiate between terrorism and the legitimate struggle of peoples for self-determination." The 5th Summit also defined the reason to deny terrorism, quoting the resolution of the UN General Assembly Resolution No. 40/61 and 3032 (XXVII) and also pointed out that terrorism violates international treaties and also the Islamic faith based on Sharia.[2] This stance to criticize Israel and support Palestine using the word terrorism is most characteristic and ongoing in the OIC resolutions.

After 9.11, the technique for denouncing terrorism has shown some development. The 10th OIC Summit repeatedly made declarations against Israel's terrorism and also declarations about Islamophobia, insisting not to connect terrorism with Islam or Muslims. After the 11th Summit, it began to make declarations criticizing non-state actors by name as terrorist groups, for example Al-Qaida, Taliban and Fatah Al-Islam. In the 13th Summit, it also criticized by name DEASH, Al-Qaida, Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab and PKK/PYD/YPG.

In summary, it can be pointed out that the OIC creates international public opinion, which can be said to be "Islamic" in some points. Firstly, the OIC's defining of Israel's violent

---

1 The full text is as follows; "Convinced of the need to adopt practical measures to counter the continuous acts of aggression of the Zionist enemy and its gangs, the deliberate desecration of the sanctity of Al-Aqsa Mosque, the escalation of their organized state terrorism, and their daily-practice of the scorched earth policy against the Arab and Palestinian citizens, their properties and Holy Places, particularly in Al-Quds Al-Sharif"

2 The full text is as follows; "Affirming the imperative need of abiding by the principles and lofty values' of the impeccable Islamic Sharia which calls for the rejection of all forms of injustice, aggression and crime";

Believing in the value which Allah Almighty has ascribed exclusively to man by placing him above many of His creatures and forbidding the slaying of man unjustly in his saying "Neither Slay anyone whom God hath forbidden you to slay, except with Right";

Committed to the true teaching of the tolerant Islamic Sharia which forbids causing terror to innocent people and, aggression on their life, and adopting the principle of personal responsibility in conformity with the words or Allah: "and the burdened soul shall not bear the burden of another";

Guided by the Charter of the Organization of the Islamic Conference which binds Member States to endeavor to strengthen Islamic solidarity and consolidate international peace and security based on right and justice"

act on Palestinians as state terrorism using the strong word "Zionist enemy," shows its stand point of supporting Palestine, makes the definition official, international and legitimate, and also updates this opinion continuously. Secondly, the OIC defines the range of application of the word terrorism or terrorists meaning, continuously updates the range of it, and makes the definition official international and legitimate. Moreover, the OIC creates the norm against terrorism from the Islamic point of view, by Sharia. These are very characteristic in the OIC resolutions and this reflects the Islamic world view. On this point, this study categorizes such resolutions as "Islamic" international public opinion.

It seems that the OIC has been struggling to create international public opinion against biased broad opinions such as islamophobic "Anti-Terrorism" movements, defensively and actively. The OIC member states insist that they are also facing terrorism and struggling against it as Islamic countries. It should be considered that the OIC's opinions, which are made by the conferences such as the Islamic summits, are all made by establishments who seek to be approved internationally and in that way the OIC is one system for the member states to approve and support each other. However, at the same time, it is certain that the OIC is creating Islamic international public opinion from the state actor's point of view, which is certainly based on the general opinion of the Ummah. The next chapter similarly analyses the OIC's function to make Islamic international public opinion against sectarian conflict, which is led by Jordan primarily.

Jordan's Religious Rapprochement Initiative

One interesting example is the Amman Message, which was endorsed by the OIC member states in 2005. The Amman Message was first declared on November 9, 2004, at Amman's al-Hashimiyyin Mosque by Jordan's chief justice Shaykh Iz al-Din al-Tamimi in front of King Abdullah II. The message was composed by ulama from various countries, whose leader was Prince Ghazi. He is a cousin of the king and the chief adviser to the king for Religious and Cultural Affairs. He received a Ph.D. from al-Azhar University and is officially recognised as an alim. This message insists on the disavowal of radicalism and declares the moderate way of Islam by citing the Quran. The message was summarized in 'the three points of the Amman Message' in 2005.

The first point insists that it is neither possible nor permissible to declare as apostates any other group of Muslims who believe in God and His Messenger, the pillars of faith, and the five pillars of Islam, and do not deny any necessarily self-evident tenet of the religion. On the first point, the eight schools of jurisprudence, which include the four Sunni Mathahib (Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i, and Hanbali), the two Shi'i Mathahib (Ja'afari and Zaydi), the Ibadi, and the Zahiri, all insist that such persons are Muslims. It also insists that whoever subscribes to the Ashari creed, 'real' Sufism, and 'true' Salafism are also Muslim. The message forbids

takfir (declaration of apostasy, or to declare a Muslim a non-Muslim) against all of the above. The second point insists that every difference among the schools of jurisprudence is only a minor problem and should be accepted. The third point insists that a fatwa should be issued only by one who is qualified in their knowledge of Islam.

In the history of the Islamic Rapprochement movement, Mahmud Shaltut, the Shaykh of al-Azhar in those days, issued a fatwa in 1959 as follows: the Ja'fari school of thought, which is also known as al-Shi'a al-Imamiyya al-Ithna 'Ashariyya [i.e. Twelvers], is a school of thought that is religiously correct to follow in worship like other schools of thought [Halverson 2013: 507]. Before Shaltut, no Sunni legal scholar of rank had gone so far in recognizing Shiism as a completely equal denomination [Brunner 2004: 290]. Therefore, this was a very historic fatwa in the realm of Sunni thought. Further in the rapprochement movement, Ibadism was also incorporated into the category of Islam at the end of the twentieth century. The Amman Message presented at the beginning of the twenty-first century mentioned the eight schools of Islamic jurisprudences and recognized them all as true Islam. With respect to this point, this message can be grasped as a development of Shaltut's fatwa and as further progress in the Islamic rapprochement movement.

International Conferences Approving Jordan's Initiative

The Amman Message was submitted to several other conferences from 2005 to 2006. This message received 552 endorsements from 84 countries of political leaders, religious leaders, and Islamic thinkers from July 2005 to July 2006 [MABDA 2009: 23]. The signatories were international in scope and were not limited to sectarian lines; they included acknowledged leaders from all four schools of Sunni jurisprudence, Iranian and Iraqi Shia leaders, representatives of smaller Shia schools such as the Ismailis, and representatives of the Ibadi school. As figure 3 shows, at first the consensus for the Amman Message was made by ulama internationally, and then by the ministers of religious endowments and Islamic affairs and by the OIC summit at Mecca.

Figure 3 [MABDA 2009: 23]

Time	Name of Conference, Place	Signs	Cf.
2005, Jul	True Islam and Its Role in Modern Society Conference, Amman	201	"3 points" 1st ed.
2005, Sep.	Forum of Muslim Ulama and Thinkers, Mecca	42	
2005, Nov.	Islamic Schools of Jurisprudence Conference, Aal Al-Bayt University, Jordan	33	
2005, Nov.	9th Session of the Council of Ministers of Religious Endowments and Islamic Affairs, Kuwait	7	
2005, Dec	3rd Extraordinary Session, OIC, Mecca	54	
2006, Apr.	Moderate Islamic Thought and Culture, Amman	55	"3 points" 1st ed.
2006, Jun.	International Fiqh Academy Conference, Amman	68	"3 points" 2nd ed.
2006, Jun.	Muslim of Europe Conference, Istanbul	157	

This 'three-point Amman Message' was submitted by Jordanian King Abdullah II to the OIC Extraordinary Summit held in Mecca in December 2005. The three points were unanimously adopted by the Islamic World's political and temporal leaderships at the OIC's extraordinary summit. This means that member states of the OIC accomplished a unanimous consensus on this issue. From the Final Communiqué of this Extraordinary Summit of the OIC in 2005, we can see the reflection of the Amman Message as below:

> I - In the Intellectual Field
>
> The Summit reaffirmed that Islam is a religion of moderation which rejects bigotry, extremism and fanaticism, and underlined in this connection the importance of combating deviant ideology using all available means, besides developing educational curricula that firmly establish the values of understanding, tolerance, dialogue and multilateralism in accordance with the tenets of Islam.
>
> The Conference stressed that dialogue among civilizations based on mutual respect, understanding and equality between people, is a prerequisite for establishing a world marked by tolerance, cooperation, peace and confidence among nations.
>
> The Conference called for combating pseudo-religious and sectarian extremism, and for the need to refrain from accusing followers of Islamic schools of heresy, and reaffirmed the need to deepen dialogue and promote restraint, moderation and tolerance and issuance of Fatwas by those not eligible to issue them.
>
> The Conference underlined the importance of reforming the Islamic Fiqh Academy such as to make it the jurisprudential authority of the Ummah.

From the Secretary General's Report from the same Extraordinary Summit in 2005, the title is "New Vision for the Muslim World: Solidarity in Action," we can also see the reflection of the Amman Message.

> 37. On the concept of moderation in Islam, the scholars agreed that this concept is based on a solid foundation of Islamic belief and constitutes the hallmark of the Islamic Ummah: "Thus have we made you an evenly-balanced nation that you may be witnesses for mankind and the Messenger may be a witness for you." (Al-Baqara-143).
> 39. The scholars also extensively deliberated on the important question of the multiple schools of thought. They stated that differences in schools of thought reflect the rich nature of the Islamic thought sources. In this regard, they expressed their full support to the declaration made regarding these issues by the International Islamic Conference, which was held in Amman in July 2005 and was attended by more than 170 Muslim scholars.

These statements published after the Summit of the OIC show the tendency that international public opinion stated as the resolution of the OIC would be softer than the opinion proposed at first; in this case of the Amman Message, the word "takfīr" or "declaration of apostasy, or to declare a Muslim a non-Muslim" has been deleted inside of the resolution of the OIC.

As international norms are generally created by many IGOs or international non-governmental organization (INGO) actors, international Islamic norms should also be created by different actors, not only the OIC but also some other conferences. Each of these international actors mutually interferes with the others and also with the roughly created international public opinion made by the ordinary mass of Muslims. In the case of this international Islamic norm, such norms are distinctive because they are backed up by Islamic law and the knowledge of the ulama (and its interaction with the mass of Muslims). Thus, this type of international norm is non-legal in general, in almost all other IGO, but in the context of Islam, these norms are created on a solid foundation of Islamic law. The OIC, as an IGO which holds political conferences such as the Islamic summit, has the role of putting such Islamic norms into the political arena and making political consensus on such religious norms. Next, as the final part of this article, we will see how can we define Islamic international public opinion, and how can we observe the creation of international Islamic public opinion, from the study of the OIC.

How do Islamic Countries make International 'Islamic' Public Opinions?

Kosugi [2006] introduced the notion of "Islamic diplomacy," showing a case that the Islamic countries have some power in their numbers inside of the UN. One important example is, as Kosugi [2006] mentioned, that Eid al-Adha and Eid al-Fitr were designated as the UN staff's official holidays in 1997 [Kosugi 2006: 607]. The following information circular to the members of the UN staff about their official holidays was published on March 31, 1998 as below:

INFORMATION CIRCULAR[3]
To: Members of the staff
From: The Under-Secretary-General for Management
Subject: OFFICIAL HOLIDAYS
1. At its 82nd plenary meeting, on 31 March 1998, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Fifth Committee and reiterating its resolution 52/214 A of 22 December 1997, decided that the United Nations official holidays shall be set at ten days, in order to observe the two holidays of Eid Al-Fitr and Eid Al-Adha at the United Nations headquarters and other United Nations duty stations.

---

3 http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=ST/IC/1998/30

2. As from 31 March 1998, therefore, staff at all duty stations are to observe the two holidays of Eid Al-Fitr and Eid Al-Adha. This year, Eid Al-Adha falls on 7 April.

3. The remaining eight official holidays should be decided upon at each duty station, after consultation with staff.

4. The Secretary-General expects all staff and programme managers to ensure that all mandates are implemented in a timely manner and to make any adjustments required.

Showing this example, Kosugi [2006] explained the power of the number of Islamic Countries inside of UN politics as a reflection of the number of votes in making resolutions, and also insisted that this case was the fruition of "joint diplomacy" by the Islamic countries [Kosugi 2006: 607].

This study adds another interesting example to this notion of Islamic diplomacy, the establishing of a "World Interfaith Harmony Week" by the UN General Assembly in 2010. This World Interfaith Harmony Week was led by Jordan, which was already the source of the Amman Message and A Common Word initiatives (2007), emphasising the importance of interfaith dialogue especially between Islam and Christianity. The sequence of the event is explained below:

> "After the success — by God's Grace — of the Amman Message (2004), which intended to promote peace, harmony and brotherhood between Muslims; and A Common Word (2007) which intended to promote peace, harmony and brotherhood between Muslims and Christians, Prince Ghazi sought a way to extend these values to everyone in the world of whatever faith (or no faith) without any exclusion, but in a way in which it would not lose its spiritual authenticity for believers in the One God. So in August 2010, he suggested the idea of a World Interfaith Harmony Week to H.M. King Abdullah II, who immediately approved it, and himself proposed the idea at the 65th Plenary Session of the United Nations on September 26th, 2010 (see: http://bit. ly/wihwun1)." [MABDA 2013: 84]

In addition the Jordan Times stated that Jordan's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nasser Judeh, also lobbied at the OIC conference, held on the same date as the 65th Plenary Session of the UN:

> "Minister of Foreign Affairs Nasser Judeh on Friday stressed the importance of the draft resolution proposed to the UN General Assembly by His Majesty King Abdullah to set up an annual World Interfaith Harmony Week. Addressing participants at the Annual Coordination Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Organisation of

the Islamic Conference (OIC) Member States, held on the sidelines of the 65th UN General Assembly Summit in New York, Judeh called on all OIC member states to support the resolution, which he said would highlight the shared human heritage of all world religions. Judeh said the meeting comes at a time when the Muslim world faces several challenges, which require joint cooperation to face these challenges and serve the common interests of Muslim countries and peoples." [Chahine 2010]

In the following month, Prince Ghazi flew to New York and introduced the idea at the U.N., having himself written the text, whilst Jordan's Ambassador to the U.N. Prince Zeid bin Ra'ad and his embassy team ably lobbied the U.N. states for the resolution [MABDA 2013: 84]. Finally, the resolution (A/Res/65/5) was adopted unanimously by the UN General Assembly after being proposed by the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and 29 other co-sponsors, namely: Albania, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, Georgia, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Liberia, Libya, Mauritius, Morocco, Oman, Paraguay, Qatar, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Tanzania, Tunisia, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, Uruguay and Yemen [MABDA 2013: 84]. The resolution read as follows:

> The General Assembly,
> 1. Reaffirms that mutual understanding and interreligious dialogue constitute important dimensions of a culture of peace;
> 2. Proclaims the first week of February of every year the World Interfaith Harmony Week between all religions, faiths and beliefs;
> 3. Encourages all States to support, on a voluntary basis, the spread of the message of interfaith harmony and goodwill in the world's Churches, Mosques, Synagogues, Temples and other places of Worship during that week based on Love of God and Love of the Neighbour, or based on Love of the Good and Love of the Neighbour, each according to their own religious traditions or convictions;
> 4. Requests the Secretary-General to keep the General Assembly informed of the implementation of the present resolution.

It is also insisted that "[t]his was the first and perhaps the only time the U.N. has approved a resolution explicitly based on belief in God." [MABDA 2012: 85–88] Prince Ghazi explained about this religious resolution as follows;

> "[T]here is mention of 'Love of God and Love of the Neighbour, or Love of the Good and Love of the Neighbour'. Why is this religious reference necessary in a UN

resolution? In answer to this question, it will be noted first that this draft resolution is unique because it is specifically about peace between religions and not about anything else, therefore some religious references in this particular case are only natural. To rigidly maintain the contrary would be to disregard the feelings of 85% of the world's population which belongs to one or another faith." [MABDA 2018: 21]

From this case, it can be revealed that Jordan, one of the member states of the OIC, gathered 29 supporting countries by lobbing to the OIC and the UN, and finally succeeded in creating a UN resolution, which was adopted unanimously. This is case also shows the power of the number of Islamic countries in issuing a resolution of the UN. Moreover this case is prominent because this successful opinion was related to religion, led by Islamic countries. It seems that they created one international public opinion against secularism. In the history of the IGO, this case can be counted as one prominent example of religions "return from exile" [Petito and Hatzopoulos 2003] into International Relations.

Conclusion

This paper has shown that one of the roles of the OIC is to create Islamic international public opinions. This kind of study might invite an argument about how we can say the opinion created by the OIC is an "Islamic" opinion, in spite of the fact that the OIC member states includes many non-Muslims inside their countries or the OIC excludes some Muslim dominant countries and Muslim minorities in non-member states. One thing that can certainly be insisted on is that the OIC, at least, recognizes itself as a representative of the Islamic World and it often uses the word "Ummah" when it talks about its issues or common benefits. Secondly, one interesting example is that the OIC is recently focusing its efforts on the problem of the Rohingya in Myanmar, which is outside of the realm of OIC members. Thus OIC also focuses on the troubles suffered by Muslims outside of its realm, making an issue of them and carrying various resolutions about the Muslim minorities outside of the OIC member states. These are examples are evidence that the OIC deals with various Muslim's issues beyond its framework as an aggregate of the nation states.

This shows some possibility that the OIC has an aspect to scoop an upper layer of the trends and infinite opinions of the Muslims of the world, although most of them inevitably spill over and fall through its fingers. So now, when we get back to Nishitani [2003]'s definition and confine the subject to state, international public opinion is certainly made through any IGOs including the OIC. And when it comes to the international public opinion created through the OIC, so long as it says it is representing the voice of the Ummah, it ought to be called international "Islamic" public opinion.

To conclude, the OIC plays a role as a platform where the Islamic countries create

consensus and publish international public opinions from the standpoint of the Islamic world. Through the OIC, Islamic international public opinions created by the OIC can have power through the considerable numbers of its 57 member states, and can show the unity of their opinions as a representative of the Islamic world.

As the Amman Message has been approved by some international conferences such as the OIC conference, it can be said that there is international public opinion related to the problems inside of the Islamic World. The OIC is a system which is constructed on premise of a Nation State's existence, thus, from one point of view, Jordan or the OIC oppose terrorism which is causing suffering to the people existing within their borders. In order to oppose terrorism, they try to create international public opinions and make consensus which can legitimise them internationally.

On the other hand, the OIC has a role to send announce the international public opinions voiced by Islamic countries to the outside, broader international community. This movement was shown by an analysis of the OIC resolutions on terrorism. This example provided one hypothesis that there is an aspect in which the OIC is creating international public opinion from Islamic point of view in order to defend Muslim countries against international public opinions such "Anti-Terrorism" which have exploited Islamophobia in the West.

As the last part of this paper shows, the power of the Islamic countries to create international public opinion in a much broader realm is sometimes demonstrated in the United Nations, the biggest IGO. Islamic countries have succeeded in getting the UN to adopt religion related issues brought by the Islamic Countries (such as the UN staff's official holiday or World Interfaith Harmony Week), and these cases have made it clear that the united opinion of the 57 member states of the OIC cannot be disregarded. Furthermore, this case also implies that the Islamic countries have demonstrated an ability to counter secularism to a certain degree.

References

OIC Journal.

OIC Official Homepage <http://www.oic-oci.org/>

Akbarzadeh, Shahram and Kylie Connor. 2005. "The Organization of the Islamic Conference: Sharing an Illusion," *Middle East Policy*, 12(2), pp. 79–92.

Al-Ahsan, Abdullah. 2006. "Political Discourse of the Organization of Islamic Conference," in Ibrahim Abu-Rabi' (ed.), *The Blackwell Companion to the Contemporary Islamic Thought*, Malden: Blackwell Publishing, pp. 527–543.

Baba, Noor Ahmad. 1994. *Organisation of Islamic Conference: Theory and Practice of Pan-Islamic Cooperation*. New Delhi: The University Press Limited.

Bianchi, Robert R. 2004. *Guest of God: Pilgrimage and Politics in the Islamic World*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

Chahine, Noora. 2010 (Sep. 26). "Judeh calls on OIC to support global interfaith week," *The Jordan Times*.

Danish, Ishtiyaque. 2001. *The Ummah, Pan Islamism and Muslim Nation-States*. New Delhi: Institute of Objective Studies.

Halverson, Jeffry R. 2013. "The Anti-Shiʿa Polemics of an Online Salafi-Jihadi: The Case of Nasir al-Qaʿida in Historical Perspective," *The Muslim World* 103(4), pp. 501–517.

Iḥsān Awghalī, Akmal al-Dīn. 2013. *Al-ʿĀlam al-Islāmī wa Taḥaddiyāt al-Qarn al-Jadīd: Munaẓẓama al-Taʿāwun al-Islāmī*. Cairo: al-Shurūq.

Ihsanglu, Ekmeleddin. 2010. *The Islamic World in the New Century: The Organisation of the Islamic Conference*. London: Hurst & Company.

Kayaoglu, Turan. 2015. *The Organization of Islamic Cooperation: Politics, Problems, and Potential*. London and New York: Routledge.

Khan, Saad S. 2001. *Reasserting International Islam: A Focus on the Organization of the Islamic Conference and Other Islamic Institutions*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

Kosugi, Yasushi. 2006. *The Islamic World: Heritage, Rebirth and Contemporary Dynamics* (*Gendai Isrāmu Sekai-ron*). Nagoya: The University of Nagoya Press.

Kramer, Martin. 1986. *Islam Assembled: The Advent of the Muslim Congress*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Landau, Jacob M. 1990. *The Politics of Pan-Islam: Ideology and Organization*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

MABDA (The Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought). 2009. *The Amman Message*. Amman. <http://jordan.specicom.eu/pages/amman.pdf> (last accessed 30/7/2018)

———. 2013. *Twenty Years of Historic Religious Initiatives Based in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan by H.R.H. Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad min Talal and many, many friends, 1993–2013 CE.*

———. 2018. *The H.M. King Abdullah II World Interfaith Harmony Week Prize Ceremony 2018.*

Mogami, Toshiki. 2016. *International Organization* (*Kokusaikikō-ron Kōgi*). Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, Publishers.

Moinuddin, Hasan. 1987. *The Charter of the Islamic Conference: The Legal and Economic Framework*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Nishitani, Makiko. 2003. "Concept of International Opinion and Its Capabilities

(Kokusaiseron no Gainen to Nōryoku)," *Journal of International Cooperation Studies*, 11(1), pp. 107–139.

Petito, Fabio and Pavlos Hatzopoulos. 2003. *Religion in International Relations: The Return from Exile*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Samuel, Katja LH. 2013. *The OIC, the UN, and Counter-Terrorism Law Making: Conflicting or Cooperative Legal Orders?* Oxford and Portland, Oregon: Hart Publishing.

Sheikh, Faiz. 2016. *Islam and International Relations: Exploring Community and the Limits of Universalism*. London and New York: Rowman & Littlefield.

Vanhullebusch, Matthias, 2015. *War and Law in the Islamic World*. Leiden and Boston: Brill.