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Could Turkey Leave NATO?

The interrelation of Antithetic Narratives

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"The West won the world not by the superiority of its ideas or values or religion [...] but rather by its superiority in applying organized violence. Westerners often forget this fact; non -Westerners never do."

Samuel P. Huntington

Abstract

Within the current epoch, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is challenged more than ever. The axiomatic values established in the post-Cold War era from the Western Liberal block are faced once again with antithetic narratives, reflecting strong elements of authoritarianism and dogmatic positions. This time however, the threat is coming from within. Turkey's stance after the 2016 military coup is steadily developing a rift not only with the European Union, but NATO as well.

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Introduction

The accession of Turkey in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) during 1952 did signal not only a military alliance but also a sincere allusion towards a western-centric approach for the country. The process of cultivating a robust diplomatic bond proved to be particularly complicated, going through a plethora of crises and resolutions that took almost half a century to gradually solidify Turkey as an ally not only to the NATO member states, but also the European Union. This study is directly suggesting that during President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's Justice and Development Party (AKP) rule, the diplomatic relations of Turkey and its western allies have significantly worsened, challenged continuously to an unparalleled level; a stalemate that if prolonged could gradually lead to the secession of Turkey from NATO. It is without a doubt, an epoch that not only Turkey is tasked with the challenge to adapt its stance within the international arena, but for every single actor or group in it as well. The axiomatic values established in the post-Cold War era from the Western Liberal block are faced once again with antithetic narratives, reflecting strong elements of authoritarianism and dogmatic positions. This study considers that what is new within this framework though, is that the internal and external narrative within Turkey are not harmonised, exercising direct pressure upon its relationship with NATO. The contemporary challenges that Turkey is facing are constantly increasing, raising concerns from both sides of this relationship. Additionally, the absence of a clear enemy figure, such as the Soviet Union, that could reinforce stronger elements of unity among the members of the NATO alliance. The principal argument underlined, is that Turkey's loyalty to the alliance should not be taken for granted, regardless of sixty-six years of cooperation.

What is the problem

Recent changes regarding the stance of Turkey towards NATO:

NATO and Turkey are perceived as one of the most significant links of co-operation between the West and the Middle-East. Be that as it may, the projection of the Turkish brand of security in the region does not seem to correspond with the American perception. As Nick Danforth states*: "[…] the US-Turkish alliance was never based on U.S. or Turkish values, Western or otherwise. […] Indeed, since its Cold War origins, the United States alliance with Turkey has been based on shared goals, not shared ideals."* (Danforth, 2015) That particular, yet important parameter is the source of friction amongst the diplomatic relationship of these two members, for a rather prolonged period, reaching its peak right after the attempted military coup against Erdogan during 2016. These settings have greatly impacted the harmonious cooperation of Turkey towards the U.S., the EU and most importantly NATO. Chriss Miller (2016) further explains that: *"For over a year, the Turkish army has been fighting Kurdish insurgents while Turkish-supported rebels in Syria have faced repeated setbacks at the hands of ISIS, Syrian Kurdish forces, and pro-Assad forces."* (Miller, 2016) This puzzle may force Turkey to reconsider its strategic policy of relying on the NATO alliance. That predisposition is becoming increasingly apparent based on its recent position of reconciliation towards Russia (The Diplomat, 2016). For a vast plethora of analysts, this Russo-Turkish relationship is becoming plain, especially after the occurrence of the 2017 constitutional reform which enabled Erdogan to circumvent the democratic checks and balances positioned against him. A political praxis -authoritarian in nature- perceived as a confrontation towards the western allies and the 'democratic dogma' within the international community. Thus, assuming this alliance is probable, the U.S. and European officials must be especially worried regarding Syria, NATO, and the European refugee policy. (Miller, 2016) Leading to the assumption that Turkey's strategic and diplomatic positioning with the West is bound to change radically (Cayhan, 2003).

Research Aim

Turkey has been examined via a multitude of dimensions -economic, strategic, political, social and diplomatic- from a vast number of scholars over the last decades. That also refers towards its relationship with NATO. Despite that though, there has been a limited growth regarding the expansion of relevant bibliography, seeking to examine Turkey's role not only in the region but also within the alliance right after the military coup of 2016. This analysis claims that there is a strong correlation between Turkey's recent fluctuations in democratic values and its stance on security issues within the region. By examining the pre-established position of Turkey via its foreign policy, its internal and external political efforts to democratize, and finally vital geostrategic events that directly oppose NATO's interests, the research gets a step closer in process of clarifying whether Turkey's exit from NATO is feasible or not. This dissertation proposal assumes that Turkey is reflecting patterns of change towards its national security policy.

As it has already been mentioned above, there is a direct aim to facilitate within the context of Turkey's relationship with NATO the various parameters and factors that influence the geopolitical situation of the country, while simultaneously analyse the academic debates that could potentially arise from it. Even though the methodology segment will explain the interrelation of these variables on a more practical and analytical level, it is essential to establish the theoretical framework that this dissertation will take under consideration regarding the steps that will build-up to the primary question. Admittedly, the key objectives of this thesis are to:

- Identify the major factors that exert political pressure upon Turkey's relationship with NATO by analysing the internal and external political situation of the country during Erdogan's rule.

- Provide an analytical exegesis, by examining how the contemporary internal and external political environment of Turkey corresponds to the pre-established narrative that was expressed via the national security policy of the country and its position within the international arena.

- Develop the axiomatic criteria that would be the presupposition towards a schism between the two actors.

This study is not trying to predict or provide a scenario-based exegesis regarding the current events occurring among Turkey and NATO. Instead, it is preferably an attempt to identify via the examination of both actors the key criteria that would illuminate the potential occurrence of such a scenario. The principal hypothesis gravitates mainly around two major themes: [1] the importance of sustaining, altering and projecting a Narrative, and [2] the geostrategic events that would erode the influence of each actor towards each other.

Chapter Outline

This sub-section provides a brief categorization of how the study will unravel and deliver a clarification towards the distinct, yet interrelated nature of each segment. Each chapter is structured in way that it aims to be separate in the procedure of tackling its unique and respective topic. Nevertheless, the eventual goal is to develop a unified product via the analysis and combination of each chapter.

Chapter 1 – Literature Review:

This chapter presents the articles and analyses that heavily impacted the conduct of this study. One of the key aspects was to configure a way of answering the question that this

dissertation has established, without being too restricted within the attempt to prove, or disprove a theoretical framework. Thereby, even though this dissertation clearly recognises that there have been extremely significant contributions in the past towards the framing of these complex issues it will not directly refer to them. The literature review has aided to identify key analyses that could better reflect the contemporary issues examined in this study. What became evident, is that the significant volume of academic literature has been examining each actor respectively but has never entertained the thought of Turkey leaving NATO. That is mainly resonated on the continuous emergence of events and a great level of instability within the region that Turkey is located, directly influencing its stance. These points will be united under the attempt to express them via a narrative-centric approach.

Chapter 2 –Methodology:

This segment describes the chosen approach in this study taking into consideration the literature review. It also entails three subsections that aim to explain the analytical aspects that will follow in chapter 3,4 & 5. Data Collection illustrates the method by which this study gathered information, and on what criteria that was based on. The limitations of this study explain the various issues that occurred during the data collection progress that influenced and formulated the problems that could not be overpassed. There is also the aim to establish the chronological framework that this analysis will focus on, suggesting that regardless of the more technical difficulties in the process of examining Turkey, the most challenging aspect was establishing a scope, which tried to grasp as much as it could without however deviating from the issue at hand. Moreover, data analysis aims to accurately explain how the information received and analysed, directed this dissertation towards the understanding that there had to be at least three significant variables that had to be categorized and examined for

the criteria to correspond in a potential succession of Turkey. It also emphasizes and explains that content analysis is mainly focused on Turkey and considers that those criteria are primarily reflective of Turkey's actions or decisions within the international arena.

Chapter 3: Historical Overview of Foreign Policy.

This section is seeking to establish the necessary foundations regarding an exegesis of the current geopolitical situation within the country. In fact, delving from the Attaturkian dogma of national security, this part of the dissertation is focused upon identifying the major historical events that shaped and materialised the current foreign policy that Turkey has adapted to the region, but it will be closely tied to the historical development of its relationship with NATO over time and its overall effectiveness. This segment will analyse the various positions taken from Turkey within the region. Mustafa Kemal Ataturk's vision of national security policy of 'peace at home, peace in the world' has become more relevant than ever. To position Turkey's current diplomatic and strategic relationship with NATO, it is deemed important to elaborate on the recent actions the country has made to solidify its position within the international system and the region, but more importantly to assess how effective it has been. What is crucial for this chapter is to identify the key principles set in place from the AKP administration. Therefore, the major events that have characterized Turkey's foreign security policy will be assessed while going through the official stances of Turkey. This step will thematically lead towards the internal political aspects of Turkey correlating to the current narrative chosen by the government.

Chapter 4: The compatibility of Narrative among NATO & Turkey

This section aims to explain as to why Turkey's zero problem policy does not correspond to the phenomena occurring around its borders. It is therefore fundamental to provide precise definitions as to what Narrative means, and how this analysis will deploy it to support the argument that there is a gradual shift of narratives among the two political entities. Delving into the domestic affairs of the country, it becomes evident that democracy plays a vital role in the transformation of every policy. This segment isolates democracy as one of the most principal factors correlated with the political narrative of the state since it is one of the most robust universal values that is identified upon its western allies but also it is fundamental to the methodological principles that Turkey has sought to materialise into policy. The first step is to determine where is the country standing by examining the following topics: [A] Turkey after the coup and the impact it had upon its democracy & [B] Why the EU has proven to be a fundamental factor concerning Turkey's recent democratization process. These are two issues that will be helpful in the attempt at identifying Turkey's democratic narrative, making it easier to examine it in contrast to the current NATO narrative. Finally, going-over the apparent contradiction of the two narratives, an exegesis is provided of the negative implications and to which extent they are bound to occur if the situation worsens.

Chapter 5: Key geostrategic factors – cases

Having explained and supported the viewpoint that the political interest and visions of both actors are irreversibly changing, the third segment will elaborate on the geostrategic importance of Turkey to NATO and vice versa. Nevertheless, that explanation derives from the principle hypothesis regarding the contemporary situation of the country. That naturally will also examine the various variables that currently influence the structural aspects of the current relationship. Even though the dissertation does not seek to deviate from the dominant

theme of Turkey leaving NATO, it most definitely must portray via some case studies (and most essential variables) the contributing factors that could potentially lead towards this phenomenon. On a more practical note, this dissertation does not suggest that Turkey would leave on the clash of narratives alone, however, the compatibility of a conventional narrative is not that far from a common strategic goal. The further these two are, the further the goal. As it was mentioned before, in the Cold War the prevailing narrative was not precisely democracy and liberalism but unity against a common enemy. Now things have changed. Turkey's strongest concern: a concern that has been raised quite a few times is the Kurdish situation, something that has escalated rapidly since the recent events in Syria. NATO's strategic goal, on the other hand, does not seem to entail the Kurdish issue on the top of the agenda. Thus, this is an examination of cases that are deemed to be directly relevant to the relationship between the two actors in the current period. The increased fluctuation of Turkey's stance to support Russian goals in the region has directly opposed their American counterparts within NATO. At this day and time, we can observe only a small fraction of this escalation. Nevertheless, it is continuously increasing and solidifying, making it a strategic concern that NATO will not be able to ignore.

Chapter 6: Conclusion – Final Remarks

This segment will reflect upon the overall outcome of this study. It will analytically summarize the key points that should be drawn from each chapter and assess what is the contemporary status of the relationship among NATO and Turkey. Finally, it will provide the personal estimation of this analysis regarding the question at hand: Could Turkey leave NATO?

Chapter 1 - Literature Review – Theoretical Framework

Delving with this issue and constructing a sound argumentation on whether Turkey could leave NATO or not, the chronological limitations of this review are mainly limited after the rise of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's Justice and Development Party (AKP). It must be noted that literature directly examining this question is extremely limited and has started to emerge mainly within 2017. Arguably, it would not be inaccurate to state that much of research on this topic before 2016 was either neglected on the basis that it was irrational even to consider such a schism among the two actors, or recent events has not occurred to provide a solid ground of argumentation. Additionally, this analysis cannot emphasize enough that the potential exit of Turkey from the alliance, is not a closed-ended question. The focus is directed towards the axiomatic development of criteria, confirming whether they are currently satisfied or not, and pointing out that together would pose a 'net-effect' triggering Turkey's exodus. More specific variables of the implemented analysis will be provided in the methodology section.

Proceeding with Joshua W. Walker's overview of Turkey's future development within the international system, it is stated that: *"In both official and academic debates, the future is often expected to parallel the recent past. Potential discontinuities are dismissed as implausible, information that conflicts with prevailing mindsets or policy preferences is unseen or viewed as anomalous, pressure for consensus drives out unique insights, and a fear of being 'wrong' discourages risk-taking and innovative analysis."* (Walker, 2011) This specific text has been the basis for this dissertation, opposing argumentation claiming that Turkey's exit from NATO should not be perceived as 'non-realistic,' or politically irrational. As it was mentioned in the introduction, both actors share more than sixty years of diplomatic

and military cooperation, but that does not automatically signify the continuity of this alliance.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation has historically been the source of debate within a vast range of different academic disciplines. In fact, the scholarly literature examining its multi-faceted dimensions has accumulated to such volumes that it has become particularly challenging to identify what position, theoretical framework or worldview in political science better captures the complexity of the organization. To a lesser extent, that also applies to the case study of Turkey. On the contrary, though, there has been a somewhat limited examination regarding the current interrelation of Turkey and NATO. More specifically, the impact of the events that have followed the 2016 military coup has not yet been incorporated thoroughly into the academic literature. However, before delving into the review of this study, it is essential to examine the pre-existing literature on both actors.

NATO

Starting with NATO, Rebecca R. Moore within her examination 'Europe "Whole and Free": NATO's Political Mission for the 21st Century' provides a particularly thorough analysis regarding the historical development of the organization and its role within the international system. Moore places emphasis on the gradual development of the alliance since the ending of the Cold-War, since she believes it is the most crucial point of transition both in the narrative but in policy making as well. The conceptualization of Liberal ideology via the spread of democratization was the basis for NATO's new narrative (Moore, 2003) After all; the world was freed from the bipolar structure of hegemonies, enabling it to embrace liberalism as the new 'mantra' within the international system. Arguably, till that point, the predominant lenses used within the academia to assess NATO's purpose within the international system was heavily correlated with realism and its variant versions. As it is

evident by now, the principal agents that are under examination within this analysis, are profoundly perceived within a state-centric system. However, after the end of the Cold-War. The sustenance of realism as a mindset was portrayed as archaic and outdated towards the rapid change of events within the international scene. (Waltz K. N., 2000) Realism is blamed for ignoring the systemic values set in place within the international arena after the end of the Cold War. (Waltz K. , 1979)Undoubtedly, the celebration of liberalism and institutionalism over the last two decades was rational –to a certain extent- after the end of the Cold War. Opposing the Westphalian mindset that realism offered, many joined their voices to support that the backbone of NATO's new rhetoric should be co-aligned to the prevalence of democratic values. That transitional epoch could be described as a rather optimistic phase for the new role of NATO: *"The future can be shaped if there is a common vision, the means, and the solidarity to implement it."* (Solana, 1999) Scholars such as Dan Reiter extended this argumentation claiming that NATO itself should be perceived as a tool of democratization, that was a proactive attempt to solidify the dominant narrative of the west, reaffirming that now that the Soviet Union has fallen, allies should unify underneath one banner; democracy. (Reiter, 2006) Moore however, considers those critiques not entirely accurate since they were heavily based on the policies of enlargement put forth by the Bill Clinton Administration. Eventually, regardless to which extent the pre-dominant ideologies such as realism, constructivism or liberalism apply to NATO's case, there is a general admittance that the organization, to justify its presence beyond the fall of the Soviets must re-adapt its narrative. As it will be seen in the following parts, the dominant aspect of this newly found narrative could be identified as a democracy. The common observation is a cornerstone for this research as well since it arguably places NATO's relationship with each of its members into an axiomatic context of comparison. The more lenient towards democracy a member-state is,

the more approachable and negotiable are the common goals established among them. That is a principle that could also be applied in Turkey.

 Turkey

While approaching Turkey, there are three distinct drivers in the country's development that led to its current state. The first two drivers can be observed via David Fromkin's thesis 'A Peace to end all Peace: The fall of the Ottoman Empire and the creation of the modern Middle East' which elaborates on the establishment of a new constitution from Mustafa Kemal Ataturk. That is a particularly important period for the country since the establishment of the new constitution, was also associated with Atatürk's vision of developing a foreign and domestic policy that is equally correspondent towards each other. The second variable seems to have also risen in this period, is the dichotomy of the society among seculars and Islamist ottomans. A division that shadows Atatürk's legacy till this very day (Fromkin, 2009). Bernard Lewi's work ', The Emergence of Modern Turkey,' written in 1968, comes into the literature as an elongation within the historical framework of Turkey and provides an accurate insight of how the Attaturkian dogma was compatible with the western narrative of NATO. Suggesting that Turkey in the given period was perceived as a geographical extension of the alliance that shielded the intrusion of the Soviet Union in the Middle East. That geostrategic perception is, in fact, the third and most significant variable attributed towards the country's role within the alliance. These three drivers seemed perfectly compatible with the structural realism argumentation. The primary justification is that neorealism offers an exegesis adequately by providing a debate, visualizing Turkey within the broader spectrum of the international arena. Specifically, structural-realism enables the opportunity to assess the

country from a state-centric approach within the international arena and the strategic objectives of the country within the current epoch. That initial approach was further enhanced under the premise of combining defensive and offensive realism, to satisfy the purpose of understanding the significant concerns of the Turkish government and its national security policy regarding NATO.

However, as it was noted in the case of NATO in the previous segment, within this period, there is considerable debate regarding which extent realism, can, in fact, offer an accurate depiction of the international system and most importantly clarify the patterns of modern states such as Turkey. Hence, one of the variables that started to be more relevant than before was the commitment to democratic values. The epistemological examination of Turkey's fluctuating foreign policies was now correlated with its attempt to associate its narrative towards a democratic and liberal environment. Both NATO and the EU were actors that played a massive role in this development, especially over the last two decades. Furthermore, one of the most critical observations that William Robert Lynch makes before reaching to these positions is that: *"In conducting a study of contemporary Turkish foreign policy, it rapidly became apparent that the major sources available are rapidly becoming overtaken by events, given the pace of change in Turkish politics."* (CBE, 2017) So that is why realism to this examination would not be fully compatible. On the other hand, the recommended theory should not over-emphasize on the internal aspects of Turkey, since that would not fully grasp the external variables that exercise pressure upon the two actors. Moreover, an argument could be established regarding the appliance of alternative theoretical models that would capture more accurately the recent transition to authoritarianism from the Turkish administration, and how that impacts the diplomatic relations that it shares with NATO. Furthermore, critical security studies could to a certain level explain the transition to authoritarianism that Turkey is currently undergoing with Recep Tayyip Erdogan. After all,

securitization in its very core expresses the need for control (Jones, 2007). That is a pattern observed at this point regarding Erdogan's process to securitize the state, leading to the gradual characterization of authoritarianism. (Foucault, 1979) Still, there was a necessity for this examination to touch upon both external and internal phenomena, since the examination of multiple variables, differing ontologically, had to be included. Then, the scope of the theoretical model used to apprehend the fluidity of this case study had to include a linear approach, while simultaneously being capable of incorporating a more event-based analysis.

Reaching that point, the study will seek to develop a discourse analysis on a narrative based structure. That will be further expanded within the methodological sections (Chapter 2), explaining how it fits better in this case study. Before proceeding to some of the most relevant texts used, there must be an etymological exegesis on the concept of 'narrative infrastructure.' That is the first step towards the logical allocation of events, documents, statements, and policies in an order that they would resemble an understandable sequence of steps that lead towards the exit of Turkey from NATO. Dilek Ulutas Duman, Stuart D Green and Graeme D Larsen explain that the theoretical basis of this model is centered around the viewpoint that 'narrative building blocks,' are analogous pieces of information, which intertwined materialize into a singular algorithmic entity; a narrative. (Dilek Ulutas Duman, 2015) The cell-like structure entails the axiomatic principle that a mega-structure, such as NATO's narrative, via the examination of its composite agents (namely Turkey) can lead to the apprehension of its narrative (NATO's). That means that for the central narrative of NATO, the Turkish side must be equally synchronized. Each 'narrative building block' in this examination equals to different variables that constitute the entirety of the narratives that both actors possess. As it will be explained underneath, the significance of each variable varies, yet in a sequential arrangement, they can be translated as antithetic against each other. Finally, Duman, Green, and Larsen emphasize the fact that; *"the processes of contestation*

are continuous. The narrative infrastructure is hence continuously re-constructed over time. The analysis of narrative infrastructure and the narrative building blocks from which it draws thereby provides potential insights into how competitive strategies are negotiated and enacted." (Dilek Ulutas Duman, 2015)

Turkey's Erratic Foreign Policy

Lynch's monograph on the effectiveness of Turkish Security Policy within the period of 2002 to 2017 has been particularly influential towards this study's first layer of examination. Lynch's overall conclusion is categorically stating that Turkey's security status within the international arena after the coup has deteriorated to a tremendous extent. The diplomatic relations with its western allies, including both the EU and NATO have worsened, while its newly found relationship with Russia is not leaning towards its favour. (CBE, 2017) The observation regarding the ineffectiveness of Turkey's recent foreign policy could be narrowed down mainly to Ahmet Davutoglu's 'zero problems with neighbours' policy. Political rhetoric that has been heavily criticized for its vagueness and over-ambitious scope. Huseyin Bagci's and Caglar Kurc's thesis 'Only Problems: How Turkey can Become an Honest Mediator in the Middle East, again', (Kurc, 2016) directly pointed out that: *"The obsession with obtaining regional power status blinded Turkish policymakers to the ever-shifting realities on the ground and the power play of the international actors in the Middle East. Turkish policymakers, departing from the Neo-Ottoman approach, believed Turkish leadership could shape the Middle East. […] Unfortunately, Turkey has not refrained from attempting to shape the Middle East, although it was ill-prepared for becoming involved in Middle East politics. In the end, Turkey was forced to make tactical decisions that defined its policies and defused its influence in the region."*. Bagci and Kurc explained this misplaced attempt to

express influence within the region was presented as a reflection of the internal political scene. Explicitly, that point is supported strongly by all western-centric sources, which also tend to narrow it down to the democratic variables of the country. As it will be explained in the methodology section, the European Commission's progress reports on Turkey's accession negotiations, have established the commitment to democratic values as one of the most significant criteria in this process.

Corrosion of Democratic values

Ian Lesser's examination of the Western-Turkish relations after the coup, re-affirms Lynch's view, that Turkey is indeed starting to portray strong elements of instability. Erratic foreign policy over the last decade though is not the only contributing factor according to Lesser, who in alignment with the European Commission's progress report in 2018, claimed that the recent devaluation of democratic values had tarnished the country's image significantly. The *"American and European support for Turkish democracy only reinforces growing concerns about Turkish stability in the wake of the coup attempt, as democratic practices and institutions are increasingly constrained."* (Lesser, 2017) It must be noted though, Turkey to succumb to authoritarianism, was not necessarily perceived as a surprise, since there were strong indicators of this phenomenon occurring many years before the failed military coup. The Center for Global Affairs (CGA) conducted a Scenario workshop on Turkey in 2011, coming up with three potential outcomes. Interestingly, the very first scenario projected that the environmental configuration of the country by 2020 could be described as illiberal Islamism. In that hypothetical situation, Turkey is under the rule of AKP with nominally democratic institutions, though non-existent opposition. The diplomatic relations with western allies have significantly worsened due to this reason. Finally, both NATO's and Turkey's common threats are overturned due to competing interests rising from the antithetic

political narratives of each actor, leading to the rapid decrease of cooperation. (CGA-Scenarios, 2011) Even though this study is not seeking to develop scenarios, the criteria and fundamental variables that were chosen in the CGA report, proved particularly useful for the conduct of this research. The six drivers of change - (secularism & political Islam, the military, the economy, the Kurdish question, and the country's foreign policy orientation) identified from the authors of these scenarios, were arguably not including the current Russian interference and the recent coup that occurred. (CGA-Scenarios, 2011) However, those are parameters that were arguably added in the future, while the bonding of all these variables in a unifying narrative was what made this dissertation to consider examining their methodological approach. Additionally, the accuracy of the predictions further substantiated the justification of taking under sincere consideration this study. Furthermore, Doug Bandow mentions, *"Erdogan has a track record of persecuting and prosecuting his opponents, usually on the premise that there's a conspiracy to undermine him."* After the military coup against him, he has proceeded to alter the constitution towards his favour and has prosecuted a massive number of military officials; seeking to re-shape the role of the military in Turkey on a permanent basis. All these are factors that cannot be perceived positively anymore: *"As Turkey descends more deeply into repression and conflict, its value to NATO decreases even further."* (Bandow, 2017)

Exogenous Factors

Thereof following the Prolegomena, the re-emergence of concerns towards the liberal stance of Turkey, and the prolonged outcomes of a problematic implementation of foreign policy are not considered as an ideal basis for dealing with the recent emergence of events occurring in Syria. Combined with the revival of Russo-Turkish cooperation, it constitutes the basis for

the major themes that surround any possible discussion of Turkey's departure from NATO. The exploration of these and more cases is crucial for the conduct of this study. There is sufficient open sourced information to formulate a sound argument. Nevertheless, there was a very limited bibliography that analyses these events or categorizes them towards the level of their impact or their relevance. Consequently, the 2018 report by the Center for Ethics and the Rule of Law titled 'Turkey's Eastern Pivot: A Challenge for NATO and a Threat to US National Security' was quintessentially the 'master-catalogue' of contemporary issues that narrowed the direction of the research. Having said that though, this study most definitely did not follow this report blindly, but instead, it worked as a skeleton for individually assessing each geostrategic event that was deemed to be relevant to this study. It is important to note though, that this report pointed out that regardless of the geographical importance of Turkey, and its assets, for NATO the turn to authoritarianism seems to be one of the greatest concerns. The reasoning is also explained within Paval K. Baev's and Kemal Kirisci's analysis on Turkey's relationship with Russia. One of the key arguments put forth is in fact that Putin's Russia poses a more appealing centre of gravity for the equally person-centric model that President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is trying to create. (Kirisci, 2017) That is a circumstance that can flourish under the authoritarian shift, entailing the potential forging of a new alliance with Russia. NATO cannot afford that. The neurotic actions from the Turkish side have recently provided ground for reasonable concern: *"This unstable pattern of high-intensity interactions between Turkey and Russia has impacted Western interests in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East in an unexpected yet significant way, and has also affected the course of confrontation between the West and Russia, in which Turkey, with all the particularities of its behaviour, remains a part of the trans- Atlantic alliance."*

(Kirisci, 2017)

Chapter 2 - Methodology

Data Collection:

The selection of an appropriate methodological pattern proved to be one of the most significant challenges for this research due to the open-ended nature of its primary question; 'Could Turkey leave NATO?'. Turkey is in fact, a particularly perplexing case, due to a plethora of unstable variables both internally and externally. This study has followed a rather common approach, that has been implemented before by individuals that examined Turkey's relationship with NATO. To properly unravel the format of the methodological elements, that dissertation has heavily relied upon qualitative analysis, since it enabled a more flexible framework for describing variation and normative factors within a group or among international actors. (Natasha Mack, 2005) Many qualitative documents were gathered to develop a more spherical apprehension of the geopolitical complexities surrounding the region. Almost entirely, this study has been based on textual content analysis, gathering both primary and secondary sources that were deemed relevant to the key themes that are under investigation. Moreover, it became apparent, that this research had to deploy both Qualitative Document Analysis (Stan, 2009) and Relational Content Analysis (Popping, 2000). That option was chosen due to the procedural aspects of gathering information; firstly, the research had to individually analyse its sources of information to assess their value, filtering what could be compressed and contextualized within a broader systematic model (Krippendorf, 1980). Having completed this phase, the implementation of Relational Content Analysis enabled a more comparative approach among the already examined documents, a function that was necessary for the context of this research. The distinguishing factor among these models of the methodology is that: *"[...] relational content analysis as compared to more traditional thematic content analysis is its focus at the extraction of information about relationships between objects from texts, rather than on the objects themselves. The*

motivation to focus on relational content analysis rather than on thematic content analysis is the basic premise that not only the changing nature of actors and issues but especially their changing relationships in the global network society deserve to be studied." (Wouter van Atteveldt) Hereafter, the sources that were gathered formulated to a certain extent the development of the main arguments during the transition of the process, but a significant majority of primary sources was utilized as supporting exact positions to a pre-established hypothesis. What is more, the author throughout the development of this study determined that the structural approach of presenting the key analytical points must be arranged in a format that expressed a linear continuity. Reviewing most sources, led to the apprehension that the basis of these phenomena could be described more accurately via a narrative configuration. That morphology of approaching events enables the researcher to assess more flexibly the plethora of events and information, providing a linear framework that directs the scope towards the topics that are deemed 'compatible.' In the influential for this study Thesis 'Narrative configuration in qualitative analysis', Donald E. Polkinghorne defines the basis of narrative analysis as: *"[…] a subset of qualitative research designs in which stories are used to describe human action. The term narrative has been employed by qualitative researchers with a variety of meanings. In the context of narrative inquiry, narrative refers to a discourse form in which events and happenings are configured into a temporal unity by means of a plot."* (Polkinghorne, 1995) The deployment of this specific schema was deemed necessary for two distinct reasons: the sheer volume of textual content had to be condensed, and thematically categorized. The chosen topic reflects a continuous progression regarding its timeline. Thus, the primary task of this qualitative analysis was finding the primary structures and themes within every official and unofficial document and place it within a logical framework; a narrative. The second reason for the chosen methodology is correlated to the pre-existing emphasis that both organizations (NATO & Turkey) have placed on the process

of projecting narratives. Finally, the overall data collection led to the dichotomization of the sources into static and dynamic. The naming of both groups derives from the nature of the sources.

Static:

Again, this group of sources could be divided on information that assisted to the formulation of a 'fixed' background and the academic bibliography that provided a dialogue within the literature review, but also better visualizations of the given phenomena. One of the most significant documents analysed, was Turkey's Defence White Paper of 2000 (Defense, 2000) that aided this study to apprehend the general stance of the Turkish government within that historical period; making it an axis for comparison. Essentially one of the key aspects within this analysis was to confirm to which extent Turkey's 2000 Defence White Document corresponded to its actions both internally and externally. Within that document, Turkey's official defence policy is presented as an embodiment of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk's vision of 'Peace at home, peace in the World.' A narrative that was later reflected within the later Defence White Document produced during 2007 (Defense M. o., 2007). Both documents offered the understanding that Turkey's policies were heavily reliant on the schema of Narratives, making it one of the core mechanisms that enabled every administration to alter positions both internally and externally. Thus, identifying a common pattern throughout the projected narratives within the given timeframe, immediately became an objective of this dissertation. Furthermore, the European Progress reports on Turkey (Commission, Turkey 2018 Report, 2018) was employed as a valuable tool for 'checking' on an annual basis the Western-centric perception towards the country. During the recent transition to authoritarianism, these documents proved to be particularly useful in the assessment of democratic trends (Commission, Key findings of the 2015 report on Turkey, 2015). The Freedom House reports and data also provided to this study a further understanding regarding

the internal political variables of the country. Finally, the study directed its gaze towards NATO's official stance and reflected interests within the region. To achieve a more solid identification of NATO's projected points of interest, the researcher analysed a substantial portion of the 'Basic Texts' provided from NATO's official Website. Documents such as 'The Alliance's New Strategic Concept' produced in 1991 (NATO, 2010), or the 'Istanbul Summit Communiqué' (NATO, Istanbul Summit Communiqué, 2014) were crucial for this dissertation. It must be noted though, that the study avoided examining documents that were not deemed relevant to the present thesis. The study, also includes within this category of sources, most of academic literature that directed the scope of this research. A plethora of scholarly articles and theses referring to the relationship between Turkey and NATO was examined and analysed to shape a stronger perception of Turkey.

Dynamic:

As it has been mentioned multiple times by now, Turkey as a case study is somewhat 'fluid' in most of its dimensions. The appearance of ground-breaking news surrounding the region has arguably been the norm for quite a long time. Thus, this research took into consideration the fact that the analysis of pre-established official or academic documents, had to coincide with the current flow of events. For that precise reason, the gathering of the information deriving from media outlets (mainly newspaper articles) was extremely useful to 'keep up' with the development of the more recent events. Fully apprehending the risk of derailing thematically though, the study tried to limit the exposure to irrelevant or repeated information via the precise limitations of the timeframe that this study inspects. Once more, NATO's multimedia library official website (NATO, NATO Multimedia Library, 2018) was rudimentary to conduct this tracking of information updates regarding Turkey but also the organization itself. Moreover, the official Press Releases & Statements produced by the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs equally aided this procedure. (Affairs, 2018)

Caveats and Limitations of this Study

Limitations

This dissertation does not aim to examine the significant impact of such a scenario, because this is not a scenario-based analysis. In fact, the primary goal is to provide a thorough examination of the current geopolitical conditions in Turkey, mainly via the years of the AKP and point out to the fact that there are three primary criteria, which if combined could indeed lead towards the exit of Turkey from NATO. Having stated that though, in seeking to understand internal issues within Turkish politics has proven to be a challenging issue since unbiased accounts are scarce (CBE, 2017). During the process of collecting data, the author realized that there were certain limitations that the dissertation had to either circumvent or recognize. One of the most apparent issues was the Turkish Government's tendency to conceal, distort or deny information that would tarnish its image, even if it was previously categorized as 'open-source' information. (Zeldin, 2015) Any position that was antithetic to the current administration has been condemned as an act of terrorist propaganda. Consequently, any academic or journalistic product that is not supporting the political rhetoric of the AKP can lead to the arrest of its author (Toksabay, 2017). That is a phenomenon that especially over the last five years, raises adequate concerns regarding the academic credibility of every document produced within Turkey. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is famous for criticizing scholars in at least five separate occasions; suggesting that they are equal to terrorists. That hostility has recently transformed into prosecutions, as: *"The decision to prosecute scores of academics for signing a January 2016 petition criticizing the Turkish government's actions in south eastern Turkey seriously violates the right to free speech and academic freedom, Human Rights Watch said today. The charges are also a misuse of terrorism laws."* (HumanRightsWatch, 2017) Besides, there was a noticeable lack of official information regarding Turkey's decision making. The government has released an

insufficient amount of documentation regarding foreign policy. That set of sources refers to the two major Defence White Document, and the non-published National Security Policy Document (NSPD). The NSPD is speculated to entail Turkey's domestic and foreign threats, while it is revised on a five-year basis. A selected group of civilians reviewed it for the first time in 2010 (SIPRI, 2011) Furthermore, this research also encountered linguistic obstacles due to the fact that there was a small amount (yet significant in value) of information from official sources that could not be retrieved, such as the official Ministry of National Defence (Defence, 2018). Even though this study considers the obstacles mentioned above, as not hindering factors, for the sake of clarity it is important to stress that the significant majority of sources is correlated or directly produced in a western-centric environment. Lastly, the conduct of this research was produced under the constant self-awareness of the author, that there might be an element of over-emphasis on the narrative aspects, as well as purely on the Turkish side. That is not though due to lack of focus, or examination of different events and data sets, but quite the opposite; the effort was directed towards these precise criteria not to deviate from the overwhelming mass of data.

Interviews

Conducting interviews was not deemed necessary for the following analysis, due to the sensitive thematic narrative of this examination. It would be impossible to secure high-level interviews with official members from both sides, but even if that occurred, it would most probably result in a repetitive reflection of the respective organization's doctrine. Questioning scholars or less involved individuals would deviate from the narrative and geostrategic themes that this dissertation is trying to cover.

The scope of the research will be broken down into two distinct time periods: from 2002-2009 and 2010 until now. That timeline will enable the project to focus more accurately on the policy and stance that Turkey has taken towards NATO in the current period within a comparative approach. That historical setting will also enable a more focused approach to the events that followed right after the coup. Besides, during the writing process, the allocation of sources was with caution and historical relevance. Meaning, that there was a conscious attempt to increase as much as possible the use of sources that were produced during the period of each event.

Data analysis

The outcome of data collection and its qualitative analysis led to the emergence of a sequence that this dissertation will follow from this section beyond.

Applying content analysis (Krippendorf, 1980) separately on NATO's and Turkey's strategic interests one of the critical observations was that NATO's credibility towards its chosen narrative prevailed strongly when its democratic principles were directly challenged (Lieffers, 2014). On the other hand, the first element that seemed to succumb in Turkey's multidimensional narrative was its liberal and democratic criteria. Hence, it was one of the first 'clues' this research started to examine, concluding that the democratic variable will play a crucial role in the future development of Turkey's connection with NATO.

The second observation, the information gathering procedure produced, was that outwardly both NATO and Turkey even to this day maintain an official stance of direct cooperation and communication (Affairs, 2018). Furthermore, Turkey is reasonably considered one of the most significant geostrategic assets of the alliance due to its ideal location and military

capacity, making the scenario of Turkey's succession from NATO unrealistic. Hitherto, via the antithetic policies that both actors pursue lately on a practical level, there is a rapidly increasing schism not only among their respective strategic interests but more importantly on the standard narrative they have shared for more than sixty years (Aybet, 2012). Both actors seem to ignore the elephant in the room, expecting from each other to raise the issue.

Last but not least, the dissertation has observed that compared with the years before 2013, the AKP has increased its aggressiveness in all dimensions of policy.

In an attempt to actively analyse all observations and put them in context, the analytical approach will be to break them into three segments thematically. Each segment elaborates on three distinct, yet deeply interrelated dimensions that connect Turkey and NATO. Attempt to visualize them as nuclear keys; unless all keys are in place and synchronized, there is no detonation. Initially, the first segment will provide via an analytical context the necessary background describing Turkey's foreign policy and how that impacted its development with NATO, trying to investigate to which extent it has been efficient. Successively, the focus will be directed towards the 2016 coup (Lesser, 2017) and the impact it had on the democratic Narrative of the country and the contradicting structure towards NATO. The final segment will try to point out the acute effects that currently exercise the most exceptional level of friction among the strategic interests of each actor. Lastly, it is important to point out that the dissertation is not trying to explain the exact implications of Turkey's exit from NATO, but it is focused on answering whether there is a mechanism that can trigger such a phenomenon. Trying not to over-stretch that last point, the development of the following sections is attempting to grasp the three most relevant dimensions: foreign policy, compatibility of narratives and specific cases studies that have an extremely corrosive effect on the relationship of NATO and Turkey.

Chapter 3 - Historical Overview of Foreign Policy.

Foreign policy:

This segment will firstly provide a historical evaluation on Turkey's foreign policy. It will then proceed to identify recent changes on the strategic implementation of the policies and how that has affected its relationship with NATO. The analysis of the current foreign policy is a necessary step to map the official stance that Turkey projects in the region. The guiding hypothesis is based on two major arguments that will be supported in the following sub-sections. [1] Turkey's foreign policy is deeply correlated with its national security policy, and the major elements that will be examined will be directed towards the 'security' theme. Still, the line distinguishing different values in the expressed foreign policy of Turkey has been fading under Ahmet Davutoglu's implemented vision of 'zero problem with neighbours'. [2] However, that mechanism has tempered with the state's capacity to engage in the foreign affairs, enabling its internal problems to determine the course of its actions. The contemporary principles that define the external actions of the country have gradually shifted from the pre-existing stance of Turkey. Therefore, identifying the major principles that Turkey seeks to implement via its foreign policy, helps this examination to confirm whether it has been successful towards its goals or not, by comparing the events that have unravelled as an extension of these policies.

The Pre-existing stance of Turkey:

Turkey's accession in NATO, has formulated to a significant extent the implementation of foreign policy, more specifically its orientation towards security. Another factor that

contributed significantly towards the formulation of foreign policy, was that the country's internal structure since the foundation of the Republic, was heavily relying on the particularly strong presence of its military. Arguably, the military was perceived as the guiding force towards the country's secular character. A characteristic that shaped strongly Turkey's foreign policy as well. Moreover, that policy making trend resembles a direct embodiment of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk's apprehension of Turkey's new role in the international system: *"To describe the stable and general diplomatic policy of the Republican's party I think this short sentence is enough: we work for peace at home, peace in the world."* (Defense S. C.-M., 2000)

The 'peace at home' obviously referring to domestic affairs can be translated as the country's continuous societal struggles towards democratization and the strong presence of the Kurdish minority which is perceived as an 'alien' group within the political sphere. The Turkish government has used its military capacity to resolve or at least control both internal issues, with devastating results and deadly conflicts.

Coming to the second thematic component of Atatürk's conception, 'peace in the world', it must be noted that all Turkish governments have provided their own interpretation to a certain extent, but they all share a strong element of continuity as well. Murat Balcı and Ali Yeşiltaş elaborate on the historical alterations that Turkish foreign security policy has undergone: *"By the same token, when we look at the historical continuity of Turkish foreign policy, it is possible to see attempts that had been made by various actors in different periods of the history to re-conceptualise foreign policy."* (Balcı, 2013) The continuity element can be isolated on the defence-based argument that all administrations have put forth to justify the presence of such a strong military. Essentially, Turkey has constantly been surrounded from many countries that either reflect political instability such as Syria or simply have direct conflicts of strategic interests, with countries like Greece, Cyprus, Israel and Russia. On the

case of Greece for instance, David Binder explains that there has been a continuous friction among the two actors even before they joined NATO. A relationship that has been unstable after the Turkish occupation of Cyprus. (Binder, 2012) Basically, the sheer size of Turkey's army with 350,000 Active Personnel and 360,565 ((GFP), 2018) makes it a juggernaut of influence within the region. Thus, participating in NATO, enabled the country to sustain and reinforce the vision of Atatürk. Within that framework, Turkey since 1952 was gradually considered to be a western ally, and a promoter of western interests in the middle east. In the 2010 report produced from the Transatlantic Academy, titled 'Getting to Zero: Turkey, its Neighbours, and the West' (Ahmet Evin, 2010), there is an underlying assertion that under the AKP's rule foreign policy has drastically changed from the pre-existing format. It is stated that: *"There once was a time when the United States and the European Union could take Turkey – a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) member since 1952 and a European Union aspirant since 1963 – for granted. There was also a time when foreign policy was the exclusive domain of Turkish diplomats and the military, who ensured Ankara's participation in regional and global struggles that were defined, primarily, in Europe and the U.S. That time has passed."* (Ahmet Evin, 2010)

So, what has changed?

According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Turkey still espouses the principle of 'peace at home, peace in the World', strongly emphasizing on the fact that all its policies are constructed around the promotion of peace. Likewise, the Turkish definition on national security, seems to have remained the same under the provided definition of Law No. 2945.

Turkish National Security Definition:

"The preservation and protection against all kinds of internal and external threats to the constitutional order of the state, her national existence, her integrity and all her political, social, cultural and economic interests and contractual rights in the international arena". (Defense M. o., 2007)

Those elements of continuity and peace can also be identified on the principal defence policies of the country, expressed in the 2007 white document:

- To act as an actor of balance of power in the region.
- To take initiatives for cooperation with her neighbours as well as other members of the international community.
- To contribute to the new strategy and security doctrines emerging because of the shifts in global security.
- To be a provider of peace and contributor of security in and around the region.

(Defense M. o., 2007)

Additionally, Turkey under the AKP administration has actively been involved in a multitude of peace keeping missions; contributing more than 10,000 personnel. (Yearbook, 2011)In combination with its active role, Turkey *"[…] supports NATO not only in operations and missions but also in terms of policy, which is to say, that Turkey supports NATO's partnership with the UN and the EU, its enlargement process and open-door policy, the NATO-Russia Council, and NATO-Ukraine cooperation*" (CIDOB, 2011). Finally, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, continues to project NATO as a quintessential ally towards the country's efforts to establish itself as a mediator of peace in the region, deeply appreciating the organization's contributions towards this country. Despite all that, it would be unwise to say the least, for someone to derive to the conclusion that Turkey's policy resembles a sound narrative. In fact, the information that was mentioned just now, could be perceived as a growing tendency from the country to impose a rather strong agenda, with a new Ottoman 'brand' within the Middle Eastern region, under the pretext of promoting peace. (Kurc, 2016) The initiation of significantly altering the traditional pathway of foreign policy could be

correlated mainly to Ahmet Davutoglu's agenda within 2009 and 2014, serving as the Minister of Foreign Affairs. According to Lynch, Davutoglu should be perceived as the architect of what is currently considered Turkish Foreign Policy. The main goal was to abandon the rather isolationist approach, sourcing from the secular remnants of Attaturkism, and proceed to an assertive apprehension of Turkey's role within the region. That was in line with Erdogan's strong Islamic background, who aspired to be the new 'Father-figure' of the country, though his goal was to revive the spirit of the Ottoman empire in the current epoch; that could be described as the legacy he would like to create (Akyol, How Erdogan lost the liberals, 2015).

Hence forward, Ahmet Davutoglu's new 'Strategic Depth' policy was introduced as a pro-active independent set of principles that were intended to reduce any disharmony with the surrounding countries in the region, while simultaneously promote stability in Middle-East. The ontological narrative attributed to Turkey's contemporary narrative via the historical interpretation of the country's role in region, strongly supported the view that Turkey had to dynamically engage and intervene in conflicts that were not only bound within the limits of its sovereignty. In other words, Ankara assumed that the new set of policies must advance the interests of the state, not only via the betterment of diplomatic relations. This new prospect entailed as Bagci mentions, Turkey to become a mediating force within the Middle Eastern region. Thereupon, emphasizing on the Islamic roots characteristics was crucial for the country in order present itself as a compatible ally towards the Arab countries. That approach was the strongest point of deviation from the previous models that had been implemented via a more secular and Attaturkian 'style'. An additional unique characteristic of these policies was also that it positioned the role of Turkey, as a state that had to break free from its dependency on the Western allies and adopt a more autonomous approach towards the East. Kurc explains that: *"[…] while previous governments have also followed a multi-dimensional*

pro-active foreign policy, the AKP government showed a clear tendency to act independently from the Western alliance, especially in relation to major regional and international conflicts, thereby weakening the traditional anchorage of Turkish foreign policy." (Kurc, 2016)

Initially, this newly chosen approach of 'zero problems with neighbours' seemed to be effective, since Turkey's rapidly increasing economic indicators and its rather neutral stance were positively perceived from most actors that it engaged with (Akpinar, 2015). The more neutral Turkey was, the more credible it seemed to be as a mediator. That is illustrated through numerous examples, such as an attempted nuclear deal with Iran in 2005 which aimed to release a certain pressure in the region. Nevertheless, that move was directly criticized from the United States, since it directly contradicted its efforts against Iran. Davutoglu at the time came out with a public statement as a response to the criticism, to solidify the position that Ankara had chosen; which he presented within three methodological and five operational principles. It is deemed important from this study to briefly present the key characteristic of each principle via the examination of Davutoglu's statements. The analysis that will follow throughout the dissertation will be based on the axiomatic values of these positions, since they are the key of explaining how pressure started building up among Turkey's relationship with NATO.

Methodological:

I. The first point within this category essentially refers to the idea of 'Strategic depth'. Claiming that Turkey, being part of the Middle East throughout its inception, could no longer ignore the various phenomena occurring within it. Possessing this deep historical bondage, its strong diplomatic ties to the west, and a formidable number of

assets, Turkey not only should not be limited only within the domestic variables that influenced its foreign policy.

II. The actions that would derive from the establishment of a new vision in the Middle East, should not be perceived as antithetic towards Turkey's efforts to improve its diplomatic stance within other regions that it has been interacting with.

III. All these novel approaches, should be encapsulated within a new set of diplomatic language. Meaning that Turkey would not consider using the surmountable size of its military to intimidate or coerce other actors to follow its interests. Instead, Turkey would seek to exercise with the support of its economy a version of soft power, that would work as an incentive of cooperation. (Davutoglu, 2010)

Operational:

I. One of the most important arguments that Ahmet Davutoglu put forth within his new doctrine, was that democracy was quintessential for the stabilization of these policies, and that it played a very important role – if not the most important one. By his own words: "*The legitimacy of any political regime comes from its ability to provide security and freedom together to its citizens; this security should not be at the expense of freedoms and human rights in the country.*" (Davutoglu, 2010)

II. The second operational principle referred to the 'zero problem with neighbours' policy and how it had helped to formulate significantly improved relationships with the actors surrounding Turkey. (Davutoglu, 2010)

III. The third principle clearly positioned Turkey as an autonomous state that was willing to intervene or act before a conflict occurred. This proactive and pre-emptive peace diplomacy, as the Minister of Foreign Affairs explained, was how Ankara envisioned Turkey's role as a mediator. A powerful actor, that via economic integration and interdependence aimed to initiate and advocate diplomatic dialogue with any other

actor in the Middle East that posed a direct threat towards the stability of the region. (Davutoglu, 2010)

IV.   The fourth principle strongly emphasised that Turkey is seeking develop a multilateral approach on foreign policy, and that it should not develop concerns towards the pre-existing relationships that it has already built. That was arguably directed towards the recent criticism from their American partners in NATO. The goal of this principle would be to put at ease the minds of the western alliances, since Turkey's flirting with Russia or Iran should not be taken as a threat. Interestingly, the Russian Federation is strongly mentioned within this segment, something that reflects Turkey's concerns on how its western allies would perceive it. That particular position was phrased as:

"This means that good relations with Russia are not an alternative to relations with the EU. Nor is the model partnership with the United States a rival partnership against Russia." (Davutoglu, 2010)

V.   Finally, the fifth principle is suggesting that Turkey should from now on be a clearly international actor, that is not limited purely on regional on internal affairs. Instead it must actively participate in a coordinated effort with the organisations that it is currently committed with, such as NATO and the UN. (Davutoglu, 2010)

Therefore, if all the methodological principles are merged together the product is essentially the new narrative Turkey wants to promote as its new stance within the international system. That also applies to the operational elements that are put forth. Till this point, as it was already mentioned, everything seemed to work in favour of Turkey as long in maintained a rather neutral stance. And yet, various problems started to occur since according to Bagci and Kurc: *The obsession with obtaining regional power status blinded Turkish policy makes to the ever-shifting realities on the ground and the power play of the international actors in the Middle East. Turkish policymakers, departing from the Neo-Ottoman approach, believed*

Turkish leadership can shape the Middle East. Such a posture, without a doubt, alienated Arab decision makers, who saw the Ottomans as a colonial power, rather than a benevolent state." (Kurc, 2016)

Lynch points out, that the new policies the AKP set to implement since its rise to power in 2002, were generally deemed as effective. However, from 2010 and onwards as Bagci's and Kurc's previous statement explained, the Turkish government's Islamic rhetoric greatly backfired against the pre-established goal of staying neutral. When Turkey sided with the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Tunisia in the hopes of formulating the internal political environment things started to become unstable. Lynch further adds, that the collaboration with the Muslim Brotherhood due to a mutual rhetoric, proved to be a monumental mistake as: *"[…] the Muslim Brotherhood government in Egypt did not survive for long and the Brotherhood has been unable to make inroads in Iraq or elsewhere in the region."* (CBE, 2017)

Finally, whether the 'Zero Problems with neighbours' policy has failed could directly be answered, by taking a brief look in the contemporary status of the country. As Chapter 4 will elaborate on how Erdogan came to be extremely authoritarian after the 2016 coup, completely contradicting the second methodological principle for a sound and cohesive democratic narrative. Additionally, as Chapter 5 will further examine, the contemporary threats that Turkey is challenged with are clearly pointing out that the country failed to successfully act as a peaceful mediator, since it has already engaged in a violent conflict in Syria and all the implications that it entails (chapter 5). Syria itself is resembles a failed country and the spill over effect seems to be uncontrollable for Turkey. Furthermore, in the following chapters, the goal is to examine and support the argument that the overly ambitious principles that the government sought to implement have not only put pressure on the domestic environment, but also with the diplomatic relationship with NATO. The following

analysis will focus on the internal elements that mitigated Turkey's capacity to project a co-aligned democratic narrative with its western allies.

Chapter 4 - Narrative

How Narratives Play A role.

The following analysis is built upon the argument that a narrative that is put forth within the international arena is a storyline that actors follow and use as a general direction for apprehending the tendencies of each other. The provided definition suggests that the very ontological aspect of an actor can be shaped via the provided narrative it seeks to reflect. The importance of narratives is fundamental since they solidify the given identity of a group such as NATO, but also a country like Turkey. They position the actors not only within the international arena but also internally towards their respective members. To provide a metaphor, attempt to visualize a country or a multilateral organization as a living organism that is constituted from a myriad of building blocks, cells that portray diverse characteristics though they share the same DNA. (Communications, 2018) That algorithmic correlation among cells is what a narrative is to the political system. For the cells to synchronize and provide a single cohesive result, they must share a similar DNA (Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA), 2015), even if they maintain divergent functions with each other. Additionally, a narrative is continuously adapting, a function that must harmoniously occur with all the members that constitute a group. Thus, the alteration of a variable within a micro-scale will have an analogous impact on the macro scale of the system and vice versa. Stretching the given metaphor, a bit further, the shift from democracy to autocracy within a country might reflect a natural political development internally, but it might also be perceived as a 'cancerous' and directly antithetical development within an organization such as NATO or

the EU. The analysis has led to the observation, that the very aspect of reinforcing and strengthening a narrative is nowadays disregarded as a secondary item on the agenda. In fact, a strong narrative in this current epoch is desperately needed especially in the context of re-emerging trends of authoritarianism. The rhetoric that each actor chooses to promote formulates not only the future policies but it "[…] supports ontological security by supporting the social identity of the agent in question and by being constitutive of identity. As self-identity is constructed vis-á-vis highly esteemed in-groups with the express purpose of maximizing self-esteem, strong narratives support the objective of maintaining or increasing the agent's self-esteem." (Flockhart, 2012) Therefore, to properly unravel the currently attributed narratives that both Turkey and NATO negotiate upon, this dissertation derived to the result that to grasp or point out the compatibility of the two actors, their examined narrative must frame and examine the relevant importance of democratic values in their current relationship. Finally, before examining the relationship between Turkey and NATO regarding their respective narratives on democratic values, there will be two sub-sections establishing two critical variables that should be considered. [A] Turkey after the coup and the impact it had on its democracy & [B] Why the EU has proven to be a fundamental importance factor concerning Turkey's recent democratization process. These are two issues that will prove useful in the attempt of identifying Turkey's democratic narrative, making it easier to examine it in contrast to the current NATO narrative. This section aims to point out the viewpoint that the new contradicting narratives among NATO and Turkey are not just a ripple effect from the coup, nor it is something that should be compared as a similar case of the past. In fact, this analysis suggests that it is the first time that Turkey's internal political narrative regarding the democratic and western criteria have shifted to such an extent that they pose an actual threat among the diplomatic relationship of NATO and Turkey.

The analysis itself assumes that Turkey in all its dimensions is reflecting the current elements of its narrative; which are authoritarian. Therefore, it is fundamental to examine the most prominent aspects of its liberal narrative and doctrine since it will play a vital role in the future strategic implications of the country.

> Definition of Narrative: the stories people tell—provide a rich source of information about how people make sense of their lives, about how they construct different facts and weave them together cognitively to make sense of reality. Narrative analysis is particularly useful in providing insight into the cognitive process and on the role of culture in shaping any human universals.
>
> (Monroe, 1998)

POINT A: The Coup

The Turkish government on July 15, 2016, faced the most violent military coup the country had ever undergone; 241 casualties and 2,194 people were severely injured. The clash at first seemed to be in favour of the overthrowing forces: *"[...] Soldiers and tanks took to the streets, and a number of explosions rang out in Ankara and Istanbul. Turkish fighter jets dropped bombs on their parliament, while the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Hulusi Akar, was kidnapped by his own security detail."* (Jazeera, 2017) During the clash for many of the allies, it looked like if the AKP's rule had come to an end. However, to the initial dismay of many, it was not. The government with the support of thousands of citizens -not armed- gathered in opposition of the coup, while also, the support of loyalist soldiers and police forces proved to be more than enough to stop the aggressors.

However, the coup did not entail devastating outcomes only for the failed overthrowers, but for the political cohesion of the country as well, since it illuminated that there is a strong societal dichotomy lying underneath the new leaps towards democratization. Admittedly, that should not be a surprise, since Turkey has repeatedly faced military coups in its recent past. The last coup, in fact, marked the fourth attempt of the military trying to subdue the political

establishment since the fall of Adnan Menderes' Democratic Party (DP) on May 1960 (Gunn, 2015). That is a phenomenon that has historically been attributed to the strong correlation of the army as the guardian of the modern Turkish state and the anti-Islamic dogma of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk. Ataturk's rhetoric could be described as an attempt to reshape the Turkish identity, by shifting the pre-existing narrative of Islamic Ottomans to Secular Nationalism. In this endeavour, however, Atatürk's vision was directly connected with the usage of the military as an enforcing mechanism for the proper function of the republic. It sanctioned the military as a dominant and inseparable element of the Turkish identity, a mechanism that had a ripple effect upon the democratization of the country (Findley, 2010). Thus, a dichotomy occurred amongst the population with the traditionalists from one side -supporting the inclusion of Islamic ideals within the governmental structure- and the nationalists from the other side -supporting the 'modernization' of the state into a republic.

 Therefore, in the preliminary stages of Erdogan's rise to power in 2002, AKP's political narrative was reflecting a liberal and democratic tendency that explicitly aimed to control and reduce the influence of the military. Achieving that though, without increasing the friction within the population was a monumental challenge, that could only be achieved via the support of external factors; more specifically, the EU. That became evident in 2008 when Erdogan directly attacked the military establishment by arresting a plethora of journalists, military officers, and politicians that were identified as a group of 'plotters' that aimed to overthrow him: a phase known as the Ergenekon & Sledgehammer trials. These trials:

"represented a nascent democracy's coming to terms with the sins of the past. It seemed that a popular, democratic regime was finally wresting itself free from the tight grip of the army and hard-line secularists, and, for the first time, was bringing the old guard to account." (Rodrik, 2012) Interestingly, this advance against the military, occurred within the window whereas Turkey was deemed to be a natural ally of the west, and a country deadest towards

the free path (Ünver, 2009). Certainly, though, this particularly aggressive move against the military confirmed Erdogan's hostility in the eyes of the population supporting the secular viewpoints, since it had not openly been expressed till that particular time. Ranj Alaaldin further explains that: *"In other words, Erdogan set himself up for another clash with the military, but few expected it to come so soon or in the form of an attempted coup. The most astonishing thing about Friday's (referring to the latest coup) events was that the coup was even contemplated by military factions, given Erdogan's grip on the country. Friday's coup attempt was by far Turkey's least effective. The military did not control the media and lacked sufficient support both within its ranks and on the streets. It also signified that Erdogan's divide-and-rule policies have worked; that he has tamed Turkey's once-feared military."* (Alaaldin, 2016)

Henceforward, that 'divide-and-rule' policy came at a massive political cost since the response that followed shattered any pre-existing hope for genuine democratic development within Turkey. The 2016 coup was perceived as a linear derivative of the actions as mentioned earlier against the military establishment. What distinguishes though this coup, is that this time the political establishment survived and used it to reinforce its grip on power. The government rapidly changed its tone after the coup, earning it a classification of 'Not Free' from the Freedom House organization in the annually produced report of 2018. (FreedomHouse, 2018) Reaching the current timeline, the AKP had successfully managed to reflect its political stance on democracy as a unilateral stance of Turkey itself. This positioning, suggests, that the coup did not trigger a U-turn on the government's attempts to democratize the country, but instead worked as a catalyst to pre-existing authoritarian tendencies, which in retrospect could be identified as the Ergenekon or Sledgehammer trials. (Rodrik, 2012)

The events that officially characterized Turkey as a non-Democracy

These estimations become even more apparent when someone notices that there has been indeed a phenomenal adjustment and alteration of variables that aid towards the constitution of democratic criteria. Immediately, the Turkish government declared a 'state of emergency,' and under this premise, it proceeded to the suspension of more than 170,000 suspects working in the public sector (Shaheen, 2017). Additionally, the government made more than 50,000 arrests; a number expected to have risen significantly since that time (Shaheen, 2017). It became evident that most of these arrests and detainments took place without due process, while evidence of "disappearances" and routine torture of detainees surfaced quite rapidly (Akengin, 2017) All groups that directly challenged the government – not only after the events but also in the past – were attacked and shut down by the government. More than 1,500 civil society organizations were closed and had their property confiscated. That equally included the prosecution of journalists which skyrocketed (BBC, 2018) and arrests based on messages via social media gradually transformed into a new type of norm (FreedomHouse, 2018). Finally, the 2017 referendum that followed the coup introduced a package of constitutional amendments that genuinely shook the foundations of secular Turkey. Finally, the vote to increase the power of the presidency and the significant reduction on democratic checks and balances confirmed the fears of many; Turkey was not reconsidering to follow a democratic path (Kirişci, 2017).

That direct transition according to Freedom House could be observed throughout 2017, and gathered into four main points:

- *Constitutional revisions that concentrated power in the presidency were adopted in an April referendum. The campaign featured a grossly uneven playing field, and last-minute changes to the criteria for validating ballots—made in contravention of the law—undermined the legitimacy of the vote count.*

- *A state of emergency first declared after the attempted coup of July 2016 was renewed every three months and remained in place at year's end, allowing the government to rule by decree and make decisions that dramatically undercut the rule of law.*

- *The government continued to take over opposition-controlled municipalities and expanded the practice to its party by forcing independently elected AKP mayors to resign.*

- *In the context of a more extensive purge of the leadership's perceived enemies, authorities-initiated prosecutions of key figures in Turkey's nongovernmental organization sector. The fear of arbitrary arrest stifled public discussion and weakened civil society.* (FreedomHouse, 2018)

Concluding with the point [A] the dissertation proceeds with the axiomatic position that Turkey is indeed not a democracy. The following section will put forth the argument that the coup was not, however, the sole reason for the occurrence of this situation. Instead, the coup only reinforced and fastened the underlying rhetoric that the AKP seeks to enforce within the country. That is better illustrated via its relationship with the EU.

POINT B: The Role of the EU

The European Union is undeniably one of the greatest political experiments regarding democratic cohesion, holding a sizable portion of influence within the international arena. To

better apprehend the impact that the EU has on the maintenance of democratic levels within the world, Douglas M. Gibler & Jamil A. Sewell suggest that: *"Jointly democratic dyads in alliance are overwhelmingly concentrated in just three alliances (NATO, the OAS, and the WEU) that together represent over 90% of the jointly democratic allied dyads since 1816."* (Sewell, 2006) Moreover, the reason that countries concentrate in these alliances is not a randomly concurrent phenomenon. Douglas M. Gibler & Scott Wolford state that the very nature of these alliances poses a particularly attractive basis for countries that can reduce to a significant extent territorial threats and focus mainly on the strengthening of their democratic values. (Wolford, 2006) Thus, the continuous attempts of Turkey to join the European Union over the last two decades signifies a rather rational tendency of strategic inclusion. The European Union has played a significant role in the gradual democratization of Turkey, constituting the archetypical figure of support towards any policy that would liberalize and democratize further the country. The 2016 coup that ostensibly degraded and stigmatized Turkey's democratic character, reflects a paradox, however; instead of seeking to enhance its democratic capacity more than ever, the government turned towards a directly antithetic direction. This observation is closely tied in with the country's recent relationship with the European Union. (Wessels, 2016) It is not a new-fangled realization, the fact that Turkey was aspiring to become a European member way before Erdogan's arrival in the political scene. The major reason though that Turkey in the past did not immediately enter negotiations was due to the strong presence of the military (Pehlivan, 2008). Till that crucial point in time (Right before Erdogan's rise to power) Turkey had generally been considered an illiberal state that was reflecting elements of tutelary democracy; a government that is directly responding back to the military establishment (Palabiyik, 2008). A classification that over the following years started to change rapidly. In the presence of a realistic opportunity to join the European Union, the Turkish government pushed forward, in hopes of enforcing the Copenhagen

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criteria. That was the perfect political window that Recep Tayyip Erdogan's Justice and Development Party (AKP) needed to solidify their popularity. Turkey and the EU possess a bilateral relationship regarding the common interests they share. For Turkey, being part of the European Economic Zone was one of the greatest arguments put forth from the Erdogan administration, within the context of deregulating the economy and establishing a liberal nexus within the Turkish political sphere (Üçer, 2008). Pledging to fulfil this political gap; by joining the EU and transforming the country's economy into an antagonistic level Erdogan denatured a new wave – at least that is how he seemed to perceive himself (Akyol, 2013). The given framework presented by the EU towards Turkey was perfectly timed by the AKP's call towards modernization, but more importantly the necessity to restrict further any potential threats to the political structure from the army. After the elections of the 3rd of November 2002 (Acikmese, 2012) the EU-Turkey cooperation saw a rapid expansion stemming from the pre-existing attempts in the Helsinki Summit during 2001 The Turkish government proceeded to enhance and broaden the constitutional amendments of 2001, adding five more harmonization packages by the end of 2004 – all in an effort to adapt towards the Copenhagen Criteria. These alterations (Affairs, 2007), included certain aspects of the legal code; reinforcing civil rights regarding the freedom of expression, abolishing the death penalty, altering the systemic structure of the National Security Council and most importantly increasing the levels of civilian control over the military. (Affairs, 2007)

Islamization under a positive light

During the same timeline, Turkey also pursued within its democratization narrative the incorporation of Islamic values, something that had previously been suppressed heavily from

the secular side of the government (Ahmad, 2009). That decision was reflected in the new policies the AKP implemented such as the lifting of a decades-old ban on headscarves in the civil service (Aljazeera, 2013). An action that received praise for its chosen narrative to incorporate and synchronize the Islamic traditions with European and western liberal democracy, a position that framed Turkey as a shining beacon of modernization within the Middle East. (Lewis, 1994) Viewpoints such as: "Turkey is engaged in a bold and profound attempt to rewrite the basis for Islamic sharia law while also officially reinterpreting the Qur'an for the modern age." (Traynor, 2008) were intensively promogulated over the media. The revival of Muslim currents within a strongly secular environment was interpreted by many as a sincere attempt to reconcile the dichotomy within Turkey's society. As Metin Heper suggested in his thesis "Islam and Democracy in Turkey: Toward a Reconciliation?":

"One might even argue that the interactive relationship between democracy and Islam has taken on a new and unexpected twist. Having long been subjected to the dominance of the radical secularists' perception of a zero-sum relationship between their worldview and Islam, the moderate Islamists, who champion the freedom of conscience, may now be instrumental in moving Turkish democracy in a more liberal direction." (Heper, 1997)

Thus, all these circumstances and firm policies taken from the Turkish government, led to the European Commission's decision in 2004 to declare that Turkey had 'sufficiently' satisfied the political aspects of the Copenhagen Criteria, and further evolved to the extension of invitation for accession negotiations on the 3rd of October 2005 (Acikmese, 2012)

What went wrong?

In hindsight, all the prementioned attempts that Turkey made towards democratization, should have constituted a solid basis of cooperation towards its inclusion within the EU. That

was not though something that did occur. It became profound over the last decade that Turkey was not exactly committing fully to potential European membership. Stating that though does not mean that it was not a bilateral relationship among both sides. As it was mentioned in the very beginning of this subsection, the European Union had a massive impact regarding the democratization of Turkey, making it reasonable enough to argue that the EU is -at least partially- responsible for the current democratization crisis in Turkey. The most significant signs could, in fact, be observed right from the very early AKP attempts to enter the EU. There was a part of the Turkish society that did not appreciate this new Turkey-EU relationship, due to the strict regulations and demands that Turkey had to meet. As Acikmese and Triantaphyllou argue: *"However, contrary to the expectations that the negotiations would lead to the light at the end of the tunnel, the process went sour during the screening phase of the negotiations. The progress both in the reform and the accession processes reflected in the initiation of negotiations was stalled in 2006, thereby raising the possibility of a 'train-crash' in EU–Turkey relations."* (Acikmese, 2012)

Hypothetically, the accession negotiations should have resulted in more stable cooperation, but instead in 2018 Turkey was officially a non-democratic state (FreedomHouse, 2018). Under the premise that someone was paying close attention to the EU-Turkey negotiations it would become clear that Turkey transformed the EU membership into another topic to be tackled within the agenda. Leading to the conclusion that forwarding democratic values were equally pursued; bringing this unique democratization process to a halt. Additionally, the general government's lack of enthusiasm towards a potential EU membership was characteristically noted via its resistance to abolishing article 301 of the Penal Code in the process of enabling freedom of expression. It was noted that: *"in the reservations to the implementation of broadcasting in one's mother tongue as endorsed on 3 August 2002; in the non-responsiveness to the third accession partnership in the form of a national programme;*

and, finally, in the decision to appoint the Minister of Foreign Affairs as the chief negotiator on 3 June 2005, thereby making EU affairs one of the many elements of a complicated foreign policy agenda (Acikmese S. , 2010)"

The Accession Negotiations Fail

The European pessimism towards Turkey's accession is firmly illustrated via the annual progress reports produced by the European Commission. Initially, in the 2013 report, one of the significant parameters that blocked Turkey's accession within the EU had to do with the pre-existing situation in Cyprus. The official reason identified from the European Commission as to why negotiations had been interrupted till that point, had to do with the lack of consensus amongst the Member States (Commission, 2013) Many have considered Cyprus as the primary impediment for Turkey's accession. In fact, every EU accession document regarding Turkey has included the Cypriot problem, suggesting that there should be new adoptions and regulations from Turkey's side. Acikmese and Triantaphyllou do recognize the Cypriot issue as one of the most critical parameters that exercised friction upon the relationship of the EU and Turkey, though they do not consider it to be the significant factor. They state that: *"[…] the Cyprus issue on its own did not cause the paralysis in Turkey-EU relations. Instead, various dynamics have been at play both in Turkey and Europe culminating in a slowdown in Turkey's EU accession negotiations."* (Acikmese S. A., 2012) That position is further supported from the 2015 progress report, whereas it is strongly emphasized that the European Commission not be in the position to ignore the internal situation in Turkey. The report points out that there is indeed a 'negative trend' against the rule of law, the protection of fundamental rights, the maintenance of democratic values and a significant decrease in the freedom of expression. (Commission, Key findings of the 2015

report on Turkey, 2015) Furthermore, the report identified a 'severe deterioration of its security situation,' something that had not been raised so strongly as a concern in official documentation of this type before. Finally, the 2018 report had a wholly changed tone regarding the way it perceived the current administration, implying that the current administration did not seem to commit towards a liberal narrative.

"The EU, which immediately and strongly condemned the attempted coup, reiterated its full support for the country's democratic institutions and recognized Turkey's legitimate need to take swift and proportionate action in the face of such a serious threat. However, the broad scale and collective nature, and the disproportionality of measures taken since the attempted coup under the state of emergency, such as widespread dismissals, arrests, and detentions, continue to raise serious concerns. Turkey should lift the state of emergency without delay."
(Commission, Turkey 2018 Report, 2018)

Taking into account the recent events that have been mentioned, the Turkish narrative has drastically altered its status from democratic to non-democratic. The European Union has a plethora of strategic interests in maintaining Turkey, though the rather extreme take on politics from the AKP has not enabled the accession negotiations to proceed. Even if there was an observable hesitation from both sides, in the beginning, it has now been replaced with evident unwillingness and fear towards one another. Erdogan's authoritarian response after the coup of 2016 has significantly decreased the popularity of Turkey's accession within the EU (Carcoglu, 2013). Conclusively, all this review regarding Turkey's relationship with the EU has pushed the country to take a more repressive tone, since at that point it does not expect any salvation or any possibility that it becomes an EU member, so 'it does not even have to pretend.' Moreover, the coup is relevant in proving that Erdogan is afraid; in his eyes, at this point, there is no other option than to behave in that way. That is precisely why,

concerning the Narrative, as long as the AKP is in power it will never go back, and it will keep increasing the aggressive tone.

NATO & Turkey – Antithetic Narratives

The previous sections that this segment is based upon aimed to clarify to which extent Turkey's narrative could be considered democratic or not.

Section A supports the view that the latest coup had a massive impact on the internal political cohesion of the state indeed and reaffirmed strong authoritarian tendencies within the political narrative followed by the government. Additionally, the events that occurred after the coup reflected an image of a country that is not willing to turn back to liberalism.

Section B, deriving from Section A that has already established Turkey as a non-democratic country, examines to which extent Turkey via its attempt to become a European member state, democratized. The overall understanding of this analysis is that Turkey had never indeed been democratic. The Turkish administration had received any democratization policy and similar attempt towards Europeanization and vice versa. Nevertheless, that had a negative impact on this process, since Turkey had turned towards democracy not based on purely societal or cultural aspects from within, but because it attempted to be more compatible towards the EU. Essentially, meaning that its democratic narrative was analogous to its relationship with the EU. In recent view of the various crisis that the country underwent, relations worsened, expectations decreased, and democracy at that point was perceived as a dispensable 'luxury.' The conclusion of both sections suggests that Turkey will not seek to alter its narrative towards a democratic pathway, at least, if the current government is in place. Thus, the development of a new foreign security policy that will be synchronized towards the new narrative is a matter of time.

Where does NATO stand in all this?

NATO's overall stance towards Turkey has been supportive within a 'vocal' context throughout their relationship. The day after the 2016 coup, NATO's Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg extended his concern towards the stability of the democratic institutions within the country, making it abundantly clear Turkey has always been a valuable ally for the alliance (Stoltenberg, NATO Secretary General statement on events in Turkey, 2016). A position of support that was repeated on the first anniversary of the coup attempt, stating that: "Democracy and the rule of law are shared values of NATO Allies. On the first anniversary of the coup attempt in Turkey, I reiterate my strong message that any attempt to undermine democracy in any of our Allied countries is unacceptable." (Stoltenberg N. S., 2017) Admittedly, those statements could be described as generic and somewhat predictable, but they do point out a clear and direct emphasis on the democratic dogma that NATO supports.

The correlation of NATO within this system of narratives has historically been associated with the two primary functions of the organization [1] Diplomacy & [2] Military Operations (NATO, 9). On first sight, NATO resembles the epitome of a military alliance purely focused on strategic operations and the international security status. A more thorough examination though would point out that NATO is, in fact, something way more complicated than that. NATO constitutes one of the most dynamic platforms aimed towards the enhancement and broadening of western liberal democratic values. That premise is deeply embedded within the systemic characteristics of the alliance, dictating the general stance of every action taken both strategically and diplomatically. Taking it a step further, the core argument that the alliance puts forth as a justification of its existence from its very inception is the moral presupposition of guarding the liberal western values. (Sewell, 2006) Historically speaking, NATO was designed and structured as a response to the Soviet Union. First and foremost, it served as a

military factor that posed a real threat against the strategic capacity of the U.S.S.R., but it stood as an equally crucial diplomatic platform that entailed the vision of sharing and defending democratic values among its members. To many the democratic rhetoric shared within the organization was what held its member-states together, and worked as a solidifying 'glue' against the common threat of the U.S.S.R. (Harvey Waterman, 2001-2002) After all, NATO's article two points out this precise thing:

> Article 2
>
> The Parties will contribute toward the further development of peaceful and friendly international relations by strengthening their free institutions, by bringing about a better understanding of the principles upon which these institutions are founded, and by promoting conditions of stability and well-being. They will seek to eliminate conflict in their international economic policies and will encourage economic collaboration between any or all of them. (NATO, The North Atlantic Treaty - Washington D.C. - 4 April 1949, 9)

Reaching the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, NATO had in principle succeeded to impose itself as the dominant order within the international arena. NATO had fulfilled its goal. As it is commonly known though, the organization managed to survive and transform precipitously into an alliance that now clearly stood in the name of promoting Democracy and Liberalism throughout the world. That phenomenon is according to NATO's official explanation is mainly attributed to the perception that being the most powerful military alliance, it has to correspond towards an equal level of responsibility. Thus, what is explicitly stated by NATO is that: *"NATO endured because while the Soviet Union was no more, the Alliance's two other original if unspoken mandates still held: to deter the rise of militant nationalism and to provide the foundation of collective security that would encourage democratisation and political integration in Europe."* (NATO, 2018) NATO's sheer size at that point enabled it to establish a new ontological claim based on its newly emerging narrative; NATO was not anymore, a mere platform for military cooperation among its members. Instead, the alliance could now be described as a multilateral entity that was composed of the individual narratives

each member-state offered, bonded all together via the espoused value of liberalism. Thus, one of the most significant variables that aided this shift was the absence of a common enemy. The western-centric narrative was: *"[...] tied in with the external threat of the Soviet Union and the internal threat of Communism, which were interlinked in that the Russian Army's presence in European countries were seen as an exacerbating factor in the spread of Communism across Europe."* (Vuorelma, 2016) As Carl Schmitt claimed within his work, the first step of security is the friend-enemy distinctions. According to him: *"the essence of sovereignty is located in the state's decision on the existence of the enemy and the situation of imminent, existential danger to which this figure gives rise to."* (Jones, 2007) The argument that could be withdrawn from Schmitt is that by defining something like an actual threat that has to be included on the security agenda of a state, then it is bound to become an exception. The exception in the case of NATO was strategic unity among its members, regardless of their commitment to liberal viewpoints. Thus, for NATO to survive, the first aspect was that it had to equally adapt its Cold War-era narrative. A position that was still associated towards the Soviet Union had to be adopted as an organization that via the support of its members, aimed to include new members in the hope of sharing a common strategic and political vision. Thus, the democratic criteria for entering NATO became even more important. Celeste A. Wallander explains: *"In the face of these challenges, NATO sought to leverage the desire for membership to encourage political reforms by requiring that new members meet its standards for good governance. This decision was based on the belief that liberal institutions, practices, and values would prevent a return to the nationalist, nativist, extremist, and intolerant dynamics that had driven destructive conflicts in Europe for centuries. To foster security within Europe, NATO required that new members leave authoritarian practices behind."* (Wallander, 2018)

Furthermore, Wallander suggests that NATO's democratic rhetoric played a crucial role in the survival of the organization after the absence of a common threat. The shared narrative regarding liberalism and democracy among the members has proven crucial to the sustenance of the organizations capacity to conduct security operations. The organization at that phase could be described: *"As an institution, NATO seems like a band of warriors in search of an enemy or, lacking that, some other plausible justification for its existence. But that is not an easy assignment."* (Binder, 2012) Practically, the military characteristics of each country are crucial to NATO's geostrategic presence; however, the level of political cohesion among its members is equally fundamental. In recent years, NATO's cohesion was proven especially under the premise that someone invoked article 5 of its founding treaty. The War on Terror that the U.S. declared after the 9/11 attacks, gathered the support from most alliance members that directly responded to the triggering of article 5. Nevertheless, Binder states that this was the only time the article was actually used: *"In fact article 5 was invoked only by the United States – one day after the 11 September 2001."* (Binder, 2012)

Article 5

The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defence recognised by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area. Any such armed attack and all measures taken as a result thereof shall immediately be reported to the Security Council. Such measures shall be terminated when the Security Council has taken the measures necessary to restore and maintain international peace and security.

(NATO, The North Atlantic Treaty - Washington D.C. - 4 April 1949, 9)

However, the military operations that occurred in 2011 to oust military dictator Muammar al-Gaddafi in Libya proved that dynamic action could occur without the presence of article 5. In fact, a commitment to the liberal values proved to be the fundamental axiom and criterion on

which NATO in cooperation with the UN pushed forward a military attack against the Libyan regime. (Zenko, 2011) The dominant argumentation presented by both international actors was within the context of human rights violations and the severe undermining of democratic principles. (Fermor, 2013)

So how Turkey's recent change of narrative upon its democratic principles influence its relationship with NATO?

Following the prolegomena mentioned above, NATO phenomenally perceives till today Turkey as an ally, that is committed towards a mutual pathway on liberal values. More than that, NATO is not a stranger to Turkey's extreme fluctuations between authoritarianism and democracy, having co-existed allied with the country throughout all its military coups. To extend this angle a bit further, NATO has also included members in the past, that was dictatorial. The Portuguese government was under the dictatorship of Antonio de Oliveira Salazar till 1974 (Wheeler, 1977) and Greece by the military junta of George Papadopoulos from 1967 to 1974 (Kassimeris, 2006). Coming back to the argument referring to the identification of a threat, NATO within the Cold War period could be more flexible towards the democratic criteria in the interests of empowering the military capacity of the alliance. This stance was also applied similarly in the cases of Turkey' military coups, all of which were within the spectrum of the pre-NATO narrative. All, except the 2016 attempt against Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

NATO, politically speaking, could keep ignoring the increasing reports on violations regarding freedom of expression, unlawful imprisonment, torture and ill-treatment in custody (Roth, 2017), under the pretext of respecting the 'State of Emergency Measures' aimed to resolve the internal crisis. Having shown support to the current administration right after the coup, even on a lectical level, alleviated a certain amount of friction. Conversely, though, the

direct antithesis regarding the democratic values of each country could backfire for NATO's systemic collection of narratives among its members. NATO cannot ignore Turkey's recent shift, because authoritarianism has enabled Erdogan to strengthen the person-centric approach to his administration (Hewitt, 2011). That directly develops an intermediate link among Turkey as a country and Erdogan as a leader. This authoritarian shift, enables him to strengthen this bond by associating policy moves as direct extensions of his vision. What becomes though problematic, is that due to this stronger connection, President Erdogan has to constantly prove his efficiency and strength both internally and externally, since it is directly correlated to the country's image. Thus, the very moment NATO will oppose his rhetoric Erdogan will politically have to prove his strength by opposing the status quo. (Genc, 2018) This study suggests that it is only a matter of time that NATO will publicly challenge the dictatorial trends of this administration. That supposition is already pushing the Turkish president to alter his centre of gravity towards partners that reflect similar tendencies. Wallander's exegeses are based on the viewpoint that: *"The situation today is different. With Russia mounting a renewed threat in Europe and beyond, there is an additional reason the institutions of liberal democracy are important to transatlantic security: illiberal and nondemocratic countries are more vulnerable to subversion. Authoritarianism enables corruption, and in Europe, corruption enables Russian access and influence. After Russia's 2014 intervention in Ukraine, the NATO members that were most affected by corruption, demagogic populism, and Russian media influence complicated the alliance's efforts to forge a unified response. Every time European sanctions against Russia have come up for renewal, the United States and other core allies have had to scramble to prevent these countries from breaking with NATO and succumbing to pressure or temptation from the Kremlin."*
(Wallander, 2018)

Chapter 5 - Contemporary Exogenous Factors

The goal of the two previous chapters was to identify the major factors that exert political pressure upon Turkey's relationship with NATO by analysing the internal and external political situation of the country during Erdogan's rule. More specifically, Chapter 3 and 4 attempted to illuminate the overall point that Turkey since the rise of the AKP has seen a rapid change in the dimensions of foreign policy, democratic values, and more importantly its overall narrative towards the West is starting to shift against it. What has been stated till this point is that the country is gradually shifting its long-term commitment to the west since its internal political values cannot sustain a credible and cohesive cooperation on a lectical level with its allies, specifically with NATO. Thereof, the primary aspect of this chapter will be to provide an analytical exegesis, by examining how the contemporary internal and external political environment of Turkey corresponds to the pre-established narrative that was expressed via the national security policy of the country and its position within the international arena. In order to do that, the main focus of this analysis will be directed into two major thematic categories [1] Russia & [2] The Kurdish policy. The decision to choose these two topics is grounded on the view that they are deeply interrelated to the Syrian conflict, and more importantly they are the two single factors that this analysis has identified as directly antithetic towards NATO's strategic interests within the region. When compared with other cases that could be identified as sources of friction towards Turkey's relationship with NATO, these two prevailed also due to the fact that they are not provisional phenomena. Essentially, the historical affiliation of Turkey towards the Kurdish population and the Russian state go way back. The following analysis will therefore be broken down into a distinct review of each case, and finally connect them to the impact they pose on NATO via the resent conflict in Syria.

Russia:

Russia and Turkey have clashed repeatedly in the past, having participated in many opposing conflicts. That alone is a significant variable towards the formulation of their strategic culture and positions throughout history. The connection of these two countries has always been paradoxical to say the least, but especially after the end of the Cold-War there have been overlapping interests in many domains and the gradual decrease of direct confrontations has followed. Interestingly, Turkey today seems to enjoy a relatively strong support from Russia in a variety of issues, and yet both seem to ignore the elephant in the room: NATO. Pavel Baev and Kemal Kirisci point out that one of the most conflictual variable for the countries is the presence of NATO. (Kirisci, 2017) As the previous chapters pointed out, Turkey, regardless of the current situation has been a strong member of the alliance since 1952, a variable that is not perceived greatly from Russia. Russia's relationship with NATO vastly deteriorated in the Kosovo War in 1999 and since then the relations have been getting worse. (Herd, 2015) That became blantantly clear after the outbreak of the Ukrainian conflict in Crimea in 2014. (Monaghan, 2016) NATO's worst fears were confirmed; Russia was re-adopting a Cold-War narrative, willing to overturn democratic alliances to dictatorships, and actively engage its military in order to secure its interests. NATO's official statement regarding the incident was clear: "Russia should, therefore, become a serious priority for the Alliance. " (Monaghan, 2016) That atmosphere of paranoia was further strengthened from NATO's position during the 2016 Warsaw Summit, raising clear concerns regarding Russian intentions in Middle Eastern scene. For NATO, Turkey under these circumstances was expected to fully support the positions taken towards the situation in the conflict, yet the AKP administration did not seem to follow through.

To provide some background context regarding the potential reasons behind Turkey's hesitation, deriving from chapter 3, Ahmet Davutoglu's 'zero problem with neighbours' was

severely tested in 2011 when the Syrian conflict broke out. Turkey at that time was still caught in a phase of promoting neutrality and stability. However, the rapid escalation of the violent events, and the rather immediate participation of their American NATO allies, pushed Erdogan to take a position. Thus, the then Prime Minister tried to use the circumstances towards his favour in order to drop the Assad regime and spread the Turkish interests within the region. That was apparently going relatively well, till Russia appeared however. The Russian intervention effectively shuttered Erdogan's hope for regional domination. It is explained that: *"[....] Russia's intervention at this juncture turned the tide of war in Assad's favor and debilitated opposition groups that Turkey was supporting. This left Erdogan bitterly frustrated – and it was against this background that the Russian bomber was shot down. [...]" (Kirisci, 2017)* The downing of the Russian Jet (BBC, Turkey's downing of Russian warplane - what we know, 2015)initially seemed to be a direct sign that Turkey and Russia were bound to increase the levels of their rivalry, and yet to the surprise of many tensions de-escalated almost immediately after the Russian forces withdrew on April 2016 (Kurc, 2016).

A few months later, the military coup against Erdogan occurred, and *"Turkey expressed its satisfaction with the unconditional support Russian President Vladimir Putin lent to the Turkish government in the wake of the July 15 failed coup attempt and vowed to speedily improve bilateral ties with Moscow after an eight-month rift."* (News, 2016) From that point on, the cooperation among Turkey and Russia drastically improved. As it was previously supported, (chapter 4) Erdogan's actions after the coup, were made in the context of securing and solidifying the position of the AKP. Nevertheless, that also included a stronger stance on authoritarianism, which till this very day is not perceived positively from neither the European Union nor NATO. At this crucial point however, President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin reasonably seemed to clearly support these tendencies. Erdogan's stronger grip on

power after the 2017 referendum, meant that the internal political structure of Turkey was steadily shifting towards a person-centric narrative. Erdogan had within this context to promote a 'strong-man' image. Therefore, the gradual favouring of Russia seemed a rational option under the premise that the politician was not in the constant position to justify his actions. Adding the factor that Turkey's accession negotiation within the European Union had completely frozen, Erdogan did not seem to have any political incentive to maintain and promote democratic principles. Reversely, Putin seems to perceive the Turkish President as *'[…] the master of Turkish politics, who knows how to mobilize his base and achieve the desired result. […] Putin appreciated his (Erdogan's) mistrust of NATO, seeing in this attitude an opportunity to disrupt the workings of the alliance." (Kirisci, 2017)*

The 'synchronised' narratives towards authoritarianism though are not the only ostensible level of a potential cooperation. To the contrary, someone could even argue that they materialised in the formulation of extended cooperation and support. Since, on December 29, 2017, Turkey proceeded to the official purchase of a sophisticated military equipment from Russia. (Aljazeera, 2018) The purchase of the Russian S-400 missile system has undoubtedly been the first form of direct confrontation against NATO since a very long time. The implications of this act, are particularly problematic for NATO, since the missile system is not technologically compatible with NATO hardware (Finkelstein, 2018). Directly implying that the Russian Federation would gain access to the higher levels of the Turkish Airforce, decreasing information sharing with NATO. This very incident according to Turkey, had nothing to do with NATO, and it should not be taken as a political message. On the other hand, General Petr Pavel, chairman of NATO's Military Committee, stated that: *"The principle of sovereignty obviously exists in acquisition of defence equipment, but the same way that nations are sovereign in making their decision, they are also sovereign in facing the consequences of that decision"* (Aljazeera, 2018) What worsened the situation exponentially

however, was the fact that Turkey has also ordered from the United States more than 100 F-35 planes (Ahval, Turkey turning to Russia for Su-57 jets a nightmare for NATO - analysis, 2018) Nicolas Saidel and Claire Finkelstein explain that the potential implications entail a situation, whereas: *"[…] a plane used by the US military. Equipped with the S-400, Turkey would be able to determine how best to track and lock-on to the F-35, information that could then be shared with NATO enemies."* (Finkelstein, 2018). Clearly, that has raised many concerns, reaffirming in the eyes of many the positions examined in the Warsaw Summit of 2016 stating that Russia directly aimed to destabilize and disrupt the bonds among its member states. Interestingly enough, on May 2018, the US Congress passed a ban on Turkey's F-35 order under the pretext of the unlawful detainment of an American Pastor name Andrew Brunson, but more importantly due to the resent purchase of the Russian S-400 missile system (Ahval, Turkey condemns U.S. bill that could bar F-35 sale, 2018).These events can only undermine Turkey's already problematic relationship with the United States, having a direct impact to NATO as well. The final update while this dissertation was composed gathered from increasing reports, was that Turkey was willing once again to turn its attention towards the Russian Federation in case the F-35s were not delivered. More specifically, it is stated that there is quite possible that Turkey would seek to acquire the Russian fighting Jets SU-57s. Regardless whether this event will materialise or not, it would most certainly be a devastating blow towards NATO, since Russia would now be one of the most important military contractors to the country. It is clearly pointed out that: *"Turkey's purchase of Russian Su-57s would - for military and diplomatic reasons - be a nightmare scenario for NATO's security."* (Ahval, Turkey turning to Russia for Su-57 jets a nightmare for NATO - analysis, 2018)

Finally, this analysis recognises that even though the two states are currently sharing an ostensible alliance and cooperation it is not necessarily a long-term commitment. The

aforementioned events should not be construed as a solid proof of Turkey's complete shift towards Russia, but as extremely alarming indicators that a rift between Turkey and NATO is rapidly taking place. On a more vocal level, that became evident, when the French President Emmanuel Macron's negative comments regarding the Russo-Turkish relationship were answered back from the current Minister of Foreign Affairs Mevlut Cavusoglu, stating: *"Ankara and Moscow may think differently but Turkey's ties with Russia are too strong to be broken by France's president. We have strong ties with Russia"* (Erkuş, 2018)

The Kurdish Situation

As a direct follow-up from the previous section, NATO's narrative since the annexation of Crimea, has been directed towards the Russian Federation. Ironically, someone could argue that NATO found its long-lost enemy and with that: a new purpose. Having explained NATO's stance on democracy, it is relatively easy to see as to why Russia over the last few years has been portrayed from the military alliance as the epitome of all problems. Therefore, when the Russian Federation started to intervene in the Syrian conflict, directly confronting NATO-backed militias, Turkey's significance for the alliance became even higher. Therefore, it is crucial for NATO that Turkey continuous to strongly contribute in the conflict, without the Russian interference. Over the last three years it has proven to be a ridiculously complicated issue. For NATO: *"To encourage Turkey to remain a reliable NATO ally, the U.S. leadership need to demonstrate that it takes Turkey's security interests seriously, particularly in Syria. [...] Demonstrating sensitivity for Turkish security concerns is important for the success of this combination of encouragement and dissuasion [...]"* (Kirisci, 2017) That is something that has not occurred till this point. Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu emphasised on the fact that NATO has to 'hear more closely' on

Turkey's demands adding at the April 16th joint press conference in Ankara: *"NATO should meet Turkey's expectations as well. We expect [NATO] to meet our expectations regarding the issue of air defense,"* (Erkuş, 2018)

In retrospect, the Turkish government has always struggled with the Kurdish population allocated on the southern regions of the country. Servet Mutlu on a 1996 publication regarding the demographic elements of Turkey, estimated their present number by the time to range from 3 million to 15 million. (Mutlu, 1996) That is a massive number considering that the total population of Turkey according to the CIA Factbook in 2017 are estimated to be around 80,845,215 million. (CIA, 2017) Therefore, Turkey is extremely uneasy regarding the other Kurdish populations found within Iraq and Syria after the 2011 conflict. The fear of the Kurdish population derives from the potential emergence of a Kurdish state in the region, something that would directly contradict every aspect of the Turkish government. Erdogan has been observing closely the participation of the Americans and their support towards Kurdish militias within Syria. Kurc accurately explains that: *"Turkey fears an independent Kurdish state in both Syria and Iraq could appeals to Turkish Kurds in the Southeast Anatolia. Furthermore, the government fears that a strengthened Kurdish unity could alter the power balance during peace negotiations in Turkey. [...] Driven by security considerations and power struggle, Turkey positioned itself against strengthening Kurds in Syria".* (Kurc, 2016)

Therefore, the Turkish Military in 2016 under the Operation Euphrates Shield, actively started to confront paramilitary groups such as the Islamic State (ISIS), the Syrian Kurdish fighting forces (SDF) and the People's Protection Units (YPG) (Finkelstein, 2018). What is important for this analysis is the fact that the United States clearly supported the YPG by providing military equipment and training something that came developed greater friction within the NATO alliance. These events further escalated when the AKP started to re-engage

in a renewed conflict with the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) which has equally been condemned as a terrorist organisation from both NATO and Turkey. Nevertheless, because of the re-emergence of a conflict against the PKK, Turkey seems to consider that aiding any Kurdish group in the region, will only support their eventual cooperation. In fact, the AKP seems to perceive all these groups -to a certain extent- as potential allies for the PKK. These concerns further escalated in the new operation Erdogan conducted against the YPG titled 'Operation Olive Branch'. (Finkelstein, 2018)

NATO till this point does not seem to respond towards Erdogan's calls for support against terrorism , and that is exactly what angers the Turkish government: *"[…] it is distressing for the Turkish government to see that its allies fail to provide assistance in the -from the official Turkish point of view- legitimate fight against terrorism." (Balcı, 2013)*

Finally, it must be noted that during the unravelling of operation Euphrates, the Russian Federation was one of the actors that maintained a neutral stance towards Ankara's decision to increase its military in the region. Moscow knew that the Kurdish situation is crucial for the Turkish administration, since it embodies their worst possible fears in terms of National Security. On the other side, NATO in both operation Euphrates and Olive Branch has not been very supportive since it contradicts its strategic interests by maintaining some of these Kurdish militias on the region. Under the premise that the Syrian conflict will remain active, Russian interference and activity from Kurdish groups will remain. Consequently, NATO will either have to figure a way to circumvent these problems or confront Turkey's erratic stance.

Conclusion

The current study has examined whether Turkey could leave NATO. The anatomy of this conclusion is provided into a three-tiered approach: [1] a summary of the thematic examination that this dissertation has gone over, [2] the key findings and their interpretation and [3] final reflections of the author.

Summary

The dissertation has been gathering information on Turkey since October 2017. During the process of constructing it, as it was already mentioned, events with great political significance occurred constantly. The literature review, revealed that the most dominant combination of theoretical frameworks regarding Turkey was realism and constructivism. As far as realism is concerned the state centric approach initially seemed to be particularly helpful towards the justification of Turkey's military stance. Undoubtedly, Turkey possesses a massive military, making it the second largest force in NATO. Defensive realism perfectly captured the strategic reasoning behind Turkey's tendency to sustain such a big army. It also corresponded to the country's doctrine of national security policy, referring to the expressed need of the state to defend itself against the unstable and hostile neighbours it apparently had. The variations of offensive realism, equally reflected Turkey's more recent expansive policies in the region, but also it's rather aggressive stance towards the Syrian conflict. Notwithstanding this relatively rational framework of explanation, whether Turkey perceived its regional environment as a continuous stage of threats or an opportunity to expand, did not matter since the fact that the military establishment was so deeply connected to the societal structure of the country that could not be accurately described with structural realism. Therefore, the second theoretical approach was to implement analysis which was placed around constructivist argumentation of securitization. That specific set of lenses enabled the author to construct a more solid apprehension regarding Erdogan's recent steps towards

authoritarianism, since most of the recent actions taken by the AKP government were under the umbrella of having declared a 'state of emergency'. In that environment, the government was quick to identify plotters and terrorists, thereof providing the enemy distinction that Carl Schmitt refers to. Again however, the rapid flow of events that directly influenced the stance of the country did not seem to correspond within this theoretical framework, therefore the author decided not to use any 'fixed' theoretical interpretation. Instead the focus of the dissertation gradually started shifting to an event-based analysis which aimed to reflect the overall stance of the country. Having said that, the role of NATO was equally analysed via this approach and then gradually the focus was purely aimed on how to identify the major narrative that each actor reflected and see whether they were compatible. At this phase, the context of the narrative was the external attributes and policies from mainly Turkey's side. That step was necessary since it located that Attaturk's legacy of 'peace at home, peace in the world' still had a massive impact as an orienting principle for policy making procedures. Examining the recent attempts from the AKP to re-establish a more Islamic narrative without directly contradicting the pre-existing positions, led to the understanding that Turkey was trying to 're-invent' its identity. This overly ambitious set of foreign policies, pushed the country to gradually adapt a new Narrative. The key component of this narrative, was that it mainly aimed to transform Turkey as a compatible model of modern Islamism with strong Democratic elements. Proceeding to the second thematical section, the focus was directed towards the examination of the internal environment, and how the procedure of developing a new Narrative influenced the political situation within. The basic conclusion that was drawn observing Turkey's recent backslide to authoritarianism, derived to two major arguments as to why that occurred. The first point was that Turkey from an administrative view, sought to adapt democratic values, purely for the purpose of supporting the Copenhagen Criteria; the first stage of the European accession negotiations. The second point was mainly correlated to

the strong role of the military establishment within the political sphere. Historically, the army was perceived as the domestic stabilizing factor, which would protect the secular values established from Kemal Attaturk. However, the political establishment in order to reduce the power of the military, started to dismantle its hierarchy under the pretext that the country was sincerely trying to democratize. As it is well known by now, the accession process in the European Union is beyond 'frozen' and neither actor expects any change. Additionally, the actions taken against the army backfired and the government had to face a military coup in 2016. These two major consecutive events lead to the gradual transition to authoritarianism.

Within this period; starting from the rise of AKP in 2002 till now, NATO to a certain extent can be described as an observer. In fact, in multiple cases NATO did not object to the decisions Turkey sought to pursue. Turkey's overly ambitious foreign policy pushed the country into the role of a 'mediator' without being properly prepared to deal with most of the conflicts that occurred. Not to mention that the stance of neutrality was particularly erratic and absent in most of the attempts Turkey tried to intervene in the region. Consequently, Turkey after the coup, found itself with a democratic narrative that was non-existent. In addition, the narrative projected inside directly contradicted an equally paradoxical foreign policy that preached peace,but had to be adopted into an aggressive stance in order to efficiently tackle the spill-over effect from the Syrian conflict.

Key Findings - Points

- The latest coup had a massive impact on the internal political cohesion of the state indeed and reaffirmed strong authoritarian tendencies within the political narrative followed by the government. Additionally, the events that occurred after the coup reflected an image of a country that is not willing to turn back to liberalism.

- That has already established Turkey as a non-democratic country. The overall understanding of this analysis is that Turkey had never indeed been democratic. The Turkish administration had received any democratization policy and similar attempt towards Europeanization and vice versa. That had a negative impact on this process, since Turkey had turned towards democracy not based on purely societal or cultural aspects from within, but because it attempted to be more compatible towards the EU. Essentially, meaning that its democratic narrative was analogous to its relationship with the EU. In recent view of the various crisis that the country underwent, relations worsened, expectations decreased, and democracy at that point was perceived as a dispensable 'luxury.' It is suggested that Turkey will not seek to alter its narrative towards a democratic pathway, at least, if the current government is in place. Thus, the development of a new foreign security policy that will be synchronized towards the new narrative is a matter of time.

- Turkey is indeed not a democracy. Instead, the coup only reinforced and fastened the underlying rhetoric that the AKP seeks to enforce within the country. That is better illustrated via its relationship with the EU.

- The ontological narrative attributed to Turkey's contemporary narrative via the historical interpretation of the country's role in region, strongly supported the view that Turkey had to dynamically engage and intervene in conflicts that were not only bound within the limits of its sovereignty.

- The EU has pushed the country to take a more repressive tone, since at that point it does not expect any salvation or any possibility that it becomes an EU member, so 'it does not even have to pretend.' Moreover, the coup is relevant in proving that Erdogan is afraid; in his eyes, at this point, there is no other option than to behave in

that way. That is precisely why, concerning the Narrative, as long as the AKP is in power it will never go back, and it will keep increasing the aggressive tone.

- This study suggests that it is only a matter of time that NATO will publicly challenge the dictatorial trends of this administration. That supposition is already pushing the Turkish president to alter his centre of gravity towards partners that reflect similar tendencies.

- This analysis apprehends that even though the Russia and Turkey are currently sharing an ostensible alliance and cooperation it is not necessarily a long-term commitment. The aforementioned events should not be construed as a solid proof of Turkey's complete shift towards Russia, but as extremely alarming indicators that a rift between Turkey and NATO is rapidly taking place.

- Finally, the Kurdish conflict within the context of Turkey's involvement in Syria, is bound to exercise the greatest levels of friction with NATO.

Final Reflections

The author of this dissertation concludes to the apprehension that Turkey's exit from NATO is gradually turning into a very realistic outcome. It is still too early to fully assess and definitively confirm whether this partnership will end. Quintessentially this dissertation does not claim that Turkey will leave NATO. But it supports that there are very strong indicators within the last decade, strongly suggesting that it would not be unrealistic to believe that. The more, Turkey turns towards authoritarianism, the more difficult it is for NATO to continue its support to the country. Turkey's stubbornness to maintain a particularly ineffective foreign policy will greatly impact the future of its diplomatic relationship, not only with NATO, but with every actor within its region.

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