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Neo-Ottomanism in Turkish Foreign Policy and Changes during the Erdoğan era

Master's thesis

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Declaration

1. I hereby declare that I have compiled this thesis using the listed literature and resources only.

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In Prague on July 31, 2018   Vladimír Hurych

References

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Abstract

In November 2002, the new emerging Justice and Development Party (AKP) experienced a landmark electoral victory that significantly rewrote the prevailing domestic and foreign policy identity. The Islam-based AKP and its leaders Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Abdullah Gül and Ahmet Davutoğlu initiated a massive transformation of the Turkish society imposing economic market-oriented reforms and emphasizing the role of democratic institutions and the potential EU membership. AKP establishment also adopted a new foreign policy identity - the neo-Ottomanism. The concept has a background in 1990's strategy of former President Turgut Özal who emphasized the historical, cultural and religious heritage of the Ottoman Empire. Based on domestic changing identity, AKP's neo-Ottomanism served as an ideological tool how to transform its foreign policy identity with using the Islamic narrative and soft power tools. The thesis analyses how the new establishment of 2000's redefined the role of Turkey regarding its geopolitical position in the Middle East. Turkey has been emphasizing its strategic role as a regional power on the crossroads of many cultures and geopolitical interests. The question is how and whether the AKP governments changed the foreign policy identity with the use of neo-Ottomanism and how this concept has been dealing with recent unfavourable domestic and international environment.

Abstrakt

V listopadových volbách roku 2002 zaznamenala nově vzniklá Strana spravedlnosti a rozvoje (AKP) masivní volební vítězství, které významným způsobem přepsalo dosavadní převládající zahraničně politickou identitu země. Strana AKP založená na islámských hodnotách v čele s jejími leadery Recepem Tayyipem Erdoğanem, Abdullahem Gülem a Ahmetem Davutoğlu spustili rozsáhlou transformaci turecké společnosti a začali prosazovat hospodářské tržně orientované reformy a zdůrazňovali roli demokratických institucí a možného budoucího členství v Evropské unii. Nová vládní garnitura AKP také přímo změnila zahraničně politickou identitu – tzv. neoottomanismus. Tento koncept pramení v 90. letech ve snaze bývalého prezidenta Turguta Özala, který se již odvolával na historické, kulturní a náboženské dědictví Osmanské říše. S ohledem na měnící se domácí identitu, neoottomanismus vládnoucí strany sloužil jako ideologické vodítko pro postupnou změnu zahraničněpolitické identity s důrazem na islámský narativ a prostředky tzv. soft power. Práce analyzuje jak nová vláda AKP po roce 2002 redefinovala roli Turecka s ohledem na geopolitickou pozici země na Blízkém

východě. Turecko upozorňuje na svůj význam a roli regionální mocnosti, která se nachází na rozcestí mnoha kultur a geopolitických zájmů. Otázkou je, do jaké míry vlády AKP změnili zahraničně politickou identitu Turecka za pomocí neoottomanismu a jak je tento koncept schopný čelit nedávné nepříznivé domácí i zahraniční situaci.

Keywords

Turkey, neo-Ottomanism, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, AKP – Justice and Development Party, foreign policy

Klíčová slova

Turecko, neoottomanismus, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, AKP – Strana spravedlnosti a rozvoje, zahraniční politika

Title

Neo-Ottomanism in Turkish Foreign Policy and Changes during the Erdoğan era

Název práce

Neootomanismus v turecké zahraniční politice a změny během Erdoğanovy vlády

Acknowledgement

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Introduction

The electoral victory of the Justice and Development Party (AKP - Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi) in November 2002 represented a landmark in Turkish domestic politics and the perception of the foreign policy identity. Contrary to decades lasting secular establishment, AKP lead by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Abdullah Gül, launched a transformation of Turkish identity and its role in the international relations. Turkish foreign policy decision makers adopted the concept of neo-Ottomanism referring to a historical legacy of the Ottoman Empire, its Islamic legacy, geopolitical and economic role. Turkey emerged as a more activist actor towards its neighbours especially in the Middle East on the territories that once fell under the tutelage of the Sultans. Since 2002, the AKP has been dominating Turkish policy that by nature impacted the foreign policy identity that was contradictory in many aspects to the decades long Turkish foreign policy and domestic identity. Turkey emerged in the spotlight several times due to domestic turbulent events and external challenges Turkey has been facing in the last years. As a key ally of NATO and a crucial partner for the European Union, many theories and studies have been written about the Turkish foreign policy proving the crucial role of Turkey in today's international relations. Additionally, the potential bias of the author regarding the importance of Turkish role in the global politics is based on the author's study visit to Turkey experiencing important events including the 2015 snap parliamentary election or the significantly worsening security situation in the country and in the region of Middle East.

As far as the time definition of the topic, the thesis aspires to contribute to an ongoing discussing about the changing Turkish foreign policy and the impact on its neo-Ottoman identity policy since 2002 until the recent events of 2018. Importantly, as the thesis will further elaborate, the AKP's attempt to change the Turkish foreign policy roots from the previous modest attempt of President's Özal to improve relations with the states surrounding Turkey, i.e. neo-Ottomanism 1.0. Consequently, as many authors distinguish, the neo-Ottomanist foreign policy promoted by Erdoğan or Davutoğlu is recognised in this thesis as the neo-Ottomanism 2.0. Moreover, the recent domestic and external events could contribute to the analysis of AKP's attempt to change the Turkish foreign policy and assess whether and how the neo-Ottoman policy of AKP governments has been successful.

This thesis will attempt to answer the following research question of how the concept of neo-Ottomanism in Turkish foreign policy is influenced and changed by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and the AKP governments. Theories of international relations offer numerous tools

how to analyse foreign policy of a state and define its particular identity. The analysis of this thesis inevitably deals with the theory of social constructivism and the approach towards states' identities of foreign policies and the interconnection between domestic and external factors. In other words, this author acknowledges the role of constructivism and identity accepting the approach "*that identity-based explanations offer a better understanding of a state's preferences and interests, and consequently its foreign policy priorities as a way how to articulate and construct the state's identity to a wider public.*"[1]

The thesis uses a qualitative method, testing the elements that played an important role in the construction of new Turkish foreign policy identity of neo-Ottomanism endorsed by AKP governments. Contrary to the neorealist theory of international relations, external and internal factors represent a crucial role when identifying and describing the identity of a state. The construction of an identity is conducted on both mutually interdependent internal and external levels. The thesis uses the constructivist theory of international relations in a sense of changing a country's foreign policy identity, in this case Turkey after 2002. As many constructivists proclaim, the domestic identity of a state has direct consequences on the determination of the state's foreign policy.[2] Some social constructivists define that state identity is not a rigid and fixed set of factors but rather a fluid and dynamic process undergoing continuous interactions with the domestic and international audience.[3] Consequently, the state identities, domestic or foreign policy ones, are gradually redefined and altered according to those actors and entities defining them. In this sense, this assumption does not exclude a dramatic shift of a state's identity and its foreign policy that could be also applicable to Turkish case and its foreign policy identity which has been, compared to other countries, repeatedly challenged and redefined several times during the last century.[4]

Mustafa Aydin defines the principles affecting the foreign policy identity into two categories: structural and conjunctural variables.[5] The first category composes of a set of long-term determined and rigid variables such as historical, geographical or religious aspects that are elaborated further when describing the impact of Ahmet Davutoğlu's Strategic Depth doctrine.

[1] BOZDAĜLIOĜLU, Y. Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach. 1st ed. New York. Routledge – Taylor & Francis Group. 2003. ISBN 0-203-50203-5. p.24
[2] BERŽIŪNAS, V. Foreign policy decision-making and the construction of state's identity. [online]. Vilnius University. 2016. Available at https://ecpr.eu/Events/PaperDetails.aspx?PaperID=28157&EventID=98
[3] YAVUZ, H. Turkish identity and foreign policy in flux: The rise of Neo-Ottomanism. [online]. Journal for Critical Studies of the Middle East, Vol. 7, No. 1. Pp. 19-41. 2006. [cit. 2018-19-06]. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/10669929808720119
[4] KOWERT, P. Foreign Policy and the Social Construction of State Identity. [online]. Department of Political Science, University of Massachusetts, Boston. 2010. [cit. 2018-27-07]. Available at: http://internationalstudies.oxfordre.com/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190846626.001.0001/acrefore-9780190846626-e-397
[5] AYDIN, M. The Determinants of Turkish Foreign Policy, and Turkey's European Vocation. The Review of the International Affairs. [online]. 2003. Vol.3. No.2. p. 306-331. p.307

The latter deals with a set of fluid variables that are highly dependent on international development, the current political representation and other internal factors that directly influence the foreign policy decision makers (Turkish elections, military coupe etc.)[6] Aydin also argues that the most important determinants shaping Turkish foreign policy identity is the historical experience of the Ottoman empire, the geostrategic position of Turkey between the continents and on the crossroads of various cultures, religions and geopolitical interests; the political ideology, the changing foreign policy dynamics and international status-quo in the region.[7]

This author seeks to analyse the changing foreign policy identity after the electoral victory of AKP in 2002 with a logic explanation of the determinants preceding this landmark event. The choice limited only for less than two decades suffice from the perspective of the content of this thesis because the theoretical and philosophical background behind the foreign policy identity construction is already extensively large. Moreover, the author points at one of the landmark period in Turkish politics and changing identity that has undercome serious contradictory flows and contestations in the last century. The thesis then seeks how the new neo-Ottoman identity adopts to the challenging environment. The conclusion will attempt to answer the question whether and if the foreign policy identity has been altered and based on what incentives the identity is being transformed and what preferences emerge for the formulation of (a new) Turkish foreign policy identity.

From the sources point of view, the author faced several limitations regarding the thesis. Because of the still continuation of the phenomenon, the author deals with limited sources (case studies, news articles) referring to the most recent dynamics. The important factor that must be mentioned is the domestic situation in Turkey and lack of impartial analysis and articles on the recent topics. Moreover, the author lacks a sufficient academic knowledge of Turkish language, therefore the thesis deals in large majority with English sources. The structure of the thesis reflexes the theoretical definition, historical background essential for understanding the topic, in other words the need to briefly analyse President's Özal's neo-Ottomanims in order to understand the President's Erdoğan's neo-Ottomanism 2.0. The key emphasis is put on the definition of neo-Ottomanism of AKP in the 2000's and the changes following this redefinition of foreign policy identity including the relations with Turkey's Islamic neighbours. The last

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[6] Ibid. p.307
[7] Ibid. p.307

part deals with the current developments following the Arab Spring and the challenges for the current state of neo-Ottoman identity and its future.

1. The concept of neo-Ottomanism after the Cold War

The establishment of the Turkish Republic and consequent adoption of the Kemalist ideology created a contradiction to the Ottoman Empire's raison d'être. The Kemalism as the Turkish Republic's core ideology was renamed after the founder of the Turkish Republic Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. The ideology and identity were being adopted throughout the 1920's and 1930's in a newly created state in a relative militant and radical manner.[8] In order to become a modern and Western-oriented country, Turkey abolished Ottoman identity as such, including historical and religious heritage trampling the Islamic religion as the dominant power in the state as well as the Arab script. As Taspinar explains, the identity of Kemalism was notably inspired by French revolution radical ideas of laicity and national state based on secularism, modernism and progressive vision of the future.[9] Moreover, Kemalism, compared to the Ottoman tradition, incorporated the idea of a national state, at that time broadly unexperienced concept in the region. The so called 'Turkishness' provided a tool of imposing common national identity that has been significantly completed in the late 1920's.[10] Contrary to the Ottoman approach, Kemalism ceased to tolerate multicultural and multiethnicity vision of a state, thus putting the Turkish ethnicity and nation in a preferred position and side-lining other ethnic groups such as the Arabs, the Kurds or the Greeks.[11]

1.1 The end of the Cold War

As far as the post-World War II era is concerned, Ankara represented a Western bulwark against Soviet expansionism towards the region of Middle East. Turkey's realpolitik neglected any debate on the regional influence or issues. Moreover, Ankara successfully avoided any deep reflection of its Islamic and Ottoman identity and this approach was the driving dogma for the Turkish foreign policy during the Cold War. In other words, Kemalist Turkey has isolated its foreign policy and ceased to reflect and use its geopolitical position in the region.[12] The ascendant Republic of Turkey turned its diplomatic back on the Middle Eastern countries

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[8] NEUMAN, C., KREISER, K. Dějiny Turecka. 1st ed. Praha. Nakladatelství Lidové noviny. 2010
[9] TANSIPAR, Ö. Turkey's Middle East Policies: Between Neo-Ottomanism and Kemalism. Washington DC. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. 2008.
[10] NEUMAN, C., KREISER, K. Dějiny Turecka. 1st ed. Praha. Nakladatelství Lidové noviny. 2010
[11] BOZDAĜLIOĜLU, Y. Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach. 1st ed. New York. Routledge – Taylor & Francis Group. 2003. ISBN 0-203-50203-5
[12] TANSIPAR, Ö. Turkey's Middle East Policies: Between Neo-Ottomanism and Kemalism. Washington DC. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. 2008. P.09

despite having most of its territory on the Asian continent than in Europe.[13] The bipolarity and proxy conflicts between the United States and the Soviet Union were the main indicators along which foreign policies of their allies were driven. Hence, Turkey, being an important strategic ally and a member of the USA and NATO, followed Western-only foreign policy and did not directly influence or intervene in Middle Eastern politics and conflicts.[14]

A thorough definition of the Turkish foreign policy and the lack of its active agenda is not the core purpose of the thesis but a brief definition is required. Turkey has not been under complete control of its foreign policy from the United States. Changing internal dynamics such as raising radical-left movements, the Kurdish issue or pro-Islamist voices were mitigating the influence of strictly secular and Western-oriented Kemalism during the second half of the Cold War. Following the adoption of a new Constitution in the 1961[15], that stressed the dominance of the relations with the West ignoring a debate over the disadvantages of this foreign policy.[16] To give an example, despite being one of the first countries and the first Islamic country to de iure recognise the State of Israel, Turkey acknowledged that its foreign policy cannot be anti-Arab as such. The differing approach compared to the US policies lead to more pragmatic approach towards its 'Muslim cousins' in the Middle East. Those changing dynamics were firstly represented by a limited support of the Palestine Liberation Organization in the 1970's that in the end resulted in an opening of an affiliate office in Ankara.[17] Naturally, the decision was not warmly endorsed by the US administration. Turkey, for the whole duration of the Cold War, proved the ability to withstand the Soviet pressure on its territorial integrity and the control of the Straits and the Black Sea region. Additionally, Turkey by pursing an active anti-communist position warmly supported by the US administration contributed to joining NATO in 1952 together with its inherent enemy Greece. This milestone was preceded by Turkey's active role and contribution to the United Nations mission against North Korea or quick recognition of Israel as the first, and for another three decades the only, Muslim country.[18] Except its involvement in the Cyprus conflict, Turkey ceased to create an active foreign policy

[13] BOZDAĜLIOĜLU, Y. Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach. 1st ed. New York. Routledge – Taylor & Francis Group. 2003. ISBN 0-203-50203-5. p.60
[14] TANSIPAR, Ö. Turkey's Middle East Policies: Between Neo-Ottomanism and Kemalism. Washington DC. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. 2008. P.10
[15] Constitution of Republic of Turkey 1961. Available at: http://www.anayasa.gen.tr/1961constitution-text.pdf
[16] BOZDAĜLIOĜLU, Y. Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach. 1st ed. New York. Routledge – Taylor & Francis Group. 2003. ISBN 0-203-50203-5. p.61
[17] Jewish Telegraphic Agency. PLO to Open Ankara Branch. [online]. 1979. [cit. 2018-28-07]. Available at: https://www.jta.org/1979/08/07/archive/plo-to-open-ankara-branch
[18] NEUMAN, C., KREISER, K. Dějiny Turecka. 1st ed. Praha. Nakladatelství Lidové noviny. 2010

agenda throughout the following four decades.[19] Despite the transformation of the international system, Turkish foreign policy remained subsidiary to the Western alliance preferences. However, there were undoubtedly differing positions or disagreements from the Turkish or US political representation giving the example of Cyprus conflict or removing Jupiter missiles after the Cuban crisis which was questioned by Ankara as a bargain between two superpowers and having significant consequences on Turkish security.[20] Despite significant disagreement, Turkey was not able to persuade its main partner about a crucial security interest due to the rigid character of the bipolar contest.

The relations with the United States remained positive and constructive during the whole Cold War with few exceptions such as the already mentioned Cyprus crisis. The first crisis on the island in 1964 resulted in the famous Johnson letter when former US president ostentatiously disagreed with Turkish ambitions to control the island emphasizing the fact that both Turkey and Greece are NATO members, hence allies. Lyndon Johnson also warned former Turkish Prime Minister Ismet Inönü that Turkey could not count with an obvious US military support in case Turkish activities result in the Soviet involvement in the crisis.[21] The 1974 crisis resulted in a short-period of arms embargo and exacerbation of the relations with the West as well as with the Islamic countries in the region.[22] Apart from those active engagements of Ankara, Turkish foreign policy remained from the late 1940's until 1980's very passive and reactive. Furthermore, at the same time, the decision makers were satisfied with status quo and strong NATO alliance membership. Turkey may be perceived as a country that basically abandoned its potential and tools for any greater role in the region. Despite the occurrence of disagreements between Ankara and Washington, none of the main political parties questioned Turkey's alliance with the West being a fundamental feature of their foreign policy identity. Former Prime Minister Demirel explained this strong devotion to NATO and Western orientation with the claim that the NATO membership is a manifestation of Turkish identity of a fate in a club of democratic countries that ensures the democratic regime and stability in Turkey.[23]

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[19] KIRIŞCI K.: The End of the Cold War and Changes in Turkish Foreign Policy Behaviour. Foreign Policy (Dış Politika), 2009, vol. 18, No. 3-4. p. 266-309. p.270

[20] NEUMAN, C., KREISER, K. Dějiny Turecka. 1st ed. Praha. Nakladatelství Lidové noviny. 2010. ISBN 978-80-7422-012

[21] BOZDAĞLIOĞLU, Y. Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach. 1st ed. New York. Routledge – Taylor & Francis Group. 2003. ISBN 0-203-50203-5. p.62

[22] KIRIŞCI K.: The End of the Cold War and Changes in Turkish Foreign Policy Behaviour. Foreign Policy (Dış Politika), 2009, vol. 18, No. 3-4. p. 266-309. p.272

[23] BOZDAĞLIOĞLU, Y. Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach. 1st ed. New York. Routledge – Taylor & Francis Group. 2003. ISBN 0-203-50203-5

However, the 1980's already experienced a slight transition from monothematic Kemalist foreign policy. Interestingly, during that period, Turkey remained a trade partner to both Iran and Iraq during an infamous and a decade-long war between those regional powers. Compared to the West and the Eastern bloc approach against Iran, Ankara traced an opportunity to broaden its influence and secure potential trade partners in both countries but at the same time keeping a military neutrality and its relations with the West. Additionally, Turkey has already been an import dependent economy relying on rising prices of oil that were one of the consequences of the conflict.[24]

According to Kirişci, the changes of the Turkish foreign policy identity were not initiated only due to the fall of the Berlin Wall. The slight revision of its definition in the 1980's was highly depended on the external environment rather than a consequence of intern dynamics. Apart from the importance of Ankara to counter the Soviet Union or Iran and maintain the status quo in the Middle East, another important factor was the rising value of Turkish Republic for the regional countries with crucial oil and gas resources. Nevertheless, to consider Turkish foreign policy as a proactive one, Turkey ought to raise its own agenda in the international politics and have an independent impact of those actions. During most of the Cold War, Ankara ceased to pursue its own agenda and to react on the already happening international events. In that sense, Turkey also did not attempt to significantly persuade its potential allies and get consequent attention to ensure its preferred outcomes of an individual foreign policy preference.[25] In the 1990's, this paradigm of foreign policy altered, and Turkey became more and more an active actor contributing to the global agenda with its preferred particular issues.

As already described, Kirişci demonstrated the changing dynamics of Turkish foreign policy by observing two main factors: the so-called conflict management and secondly the creation of a new agenda for the institutions in Turkey's neighbourhood. This analysis is based on a widely-recognized 1992 statement of former Foreign Minister Hikmet Cetin when he defined the main challenges and potential contributions of Turkey for the international security environment including the conflict management and active creation of a foreign policy agenda.[26] The Kemalist and isolationist paradigm of the Cold War when the core attention was brought to Washington and NATO's priorities vis-à-vis countering the Soviet influence, did not

[24] COHEN, S. *Turkey keeps a cautious, neutral eye on Iran-Iraq war.* [online]. The Christian Science Monitor. 1983. [cit. 2018-17-07]. Available at: https://www.csmonitor.com/1983/0831/083149.html

[25] TANSIPAR, Ö. Turkey's Middle East Policies: Between Neo-Ottomanism and Kemalism. Washington DC. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. 2008. p.275

[26] CETIN, H. The security structures of a changing continent: A Turkish view. [online]. No. 2. Vol. 40. NATO Review. 1992. [cit. 2018-20-06]. Available at: https://www.nato.int/docu/review/1992/9202-2.htm

fully reflect the emerging opportunities in the 1980's and 1990's. Turkey found itself in a relatively unstable region that appeared outside the bipolar rivalry.[27] The decision-makers in Ankara found themselves in front of an necessity to reconsider their foreign policy priorities in order to tackle an inherent challenge of post-Cold War instability, civil wars, ethnic conflicts that were spreading from the regions of the Balkans, Caucasus or Central Asia, i.e. all Turkey's neighbours. What mostly concerned foreign policy stakeholders was Turkey's territorial integrity and the need to avoid similar conflicts and separatism in their country as many of those conflict were fought in the close adjacent countries.[28] As mentioned before, regarding the active involvement in the international arena by actively promoting its own agenda, Turkey was relatively successful in drawing the attention of the international community to those new conflicts. Turkish leaders often used international organizations to voice their concerns including NATO, United Nations, Council of Europe or the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.[29] This approach naturally overcomes the experience with the unilateral and controversial crisis management in Cyprus and potential international diplomatic isolation of Turkey. Among the successful examples of a new crisis management approach, Kemal Kirişci mentions the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan in early 1990's. Instead of short-sighted unilateral decision of a military intervention in the neighbouring conflict supported by a Turkish public support, Ankara put the conflict on the international agenda and promoted a wider diplomatic resolution[30]. Other important example is the restrictive policy of Communist Bulgaria against its Turkish minority in the 1980's. Instead of keeping decades valid paradigm and not raising dispute or conflict with the Soviet Union or its ally, i.e. Bulgaria, Turkey stood up as an active player outside the paradigm of the Cold War and accepted a large number of Bulgarian refugees.[31] Lastly is the case of Turkey's successful direct engagement in the Bosnia war. At that time, Ankara created a pressure group lead by Turkey in order to impose economic sanctions against Belgrade and attempt to reach the end of the ongoing war, which represented another example from the time of collapsing bipolar world.[32]

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[27] NEUMAN, C., KREISER, K. Dějiny Turecka. 1st ed. Praha. Nakladatelství Lidové noviny. 2010. ISBN 978-80-7422-012
[28] KIRIŞCI K.: The End of the Cold War and Changes in Turkish Foreign Policy Behaviour. Foreign Policy (Dış Politika), 2009, vol. 18, No. 3-4. p.278
[29] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Turkish Republic: Turkey and the Organization for Security and Cooperation. [online]. 2014. [cit. 2018-27-06]. Available at: http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey-and-the-organization-for-security-and-cooperation-in-europe-osce.en.mfa
[30] COWELL, A. Turk Warns of a Religious War in Azerbaijan. [online]. 1992. [cit. 2018-01-06]. Available at https://www.nytimes.com/1992/03/12/world/turk-warns-of-a-religious-war-in-azerbaijan.html
[31] VASILEVA, D. Bulgarian Turkish emigration and return. [online]. The International Migration Review. Vol. 26. No. 98. 1992. [cit. 2018-27-06]. Available at: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/12285857
[32] KIRIŞCI K.: The End of the Cold War and Changes in Turkish Foreign Policy Behaviour. Foreign Policy (Dış Politika), 2009, vol. 18, No. 3-4. p.284

Apart from conflict management, Kirişci stresses the importance of Turkey's strategy of keeping the stable and peaceful environment in the broader region. The former Minister of Foreign Affairs Hikmen Cetin defined Turkey's strategy as a need to influence and promote the system of interlocking organizations.[33] Looking back to history and the roots of the second factor, the primary principle of the Turkish foreign policy can be found back in the early era of Ataturk's Turkish Republic. The founder of the new modern state pursued pragmatic strategy of internal stability followed by the international and regional stability. This core of Turkish foreign policy identity is described by famous Mustafa Kemal's quote *"Peace at Home, Peace in the World"*[34]

As already mentioned, by the end of the Cold War, Turkey was engulfed by many instable countries. To put few examples, Turkey had to cope with the disintegration and civil war in the Balkans, wars and disputes between former Soviet republics at the Caucasus, transformation process in Bulgaria, post-war situation in Iran and Iraq that also experienced the First Gulf War at the beginning of 1990's followed by a refugee crisis dismantling markets essential for Turkey's Middle Eastern trade.[35] The chaotic, multidimensional and unprecedented situation dramatically increased the requirements for capacities and adoption of new foreign policy strategies. With the upcoming change of international order, military solutions and an alliance within NATO and one-sided international orientation ceased to be sufficient for an array of new challenges for Turkey.[36] Apart from security and geopolitical challenges, the country naturally faced an economic threat as the trade exchange with many states in the region dramatically dropped due to their internal conflicts. Moreover, the imminent threat of an ethic conflict spreading into Turkish territory, in other words the Kurdish minority, followed by a threat of endangering internal stability of a Western oriented integrity undoubtedly led to reconsideration of foreign policy strategy that failed to be applicable anymore.[37] Additionally, Turkey was naturally worried by at-then existing discussion of dismantling NATO as the imminent threat of the Warsaw Pact ceased to exist. Internally stable, democratic and secular Turkish representation found itself as a potential mediator and a stabilization element of the region for

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[33] COHEN, S. *Turkey keeps a cautious, neutral eye on Iran-Iraq war.* [online]. The Christian Science Monitor. 1983. [cit. 2018-17-07]. Available at: https://www.csmonitor.com/1983/0831/083149.html

[34] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Turkish Republic: Turkish Foreign Policy During Ataturk's Era. [online]. [cit. 2018-27-06]. Available at: http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkish-foreign-policy-during-ataturks-era.en.mfa

[35] KIRIŞCI K.: The End of the Cold War and Changes in Turkish Foreign Policy Behaviour. Foreign Policy (Dış Politika), 2009, vol. 18, No. 3-4.

[36] CETIN, H. The security structures of a changing continent: A Turkish view. [online]. No. 2. Vol. 40. NATO Review. 1992. [cit. 2018-20-06]. Available at: https://www.nato.int/docu/review/1992/9202-2.htm

[37] KIRIŞCI K.: The End of the Cold War and Changes in Turkish Foreign Policy Behaviour. Foreign Policy (Dış Politika), 2009, vol. 18, No. 3-4. p.285

both West and Middle Eastern countries. With the collapse of the communism and long-lasting alliances in the region, Turkey was, bearing mind the complexity of the end of bipolar division, forced to be more open and active. Consequently, Ankara envisaged the importance of international organizations as an essential element that have the potential to secure internal stability by creating a peaceful neighbourhood. Apart from NATO, Turkey therefore looked up for an active membership in other organizations such as Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe or the European Community.[38] As former Foreign Minister Hikmet Cetin stated in 1992, that the peaceful environment needs to be sought based on three main aspects: a moral imperative build on a Soviet oppression of Central and Eastern European region; an economic cooperation and interdependence requiring a political stability and friendly relations among the states represented e.g. by the establishment of Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation;[39] and the geopolitical situation followed by the disintegration of the Soviet Union. No single institution was able to deal with the chaotic and unpredictable security environment, especially taking into account a potential chaos that might spread from the Middle-Eastern region.[40] For Turkey, consequently, the active involvement in many regional and international organizations was a chance how to become more active international player in the interlocking system and thus secure its own interests.

As far as the international situation in 1990's is concerned, during the first Gulf War, the conflict enabled Turkey to emerge as a more active player in the vacant region. Being a long-term ally of the United States and having a pragmatic alliance with Israel, Turkey fully supported the US military action against Saddam Hussein's forces.[41] Nevertheless, the full support brought negative consequences to Turkish trade revenues as well as growing separatist movement in Kurdish regions. Following the creation of autonomous Kurdistan of Iraq, Kurdish issue again emerged as an important role.

At the end of 20th century, Turkey enjoyed significantly peaceful and stable environment on its Eastern and Southern borders as Tansipar calls it a "*zone of peace*" that was more preferable for those promoting the neo-Ottoman concept.[42] This aspect also contributed to a changing perception of foreign policy identity and transition from Kemalism towards neo-

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[38] BOZDAĜLIOĜLU, Y. Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach. 1st ed. New York. Routledge – Taylor & Francis Group. 2003. ISBN 0-203-50203-5. p.76

[39] Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation. [online]. [cit. 2018-27-06]. Available at http://www.bsec-organization.org/

[40] BOZDAĜLIOĜLU, Y. *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach.* 1st ed. New York. Routledge – Taylor & Francis Group. 2003. ISBN 0-203-50203-5. Approach p.84

[41] NEUMAN, C., KREISER, K. Dějiny Turecka. 1st ed. Praha. Nakladatelství Lidové noviny. 2010. ISBN 978-80-7422-012

[42] TANSIPAR, Ö. Turkey's Middle East Policies: Between Neo-Ottomanism and Kemalism. Washington DC. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. 2008.

Ottomanism. The "*zone of peace*" terminated with the breakout of the Iraq war in 2003. The relations between Ankara and Washington were negatively impacted by creating an instability in the whole region having negative ramifications on TFP. On one hand, Turkish military and government realised that maintaining good relations with their key ally represents a necessity for the future engagement in the region and whole stability of their alliance. However, on the other hand, Turkey opposed the possibility of a war at its borders particularly with the relations to Iraqi's Kurdistan. Based on at-then recent cooperation between US army and Iraqi Kurds, Ankara naturally feared that with the fall of Hussain's regime, Iraqi Kurds could take advantage of the instable situation, gain more autonomy or even independence. Consequently, their power and political capital for further extension of their influence can also influence potential Kurdish separatist's movements in Turkey or Syria. In other words, this scenario would represent a real obstacle for Turkish national interests especially taken from the perspective of Kemalism.[43]

1.2 Kemalism and neo-Ottomanism

1.2.2. Kemalist identity

In order to understand the concept of neo-Ottomanism and the change of Turkish foreign policy identity, there is a need to briefly point out the most important aspects of the Kemalist ideology. The concept and ideology of Kemalism (or sometimes referred to Atatürkism[44]) is directly linked to the founder of the modern Turkish Republic Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Kemalism represented a dramatic shift from the old imperial times emphasizing the secularism and Turkish patriotism. Yilmaz Çolak describes the significant change brought by the radical implication of Kemalism as a war of cultures.[45] Hakan Yavuz, who served as an academic and ideological advisor to former Prime Minister, President and supporter of neo-Ottomanist policy Turgut Özal, often describes the secularist policy as an *"oppressive national-building project of the Kemalist regime."*[46] The newly established sovereign Republic overcame the instability and danger of separation into various states or occupation by foreign powers. Consequently,

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[43] JEFFERY, S. The Kurds: a history of suppression. [online]. 2001. [cit. 2018-28-06]. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2001/aug/17/kurds.iraq
[44] Sweden Atatürk's Ideal Association. What is Ataturkism? [online]. [cit. 2018-01-07]. Available at: http://en.isvecadd.com/what-is-ataturkism/
[45] ÇOLAK, Y. Ottomanism vs. Kemalism: Collective Memory and Cultural Pluralism in 1990s Turkey. [online]. Middle Eastern Studies, Taylor & Francis, Ltd. Vol. 42, No. 4. 2006. p. 587-602. [cit. 2018-19-06]. Available at http://www.jstor.org/stable/4284477, p.2
[46] YAVUZ, H. Social and Intellectual Origins of Neo-Ottomanism: Searching for a Post-National Vision. [online]. Die Welt des Islams. University of Utah. Vol. 56. No.3-4. Pp. 438-465. 2016. [cit. 2018-17-06]. Available at: https://utah.pure.elsevier.com/en/publications/social-and-intellectual-origins-of-neo-ottomanism-searching-for-a. p.2

Atatürk, the symbol of national unity and independence, that endured the whole 20th century, was the driving force of ideological formulations for domestic and foreign policy that basically remained unchanged until the 1980's.[47] Many analysist and politicians label Kemalism a success story for 20th century due to its consistency and endurance in a highly unstable 20th century especially compared to its neighbours.

As already mentioned, Kemalism is a depending element of the creation of a modern, democratic and Western identity of the Republic of Turkey. For Kemalism, the most important stabilization feature of the new republic was the army which has repeatedly acted against the spread of instability and adversary ideologies, particularly the Communism and radical Islamist ideologies. The guardian of the Turkish Republic and its secular ideology found itself breaking the Western core ideas of democracy and free elections. Active involvement into the Turkish domestic politics accompanied with several coup d'états in 1960, 1971 and 1980 was a tool how to preserve the Kemalist republic against the still-present threat of the Soviet Union, radical Islamists movement or Kurdish secessionist tendencies.[48]

As far as common features of Kemalism are concerned, the foreign policy dogma incorporates six main aspects that have endured basically unchanged until the end of the Cold War: secularism (laicism), nationalism, republicanism, populism, statism in an economic sense and reformism (modernism) in a broad sense.[49][50] Moreover, those ideology features were enlisted to the policy roots of the Atatürk's Republican People's Party (CHP - Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi) and further incorporated in Turkish Constitution that was adopted in the 1937.[51] Following those main aspects, Kemalist ideology was exposed to fundamental challenges throughout the 20th century: the imminent Communist threat, political Islam with Islamist radical ideology and thirdly the Kurdish issue. Bozdağlioğlu redefines the top-down imposed concept of Kemalism as a radical and inevitable revolution after the end of the First World War. Kemalism also launched the processes of modernization and westernization of the country. For the Kemalist elite, Turkey ought to become a Western recognised European democratic nation

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[47] Oxford Islamic Studies Online. [online]. [cit. 2018-27-06]. Available at http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/print/opr/t236/e0440

[48] TANSIPAR, Ö. Turkey's Middle East Policies: Between Neo-Ottomanism and Kemalism. Washington DC. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. 2008.

[49] BOZDAĞLIOĞLU, Y. Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach. 1st ed. New York. Routledge – Taylor & Francis Group. 2003. ISBN 0-203-50203-5. p.46

[50] Oxford Islamic Studies Online. [online]. [cit. 2018-27-06]. Available at http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/print/opr/t236/e0440

[51] BOZDAĞLIOĞLU, Y. Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach. 1st ed. New York. Routledge – Taylor & Francis Group. 2003. ISBN 0-203-50203-5. p.46

contrary to the Islamists that aimed at remaining a religious state whose place is in the Middle East with a different civilization, Islamic religion and culture. [52]

1.2.3. Özal's neo-Ottomanism

From the neo-Ottomanist point of view, Communism ceased to exist in Turkey's neighbourhood, political Islam is a part of its strategy and the Kurdish demands are rather perceived as an internal threat in Turkey.[53] Consequently, leaving its policy of non-involvement, Turkey evolved into a more active position and as an important player in Middle East, an unstable region lacking a hegemon in the last hundred years since the division of the Ottoman Empire.[54] Following the higher acceptance of being a more assertive and active actor in the international relations, Turkey showed the willingness to take part and mediate the mediate the Arab-Israeli conflict, to attend regional organization conferences and initiatives and hence directly influence its policies.[55] Additionally, Turkey started to play an important role at the Organization of Islamic conference (OIC) being a full member since 1976[56] and by taking part in military UN Forces in Lebanon or NATO forces contribution in Afghanistan.[57]

Neo-Ottomanism is naturally inspired by the ideas of Ottoman pluralism, that was a response to raising secessionism and ethnic nationalism of the Empire especially in the Balkans by the end of 19th and at the beginning of 20th century. Ottomanism as a new state policy aspired to create a mutually recognized ideology countering secessionist movement.[58] Young Turks, a modernist, nationalistic and radical movement established in 1908, were deeply influenced by the Ottomanism practises in a way that the concept attempted to combine Western modernization with traditional Islamic and cosmopolitan character of the Empire, that has been reflected by a modern version of the neo-Ottomanism. According to Yilmaz Çolak, Ottoman

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[52] BOZDAĜLIOĜLU, Y. Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach. 1st ed. New York. Routledge – Taylor & Francis Group. 2003. ISBN 0-203-50203-5. p.13

[53] GULLO, M. Turkish Foreign Policy: Neo-Ottomanism 2.0 and the Future of Turkey's Relations with the West. Master's thesis, Duke University. 2012. Available at http://hdl.handle.net/10161/5482.

[54] CZAJKA, A. WASTNIDGE, E. The Centre of World Politics? Neo-Ottomanism in Turkish Foreign and Domestic Politics. [online]. 2016. Available at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/312147106_Neottomanism_in_Turkish_Foreign_Policy_Through_the_Lenses_of_the_Principal-Agent_Theory.

[55] TANSIPAR, Ö. Turkey's Middle East Policies: Between Neo-Ottomanism and Kemalism. Washington DC. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. 2008.

[56] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Turkish Republic: Turkey and the Organization for Security and Cooperation. [online]. 2014. [cit. 2018-27-06]. Available at: http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey-and-the-organization-for-security-and-cooperation-in-europe-osce.en.mfa

[57] SAIFULLAH, M. Is Turkey's Erdogan seeking a leading role in Afghanistan? [online]. Deutsche Welle. 2017. [cit. 2018-07-07]. Available at: https://www.dw.com/en/is-turkeys-erdogan-seeking-a-leading-role-in-afghanistan/a-39575830

[58] TURAN, K. Neo-Ottomanism in Turkish Foreign Policy Through the Lenses of the Principal-Agent Theory. [online]. Gazi University. Vol.1. No.1. 2016. [cit. 2018-27-06]. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/312147106. p.4

pluralism "…*entails the peaceful coexistence of different ethno-religious and cultural groups under a political community* [and] *was constructed as a part of neo-Ottomanism combining the traditional Ottoman form of pluralism with modern liberal multiculturalism…*"[59]

As to the paradigmatic shift from Kemalism to neo-Ottomanism, there are two important aspects that distinguish both concepts and are important for the international relations: different approach towards the Kurdish minority and related level of confidence on external level. Firstly, the Kurdish challenge in the eyes of Kemalist republicans who perceived Kurdish nationalism as a threat to Turkey's internal security. As already mentioned, Kemalism put an emphasis on Western-oriented national state where the population is defined by collective consciousness of Turkish nation, where the military represents an important bulwark towards Islamism and instability in the region. Therefore, the Kurdish minority was excluded from the vision of homogenous Turkish Republic.[60] Followingly, the Kurdish influence was spreading in the neighbouring countries such as Syria or Iran especially from the 1980's and 1990's. Those tensions consequently raised concerns among Kemalists representation that the Kurdish population might create a strong nationalistic and broadly autonomous Kurdish region in south-east Turkey.[61]

In that perspective, neo-Ottomanism goes beyond the contradiction between the Kurds and homogenous vision of Kemalist Turkey. After years of civil war, internal struggles and the inability to solve the conflict in South-East Turkey, neo-Ottomanism does not see the Kurdish population as an imminent threat and is thus perceived as a solution compared to the Kemalist adversary strategy.[62] The Kurdish Republic was based on Western democratic values where radical movements, either far-right, far-left or political Islam, were excluded from the society. Kurdish opposition leaned more towards leftist (socialist) ideology that represented another obstacle for mutual reconciliation. During the Cold War, when Turkey and whole NATO faced the Soviet threat, communism was a forbidden ideology which was embraced by a fraction of Kurdish separatists.[63] In a broader sense, neo-Ottomanism, based on its shared Ottoman history,

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[59] ÇOLAK, Y. Ottomanism vs. Kemalism: Collective Memory and Cultural Pluralism in 1990s Turkey. [online]. Middle Eastern Studies, Taylor & Francis, Ltd. Vol. 42, No. 4. 2006. p. 587-602. [cit. 2018-19-06]. Available at http://www.jstor.org/stable/4284477. p.587

[60] TANSIPAR, Ö. Turkey's Middle East Policies: Between Neo-Ottomanism and Kemalism. Washington DC. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. 2008.

[61] ÇOLAK, Y. Ottomanism vs. Kemalism: Collective Memory and Cultural Pluralism in 1990s Turkey. [online]. Middle Eastern Studies, Taylor & Francis, Ltd. Vol. 42, No. 4. 2006. p. 587-602. [cit. 2018-19-06]. Available at http://www.jstor.org/stable/4284477

[62] Ibid, p.588.

[63] TANSIPAR, Ö. Turkey's Middle East Policies: Between Neo-Ottomanism and Kemalism. Washington DC. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. 2008.

redefines the Turkish history and provides a more conciliar solution also for the coexistence of the Turkish and Kurdish population.

A second aspect partially related to the Kurdish issue which differentiates the Kemalism and neo-Ottomanism is the higher level of self-confidence and ambition of Turkey in the international relations. The latter attempts to create internationally stronger Turkey, a new regional power. New approach considers the Kurdish problem in Turkey mostly as an internal struggle that shall not influence its foreign policy. The new concept should rather encompass a broad geostrategic thinking and via its neo-Ottoman strategy to become a problem-solving power with a regional importance.[64] What is important to mention and what might be misunderstood is the fact that the neo-Ottomanism is not aimed to embrace a neo-imperialist paradigm and restore the old Empire in its borders. On the contrary, the Turkish "grandeur" focuses on imposing its soft power influence, being a mediator between the cultural West and East, to play a stable actor in the unstable Middle East region.[65] In other words, neo-Ottomanism, contrary to Kemalist foreign policy, brings a new feature that incorporates the so called soft power, a concept invented and developed by Joseph Nye.[66]

In order to have a more active foreign policy and to impose its own international agenda, the state has to pursue its culture, political values and active foreign policy goals.[67] Kemalist mindset is in many ways contradictory to soft power features of neo-Ottomanism which promotes its Ottoman historical, cultural or religious heritage. Despite the unshakeable historical position of Turkish Republic founder Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the defenders of neo-Ottomanism pursue more active role, strengthen the role of Islam in domestic and foreign policy. Ankara does not oppose its multicultural and imperial history as a way how to balance and reconcile the radical secularism and republicanism of Kemalist foreign policy.[68] In other words, neo-Ottomanism is not in a contraposition to Kemalism and tries to formulate an alternative vision to a dominant nation building and to some extend oppressing Kemalist ideology.

Normalization and the attempt to restore the relations with the Kurdish population also plays an important role for the neo-Ottomanism. Compared to Kemalism, the Ottoman Empire

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[64] GULLO, M. Turkish Foreign Policy: Neo-Ottomanism 2.0 and the Future of Turkey's Relations with the West. Master's thesis, Duke University. 2012. Available at http://hdl.handle.net/10161/5482
[65] TANSIPAR, Ö. Turkey's Middle East Policies: Between Neo-Ottomanism and Kemalism. Washington DC. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. 2008
[66] NYE, J. Soft Power: The Means to Success In World Politics. New York: Public Affairs, 2004
[67] Ibid.
[68] TANSIPAR, Ö. Turkey's Middle East Policies: Between Neo-Ottomanism and Kemalism. Washington DC. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. 2008. p.7

included various religions, ethnicities and languages under the rule of Sultan. Neo-Ottomanism does not promote nationalism as such, it is open for an assimilation of many minorities contrary to the Kemalist republicanism: the Kurds, the Alevis, Greeks, Christians or people from the Balkans and the Causasus.[69] In other words, Islam can serve to some extent as a toll how to soften the differences between the Turks and the Kurds as Islam used to be and can be the driving connection between them even without the existence of the Ottoman Empire.[70]

The first use of the term neo-Ottomanism dates to 1985 (i.e. still in a time of Cold War and prevailing Kemalism) when David Barchard first proposed this ideology as a potential for the future Turkish foreign policy orientation.[71] Barchard defines the new concept as a "*consciousness of the imperial Ottoman past*"[72] stressing the impact of former Turkish President Turgut Özal. During the 1980's, he attempted to reflect the changing international and domestic environment. His vision of the neo-Ottomanism does not inherently exclude the Kemalist ideology as such. As Özal promoted, he envisioned the neo-Ottomanism as a reconstruction of then-prevailing state-building and radical Kemalism and broadened the concept with neo-Ottoman features. Considering Barchard's first conceptualisation, Hasan Yavuz suggests probably one of the most suitable definitions of the neo-Ottomanism that emerged in the 1980's and 1990's:

> *"Neo-Ottomanism is a new mindset that seeks to resituate Turkish nation-building in its Ottoman roots by recognising the Ottoman legacy and its communities as the constitutive elements of the nation that live on in the Republic of Turkey. Neo-Ottomanism is not anti-secular but it is anti-Jacobinist. Moreover, it seeks to bring constitutional citizenship on the basis of sharing the Ottoman legacy and memories, along with the achievements of the Republic. It treats the Ottoman legacy as cosmopolitan and is open to diverse communities under the same sovereign authority."[73]*

The first phase of imposing the neo-Ottomanism in Turkish politics is connected to Turgut Özal. The founder of the Motherland Party (ANAP - Anavatan Partisi) was appointed Prime Minister in 1983 implementing a set of extensive liberal reforms opening Turkish market to the

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[69] ÇOLAK, Y. Ottomanism vs. Kemalism: Collective Memory and Cultural Pluralism in 1990s Turkey. [online]. Middle Eastern Studies, Taylor & Francis, Ltd. Vol. 42, No. 4. 2006. p. 587-602. [cit. 2018-19-06]. Available at http://www.jstor.org/stable/4284477. p.587

[70] TANSIPAR, Ö. Turkey's Middle East Policies: Between Neo-Ottomanism and Kemalism. Washington DC. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. 2008.

[71] YAVUZ, H. Turkish identity and foreign policy in flux: The rise of Neo-Ottomanism. [online]. Journal for Critical Studies of the Middle East, Vol. 7, No. 1. Pp. 19-41. 2006. [cit. 2018-19-06]. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/10669929808720119. p.433

[72] Ibid. p.433

[73] Ibid. p.444

world economy and consequently submitting the application to join the European Economic Community in 1987. By the end of the Cold War, Özal served as a President of the Turkish Republic from 1989 until 1993.[74] Turgut Özal perceived neo-Ottomanism as a new way how to shape Turkey's collective memory, perception of its historical heritage and foreign policy orientation. After decades of omitting the consequences of the Ottoman Empire's existence, Özal finally acknowledged the Republic of Turkey as direct successor and hair of the Ottoman Empire, its history, culture and religion that naturally shaped the Turkish identity on domestic as well as on the external level.[75]

Former Turkish President Özal constructed his vision of Turkish identity based on the multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multicultural dimension. Similarly to the sultanate Özal's neo-Ottomanist vision included a form of a melting pot feature that was supposed to tackle the raising multi-ethnic challenges and the failure to fully implement and define Turkey's official (Kemalist) national identity.[76] Furthermore, this redefinition of identity and foreign policy orientation did not aim to fully replace Kemalism and create a complete negation of the decades long pursued policy. Neo-Ottomanism aspired to broaden the concept and create a new, more democratic, open to Islam but still secular vision of Turkey.

Hakan Yavuz, the proponent of neo-Ottomanism in the 1990's, emphasizes a very important aspect of the democratization process. With the rising level of pluralism, democratic representation and consequent rising opportunities for religious, ethnic or cultural minorities, those groups were given the opportunity to shape their interests and promote them entering to a public and political sphere. Therefore, articulating their views and policy priorities, they created a challenge to a dominant Turkish secular identity that had to tackle with more diverse environment like during the Ottoman Empire including more Islamic or Kurdish interests.[77] Ankara's based journal Türkiye Günlüğü[78] represented an ideological and political platform for shaping the neo-Ottomanism and voicing its raising importance in the society. One of the main leaders of the journal and promoter of the ideology Cengiz Candar promoted the redefinition of the imperial history and moving to the more pluralistic, multi-ethnic and regionally opened state

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[74] Encyclopedia Britannica. [online]. Turgut Özal. [cit. 2018-25-07]. Available at:
ttps://www.britannica.com/biography/Turgut-Ozal
[75] ÇOLAK, Y. Ottomanism vs. Kemalism: Collective Memory and Cultural Pluralism in 1990s Turkey. [online]. Middle Eastern Studies, Taylor & Francis, Ltd. Vol. 42, No. 4. 2006. p. 587-602. [cit. 2018-19-06]. Available at http://www.jstor.org/stable/4284477. p.591
[76] Ibid., p.591
[77] YAVUZ, H. Social and Intellectual Origins of Neo-Ottomanism: Searching for a Post-National Vision. [online]. Die Welt des Islams. University of Utah. Vol. 56. No.3-4. Pp. 438-465. 2016. [cit. 2018-17-06]. Available at:
https://utah.pure.elsevier.com/en/publications/social-and-intellectual-origins-of-neo-ottomanism-searching-for-a. p.446
[78] Türkiye Günlüğü. [online]. Available at: http://www.turkiyegunlugu.com.tr/

emphasizing the importance of democracy, human rights, liberal values and market-oriented economy.[79]

Özal's neo-Ottomanism, as many authors describe, puts in practise a revised foreign policy not based on Kemalist orientation but more on active involvement and reflecting dramatic changes in the world politics and Turkey's neighbourhood. Özal, having Kurdish ancestors, wanted to transform the Kemalist foreign policy doctrine with a more active approach towards the Middle East as well as the Central Asian republics.[80] Apart from the Middle East, Özal also promoted strengthening relations in the Black Sea Region which resulted in the creating of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization in 1989.[81] Consequently, Özal considered Islam in a more tolerant and liberal manner and as a unification feature for most of the different groups.[82] Using Yavuz' conclusion: "*Neo-Ottomanism's purpose is not to restore the past but rather to critique the current position or the purpose of articulating a new collective goal … aiming to deconstruct the Kemalist Republican's conception of identity and society…*[and]…*to promote the market for Turkish goods and, more broadly, socio-political influence and bringing Islam back into the public sphere under the guise of Ottomanism.*"[83]

Furthermore, as President Özal represented a more active policy towards its neighbourhood, the massacres in the war-torn Yugoslavia had a fundamental impact on Turkish decision makers. The massacres against Bosnian Muslims resonated in Turkish society and pushed the political elite to act against the atrocities. Turkish diplomats urged their colleagues of the international community and President Özal himself called the US President to use the military force and stop the Bosnia war.[84] Turkish politicians including Özal promptly took advantage of the society's demand and did not hesitate to use the narrative of common Muslim identity and the historical and cultural heritage of the Ottoman empire in the Balkans. A part of Turkish society was convinced that the Western Christian powers lack the willingness to act against the atrocities against Bosnian Muslim population and hence urged Turkish government

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[79] ÇOLAK, Y. Ottomanism vs. Kemalism: Collective Memory and Cultural Pluralism in 1990s Turkey. [online]. Middle Eastern Studies, Taylor & Francis, Ltd. Vol. 42, No. 4. 2006. p. 587-602. [cit. 2018-19-06]. Available at http://www.jstor.org/stable/4284477. p.592-593

[80] TANSIPAR, Ö. Turkey's Middle East Policies: Between Neo-Ottomanism and Kemalism. Washington DC. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. 2008. p.10

[81] Ibid. p.10

[82] ÇOLAK, Y. Ottomanism vs. Kemalism: Collective Memory and Cultural Pluralism in 1990s Turkey. [online]. Middle Eastern Studies, Taylor & Francis, Ltd. Vol. 42, No. 4. 2006. p. 587-602. [cit. 2018-19-06]. Available at http://www.jstor.org/stable/4284477. p.593

[83] YAVUZ, H. Social and Intellectual Origins of Neo-Ottomanism: Searching for a Post-National Vision. [online]. Die Welt des Islams. University of Utah. Vol. 56. No.3-4. Pp. 438-465. 2016. [cit. 2018-17-06]. Available at: https://utah.pure.elsevier.com/en/publications/social-and-intellectual-origins-of-neo-ottomanism-searching-for-a. p.448

[84] KOHEN, S. Turkey Urges Immediate Intervention in Bosnia. [online]. The Christian Science Monitor. 1993. [cit. 2018-11-07]. Available at: https://www.csmonitor.com/1993/0112/12022.html

to act independently. Moreover, since Serbian nationalists labelled all Muslim population of former Yugoslavia as "Turks", this narrative contributed to an extreme sensibility of Turks regarding Bosnian Muslims. Thus, the "Turkishness" was not described exclusively about the Turkish ethnic narrative but rather used in a broader, neo-Ottomanist and more multicultural sense that also included Bosnian Muslims and other communities and ethnicities.

Consequently, the redefinition of Turkish identity and foreign policy identification was met with a rising criticism of the Kemalist elite and politicians.[85] Despite Özal's death in 1993, the ideas of his reshaped imperial but not imperialist vision of Turkish society and foreign policy identity prevailed in the Turkish narrative throughout the 1990's and contributed to a breeding ground for AKP's version of neo-Ottomanism. As far as the political connection between Özal and AKP is concerned, the Welfare Party (Refah Partisi) appeared as a successor of the National Salvation Party (Millî Selâmet Partisi). The populist Welfare Party was an Islamic oriented political party founded by former Turkish Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan in 1983.[86] Two years after Özal's death, the Welfare Party won the general elections in 1995 by a landslide being the first religious-based party to form a majority government. Interestingly, current President Erdoğan was elected for Welfare Party a Mayor of Istanbul in 1994. The party used an anti-Wester narrative also pointing at European powers and the United States inability to stop the genocide on Bosnian Muslims. Moreover, Welfare Party perceived Turkish nation as a Muslim one and it put its policy priorities, i.e. Ottoman legacy, in contradiction with Kemalist secular republicanism. Contrary to Özal, they used neo-Ottomanism in a more populist and inconsistent manner and emphasized the role of Islam and downgraded the geopolitical implications on Turkish foreign policy.[87] Nevertheless, due to its pro-Islamist policies and being labelled as an Islamist threat, the Kemalist secular (and military) officials decided to ban and dissolved the party in 1997 in a so-called February 28 process (a partial military coup), which was followed by a confirmation by the Supreme Court in 1998.[88]

To conclude, President Turgut Özal significantly influenced the ideas of neo-Ottomanism identity and transformed it into a real foreign policy strategy as well as reshaping the domestic

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[85] ÇOLAK, Y. Ottomanism vs. Kemalism: Collective Memory and Cultural Pluralism in 1990s Turkey. [online]. Middle Eastern Studies, Taylor & Francis, Ltd. Vol. 42, No. 4. 2006. p. 587-602. [cit. 2018-19-06]. Available at http://www.jstor.org/stable/. p.594

[86] Global Security. [online]. Welfare Party. [cit. 2018-19-07]. Available at: https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/europe/tu-political-party-rp.htm

[87] ÇOLAK, Y. Ottomanism vs. Kemalism: Collective Memory and Cultural Pluralism in 1990s Turkey. [online]. Middle Eastern Studies, Taylor & Francis, Ltd. Vol. 42, No. 4. 2006. p. 587-602. [cit. 2018-19-06]. Available at http://www.jstor.org/stable. p.597

[88] Global Security. [online]. Welfare Party. [cit. 2018-19-07]. Available at: https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/europe/tu-political-party-rp.htm

perception of Turkish national identity. Within the unstable period of his presidency, on one hand, he defended the role of moderate Islam based on Ottoman legacy. On the other hand, Özal promoted neoliberal reforms and the process of opening Turkey to international market. The Welfare Party transformed neo-Ottomanism into a more populist and radically Islamic manner which was followed by the dissolvement of the party. Consequently, both liberal and more foreign policy oriented neo-Ottomanism of Turgut Özal and more Islamist perception of the Welfare Party failed to consolidate itself in the 1990's but its ideas remained in the political discourse that was promptly adopted by soon emerging AKP and its leader Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.[89]

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[89] ÇOLAK, Y. Ottomanism vs. Kemalism: Collective Memory and Cultural Pluralism in 1990s Turkey. [online]. Middle Eastern Studies, Taylor & Francis, Ltd. Vol. 42, No. 4. 2006. p. 587-602. [cit. 2018-19-06]. Available at http://www.jstor.org/stable/4284477. p.599

2. Governing AKP and neo-Ottomanism

2.1. Changing dynamics after 2002 elections

Neo-Ottomanism enables Turkish decision makers to conduct a more pragmatic policy different to traditional schemes of secular Kemalism. Referring to the neo-Ottomanism and historical depth of its legacy, new Turkish foreign policy offered a broad toolbox of policies suitable for creating a flexible framework for Turkish diplomacy.[90] Before analysing those aspects that helped to transform the foreign policy identity of Turkey, we need to define the crucial political changes characterised by the electoral victory of the Justice and Development Party (JDP) or in Turkish Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AK Parti or AKP as it is generally used in the English-speaking media and in this thesis.

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's version of the neo-Ottomanism has been the driving foreign policy doctrine in Turkey for almost two decades. The question is whether the ideology really altered the foreign policy behaviour of Ankara or whether the ideology entrenched into foreign and domestic policy narrative or whether it has rather failed facing the most recent domestic and international development. Before examining the changes in Turkish foreign policy identity and the influence of Islam legacy, the key dogmatic Davutoğlu's "Strategic Depth" doctrine and the importance of how the relations with Turkish neighbourhoods were transformed, we need to provide a background of the early 2000's and related electoral victory of AKP.[91]

The undoubtful figure of the new political party established in August 2001 has been until nowadays Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.[92] As far as his political career is concerned, Erdoğan joined the youth branch of the National Salvation Party (Millî Selâmet Partisi, MSP), an Islamist conservative party. After the 1980 military coup when the existence of the National Salvation party was banned, Erdoğan followed the steps of former Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan (also former member of MSP) and joined another Islamist party called the Welfare Party established in 1983. Nevertheless, the party was dissolved in 1998 by the Constitutional Court

[90] SAHIN, M. Turkey and Neo-Ottomanism: Domestic Sources, Dynamics and Foreign Policy. [online]. Florida International University. FIU Electronic Theses and Dissertations. 2010. P. 228. [cit. 2018-27-06]. Available at: http://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/etd/160. p.182

[91] Global Security. [online]. AKP Political Party. [cit. 2018-19-07]. Available at: https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/europe/tu-political-party-akp.htm

[92] TURAN, K. Neo-Ottomanism in Turkish Foreign Policy Through the Lenses of the Principal-Agent Theory. [online]. Gazi University. Vol.1. No.1. 2016. [cit. 2018-27-06]. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/312147106

due to its Islamist ideology and the violation of the secular character of the Turkish Republic.[93] Current Turkish President Erdoğan was elected a Mayor of Istanbul in the 1994 municipal elections. Managing of one of the biggest cities in the world, Erdoğan's pragmatic and popular leadership gained a significant respect and popularity in the society that contributed to his rising political career. Erdoğan himself followed the general policy of the Welfare Party's controlled municipalities that promoted cultural and religious programs directly linked to the Ottoman legacy and Islam's culture. Apart from the pragmatic rule of Istanbul, Erdoğan initiated various cultural programs emphasizing the historical, religious and cultural identity of Islam and the importance of the Ottoman Empire in the Turkish biggest city. To put an example, in contradiction with the Kemalist tradition that always celebrated the anniversaries connected to Atatürk's life or the establishment of the Republic, Erdoğan initiated a massive commemoration of the conquest of Istanbul in 1453 by glorified Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror (Fatih Sultan Mehmet).[94] Erdoğan did not act as an exception because other Welfar Party's mayors initiated similar initiatives that put Islam step by step back to the public sphere influeincing the perception of the Turkish identity.

Nevertheless, in 1997, Erdoğan was dismissed from the prestigious office and was imprisoned for four months due to the public recitation of an Islamist poem that was found illegal.[95] Gaining a considerable public support of a fighter for democracy and free conditions to all political entities, he established AKP in August 2001 with many previous politicians from the dissolved Islamist parties including the former Turkish President Abdullah Gül.[96] The party itself was successfully preparing for the upcoming general elections in November 2002 in a time of a significant political crisis caused by unstable coalition governments and negative public opinion towards the political establishment. Moreover, Turkey experienced one of the biggest economic crisis in its modern history that resulted in an intervention of the International Monetary Fund and the call for structural reforms.[97] Hence, coalition disputes and the economic problems discredited the governing parties and contributed to Erdoğan's electoral victory.[98] The

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[93] ATACAN, F. Explaining Religious Politics at the Crossroad: AKP-SP [online]. Turkish Studies. Vol. 6. No.2. 2005. [cit. 2018-01-07]. Available at: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14683840500119510?journalCode=ftur20

[94] YAVUZ, H. Social and Intellectual Origins of Neo-Ottomanism: Searching for a Post-National Vision. [online]. Die Welt des Islams. University of Utah. Vol. 56. No.3-4. Pp. 438-465. 2016. [cit. 2018-17-06]. Available at: https://utah.pure.elsevier.com/en/publications/social-and-intellectual-origins-of-neo-ottomanism-searching-for-a. p. 458

[95] Columbia University World Leaders Forum. [online]. Columbia University in the City of New York. 2008. [cit. 2018-07-07]. Available at: https://web.archive.org/web/20100609035001/http://www.worldleaders.columbia.edu/participants/recep-tayyip-erdo%C4%9F

[96] Ibid.

[97] Encyclopedia Britannica. [online]. Recep Tayyip Erdogan [cit. 2018-25-07]. Available at: https://www.britannica.com/biography/Recep-Tayyip-Erdogan

[98] The Economist. [online]. Erdogan triumphs—with plenty of help from his enemies. [cit. 2018-02-07]. Available at: https://www.economist.com/europe/2002/11/07/erdogan-triumphs-with-plenty-of-help-from-his-enemies

significant protest vote movement and the required 10% threshold resulted in a major political turnover as all parties presented in the government failed to overcome the required threshold, in other words 45% of the votes were not represented in the Parliament. This resulted in a major victory of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's led AKP winning over a third of the votes but gaining over two-thirds of the seats. Due to the prevailing Court's ban that hampered Erdoğan from running for the MP post in 2002, he achieved to become a Prime Minister on May 14, 2003, after the parliament lifted the ban and Erdoğan won district's snap elections in 2003.[99]

Coming to power, AKP founders started to transform the Turkish identity presenting a modified way of an Islam-oriented political party that naturally influenced the foreign policy identity of the country. Compared to their predecessors, AKP was more pro-democratic and pro-European party that, despite its conservative and Islam-oriented ideology, strengthened the role of democratic institutions and Turkey's orientation towards the EU membership. For AKP politicians and supporters, democratic reforms represented a suitable mean how many minorities or to-then oppressed groups in the society can be represented in public. Furthermore, following the economic and political crisis, the situation enabled AKP to overshadow the dominant role of Turkish military elite.[100] In the domestic politics, Erdoğan, unlike Turgut Özal who highlighted the importance of liberalisation and economic reforms, stressed the need for deep democratic and judicial reforms and subsequent need to support low and middle class of Turkish citizens living in the Anatolia regions (centre parts of Turkey formerly less developed than the republican West Coast or more liberal Istanbul agglomeration).

Reflecting the reality in the late 1990's, Erdoğan and Gül abandoned the anti-Western policies and reshaped the identity narrative to a more universal and broader need of human rights promotion and democratic systems. At the same time, they both favoured maintaining Islam as the driving cultural and historical feature in the society's identity.[101] Furthermore, Islamic parties often struggled to attract more than 15% of votes in the past as their support came from strongly religious and rural areas. Nevertheless, Erdoğan as the leader of a new moderate conservative Islam-oriented party but pursuing economic liberal and democratic reforms achieved to attract a broad electorate that is keeping him in power until nowadays.[102]

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[99] CNN International. [online]. Turkish PM quits for Erdogan. 2003. [cit. 2018-17-07]. Available at: http://edition.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/europe/03/11/turkey.elections/

[100] TANSIPAR, Ö. Turkey's Middle East Policies: Between Neo-Ottomanism and Kemalism. Washington DC. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. 2008. p.13

[101] Global Security. [online]. AKP Political Party. [cit. 2018-19-07]. Available at: https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/europe/tu-political-party-akp.htm

[102] Ibid.

AKP encouraged the historical Ottoman sentiment of the old Empire, its religious roots in order to mobilise the lower-middle class cities like Konya and rural areas of Anatolian midlands.[103]

This change and continuous acceptance of moderate reformist Islamist narrative contributed to a changing domestic Turkish identity that naturally was reflected in shaping the new foreign policy narrative. Additionally, Erdoğan is partly blamed that he took advantage of the political instability and used the democratic, reformist and liberal narrative as a tool for bringing him into power and continually inclining towards more authoritarian regime. In other words, considering the political instability and the positions of Erdoğan's weak political challengers, the emphasis on democracy might have served as a tool for gaining a power in Turkey rather than an end of their activities. [104]

Before analysing the foreign policy implications of AKP governments, Erdoğan himself was involved in highly watched debate in Turkey related to Muslim identity. After massive protests and social tension between the secularists and religious political interests in 2007 over AKP's Abdullah Gül presidency candidacy, Erdoğan and his party pushed through the parliament the amendments of the 1982 Constitution and lifted the part banning women wearing headscarves at the universities. AKP faced massive protests and the party was nearly on the verge of dissolution in 2008 by the Constitutional Court for breaking the secular foundations of the Republic. However, compared to the dissolvement of the Welfare Party, AKP was not found illegal and unconstitutional and the party could continue governing. [105]

2.2. Foreign policy aspects of the new government

In the 2016 article, Hakan Yavuz divides the AKP government's foreign policy into three chronological phases. Firstly, Yavuz sets the first years of Erdoğan's government as a market-oriented period that was accompanied with serious efforts of Turkey to join the EU and fulfil the requirements coming from the application procedure. The other period of the new Turkish foreign policy is defined as an Islamist one dating from the start of the Arab revolutions until 2014. Finally, Yavuz calls the most recent period as a splendid isolation reflecting the

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[103] Hürriyet Daily News. [online]. As it happened: PM Erdoğan declares local poll victory amid fraud claims. [cit. 2018-07-07]. Available at: http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/as-it-happened-pm-erdogan-declares-local-poll-victory-amid-fraud-claims-64283
[104] KIRIŞCI K.: The End of the Cold War and Changes in Turkish Foreign Policy Behaviour. Foreign Policy (Dış Politika), 2009, vol. 18, No. 3-4. p. 266-309
[105] Encyclopedia Britannica. [online]. Recep Tayyip Erdogan [cit. 2018-25-07]. Available at: https://www.britannica.com/biography/Recep-Tayyip-Erdogan

geopolitical situation from 2014 until 2016.[106] The thesis does not specifically follow the AKP's government and its neo-Ottomanism vision into those phases even though they are reflected in many parts and provide a useful tool for its analysis. Additionally, the third phase would be, due to the recent developments in 2017 and 2018, altered.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Turgut Özal's foreign policy identity significantly differed from the conservative Kemalist, solely Western-oriented doctrine. Turkey emerged in a different international environment after the end of the Cold War when Özal's policy brought first application of the neo-Ottoman (in Turkish *Yeni Osmanlıcılık)* policy into practise. Despite the failure to impose the doctrine more deeply and for a longer period, the ideological and practical implications remained in the political discourse and were adopted by the newly established AKP majority government. Therefore, AKP and Özal follow some of the similar features of neo-Ottoman foreign policy being the neo-Ottomanism 1.0. and neo-Ottomanism 2.0.[107]

Firstly, AKP supporters and decision-makers come from the Anatolian lower and middle class compared to the more liberal and republican Istanbul, West-Coast areas and Kurdish South-East. Secondly, Özal and Erdoğan both emerged as political leaders in a time of a governmental instability and economic crisis that both helped them to mobilise their supporters. Thirdly, the foreign policy doctrines were generally labelled as neo-Ottomanists and faced similar obstacles and opposition from the military and secular part of the Turkish society.[108] Furthermore, AKP's foreign policy decision makers put their vision of the neo-Ottoman doctrine in juxtaposition towards Kemalism that was described as a decades-long failure unable to solve Turkish struggles. Kemalism projected a national state building process creating a homogenous society that ignored the rising needs of the Kurdish identity as well as ignoring the Muslim character of the country. Contrary to the Kemalist realism, AKP transformed Turkish foreign policy identity with a more liberal approach emphasizing more openness, cooperation regarding trade and economic agreements, multilateralism with the Islamic undertone and conflict solution diplomacy.[109] Erdoğan himself was not the key driver of the ideological and philosophical background of changing Turkish foreign policy but it was

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[106] YAVUZ, H. Social and Intellectual Origins of Neo-Ottomanism: Searching for a Post-National Vision. [online]. Die Welt des Islams. University of Utah. Vol. 56. No.3-4. Pp. 438-465. 2016. [cit. 2018-17-06]. Available at: https://utah.pure.elsevier.com/en/publications/social-and-intellectual-origins-of-neo-ottomanism-searching-for-a. p.459-460
[107] TANSIPAR, Ö. Turkey's Middle East Policies: Between Neo-Ottomanism and Kemalism. Washington DC. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. 2008.
[108] BERTRAND, G. Turkish Diplomacy since 2003: Transition from Realpolitik to a Liberal Foreign Policy? [online]. Perspectives, Vol. 21, No. 2, 2013, pp. 63-82. [cit. 2018-19-06]. Available at http://www.jstor.org/stable/24624546. p.70-71
[109] Ibid. p .65

his ally Ahmet Davutoğlu who then served as a Foreign Minister and Prime Minister (the thesis dedicates the next section to Davutoğlu's Strategic Depth Doctrine).

Erdoğan explained his vision that Turkey's influence should be spread into the areas where it (meaning the Ottoman presence) had been present in the past. Davutoğlu, Erdoğan and Gül changed the traditional patterns of the Turkish foreign policy identity from the traditional Kemalist passive vision "*Peace at Home, Peace in the World*" and launched diplomatic and economic initiatives in Turkey's neighbourhood. Turkey expressed its ambition to become a democratic leader of divided Muslim world using the Ottoman and Muslim legacy on both domestic and foreign level.

The Justice and Development Party (AKP) often used the identity term *"medeniyetcilik"* which means a civilization approach linked to the Muslim golden era during the Ottoman Empire.[110][111] Referring to the concept when Turkey serves as a model for other Muslim countries, we need to point out that Turkish nation is not an Arabic nation. Hence, in certain context, Turks have always felt the need to emphasize this fact partially blaming the Arabsfor the breakup of once stable, multicultural and multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire and preferred to befriend with the British authorities present in the Middle East. On the other hand, Turks became an unfriendly country in the Arab eyes especially during the Cold War due to the strict Kemalist secular ideology and pro-Wester orientation of foreign policy contrary to pro-Soviet orientation of the Arab world.

Compared to conflicts-torn and divided Arab nations, Turkey has been a stabilization factor in the region and relatively successful economic and political example. Thus, after the Cold War and changing geopolitical dynamics in the region, Turkey with its more active role in the region, President Özal's diplomatic priorities and finally the starting AKP era, the swift enabled to become a certain alerting example for other Muslim countries.[112] The successful example was accelerated by a significant economic growth in the 2000's followed by structural institutional and economic reforms that, to some extent, modelled Turkey as an example how to harmonise its Muslim heritage with the democratic institutions and potential EU membership.

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[110] HALE, W., ÖZBUDUN, E. Islamism, Democracy, and Liberalism in Turkey: The Case of the AKP. [online]. Political Science Quarterly. Vol. 125, No. 2. 2013. Pp. 200–214. [cit. 2018-11-07]. Available at: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/j.1538-165X.2010.tb02030.x

[111] Global Security. [online]. AKP Political Party. [cit. 2018-19-07]. Available at: https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/europe/tu-political-party-akp.htm

[112] TANSIPAR, Ö. Turkey's Middle East Policies: Between Neo-Ottomanism and Kemalism. Washington DC. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. 2008. p.12-14

At the same time, Erdoğan, as he launched cultural programs in the 1990's when he was a Mayor of Istanbul, used during the first decade of his leadership slogans *Osmanlı torunu* or *Osmanlı Torunlarıyız* meaning the grandchildren of the Ottomans.[113] Using this appeal of the Ottoman identity of the Turkish nation, Erdoğan and his counterparty members often described the Turks as direct heirs of the Ottoman grandeur and Muslim legacy that had an impact on the foreign policy decisions. The Islamic heritage emphasis directly linked with the existence of the Sultanate played a role both for domestic audience and its neighbourhood (relations with neighbouring states are described in the next section). The increase of notions and references between the Turkish Republic and the Ottoman Empire, that were already noticeable during Özal's presidency in the 1990's, are not the be misunderstood as the attempts to restore autocratic sultanate where Turkey's Islam rule dominated over the Middle East, North Africa and the Balkans. The redefined strategy on neo-Ottomanism rather attempts to use the Ottoman and Muslim legacy and its continuing historical heritage and build another layer of Turkish foreign policy coming from decades-lasting secular Kemalist identity.[114]

Sahin describes potential roots of the Islamist inspiration for AKP's neo-Ottomanism identity coming from Erbakan's policies, Naqshbandi ideology which is a traditional Sunni spiritual version of Sufism also present in Turkey; and lastly the Nur movement of US based Fethullah Gülen (the one who became a vital enemy of Erdoğan).[115] Despite the indirect impacts of the following movements, AKP Islamic emphasis was mostly rooted in the Ottoman legacy and the self-creation of the identity that was not aimed against Western allies and Turkish military.[116] Also, compared to its dissolved Islamist predecessors, AKP's crucial role was to impose a redefinition of national interests and new Turkish foreign policy mindset in the Turkish society.

Contrary to its predecessors, AKP never wanted a direct clash with the military establishment and the main politicians declared its obedience to the secular character of the state.[117] However, AKP enjoyed a growing support also at the expense of the military representation that was in the 1990's and especially in the 2000's gradually losing its influence

[113] Global Security. [online]. Turkey: Neo-Ottoman Empire. [cit. 2018-11-07]. Available at: https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/europe/tu-forrel-neo-ottoman.htm

[114] TANSIPAR, Ö. Turkey's Middle East Policies: Between Neo-Ottomanism and Kemalism. Washington DC. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. 2008.

[115] OLCOTT, M. Sufism in Central Asia: A Force for Moderation or a Cause of Politicization? [online]. Carnegie Papers, Vol. 1, No. 84. 2007. P. 46 [cit. 2018-01-07]. Available at: http://carnegieendowment.org/files/cp84_olcott_final2.pdf

[116] SAHIN, M. Turkey and Neo-Ottomanism: Domestic Sources, Dynamics and Foreign Policy. [online]. Florida International University. FIU Electronic Theses and Dissertations. 2010. P. 228. [cit. 2018-27-06]. Available at: http://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/etd/160. p. 189

[117] Ibid. p. 187

and prestige among the Turkish society. AKP governments in the early stages gained the reputation of a reformist party that also focused on a judiciary reform that could be accepted by the European authorities as a free and stable third pillar of the Turkish democracy. Because of those reforms, the role of the Turkish army and its tools how to intervene into Turkish politics were gradually limited. Additionally, AKP was gaining more support in the elections following its 2002 landslide victory in 2007 and 2011.[118] The electoral victory in 2011 brought so far, the highest support of AKP gaining merely half of the votes and easily securing the constitutional majority in the parliament.[119]

Interestingly, similar evolution was experienced by AKP's major opposition rival, the Republican People's Party (CHP - Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi), that is a republican, social democratic and secular party that has been the most significant opposition to Erdoğan's AKP for the nearly last two decades. Current CHP leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu replaced the pro-military Deniz Baykal as the Chairman of the party and promoted a more social-democratic program instead of keeping close connections with the military.[120] This aspect also contributed to a growing support of CHP in 2000's that was partially following AKP's patter of increasing support. In 2011, CHP reached nearly 26% of support proving the changing perception of the military and the ongoing change of Turkish identity where the role of the military ceased to play the most important role.[121]

AKP did not aspire to break its strong relations with the West but to broaden upcoming opportunities and use the Ottoman heritage in its stronger and more proactive role in the Middle East. Kemalism was driven by ubiquitous Cold War environment but 2000's brought many opportunities and possibilities to open the diplomatic channel and create a new model of relations with the neighbourhood countries.

Moreover, the perception of different ethics and nationalities including the Kurdish minority played an important role for AKP's version of the neo-Ottomanism. Going beyond the Kemalist foreign policy, the redefined framework does not perceive the Kurdish question as a main national security threat.[122] As Kurds have been a legitimate and equal part of the Ottoman

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[118] CNN International. [online]. Turkish PM quits for Erdogan. 2003. [cit. 2018-17-07]. Available at: http://edition.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/europe/03/11/turkey.elections/
[119] Ibid.
[120] Hürriyet Daily News. [online]. Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu re-elected as Turkey's main opposition CHP chair. [cit. 2018-14-07]. Available at: http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/kemal-kilicdaroglu-re-elected-as-chp-chair-126734
[121] BERTRAND, G. Turkish Diplomacy since 2003: Transition from Realpolitik to a Liberal Foreign Policy? [online]. Perspectives, Vol. 21, No. 2, 2013, pp. 63-82. [cit. 2018-19-06]. Available at http://www.jstor.org/stable/24624546, p.76
[122] TANSIPAR, Ö. *Turkey's Middle East Policies: Between Neo-Ottomanism and Kemalism*. Washington DC. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. 2008. p.15

empire sharing the same religion and similar cultural heritage as the Turks, the multicultural neo-Ottomanism does not perceive the Kurdish political demands as a security threat and a crucial obstacle for its more proactive foreign policy. Kemalist identity put the preference to domestic peace and solving the tough relations between the Kurds and the Turks. Therefore, Kemalist foreign policy doubts the ambitious and adventurous vision of Turkey again as a regional power bridging the West and East interests and thus letting the Kurds a certain kind of autonomy, political and cultural rights being another Muslim group in the state. Moreover, Kemalists perceive the neo-Ottomanism at odds with the national state preferences that are represented by a secular republic.[123] Therefore, the EU aspirations of AKP and political Islam identity was suspiciously seen as a secret tool how to impose more Islam into a public sphere and politics at the expense of secular Kemalism. Additionally, Erdoğan, once a liberal and pro-Western leader, was acknowledge by Kurdish population quite warmly that resulted in a significant support of AKP in Kurdish regions throughout many elections.[124]

2.3. The use of soft power

The emergence of the concept of soft power, that Joseph Nye first presented with relation to the US foreign policy analysis, also plays an important role of the AKP's neo-Ottomanist redefinition of the foreign policy identity. Many features were already defined but we cannot miss the establishment of the cultural centres in the other parts of the Middle East, the Balkans or even in other European countries and in the United States. Based on the legislative initiative of Prime Minister Erdoğan in 2007, Yunus Emre Institute was established and dozens of branches were opened world-wide. However, the majority of the centres were opened in the countries that formerly were under the control of the Ottoman Empire. Ahmet Davutolğu describes the importance of those centres as a mean how to present and spread the culture and heritage of the Turkey that encompassed many different cultures and religions during the Ottoman era stressing the importance of the new foreign policy identity of Turkey.[125] Former Turkish President Abdullah Gül, who serves as an honorary President of the Yunus Emre Institute, opened in 2009 the second institute's branch in Tirana, Albania, claiming that

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[123] Ibid. p.15

[124] Middle East Eye. Why did most of Turkey's lost pro-Kurdish votes go to ruling AK party? [online]. 2015. [cit. 2018-29-06]. Available at: http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/why-did-most-turkey-s-lost-pro-kurdish-votes-go-ruling-ak-party-1279486418

[125] CZAJKA, A. WASTNIDGE, E. The Centre of World Politics? Neo-Ottomanism in Turkish Foreign and Domestic Politics. [online]. 2016. Available at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/312147106_Neottomanism_in_Turkish_Foreign_Policy_Through_the_Lenses_of_the_Principal-Agent_Theory. p.2-3

"…*these centres are Turkey's invisible power. I mean preserving the vitality of her cultural heritage is Turkey's biggest power. Not many countries have this power. We should appreciate its worth.*"[126] President Gül, emphasized the importance to spread the language and culture in Turkey's neighbourhood and called this diplomatic strategy as an invisible power having a similar meaning like the concept of Joseph Nye's soft power.[127]

Yunus Emre Institute should not be seen as the only attempt of Turkey to institutionalize its spread of culture, historical heritage and language under the neo-Ottomanist foreign identity. Former President Özal already established the International Organization of Turkic Culture (TÜRSOY).[128] The organization was founded as a tool how to spread Turkish language and culture with friendly Turkic nations and ethnics in Central Asia and Caucasus, i.e. Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan followed by observers states and entities including Tatarstan or Northern Cyprus.[129]

Last but not least, less institutional but still having a fundamental impact is the Turkish entertainment industry, particularly Turkish movies and TV series. In the last two decades, Turkish film industry has produced dozens of successful movies that are very popular in the countries where the Ottoman Empire reigned a century ago. This soft power tool emphasize and to some extend creates cultural connections and affinities with those societies articulation a common shared Ottoman identity.[130] To put an example, the most famous is a TV historical fiction series called The Magnificent Century (Muhteşem Yüzyıl) from the era of the longest-reigning Ottoman sultan Süleyman the Magnificent.[131] Despite the fact that the TV show is not directly controlled and produced by AKP government, they project particular positive aspects of the Ottoman grandeur and try to evoke a suitable perception of the Ottoman époque further reflected in the modified Turkish identity. Consequently, the TV shows are warmly accepted by the AKP top politicians, but critics point at historical inaccuracies and a passive

[126] GÜL, A. Keeping her cultural heritage alive is Turkey's biggest power.[online]. 2009. [cit. 2018-19-07]. Available at: http://www.abdullahgul.gen.tr/news/397/48531/keeping-her-cultural-heritage-alive-is-turkeys-biggest-power.html

[127] CZAJKA, A. WASTNIDGE, E. The Centre of World Politics? Neo-Ottomanism in Turkish Foreign and Domestic Politics. [online]. 2016. Available at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/312147106_Neottomanism_in_Turkish_Foreign_Policy_Through_the_Lenses_of_the_Principal-Agent_Theory. p.3

[128] Ibid. p.5

[129] International Organization of Turkic Culture. [online]. [cit. 2018-20-07]. Available at: https://www.turksoy.org/en

[130] YAVUZ, H. Social and Intellectual Origins of Neo-Ottomanism: Searching for a Post-National Vision. [online]. Die Welt des Islams. University of Utah. Vol. 56. No.3-4. Pp. 438-465. 2016. [cit. 2018-17-06]. Available at: https://utah.pure.elsevier.com/en/publications/social-and-intellectual-origins-of-neo-ottomanism-searching-for-ap. 460

[131] Middle East Eye. Why did most of Turkey's lost pro-Kurdish votes go to ruling AK party? [online]. 2015. [cit. 2018-29-06]. Available at: http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/why-did-most-turkey-s-lost-pro-kurdish-votes-go-ruling-ak-party-1279486418

subconscious Islamisation and Ottomisation of the Turkish society and of the viewers in the Balkans, Caucasus or in the Middle-East countries.[132]

Both Yunus Emre and TÜRKSOY play an important role of the neo-Ottoman spread of Turkish influence together with the so-called Turkish soup-opera diplomacy[133]. All mentioned elements attempt to spread the cultural heritage, positive historical connections and affiliations with an Islamist undertone mainly focusing post-Ottoman Empire territory and consequently change the Turkish foreign policy identity. Additionally, this soft-power initiative also resonates at the Turkish domestic audience.[134]

2.4. Ahmet Davutoğlu and Strategic Depth doctrine

Turkish Foreign policy after 2002 and the concept of the neo-Ottomanism is undoubtedly linked with Ahmet Davutoğlu. Born in a conservative Anatolian city of Konya, he served as a scholar in Malaysia, worked for Islamic newspapers and for a Muslim-oriented business association. Davutoğlu significantly changed the rhetoric and practical implication of the Turkish foreign policy identity.[135] Compared to his colleagues from academia, he was given the privilege as a professor of the international relations to use his theory and research into practise and create a new dimension of the foreign policy agenda. Thus, he became one of the most important politicians of the Middle East. In 2011, he appeared on the prestigious Foreign Policy Top 100 Global Thinkers list.[136]

The architect and intellectual father of the new foreign policy of the Turkish Republic was chosen by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan as his chief advisor for international affairs in 2002.[137] Erdoğan transformed a small department of the governmental office into an important advisory body, significantly rising its personnel and hence hiring similar-minded staff that favoured the

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[132] Middle East Eye. Why did most of Turkey's lost pro-Kurdish votes go to ruling AK party? [online]. 2015. [cit. 2018-29-06]. Available at: http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/why-did-most-turkey-s-lost-pro-kurdish-votes-go-ruling-ak-party-1279486418

[133] MOORE, R. Soap Opera Diplomacy: Turkish TV in Greece. [online]. The International. 2013. [cit. 2018-17-07]. Available at: https://web.archive.org/web/20130215073839/http://www.theinternational.org/articles/339-soap-opera-diplomacy-turkish-tv-in-greec

[134] CZAJKA, A. WASTNIDGE, E. The Centre of World Politics? Neo-Ottomanism in Turkish Foreign and Domestic Politics. [online]. 2016. Available at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/312147106_Neottomanism_in_Turkish_Foreign_Policy_Through_the_Lenses_of_the_Principal-Agent_Theory. p.6

[135] GRIGORIADIS, I., The Davutoğlu Doctrine and Turkish Foreign Policy. Bilkent University Ankara. Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy ELIAMEP. Vol.8, No.1. 2010. p.4

[136] Foreign Policy. The FP Top 100 Global Thinkers. [online]. [cit. 2018-22-07]. Available at: https://foreignpolicy.com/2011/11/28/the-fp-top-100-global-thinkers-4/

[137] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Turkish Republic: Turkish Foreign Policy During Ataturk's Era. [online]. [cit. 2018-27-06]. Available at: http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkish-foreign-policy-during-ataturks-era.en.mfa

new vision of AKP on foreign policy issues, i.e. different approach of higher engagement including the Islamic agenda. Erdoğan preferred to surround himself with a group of independent, highly-educated Islamic scholars such as Davutoğlu, who instead of influencing Erdoğan in an orthodox religious manner preferred to develop a more pragmatic foreign policy. In 2009, as a key ally of Erdoğan, Davutoğlu was appointed in the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Moreover, when Erdoğan became the President of Turkey, Ahmet Davutoğlu replaced him in the post and served as a Prime Minister from 2014 until 2016.[138]

Tansipar describes Davutoğlu's contribution to the changing foreign policy identity followingly: "*Davutoglu's neo-Ottoman vision, it should be noted, is very different from policies promulgated by Necmettin Erbakan. While Erbakan sought to create an Islamic alliance with Muslim countries like Libya, Iran, Malaysia, and Indonesia as an explicit alternative to alliance with the West, AKP leaders today want to reach out to the East to complement their ties to the West, not replace them.*"[139]

Davutoğlu's neo-Ottomanism is rooted in the 1990's reflection of Turgut Özal's foreign policy. The new advisor to the Prime Minister, however, succeeded in implication of the new doctrine, supporting it with its philosophical and ideological background and maintaining its activist engagement with the other countries in Turkey's vicinity. The professor of the international relations Davutoğlu could build up his doctrine on the consolidation of Turkish political system, the significant economic rise and the overall stability of the country compared to its neighbours.[140]

Furthermore, with AKP in power, Davutoğlu's new foreign policy identity was supported by the ongoing domestic political and societal change. The domestic transformation of identity in 2000's influenced the vision of Turkey vis-à-vis its neighbourhoods and enabled AKP's government to direct those changes and reflect them for almost two decades. Davutoğlu did not consider the security agenda as a main aspect of the international affairs. He rather emphasized the role of exporting Turkish cultural and political influence, its soft power, together with intensified economic cooperation in the countries formerly under the rule of Sultan. Contrary to the Kemalist foreign policy that failed to acknowledge Turkey's geopolitical and strategic potential, AKP governments succeeded in defining an additional dimension of

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[138] ARAS, B. The Davutoğlu Era in Turkish Foreign Policy. [online]. Insight Turkey. Vol. 11, No.3., 2009. P. 127-142. [cit. 2018-07-07]. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/26331107?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents p.127
[139] TANSIPAR, Ö. Turkey's Middle East Policies: Between Neo-Ottomanism and Kemalism. Washington DC. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. 2008. p.14
[140] ARAS, B. The Davutoğlu Era in Turkish Foreign Policy. [online]. Insight Turkey. Vol. 11, No.3., 2009. P. 127-142. [cit. 2018-07-07]. Available at https://www.jstor.org/stable/26331107?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents. p.128

external relations which were not connected to domestic security and political dynamics such as the Kurdish issue.[141]

In 2001, Davutoğlu published a crucial book called The Strategic Depth that dramatically contributed to the new perception of Turkey and created a new neo-Ottoman doctrine. The roots of the book can be traced in geopolitical thinking, liberalism concerning the economic cooperation, the soft power concept and also the role of Turkish diplomacy in conflict mediation.[142] Hence, Davutoğlu does not hesitate to criticise the foreign policy of the country throughout the Cold War and its lack of its own international agenda resulting in various missed opportunities. Being an ideological opponent of strict secular and rather a passive Kemalism in terms of the international relations, he adds the Islamic agenda into his concept of revised foreign policy identity.

Also, due to the influence of at-then popular Samuel Huntington's doctrine, Davutoğlu emphasizes the role or the Islamic civilization with the reference to the Ottoman Empire's role in the past. The Islamic civilization narrative points at the system of milliets, autonomous religious and societal communities that were guaranteed their autonomy but were committed to the Sultan's rule. The use of milliet narrative serves as an argument for the neo-Ottoman identity that encompasses former Empire's territories under Turkish soft power influence. Putting in juxtaposition with the national state concept and the Western perception of a homogenous nation, Davutoğlu defends the universal concept of the Islamic identity, a backbone of his doctrine. Nevertheless, the Strategic Depth does not restrict itself to a religious agenda but rather a broader concept of a civilization that, among other aspect, incorporates the Islam religion as such. As a result, this narrative was easier to be endorsed by domestic and international audience, mainly by conservative population as a core of AKP's electorate.[143] Giving the preference to the creation of the universal Islamic community rather than national states narrative, Ahmet Davutoğlu uses the historical examples of the positive religious and cultural aspects of the Ottoman Empire that helped to articulate Turkey as an inherent regional power and the potential leader of the Muslim world.[144] From an institutional point of view, it was Davutoğlu who pushed through the active involvement at the Organization of the Islamic

[141] ARAS, B. The Davutoğlu Era in Turkish Foreign Policy. [online]. Insight Turkey. Vol. 11, No.3., 2009. P. 127-142. [cit. 2018-07-07]. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/26331107?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents. p.2

[142] GRIGORIADIS, I., The Davutoğlu Doctrine and Turkish Foreign Policy. Bilkent University Ankara. Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy ELIAMEP. Vol.8, No.1. 2010. p.4

[143] SAHIN, M. Turkey and Neo-Ottomanism: Domestic Sources, Dynamics and Foreign Policy. [online]. Florida International University. FIU Electronic Theses and Dissertations. 2010. P. 228. [cit. 2018-27-06]. Available at: http://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/etd/160. p.181

[144] MURINSON, A. The Strategic Depth Doctrine of Turkish Foreign Policy. [online]. Middle Eastern Studies, Vol. 42, No. 6. 2006. pp. 945-964 [cit. 2018-07-07]. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/4284512, p.950

Conference (OIC) and the election of Turkish representative as the General Secretary of the organization creating another leverage in the Muslim world.[145]

The Strategic depth roots from the failure of Kemalism understanding and using the strategic importance of Turkey in the past. For Davutoğlu, he understands two main features of the strategic depth: the historical and geographical depth. Concerning the historical depth, Davutoğlu explains Turkey's importance and position in the past located in the epicentre of various crucial historical events. He labels Turkey not as a regional power but a central power referring to the historical importance of the Byzantine empire, the conquest of Constantinople, the historical importance of the control of the Straits Bosporus and Dardanelles during a dozen of conflicts and lastly the Cold War bulwark against the Soviet expansionism.[146] The historical depth contributes to the acceptance of the Ottoman legacy that should guide the new perception of the foreign policy identity that due to its history, Turkey cannot remain inactive in the regional politics and is obliged to play an important role.

As far as the geographical depth is concerned, it relates to the historical depth and is influenced by the strategic territorial location of Turkey and the Ottoman Empire. Davutoğlu elaborates the concept claiming that Turkey (or the Ottoman Empire) is a European country and at the same time an Asian one. Additionally, Turkey could and should be labelled as a Mediterranean country, Middle Eastern, Balkan, Caucasian or a Black Sea country.[147] Subsequently, the AKP's foreign-policy decision makers and its ideological creators ceased to be limited by the Kemalist mental barriers vis-à-vis the relations with other countries in the region. Davutoğlu transformed the roots of the foreign policy thinking from the limited domestic reaction on security issues and its potential implications in regional policy into a broader, multidimensional and regional level of thinking. AKP governments broadened the horizons and tools of the new foreign policy identity of the country in several engagement opportunities: economy, culture, religion, history or conflict mediation.[148]

As a result of the new philosophical background, Davutoğlu and the whole foreign-policy apparatus of AKP accepted this perception and promoted the already mentioned multidimensionality on the economic, cultural, historical, linguistical, religious or peace

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[145] ARAS, B. The Davutoğlu Era in Turkish Foreign Policy. [online]. Insight Turkey. Vol. 11, No.3., 2009. P. 127-142. [cit. 2018-07-07]. Available at https://www.jstor.org/stable/26331107?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents. p.134
[146] GRIGORIADIS, I., The Davutoğlu Doctrine and Turkish Foreign Policy. Bilkent University Ankara. Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy ELIAMEP. Vol.8, No.1. 2010. p.4
[147] MURINSON, A. The Strategic Depth Doctrine of Turkish Foreign Policy. [online]. Middle Eastern Studies, Vol. 42, No. 6. 2006. pp. 945-964 [cit. 2018-07-07]. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/4284512. p.952
[148] GRIGORIADIS, I., The Davutoğlu Doctrine and Turkish Foreign Policy. Bilkent University Ankara. Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy ELIAMEP. Vol.8, No.1. 2010. p.5

mediation features. Together with the Ottoman legacy, importance of the geographical depth and the changing national identity, the Strategic Depth doctrine fits and to a broad extent defines the new neo-Ottomanism vision of AKP and the role of Turkey during the first governments under AKP. Although Erdoğan or Davutoğlu did not aspire to create boundaries of the new foreign policy strategy only to those areas where the Ottoman Empire used to govern, most of their activities and engagement naturally correspond with the former areas of the Sultanate.[149] Özkan defines the book as "*a mythological style about how to form a Grand Turkey as a global power*" focusing on spreading its influence especially in the Middle East.[150] Pointing at the historical depth, Özkan claims that, according to Davutoğlu's doctrine, Turkey is not considered a traditional national state. Referring to the historical depth, Turkey or the Ottoman Empire has been in the centre of historical events for more than five centuries thus Turkish nation with its long Ottoman legacy is exceptional which needs to be further developed in its foreign policy doctrine.[151]

The Davutoğlu's book was warmly accepted in Turkey and intensely studied on the international level. As Strategic Depth is not an academic piece at the first place, it also became relatively popular in the Turkish society giving a perception of the government influencers how to form a Grand Turkey and its neo-Ottoman potential of spreading its influence in former Ottoman territories. The Strategic Depth is sententiously defined in Czajka's article claiming that the neo-Ottoman strategy aspires to put Turkey in the centre of world politics or as it could be mocked with the narrative of Donald Trump's slogan "making Turkey great again."[152] Following the theoretical and ideological background of Davutoğlu's neo-Ottomanist Strategic Depth, the next section deals with concrete relations with particular states.

2.5. Changing external relations in 2000's

Ahmet Davutoğlu's doctrine and the remodelling of the neo-Ottomanism encompassed two dimensions: the internal redefinition of Turkish national identity steered by the AKP governments and the external identity regarding a new proactive foreign policy and broader

[149] ARAS, B. The Davutoğlu Era in Turkish Foreign Policy. [online]. Insight Turkey. Vol. 11, No.3., 2009. P. 127-142. [cit. 2018-07-07]. Available at https://www.jstor.org/stable/26331107?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents. p.130-131
[150] ÖZKAN, B., The end of strategic depth in Turkey? What to expect of Turkey's foreign and security policy turn. In: Youtube [online]. 27 January 2017. [cit. 2018-28-07]. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y-rIdDOMEWw&t
[151] Ibid.
[152] CZAJKA, A. WASTNIDGE, E. The Centre of World Politics? Neo-Ottomanism in Turkish Foreign and Domestic Politics. [online]. 2016. Available at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/312147106_Neottomanism_in_Turkish_Foreign_Policy_Through_the_Lenses_of_the_Principal-Agent_Theory

regional cooperation.[153] Turkish relations in its neighbourhood, mostly with the states that used to be an integral part of the Ottoman Empire in the past, fundamentally changed after the end of the Cold War. Following the Özal's influence in the 1990's, Erdoğan and Davutoğlu reshaped the Turkish foreign policy in a neo-Ottoman manner stressing the positive and active approach of economic, cultural or religious cooperation based on a more self-confident diplomacy. This new approach aimed at ensuring Turkey to become an established regional power like Iran or Saudi Arabia nowadays. Using its various identities and geographical and historical depth as defined in Davutoğlu's doctrine, Turkey emerged as an ideal conflict-solver and peace-maker hosting politicians and conferences on many topics from the Balkans to Middle East or Central Asia.[154] As a result, the decision makers were not concentrated on a single area or a topic as the Kemalist foreign policy during the Cold War would pursue. Instead, it emphasized the need for a quick pragmatic response, promoting zero-problems policy with its neighbours, keeping various agendas open and be flexible during unexpected changes in the regional or international politics.[155]

Economic cooperation constitutes another important part of the neo-Ottoman diplomacy and new active approach towards the region. Overcoming the economic crisis in the early stages of 2000's, Turkey emerged as a stronger economic power in the region with the significant help of successful economic reforms of the first AKP government. Additionally, Ankara launched an intensive economic cooperation supported by a new economic class of smaller entrepreneurs coming from conservative rural areas in the Anatolian midlands that remain the core electorate of AKP until nowadays.[156]

2.5.1. Western Allies: The European Union and the Unites States

The new neo-Ottoman doctrine of the multidimensional, fluid and flexible approach altered the relations with traditional Western allies. On the one hand, Turkey, under the rule of AKP and Erdoğan, followed the traditional pro-European approach promoting the reformist agenda that might have eventually helped Turkey to fulfil the acceptance procedure

[153] SAHIN, M. Turkey and Neo-Ottomanism: Domestic Sources, Dynamics and Foreign Policy. [online]. Florida International University. FIU Electronic Theses and Dissertations. 2010. P. 228. [cit. 2018-27-06]. Available at: http://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/etd/160. p.186

[154] ARAS, B. The Davutoğlu Era in Turkish Foreign Policy. [online]. Insight Turkey. Vol. 11, No.3., 2009. P. 127-142. [cit. 2018-07-07]. Available at https://www.jstor.org/stable/26331107?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents p.131-132

[155] Ibid. p.133

[156] YAVUZ, H. Social and Intellectual Origins of Neo-Ottomanism: Searching for a Post-National Vision. [online]. Die Welt des Islams. University of Utah. Vol. 56. No.3-4. Pp. 438-465. 2016. [cit. 2018-17-06]. Available at: https://utah.pure.elsevier.com/en/publications/social-and-intellectual-origins-of-neo-ottomanism-searching-for-ap.450

requirements for the EU membership. AKP opposed breaking the previous governments' aspirations vis-à-vis the EU membership and in 2004, the EU officially opened the accession negotiations with Turkey so that the country might potentially enter the traditionally "Christian Club".[157] The driving force of the new Turkish foreign policy identity, Ahmet Davutoğlu, however represented a more sceptical approach towards the EU membership. According to him, Turkey should not focus only on the EU membership regarding its foreign policy priorities. For AKP, this position would be a repetition of the Kemalist approach that, due to the existence of the Cold War, was mainly focused on the security cooperation with NATO allies ignoring the relations with other countries. Within few years in the post, Davutoğlu was highly sceptical about the likelihood of Turkey's full membership in the European Union claiming that the country cannot wait at the EU door forever.[158]

Consequently, Turkey ceased to perceive the EU or NATO member states as the only possible and stable allies and did not hesitate to oppose international policies including the prevailing disputes over Cyprus which Greek part that became a member of the EU in 2004. Ankara than created its own neo-Ottoman channel of foreign policy without abandoning the aspirations for a closer relationship with the EU. As Davutoğlu considers, Turkey should reformulates its overall geopolitical importance, i.e. the strategic depth, and promote a multidirectional foreign policy.[159] Considering foreign policy as directly connected with the internal affairs, AKP politicians also reflected the changing public opinion and changing domestic identity that remained pro-European but started to articulate more sceptical approach about the real impact of the full EU membership and the overall orientation of Turkey mainly towards the Western countries.[160]

The detachment has also sources in the Wester-sceptical moods and negative public opinion coming from the 2003 US military operation in Iraq. The new AKP government of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was forced to tackle the highly challenging and difficult situation towards its key security ally. On one hand, Ankara's essential national interest was to maintain the security relations with the United States and the security guarantees coming from NATO membership. On the other hand, the new neo-Ottoman approach of multinational cooperation and supporting the stability of Iraq as its neighbourhood, economic partner and potential ally in

[157] CNN International. [online]. *EU agrees to Turkey entry talks.* 2004. [cit. 2018-19-07]. Available at: http://edition.cnn.com/2004/WORLD/europe/12/16/eu.turkey/

[158] MURINSON, A. *The Strategic Depth Doctrine of Turkish Foreign Policy.* [online]. Middle Eastern Studies, Vol. 42, No. 6. 2006. pp. 945-964 [cit. 2018-07-07]. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/4284512 p.952

[159] Ibid. p.952

[160] Delegation of the European Union to Turkey. *Support for EU membership in Turkey at over 50%* [online]. 2007. [cit. 2018-29-06]. Available at: https://www.avrupa.info.tr/en/news/support-eu-membership-turkey-over-50-2899

the region failed to recognize the advantages of the US military intervention and Turkey's initial support.[161] As a result, Turkey together with the majority of its allies did not support the military intervention to Iraq promoted by former US president G. W. Bush.

Interestingly, pragmatic Erdoğan himself was considering endorsing the plan to open a northern front from Turkey so that the US troops can invade Iraq through the Kurdish populated Northern regions southwards Baghdad. However, as a newcomer in the Prime Minister post, Erdoğan lost the parliament vote as a result of a strong opposition in the parliament coming also from his party as well as vocal disagreement from the public opinion or Muslim communities and civil society.[162] Erdoğan failed to have a first neo-Ottoman vision influencing the post-war Iraq and shocked US allies that significantly had an impact on US-Turkish relations. Many politicians perceived this denial as the end of decades long close cooperation with the US Army. However, Turkey remained dedicated towards the United States repeatedly offering the use of its military base in Incirlik located at a strategic position that already helped the United States during the 1958 Lebanese crises, at the First Gulf War or most recently during the airstrikes against Daesh from 2015.[163] Nevertheless, the relations with the United States during the first decade of AKP's governments remained relatively solid and constructive but were significantly affected by the Iraq conflict and the changing foreign policy identity of Turkey.

2.5.2. Syria

The relations with Turkey's neighbouring Muslim countries underwent dramatic changes during the first years of AKP regime. Importantly, relations with Syria, Iran and Iraq have a specific common feature that plays in all countries a highly-observed topic: the Kurdish minority. All the countries have its own regions with a dominant Kurdish population and all governments always attempted to avoid any separatist and independent movements among the Kurdish population.[164]

The most spectacular change of mutual relations under the leadership of Erdoğan and Davutoğlu were the Turkish-Syrian relations. The neo-Ottomanism contributed to a dramatic

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[161] SAHIN, M. Turkey and Neo-Ottomanism: Domestic Sources, Dynamics and Foreign Policy. [online]. Florida International University. FIU Electronic Theses and Dissertations. 2010. P. 228. [cit. 2018-27-06]. Available at: http://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/etd/160. p.188

[162] Ibid. p.189

[163] Incirlik Air Base. [online]. [cit. 2018-16-07]. Available at: http://www.incirlik.af.mil/About-Us/Fact-Sheets/Display/Article/300814/incirlik-air-base-history/

[164] TANSIPAR, Ö. Turkey's Middle East Policies: Between Neo-Ottomanism and Kemalism. Washington DC. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. 2008. p.21

improvement of relations between Ankara and Damascus. Both countries emerged on the brink of a war back in 1998 due to the Syrian support of the PKK (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê), the Kurdistan Workers Party, that is considered as a terrorists group and is the imminent enemy to the Turkish security. Syria avoided an open conflict with its stronger northern neighbour, ceased its support of PKK and most importantly expelled PKK's leader Abdullah Öcalan who was afterwards imprisoned by Turkish forces for life.[165] The turning point contributed to a compete U-turn in mutual relations overcoming deep animosities. Both countries launched a deep cooperation from the early 2000's.

AKP electoral victory even intensified the cooperation and Syria, considered as a problematic regime for the Western countries, encouraged the change of the relations and Turkey emerged as a key mediator and regional actor vis-à-vis Damascus.[166] In 2003, both countries signed an array of bilateral agreements including the end of disputes over Turkey's Hatay province, economic cooperation and launching a duty-free trade, cultural and educational agreements. The transformation of mutual relations peaked with an official visit of Syria's President Bashar Assad to Ankara in 2004 after long 57 years when a leader of Syria visited Turkey.[167]

From a neo-Ottoman point of view, Turkey ensured that Syria was not an enemy anymore, launched various agreements, found a common ground about the important security cooperation including the fight against terrorism. Moreover, Turkey emerged as a key mediator for Damascus with the international community due to Syria's complicated position on the international level. Despite Syria's involvement in Lebanon criticised by Ankara's allies, Turkish President did not criticise Syria's intervention and organized an official visit to Damascus confirming the spectacular change in mutual relations.[168] As a consequence, Syria as a former part of the Ottoman Empire, provided Ankara a new gateway to the Arab world and an argument for the new foreign policy identity that already brought highly positive outcomes. The most crucial aspect was the economic cooperation resulting in signing the free trade

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[165] KINZER, S. Turkish Commandos Capture a Kurdish Leader in Raid Into Iraq. [online]. The New York Times. 1998.. [cit. 2018-11-07]. Available at: https://www.nytimes.com/1998/04/15/world/turkish-commandos-capture-a-kurdish-leader-in-raid-into-iraq.html

[166] GRIGORIADIS, I., The Davutoğlu Doctrine and Turkish Foreign Policy. Bilkent University Ankara. Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy ELIAMEP. Vol.8, No.1. 2010., p.6

[167] PHILLIPS, J. Turkey's global strategy: Turkey and Syria. [online]. London. London School of Economics and Political Science. 2012. [cit. 2018-22-06]. Available at http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/43498/1/Turkey%27s%20Global%20Strategy_Turkey%20and%20Syria%28lsero%29. p.3

[168] MURINSON, A. The Strategic Depth Doctrine of Turkish Foreign Policy. [online]. Middle Eastern Studies, Vol. 42, No. 6. 2006. pp. 945-964 [cit. 2018-07-07]. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/4284512. p.956

agreement contributing to a fourfold increase of mutual trade between 2006 and 2010.[169] On the brink of the so-called Arab Spring, i.e. a decade after both countries were facing a mutual military conflict, the Turkish-Syrian relations were characterised by a model partnership in the Middle East.[170]

2.5.3. Iran

The religious competition represented a hallmark in the imperial rivalry of the Turkish-Iranian relations. The Ottoman Empire, which perceived itself as the defender of Sunni Islam, attempted to eliminate the influence of Shia Islam represented by Iran or Persian Empire is the past. However, both countries are not Arabic states and religious animosities in the recent decades did not represent the key obstacle for mutual relations. Despite historical animosities and conflicts, both countries became the key US allies during the first decades of the Cold War until the Islamic revolution in 1979. Despite Ankara's Kemalist foreign policy of non-involvement focusing on the relation with the West, Turkey did not fully break the relations with Teheran. On the contrary, during the Iraqi-Iranian war in the 1980's, Turkey remained neutral despite the international isolation of the new revolutionary Ayatollah's regime and promoted the existing and mutually advantageous trade exchange especially the crucial gas supplies to Turkey.[171]

Additionally, after the end of the Cold War and the Iran-Iraq war, the relations of the key regional powers significantly improved. Comparing the overwhelming amelioration of Turkish-Syrian relations, Ankara emphasized the security cooperation due to the activities of Kurdish separatists on Turkish-Iranian borders. Iran experienced Turkish scenario with the establishment of Kurdish separatist movement called PJAK (Kurdistan Free Life Party), a sister organization of PKK considered by both countries a terrorist group aiming at violent separation of the Kurdish regions on Iranian-Turkish borders.[172] In order to launch a proactive diplomacy with Teheran and secure the surrounding areas of the country, the AKP government signed a

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[169] PHILLIPS, J. Turkey's global strategy: Turkey and Syria. [online]. London. London School of Economics and Political Science. 2012. [cit. 2018-22-06]. Available at http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/43498/1/Turkey%27s%20Global%20Strategy_Turkey%20and%20Syria%28lsero%29. p.6

[170] COSKUN, G. Model Partnership in the Middle East: Turkish-Syrian Relations. [online]. Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies. 2011. [cit. 2018-07-07]. Available at: http://sedatlaciner.blogspot.com/2011/01/model-partnership-in-middle-east.html

[171] ÖZCAN, N., ÖZDAMAR, Ö., Uneasy Neighbors: Turkish-Iranian Relations Since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. [online]. Middle East Policy Council., Vol. 17, No. 3. [cit. 2018-19-07]. Available at https://www.mepc.org/uneasy-neighbors-turkish-iranian-relations-1979-islamic-revolution

[172] Reuters. [online]. U.S. brands anti-Iran Kurdish group terrorist 2009. [cit. 2018-07-07]. Available at: https://www.reuters.com/article/

security cooperation aimed at eliminating the common enemy's activities. More precisely, the representatives of both countries agreed on establishing an intelligence cooperation council with the main agenda of countering PKK and PJAK terrorist activities and potential separatist aspirations in the Kurdish regions.[173]

As a result of the Iraqi war starting in 2003, both countries together with Syria worried that raising instability and security concerns would probably cause the increase of tensions among Kurdish population and rising demands for the autonomy in Turkey, Iran or Syria's Rojava region. Better relations with Turkey also enabled both Iran and Syria to reduce the diplomatic isolation vis-à-vis Western countries.[174] As far as the mediator and peace-maker role in the neo-Ottoman policy is concerned, Turkey envisaged itself as a main mediator regarding the Iran nuclear dispute. Partial opposition to the policy of the United States and the European Union, Ankara emerged as an important and reliable negotiator for Teheran.[175] When Iran failed to meet the requirements coming from the Non-Proliferation Treaty on the nuclear weapons, Turkey defended Iran's claims the development of peaceful nuclear energy.[176] Although Erdoğan dealt with a significant diplomatic pressure with Ankara's main gas supplier over the support of the nuclear program, AKP government avoided any breakup of the pragmatic relations with Iran but slightly modified its narrative in order to partially meet Western-allies expectations.

2.5.4. Iraq

The previous section already tackled the relations with Iraq that were drastically changed due to the military operation in 2003. On one hand, the instability of the region, potential spread of extremist Islamist groups or strengthening Iran's regional aspirations became a geopolitical challenge for Turkey, that was transforming its foreign policy identity into a more pragmatic, friendly and activist approach. However, in the first year of the new AKP government, Ankara embraced the new changing regional redistribution of power as

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[173] TANSIPAR, Ö. Turkey's Middle East Policies: Between Neo-Ottomanism and Kemalism. Washington DC. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. 2008. p.23

[174] MURINSON, A. The Strategic Depth Doctrine of Turkish Foreign Policy. [online]. Middle Eastern Studies, Vol. 42, No. 6. 2006. pp. 945-964 [cit. 2018-07-07]. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/4284512. p.957

[175] GRIGORIADIS, I., The Davutoğlu Doctrine and Turkish Foreign Policy. Bilkent University Ankara. Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy ELIAMEP. Vol.8, No.1. 2010. p.7

[176] MURINSON, A. The Strategic Depth Doctrine of Turkish Foreign Policy. [online]. Middle Eastern Studies, Vol. 42, No. 6. 2006. pp. 945-964 [cit. 2018-07-07]. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/4284512. p.960

geopolitical opportunity how to play a more important role in the region and spread its activities and cooperative engagement to the Muslim world.

At the eve of the Second Gulf War in Iraq, Turkey used the situation for a peace-mediation role and invited all Iraqi's neighbours, i.e. all of them Muslim countries, to Istanbul's old Ottoman palace in order to articulate a diplomatic pressure on Hussein's government to cooperate with United Nations' inspectors.[177] With the fall of Hussein's regime, Ankara mainly focused on preventing a creation of autonomous region or even an independent Kurdish entity in Northern Iraq that potentially can cover PKK's military activities. This scenario would have been found by former secular Kemalist representation as well as by new AKP representatives as hideous and unacceptable possibility regarding PKK's activities representing a direct threat to Turkish national security.[178]

Turkey seriously considered a direct military operation to Iraq in 2005. However, instead of using a direct military intervention, the tensions were eased by diplomatic means as Ahmet Davutoğlu supported a more pro-active and less containment approach toward the Iraqi Kurds.[179] The relations with Baghdad federal government and Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), that was accepted by Ankara as a legitimate regional Kurdish representative body in Iraq, found common topics of cooperation. Turkey then accepted its new role of mediator as a new tool of its new foreign policy identity. Ankara promoted sustaining the fragile peace in Iraq and overcome potential century old painful memories (so-called Sevres syndrome) coming from the post-World War I period when the Western powers divided the Ottoman Empire and supported the idea of an independent Kurdistan.[180] Following the new neo-Ottoman approach regarding Iraq, Ahmed Davutoğlu closely monitored the complicated situation in Iraq and subsequently he paid a landmark visit to Northern Iraq in 2009. During a meeting with KRG's President Massoud Barzani, Davutoğlu as a Foreign Minister announced the opening of a Turkish consulate in Iraq's Kurdish city of Erbil calling it a symbolic bridge between Turkey and Iraq and a further gate southward to Iraqi city of Basra, once a crucial Ottoman port with a strategic and symbolic importance. Contrary to hostile relations, Davutoğlu strengthened the

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[177] MURINSON, A. The Strategic Depth Doctrine of Turkish Foreign Policy. [online]. Middle Eastern Studies, Vol. 42, No. 6. 2006. pp. 945-964 [cit. 2018-07-07]. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/4284512. p.954

[178] Ibid. p.954

[179] GRIGORIADIS, I., The Davutoğlu Doctrine and Turkish Foreign Policy. Bilkent University Ankara. Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy ELIAMEP. Vol.8, No.1. 2010. p.7

[180] DANFORTH, N. Forget Sykes-Picot. It's the Treaty of Sèvres That Explains the Modern Middle East. [online]. Foreign Policy. 2015. [cit. 2018-22-07]. Available at: https://foreignpolicy.com/2015/08/10/sykes-picot-treaty-of-sevres-modern-turkey-middle-east-borders-turkey/

role of a dialogue concerning the activities of PKK that might be better monitored and countered with KRG cooperation than without it.[181]

Despite an array of mutual disputed topics, the changing relations showed the reconsideration of the perception towards the Kurdish ethnicity in general. Kemalists see Kurdish aspirations as a direct threat to national security either in Turkey or in Iraq. The secular vision undercame a neo-Ottomanist transformation under the virtue of more pro-active and peace seeking foreign policy. Moreover, from AKP's perspective, Turks and Kurds can be connected under the auspices of Islam religion and would not represent a contradiction in the new Turkish identity. The practical implication of this approach, however, did not fully meet its potential as AKP itself remained sceptical towards the Kurdish autonomous movements in Iraq that might have served as a pretext and inspiration for Turkish or Syrian Kurds.[182]

2.5.5. Israel and Palestine

Following the neo-Ottoman and activist foreign policy, the AKP government adopted an active role also in the Israel-Palestine conflict. Turkey recognised Israel in 1949 as the only Muslim country before Egypt did so three decades later.[183] Turkey and Israel, both crucial allies of the United States during the Cold War, continued with the pragmatic security cooperation after the Cold War. When AKP's leadership came to power in 2002, Israel's image changed in Turkish eyes due to strong regional public opinion turning more against Israel and due to changing Turkish internal dynamics. The articulation of a more Islamic agenda was more antagonistic towards the Jewish state.

As a result of the controversial military activities in Gaza in 2004, Erdoğan ostentatiously condemned the operations calling Israel a terrorist state. Although Erdoğan's activity had a significant impact on political relations, the pragmatic economic and security cooperation remained almost untouched.[184] Additionally, Turkey defended Iran's nuclear

[181] Kurdistan Regional Government. *President Barzani, Turkey's Foreign Minister Davutoğlu hold historic meetings, announce plans to open consulate.* [online]. 2009. [cit. 2018-11-07]. Available at: http://cabinet.gov.krd/a/d.aspx?s=010000&l=12&a=32216

[182] ÖZCAN, N., YAVUZ, H. The Kurdish Question and Turkey's Justice and Development Party. online]. Middle East Policy, Vol. 13, No. 1. Pp. 102-119. [cit. 2018-19-06]. Available at: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1475-4967.2006.00241.x

[183] ÇAGAPTAY, S. *Hamas Visits Ankara: The AKP Shifts Turkey's Role in the Middle East.* [online]. The Washington Institute. Policy Watch. 2006. [cit. 2018-07-07]. Available at: https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/hamas-visits-ankara-the-akp-shifts-turkeys-role-in-the-middle-east

[184] MURINSON, A. *The Strategic Depth Doctrine of Turkish Foreign Policy.* [online]. Middle Eastern Studies, Vol. 42, No. 6. 2006. pp. 945-964 [cit. 2018-07-07]. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/4284512 p.958

program after Teheran's non-compliance of the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 2003, a crucial topic for Israel's national security.[185] Another aspect that worsened the relations between Israel and Turkey was the approach towards the Palestinians. Contrary to Israel, Western allies and the overall international community, Turkey denied condemning the electoral victory of Hamas in 2005 as Davutoğlu again used the advantage of a dynamic and changing regional situation and launched dialogue with Hamas's representatives. Turkish Foreign Ministry explained the policy, that was in clear opposition with the US and EU claiming that all relevant actors (not only) in the Israeli-Palestinian should be taken into consideration and included in the regional dialogue.[186]

Erdoğan pushed Turkey into an active mediator role and did not hesitate launching negotiations even with Hamas, considered as a terrorist group, as its leaders visited Ankara in 2006. Turkey maintained the same narrative regarding Israeli military actions in Gaza or Lebanon condemning the actions and consequently gaining a domestic public support as well as the rising popularity of Turkey in the Muslim world. Other states started to perceive Turkey as a potential regional power, a trustworthy partner that could protect the Muslim nations against Israel.[187]

In 2010, the Israeli-Turkish relations reached rock bottom due to the Mavi Marmara incident when a Turkish humanitarian boat broke the Gaza blockade and clashed with Israeli forces that killed several Turkish activists. Israel partially excused in 2013 and the diplomatic clash did not alter the security and economic cooperation.[188] To conclude, Turkish-Israeli relations experienced a significant deterioration as possibly the only country in the region in the new neo-Ottoman foreign policy framework.

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[185] MONJE, S. *Did Iran Ever Actually Violate The Nonproliferation Treaty? Does It Matter?* [online]. The Foreign Policy Association. 2016. [cit. 2018-06-07]. Available at: https://foreignpolicyblogs.com/2016/01/13/did-iran-ever-actually-violate-the-nonproliferation-treaty-does-it-matter/

[186] ARAS, B. The Davutoğlu Era in Turkish Foreign Policy. [online]. Insight Turkey. Vol. 11, No.3., 2009. P. 127-142. [cit. 2018-07-07]. Available at https://www.jstor.org/stable/26331107?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents.p.135

[187] PTÁČKOVÁ, G. Analýza turecké zahraniční politiky v letech 2002-2013. Brno. Fakulta sociálních studií. Masarykova Univerzita. Master's thesis. 2013. p.34

[188] SHERWOOD, H. Netanyahu apologises to Turkish PM for Israeli role in Gaza flotilla raid. [online]. The Guardien. [cit. 2018-13-07]. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/mar/22/israel-apologises-turkey-gaza-flotilla-deaths

3. Redefining the neo-Ottomanism

3.1. Arab Spring

The events of the so called Arab Spring afflicted the whole region of the Middle East and North Africa and represented an unprecedented change of the status-quo. The series of emancipation and pro-democratic uprisings emerged as serious challenges to decades-long ruling authoritarian regimes in the region. However, despite a wave of optimism and support from the international community calling for more democratic regimes in the region, the results appeared to be fundamentally different. In certain cases, including the Syrian civil war, the overall impact of the revolutions starting in 2011 are yet to be assessed.

Although most of the regimes faced a certain wave of uprisings and demands for a significant change of the government, Turkey was, compared to other countries, barely untouched during the first phase of the Arab Spring uprisings. Nevertheless, the upcoming massive instability of the region meant a major challenge for the existing foreign policy of Turkey. At the same time, during the first half of 2011, the AKP government was preparing for a third consultative electoral victory and no domestic challenge was threatening popular Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.[189]

On the international level, more and more states emerged in an internal chaos of anti-establishment revolutions. Therefore, a decade-lasting transformation of AKP's neo-Ottomanist foreign policy identity appeared in a difficult situation. The zero-problems policy regarding almost all surrounding countries (with logical exception of Armenia and the relations with Israel) and the promotion of multidimensional foreign policy of intensifying economic, cultural or religious cooperation of Turkey's soft power concept started to struggle with the new environment. Despite the 2003 US military intervention to Iraq and the consequent instability, Turkey enjoyed a stable and relatively friendly situation of improving mutual relations with its neighbours.

In the first half of 2011 when the Arab Spring mastered the international attention, the AKP government adopted a cautious and passive foreign policy in the first months of the Arab Spring. Erdoğan and Davutoğlu preferred not to break the positive relations with its neighbours and other countries affected by the revolutions. The dynamic situation appeared to be highly confusing in the first months and Turkey strove avoiding the loss of economic, political or

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[189] FALK, R. Interpreting the AKP Victory in Turkey. [online]. Foreign Policy Journal. 2011, [cit. 2018-19-06]. Available at: https://www.foreignpolicyjournal.com/2011/06/15/interpreting-the-akp-victory-in-turkey/

cultural ties that had been successfully build in the first decade of AKP's leadership.[190] This new foreign policy identity comes from the previously described neo-Ottoman foreign policy incorporated in Foreign Minister Davutoğlu's Strategic Depth doctrine dealing with proactive and liberal engagement in the region. Another important aspect of this policy, peace-building and mediation policy, was endangered by the need to choose between rebels or governments and to adopt any kind of position towards the instability in the region, mostly vis-à-vis Assad's Syria.[191] Throughout the 2000's, Ankara did not hesitate to cooperate with various kind of regimes from democratic to strictly authoritarian ones.

As far as the domestic policy is concerned, AKP strengthened the importance of judiciary reforms, promotion of more democratic institutions, market-oriented economy of the role of free elections and representation of various parts of the society, including the conservative and Islamists currents. On the other hand, Erdoğan's pragmatic neo-Ottomanist foreign policy put a preference for active cooperation with all sorts of states. Instead of promoting relatively liberal political Islamic governments, that hardly existed in the region before 2011, AKP's neo-Ottomanism in the region enabled Erdoğan and Davutoğlu to cooperate with secular authoritarian regimes of Syria or Egypt, i.e. from an ideological point of view more favourable allies for a secular Kemalist representation supported by the military.[192]

The most fundamental change in the mutual relations before and after the 2011 Arab uprisings the AKP leaders experienced vis-à-vis the Syrian regime. Between 1999 and 2011, both countries enjoyed excellent relations often labelled as a model relation for Turkish new neo-Ottoman foreign policy when dealing with other countries in its neighbourhood.[193] With the ongoing oppression of mostly Sunni opposition, the deterioration of relations between Turkey and Ankara was almost inevitable. The calls for democratic transition, coming from the domestic narrative, and the cessation of the civilian oppression were not reflected. Once a popular and friendly ally Bashar Assad became an inevitable enemy for the Turkish foreign-policy decision makers and the international community. Erdoğan and Davutoğlu lost their patience with the emerging atrocities against the Syrian population and AKP leader started to

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[190] BERTRAND, G. Turkish Diplomacy since 2003: Transition from Realpolitik to a Liberal Foreign Policy? [online]. Perspectives, Vol. 21, No. 2, 2013, pp. 63-82. [cit. 2018-19-06]. Available at http://www.jstor.org/stable/24624546. p.77
[191] Ibid. p.77
[192] TORELLI, S. The "AKP Model" and Tunisia's al-Nahda: from Convergence to Competition, [online]. Insight Turkey, vol. 14, no. 3, 2012. 2012. [cit. 2018-19-07]. Available at: http://go.galegroup.com/ps/anonymous?id=GALE%7CA299062078&sid=googleScholar&v=2.1&it=r&linkaccess=abs&issn=1302177X&p=AONE&sw=w. p.13
[193] COSKUN, G. Model Partnership in the Middle East: Turkish-Syrian Relations. [online]. Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies. 2011. [cit. 2018-07-07]. Available at: http://sedatlaciner.blogspot.com/2011/01/model-partnership-in-middle-east.html

openly criticise Assad's regime. Prime Minister Erdoğan highlighted the need to protect the civilian population and avoid negative effects of the war on the regional stability. He even directly called Assad to step down from his post adding a well-known speech that *"...fighting your own people until the death is not heroism. It's cowardice. If you want to see someone who fights his people to the death, look at Nazi Germany, look at Hitler, look at Mussolini..."*[194]

Ankara suspended several trade agreements and also their mutual diplomatic relations including the closure of its embassy in Damascus together with most of the Western countries in the beginning of 2012.[195] Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu, a year after the outbreak of the Syrian civil war, proclaimed that *"a regime fighting against its own people, trying to keep the status quo, cannot survive..."*[196] envisaging a brief victory of the Islamist opposition and pro-Turkish groups followed by a potential installation of a friendly government.

After the establishment of the Free Syrian Army in 2011, at that time the most influential opposition to Assad's regime, Turkey began to consider an intensified involvement in the Syrian civil war. Together with many regional regimes and the United States, Ankara supported anti-Assad rebels making a compete turn in the relations with its crucial neighbour Syria within a year. AKP supported military training of the Islamist rebels and contributed to the establishment of Istanbul-based umbrella platform called Syrian National Council.[197] The foreign policy identity of non-involvement with the military and promoting economic or cultural cooperation of neo-Ottomanist doctrine completely ceased to be applied within 2012 when Turkey decided to actively intervene in the Syrian conflict.

Despite a negative impact on mutual relations between Ankara and Damascus, the Arab Spring on the other hand offered the neo-Ottoman policy an opportunity how to continue with an active implication of the concept. During the first phase of the Arab Spring when the situation was highly unfavourable for Bashar Assad's regime, Ankara aspired to change the secular authoritarian regime and replace it by a befriended Islamic one. Being a part of the regional wave that contributed to the emergence of the Muslim Brotherhood, its branches and other political Islamist movements, Syria appeared to be another battleground for an Islamist

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[194] BURCH, J. *Turkey tells Syria's Assad: Step down!* [online]. Reuters. 2011. [cit. 2018-20-07]. Available at: https://www.reuters.com/article/us-syria-idUSL5E7MD0GZ20111122

[195] YAKIŞ, Y. *Turkey after the Arab Spring: Policy Dilemmas.* [online]. Middle East Policy Council. Vol. 21. No. 1. 2013. [cit. 2018-27-07]. Available at: https://www.mepc.org/turkey-after-arab-spring-policy-dilemmas

[196] The Telegraph. [online*]. Syria: Turkey delivers 'strong political message' as it closes Damascus embassy*. [cit. 2018-22-07]. Available at: https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/syria/9166617/Syria-Turkey-delivers-strong-political-message-as-it-closes-Damascus-embassy.

[197] YAKIŞ, Y. *Turkey after the Arab Spring: Policy Dilemmas*. [online]. Middle East Policy Council. Vol. 21. No. 1. 2013. [cit. 2018-27-07]. Available at: https://www.mepc.org/turkey-after-arab-spring-policy-dilemmas

opposition that could, with the extensive help of Turkey, overthrown Assad's regime.[198] The miscalculation of dozens of differing fighting groups supported my many external actors, significant change of its foreign policy towards Syria and the ignorance of emerging extremist Islamist and terrorist groups in Syria contributed to a foreign policy failure of Turkey's neo-Ottomanism in Syria. The dramatic change from zero-problems relations with the neighbours accepted for a long period to "zero friendship with its neighbours" downgraded most of the content of the neo-Ottoman policy towards the region.[199]

Hakan Yavuz differentiates the periods of AKP's foreign policy into three stages. The first one is characterised by the reformist market-oriented period accompanied with the aspirations to join the EU going through the second phase of the Islamist period between 2011 until 2014 and ending with a splendid isolation period until 2016.[200] As the aim of this thesis is not to divide the phases of Turkey's external relations according to Yavuz, the events of the Arab Spring and its impact on Turkey would correspond with the second period. The Islamist agenda of AKP is actually nothing new in the Turkish foreign policy. Years before the Arab uprisings, Ankara downgraded its relations with the West by openly accepting Hamas' leaders in Ankara in 2006 emphasizing its role of an Islamic representatives of the Palestinians based on the results of the democratic elections.[201]

Importantly, the political Islam promoted by the Muslim Brotherhood and its branches represent Turkey's direct foreign links to political Islam movements. During 2011, they emerged as potential future leaders of those countries where the authoritarian regimes dominated before 2011. The revolutionary character of the multinational Muslim Brotherhood movement endeavoured to topple the secular authoritarian regimes in the region and establish an Islamic governance.[202] Turkey's support of those movements throughout the region plays a part of a plan that, in case of a successful replacement of authoritarian regimes with Muslim Brotherhood affiliated governments, Turkey could appear as the leader of the multinational Islamist political movement. Additionally, Ankara could replace small Qatar, the original leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, and provide an exponentially higher material and ideological

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[198] ALMASSIAN, K. *The Rise and Fall of Neo-Ottomanism in Syria.* [online]. Journal of Eurasian Affairs. Vol. 3. No.1. 2014. [cit. 2018-20-07]. Available at: http://www.eurasianaffairs.net/the-rise-and-fall-of-neo-ottomanism-in-syria/
[199] Ibid.
[200] YAVUZ, H. *Social and Intellectual Origins of Neo-Ottomanism: Searching for a Post-National Vision.* [online]. Die Welt des Islams. University of Utah. Vol. 56. No.3-4. Pp. 438-465. 2016. [cit. 2018-17-06]. Available at: https://utah.pure.elsevier.com/en/publications/social-and-intellectual-origins-of-neo-ottomanism-searching-for-a. P.459-460
[201] ARAS, B. *The Davutoğlu Era in Turkish Foreign Policy*. [online]. Insight Turkey. Vol. 11, No.3., 2009. P. 127-142. [cit. 2018-07-07]. Available at https://www.jstor.org/stable/26331107?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents. p.135
[202] KORYBKO, A. *The global blueprint for neo-Ottomanism: Soft Power*. [online]. Katehon. 2017. [cit. 2018-19-07]. Available at: http://katehon.com/article/global-blueprint-neo-ottomanism-soft-power-part-i

support for the movement throughout the region. Contrary to Qatar, Turkey and its predecessor the Ottoman Empire possessed century-long experience of the governance of the whole region. Contrary to theocratic and undemocratic Saudi Arabia that considers Muslim Brotherhood as an enemy, the democratic and moderate Turkey as a US ally could have played an important role in controlling the affiliated relatively democratic Sunni Islamist governments. Those allies might have been used in the future as an efficient bulwark against raising geopolitical aspirations against Shia Iran and its raising role in Iraq, Syria and Lebanon.[203]

In case of Tunisia, al-Nahda movement originating from the Muslim Brotherhood, proclaimed that the Justice and Development party (AKP) represents a model of an Islamic party to follow in Tunisia.[204] Contrary to Turkey where Islam-oriented parties could exist unless they did not cross certain secularist boundaries, political Islam in Tunisia experienced a thorough repression and an inexistent possibility to freely develop into a moderate and established political party. Despite the fundamental differences between political Islam in Turkey and in Tunisia, the affinity with the Turkish governing party and the strongest opposition that toppled Ben Ali's authoritarian regime were maintained during the Arab Spring. The unique case of AKP, that have not turned the country into a new caliphate during its decade-long popular leadership, is far away from being a suitable and successful model example for other Islamist movement as the Turkish example could not be fully exported to other countries due to its uniqueness.[205]

As a part of the interventions to domestic politics of the revolution affected countries, Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan called Egypt's President Housni Mubarak to step down in February 2011 as a result of a massive popular uprising.[206] Ankara's plans counted with the future fundamental role of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt successfully replacing Mubarak's regime. This aspiration resulted in intensified relations between the movement and AKP. In July 2013, the Turkish foreign policy plan failed as Morsi's government was ousted by the Egyptian army. Ankara presented the most vocal opposition to the new secular Egypt's regime and openly calling it a military coup toppling democratically elected President Morsi. Due to the coup and support of banned Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, Cairo and Ankara broke mutual

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[203] Ibid.
[204] TORELLI, S. *The "AKP Model" and Tunisia's al-Nahda: from Convergence to Competition,* [online]. Insight Turkey, vol. 14, no. 3, 2012. 2012. [cit. 2018-19-07]. Available at: http://go.galegroup.com/ps/anonymous?id=GALE%7CA299062078&sid=googleScholar&v=2.1&it=r&linkaccess=abs&issn =1302177X&p=AONE&sw=w
[205] YAKIŞ, Y. *Turkey after the Arab Spring: Policy Dilemmas.* [online]. Middle East Policy Council. Vol. 21. No. 1. 2013. [cit. 2018-27-07]. Available at: https://www.mepc.org/turkey-after-arab-spring-policy-dilemmas
[206] PARKINSON, J. *Turkey: Mubarak Should Leave Now.* [online]. The Wall Street Journal. 2011. [cit. 2018-20-07]. Available at: https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052748703960804576119811353451704

relationship causing another partial diplomatic isolation for Erdoğan in the region.[207] Nevertheless, the geopolitical realities in the region following the establishment of Egypt's military government persuaded Turkish leaders to reconsider its policy and normalize the relations with Egypt so that Ankara does not ostentatiously block further and pragmatic dialog. Egypt represents a strategic player in the region and the Saudi's declaration of the Muslim brotherhood a terrorist organization contributed to a revised Erdoğan's perception of Egypt in order to balance the rising challenges from the Muslim world and to keep some influence in Egypt and also on the Muslim Brotherhood. In other words, as Muslim Brotherhood lost its dominant role in Egypt, realpolitik and pragmatic view of the instable relations in the region overcame a normative ideological stance of the Turkish foreign policy. Turkey thus accepted the new Egypt's government but remained open to further cooperation with the Muslim Brotherhood.[208]

To summarize, the Muslim Brotherhood and its affiliates represented a possibility of opening the Muslim/Arab world to Turkey via its neo-Ottoman doctrine of historical and religious connections. Especially the instable international environment contributed to a de-facto abandonment of most of the soft power content of AKP's neo-Ottomanism dominant during the 2000's. Turkish government turned its back to the authoritarian regimes with whom it maintained solid relations in general. Because of the dynamics of the first stages of the Arab Spring, Turkey decided to favour emerging Islamist movements and support them directly or indirectly. Ankara planned that those movement could have taken over the governments and consequently become allies with Turkey from the pragmatic political side but also from the ideological and religious point of view. The geopolitical realities showed that repeated changeovers of Turkish orientation and the impact of unpredictable evolution of the instable situation hampered Turkey's 2000's aspiration to play a peaceful regional power.

3.2. Turkish domestic dynamics

Turkey, unlike Egypt or Syria, did not experienced a long period of authoritarian leadership oppressing all sorts of opposition, including liberal or political Islamist movements. Contrary to most of the countries in the region, Turkey emphasized the tradition of free elections

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[207] YAKIŞ, Y. *Turkey after the Arab Spring: Policy Dilemmas.* [online]. Middle East Policy Council. Vol. 21. No. 1. 2013. [cit. 2018-27-07]. Available at: https://www.mepc.org/turkey-after-arab-spring-policy-dilemmas
[208] DÜZGIT, S. *The Seesaw Friendship Between Turkey's AKP and Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood.* [online]. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. 2014. [cit. 2018-19-07]. Available at: http://carnegieendowment.org/2014/07/24/seesaw-friendship-between-turkey-s-akp-and-egypt-s-muslim-brotherhood-pub-56243

and democracy since the end of the Second World War that was only interrupted by military coups that did not prevent the restoration of the democratic regime. Therefore, similar reasons for the massive protest movement compared to Egypt, Tunisia or Syria were not shared.[209] As a result, the peaceful protests in Istanbul's Gezi Park in 2013 preventing a construction of a controversial shopping mall did not contribute to another country affected by the revolution wave. The crucial aspect of AKP's impact is the miserable political role of the Turkish army is the constant degradation of its role by a set of judiciary reforms. Furthermore, the Turkish military faced several pro-government's trials that literally caused the subordinate role of the once dominant Turkish army that would probably have supressed the 2013 protests. The diminishing political significance of the Turkish army, the second biggest in NATO, naturally favours Erdoğan and the reconsideration of the secular national identity towards higher acceptance of the religious character of the society. From a personal point of view, Erdoğan himself experienced the political power of the military elite aimed at eliminating Islamist political parties in the 1990's.[210]

The Kurdish issue and the spread of Daesh (ISIS) came to the spotlight in 2015 and 2016. Contrary to the Kemalist governments, AKP achieved to partially address the Kurdish population and present their party as an Islam-based and in favour of reforms promoting the Kurdish emancipation. Erdoğan's abandonment of direct hostility towards the Kurdish population from 2002 until 2015 brought him a crucial part of mostly conservative electorate helping him to form majority governments until 2015.[211] The general elections in June 2015 experienced a significant flow of Kurdish voters from AKP to pro-Kurdish People's Democratic Party (HDP - Halkların Demokratik Partisi) that endangered Erdoğan's vision of Muslim unity of Kurds and Turks.[212] The elections also caused a hung parliament resulting in a political instability and Erdoğan's need to seek again a majority government that was achieved after a period of instability and massive media campaign in the snap elections in November 2015.[213] Moreover, the protests following Kurdish allegations that the Turkish military secretly collaborated with Daesh against Kobane's Kurds caused another conflict between the Turkish

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[209] BERTRAND, G. *Turkish Diplomacy since 2003: Transition from Realpolitik to a Liberal Foreign Policy?* [online]. Perspectives, Vol. 21, No. 2, 2013, pp. 63-82. [cit. 2018-19-06]. Available at http://www.jstor.org/stable/24624546, p.77
[210] YAKIŞ, Y. *Turkey after the Arab Spring: Policy Dilemmas.* [online]. Middle East Policy Council. Vol. 21. No. 1. 2013. [cit. 2018-27-07]. Available at: https://www.mepc.org/turkey-after-arab-spring-policy-dilemmas
[211] Ibid.
[212] EDELMAN, E, CORNELL, S. *Turkey Transformed: The Origins and Evolution of Authoritarianism and Islamization Under the AKP.* [online]. Bipartisan Policy Center. P. 99. 2015. [cit. 2018-09-07]. Available at: https://bipartisanpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/BPC-Turkey-Transformed.pdf
[213] Middle East Eye. Why did most of Turkey's lost pro-Kurdish votes go to ruling AK party? [online]. 2015. [cit. 2018-29-06]. Available at: http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/why-did-most-turkey-s-lost-pro-kurdish-votes-go-ruling-ak-party-1279486418

military and Kurdish insurgent groups. In summer 2015 the Turkish government decided to launch a military operation against the Kurdish insurgent groups in the south-east of the country specifically against PKK bases in the bordering Kurdish regions in Syria and Iraq. The escalation of conflict was accelerated by an entire full-scale riot of PKK against the Turkish authorities. Reciprocally, the Turkish forces targeted PKK's military bases and oppressed the opposition HDP being accused of cooperating with terrorist group PKK. Contrary to former peaceful attempts to solve the Kurdish issue in a peaceful and diplomatic manner, the military action resulting in almost 4 000 casualties terminated AKP's attempts to restore Turkish-Kurdish relations as a part of its neo-Ottoman policy reuniting differing groups under the Muslim unification features.[214]

Another turning event in Turkey is represented by a significant degradation of the role of the Turkish military and raising culmination of power in AKP's less and less democratic governance. On July 15, a failed military coup shocked the whole country. After two decades of gradual loss of its power, part of the Turkish military again attempted to conduct a coup and change the political and security situation in the country. However, being the first military coup attempt in the 21st century, the Turkish society itself dramatically changed including the perception of the army's role. Erdoğan's pro-Islamist leadership stressing the democratic and market-oriented reforms that, at the first phases aimed at subsequent EU membership, represented the roots of the overwhelming disagreement with the coup that was described as an attack on Turkish democracy and AKP as the governing party. The society unification and condemnation of the coup showed Erdoğan another level of his support even from the opposition camp. Under the state of emergency, AKP government took over the control of the Turkish army, dismissed and imprisoned thousands of civil servants and journalists as a part of brutal retaliatory measures. Interestingly, the government's narrative also highlighted traditional Kemalist and nationalistic narrative with the reference to the historical experience of the nation's fight against oppression including popular resistance after the First World War similar to the one experienced during the July 15 coup.[215] The state leaned quickly towards one-man ruled based on recent consolidation of power and limited the political capabilities of the military, opposition liberal and Kemalist parties, media or the Gülen movement. As a potential leader of the Muslim world and the Middle East, Erdoğan lost last barriers for his plan of a

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[214] International Crisis Group. Turkey's PKK Conflict: The Rising Toll. [online]. [cit. 2018-23-07]. Available at: http://www.crisisgroup.be/interactives/turkey/
[215] DANFORTH, N. Turkey's New Maps Are Reclaiming the Ottoman Empire. [online]. Foreign Policy. 2016. [cit. 2018-20-07]. Available at: https://foreignpolicy.com/2016/10/23/turkeys-religious-nationalists-want-ottoman-borders-iraq-erdogan/

strong presidential system under his strong leadership.[216] His desire was confirmed in the 2017 referendum changing the Constitution that paved the way to the presidential system replacing traditional parliamentary democracy. Despite a significant opposition and fears that AKP aspires to give all the power to one man and disassemble the democratic institutions in Turkey, Erdoğan used his power, pressure on media and political rivals and massively mobilised his supports based mostly in conservative, religious and rural areas or Anatolian towns. [217] Regarding the foreign policy agenda, AKP claimed that Turkey deems the presidential system essential for appropriate responses to the international challenges so that Ankara can represent an important actor in the unstable region. A strong centralised leadership under one-man's rule has been repeatedly criticised by the pejorative comparison of Erdoğan to a new Sultan, an autocratic leader of the Muslim world.[218] Öniş and Kutlay elaborate the transforming AKP governance with the change of the third victory after 2011 elections when AKP contributed to a raising polarisation of the society and the distribution of power was becoming more unbalanced in favour of Erdoğan's rule. After 2011, the following fourth AKP's term is characterised as an illiberal democratic system with various authoritarian features.[219]

The transformation of Turkish politics and society following the end of the parliamentary system was confirmed by June 2018 parliamentary and presidential elections enabling Erdoğan to become the first President of the "new Turkish Republic" extending his leadership lasting from 2003 potentially until 2029.[220] The unquestionable role or Erdoğan will definitely create a new dimension of the neo-Ottoman policy as the current President possesses stronger powers and the direct influence on the parliament that, in the new political system, lacks the post of the Prime Minister that enables the President to be the key driver of the foreign policy agenda. There is a question is whether his upcoming leadership will bring required unpopular economic reforms and the restoration of the relations with its neighbours or whether he will continuously dissolve the Turkish democracy and impose a new version of neo-

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[216] EDELMAN, E, CORNELL, S. *Turkey Transformed: The Origins and Evolution of Authoritarianism and Islamization Under the AKP.* [online]. Bipartisan Policy Center. P. 99. 2015. [cit. 2018-09-07]. Available at: https://bipartisanpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/BPC-Turkey-Transformed.pdf

[217] BREMMER, *I. These 5 Facts Explain What Happens Next After Turkey's Referendum.* [online]. The Time. 2017. [cit. 2018-20-07]. Available at http://time.com/4744934/turkey-referendum-tayyip-recep-erdogan/

[218] HAVAOGLU, S. *Sultan Who Raged at the West Becomes a Hero in Erdogan's Turkey.* [online]. The Bloomberg. 2018. [cit. 2018-22-07]. Available at: https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-03-19/sultan-who-raged-at-the-west-becomes-a-hero-in-erdogan-s-turkey

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[220] KURUBAS, S. *What does the presidential system bring to Turkey?* [online]. TRT World. 2018. [cit. 2018-20-06]. Available at: https://www.trtworld.com/turkey/what-does-the-presidential-system-bring-to-turkey--17682

Ottomanism that will ignore the role of soft power and prefer direct intervention in other states affairs (be it neo-Ottomanism 3.0.).

3.3. Future and critique of the neo-Ottomanism

To put an example when the revised neo-Ottomanist foreign policy partially failed to tackle with the unprecedented Arab uprisings in the whole region is the direct military intervention to Syria. After the failure of the opposition Islamist groups to topple once-friendly regime of Assad and ongoing atrocities of the civil war, Turkey launched already mentioned military intervention to Syria called Operation Euphrates Shield in accordance with the Free Syrian Army.[221]

Turkey created a de-facto protectorate in Afrin region under Ankara's control creating a buffer zone and a geostrategic position vis-à-vis the Syrian civil war and the Kurdish autonomous aspirations in Syria's Rojava region. Turkey avoided the creation of a broad autonomous Kurdish region in Northern Syria as Ankara perceive Syrian Kurdish forces direct affiliates of PKK. In that sense, Turkish military aspires to control the whole neighbouring region in Syria in order to avoid the creation of the Kurdish autonomous region. The Kurdish issue became again a vital problem for the Turkish security. Together with the Kemalist governments in the past, the need to fight against Kurdish insurgency and terrorists' movements and pursue direct military operations contradict the ideological vision of Davutoğlu's neo-Ottomanist foreign policy. Creating a buffer zone and geopolitical important leverage in Turkish Cyprus, Erdoğan is following a similar pattern of direct military intervention in the surrounding areas of Turkey.

In a general sense, AKP's neo-Ottomanism experienced dramatic redesign due to the events following the outbreak of the Arab Spring. Referring to the changing environment, the problems with the identification of the neo-Ottomanism also emerged as there has not been any generally acknowledged definition of the concept or whether it can even apply to the Turkish foreign policy. AKP's leader even themselves denied that their government was pursuing a neo-Ottoman policy as they envisaged the term in a pejorative meaning. For instance, during his visit to Bosnia in 2011, former Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu himself denied such a description claiming "*I am not a neo-Ottoman. Actually, there is no such policy. We have a*

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[221] Global Security. [online]. *Operation Euphrates Shield*. [cit. 2018-11-07]. Available at: https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/syria-euphrates-shield.htm

common history and cultural depth with the Balkan countries, which nobody can deny. We cannot act as if the Ottomans never existed in this region"[222] emphasizing the soft power aspects of the neo-Ottomanism as the key driver of the foreign policy.

Neo-Ottomanism, soft power and zero-problems policy showed its limits vis-à-vis the significantly altered regional environment and the instability. The foreign policy promoted by Ahmet Davutoğlu failed to adequately respond to the quickly changing dynamics of the neighbourhood especially regarding the relations with Damascus where excellent multidimensional relations completely changed to an advisory and aggressive narrative within less than 12 months. In other words, neo-Ottomanism ought to find tolls and measures that could deal with the unfriendly relations so that the concept is also applicable in revolutionary times and war-torn regimes. Furthermore, taking into account the constructivist approach and the connection between domestic and foreign policies, neo-Ottomanism appears as a successful foreign policy doctrine based on harmonised environment on domestic level. The success of Davutoğlu's doctrine reflected the favourable political and societal situation in 2000's in Turkey. AKP envisaged a reformist and liberal change to an instable Turkey struggling with economic crisis. The positive narrative, call for democracy and building friendly and peaceful relations with the neighbours contributed to parallel increase of the efficiency of foreign policy doctrine. The mutual connection between domestic and external aspects reflects the deep polarization of Turkish society, decreasing level of democracy and subsequent difficulties and failures of AKP's neo-Ottoman foreign policy in the recent years.

Davutoğlu's Strategic Depth excluded any military or direct political control of the areas under former tutelage of the Ottoman Empire. However, critics and opposition proclaim that recent activities of Turkey in Syrian and Iraqi's Kurdistan encompass imperial and aggressive tone in order to control once held territories. The reference to the irredentist reclaiming of the Ottoman held territories reflect the rising Turkish nationalism.[223] Contrary to the ideological neo-Ottomanist roots of soft power and liberal approach towards it neighbours, Ankara's military activities in Iraq and Syria including the recent control over Afrin in 2018 confirms the raising concerns. Moreover, the irredentist cartography promoted by several politicians and media (ad Annex 1) confirm that this current in Turkish politics and society is still existing. Praising for a "Greater Turkey" having a larger role in the region and a direct control of the

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Muslim world via direct or indirect territorial control of the neighbouring countries. The particular map is based on the nationalist and well-known concept of greater territorial control of the states (greater Albania, Serbia, Bulgaria or Greece), precisely in this case Turkey controlling Northern Syria and Iraq, parts of Greece or south of Bulgaria.[224] Ankara has also started to use the leverage on the Turkic (or Turkmen) minorities in Syria and Iraq as a counterbalance to Assad's regime and PKK's troops following the same pattern as Turkey experienced with supporting Turkish minorities in Greece and Cyprus during the 20th century disputes.[225] As a result, compared to secular nationalism or neo-Ottoman liberalism and openness to religious unification, Turkey's policy towards those disputed areas in the Middle East witnessed a mixture of irredentist nationalism in the recent years together with the neo-Ottoman call for Muslim unity specified with the support of befriended Sunni communities such as the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. Amid the fights over Mosul controlled by Daesh in 2016, President Erdoğan defended Turkish military activities in Northern Iraq claiming that the Turkish troops aim at the protection of "*...our Sunni Arab brothers, our Turkmen brothers.*"[226] As far as the domestic audience is concerned, AKP defends those military actions against PKK a part of countering crucial security threats and protecting Turkish national interests. This approach proves that the Kurdish issue and PKK again overshadows Davutoğlu's soft power neo-Ottomanism in the 2000's.

The so-called Pax Ottomanica naturally experienced an array or criticisms, including the significant role of Islam. As already mentioned, Yavuz's definition of AKP's foreign policy into three stages labels the second phase (2011-2014) as an Islamist one stressing the need to support Islamist and befriended movement attempting to topple secular authoritarian regimes.[227] Czajka and Wastnidge assess the recent neo-Ottomanism in a highly critical way. They consider AKP's neo-Ottomanism only as a façade of a broader Islamist regional aspiration adding that "*…despite AKP attempts to positively value neo-Ottomanism a particular kind of neo-Ottomanism, what emerges is a continuation of authoritarianism and a lack of liberal, multicultural and democratic principles that characterised the Ottoman empire for much of its history.*"[228] Another criticism of the recent Turkish foreign policy labelled the recent

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[224] Ibid.
[225] Ibid.
[226] Middle East Eye. Ankara joins air raids on Mosul as Iraqis protest Turkish role. [online]. 2016. [cit. 2018-20-07]. Available at: http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/ankara-joins-air-operation-take-mosul-iraqis-protest-against-turkish-role-1106417056
[227] YAVUZ, H. *Social and Intellectual Origins of Neo-Ottomanism: Searching for a Post-National Vision.* [online]. Die Welt des Islams. University of Utah. Vol. 56. No.3-4. Pp. 438-465. 2016. [cit. 2018-17-06]. Available at: https://utah.pure.elsevier.com/en/publications/social-and-intellectual-origins-of-neo-ottomanism-searching-for-a. P.459-460
[228] CZAJKA, A. WASTNIDGE, E. The Centre of World Politics? Neo-Ottomanism in Turkish Foreign and Domestic Politics. [online]. 2016. [cit. 2018-07-07]. Available at

developments and Erdoğan's role as the end of neo-Ottomanism. Erdoğan and Davutoğlu dreamt of bringing back the glance and glory of the Ottoman Empire using the soft power elements. Strategic Depth doctrine foresaw Turkey becoming a regional power on the virtues of the Ottoman empire using the cultural and historical heritage. The assumption failed to tackle the character of the neighbouring countries and the upcoming security and political challenges that brought the US, Russia, China, EU and Iran as the key decision makers in the region.

The aspect is described by aforementioned positive economic outcomes in 2000's and numerous trade agreements with many authoritarian regimes. After the outbreak of the Arab Spring, Erdoğan's virtue of democratic leader of the Muslim world underestimated the consequences of the massive revolution wave in the region and failed in responding to Russian and Iranian influence in Syria. With the weakened role of Assad in Kurdish Rojava, Turkey's demand of Assad's removal paradoxically strengthened the role of Syrian Kurds who gained a significant autonomy in the region and aspire to create an autonomous region like Iraq's Kurdistan which would represent a major security threat to Ankara.[229] The inability of AKP to deny the historically established perception of the Kurdish problem as the most important security threat contributed to the failure of neo-Ottomanism. During the 2000's, AKP's leaders understood the advantages of the new perception of the Kurdish population as a part of the broader Turkish nation unified by a common Islam religion and not based on the nation-state building. Chéreau compares the end of the Ottoman Empire and its Ottomanism with the recent reality of AKP's neo-Ottomanism. Both periods feature similar concentration of power, unrespect of human rights in the society and lacking a thorough commitment and application of the democratic governance that only served as a toll how to embrace the power in the state and overshadow the opposition and its critics.[230]

Last but not least, the Balkans did not experience a massive change of the status-quo thus the aim of the Turkish foreign policy partially turned away from this region. Ahmet Davutoğlu pursued very active and cooperative foreign policy towards the Balkans in the 2000's. Despite lacking the religious or ideological shared connections, Turkey strengthened the economic cooperation with various states including Serbia as its biggest trade partner in the

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https://www.researchgate.net/publication/312147106_Neottomanism_in_Turkish_Foreign_Policy_Through_the_Lenses_of_the_Principal-Agent_Theory. p. 12

[229] Die Welt. *Islam-Ideologe will Frauen das Rauchen verbieten.* [online]. 2017. [cit. 2018-19-06]. Available at: https://www.welt.de/politik/ausland/article167692532/Islam-Ideologe-will-Frauen-das-Rauchen-verbieten.html

[230] CHÉREAU, A. Modern Turkey and neo-ottomanism. [online]. Classe Internationale. 2017. [cit. 2018-20-07]. Available at: https://classe-internationale.com/2017/10/16/modern-turkey-and-neo-ottomanism/

post-Yugoslavia area.[231] Contrary to a multidimensional policy, Erdoğan took advantage of friendly relations with Bosnia for his domestic purposes organizing a massive pre-elections rally in May 2018. The key electorate that helped Erdoğan to win the 2018 elections were the Turks living abroad who gathered in Sarajevo for "sultan's" Erdoğan support.[232] Nevertheless, Turkey failed to continue with its pro-active policy in the Balkans after 2011 and the extensive concentration on the events in the Middle East and ad-hoc pragmatic visits did not contribute to the continuation and further elaboration of neo-Ottomanism in the Balkans. Post-2011 neo-Ottoman policy of AKP did not contribute to creating more friends in the former Ottoman Empire's territory as Syria and post-Morsi Egypt emerged as rival regimes.[233]

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[231] Hürriyet Daily News. [online]. *Turkey signs trade agreement on agriculture with Serbia.*2018. [cit. 2018-24-07]. Available at: http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-signs-trade-agreement-on-agriculture-with-serbia-117049

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[233] YETKIN, M. The end of neo-Ottomanism? [online]. Hürriyet Daily News. 2017. [cit. 2018-22-07]. Available at http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/opinion/murat-yetkin/the-end-of-neo-ottomanism-124861

Conclusion

The thesis analyses how the concept of neo-Ottomanism in Turkish foreign policy is influenced and changed by AKP's governments, especially by the rule of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. The author works with the theory of social constructivism and the importance of the interdependence between domestic and external factors influencing the foreign policy identity. The Turkish foreign policy as other identities relate to a set of predefined conditions including the territorial location, its history, in our case the Ottoman Empire and Kemalist Turkish Republic, or the prevailing religion in the society. Moreover, as the Turkish case also shows, the identity is dependent on fluid and unstable conditions including dramatic shift in domestic politics (landmark elections in 2002 or the transformation to the presidential system) together with external factor such as the outbreak of the Arab Spring. After defining the differences between Kemalism and both periods of neo-Ottomanism, the thesis describes the role of Former Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu, the author of the crucial Strategic Depth doctrine. The IR professor created an ideological and philosophical background of his envisioned foreign policy identity fundamentally different to the at-then prevailing Kemalist, secular and only Western-oriented identity.

The concept of neo-Ottomanism very often serves as a go-to-concept when analysing the recent Turkish foreign policy. At the same time, a unified and acknowledge definition is absent creating confusions for the analysis. The concept of neo-Ottomanism has not been invented by AKP establishment. Already in 1990's after the end of the Cold War, Prime Minister and President Turgut Özal attempted to change the Turkish foreign policy with a more Islamic based and active approach towards its neighbourhood, the so called neo-Ottomanism 1.0. However, in my thesis, I analyse the changing foreign policy identity of neo-Ottomanism 2.0. of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) leadership since the electoral victory in 2002. Compared to Özal, Erdoğan and AKP's leadership significantly reconsidered the foreign policy identity and within several consecutive governments, they succeeded in the transformation of the identity that has been in most of the cases put in practice. Compared to Özal, AKP's more ambitious and successful neo-Ottoman vision enabled AKP to promote and establish their own vision of Turkish domestic and foreign identity.

The implication into reality is based on Ahmet Davutoğlu's Strategic Depth doctrine. According to the ideological background, AKP leadership abandoned the realpolitik of the secular regimes and used various opportunities of Turkey's soft power potential instead of using a passive foreign policy in case of Syria or Iraq or military force in case of Cyprus. The new Turkish paradigm pursued by AKP leadership ameliorated the diplomatic relations and launched a series of economic agreements and cultural cooperation. The neo-Ottomanism created a useful framework enabling Turkey to promote multidimensional policies using its problem-solving potential in the region and the relations with other Islamic countries. AKP did not create a pure contradiction to former Kemalist secular identity and its orientation towards NATO alliance and the EU membership process. Davutoğlu's neo-Ottoman vision created a multidimensional foreign policy encompassing several priorities at the same time, for instance the EU membership, economic cooperation with Iran, restoration of relations with Syria, cultural influence in Bosnia etc.

The thesis concludes that the change of Turkish identity and its foreign policy is closely linked to the personality or Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Since AKP came to power, he represented the driving element of the transformation. Based on the Islamic background of Erdoğan, Davutoğlu or Gül, AKP often used their close Islamic narrative referring to the Ottoman glory. The leaders repeatedly remembered the Turkish nation as the direct heir of the Ottoman Islamic grandeur. The strong articulation of the Ottoman legacy of the Muslim world has been present in the discourse since their electoral victory in 2002. Therefore, the domestic articulation of the Muslim identity and its inseparability with the Ottoman heritage undoubtedly influenced the foreign policy identity especially in the meaning that relations with Muslim countries (notably Turkish neighbours) ought to be improved. Additionally, the importance of the Muslim identity incorporates another aspect that has significantly changed the foreign policy. AKP during the first terms of its governments improved the relations with the Kurdish minority because Islam could serve as a unification tool for the Turkish and Kurdish society. Contrary to the military oppression, AKP governments understood the Kurdish minority as a part of the broad identity connected with the religious legacy like during the Ottoman époque. Additionally, the Islamic narrative and policy preferences enabled Erdoğan to present himself as a future leader of the Muslim world, particularly of those territories under the tutelage of the Ottoman Empire (Syria, Iraq, Bosnia).

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's reimagination of the Ottoman Empire's glory understands Turkey in the central position of a regional power with a soft-power control over other territories. While aspiring for the EU membership during its first terms, AKP used the flexibility of the neo-Ottomanism and improved the relations with Syria, Balkans states, Iran, Iraq or in the Black Sea region and the Palestinian authority while keeping pragmatic security cooperation with Israel. The narrative for the international audience of Turkey's aspirations to be the democratic leader of the Muslim civilization resonated in the Middle East raising Erdoğan's popularity.

In my thesis, I concluded that Erdoğan's and Davutoğlu's attempt to fundamentally and deeply transform the foreign policy identity was partially successful especially due to highly advantageous environment in the 2000's. Nevertheless, as every implied foreign policy construct, neo-Ottomanism 2.0. had to face internal and external realities fundamentally different to those when establishing the neo-Ottoman identity. After a decade of AKP's successful governments, neo-Ottomanism managed by Erdoğan, failed to successfully tackle the unprecedented change of status-quo in the region, the so-called Arab Spring. The external factors such as the civil war in Syria, complicated situation in Iraq or the rivalry with Iran on Syrian soil presented a challenge for a peaceful and soft power neo-Ottomanism foreign policy that was not able to tackle the significant differences in the region. Moreover, Erdoğan supported unsuccessful Islamic attempts to govern in the region, especially in case of Muslim Brotherhood. The political Islamic group has been for a limited time perceived as a Turkish affiliate and toll how to spread friendly and Islamic governments in the region following the success of al-Nahda in Tunisian. The failing strategy and inability of neo-Ottomanism to cope with realpolitik of war-torn region is shown with the direct military intervention in Syria and recent control of Syria's Afrin region. The use of military force resembles more the military supported secular governments rather than a peace-promoting neo-Ottomanism foreign policy.

The domestic problems also showed the limits of the neo-Ottomanism 2.0. identity. Firstly, the raising strong polarisation of the society and the oppression of particular freedoms after the failed military coup created an obstacle of a unified Turkish society. Furthermore, the military operation against PKK activities in south-east of Turkey confirmed that the military and interventionist aspect still partially prevail in Turkish DNA giving the reference to the Cyprus issue military solution in order to protect Turkish national interests.

Despite a significant change of the Turkish foreign policy identity in the last few years, the author of the thesis does not consider the neo-Ottomanist foreign policy identity as a failed

constructivist concept. Neo-Ottomanism 2.0. is definitely suitable for ideal theoretic condition and for a specific period for Turkey in 2000's. Despite the failure in Syria, Egypt or in Kurdish regions and consequent abandonment of constructivist, friendly and soft power neo-Ottomanism, the new realistic, pragmatic and ad-hoc conflict solution approach does not undermine the core of the neo-Ottomanism ideas. Meanwhile, Turkey's domestic identity has not changes as much as the external unstable environment.

The author of the thesis believes that the recent domestic transformation into a presidential system and de iure giving Erdoğan a strong position but not absolute power in the state, a new vision of neo-Ottomanism 3.0., could emerge based on the reflection changing domestic and mostly international situation. In case of a stabilization of the Kurdish issue, Turkey could maintain the positive relations with the Balkans or the Central Asia while being more assertive and pragmatic actor in the Middle East from the position of a strong regional power balancing the interests of Iran, Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Unless the current situation changes, the current concept of neo-Ottomanism identity needs a further redefinition because the theoretical concept partially failed when facing the Middle Eastern reality. However, Erdoğan as a strong leader of the country not limited by the parliament could abandon the concept of the neo-Ottomanist identity. Erdoğan might focus on territorial and political control of parts of the Middle Eastern territories without avoiding the use of military power. Adding a predicted economic crisis, the use of the Kurdish problem as the biggest security challenge for the Turkish state might contribute to a more interventionist and authoritarian role. In other words, under certain circumstances, the future foreign policy identity could encompass features of both neo-Ottomanism and interventionist Kemalism.

Summary

The neo-Ottomanism pursued by the AKP governments significantly changed the Turkish foreign policy identity. Turkey abandoned the secular and passive identity and established a multidimensional set of relations throughout the region with the focus on former Ottoman held territories. The new economic, cultural or political relations enabled Turkey to emerge as a strong regional power during the 2000's while at the same time remaining an important NATO member and a EU-membership candidate. Favourable domestic and external factors contributed to the real transformation of the foreign policy identity that started to significantly emphasize the role of the Islamic religion and the strategic importance of the country as the heir of the Ottoman Empire. Nevertheless, the favourable environment, economic rise and reconciliation with Turkish Kurds remained for a decade until the Arab Spring. The constructivist theory struggled to face raising internal and external challenges of wars, instability and breakup of solid relations with its neighbours. With the ongoing polarisation of Turkish society and worsening relations with the Kurds, Turkey struggles to tackle the international challenges. Erdoğan, who successfully transformed the neo-Ottomanism identity, came short with taking advantage of the regional instability and AKP government often abandons its soft-power foreign policy and does not hesitate to use military forces to promote its national interests. The question remains whether the new political system in Turkey will abandon the neo-Ottomanism 2.0. or with the amelioration of the regional situation, Turkey again can find its neo-Ottoman foreign policy identity that would be able to face geopolitical realities of the region.

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Research design

Neo-Ottomanism in Turkish Foreign Policy and Changes during the Erdogan era

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Academic year: 2015/2016

The end of bipolar superpower rivalry between the West and the East posed a major challenge for Turkish Foreign Policy (TFP). Turkey has been a key ally of the West throughout the Cold War and a key US ally regarding the deterrence of Soviets expansionism, including the desire to control the Straits. Security, military issues, territorial integrity and internal stability were key features for Turkey in a very difficult geostrategic position. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the disintegration of the Soviet Union caused a completely different international environment. In this period, TFP became more active and conducted by its domestic national interests and historical or economic desires. This new approach of TFP is called Neo-Ottomanism referring to a historical ideology of Ottomanism in the late era of the Ottoman Empire (Sahin, 2010). The new political ideology opposes the former dogma of Turkish foreign policy based in the Kemalist features of the Turkish republic that was represented by secular and pro-Western foreign policy that kept Turkey not active in foreign affairs. Nevertheless, the Neo-Ottomanism is presented as a more activist foreign policy in the larger region of Middle East and Europe, mostly on the territory of the former Ottoman Empire. Ankara's new revised foreign policies, values and initiatives played an important role in the region and also vis-à-vis the relations with the West. New security, economic or cultural challenges constituted a change in the thinking of Turkish diplomats and politicians and started to develop more responsive role in the international organizations and increase its leverage. In other words, '*Turkey has responded to this challenge by introducing foreign policies that are considerably more activist and assertive, compared to the past'* (Kirişci, 2009).

The key player in revising TFP is the AKP governing party (JDP – Justice and Development Party) under the rule of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the former Prime Minister and current President of the Turkish republic. In more than a decade, AKP was the dominating party

wining all elections held in Turkey since 2002 and fundamentally transformed Turkish domestic and foreign policy based on conservative-liberal approach and moderate application of Muslim identity to politics.

Consequently, the importance of understanding the Turkish Foreign Policy changes is essential in understanding broader geopolitical events and dynamics, i.e. Turkey and the geopolitical consequences of the Arab spring. Another important feature of Neo-Ottomanist foreign policy is the complexity of Turkey-West relations that underwent various 'ups and downs' including recent issues over the migration crisis, status of democracy in Turkey, recent attempt of military coup or the matter of Turkish membership in the EU.

Research question

This thesis will attempt to answer the following research question:

- How the concept of Neo-Ottomanism in Turkish Foreign Policy is influenced and changed by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and the AKP governments?

Accepting the theory of Neo-Ottomanism that succeeded secularist Kemalist Turkish foreign policy, the thesis will discuss the transformation in Turkish Foreign Policy and current influence of AKP and Erdogan's Presidency.

Hypotheses

Theories of international relations offer numerous theories of how to explain foreign policy of a state. Without preferring only one of the theories, the thesis works with question identity in foreign policy and the interconnection between domestic and external behaviour. This thesis will work with the doctrine of Turkish Foreign policy based on a historical reference to Turkish geopolitical predecessor, the Ottoman Empire. The Kemalist ideology predominated most of the 20th century in Turkey and to some extend alienated the Islamic movement and sympathizers. The AKP accepted government with more active and assertive approach including the acceptance and promotion of Muslim identity of Turkey which included similarities that Islamic movements were promoting in the past. The key antagonism with the Kemalist approach was a strong Kemalist army that was a guardian of a secular republic intervening into Turkish politics on several occasions. Although there was no pure contradiction between Neo-Ottomanism of the 1990's and AKP's Foreign policy, the AKP Islamic party started to transform the proactive TFP / Neo-Ottomanism. The thesis assumes that from a more geopolitical proactive approach towards Turkey's neighbourhoods, Ankara due to AKP's

influence, emphasized the Islamic identity and Turkish moderate Islamic politics that could have incorporated democratic institutions commonly known in the West but broadly absent in the former areas of the Ottoman Empire.

The thesis will attempt to summarize the key features of the Neo-Ottomanism and emphasize the changing dynamics under Erdogan's and AKP governance that had basically defined and conducted Turkey's foreign policy. The milestone for the thesis is 2002 parliamentary victory for AKP that was followed by successions of majority governments lead by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

The author of the thesis accepts Neo-Ottomanism to be (not solely) the leading explanation of changing Turkish foreign policy in the last two decades. Nonetheless the explanation and usage of the doctrine significantly varies and, what is probably the crucial factor for the thesis, has been influenced and redefined in time by the governing AK Party. On one hand, scholars explain that as a vagueness of the theory that cannot explain the complexity of events occurring in the vast area of former Ottoman Empire and with regards to Turkey-West relations. On the other hand, giving example of M. Gullo and his theory of Neo-Ottomanism 2.0 enables to understand changing dynamics of Turkey's relations with the West.

Furthermore, numerous foreign policy decision makers were naturally influenced by domestic and external factors. As Mustafa Sahin mentions, domestic factors may bring direct or indirect implications for Neo-Ottomanism doctrine but they all come under AKP's governments. The key changes could be traced with the attempt to alter the constitution so that Turkey can become a presidential republic with Erdogan in the head or the application of political Islam in everyday politics, The latter offer deep explanation for the understanding of Turkish Foreign policy such as the revision of relations with other Muslim countries and deeper involvement in Middle-Eastern issues and conflicts or more assertive approach towards the EU membership.

To conclude, the thesis works with changes of TFP and the theory of Neo-Ottomanism mentioned above. Within the time of AKP's establishment of the power in Turkey since 2002 electoral victory, TFP underwent a significant changes and Neo-Ottomanism could be less explanatory of current TFP or even absent.

Methodology

Qualitative methods will be used in the thesis. The author will work with primary literature explaining identity politics, main features of recent history of Turkish Foreign policy and various online accessible literatures referring to Neo-Ottomanism doctrine. Last but not

least, the author will attempt to analyse official statements of the Turkish officials as well as Turkish media that offer limited impartiality. The thesis should undercover recent and current dynamics in terms or changes in the concept of Neo-Ottomanism.

The research will be conducted by using chosen assumptions of constructivism as a theory of International relations as well as analysis of existing articles and documents supplemented by historical references and analyses. Moreover the author will use abundant participatory observation of Turkish Foreign Policy and an academic insight of the related topic during the author's semestral exchange in the country's capital.

An overview of various assumptions will be offered as well as analyses of recent dynamics using different resources. Outcomes of the thesis will be supplemented by direct contact with academic workers of Ankara University and a theoretical help with finding hardly accessible resources.

Finally, the analyses, comparison and reflection of literature will attempt to emphasize the basis of changes of the concept of Neo-Ottomanism in Turkish Foreign policy and its relations with other entities.

<u>Expected structure of the thesis</u>

The structure of the thesis reflexes a chronological order of examined topic starting with the first chapter that should analyse and emphasize the main features of Neo-Ottomanism so that the thesis could include the governing AKP changing TFP. The third chapter deals with current changes mostly represented by changing political environment in Turkey, strengthening Erdogan's power and Islamic identity in domestic and foreign policy related to the concept of Neo-Ottomanism. Last but not least I attempt to summarize the redefinition of TFP and current perception of examined concept of Neo-Ottomanism ant its future woth regard to relations with the West and Muslim countries.

Introduction

1. The concept of Neo-Ottomanism after the Cold War
    a. The End of the Cold War
    b. Neo-Ottomanism, Kemalism and secular governments
2. Governing AKP
    a. Changing dynamics after 2002 elections
    b. Political Islam and Turkish Foreign Policy
    c. Changing external relations
3. Recent domestic dynamics of Turkish Foreign Policy

       a. Presidential system

       b. The role of PM Ahmet Davutoglu

   4. Redefined Neo-Ottomanism

       a. Future relations with the West

       b. Relations with Muslim countries after the Arab Uprisings

Conclusion

Bibliography

Taking into account a relative lack of primary literature in all languages but English and insufficient knowledge of Turkish language of the author, the thesis will work with resources written in English language. The main source includes theoretical overviews of Turkish foreign policy, historical case studies and recent analyses and texts regarding the concept of Neo-Ottomanism.

Another factor is the domestic situation in Turkey and limited impartiality of chosen newspaper articles and analyses. Moreover, the official statements may ignore certain dynamics or the acceptance of the concept of Neo-Ottomanism. The thesis attempts to offer an analysis of the changes and try to synchronize numerous resources.

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