

**IDENTITY SECURITY AND TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY IN  
THE POST-COLD WAR PERIOD: Relations with the EU,  
Greece and the Middle East**

**A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**by**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Since the establishment of the republic in 1923 there has never been a consensus over Turkey's national identity, either internally or externally. Westernization was a top-down project that fostered societal resistance from the outset and which received only partial recognition from the West itself. The end of the Cold War has further intensified the debates over Turkish identity both in Turkey itself and in the wider world.

This thesis examines the implications of a complex and insecure identity for Turkey's political development and in particular its ability to develop an international role commensurate with its size and capabilities. In doing so, it demonstrates the connection between different notions of Turkish identity and foreign policy preferences whilst emphasising also the important role of the international institutional context (for example membership of NATO and the EU) in shaping the preferences of diverse state/societal actors within Turkey in the post-Cold War period. The focus in this regard is on the military, political parties and business/civil-society groups.

The thesis engages recent debates between constructivists and rationalists and argues that a constructivist account of Turkish foreign policy is more helpful than a rationalist explanation, through the case studies of Turkey's relations with the EU, Greece and the Middle East in the post-Cold War period. It shows how rational actor assumptions operate within a constructivist context and aims to shed light on the relationship between identity, political interests and foreign policy. The thesis also demonstrates that an insecure identity is a barrier to pursue consistent foreign policy goals, thereby lending support to the view that a secure identity is a condition of developing a stable and influential role in the post-Cold War system.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

ANAP= Anavatan Partisi (Motherland Party)

AKP= Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Justice and Development Party)

CHP= Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (Republican People's Party)

CTP= Cumhuriyetçi Türk Partisi (Republican Turkish Party)

DYP= Doğru Yol Partisi (True Path Party)

İKV= İktisadi Kalkınma Vakfı (Economic Development Foundation)

MGK= Milli Güvenlik Kurulu (National Security Council)

MÜSİAD= Müstakil İşadamları Derneği (Independent Businessmen Association)

PASOK= Panelliniko Sosialistikó Kínima (Pan-Hellenic Socialist Party)

RP= Refah Partisi (Welfare Party)

TESEV= Türkiye Ekonomik ve Sosyal Etüdler Vakfı (The Turkish Economic & Social Studies Foundation)

TRNC= Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus

TSK= Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri (Turkish Armed Forces)

TÜSİAD= Türkiye Sanayici ve İşadamları Derneği (Turkish Industrialists and Businessmen Association)

UBP= Ulusal Birlik Partisi (National Union Party)

CEECs= Central and Eastern European Countries







## **INTRODUCTION:**

Turkey's geographical and cultural location at the crossroads of different continents, civilisations and religions may in principle endow Turkey with unique credentials to play a key role in international relations. Turkey is the only Muslim-majority country in the world which is secular, democratic and pro-Western. With these credentials, it is the strongest case which can disprove the prevalent idea in the West that Islam and democracy are incompatible. In this sense, it is often thought as an ideal role-model for other Islamic nations. The potential benefits of such a role are particularly great given the sense that the 9/11 attacks on the United States have, as Taşpınar noted, 'turned the implausible scenario of a "clash of civilisations" into a "self-fulfilling" prophecy'.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, in 1993 Samuel Huntington classified Turkey as a 'torn country' whilst at the same time noting that it would be a decisive state in his controversial claims regarding a projected future clash of civilisations.<sup>2</sup> For this reason, understanding the dynamics of decision-making in Turkish foreign policy is crucial for predicting the future relationship between the West and the Islamic world.

Whilst the 1990-91 Gulf War and the 9/11 attacks did restore Turkey's geo-political importance after the end of the Cold War, Ankara has not been able to play the sort of pro-active foreign policy role many would like. In the past two decades, Turkish politics entered a period of instability which is manifest in rising tension between the military and the civilians, short-lived coalition governments until 2002, an ongoing civil war with the Kurdish separatist movement, the rise of both Turkish and Kurdish nationalism and the deepening of the polarisation between secularist Kemalists and Islamists in the country. Indeed, the Western media started to talk about the existence of two different Turkeys, namely European Turkey and Asia Minor.<sup>3</sup> In this context, Turkey has pursued an ambivalent foreign policy particularly towards the European Union (EU) and the Middle East.

This thesis will illustrate how Turkey's complex and insecure identity threatens its stability, slows down its political development and prevents the formulation of a consistent and effective foreign policy which would allow the country to develop an international role

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<sup>1</sup> Taşpınar, O. (2005), *Kurdish Nationalism and Political Islam in Turkey: Kemalist Identity in Transition*, (New York: Routledge), p.4

<sup>2</sup> Huntington, S. P. (1996), *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, New York, Simon & Schuster)

<sup>3</sup> See New York Times, '30000 protest Islamic hue in Turkish System', 15 April 2007

commensurate with its size and capabilities. In doing so, it will draw on constructivist approach since Turkey does not fit the static model of a stable state with relatively fixed interests that characterize rationalist approaches. National interests are understood differently by diverse groups and are pursued through defining or re-defining a collective/social identity for Turkey. Over the past two decades, Turkish foreign policy emerged as a platform in which rival identity claims have been contested in the context of enhanced polarisation between the country's two major political/social identities, namely secularist Kemalists and Islamists. At this point, it should be noted that these identities are neither monolithic nor fixed. Secularism and Islamism in Turkey is understood in a variety of ways. Moreover, Kemalists and Islamists have been transforming themselves according to changing internal and external contexts.

By Islamists, this thesis will refer to those parties whose founders come from the 'national view movement' (*milli görüş*) which embraced ambiguous references to the Ottoman past, disapproved of further rapprochement towards Europe, and called instead for closer economic co-operation with the Muslim countries. In recent years, the secular tone in the discourse of Islamists, represented by the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP*) has gradually become more intense. Indeed, the AKP emerged as an ardent advocate of Turkey's EU membership. Nonetheless, the party is still called Islamist by many scholars due to the roots of its founders and its attempts to make more space for faith-based lives under secular conditions. For these reasons, this thesis will also consider the AKP as an Islamic-based party.

On the other hand, the two terms, "Kemalists" and "secularists" will be used interchangeably throughout the thesis and cover such institutions and actors as the bureaucracy, the military, the judiciary and the Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, CHP*) which see secular nationalism as the main vehicle for Turkey's modernization.<sup>4</sup> This camp perceives religion as an individual issue and disapproves of religious expressions such as wearing the Islamic headscarf in the public sphere. In recent years, as the Islamists became increasingly pro-EU, the secularists who have traditionally underlined the need to Westernize in order to modernize the country, started ironically to adopt a reactionary position emphasizing national independence and showing signs of Euro-skepticism. The swift and unexpected policy change of the Islamists towards the EU generated suspicions among

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<sup>4</sup> Yavuz, H. (1997), 'Turkish-Israeli Relations through the Lens of the Turkish Identity Debate'. *Journal of Paletsine Studies* XXVII, No. 1, p. 23

the secularists who were very much worried that the AKP can take advantage of the EU-related reforms in order to implement a ‘hidden agenda’ which would undermine secularism in Turkey.

Before concentrating on how Turkey’s interaction with the EU is interpreted by the country’s diverse identities and how these interpretations influence the formulation of Turkish foreign policy, the first two chapters will provide a theoretical and historical background for the thesis. Chapter one will firstly discuss the emergence of constructivism as a ‘middle ground’ in IR theory as well as its variants. Subsequently, the discussion will shift to the ontological contributions of the approach. This section will focus on (i) the role of identity in the construction of preferences, threat perceptions and alliances and (ii) the constitutive role of norms and international institutions. The discussion on international institutions will concentrate on the EU given its transforming effect on Turkey.

In accordance with this theoretical background, chapter two will examine the origins of identity insecurity in Turkey and show how diverse identities emerged in the country in a historical setting. Although the main focus of this thesis is on the post-Cold War period, a historical background is essential to understand the dynamics of recent issues in Turkey considering the fact that identity debates in the country date back to the late Ottoman period. Although Kemalists won the argumentative battle over Turkey’s national identity in the early 1920s, rival claims remained strong and continued to influence Turkish foreign policy behaviour through hindering the country’s political development, shaping societal perceptions and in general affecting political debates. The chapter will draw particular attention to the role of regional identities in the problematization of Turkish national identity.

Following these two introductory chapters, the rest of the thesis will provide a systematic analysis of Turkey’s important foreign policy issues by examining the background social, economic, ideological and domestic political factors which influence and in some cases shape the course of its foreign policy. Three case studies, namely relations with the EU, Greece and the Middle East, were selected to support the thesis. The special focus of these chapters will be on how Turkey’s interaction with these regions/countries are interpreted by the members of its two major political/social identities, namely Kemalists (secularists) and Islamists and how these interpretations affect the perception of Turkey’s national interests and the formulation of Turkish foreign policy.

Chapter three will concentrate on Turkey’s relations with the EU in the post-Cold War period. In doing so, it will firstly explore the relationship between Turkey’s insecure identity and the pace of its ‘Europeanization’ process by analyzing the development of civil-

military relations and civil society in the country. Subsequently, the discussion will shift to the perceptions and positions of diverse political parties in both Europe and Turkey regarding the Turkish accession to the EU. The aim is showing how the perceptions of actors in each side concerning the 'other' as a threat or a challenge to its own identity and their interpretation of the other's behaviours accordingly influence the relations between Turkey and the EU. Finally, the impact of insecure identity on Turkey's cultural policy will be explored since it is central to the projection of Turkey's image in Europe.

Chapter four will analyze how different institutional contexts influenced the development of Turkey's identity and re-shaped its foreign policy towards Greece. Since the Cyprus issue constitutes the biggest problem between the two neighbours, and has been particularly important for Turkey's domestic politics, the main focus of this chapter will be developments regarding the Cyprus problem in the post-Cold War period. In the second part of the chapter, the discussion will analyze the Turkish Cypriot identity formation and the development of a struggle between ethnic identity (i.e. Turkish nationalism) and regional identity (i.e. Cypriot patriotism) among the community. This issue which has a significant impact on the relationship between Ankara and the Turkish Cypriots and thereby on the negotiating power of the Turkish side in the Cyprus peace talks has been largely overlooked in the current literature.

Chapter five will look at the relations between Turkey and the Middle Eastern countries with a special emphasis on the positions of diverse actors in Ankara. It aims to show how Turkish foreign policy towards this region has traditionally been formulated in a way that would secure the country's self-ascribed identity. Subsequently, it will explore how relations with the region have become another source of polarization between Turkey's diverse identities. Shifts in Turkey's positions towards the Arab-Israeli conflict is a particularly good case to examine the part played by different conceptions of Turkish identity amongst various groups within Turkey in the variation in Ankara's attitudes to what are quite fundamental issues of foreign policy.

By analyzing Turkey's foreign policy behaviour towards the EU, Greece and the Middle East in the post-Cold War period, this thesis will shed further light on the relationship between identity, interest and foreign policy and the capacity of the wider institutional context to influence these. It aims to demonstrate how insecure and unstable identity slows down a state's political development and aggravates the conditions for developing a stable and effective role in post-Cold War system. The thesis will extend earlier studies on Turkish foreign policy which adopted a constructivist approach by applying a more systematic

approach to domestic politics. This approach will shift our attention from a singular notion of national identity to a range of contesting identities at the domestic level and illustrate the impact of this contestation over Turkey's identity on the country's foreign policy behaviour and influence in world politics. In keeping with the theoretical interest in how international institutions may shape and transform notions of identity and privilege some groups over others, special focus will be on how Turkey's interactions within the EU context are interpreted by the country's diverse groups and how these interpretations affect the formulation of Turkish foreign policy.

## **RESEARCH DESIGN:**

This section outlines the research design used in this PhD thesis. It will firstly focus on the reasons for choosing the case study approach as the research strategy of the thesis. This includes the justification of the selected cases, namely Turkey's relations with the EU, Greece and the Middle East. Subsequently, the focus will shift to the explanation and justification of the range of sources used. A discussion of the extent to which general claims can be made on the basis of the material included in the thesis will then bring the section to a close.

## **RESEARCH STRATEGY:**

The aim of this thesis is to make a contribution to understanding the complex links between different notions of Turkish identity and foreign policy preferences and how contestations over national identity influences the formulation and direction of Turkish foreign policy in the post-Cold War period. As a method of data selection, the case study approach has been chosen for this thesis. A case study approach is a favoured strategy when "how" and "why" questions are being posed and when the research deals with complex and ambiguous phenomena which contain a large number of variables and relationships, and are difficult to overview and predict.<sup>5</sup> Without any doubt, Turkish foreign policy is influenced by a large number of variables including Turkey's historical experiences, its geo-political and geo-strategic location, and the existence of domestic contestation between its diverse social groups on the question of its national and collective identity. Furthermore, it is impossible to provide a complete account of Turkish foreign policy in the post-Cold War period without analyzing the demands of systemic and regional changes on the country's foreign relations. Considering all these factors, choosing the case study approach fits well with the nature and aims of this thesis.

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<sup>5</sup> See Gummesson, E. (2007), "Case Study Research," in Gustavsson, B., ed., *The Principles of Knowledge Creation Methods*, (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar)

## **SELECTION OF CASE STUDIES:**

While much case study research focuses on a single case, most-multiple case designs are likely to generate stronger findings due to the possibility of multiple confirmation of the findings and the ability to draw out a degree of nuance or variation on a theme. Nevertheless, when using a multiple-case design, a major question is how many cases are necessary or sufficient to satisfy the objectives of the research? According to Yin, two or three cases can be sufficient when the rival theories which propose explanations for the study subject are greatly different.<sup>6</sup>As the literature review will show, most scholars studied Turkish foreign policy from a rationalist perspective by fixing security as the main foreign policy goal of Turkey and focusing principally on external structural imperatives as the main determinant of Turkish foreign policy. On the other hand, scholars who adopted the constructivist approach emphasized identity conceptions of political elites as the main determinant of Turkish foreign policy. Considering the great difference between rationalist and constructivist accounts of Turkish foreign policy, three cases are sufficient to satisfy the objectives of this study.

As a country located on the cultural boundary between the West and the Islamic world, Turkish foreign policy in the post-Cold War period has two major dimensions, namely the Western and the Eastern. Historically, based on the Western-inspired reforms of Atatürk, Turkey had placed great emphasis on its relationship with the Western world. In line with this traditional Western orientation, relations with Europe have always been a central part of Turkish foreign policy. The other defining aspect of Turkey's Western-oriented foreign policy has been its close ties with the United States. Out of these two important branches of the Western dimension of Turkish foreign policy, the investigator chose to focus on the country's relations with the EU as the first case study.

The relationship with the EC/EU has been a core feature of Turkish foreign policy since the 1960s. Since the end of Cold War, Turkey has fostered close political, economic and cultural relations with Europe through establishing several institutional links with the EU. It signed a customs union agreement with the Union in 1995 and since then trading relations have steadily increased such that trade with the EU comprised 59 percent of Turkish exports and 52 percent of Turkish imports in 2005. Turkey was officially recognized as a candidate for full membership in 1999 and started to negotiate membership with the Union in 2005. Since 2003, Turkey has participated in all CSDP (Common Security & Defence

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<sup>6</sup> Yin, R. K. (2003), *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, (London: Sage Publications), p.51

Policy)<sup>7</sup> operations and missions to which it has been invited. Indeed, most of these operations and missions were within Turkey's immediate neighbourhood. Nevertheless, Turkey's relationship with the EU does not only take place in the form of economic and military cooperation but also on the civil society level such as in the organization of business groups. The transnational interaction between Turkey and the EU in the personal, cultural and educational areas has also shown a dramatic rise in the past years.

The increasing density and volume of political, social, and cultural relations between the EU and Turkey in particular, given the deeper historical context in which Europe has been the traditional 'other', make it a valuable case for exploring the connections between issues of foreign policy and identity-based politics domestically. Indeed the focus on relations with Europe is also valuable as processes of Europeanization have themselves challenged those notions of Westernization that were implicit in relations with the United States. When compared with Turkey's relations with the United States, the EU case is also prospectively interesting in that the more politically and socially invasive nature of this relationship ought to allow for the examination of the role of international institutions and norms in changing notions of identity and interest for different Turkish actors/groups.

The second case study, namely relations with Greece, is particularly significant due to the fact that both states went to war in 1974 over Cyprus and there remain a number of conflicts between the two states in the Aegean Sea. Hence the relationship carries with it a lot of political and military sensitivities. Besides this, since Greek Cypriot accession to the EU in 2004, Cyprus has proved a significant obstacle to Turkey's own foreign policy goal of achieving EU membership. Indeed, and without wishing to prejudice the argument, the Cyprus case is one of the areas in which the different position promoted by the AKP is apparent. Traditionally, Cyprus was represented as vital to Turkey's national security due to its closeness to the Turkish mainland and consequently as a potential source of a fatal threat to Turkey. Until recent years, the Cyprus issue remained confined to the military, and the policy of Turkey towards the island was to be based on military considerations. Nevertheless, in 2002, the AKP government recognised the need for a solution to the Cyprus dispute, contrary to the traditional opinion of "no solution is the solution" and subsequently backed the Annan Plan and encouraged the Turkish Cypriots to approve the re-unification in April 2004 referendum.

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<sup>7</sup> CSDP was formerly known as ESDP (European Security & Defence Policy)



As the resolution of the Cyprus problem would significantly facilitate the opening of entry negotiations between Turkey and the EU, the shift in Ankara's Cyprus policy can be ascribed to the AKP's commitment to the EU accession process. In any case, it is significant that the opening of EU negotiations was regarded as more important than the maintenance of the decades-old state policy in regards to Cyprus. The AKP supported a total transformation of approach to the issue, which was a fly in the face of the military, much of the ministries of Foreign Affairs and the Presidency.<sup>8</sup> Accordingly, the eventual adoption of a completely new policy on Cyprus in 2004, which is one of the most striking signs of the transformation that Turkish foreign policy has gone through in recent years, enables us to examine whether this transformation in Turkish foreign policy can be traced to changing notions of identity and interest under the AKP government.

While keeping its commitment to the goal of EU membership, Turkish foreign policy also sought to enhance its Eastern dimension during the post-Cold War period. In the new international order, Turkey's geostrategic importance shifted because of its proximity to the Middle East, and the Turkic republics in Central Asia and the Caucasus. Of these two, the investigator chose to focus on the Middle East. Firstly, whilst the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the emergence of Turkic republics in Central Asia and the Caucasus did raise enthusiasm for a leadership role for Turkey in this region, this did not last long. The persistence of lingering obstacles to cooperation from the Soviet era seemingly led the cause of pan-Turkism to be abandoned. Indeed, in light of the country's orientation towards the EU and its preoccupation with Iraq, the PKK and the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Caucasus and Central Asia only manage to rank third and fourth at best on Turkey's list of priorities. Turkish involvement in the Central Asian affairs remains relatively light compared to other major actors who are competing for influence in the region including Russia, Iran, China, the United States and the EU.

By contrast, the Middle East became increasingly important on the agenda of Turkish foreign policy in the post-Cold War period. During the 1990s, an intense debate emerged between the Kemalist vision of confrontation and the Islamist vision of engagement in regards to the Middle East. When the Islamist Welfare Party came to power in 1996, the government attempted to re-orient Turkish foreign policy towards the Islamic world. The secularists, notably the military, responded to these attempts by intensifying its ties with

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<sup>8</sup> Robins, P. (2007). 'Turkish Foreign Policy since 2002: between a 'post-Islamist; government and a Kemalist state'. In: *International Affairs* 83 (1).

Israel. Since coming to power in 2002, the AKP has been pursuing a very active foreign policy towards the Middle East. After decades of discreet disengagement from its Middle Eastern environment, Ankara has become an active player in the international politics of the region. This is reflected in a number of issues ranging from developments in Northern Iraq and the future of the Kurds to Ankara's pursuit to establish close links with Syria and Iran while emerging as a mediator between Israel and the Arabs. In brief, the Middle East emerged as the most important aspect of the Eastern dimension of Turkish foreign policy in the post-Cold War period. Considering the clash between the military and the Welfare Party, as well as the activism of the AKP, the relationship with the Middle East provides a valuable *prima facie* case for examining the part played by different conceptions of Turkish identity amongst various groups within Turkey in the variation in attitudes to what are quite fundamental issues of foreign policy.

The second reason for choosing the Middle East over Central Asia & the Caucasus is the fact that the secularist-Islamist distinction has clearly been the most important political cleavage in the country since the end of Cold War. The highest percentage of the vote which the Nationalist Action Party (the main representative of those supporting Pan-Turkist ideas in Turkish foreign policy) managed to get has been 18 percent in 1999 elections. In 2002 elections, the party gained no seats in the Turkish Parliament since it failed to gain the necessary 10 percent of the vote. Finally, the relationship between Turkey and the Middle East is a more informative case for predicting the future of the relationship between the West and the Islamic world. Ankara's performance in being a role-model for democratization in the Middle East will be critical for avoiding future conflicts such as those envisaged in Samuel Huntington's "clash of civilizations".<sup>9</sup>

Overall, relations with the EU, Greece and the Middle East constitute the most salient aspects of Turkish foreign policy in the post-Cold War period. Hence, an in-depth analysis of these three cases will be sufficient to enhance our understanding of the relationship between Turkey's identity security, political development and foreign policy behaviour. Furthermore, the three cases are well interconnected and one of them cannot be adequately understood without consideration of the other. While Turkish-Greek relations are firmly embedded in the EU context, Turkey's interaction with the EU deeply influences its relations with the Islamic world.

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<sup>9</sup> Huntington, S. P. (1996), *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, New York, Simon & Schuster)

## THE CHOICE OF SOURCES:

The choice of a single data set has the risk of potential biases as the investigator could select data that is more beneficial to the original hypothesis. In order to avoid this bias, the data collection for this study will be based on a combination of different sources including an extensive survey of the books and scholarly journals in English and Turkish languages, newspaper sources, documents, interviews and an analysis of foreign policy discourses and representations in Turkey, Greece, Europe and the Middle East.

The literature review was used in order to establish the state of existing research on the selected cases in order to build upon this. More specifically, the literature review helped to identify; (i) the questions relevant to case studies, (ii) the gaps where original research is required, and (iii) opposing views.

Qualitative research rests upon understanding. The logic of qualitative research and the resulting need of methodical competence differ considerably from those relying on statistical evidence. As Finnemore pointed out, one can have indirect evidence of motivations for political action such as norms, interests and threats.<sup>10</sup> In this regard, the analysis of discourses taken with the aim of Turkey's appropriate and proper path of strategic development is especially useful for the study of social structures.<sup>11</sup> With the aim of understanding the possible evolution of identities in Turkey and the role of institutional norms in such processes, this thesis examined the changes in state practices as well as political discourses and justifications. The kind and the consistency of discourses that actors use help us in understanding the motivations behind their practices. Since justifications are an attempt to link one's actions to standards of appropriate and acceptable behaviour, their analysis sheds light on what these internationally held standards are and how they may change over time.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Finnemore, M and Sikkink, K. (1998), 'International Norm Dynamics and Political Change', *International Organization*, Vol.52, No.4, p.892

<sup>11</sup> Modified from Johnson D. & Johnson R.T, (2000), 'Civil Political Discourse in a Democracy: The Contribution of Psychology', *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, Volume 6, Issue 4, p.29

<sup>12</sup> Finnemore, M. (1996), 'Constructing Norms of Humanitarian Intervention', in *The Culture of National Security*, ed. Katzenstein, p. 159

Apart from political discourses, the case studies also looked at the discourses and representations in Turkey's and other relevant countries' history education, media, arts, literature and popular culture. History education is perhaps the most important channel through which national identities and their associated enemy perceptions are transmitted to the public opinion. The media also plays a significant role in shaping public opinion and national identity conceptions whilst the arts, literature and popular culture are very important channels through which negative or positive images of the 'other' are conveyed to current and future generations.

The case study chapters used a wide range of Turkish and international newspapers and internet news sources. An important concern with media data is related to the number and extent of bias involved in journalists' selection process which affects the validity of observation. In order to avoid this bias, the investigator used articles from several national newspapers in Turkey including *Hürriyet*, *Milliyet*, *Radikal*, *Zaman*, *Cumhuriyet* and *Sabah*. These newspapers are divided on ideological lines. Out of three mainstream newspapers which are controlled by Mr. Aydın Doğan, *Hürriyet* and *Milliyet* are more nationalist/secularist while *Radikal* is more liberal. *Zaman*, another popular paper supported by followers of the Islamic leader Fethullah Gülen, caters mostly to religious conservatives, and is largely supportive of the AKP. Another important newspaper, *Sabah*, was recently sold to a holding firm, Çalık, seen as close to the AKP. *Cumhuriyet*, a relatively small and serious paper, caters to the old-guard secular elite.

Apart from news sources, the investigator also conducted some semi-structured interviews in Ankara and Istanbul with some representatives from Turkish political parties, business associations and civil society organizations. Most questions of the interviews were pre-determined which were asked in a systematic and consistent order. Nonetheless, the interviewees were permitted to probe far beyond the answers to their prepared standardized questions. Interviewees were sometimes asked to elaborate their answers. Moreover, some unscheduled but relevant questions had arisen from interactions during the interviews as well.

Finally, the case studies also made use of some official reports and archival records such as the European Commission documents, Euro-barometer surveys, and data from Turkish Statistical Institute. In brief, this thesis used a range of different sources in two languages. The methodological objective is to undertake an analysis emphasizing broader contextualization, focusing on the logic of contestation, inclusion and exclusion, and the relationship between the political, societal and media discourse and the actual political behaviour. The thesis thus seeks to offer an appropriately detailed and empirical political-

economic, socio-cultural, institutional, historical and discursive analysis of Turkey's most important foreign policy issues in the post-Cold War period.

### **GENERALIZABILITY:**

An important concern regarding the scientific value of case studies is the question of generalizability. Generalizability refers to the capacity of the case to be informative about a general phenomenon, to be broadly applicable beyond the specific site, time and circumstances studied.<sup>13</sup> For many this is an unnecessary concern since there is clearly a scientific value to gain from examining some single category of individual, group or society simply to gain an understanding of that individual, group or society. Nevertheless, case studies do not only inform us about a specific individual, group or society but also provide understanding about similar individuals, groups and societies.<sup>14</sup> This project does not aim to generalize across time and space. Rather it aims to understand the different factors underlying Turkish political-society in the post-Cold War period. This said, and although Turkey constitutes a unique case due to its history and geography, there may well be lessons to be learned for other countries from the Turkish experience. Turkey shared similar nation-building experiences with many countries in the world. Moreover many countries possess problematic and insecure identities similar to the Turkish case. In this regards, this research aimed to be helpful for the understanding of the relationship between identity, interests, and state behaviour and influence in international relations. Research on the political development and foreign policy choices of other societies in which identity is highly contested between diverse groups will be helpful for a better understanding of this important question in international relations. Link by link, case by case, construction of meaning by the researchers is how case study contributes to social science and society.

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<sup>13</sup> Mabry, L. (2008). Case study in social research. In *Handbook of Social Research Methods*, P. Alasuutari, L. Bickman, & J. Brannen (Eds.), ( London: Sage), p.222

<sup>14</sup> Berg, B. L. (2007), "Case Studies" in *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences: International Edition*, (Boston: Allyn & Bacon), p.295

## **LITERATURE REVIEW:**

Although some international relations scholars predicted that the end of Cold War would make Turkey less important, international events, most notably the 1990-91 Gulf War and the 9/11 attacks, restored the country's geopolitical importance. In this context, Turkish foreign policy since the end of Cold War has been a subject of interest as it has never been before; thus quite a few books and articles have been published on the topic in recent years. However, only a few of them have presented overall studies of Turkish foreign policy.

Most scholars approached the issue from a rationalist perspective by fixing security as the main foreign policy goal of Turkey and focusing merely on external structural imperatives as the main determinant of Turkish foreign policy. Only a small share of research in this area dealt with the impact of identity and domestic factors. However, most of those lacked a solid theoretical foundation and analytical framework, which significantly weakened their arguments. This chapter aims to critically review the current literature on the Turkish foreign policy of the post-Cold War period.

In his comprehensive study William Hale summarised the evolution of Turkey's external relations from 1774 to 2000. He assumed Turkey as a middle power and argued that Turkey's alliance with other states or its neutrality is determined by the international system. Hale acknowledged the fact that Turkish identities became more pluralist after the 1960s. However, he claimed that this would not prevent Turkey from pursuing a coherent foreign policy.<sup>15</sup> Since he defines power in rationalist terms, Turkey's identity pluralism would not have an influence on the power and role of Turkey in the international arena. Hale predicted that Turkey will continue to identify itself with the West in the foreseeable future, while maintaining good relations with the Islamic world for pragmatic reasons. Although his book is a very comprehensive and authoritative study, Hale understated the domestic dynamics of Turkish foreign policy.

Alternative claims to national identity have influenced Turkish foreign policy behaviour not only through hindering Turkey's political development, but also through shaping perceptions and affecting political debates in the country. The influence of rival sub-national identities became even more significant in the post-Cold War period due to the rise

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<sup>15</sup> See Hale, W. (2000), *Turkish Foreign Policy 1774-2000*, (London: Frank Cass Publishers), p. 333

of identity politics and tension between the state and society. These developments have transformed Turkish foreign policy into a platform of contestation between diverse sub-national identities with distinct interpretations of national interest. This contestation has been influencing the way Turkey formulates its foreign policy especially in regards to Europe and the Middle East. Turkey's policy toward European integration as well as to cooperation in the Middle East has been ambivalent due to its insecure and contested identity. As a result, it could not develop a strong sense of reputation, trust and a collective identity with either region which unsurprisingly complicates its relations with these regions.

Another text which followed a rationalist approach is *Turkish Foreign Policy in the Post Cold War Era*, edited by İdris Bal. Most authors of this book agreed on the idea that Ankara's Turkish foreign policy is determined by structural factors. Only Dirk Rohtus focused on some ideational factors and argued that the Kemalist paradigm has not changed much since the days of Atatürk, thus is incompatible with basic principles and concepts of the European Union (EU). He believes that with the final break-up of Kemalism, Turkish foreign policy will be liberated from its security-oriented approach. The rest of the book is dominated by diplomatic history, and many chapters lack a theoretical framework.

By mainly drawing on a neo-realist approach, Ahmet Davutoğlu, in his book, *Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu (Strategic Depth: The International Position of Turkey)* aimed to offer new alternatives to Turkish foreign policy. According to him, Turkey is on the edge of a historic crossroad and should combine "its historical and geographical depth with rational strategic planning,"<sup>16</sup> in order to take advantage of local and global sources of dynamism and play a greater role in international politics. He claimed that Turkey has no option to be a peripheral player since it is located at the centre of world politics and thus destined to play a central role. Calling on Turkey to "rediscover its historic and geographic identity" which its traditional foreign policy neglected, Davutoğlu advocated an assertive foreign policy orientation.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, this assertiveness is built on "zero-problem strategy" in regard to relations with Turkey's neighbours. With its wide-ranging topics and alternative approaches, this book is a major complementary source to understand the dynamics of Turkish foreign policy. Nevertheless, Turkey's relations with its neighbours include serious identity issues. Besides, Davutoğlu suggested a new identity for Turkey to

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<sup>16</sup> Davutoğlu, A. (2001), *Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu (Strategic Depth: The International Position of Turkey)*, (Istanbul: Küre Yayınları), p.11

<sup>17</sup> Murinson, A. (2006), 'The Strategic Depth Doctrine of Turkish Foreign Policy', *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol.42, No.6, p.953

play a central role in world politics. Hence, his propositions could be better understood though a constructivist rather than a neo-realist theory framework.

Yücel Bozdağlıoğlu is one of the first scholars who adopted the core insights of the constructivist approach in his analysis of Turkish foreign policy behaviour. In his book (*Turkish foreign policy and Turkish identity*), he argued that throughout its modern history, Turkey's foreign policy has been influenced by its self-ascribed 'Western' identity which was created after the establishment of the republic. He offered a critique of the rational-choice literature on Turkish foreign policy and argued that Turkish foreign policy has been, and still is, determined by identity considerations, which are analyzed in terms of three competing formations: Western, Islamic and Nationalist. Bozdağlıoğlu mentioned an identity crisis in Turkey, which is understood as the inconsistency between the state's self-perception and the perception of Turkey by others. For him, the sources of Turkish identity crisis are the negative effects of the modernization project and the EU's reluctance to accept Turkey as a full member. Bozdağlıoğlu noted two important points to explain why constructivism offers a better explanation for Turkish foreign policy. First, Turkey started to identify herself with the West before the Soviet threat existed. Second, although cooperation with Iran and Iraq would be beneficial for Turkey in terms of solving the Kurdish problem, Turkey avoided cooperation with these states due to its own insecure identity.<sup>18</sup>

Bozdağlıoğlu's book is a remarkable reference for understanding the impact of Turkish identity on Turkish foreign policy. Nonetheless, it has some short-comings as well. First of all, the issue of identity in Turkey is more than a crisis which refers to a temporary situation. The quest for a new identity dates back to the first Westernization movements in the Ottoman Empire and continues to this day. Secondly, Bozdağlıoğlu ascribed the notion of identity to Turkish state and developed his argument by setting constructivism against neo-realism. However, national identity is not constructed only out of interstate interactions but also from the interpretations of such interactions by diverse social actors. Indeed, states are merely frameworks in which a contestation between diverse social identities takes place over the definition of national interests. Social identities continue to exist even when they are not represented in the state and can influence societal perceptions and political debates. Turkish foreign policy in the post-Cold War period is often a product of such domestic contestations between the country's two major social/political identities, namely Kemalists and Islamists.

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<sup>18</sup> Bozdağlıoğlu, Y. (2003), *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach*, (New York: Routledge), p. 8



For this reason, applying a more systematic approach to domestic determinants, specifically the preferences of diverse social groups, will help us to better understand the dynamics of Turkish foreign policy.

Another important text on Turkish foreign policy is Philip Robins' *Suits and Uniforms*. Robins presented a multi-dimensional analysis of the complex dynamics of Turkish foreign policy. He has adopted a methodology which requires a thematic approach instead of a regional account. The main argument of the book is that Turkey is a status quo power, which strongly maintained its Westward orientation in terms of its foreign relations.<sup>19</sup> Robins examined Turkish foreign policy by identifying and analyzing its key processes and players. He presented the government, presidency, foreign ministry and the security establishment as the main actors of Turkish foreign policy. He particularly emphasized the interaction between the civilian and the military actors. To him, parliament, interest groups, public opinion and ethnic pressure groups are secondary players with a limited impact. For a better understanding of foreign policy, Robins sought to integrate internal and external factors which shape Turkish foreign policy. He mentioned historical, ideological, security-related, and economic factors as the ideational and material determinants of Turkish foreign policy. Although, he did not present a region-by-region account, he concentrated on four case studies to examine the emergence and evolution of Turkish foreign policy. The case studies include the Bosnian conflict, the relationship with Israel, northern Iraq, and the relations with the Central Asian Turkic Republics.

*Suits and Uniforms* is the product of comprehensive research, which provides a valuable resource for all those who need to understand the complexity of Turkish foreign policy. Moreover, with its methodology, it brought freshness into the study of Turkish foreign policy. Nevertheless, it has its limitations too. Firstly, although Robins gives so much importance to the impact of domestic factors, he has a very limited discussion of recent development particularly after 1999. His discussion on the issue of Kemalist and Islamist paradigms' impact on Turkish foreign policy is insufficient. Both of these paradigms have been transformed and neither is monolithic anymore. Moreover, he mentioned neither the impact of radical reforms on a number of issues following the confirmation of Turkey's EU candidature nor the latest developments in Cyprus before and after the re-unification referendum. These developments have significantly influenced the debates on Turkish

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<sup>19</sup> Robins, P. (2003), *Suits and Uniforms: Turkish Foreign Policy Since the Cold War*, (London: Hurst & Company), p.6

foreign policy. In this sense, Robins' work although being quite comprehensive, needs to be updated.

Secondly, Robins deliberately avoided concentrating on important foreign policy issues such as relations with Greece and the EU as well as the Cyprus problem. Domestic dynamics such as the transformation of Islamic and Kemalist identities had a great impact on Turkey's relations with Greece, Cyprus and the EU, which are all inter-connected issues. In this regard, these cases could have been good test cases for his methodology. Relations with the EU are particularly important, since it still holds a decisive impact on Turkey's relations with other parts of the world.

In their book *Turkish Foreign Policy in an Age of Uncertainty*, Larrabee and Lesser briefly mentioned the influence of Turkey's changing domestic situation, particularly the rise of political Islam and Kurdish nationalism as well as economic problems, on self-definition and future goals of the country. However, special focus has been on the strategic and security issues facing Turkey, including a number of issues posed by the terrorist attacks of September 2001 and the subsequent international response. The book also emphasized how the shift in European priorities and self-perception affected their relations with Turkey. They claimed that the new concern of Europe is not deterring Russia but to create a cohesive economic and political union, which decreased the Western dependence on Turkey.

The authors offer a comprehensive presentation of several issues of Turkish foreign policy, including relations with Europe, the United States, the Balkans and Eurasia. Nevertheless, their discussion of the impact of domestic and ideational factors was quite limited. Moreover, like many of the other books, it was published before the emergence of important domestic and international developments such as the Iraq War or the United Nations' failed attempt to reunify Cyprus.

Another important text in this field is '*Turkish Foreign policy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century*' which is edited by Tareq Ismael and Mustafa Aydın. This book attempted to bring about a comprehensive coverage of various issues concerning Turkish foreign policy. The authors highlighted the impact of systematic changes on the foreign policy of Turkey. To them, since its establishment Turkey pursued a rational foreign policy, yet this came to an end with the 1980 coup and the end of Cold War.<sup>20</sup> They noted 'if Turkey has to move away from Europe,

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<sup>20</sup> Ismael, T. And Aydın, M. Ed. (2003), *Turkey's Foreign Policy in the Twenty-First Century*, (Burlington: Ashgate), p.5

anti-secular and anti-democratic tendencies may grow stronger'.<sup>21</sup> However, they claimed Turkey will continue to cooperate with the West, as other alternatives cannot satisfy Turkey's economic, security and ideological needs. This clearly illustrates that they do not see much connection between the domestic developments and the foreign policy choices of Turkey. The book also fails to examine and predict possible foreign policy alternatives in the new century, since the most radical changes, most notably the rise of AKP in 2002, occurred before its publication.

Amikam Nachmani's book, *Turkey: Facing a New Millennium* examined Turkish foreign policy in 1990s, which he regarded as successful years. Nachmani briefly looked at Turkey's quest for a new identity and the tension between Kemalists and Islamists, since the end of the Cold War. Yet, he argued that secular-Islamist disagreements have not worsened in the 1990s. Nachmani explained how conflicting ideologies of secular nationalism and political Islam have prevented Turkish-Iranian cooperation even in areas where the two states share a common view, such as their objection to an independent Kurdish state and growing Russian influence in Central Asia.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, he offered an explanation for the fading Turkish interest in Central Asia. According to him, the reason of this declining interest is the fact that Turkey prefers Russian instead of Iranian domination in the region, as the latter would engender the rise of radical Islamism. Nachmani's principal argument is that Turkey will not be a true regional superpower simply because it will not take the risk of engaging in clashes, confrontations and wars with its neighbours<sup>23</sup>. He saw this as an advantage since he was quite optimistic about the integration of Turkey into the EU. Although being quite informative, this book mainly focuses on early 1990s and is not well-informed about the recent debates on Turkey's role and identity in the new millennium.

Published in 2004, Nasuh Uslu's *Turkish Foreign Policy in the Post-Cold War period* is another text which aimed to evaluate Turkish foreign policy in future by focusing on shifts in threat perceptions and new domestic realities. Uslu highlighted Turkey's fear of losing the security support of the West in the unstable period after the Cold War, and the search for a new identity in the country for pursuing its own interests instead of Western interests. However, he claimed that the Western orientation of the Turkish foreign policy cannot

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<sup>21</sup> Ismael, T. And Aydın, M. Ed. (2003), *Turkey's Foreign Policy in the Twenty-First Century*, (Burlington: Ashgate), p.20

<sup>22</sup> Nachmani, A. (2003), *Turkey: Facing a New Millennium*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press), p.99

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p. 245

change radically since there are mechanisms which will prevent this from happening.<sup>24</sup>

Another important text which paid attention to the role of identity in Turkish foreign policy is *Türkiye'nin Dış Politika Gündemi: Kimlik, Demokrasi, Güvenlik (Turkey's Foreign Policy Agenda: Identity, Democracy, Security)* which is edited by İhsan Dağı, Ramazan Gözen and Şaban Çalış. This book consists of a range of articles which attempted to show the problems created by identity, democracy and security issues for the formulation of Turkish foreign policy. The authors argued that identity, democracy and security are the main areas where Turkish foreign policy fell into stalemate due to changing domestic and global developments in the post-Cold War period. The book predicted that these issues may cut Turkey off from global developments and further isolate the country from the rest of the world unless they are tackled with domestic dynamics.<sup>25</sup>

Most of the books mentioned above were written prior to the dramatic changes that have taken place inside and outside Turkey. The results of the 2002 parliamentary elections which brought the AKP into power alone, the developments in Cyprus issue such as the United Nations' proposal to re-unify the island and the referendum in 2003, massive enlargement of the EU in 2004 and 2007, have deeply affected the formulation of Turkish foreign policy and Turkey's foreign relations. Furthermore, the impact of the transformation of Islamic and secular identities on Turkish foreign policy, which is demonstrated by their stance towards the EU membership and the solution of the Cyprus problem, has not been sufficiently analyzed.

There is a consensus in the current literature that the end of Cold War created new opportunities for Turkey. Nevertheless, most of the texts drew a similar conclusion in which Turkey will continue its Western-oriented foreign policy. Shifts in political elites with different conceptions on national identity may change the identity of the state. In this context, states re-define their interests, which may bring different foreign policy behaviour. In recent years, Turkey's Westernized elite which has neglected their country's Ottoman past and Islamic identity has been challenged by the Islamists who take pride of Turkey's Ottoman

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<sup>24</sup> Uslu, N. (2004), *Turkish Foreign Policy in the Post-Cold War Period*, (New York: Nova Science Publishers), p.124

<sup>25</sup> Çalış, S. (2001), 'Ulus, Devlet ve Kimlik Labirentinde Türk Dış Politikası' (Turkish Foreign Policy in the Context of Nation, State and Identity) in *Türkiye'nin Dış Politika Gündemi: Kimlik, Demokrasi, Güvenlik (Turkey's Foreign Policy Agenda: Identity, Democracy, Security)* (eds), Dağı, I., Gözen, R., and Çalış, S., (Ankara: Liberte), p.7

past and Muslim identity.<sup>26</sup> Since 2002, the AKP with its Islamic roots has been controlling the Turkish government. Nevertheless, Turkey has a deep foreign policy bureaucracy and traditions, which can hardly be manoeuvred by a political party. Moreover, the Turkish military continues to be an important player in Turkish politics. This situation constrains the ability of the AKP government to pursue a foreign policy independent of considerations of the domestic power balance. In this context, Turkish foreign policy emerged as a platform in which rival identity claims of diverse/political identities have been contested. In this contestation, the EU plays an important role through shaping and altering the notions of identity that Turkey's diverse camps hold and privileging some over others. In brief, Turkish foreign policy in the post-Cold War period is often a product of such domestic contestations between the country's two major social/political identities, namely Kemalists and Islamists, in the EU context. Hence Ankara has been pursuing an ambivalent foreign policy especially towards the EU and the Middle East.

The thesis engages recent debates between constructivists and rationalists and argues that a constructivist account of Turkish foreign policy is more helpful than a rationalist explanation, through the case studies of Turkey's relations with the EU, Greece and the Middle East in the post-Cold War period. It shows how rational actor assumptions operate within a constructivist context and aims to shed light on the relationship between identity, political interests and foreign policy. It will build on previous studies on Turkish foreign policy which emphasized the role of identity by applying a more systematic approach to domestic determinants in foreign policy analysis. The thesis aims to shift attention from a singular notion of national identity to a range of contesting identities at the domestic level and show the repercussions of this contestation over Turkey's identity on its foreign policy behaviour and influence in world politics. International institutions, notably NATO and the EU, play a key role in the contestation between Turkey's diverse camps through shaping and transforming actors' identities and privileging some groups over others. Hence, the case studies will put a strong emphasis on the importance of the institutional context for Turkey's foreign relations.

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<sup>26</sup> See Larrabee, S. (2007), "Turkey Rediscovered the Middle East", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol.86, No.4, p.2

## **CHAPTER ONE:**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:**

#### **INTRODUCTION: THE EMERGENCE OF THE “FOURTH DEBATE” IN IR THEORY**

In the last two decades, the “fourth debate” in International Relations (IR) theory between constructivism and rationalism has become more important as constructivists have built on epistemological challenges rooted in sociological perspectives emphasizing shared norms and values. As Wiener noted the “fourth debate” could emerge from its battle-ridden disciplinary context since third debaters, namely rationalists and reflectivists, kept with the practice of binary positioning as the dominant disciplinary practice in the 1980s.<sup>27</sup> However, constructivists managed to break with the traditional battlefield behaviour and became widely accepted in the IR community in the 1990s. As a result, the “fourth debate”, in Wiener’s view, resembled an actual conversation characterized by a more encompassing discussion between different theoretical positions in the discipline compared with the hostile debating style of earlier debates.<sup>28</sup> At this point a good question to ask is how constructivism achieved much greater popularity and recognition among IR scholars compared to previous approaches which challenged mainstream rationalist theories? In other words, what distinguished constructivists from reflectivist scholars and how did constructivism become so important in the “fourth debate”?

Emanuel Adler identified two main differences between constructivism and reflectivist approaches. First of all, unlike reflectivist approaches<sup>29</sup>, constructivism does not reject the existence of a world independent from our thoughts.<sup>30</sup> It recognizes the world of

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<sup>27</sup> Wiener, A. (2006), ‘Constructivist Approaches in International Relations Theory: Puzzles and Promises’, *Constitutionalism Webpapers*, No.5, p.2

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> See for example Smith, S. (1996), ‘Positivism and Beyond’, in Smith, Booth and Zalewski, *International Theory: Positivism & Beyond*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), and Linklater, A. (1989), *Beyond Realism and Marxism : Critical Theory and International Relations*, (London: Macmillan)

<sup>30</sup> Adler, E. (1997) "Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics," *European Journal of International Relations* Vol. 3, No 3, p.333

brute facts. What constructivists oppose is the view that phenomena can constitute themselves as objects of knowledge independently of discursive practices. According to them, socially meaningful objects or events are always the result of an interpretive construction of the world out there. Put differently, the knowledge of reality is socially constructed. Nevertheless, the principles of knowledge construction are not totally internal to discourse, but socially constituted through practices.<sup>31</sup>

While recognizing the existence of brute facts, constructivists distinguish between the natural and social world and emphasize the ‘social facts’ that do not exist in the physical world. In the words of linguistic philosopher John Searle social facts ‘depend on human agreement that they exist and typically require human institutions for their existence’.<sup>32</sup> Social facts include money, property rights or marriage in contrast to material facts which exist in the physical world whether or not there is agreement that they do such as rocks and trees.<sup>33</sup> Constructivists stressed that many concepts of world politics are social facts since they exist only by virtue of human acts of creation which happen in a cultural, historical, and political context of meaning. For instance, one of the most important concepts of world politics, sovereignty is a social fact whose existence requires a shared understanding and acceptance of the concept. Similarly, the boundaries which divide states exist only by virtue of human agreement.

Secondly, constructivist and reflectivist approaches differ in their objectives of enquiry. Due to their ontological position, reflectivist scholars may abandon the search for causes and objective truths. Their main aim of inquiry is emancipation from oppressing discourses, power structures and ideologies and theories.<sup>34</sup> On the other hand, constructivists do want to know how norms constitute the security identities and interests of international

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<sup>31</sup> Guzzini, S. (2000), ‘A Reconstruction of Constructivism in International Relations’, *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol.6, No.2, p.160

<sup>32</sup> Searle, J. (1995), *The Construction of Social Reality*, (London: The Penguin Press) p.2

<sup>33</sup> Ruggie, J.G (1998), “What Makes the World Hang Together? Neo-utilitarianism and the Social Constructivist Challenge”, *International Organization*, Vol.52, No:4, p.856

<sup>34</sup> See Campbell, D. (1996), ‘Violent Performances: Identity, Sovereignty, Responsibility’, in Yosef Lapid and Friedrich Kratochwil (eds) *The Return of Culture and Identity in IR Theory*, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner)

and transnational actors in particular cases.<sup>35</sup> This does not mean that constructivists are not interested in progress in International Relations. However, they believe that progress is not only based on what theorists say. It requires a re-definition of actors' identities and interests as well. In brief, constructivism is not an expression of frustration. It is a working research program which is interested in providing a more complete explanation of world politics.

Another important difference between reflectivist approaches and constructivism is in regards to their relationship with mainstream theories. Reflectivist scholars have tended to resist dialogue with rationalists and tend to undermine the actual insights produced by rationalist approaches such as neo-realism.<sup>36</sup> As Sorensen put it 'de-constructing any theory can produce helpful insights. The problem only comes in when this is taken to the extreme where everything in the criticized theory is rejected and the possibility of any cross-fertilization between theoretical traditions is denied'.<sup>37</sup> Despite their weaknesses, rationalist approaches have produced valuable insights about world politics, notably about anarchy, and is quite helpful in exploring specific aspects of world politics from a particular point of view. In line with this view, most constructivists have a productive way of holding on to the insights produced by rationalist approaches including neo-realism. A core constructivist research concern is what happens before the rationalist model kicks in. Constructivism is more of an approach which provides an ontology differing from rationalist approaches and its central theme is the impact of the ideational factors on the material factors. Indeed, many rationalists and constructivists claim that no great epistemological or methodological differences divide them.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Adler, E. (1997) "Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics," *European Journal of International Relations* Vol. 3, No 3, p.333-34

<sup>36</sup> See Smith, S. (1996), 'Positivism and Beyond', in Smith, Booth and Zalewski, *International Theory: Positivism & Beyond*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), Smith, S. (1997), 'Epistemology, Postmodernism and International Relations Theory: A Reply to Østerud', *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol.34, No.3, Smith, S. (1999), 'Social Constructivisms & European Studies: A Reflectivist Critique', *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol.6/4

<sup>37</sup> Sørensen, G. (1998), 'IR Theory After the Cold War', *Review of International Studies*, Vol.24, No.5, p. 87

<sup>38</sup> See Wendt, A. (1998), 'On Constitution and Causation in International Relations', *Review of International Studies*, 24 (special issue), p.116, and Katzenstein, P., Keohane, R., Krasner, S. (1998), "International Organization and the Study of World Politics," *International Organisation*. Vol. 52, No:4, p.675



## MIDDLE GROUND:

One of the key factors behind constructivism's popularity is its alleged 'middle ground' position. Many prominent constructivists such as Alexander Wendt, Emmanuel Adler and Jeffrey Checkel emphasized constructivism's 'middle ground' position between rationalist and reflectivist theories of IR. Wendt's constructivism aimed to build on the shared features of the liberalist wing of the rationalist tradition and the modern constructivist wing of the reflectivist tradition. In his well-known book *Social Theory of International Politics*, Wendt defended his constructivism from both those rationalists who see it as equal to post-modernism and those more radical constructivists who want to go much further than he does.<sup>39</sup> Checkel argued that constructivism has the potential to bridge the mainstream theorists from reflectivists. In his own words: 'with the latter, constructivists share many substantive concerns (role of identity and discourse, say) and a similar ontological stance; with the former, they share a largely common epistemology. Constructivists thus occupy a middle-ground between rationalist and reflectivist scholars'.<sup>40</sup> Finally, Adler argued that it is constructivism, rather than any alternative such as the neo-liberal focus on ideas, which seizes the middle ground between reflectivists and rationalists due to its position at two intersections—that between materialism and idealism, and that between individual agency and social structure.

Indeed, the first move from materialism towards idealism was realized by neo-liberal institutionalists. They agree with realists that behaviour is affected by outside physical forces. However, like reflectivists, they take the role of ideas, which they defined as 'beliefs held by individuals', into account.<sup>41</sup> Neo-liberals demonstrated the proposition that ideas and institutions are at least relatively autonomous determinants of international life and concentrated on the ways in which ideas can have independent causal effects. Nevertheless, due to their ontological assumption of fixed and exogenous interests, neo-liberals framed the

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<sup>39</sup> Wendt, A. (1999), *Social Theory of International Politics*, (New York: Cambridge University Press), p.2

<sup>40</sup> Checkel, J. (1998), 'The Constructivist Turn in International Relations Theory', *World Politics*, Vol.50, p.327

<sup>41</sup> Adler, E. (1997) "Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics," *European Journal of International Relations* Vol. 3, No 3, p. 322

explanatory problem as ‘ideas versus interests’ and assumed that ideas matter only to the extent that they are consequential beyond effects of power and interest.<sup>42</sup> According to Wendt, this view has been helpful since there is much in world politics that power and interest cannot explain. Nevertheless, ideas and interests cannot be compared as competing causal variables due to the constitutive effects of the former on the latter. Therefore, this model is incomplete since it overlooked the constitutive effects of ideas on power and interests. As Adler put it ‘due to its assumption of fixed interests, neo-liberal epistemology misses most of the “action”, namely, the constitution of actors’ identities and interests by collective cognitive structures’.<sup>43</sup>

On the other hand, constructivists such as Wendt attempted to show both causal and constitutive functions of ideas. For this reason, constructivism is often characterized by its opposition to materialism. Nevertheless, the character of this opposition depends on the interpretation of materialism as a theory which accounts for the effects of power, interests or institutions by reference to ‘brute’ material forces. Brute material forces refer to things which exist and have certain causal powers independent of ideas such as physical environment. Wendt did not deny that brute material forces have some effects on the constitution of power and interest. In his own words; ‘at some level material forces are constituted independent of society, and affect society in a causal way. Material forces are not constituted solely by social meanings, and social meanings are not immune to material effects’.<sup>44</sup> Nonetheless, Wendt emphasized that only a small part of what constitutes interests is actually material. Moreover the meaning of power is also largely a function of ideas. Power translates into threat only within a certain set of understandings and representations. For example, the material fact that Germany has more military power than Denmark imposes physical limits on Danish foreign policy toward Germany, but those limits will be irrelevant to their interaction if neither could consider war with the other.<sup>45</sup> In brief, Wendt’s constructivism does not imply a radical ‘ideas all the way down’ idealism which denies any role whatsoever to material considerations. It

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<sup>42</sup>Wendt, A. (1999), *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p.94

<sup>43</sup> Adler, E. (1997) "Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics," *European Journal of International Relations* Vol. 3, No 3, p. 331

<sup>44</sup> Wendt, A. (1999), *Social Theory of International Politics*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p.111-2

<sup>45</sup>Ibid, p.110

acknowledges that material factors matter but argue that how they matter depends on ideas. A more detailed discussion of the relationship between ideas, interests and threat perceptions will be presented later in the chapter. Now let us focus on the second dimension of constructivism's 'middle ground' position.

The debate on materialism and idealism paved the way for another vital question regarding the primacy of either social structure or individual agency for the explanation of human action. According to methodological individualists such as Jon Elster, the elementary unit of social life is the individual human action. In his own words 'to explain social institutions and social change is to show how they arise as the result of the action and interaction of individuals'.<sup>46</sup> On the other hand, scholars such as Emile Durkheim and Max Weber rejected methodological individualism and emphasized the vitality of structure for explaining the origins of human action. To them, social facts cannot be reduced to individual cognition and demand a social explanation. Finally, a third option, adopted by several modern social theorists, aimed to make a balance between these two camps. Anthony Giddens' *structuration* is a well-known example of this approach. In a similar manner with structuralists, structuration theory emphasizes the significance of structures. Accordingly, all actions are performed within a context of a pre-existing social structure which is governed by a set of norms and laws. Hence, structure constrains the actions of individual agents. Nevertheless, in this account, structures are not separate from the self-understandings and practices of human agents. Giddens aimed to joint agents and structures in a 'dialectical synthesis' that overcomes the subordination of one to the other.<sup>47</sup>

Neo-realism has a dual commitment both to methodological individualism and structural analysis. On one hand, it privileges structural constraints over agents' strategies and motivations. On the other hand, it argues the international system structures consist of

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46 Elster, J. (1989), *Nuts and Bolts for the Social Sciences*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p.13 cited in Adler, E. (1997) "Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics," *European Journal of International Relations* Vol. 3, No 3, p. 325

45 See Giddens, A. (1979) *Central problems in Social Theory: Action, Structure and Contradiction in Social Analysis*. (London : Macmillan) and Giddens, A. (1981) *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism. Vol. 1. Power, Property and the State*. (London : Macmillan)

externally related state agents. External relations refer to interactions between entities which can exist without the other. Therefore, the starting point of neo-realist analysis is states with given properties. Ontologically, the result is to reduce one unit of analysis—structures—to the other—agents.<sup>48</sup> In line with this view, neo-realists defined political structures by three elements: ordering principle, differentiation of functions among the units, and distribution of capabilities across units.<sup>49</sup> Anarchy is the ordering principle of international politics and refers to the lack of a hierarchically superior and coercive power which can resolve disputes or enforce laws and order on states. The conditions of anarchy eliminate functional differentiation between states. Put differently, states under anarchy act according to the logic of self-help and acquire egoistic identities and fixed interests. Since anarchy is assumed to be constant and it entails the sameness of units, neo-realists reduced the international structure to the properties of its member elements. Therefore, they explain structural change in terms of the distribution of capabilities.

On the other hand, constructivists were deeply influenced by Giddens' *structuration*. In line with his views, Wendt rejected the neo-realist definition of international system structures as consisting of externally related, pre-existing state agents. To him, system structures cannot generate agents if they are defined exclusively in terms of those agents in the first place.<sup>50</sup> Therefore, neo-realist definition leads to an understanding of system structures as only constraining the agency of pre-existing states and is theoretically too weak to support a social theory of state. Constructivists emphasized that international structure is not only consisting of material capabilities but also social relationships. In Wendt's words 'social structures include three essential elements: shared knowledge, material resources, and practices; and these three elements are interrelated'.<sup>51</sup> Since these elements are internally related, they cannot be defined independently of their position in the structure.

A social structure leaves more space for agency, i.e. for the individual or state to influence their environment, as well as to be influenced by it. Therefore, constructivists highlighted a process of interaction between agents and structures. Their ontology is one of

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<sup>48</sup> Wendt, A. (1987), 'The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory', *International Organization*, Vol.41, No.3, p.342

<sup>49</sup> Waltz, K. (1979), *Theory of International Politics*, (New York: Random House), p.81-81,88-89

<sup>50</sup> Wendt, A. (1987), 'The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory', *International Organization*, Vol.41, No.3, p.343

<sup>51</sup> Wendt, A. (1995), "Constructing International Politics", *International Security*, Vol.20,p.73

mutual constitution of the two units of analysis, where neither is reduced to the other. Given that the structure and agents are mutually constituted the conditions of action are what the actors make them to be. Accordingly, self-help and power politics are socially constructed under anarchy. In Wendt's words 'there is no logic of anarchy apart from the practices that create and instantiate one structure of identities and interests rather than another; structure has no existence or causal powers apart from process. Self-help and power politics are institutions, not essential features of anarchy. Anarchy is what states make of it'.<sup>52</sup> In other words, if states find themselves in a self-help system, according to Wendt this is a result of their own practices.

While emphasizing the power of practice in shaping the character of anarchy, Wendt rejected the neo-realist assumption that there is only a single logic of anarchy. Instead, he talks about three logics of cultures of anarchy, namely Hobbesian, Lockean and Kantian. To him, only the Hobbesian structure is a truly self-help system and transformation from one culture to another is possible. The nature of the internal relations that comprise a social structure also defines a set of possible transformations of its elements.<sup>53</sup> In short, structure influences or constrains social action yet it can also be (re)-created and transformed by it. This does not mean that states in anarchy can suddenly alter their circumstances. However, relationships evolve over time. They are not necessarily characterized by enmity and egoism. For example, the United States and Canada have evolved as friends, while other states are enemies. Similarly, France and Germany were former enemies who have learnt to cooperate. In short, constructivism represents a middle ground between individualism and structuralism because it is not merely focusing on how structures constitute agents' identities and interests but also aims to explain how individual agents socially construct these structures in the first place.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Wendt, A. (1992), "Anarchy is what states make of it: the social construction of power politics" in *International Organization*, V.46, No:2, p.394-5

<sup>53</sup> Wendt, A. (1987), 'The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory', *International Organization*, Vol.41, No.3, p.357

<sup>54</sup> Adler, E. (1997) "Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics," *European Journal of International Relations* Vol. 3, No 3, p. 330

## VARIANTS OF CONSTRUCTIVISM:

As the above discussion indicates, constructivists have a shared critique of the static material assumptions of rationalist approaches. They have questioned the individualist ontology of rationalism and have highlighted the social dimensions of world politics as well as the possibility of change. Furthermore, they accepted the possibility of a reality to be constructed, which differentiates them from reflectivist approaches that problematize this possibility.<sup>55</sup> Nonetheless, in examining this 'reality' they developed diverse ways and methods.

There are many classifications of constructivism, one of the most useful being that of John Gerard Ruggie. Ruggie identified three variants of constructivism. The first variant, which he calls *neo-classical constructivism*, examines the role of norms and identity in shaping political outcomes while emphasizing the significance of empirical work in doing so. The members of this variant are epistemologically committed to the idea of social science and certain methods common to positivism which includes hypothesis testing, causality and explanation.<sup>56</sup> The typical methodological starting point of neo-classical constructivists is the qualitative, process-tracing case study. Ruggie put himself as well as some other prominent constructivists such as Adler, Onuf, Kratochwill and Finnemore in this category.

At this point, it is important to note that there is a difference in the understanding of social science and causality between the members of neo-classical constructivism and rationalist approaches. For example, Adler argued that constructivism combines 'understanding' and 'explaining' to construct a sociologically sensitive scientific approach to International Relations. According to him science and interpretation are not fundamentally different endeavours aimed at different goals.<sup>57</sup> Neo-classical constructivists' understanding of causality also differs from that of rationalists. Causality in rationalist approaches refers to the relationship between an event (the *cause*) and a second event (the *effect*), where the second event is a consequence of the first. Neo-classical constructivists argue that

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<sup>55</sup> Zehfuss, M. (2002), *Constructivism in International Relations*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)

<sup>56</sup> J.G. Ruggie (1998), "What Makes the World Hang Together? Neo-utilitarianism and the Social Constructivist Challenge", *International Organization*, Vol.52, No:4, p.881

<sup>57</sup> Adler, E. (1997) "Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics," *European Journal of International Relations* Vol. 3, No 3, p. 334

deterministic laws are improbable in the social world and thus reject the notion that social forms ‘determine’ human action. According to Adler constructivists subscribe to a notion of social causality that takes reasons as causes, because ‘doing something for reasons means applying an understanding of what is called for in a give set of circumstances’.<sup>58</sup> Finnemore also stated that norms and rules do not determine action yet they provide actors with direction and goals for action and therefore socially constitute—‘cause’—the things people do.<sup>59</sup>

The second variant of constructivism is labelled by Ruggie as *post-modernist constructivism*. The members of this category include Richard Ashley, David Campbell and James Der Derian. These scholars seek to understand the ways in which the world is constructed. Inspired by Nietzsche, Foucault and Derrida they focus on the role of language in the construction of norms and rules. Considering their commitment to post-positivist epistemologies, this role is not explanatory. Put differently, post-modernist constructivists do not aim to provide causal explanations. To them, causality is considered chimerical.<sup>60</sup> Therefore they are interested in *constitutive explanations* which answer a ‘how this is possible’ question rather than ‘what caused this to come about’ type of question. For instance, rather than investigating the factors which caused a change in a state’s identity, they would focus on the background conditions and discourses that enabled such change in the first place.

Ruggie’s third constructivist variant is *naturalistic constructivism* which is mostly based on the work of Wendt. While being committed to the idea of social science, Wendt acknowledged that natural and social worlds are partly made of different kinds of stuff, and that these ontological differences require different methods for their study. In his own words: ‘we cannot study ideas in exactly the same way that we study physical facts because ideas are not the kind of phenomena that are even indirectly observable’.<sup>61</sup> For this reason, Wendt put

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<sup>58</sup> Giddens, A. (1984), *The Constitution of Society*, (Berkeley: University of California Press), p.345 cited in Adler, E. (1997) "Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics," *European Journal of International Relations* Vol. 3, No 3, p. 329

<sup>59</sup> Finnemore, M. (1996), *National Interests in International Society*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press), p.28

<sup>60</sup> J.G. Ruggie (1998), “What Makes the World Hang Together? Neo-utilitarianism and the Social Constructivist Challenge”, *International Organization*, Vol.52, No:4, p.881

<sup>61</sup> Wendt, A. (1998), ‘On Constitution and Causation in International Relations’, *Review of International Studies*, 24 (special issue), p.107

his emphasis on scientific realism, especially on the writings of Roy Bhaskar. Scientific realism is developed largely as a reaction to empiricism and challenged this epistemological theory in two important issues, the first one being the status of unobservables. In the eyes of empiricists, entities exist only if we have direct sensory experience of them. On the other hand, scientific realists argue that unobservable structures can be scientifically legitimate as long as they have observable effects or are manipulable by human agents.<sup>62</sup> In other words unobservable entities are seen as real and causally efficacious. In line with this view, Wendt argued that examining unobservable entities to account for observable behaviour is perfectly legitimate scientific practice.

The second difference between empiricists and scientific realists is in regards to the nature and requirements of scientific explanation. According to empiricists, explanation involves the categorization of a phenomenon under a law-like regularity. We explain something casually only when we have included it deductively under a law. Therefore, empiricists put their emphasis on ‘why’ questions. On the other hand, scientific realists argue that scientific explanation involves the identification of the underlying causal mechanisms which physically engendered the phenomenon. Therefore, we explain something casually only when we have described the mechanisms or process by which it is generated.<sup>63</sup> This understanding of causality gives more value to ‘how’ questions. According to Wendt, the adoption of scientific realism allows the possibility of a new understanding of social science in which scholars will no longer need to choose between ‘science’ (i.e. empiricist science) and the supposedly ‘un-scientific’ paradigms of critical theory. They would be able to think ‘abductively’ about causal mechanisms to build their theories, instead of trying to find law-like generalizations about observable regularities.<sup>64</sup>

Wendt also argued that constitutive theory should not be seen as necessarily descriptive since it can be explanatory too. For example, questions like ‘what is the European Union?’ ‘Is it an emerging federation?’ ‘An international regime?’ is constitutive. The answers to these questions are in part descriptive. However they can be explanatory as well because while making sense of the EU, they also provide insights into the union’s behaviour.

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<sup>62</sup> Wendt, A. (1987), ‘The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory’, *International Organization*, Vol.41, No.3, p 352

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid*, p.353

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid*, p.370



If the EU is an emerging federation then it will have a tendency to centralize authority; if it is an international regime then it will have a tendency to maintain its members' sovereignty.<sup>65</sup> In short, answering 'what' questions can be a valuable and distinct kind of theorizing and can be both descriptive and explanatory.

Other prominent constructivists such as Checkel also criticized a pure positivist methodology and stressed the need to supplement them with interpretive techniques in order to provide a more complete account of International Relations and build multi-lane bridges between different approaches. According to him, most constructivists attempted to build just one-lane bridges, going from constructivism to rationalism, rather than two-lanes (the second going from constructivism to reflectivist and critical approaches) and he identified positivism as the main culprit of this weakness.<sup>66</sup> Checkel also criticized postmodernist constructivists for not operationalizing their arguments, notably the role of language and communication, and argued that a possible post-positivist starting point would be scientific realism.<sup>67</sup> According to him, this can create a sufficiently broad epistemological platform to bring together all constructivists in an effort at multi-lane bridge building.

Even though she was identified by Ruggie as a neo-classical constructivist, Finnemore also advocated a scientific realist position in her latest writings. In a joint article with Henry Farrell, she wrote: 'we are more convinced by social-scientific variants of scientific realism, which stress (in contrast to post-positivists) that causation is important, but also (in contrast to positivists) that causal mechanisms exist independently of directly measurable relationships between variables'.<sup>68</sup> In her studies of the casual effects of norms, she analyzed changes in state practices as well as discourses, notably justifications. According to her, one can only have indirect evidence of norms just as one can only have indirect evidence of most other motivations for political action such as interests and threats.<sup>69</sup> In line with this view, she

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<sup>65</sup> Wendt, A. (1998), 'On Constitution and Causation in International Relations', *Review of International Studies*, 24 (special issue), p.111

<sup>66</sup> Checkel, J. (2006), "Constructivism and EU Politics." In Knud Erik Joergensen, Mark Pollack, Ben Rosamond, Eds, *Handbook of European Union Politics*. (London: Sage Publications), p.5

<sup>67</sup> Ibid, p.6

<sup>68</sup> Farrell, H. And Finnemore, M. (2009), 'Ontology, Methodology and Causation in the American School of Political Economy', *Review of International Political Economy*, Vol.16, No.1, p.104

<sup>69</sup> Finnemore, M and Sikkink, K. (1998), 'International Norm Dynamics and Political Change', *International Organization*, Vol.52, No.4, p.892

highlighted the importance of examining justifications since they are an attempt to link one's actions to standards of appropriate and acceptable behaviour. Therefore, by examining them we can begin to understand what these internationally held standards are and how they may change over time.<sup>70</sup>

The constructivism favoured in this thesis is in line with the views of above scholars such as Wendt, Finnemore and Checkel who combined a social ontology that is critical of methodological individualism with a middle-ground philosophy and epistemology that emphasize social causality as well as the benefits of complimenting positivist methodologies with interpretive techniques. These scholars agree that we should emphasize causal mechanisms yet we should not reduce them to observable entities. Instead of attempting necessarily to construct law-like generalizations on the one hand, or to reject the value of the scientific inquiry on the other, they sought to identify relevant causal mechanisms, and arrived at useful judgments in regards to how identities and norms influence state interests and behaviour.

By adopting a similar approach, this thesis will show how ideational factors, namely identities and norms, causally affected the formulation of Turkish foreign policy while constituting Turkish actors' perceptions of their interests. Special emphasis will be on (i) how contestations over state identity and variations in actors' identity security affect the foreign policy behaviour and capacity of the country and (ii) how norms promoted by international institutions may shape and transform notions of actors' identities and privilege some groups over others. Special focus will be on how EU norms allowed the key actors of Turkish foreign policy, notably the military and political parties, to re-define their interests in late 1990s and early 2000s and paved the way for a transformation in some of the key dimensions of Turkey's foreign policy. With the aim of providing a more complete understanding, the background conditions such as business ties and the role of civil societies, as well as changes in political and media discourses that made such transformations possible, will also be explored in the case study chapters. The rest of this chapter will discuss the ontological contributions of constructivists to the study of world politics in general and Turkish foreign policy in particular. It will firstly focus on the relationship between identities, interests and threat perceptions. Subsequently the focus will shift to the effects of norms and international institutions on actors' identities and behaviour.

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<sup>70</sup> Finnemore, M. (1996), 'Constructing Norms of Humanitarian Intervention', in *The Culture of National Security*, ed. Katzenstein, p. 159

## ONTOLOGICAL CONTRIBUTIONS:

As the above discussion indicated, there is no common epistemological ground for constructivists. However, the main strength of constructivism lies in its deeper and broader ontology which emphasizes identities, norms, social agents, and the mutual constitution of structure and agency. This rich ontology and sociological approach have allowed us to understand the socio-cultural context within which rational actors operate and have expanded the theoretical lines of mainstream international relations theory through the incorporation of identities, norms, and socialization within institutions. Let us now discuss these important constructivist variables in greater detail.

### A. IDENTITY:

The concept of identity is at the centre of the constructivist critique of rationalism. According to constructivists, identities are necessary in both domestic and international politics. In Hopf's words 'they perform three necessary functions in a society: they tell you and others who you are and they tell you who others are'.<sup>71</sup> By telling you who you are, identities imply a particular set of interests for actors. For example, identity as a liberal democracy cannot be separated from an interest in complying with norms regarding human rights. Likewise, identity as a capitalist cannot be separated from an interest in generating profit.<sup>72</sup> Nevertheless, the relationship between identity and interest is a much more complicated issue. Although certain identities impose certain interests, the former is not always independent from the latter. Sometimes actors can choose particular identities in accordance with their interests. However these interests themselves presuppose still deeper identities. To further elaborate this complex relationship, a comparison between rationalist and constructivist accounts of interests is helpful.

Constructivism and rationalist approaches share the assumption that interests imply choices. Nevertheless, rationalist approaches goes further and assume that interests of states

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<sup>71</sup> Hopf, T. (1998), "The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory", *International Security*, Vol.23, No.1, p.175

<sup>72</sup> Fierke, K. (2007), "Constructivism", In *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity*, Edited by Tim Dunne, Milja Kurki, and Steve Smith, (Oxford University Press: Oxford), p.171

are exogenous and given. Accordingly, all states have similar and fixed interests that are limited to an often narrow conception of utility-maximization due to the anarchic nature of the international structure. Since the main aim of states under anarchy is survival, they need to behave in line with structural requirements, which eventually make them acquire selfish interests.<sup>73</sup> Constructivists did not deny the importance of interests. Wendt noted: ‘no one denies that states act on the basis of perceived interests, and few would deny that those interests are often egoistic. I certainly do not...What matters is how interests are thought to be constituted’.<sup>74</sup> For example, the argument that states are only interested in survival assumes that they are satisfied or ‘status quo’ powers. A status quo state has no interest in conquering other states or changing the rules of the international system. But the question is how this interest is constituted?

Wendt drew our attention to beliefs such as being satisfied with its international position or seeing itself as ‘a member of a society of states’.<sup>75</sup> These beliefs are not only about the external world. They also constitute a certain identity and its relationship to the world. Hence, constructivists connected interests to the identity of the subject and claimed that neither the former nor the latter can be separated from a world of social meaning. In this account, the interests of states which are linked to their identities are a variable dependent on historical, cultural, political and social context. In short, constructivism treats identity and interest as endogenous and socially constructed. Therefore they can vary depending on historical, cultural, political and social context. Furthermore, they are not objectively grounded in material forces but the result of ideas and the social construction of such ideas.

Wendt treated identity as a property of intentional actors that generates motivational and behavioural dispositions.<sup>76</sup> Put differently, it is a subjective quality which stems from an actor’s self-understanding. However, the producer of an identity is not in control of what it ultimately means to others.<sup>77</sup> Therefore, the meaning of those understandings will depend on

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<sup>73</sup> See Waltz, K. (1979), *Theory of International Politics*, (New York: Random House)

<sup>74</sup> Wendt, A. (1999), *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p.113

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid*, p.124

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid*, p.224

<sup>77</sup> Hopf, T. (1998), “The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory”, *International Security*, Vol.23, No.1, p.175

whether other actors represent an actor in the same way. This shows us that ideas held by the ‘self’<sup>78</sup> as well as those held by the ‘other’ can enter into identity. The character of this internal-external relationship varies according to the kind of identity in question.

Wendt identified four kinds of state identities, namely corporate, type, role, and collective. He claims corporate identity consists of ‘self-organizing qualities that constitute actor individuality’ and therefore it is ‘exogenous to otherness’.<sup>79</sup> The type identity refers to a social category applied to persons who share some characteristics such as values, languages, or historical commonalities etc. In the state system, type identities correspond to regime types such as capitalist states, democratic states etc. Type identities of states have a social dimension since ‘others’ are involved in their constitution. However they are still exogenous to the state system because they do not depend on other states for their existence.

Unlike corporate and type identities, role identities are not based on intrinsic properties, they exist only in relation to others. One cannot enact role-identities by oneself. Many roles are institutionalized in social structures. This facilitates the sharing of expectations on which role identities depend on. Most roles allow a measure of interpretation, but only within certain limits. The breach of these limits can bring a contestation over role identities. Finally, collective identity ‘takes the relationship between self and other to its logical conclusion, identification, which refers to a cognitive process in which the self-other distinction becomes blurred’.<sup>80</sup> Identification is generally issue-specific and hardly ever total but always involves extending the boundaries of the self to include the other. Collective identities built on role identities as it merge self and other into a single identity. They also built on type identities since collective involve shared characteristics, but not all type identities are collective because not all involve identification. For instance, Turks and Greeks share many cultural characteristics due to their cohabitation for more than four hundred years. However, these common characteristics were not translated into a strong sense of identification between the two nations. In brief, collective identity is a combination of role

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<sup>78</sup> Self refers to the ‘totality of an individual’s thoughts and feelings having reference to itself as an object.

<sup>79</sup> Wendt, A. (1994), “Collective Identity Formation and the International State”, *American Political Science Review*, Vol.88, p.385

<sup>80</sup> Wendt, A. (1999), *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p.229

and type identities which has a causal power to encourage actors to define the welfare of the other as part of that of the self, to be altruistic.

States' behaviour can be motivated by a variety of interests rooted in corporate, type, role and collective identities. However, their corporate identity as states generates some common interests such as physical survival, autonomy, economic well-being and 'collective self-esteem'. The form these interests take will vary with states' other identities which to varying degrees are constructed by the international system.<sup>81</sup> For instance, the understanding of survival can vary depending on the historical context. In the eighteenth century ceding territory to other states was a common practice. In 1878 the Ottomans gave the administration of Cyprus to the British since this was not perceived as a threat to the survival of their empire. In the current international system, this practice is very uncommon since a state's survival is increasingly identified with the maintenance of territorial integrity. For example, giving up pre-dominantly Kurdish South-eastern Anatolia is currently an unimaginable option for Turkish governments since this is perceived as an existential threat to the spatial identity of Turkey.

Similarly, the understanding of economic well-being can also vary depending on the type of the state. Economic growth, more specifically increasing material benefits to their citizens, is the key criterion of economic well-being in capitalist states due the logic of the market or the necessity to legitimate the economic order. Nonetheless, this has not been the case all the time. For instance, feudal modes of production were not inherently growth-oriented.<sup>82</sup> In Turkey, the enrichment of certain groups, most notably Islamist circles, was not supported by the secular state until recent years. Likewise, economic interaction with oil-rich Gulf States was discouraged by the Turkish state until 1980s despite its potential contribution to the economic growth of Turkey.

Finally, collective self-esteem refers to a group's need to feel good about itself, for respect or status.<sup>83</sup> Like other interests, this interest can be expressed in different ways too. One way of expression is whether collective self-images are positive or negative. Self-images

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<sup>81</sup> Wendt, A. (1999), *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p.235

<sup>82</sup> Ibid, p. 236

<sup>83</sup> Wendt, A. (1999), *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p.236

are constructed by taking the perspectives of the others. Therefore, they depend on self's relationships with significant others. Positive self-images emerge from mutual respect and cooperation. On the other hand, negative self-images emerge from perceived disregard or humiliation by other states. Since groups cannot long tolerate such images if they are to meet the self-esteem needs of their members, they will compensate by self-assertion and/or devaluation and aggression toward the other.<sup>84</sup> For instance, the ambivalent position of the EU towards Turkey's membership and unenthusiastic position of several European states generated feelings of exclusion and humiliation among large segments of the Turkish population. These feelings contributed greatly to the rise of nationalism and led a significant decline in the levels of popular support for Turkish membership of the EU. Indeed, recent opinion polls revealed the rise of a general anti-Westernism in the Turkish public which is manifest with a strong anti-Americanism and rising anti-Israel feelings.

According to Wendt, these corporate interests must be fulfilled in order to secure state-society complexes.<sup>85</sup> Even if actors can interpret the ways of fulfilling their corporate interests differently, this does not mean that they can construct them anyway they like. As Hopf put it social practices that constitute an identity cannot imply interests that are not consistent with the practices and structure that constitute that identity.<sup>86</sup> Embedded identity constructions define the boundaries of legitimate ideas and limit the range of possible interpretations.<sup>87</sup> Moreover, how a state fulfils its corporate interests depends on how it defines the self in relation to the other, which is a function of social (role) identities.<sup>88</sup> The

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<sup>84</sup> Kaplowitz, N. (1984), 'Psychopolitical Dimensions of International Relations', *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol.28

<sup>85</sup> Wendt, A. (1999), *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p.237

<sup>86</sup> Hopf, T. (1998), "The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory", *International Security*, Vol.23, No.1, p.176

<sup>87</sup> Marcussen, M., Risse, T., Engelmann-Martin, D., Joachim Knopf, H. And Roscher, K. (1999), 'Constructing Europe? The Evolution of French, British, and German Nation State Identities', *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol.6, No.4

<sup>88</sup> Wendt, A. (1994), "Collective Identity Formation and the International State", *American Political Science Review*, Vol.88, p.385

ability of states to develop 'selfish' or 'collective' identities is determined by whether or not social identities imply an identification with the others.

When states constitute other as enemy, they acquire selfish identities and do not recognize the other's right to exist. These states will not voluntarily restrict violence towards each other and this leads to the emergence of Hobbesian culture of anarchy. The Lockean culture on the other hand is characterized by rivalry rather than enmity. Here, the self and other respect each other's right to exist. Finally, when states identify with the other positively, they develop a collective identity which implies non-violence towards each other. This corresponds to the Kantian culture of anarchy which prevails between the democratic states of the world. The prevalent culture of anarchy in the international system is determined by the majority of its members and will compel states to behave in a certain matter while constituting their identities. These identities in turn will define the meaning of actors' power, namely their material capabilities.

At this point, let us shift our attention to the relationship between identity, power and threat perceptions. Constructivist account of identity offers a plausible explanation for how power translates into threat within a certain set of understandings and representations. This important question has been overlooked by the rationalists. According to neo-realists such as Kenneth Waltz, states having greater power represent an inherent threat since nothing in the anarchic international system prevents them from using the power advantage to coerce weaker neighbours.<sup>89</sup> In line with this view, they argued that states ally against power. Subsequent neo-realists such as Stephen Walt observed that this is empirically mistaken and recognized that states balance not against power but rather against threats. He also identified three key factors contributing to threat, namely geographic proximity, offensive capability and 'aggressive' intentions.<sup>90</sup> Several constructivists have challenged the deterministic relationship between power and threat and showed how identity is linked to the construction of threats and represents a potential source of alliance formation.

Risse-Kappen argued that Walt's factors could not adequately explain the formation, cooperation and continuation of alliances. According to him, threat perceptions do not emerge from international power structure only. Actors' domestic identities are also essential

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<sup>89</sup> See Waltz, K. (1979), *Theory of International Politics*, (New York: Mc Grow Hill)

<sup>90</sup> Walt, S. (1987), *The Origins of Alliances*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press)



for their perceptions of one another in the international arena. More specifically, actors assume that the external behaviour of a state will be in line with the values and norms governing its internal political processes that shape its identity.<sup>91</sup> Liberal states assume that non-liberal states which do not rest on free consent and exercise violence towards their own people, are more likely to behave aggressively in their interactions. Therefore they are deeply suspicious of non-liberal states' intentions and see their military capabilities as threatening.

For instance, the United States does not perceive the large quantity of nuclear weapons held by France as threatening. In contrast, North Korea's or Iran's possible possession of even one or two generates terrific concern in Washington D.C. Another example from Turkey is helpful to further elaborate the point. Until recent years, Iran was perceived as an important threat in Ankara despite four centuries of amicable ties between the two nations. The key factor which triggered such threat perceptions was Iran's domestic Islamic regime and its support to Islamist groups in other Muslim countries, not the country's military weapons. In other words, Iranian power became threatening as a tool to export the Iranian domestic order to Turkey. Since 2002, Iran is considered less threatening for Turkey. This decline in the perceptions of 'Iranian threat' is not a result of Iran's declining military power. On the contrary, Iran became a militarily stronger country and is likely to develop a nuclear arsenal in the foreseeable future. Therefore, the fading perceptions of 'Iranian threat' in Turkey can be better understood with the country's identity shift in recent years. In brief, identity plays a defining role in shaping perceptions towards other states' military capabilities. Put differently, material capabilities acquire meaning for states according to who has those capabilities, that is, a friend or an enemy.

Michael Barnett is another prominent constructivist who criticized Walt and emphasized identity in the formation of threat perceptions and alliances. He argued that the concept of intent in Walt's explanation of alliances is left underspecified and undertheorized. In his own words 'by rejecting the proposition that intent is linked to anarchy or the balance of power and by failing to offer a conceptual tie in its place, Walt leaves the issue unresolved: How is intent determined? What constitutes a threat?'<sup>92</sup> According to him, the variable of

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<sup>91</sup> Risse Kappen, 1996, "Collective Identity in a Democratic Community: The Case of NATO", *Culture of National Security*, eds. Katzenstein, p.367

<sup>92</sup> Barnett, N. M. (1996). 'Identity and Alliances in the Middle East' in *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*, ed. Peter Katzenstein, (New York: Columbia University Press), p.404

identity fills the gap here in two ways. Firstly, a shared identity affects the interests of the actors who hold this identity by determining the socially acceptable policies available to them. In this way, it shapes their desired and available security policies. For example, Arab identity caused Arab states to identify Israel as a threat and enemy. Even if this hostility did not overcome collective action problems and ‘free-riding’, it determined what was acceptable and legitimate and indicates a strong relationship between identity and the definition of threat. Secondly, identity makes some partners more attractive than others. States holding similar corporate identities are more likely to identify each other positively and seek cooperation.<sup>93</sup> For example, democratic states usually align with one another and do not ally against each other during times of war.

According to Barnett, identity does not only provide some leverage over the choice of an alliance partner, but also suggests that the maintenance of that alliance can be dependent on parties’ mutual identification. Accordingly, an important basis of alliances is not simply shared interests in relationship to an identified threat but rather a collective identity that promotes mutual identification. He highlighted that states need to uphold the values and norms of a community to be counted as its members. In other words, being part of a community entails complying by the community’s norms not only in foreign policy behaviour but also in state-society relations. And in order to be able to uphold the values and norms of a community, states must have a stable identity. While emphasizing the need of a stable identity, Barnett also noted that upholding a stable and secure identity consistent with a wider community may be especially difficult for some states at certain times. At this point, a good question to ask is ‘which states are more likely to have difficulties in upholding stable and secure identities?’ Let us now focus on the issue of identity security of states and the impact of having unstable and insecure identities on their foreign policy behaviour and capacity in the international system.

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<sup>93</sup> Risse Kappen, 1996, “Collective Identity in a Democratic Community: The Case of NATO”, *Culture of National Security*, eds. Katzenstein, p.410

## **B. THE SECURITY OF IDENTITY:**

Indeed, even in the most homogeneous societies in terms of ethnicity, religion and social culture, boundaries of national identity are hardly settled. Communities and societies can be understood as engaging in a continuous debate over their collective identity.<sup>94</sup> In the words of Edward Said, society “is the locale in which a continuous contest between adherents of different ideas about what constitutes the national identity is taking place”.<sup>95</sup> In other words, no state’s identity is entirely secure or stable as identities are always open to contestation. Nevertheless, the identities of some states at certain times can be less secure than others. Pluralistic societies and the so-called ‘torn’<sup>96</sup> societies whose elites seek to redefine their country’s collective identity are more likely to suffer from insecure identities. In these societies, state identity is highly contested between diverse social groups who have different and often conflicting understandings of national interests.

Eventually, the definition of national identity (and consequently the state’s identity) will be dominated by the most powerful groups or individuals. These groups or individuals during the state-building process will attempt to impose their own identities and institutionalize them in legal, political, and social structures at both internal and international levels. Internally, they will develop myths and institutions to safeguard and secure their identity. Nevertheless, alternative social identities can survive even when they are not represented in the state and endure to shape perceptions and affect political debates in a country. Perceptions of such actors can be socially strong particularly when there is a tension between the state and large segments of the society. As Doğu Ergil noted ‘when national identity is not a construct negotiated by the citizens of that nation, it creates problems for neglected and excluded groups that can escalate into perceived security threats by the hypersensitive state’.<sup>97</sup> In order to secure their identity, dominant actors will seek to embed it in interstate normative structures, notably regimes and security communities. The acceptance of a state to a society of states can further confirm its identity. This often involves

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<sup>94</sup> Barnett, M. (1996) ‘Identity and Alliances in the Middle East’, Peter Katzenstein (ed.), *The Culture of National Security* (New York: Colombia University Press), p. 411.

<sup>95</sup> Said, E., ‘The Phony Islamic Threat’, *New York Times Magazine*, November, 21 November 1993

<sup>96</sup> See Huntington, S. P. (1996), *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, (New York, Simon & Schuster)

<sup>97</sup> Ergil, D. (2000), ‘Identity Crises and Political Instability in Turkey’, *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol.54, No.1, p.47

membership in an international organization and represents an additional source of the state's identity.

The confirmed identity can stay relatively stable and secure for a long period of time until a *critical juncture* occurs. Critical junctures refers to 'perceived crisis situations occurring from complete policy failures, but also triggered by external events'.<sup>98</sup> Domestic developments such as changes in political economy, demography or territorial boundaries can trigger debates on identity and prevents a state to maintain a stable identity. In this context, a state's corporate identity can be changed through different mechanisms such as revolutions, domestic institutional arrangements or elections. A change in the state's corporate identity will also bring a change in its social identity since foreign policy can be dominated by entirely new organizations or individuals with different identity conceptions that may understand the national interest in a different way.<sup>99</sup>

The interaction between corporate and social identities of a state can also takes place in the opposite direction. External development such as a change in systemic patterns can also pave the way to wide-scale domestic change and revive or intensify debates about the collective identity and the state's relationship with the larger community. Under new historical conditions, the state's collective identity or the debate about that identity can be conflicting with the demands and defining characteristics of the broader community.<sup>100</sup> Such a situation can mean rejection by others who are thought to hold similar identities and undermines the state's membership in the community. This significantly undermines the security of a state's social identity and can influence its corporate identity as well. Lack of a clearly defined role in the international level will change the range of legitimate identity options for political actors in a country. As a result, dominant actors can modify their ideas about political order and about nation state identity since the old concepts are usually

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<sup>98</sup> Marcussen, M., Risse, T., Engelmann-Martin, D., Joachim Knopf, H. And Roscher, K. (1999), 'Constructing Europe? The Evolution of French, British, and German Nation State Identities', *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol.6, No.4, p.616

<sup>99</sup> Bozdağlıoğlu, Y. (2003), *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach*, (London: Routledge)

<sup>100</sup> Barnett, M. (1996) 'Identity and Alliances in the Middle East', Peter Katzenstein (ed.), *The Culture of National Security* (New York: Colombia University Press), p. 412

regarded as irrelevant or as having failed.<sup>101</sup> On the other hand, excluded groups can take advantage of the situation to weaken the dominant group's political position and to present their identity as the alternative. These developments will intensify the debates over corporate identity and can pave the way to an 'identity crisis' which in turn further influences the role identities of contesting actors.

An important question arises at this point: How does contestation of state identity influence the foreign policy of the state in question? Considering the links between identities and preferences, we can assume that implementing a certain foreign policy would require consent and consensus among diverse groups that are involved in the formulation of foreign policy and that have different role identities. When such consensus does not exist, a state's interests arise out of a struggle between different domestic groups trying to influence the course of the state's foreign policy in accordance with their identity conceptions. The contesting definitions of state identity are usually attached to contradictory expectations. 'Such expectations may call for incompatible performances; they may require that one hold two norms or values which can suggest conflicting behaviours; or they may require that one (identity) necessitates the expenditure of time and energy such that it is difficult or impossible to carry out the obligations of another (identity)'.<sup>102</sup> Put differently, competing identity conceptions of diverse actors who take part in the formulation of foreign policy complicate the definition of national interests, suggest different foreign policy pathways and prevent development along any one path. This brings ambivalence to the foreign policy of the state in question. Growing ambivalence in a state's foreign policy causes confusion and brings a decline in the predictability of its behaviours and in this way complicates its relations with other states. For example if the state in question is a member of an alliance, its ambivalent foreign policy which stems from its contesting identity, will undermine the alliance's foundation or a state's membership in it.

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<sup>101</sup> Marcussen, M., Risse, T., Engelmann-Martin, D., Joachim Knopf, H. And Roscher, K. (1999), 'Constructing Europe? The Evolution of French, British, and German Nation State Identities', *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol.6, No.4, p.617

<sup>102</sup> Sheldon, S. (1980), *Symbolic Interactionism: A Social Structural Perspective*, (Reading, Mass.: Benjamin/Cummings) cited in Barnett, M. 'Identity and Alliances in the Middle East', Peter Katzenstein (ed.), *The Culture of National Security* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), p. 412

In recent years, this has been especially obvious, since many states began debating their national identity and its relationship to other international communities, most notably the 'West'. Turkey is a particularly good example to such a situation. External developments, notably the end of Cold War, globalization and European integration, as well as domestic developments such as economic liberalization since 1980s, massive internal migration from Eastern Anatolia to Western Turkey and EU-related political reforms triggered debates on Turkey's corporate and social identities. These developments changed the range of legitimate ideas on state identity for Turkish political actors. On one hand, secular elites who are dominant in the Turkish military as well as the bureaucracy slightly modified their identity conceptions and began to emphasize Turkey's multi-civilizational and bridge identity between East and West. On the other hand, Islamist groups who first came to power in 1996 seriously challenged both the country's corporate (Kemalist) and role (Western) identities, and instead highlighted an Islamic identity.

In recent years, both groups have been transforming themselves according to changing internal and external normative contexts notably that of the EU which. Islamists became increasingly supportive of the EU membership while the secularists tolerated some EU-related reforms which reduced their political powers. These transformations temporarily relieved the tension between the two groups in early 2000s. Nevertheless, a consensus on the long-lasting issue of identity could not have been reached in the absence of the full EU membership signal in the foreseeable future. On the contrary, contestation over identity became more intense in the uncertain context of Turkey's future relations with the EU which is manifest with the rising polarization between the secularists and Islamists. Contesting identity definitions of the country's two key political camps call for diverse behaviours and as a result Turkey has been pursuing an ambivalent foreign policy in the past two decades. This ambivalence in Turkish foreign policy is most evident in the country's relations with the EU, Greece and the Middle East. For example, shifts in Ankara's position in the Cyprus issue shows how different conceptions of identity brings contradictory foreign policy behaviour and hinders development along any one path. On the other hand, the transition of Turkey's relations with Israel from a very close alliance to a normal and eventually a problematic relationship shows how identity insecurity can undermine alliances. The case study chapters will focus on these issues in greater detail.

As the above discussion indicated state identities are not monolithic and static. On the contrary, they are highly contested especially in 'torn' societies and are dynamically produced and re-produced through a clash of sub-national identities. States' interactions in

various institutional contexts can intensify and complicate the debates over national identity by adding more elements such as norms and values. Such interactions can alter the normative understandings of actors and eventually transform their identities which will have important consequences for a state's foreign policy. Let us now turn our attention to the constitutive and transformative role of norms and institutions which is another important contribution of constructivism to IR theory.

### C. LOGICS OF ACTION, NORMS AND INSTITUTIONS:

As Fearon and Wendt pointed out a typical way of understanding the difference between rationalist and constructivist approaches is in terms of the logics of action they emphasize.<sup>103</sup> Rationalists, who assume that the interests and preferences of actors are exogenously given and fixed, emphasized what James March and Johan Olsen called the *logic of consequentialism (LOC)*.<sup>104</sup> This logic treats actors as calculating machines who assess different courses of actions and then choose whichever provides the most efficient means to their ends. In this logic, *instrumental rationality* prevails. Put differently, choices of rational actors are guided by the outcome of action. Actions are valued and chosen not for themselves, but as efficient means to a further end. On the other hand, most constructivists highlighted what March and Olsen called the *logic of appropriateness (LOA)*. This is the realm of *normative rationality* whereby actors try to 'do the right thing' rather than maximizing their given preferences. In other words, this logic treats actors as rule-followers who decide what to do by posing the following questions: (i) 'what kind of a situation is this?', (ii) 'who am I?', (iii) 'how appropriate are different actions for me in this situation?'<sup>105</sup>

The LOA thus comprises three main elements, namely situation, identity and rules. Situations can be interpreted differently and this enables individual differences in action. Even actors holding similar identities or roles can act differently if they interpret the situation differently. At this point, institutions play a key role by shaping identities and the tools by which actors interpret situations and in this way produce similar behaviour from dissimilar

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<sup>103</sup> Fearon, J. And Wendt. A.(2002), 'Rationalism v. Constructivism: A Skeptical View' in *Handbook of International Relations*, eds. Risse, T., Carlsnaes, W. And Simmons, B. (London: Sage Publications), p. 60

<sup>104</sup> See March, J and Olsen, J (1989), *Rediscovering Institutions*, (New York: Free Press) and March, J and Olsen, J. (1995), *Democratic Governance*, (New York: Free Press)

<sup>105</sup> Sending, O. J. (2002), 'Constitution, Choice and Change: Problems with the Logic of Appropriateness' and its use in Constructivist Theory', *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol.8, No.4, p.447

actors. Hence, the identity that March and Olsen stressed is institutional identity which is defined by certain duties and obligations. Institutional identities demand certain actions in order for that identity to be fulfilled and maintained. And rules inform actors about what to do in order to behave as their institutional identity demands by storing information about institutional practices, routines and norms. In brief, LOA assumes that actors decide what to do by interpreting a situation, determining his/her identity and then look for a rule which defines appropriate options.<sup>106</sup>

The contrast between LOC and LOA leads to different understandings of social norms and the reasons thought to explain norm compliance. Neo-realists assume that norms do not have causal force whereas neo-liberals argued that they can have an important role in particular issue-areas. Nevertheless, even for the latter, norms are still a superstructure constructed on a material base.<sup>107</sup> Norms are created by agents and have a regulative role, namely assisting agents with exogenous interests for optimizing utility. Nevertheless, they can also constrain the choices and behaviour of self-interested states. Since the actions of rational agents are guided by LOC, people follow norms only/if it is useful to do so. In other words, norm compliance is an exercise in cost/benefit calculation -- be it in response to material benefits or the threat of sanctions. It is a game of altering strategies and behaviour.<sup>108</sup>

On the other hand, constructivists argue that a norm, which is defined by Jepperson, Wendt and Katzenstein as 'collective expectations about appropriate behaviour for a given identity'<sup>109</sup> can have regulative as well as constitutive roles. They can define or constitute identities in the first place or regulate behaviours for already constituted identities. Therefore, norms can have independent causal effects on agents' behaviour. Rather than being a superstructure on a material base, they contribute to the constitution of that base. Global norms and states interact: they are mutually constructed. In this way, norms establish

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<sup>106</sup> Sending, O. J. (2002), 'Constitution, Choice and Change: Problems with the Logic of Appropriateness' and its use in Constructivist Theory', *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol.8, No.4, p.450

<sup>107</sup> Checkel, J. (1998), 'The Constructivist Turn in International Relations Theory', *World Politics*, Vol.50, p.327

<sup>108</sup> Checkel, J. (1999). 'Sanctions, Social Learning and Institutions: Explaining State Compliance with the Norms of the European Human Rights Regime', *Arena Working Paper Series*, WP 99/11, Available online at [http://www.arena.uio.no/publications/wp99\\_11.htm](http://www.arena.uio.no/publications/wp99_11.htm)

<sup>109</sup> Jepperson, R., Wendt, A. and Katzenstein, P (1996), 'Norms, Identity, and Culture in National Security'. In *Culture and National Security*, ed. Katzenstein, (New York: Columbia University Press), p.54



expectations about how actors will behave in a specific environment. For example, the norm of sovereignty regulates the interactions of states in international affairs while simultaneously defining what a state is. Similarly, human rights norms do not only protect citizens from state intervention but also define a ‘civilized state’ in the modern world.<sup>110</sup>

Since agents’ actions are assumed to be guided by LOA, constructivists argue that agents comply with norms because they internalize them. In other words, they think norms as the right or legitimate thing to do. Constructivists put a strong emphasis on arguing, learning and persuasion which leads to the agents’ internalization of norms. Accordingly, agents do not only and always power; they also puzzle and learn. As Checkel put it ‘agents puzzle because they are engaged in cognitive information searches -- typically induced by policy failure or an uncertain environment. As a result, the strategies and, perhaps, underlying preferences of these agents are in flux; they are thus open to learning’.<sup>111</sup>

In line with these views, many constructivists attempted to show how norms shape states’ identity and interest and in this way change their foreign policy behaviours. Martha Finnemore has been influential in examining the way in which norms are involved in the process of the construction of actor's perceptions of their interests. According to her, norms create permissive conditions and provide states with direction and goals for action. As a result, changing norms can create new interests which enable them to adopt new and different behaviour. Finnemore has focused on the role of international organizations in spreading new international norms and models of political organization. She outlined the ways that international organizations “teach” states new norms of behaviour and construct domestic institutions and procedures inside states that reflect emergent international norms and practices.<sup>112</sup> In her analysis of humanitarian interventions, Finnemore argued that the changing norms about who is ‘human’ after the Second World War, in which international

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<sup>110</sup> Risse-Kappen, T. (2000), ‘Let’s Argue: Communicative Action in World Politics’, *International Organization*, Vol.54, No.1, p.5

<sup>111</sup> Checkel, J. (1999). ‘Sanctions, Social Learning and Institutions: Explaining State Compliance with the Norms of the European Human Rights Regime’, *Arena Working Paper Series*, WP 99/11, Available online at [http://www.arena.uio.no/publications/wp99\\_11.htm](http://www.arena.uio.no/publications/wp99_11.htm)

<sup>112</sup> Finnemore, M and Sikkink, K. (1998), ‘International Norm Dynamics and Political Change’, *International Organization*, Vol.52, No.4

institutions most notably the UN played a key role, created new interests and eventually transformed states' intervention behaviour. In her study of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), she shed light on the creation of science policy bureaucracies in many countries despite the lack of pressures from domestic electorate or powerful countries.

While Finnemore mostly emphasized how norms promoted by international organizations change state behaviour, some other constructivists argued that international norms have important effects on state behaviour via domestic political processes. Thomas Berger explained the maintenance of Germany's and Japan's non-assertive foreign policies, despite dramatic changes in their security environments and steady growth in their power, with the internalization of anti-militaristic norms. In doing so, he focused on domestic cultural-institutional context in which defence policies of these two states are made. He emphasized the concept of 'political-military culture' which refers to 'the subset of larger political culture that influences how members of a given society view national security, the military as an institution and the use of force in international relations'.<sup>113</sup>

According to Berger, the study of the political-military culture of a nation requires an examination of the original set of historical experiences that define how a society views the military and national security. A particular focus should be on the interpretation of these events among diverse social groups in the society. In his case studies, Germany and Japan, he emphasized how military defeat in the Second World War had shrunk the prestige of armed forces in both countries and initiated a transformation of their political-military cultures from a highly militaristic one to an anti-military one over the years. Berger also took our attention to several institutional and ideological structures which were created in both countries to secure their new political-military cultures. In the case of Germany, he particularly highlighted ideological structures such as the beliefs and values used to legitimate the new national security policies and institutions, notably a new definition of German national identity as part of the 'Western civilization'.<sup>114</sup> In short, these two states have developed

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<sup>113</sup> Berger, Thomas U. (1996). "Norms, Identity and National Security on Germany and Japan". In: Katzenstein, Peter J. (ed) . *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*. (New York: Columbia University Press), p.325-6

<sup>114</sup> Berger, Thomas U. (1996). "Norms, Identity and National Security on Germany and Japan". In: Katzenstein, Peter J. (ed) . *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*. (New York: Columbia University Press), p.336

beliefs and values that make them reluctant to resort to the use military force despite strong systemic pressures as a result of their historical experiences and the way in which those experiences were interpreted by domestic political actors.<sup>115</sup>

Berger's emphasis on domestic cultural-institutional context and his concept of 'political-military culture' is quite helpful to understand changes in Turkey's foreign policy in the last two decades as well. Just like pre-war Germany and Japan, Turkey had also been a militarist society since its foundation in 1923. The armed forces, led by Kemal Atatürk played a decisive role in the establishment of Turkish state as well as all of its institutions. This highly militaristic political-military culture was legitimated with several ideological structures. Central to these legitimations were a definition of Turkish national identity as Western, homogeneous and secular. Other legitimations were related with Kemalists' interpretation of the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire after the First World War and include geographical determinism, the Sèvres Syndrome, and several types of fear, notably Islamic reaction (*Irtica*), encirclement and disintegration. Until recent years, these ideological structures have been quite effective to maintain the army's legitimacy. Turkey's Kemalist and militarist political culture was translated into a Western-oriented foreign policy during the Cold War. On the other hand, Ankara pursued a cautious and non-interventionist approach towards neighbouring countries, especially the Islamic Middle East.

Nevertheless, Turkey's traditional security culture started to be questioned from the 1980s onwards. A series of political and economic liberalizing reforms of Özal's period paved the way for the emergence of a Turkish civil society and empowered Islamic groups, which eventually started to question Turkey's security conceptions and foreign policy practices. On the other hand, the revival of Kurdish nationalism and political Islam in the 1990s despite several interventions significantly reduced the army's prestige in the eyes of the country's liberal and intellectual circles. The EU's decision to recognize Turkey as a candidate country in 1999 also consolidated Turkey's emerging political-military culture. EU-related reforms reduced the political powers of the military while empowering political and societal actors which promote a different security culture, and legitimized their policy choices. Turkey's new political-military culture, which was legitimated with a new definition

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<sup>115</sup> Berger, Thomas U. (1996). "Norms, Identity and National Security on Germany and Japan". In: Katzenstein, Peter J. (ed) . *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*. (New York: Columbia University Press), p.318

of its identity as a bridge between East and West, was translated into a transformation of its foreign policy, especially towards its neighbours. This long and uneasy process and how Turkey's contesting political-military cultures affected its foreign policy will be explored in the following chapters in greater detail.

In a similar manner with Berger, Thomas Risse-Kappen also emphasized domestic political structures and argued that the ability of international institutions to promote norms and influence state policy is dependent on domestic structures understood in terms of state-societal relations. He also highlighted how domestic norms can also regulate interactions between states. According to Risse-Kappen, this is particularly valid for democracies that externalize their internal norms when cooperating with each other and in this way mediate power asymmetries by norms of democratic decision making. He identified four ways in which such norms affect the interaction between democratic allies: (i) decision-makers predict allied demands or consult their partners before preferences are formed, (ii) norms serve as collective understandings of appropriate behaviour and can be used by actors when justification for an argument is needed, (iii) cooperation rules also affect the bargaining processes between allies: democratic norms de-emphasize the use of material power in intra-allied bargaining processes, (iv) democratically-elected leaders are constrained by domestic pressures and procedures and since these procedures form the core of the value community, using them to enhance one's bargaining power is considered appropriate.<sup>116</sup>

For the above-mentioned reasons, inter-democratic institutions are special since they can build upon a strong sense of community of liberal states. Once established they contribute to the consolidation of its members' democracies and reinforce the positive effects of democracy on peace. In brief, there is a two-level norm game occurring in which the domestic and international norms are increasingly linked. As Finnemore pointed out many international norms were once the domestic norms of a country/society or region.<sup>117</sup> Besides, international norms must always work their influence through the filter of domestic structures and domestic norms. Nevertheless, the effects of domestic norms are strongest at the early stage of a norm's life cycle. Once a norm has been institutionalized in the international

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<sup>116</sup> Risse Kappen, 1996, "Collective Identity in a Democratic Community: The Case of NATO", *Culture of National Security*, eds. Katzenstein, pp.369-370

<sup>117</sup> Finnemore, M and Sikkink, K. (1998), 'International Norm Dynamics and Political Change', *International Organization*, Vol.52, No.4, p.893

system, domestic effects became less important. This brings our attention back to the role of international institutions which were described by Claude as ‘custodians of the seals of international approval and disapproval’<sup>118</sup> and play a key role in establishing and assuring states’ compliance with international norms.

#### **D. INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS:**

The issue of how international institutions operate and influence actors’ decisions has been another matter of debate between rationalists and constructivists. In the rationalist account, if no agreements among actors could be mutually beneficial, there would be no need for specific international institutions.<sup>119</sup> However, if actors share a view that cooperation will be mutually beneficial, they will establish international regimes and organizations which provide forums in which they can mitigate collective-action problems such as several temptations for cheating, deception and free-riding. According to rationalists, international institutions change transaction costs and reduce certain forms of uncertainty. More specifically, they provide information, stabilize expectations and make de-centralized enforcement feasible by creating conditions under which reciprocity can operate.<sup>120</sup> In this way, they change the rational means-ends calculations and constrain behaviour and strategies of states.

Constructivists on the other hand, suggest that the influence of international institutions is much deeper. In this view, they can transform the identities and interests of political elites as well as civil society by providing legitimacy for collective decisions, and through the process of socialization, spreading their norms and rules. International institutions also promote shared understandings and a collective security identity. This is particularly valid for inter-democratic institutions for the above-mentioned reasons. As Risse-Kappen noted inter-democratic institutions are special since they can build upon a strong

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<sup>118</sup> Quoted in Finnemore, M and Sikkink, K. (1998), ‘International Norm Dynamics and Political Change’, *International Organization*, Vol.52, No.4, p.903

<sup>119</sup> Keohane, R. (1988), “International Institutions: Two Approaches”, *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol.32,p.386

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*

sense of community of liberal states. However, the degree of institutionalization as well as the extent to which ‘pluralistic security communities’ have emerged varies among inter-democratic institutions.<sup>121</sup> For instance, when one compares NATO with the EU in terms of their degree of institutionalization and the extent to which collective identities have developed among its members, the latter scores higher than the former on both dimensions. For this reason, the EU received special attention from IR scholars since it is an excellent case study for getting at some bigger issues in regard to the relations of institutions, states and individuals. The EU has been acting as a strong catalyst for the transformation in Turkey’s public and foreign policies as well. For this reason, the rest of this section will focus on the EU and how it influences its member and applicant states.

The EU has a unique nature compared to the all other international organizations. This uniqueness stems from the fact that the European integration process necessitates the delegation of a broad range of state sovereignty to the supra-national institutions of the organization such as the European Commission, European Parliament and the European Court of Justice, which is also known as ‘deep’ integration. The commitment to a deep integration was made clear when six original members of the EU’s forerunner, European Economic Community (EEC) expressed their determination in the first recital of the preamble of the Treaty of Rome ‘to lay down the foundations of an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe’.<sup>122</sup> Currently, the degree of integration, the level of political community and pooling of sovereignty in Europe far exceeds those seen in other regions of the world. In Checkel’s words ‘if there is any place in the world where the nation-state would seem to be in re-treat, it is in Europe.’<sup>123</sup> Through its *acquis communautaire* (the accumulated legislation, legal acts, court decisions which constitute the body of EU law), the EU influences virtually every aspect of policy-making and implementation in its member states. In brief, EU membership transforms the domestic structure of a member state through initiating a process of ‘Europeanization’, in which the Union’s political and economic dynamics as well as norms

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<sup>121</sup> Risse Kappen, 1996, “Collective Identity in a Democratic Community: The Case of NATO”, *Culture of National Security*, eds. Katzenstein, pp.369-370

<sup>122</sup> Treaty Establishing the European Economic Community, 25 March 1957, Original text available at: [http://europa.eu/legislation\\_summaries/institutional\\_affairs/treaties/treaties\\_eec\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/institutional_affairs/treaties/treaties_eec_en.htm).

<sup>123</sup> Checkel, J. (2005), ‘International Institutions and Socialization in Europe: Introduction and Framework’, *International Organization*, Vol.59, Fall, p.801

and practices become part of the organisational logic of national politics and policy-making.<sup>124</sup>

Apart from its commitment to a deep integration, the EU also committed itself to enlargement in Europe from the very beginning. Starting with six members in 1950s, the EEC doubled its number of members by a range of accessions during the 1970s-80s. The end of the Cold War in 1989 transformed the context of European integration by opening-up the possibility of a continent-wide union. Nevertheless, admitting new member states which were experiencing painful economic transformations raised challenges to the idea of an 'ever closer union'. The lengthy process of eastern enlargement threatened to disturb the internal order of the Union as well. These concerns triggered a widening versus deepening debate on the question of future European integration and led in 1990 to the launch of two intergovernmental conferences. Out of these emerged the Treaty on European Union in 1993 which is also known the Maastricht Treaty.

Maastricht legally created the European Union and deepened integration in various ways such as outlining the phases towards Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), enhancing the legislative powers of the European Parliament and establishing Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). In the same year, at the Copenhagen European Council, the Union confirmed its firm commitment to enlargement, while simultaneously defining the membership criteria, which are often referred to as the 'Copenhagen criteria'. The Copenhagen criteria require that a state have the institutions to preserve democratic governance and human rights, have a functioning market economy, and accept the obligations and intent of the EU.<sup>125</sup>

By clarifying the conditions of full membership, the EU started to exert pressures and other phenomena associated with Europeanization on its applicants as well. Indeed, as Grabbe pointed out, the EU influence in the applicants can go well beyond its official competences in the current member states.<sup>126</sup> In other words, the accession process pushes the applicants towards greater convergence with particular institutional models than has occurred

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<sup>124</sup> Ladrech, Robert (1994). 'Europeanization of domestic politics and institutions: The case of France'. *Journal of Common Market Studies*. 32(1), p. 69.

<sup>125</sup> EU Membership Criteria and Accession Preparation. Available online at [http://europa.eu/legislation\\_summaries/institutional\\_affairs/treaties/treaties\\_eec\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/institutional_affairs/treaties/treaties_eec_en.htm).

<sup>126</sup> Grabbe, H. (2001), 'How Does Europeanization affects CEE Governance? Conditionality Diffusion and Diversity', *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol.8, No.6, p.1013

within the existing EU. She explains the EU's greater influence on its applicants by the added dimensions of conditionality and a negotiating process. Conditionality makes mitigating the influence of EU policies more difficult for applicants than for member states. The Copenhagen conditions are extensive, and what constitutes fulfilling them is open to interpretation.<sup>127</sup> This provides the EU substantial power in deciding what needs to be done to realize compliance. Furthermore, applicant countries cannot debate the introduction of the *acquis* during the accession talks since it is non-negotiable.

During the entire process of accession the EU uses several mechanisms to bring about *desired changes* in the behaviour of an applicant state. Nonetheless, rationalist explanations are exclusively based on cost-benefit calculations in the light of external incentives provided by conditionality. Schimmelfennig emphasized the role of incentives and political rewards used by the EU in the transformation of human rights and democracy norms in the CEECs. According to him, persuasive tools have been less effective when applied without incentives, particularly if domestic opposition to change is powerful.<sup>128</sup> Grabbe provided a more detailed analysis of the mechanisms of Europeanization in EU applicants and identified five such conditionality tools. The first tool is the *provision of legislative and institutional templates*, which refers to a legal transposition of the *acquis* and the harmonisation with EU regulations. Secondly, *money: aid and technical assistance*, which has the function "of supporting the transfer of EU models". Thirdly, *benchmarking and monitoring*, that refers to the assessment of the progress of each candidate country through regular reports published by the European Commission. Fourthly, *advice and twinning*, enables direct involvement of the EU administrative bodies and actors in the national arenas. The final conditionality instrument is the mechanism of *gate keeping* which refers to access to different stages in the accession process, especially achieving candidate status and beginning accession talks.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Grabbe, H. (2001), 'How Does Europeanization affects CEE Governance? Conditionality Diffusion and Diversity', *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol.8, No.6, p. 1015

<sup>128</sup> Schimmelfennig, F. (2005), 'Strategic Calculation and International Socialization: Membership Incentives, Party Constellations, and Sustained Compliance in Central and Eastern Europe', *International Organization*, Vol.59. Issue 4.

<sup>129</sup> Grabbe, H. (2001), 'How Does Europeanization affects CEE Governance? Conditionality Diffusion and Diversity', *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol.8, No.6



Constructivists such as Checkel did not deny the existence of strategic calculation or the role of incentives and rewards in the process of member and applicant states' Europeanization. Indeed, Checkel criticized other constructivists for ignoring that much of everyday social interaction is about strategic exchange. When this mechanism operates alone, actors adapt their behaviour to the norms of the EU in order to maximize their given interests. Nevertheless, Checkel also emphasized that actors can learn new interests and acquire new preferences in the absence of obvious material incentives through their interaction with broader institutional contexts.<sup>130</sup> In line with this view, he identified two additional socialization mechanisms within the EU, namely *role playing* and *normative suasion*. *Role playing*, involves non-calculative behavioural adaptation and thus it starts the shift from LOC to LOA. Here, actors comply with the norms of an institution simply because it is easier socially to do so, not because of strategic calculations or because they think it is the right thing to do. On the other hand, when *norm suasion* occurs actors actively internalize new understandings of appropriateness. The shift from LOC to LOA is complete and actors comply with the norms of an institution because they think it is the right thing to do even though they did not used to think so.<sup>131</sup>

Despite their distinctiveness, the three mechanisms of Europeanization are intimately related entities and can interact with each other over time. In many cases, strategic calculation or role playing take place at the beginning of a process which ultimately leads to internalization of norms and preference change.<sup>132</sup> Furthermore, incentives and rewards used by the EU are essentially related to membership. As Checkel and Zürn pointed out: 'incentives are important as socialization mechanisms yet their success is dependent on the construction of a certain relationship between those involved in the process and the diffusion of ideas that leads to valuing membership. In brief, incentives are constructed as well'.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Checkel, J. (1999), 'Social Construction and Integration', *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol.6, No.4, p.548

<sup>131</sup> Checkel, J. (2005), 'International Institutions and Socialization in Europe: Introduction and Framework', *International Organization*, Vol.59, Fall, p.811

<sup>132</sup> Ibid, p.809

<sup>133</sup> Checkel, J. And Zürn, M. (2005), 'Getting Socialized to Build Bridges: Constructivism and Rationalism, Europe and the Nation State', *International Organization*, Vol.59, Issue 4, p.1064

Even Grabbe acknowledged that aid, trade and other benefits have not had such direct and evident consequences as progress towards membership.<sup>134</sup> Therefore, before membership can be used as an incentive by the EU, the targets of socialization should be persuaded that membership is beneficial to them. There can be significant variation among elites in applicant states on the desirability of membership. At this point *two important questions arise: (i) 'why membership is sometimes considered an incentive by the targets of the socialization?' and (ii) 'why the EU considers enlargement—especially towards certain countries—desirable?'*

In the rationalist account, expected individual costs and benefits determine member states' and applicants' enlargement preferences. To be more specific, a member state favours the integration of an outside state and an outsider state seeks to expand its institutional ties with an international organization under the conditions that it will acquire positive net benefits from enlargement.<sup>135</sup> In line with this view, rationalist scholars explained EU's commitment to enlargement merely with the economic benefits or security gains of its member states. More specifically, enlargement meant expansion into new markets for certain member states and stability for the Union as a whole. Nevertheless, member states could try to gain access to new markets through ways short of membership such as free trade agreements. Moreover for some member states it was clear that the negative consequences of enlargement will outweigh possible benefits. For instance, while the geographical location indicates that Ireland, Portugal or Spain are not very vulnerable to political instability in the CEECs and are not best placed to exploit the economic opportunities of enlargement.<sup>136</sup> Indeed, internal policy reforms entail for these states the risk of losing substantial receipts from the EU budget. Even if we assume that the Union as a whole had an interest in stability in Europe, new boundaries could also bring new divisions in the continent and pave the way for instability. For this reason, the EU could attempt to contribute to stability in other ways

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<sup>134</sup> Grabbe, H. (2001), 'How Does Europeanization affects CEE Governance? Conditionality Diffusion and Diversity', *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol.8, No.6, p.1020

<sup>135</sup> Schimmelfennig, F. And Sedelmeier, U. (2002), 'Theorizing EU Enlargement: Research Focus, Hypotheses, and the State of Research', *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol.9, No.4, p.510

<sup>136</sup> Sedelmeier, U. (2000) 'The EU and the Eastern Enlargement: Risk, Rationality and Role Compliance' *The State of the European Union: Risks, Reforms, Resistance and Revival*, Edited by Maria Green Cowles and Michael Smith, (New York: Oxford University Press), p.170

short of membership such as financial aids.

Rationalists emphasized similar motivations for applicant states' interest in EU membership. For instance, the deepening of economic integration in the Union brings negative externalities for outsiders and trigger demands for membership. Other motivations in the rationalist account for desiring EU membership include changes in the world economy or security environment, and rising economic dependence on the Union.<sup>137</sup> Nevertheless, EU membership implied certain risks for the CEECs as well. Poor competitiveness of these countries could lead to increased balance of payments deficits and hence economic insecurity especially in countries such as Poland and Romania. Moreover, there were concerns about a German economic domination over Poland as a result of significant trade and FDI by German businesses. EU's demands on human rights also involved some security risks for the CEECs. These demands provoked intense debates regarding minority rights in many of the CEECs such as Slovakia, Hungary and Romania.

Considering all these factors, an exclusive focus on utility cannot capture the enlargement preferences of the EU and its applicants. For this reason, many scholars such as Schimmelfennig accepted that norms also influenced actors' preferences. In order to explain EU's choice to expand towards the CEECs, Schimmelfennig emphasized the concept of 'rhetorical entrapment' and argued that actors with self-interest in enlargement have strategically used normative arguments to shame the rest of the Union into accepting it.<sup>138</sup> In other words, those who had no interest in enlargement found themselves 'rhetorically entrapped' to approve it due to EU's statements during the Cold War that implied a moral commitment to accept these states as members. This suggests that norms functioned merely as constraints on actors' behaviour. Sedelmeier opened the possibility that norms can also be used non-instrumentally. To him, the influence of norms can be different on different actors. More specifically, norms can be constitutive for the policy advocates of enlargement whereas calculations of reputation and social costs of deviation explain how these policy advocates mobilize backing for enlargement in the Union as a whole.<sup>139</sup> However, as Sjursen pointed

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<sup>137</sup> Schimmelfennig, F. And Sedelmeier, U. (2002), 'Theorizing EU Enlargement: Research Focus, Hypotheses, and the State of Research', *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol.9, No.4, p.512

<sup>138</sup> See Schimmelfennig, F. (2001), 'The Community Trap: Liberal Norms, Rhetorical Action, and the Eastern Enlargement of the EU', *International Organization*, Vol.55, No.1, pp.47-80

out the effectiveness of such processes of shaming is dependent on the actors' belief that the norms at stake exist and are valid.<sup>140</sup> In other words, actors will be ashamed of not complying with certain norms only if they consider such norms as valid and legitimate. Hence it is the commitment to norms that are considered legitimate rather than rationalist calculations of reputation that allows us to understand EU's enlargement preferences.

While emphasizing the constitutive role of norms, many constructivists put a strong emphasis on cultural factors such as a sense of community, 'cultural match' and a collective identity to explain enlargement preferences.<sup>141</sup> Accordingly, whether member states and applicants consider enlargement as attractive depends on the degree of community they perceive to have with each other. 'The more an external state identifies with the international community that the organization represents and the more it shares the values and norms that define the purpose and the policies of the organization, the stronger the institutional ties it seeks with this organization and the more the member states are willing to pursue integration with this state'.<sup>142</sup> In line with this view, many scholars emphasized the role of EU's collective identity in its enlargement preferences. For the purposes of this thesis, Sjursen's study on EU enlargement is quite helpful since it gives us a clue not only on why the EU expanded but also on why it prioritized the accession of the CEECs over Turkey.

Sjursen made a distinction between two different forms of norm-guided justifications for enlargement, namely ethical-political arguments and moral arguments.<sup>143</sup> Ethical-political arguments refer to the values that are perceived as constitutive of European identity and involve a duty and solidarity only with those who share them. On the other hand, moral arguments involve references to rights that can be regarded just by all actors irrespective of

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<sup>139</sup> Sedelmeier, U. (2000) 'The EU and the Eastern Enlargement: Risk, Rationality and Role Compliance' *The State of the European Union: Risks, Reforms, Resistance and Revival*, Edited by Maria Green Cowles and Michael Smith, (New York: Oxford University Press), p.170

<sup>140</sup> Sjursen, H. (2002), 'Why Expand? The Question of Legitimacy and Justification in the EU's Enlargement Policy', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol.40, No.3, p. 500

<sup>141</sup> See Checkel, J. (1999) 'Norms, Institutions, and National Identity in Contemporary Europe', *International Studies Quarterly* 43(1): 83–114 and Cortell, A. and Davis, J. (2000) 'Understanding the domestic Impact of International Norms: a Research Agenda', *International Studies Review* 2(1): pp.65-87

<sup>142</sup> Schimmelfennig, F. And Sedelmeier, U. (2002), 'Theorizing EU Enlargement: Research Focus, Hypotheses, and the State of Research', *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol.9, No.4, p.513

<sup>143</sup> Sjursen, H. (2002), 'Why Expand? The Question of Legitimacy and Justification in the EU's Enlargement Policy', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol.40, No.3, pp.491-513

their cultural identity. According to Sjursen, ethical-political arguments which indicate a sense of kinship-based duty are more effective in mobilizing support for enlargement. In order to elaborate this hypothesis, Sjursen compared EU's statements about relations with the CEECs and Turkey and demonstrated a significant difference between the two. The accession of the CEECs into the EU was represented as the end of an artificial division in Europe which was imposed by the outsiders. This representation has been a constant factor not only in EU's policy documents but also in the EU's leaders' speeches regarding the enlargement towards the CEECs. In brief, the main justification used for eastern enlargement was that the CEECs are a part of the 'European family' that must be returned to Europe.<sup>144</sup> On the other hand, Turkey was mostly represented as an important partner to Europe rather than a natural part of the 'European family'. There has been almost no reference to duty of kinship with regard to this country. Those favouring Turkey's membership constructed a rationale explicitly connected to the utility defined in terms of security. In other words, the main justification for supporting Turkey's EU membership is its strategic importance rather than the fact that it is 'one of us'.<sup>145</sup>

Despite the differences between the justifications for enlargement towards the CEECs and Turkey, the EU emphasized that the decision about who would be allowed to join the Union is objective since entry talks with an applicant starts only after it meets a core of the Copenhagen criteria. However, in the process of backing applicants in their efforts to meet these criteria, the Union has given priority to the CEECs over Turkey. As Lundgren showed Poland, for example, was given much more financial support toward democratic transition than Turkey after the end of Cold War.<sup>146</sup> Moreover, the CEECs were courted to attend and engage in regular meetings in various EU institutions far in advance of accession, whereas Turkey was not. In brief, the EU's identity construction of the CEECs as 'European' and an 'extension of self' paved the way for their prioritization over Turkey in the Union's

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<sup>144</sup> Sjursen, H. (2002), 'Why Expand? The Question of Legitimacy and Justification in the EU's Enlargement Policy', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol.40, No.3, p.503

<sup>145</sup> Ibid, p.504

<sup>146</sup> Lundgren, Å. (1998), *Europeisk Identitespolitik: EU's Demokratibånd till Polen och Turkiet*, PhD thesis (Uppsala: Uppsala University) cited in Sjursen, H. (2002), 'Why Expand? The Question of Legitimacy and Justification in the EU's Enlargement Policy', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol.40, No.3, p.492

enlargement policy.

Turkey's EU bid has engendered heated debates in the EU about the nature of European identity and the very boundaries of modern Europe. Consequently, a high degree of variation can be observed in the preferences of member states in regards to Turkey's EU membership. Contrasting voices within the EU ranging from the negative attitude of German Christian Democrats to the more favourable stance of the UK or Italy constantly send mixed signals to Turkey. These are strengthened by the inconsistent EU positions on this issue. As a result of EU's ambivalent position towards Turkey's membership, Ankara has been criticizing the Union for applying double standards reducing its incentives to comply with EU political recommendations. In this context, Turkey's Europeanization has been particularly slow in comparison with the CEECs.

Nevertheless, explaining Turkey's problematic and slow Europeanization process only with mixed messages from the Union would be incomplete. In the constructivist account, the strength and stability of enlargement preferences in an applicant state is dependent on the extent of the domestic consensus on its state identity and policy norms. If an applicant has a relatively secure and consensus-based state identity, its politics will be less controversial and the resulting enlargement preferences will be stable and strong. On the other hand, if identity of an applicant state is highly contested, its politics will be ambivalent and the resulting enlargement preferences will be instable.<sup>147</sup> For instance, a widespread consensus on state identity can be observed in the CEECs. Political elites in these countries collectively promoted a common identity between Eastern and Western Europe after the end of Cold War. As mentioned above, this common identity was systematically echoed in the EU. The "Europeanness" of the CEECs was hardly questioned by the EU and their accession to the Union was not a question of if but when. Due to the existence of a domestic consensus on state identity and its recognition by the EU, opposition to change has been weak in the CEECs. Furthermore, EU models were being presented at the same time as the CEEC policy-makers were seeking institutional models to replace or to create new structures.<sup>148</sup> In this context, these states saw themselves as a student in a teacher-student relationship. As a result,

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<sup>147</sup> Schimmelfennig, F. And Sedelmeier, U. (2002), 'Theorizing EU Enlargement: Research Focus, Hypotheses, and the State of Research', *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol.9, No.4, p.514

<sup>148</sup> Grabbe, H. (2001), 'How Does Europeanization affects CEE Governance? Conditionality Diffusion and Diversity', *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol.8, No.6, p.1014

the CEECs adopted fundamental norms and practices of the EU rather quickly and smoothly and eventually joined the Union as full members within a decade.

On the other hand, as mentioned throughout the thesis, there has never been a national consensus over Turkey's identity. Westernization was a top-down project that fostered societal resistance from the outset and which received only partial recognition from the West itself. The end of the Cold War has further intensified the debates over Turkish identity both in Turkey itself and in the wider world. As chapter two and three will show in detail, Turkey's EU bid has been a source of a tense relationship, reinforcing divisions and conflicts not only within Turkey but also within Europe. Unlike the CEECs, Turkey has had severe problems with its reform process as a result of a lack of a domestic consensus on its state identity which generated a strong domestic resistance to change. This resistance includes forces that emphasize Turkey's envisaged 'special conditions' and hinder the tide of the country's Europeanization. EU's questioning of Turkey's European credentials and its ambivalent position on its future membership also reinforced debates on identity and triggered instability in the country. As a result, Turkey has been travelling a particularly difficult and often bumpy road toward European integration. Furthermore, along the way the country has been passed by a number of competitors who now themselves have a say on Turkey's EU membership. In brief, Europeanization is as much an EU-inspired project as a national venture, involving the interaction of both external and internal factors.<sup>149</sup> Its success necessitates commitment, will and consensus from both sides. Subsequent chapters will examine the difficulties that Turkey faces in its Europeanization process due to its insecure identity in greater detail.

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<sup>149</sup> Anastasakis, O. (2005), 'The Europeanization of the Balkans', *Brown Journal of World Affairs*, Vol.12, Issue. 1, p.86

## **STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF CONSTRUCTIVISM: CONCLUDING REMARKS**

The strength of constructivism lies at least partially in its ‘middle ground’ position between rationalist and reflectivist approaches in IR theory. This position on one hand, enabled scholars to criticize the mainstream rationalist theory, or at least to be innovative with regard to it, on the other hand allowed them to avoid the drawbacks of reflectivist approaches. While avoiding ‘the pitfalls of the extremes of empiricism and idealism, of individualism and holism, or of single truth and relativism’<sup>150</sup>, constructivists developed a rich and broad ontology which emphasizes identities, norms, social agents and mutual constitution of structure and agency. With its rich ontology and sociological approach, constructivism has expanded the theoretical lines of mainstream IR theory and allowed us to understand the socio-cultural context within which it operates.

Rationalist approaches, notably neo-realism minimized the role of socio-cultural context and perceived national interest as a static, culture-free black box. Constructivism on the other hand attached a social dimension to the central debates of international relations, emphasized inter-subjective meanings and opened the black box of interest and identity formation.<sup>151</sup> Constructivists have sought to understand the full range of roles that ideas and beliefs play in world politics rather than treating them simply as instrumental. They successfully demonstrated the causal and constitutive role of ideational factors on state identities and interests, independent of material factors.<sup>152</sup> After all, neither individuals nor states can be separated from a context of normative meaning which shapes their identity and the possibilities available to them. Moreover, material structures are given meaning only by the social context through which they are interpreted. Therefore constructivism also shed a light on how power translates into threat within a certain set of understandings and representations.

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<sup>150</sup> Guzzini, S. (2000), ‘A Reconstruction of Constructivism in International Relations’, *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol.6, No.2, p.148

<sup>151</sup> Checkel, J. (1998), ‘The Constructivist Turn in International Relations Theory’, *World Politics*, Vol.50, p.326

<sup>152</sup> For a detailed discussion see Copeland, D.C. (2000), ‘The Constructivist Challenge to Structural Realism’, *International Security*, Vol.25, No.2, p.187-212



Constructivists' stress on the mutual constitution of structure and agency helps to explain structural change and tackle the neo-realist pessimism about the odds of cooperation. Given that structure and agents are mutually constituted, the conditions of action are also what the actors make them to be. Most objects of international relations such as national borders or sovereignty are constructed by human agency in a cultural, historical and political context of meaning. As Wendt pointed out self-help and power politics are also socially constructed institutions, not essential features of anarchy.<sup>153</sup> Conflicts and wars occur as a result of states' own social practices, which reproduce selfish and militaristic approaches.<sup>154</sup> Therefore, they are not inevitable even in an anarchic system. Changes in states' practices can eventually transform the type of anarchy and the nature of international system that states interact and pave the way to a more cooperative world. In short, constructivism's emphasis on the constitution of material forces by ideas brought the transformative potentials of the system to light.

Constructivism is particularly useful to understand Turkish foreign policy in the post-cold war period. Rationalist approaches might be helpful for explaining specific decisions which are taken in a stable environment. Identities and interests can sometimes last over the course of an interaction and thus make rationalist assumptions plausible. For instance, if Hobbesian culture lasted over a long period of time, then, it would be useful to think of the system in rationalist terms. Nevertheless, state identities and interests can change over time and this can eventually transform the culture of anarchy in the international system. In such a scenario, rationalist assumptions become problematic. After the end of the Second World War, a shift from a Hobbesian to a Kantian culture of anarchy started to develop in Europe simultaneously on the basis of the NATO and the EU. Since the end of Cold War, the continent has entered a post-modern system in which bipolarity and rivalry has been replaced by the development of a Kantian security community.<sup>155</sup>

Turkey's engagement with these two pluralistic security communities in Europe, namely NATO and the EU, has influenced its 'culture of anarchy' as well and shifted the

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<sup>153</sup> Wendt, A. (1992), "Anarchy is what states make of it: the social construction of power politics" in *International Organization*, V.46, No:2, p.394-5

<sup>154</sup> Copeland, D.C. (2000), "The Constructivist Challenge to Structural Realism", *International Security*, Vol.25, No.2,p.198

<sup>155</sup> Wendt, A. (1999), *Social Theory of International Politics*, (New York: Cambridge University Press)

country out of a Hobbesian culture towards the Kantian one. Internally, the country has become much more open to pluralism and much more at ease with its cultural and ethnic diversity. Turkish foreign policy also entered into an age of transformation. We witnessed the adoption of a 'win-win' approach in foreign policy which is manifest with shifts in important policy areas such as Cyprus. As Kirişçi pointed out nothing illustrates the new "win-win" approach to foreign policy better than the shift in Turkey's position on the Cyprus issue in 2003-2004.<sup>156</sup> Turkey's EU candidacy and the principle of conditionality that the union employs with its candidates have also enabled Ankara to develop a new "soft power" foreign policy towards the Middle East. Considering the change that characterizes Turkish politics in the post-Cold War period, rationalist assumptions with regard to national interest and rational actors do not fit with the nature of Turkey's foreign policy. In other words, Turkey does not match the static model of a stable state with relatively fixed interests that characterize rationalist approaches.

Despite its important contributions and assets, constructivism has its limits as well. The argument that any change in strategic practice can change the identities of states from collective to selfish or vice versa, does not explain what would change the nature of state practice or why states would want to change it in the first place. In a similar manner with neo-realism, most constructivists overlooked the interconnectedness of international and domestic politics. In order to show that states' social identities and interests are endogenous to state interaction and can change depending on that interaction, Wendt, arguably the best known advocate of constructivism, developed a systemic approach and excluded the domestic dimension of identities from his examination. In other words, he ignored domestic processes to focus on the effect of interaction between states. He treated the corporate identities of the states as fixed and pre-social entities.<sup>157</sup> This modest view of the state and domestic dimension of its identity can be helpful for his theoretical objectives. Nevertheless, it fundamentally weakens the constructivist argument.

As mentioned earlier, the corporate identity of a state will emerge as a result of a domestic contestation between diverse social groups. Once emerged, corporate identities shape the direction and intention of states' systemic interactions. Put differently, states begin

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<sup>156</sup> Kirişçi, K. "Turkey's foreign policy in turbulent times", *European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS) Chaillot Paper* - n°92, September 2006.

<sup>157</sup> Cederman, L.E. and Daase, C. (2003), "Endogenizing Corporate Identities: The Next Step in Constructivist IR Theory", *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol.9, No.1, p.6

interacting with each other with an already constructed corporate identity. Moreover they can construct ‘self’ and ‘other’ before the interaction begins through discursive practices such as representations. Therefore, states do not start interaction unintentionally at all times. The corporate identity and representations are helpful to understand why states are interested in interacting with each other in the first place and what their intentions are in such interactions.<sup>158</sup> For instance, similarity in corporate identity and positive representations can encourage states to identify with each other and seek cooperation. Alternatively, some interaction patterns originate as side-effects from the desire to create, uphold, destroy and transform corporate identities.<sup>159</sup>

In brief, corporate identity is an important independent variable in the construction of social identities at the systemic level. Once constructed the social identity of a state and its interactions in the international system will in turn influence its corporate identity by adding more elements such as norms and values. This influence can be a confirmation or rejection of a state’s self-claimed identity depending on the nature of interaction. In turn, any change in the corporate identity of a state due to internal or external events will eventually affect its social identity in the international system. Therefore, a more complete understanding of a state’s foreign policy requires a greater attention to its corporate identity and how it interacts with the state’s social identity.

As indicated earlier in this chapter, some constructivists showed how states’ corporate identities, notably domestic structures and domestic norms, can influence their systemic interactions. Berger explained Germany’s and Japan’s pacifist foreign policy with their domestic cultural and institutional context, namely their anti-military political-military culture. Risse-Kappen emphasized how democratic states externalize their domestic norms in their interactions with each other. Nevertheless, even these scholars treated identity as a possession of an entire nation. This treatment is problematic since many countries experience contestations over their identity and as the Turkish case indicates some identities are formed in the absence of a consensus between the state and large segments of society. Therefore this thesis aims to move our attention from a singular understanding of state identity to a range of contesting identities at the domestic level and emphasize the impact of these contestations on

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<sup>158</sup> Bozdağlıoğlu, Y. (2003), *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach*, (London: Routledge), p.27

<sup>159</sup> Cederman, L.E. and Daase, C. (2003), “Endogenizing Corporate Identities: The Next Step in Constructivist IR Theory”, *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol.9, No.1, p.15

state's foreign policy behaviour and capacity in the international system.

In line with this aim, the following chapters of the thesis will focus on a range of important foreign policy issues of Turkey in the post-Cold War period. Since the end of Cold War, Turkish foreign policy emerged as a platform in which rival identity claims have been contested. In this context, national interests are understood differently by diverse groups and institutions and are pursued through defining or re-defining a collective/social identity for Turkey. For this reason, many aspects of Turkish foreign policy can be better understood by an approach which pays attention to Turkey's corporate identity as well as its interaction with its social identity. Accordingly, the case study chapters will concentrate on the identity conceptions of important domestic actors and institutions in Turkey who can influence the formulation of Turkish foreign policy. In keeping with the theoretical interest in how international institutions may shape and transform notions of identity and privilege some groups over others, special focus will be on how Turkey's interactions within the EU context are interpreted by the country's diverse groups and how these interpretations affect the formulation of Turkish foreign policy.

## **CHAPTER TWO:**

### **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:**

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

This chapter will examine the origins of identity insecurity in Turkey and show how diverse identities emerged in the country in a historical setting. The main focus of this thesis as a whole will be on the relationship between Turkey's insecure identity and its foreign policy in the post-Cold War period. Nevertheless, in order to understand the impact of identity insecurity on Turkey's political development and foreign policy during this time frame, it is first necessary to understand the historical roots of such identity insecurity.

The history of Turkey's identity issue goes back to the late Ottoman period in which state elites had sought solutions to questions of identity as well as independence and modernization. Identity conceptions promoted by diverse groups such as the Young Ottomans, Islamists and the Young Turks during this time period, shaped trends which subsequent Turkish actors unavoidably inherited. The early Kemalists' preoccupation with independence and cultural Westernization demonstrated significant continuity with their Young Turk predecessors. On the other hand, Young Ottomans' emphasis on the compatibility of Islamic culture and Western liberalism influenced the identity conceptions of all centre-right parties in Turkey including the currently governing AKP. Indeed, the foreign policy of the party is sometimes termed by various analysts as being 'neo-Ottoman'. Therefore before examining the identity conceptions of Turkish actors in the republican period, the first task of this chapter is to establish the genealogy of ideas and policies they inherited from the late Ottoman era.

The second part of the chapter will concentrate on how Kemalists constructed and institutionalized the identity of republican Turkey through a series of cultural reforms aiming to westernize the country in Europe's image. Although, Kemalists managed to pause identity debates in Turkey, rival claims to national identity remained strong and continued to shape societal perceptions and affect political debates in the country. In line with this view, the third part of the chapter will show how alternative identity conceptions became a reference point for the opposition in Turkey following the establishment of the multi-party system in 1946. Here, the main focus will be on how Westernization was re-interpreted during the 1950s and

was understood as fostering relations with the West rather than a cultural imitation of it, and with the United States rather than Western Europe as the model.

Subsequently, the discussion will shift to the Özal period during the 1980s which represents a turning point for both domestic and foreign policies of Turkey. This section will show how Özal's policies prepared a suitable ground for the rise of identity politics after the end of the Cold War which is manifested with the Islamist challenge to the dominance of Kemalism. Since the foreign policy developments in the post-Cold War period constitutes the main topic of the case study chapters, the emphasis here will be on important internal developments which transformed Turkish foreign policy into an area of contestation between diverse identities. The chapter will come to a close with a brief discussion of how the EU context added a new dimension to the process of Westernization, that is to say Europeanization, and contributed to the transformation of Turkish identities. Throughout the chapter, a special emphasis will be given to the role of regional differences, which existed since the Ottoman times, in the problematization of Turkish national identity construction and external projection.

## **DEBATES ON IDENTITY IN THE LATE OTTOMAN PERIOD:**

Turkey's identity question has its roots in a long-lasting geographic and social divide dating back to the Ottoman times. At the height of its power, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Ottoman Empire encompassed a very large area spanning three continents and controlled much of South-eastern Europe, Western Asia and Northern Africa. These vast territories were home to an extremely diverse population ranging from the Muslim majority to the minority population, specifically Christians and Jews. As a theocratic state, the Ottomans classified their subjects according to their religious beliefs. This system of classification, known as the Millet System created semi-autonomous communities within the empire and allowed non-Muslim communities to maintain their own laws, courts, judges and schools.<sup>160</sup> Turks, Kurds, Albanians, Bosniaks and Arabs constituted the Muslim Millet whereas Greek Orthodox, Jews and Armenians were other major millets of the empire. The Millet System was a significant mechanism which sustained the multi-cultural nature of the

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<sup>160</sup> See Kenan, S. (2005). *The Existence of Millet System as a Platform of Dialogue and Recognition among Muslims and non-Muslims in the Ottoman Empire*. [online] Centre for Islamic Studies, Istanbul. Available at: <URL: <http://www.islamconf.org/2005/conference/papers/Abstracts/kenan-abstract.pdf>>

Ottoman society.<sup>161</sup>

Even though the empire encompassed a very large territory, the settlement of the Ottoman Turks who dominated the ruling class, was largely concentrated in two distinct areas, namely the Balkan Peninsula which was also called Rumelia or European Turkey and Anatolia which was also called Asia Minor. For this reason, the Ottoman Empire fundamentally rested on two geographic pillars and had been a polity with two separate centres of gravity. Rumelia included the most advanced, most densely populated and wealthiest provinces of the empire and was home to a disproportionately large part of the Ottoman ruling elite. In particular, the cosmopolitan port city of Salonika (Selânik in Turkish) was a terminus for steamships and railways, an important manufacturing and commercial centre, and indeed the most industrialized city in the empire.<sup>162</sup> It was one of the Ottoman cities best supplied with schools and army headquarters both of which were open to new currents of thought. On the other hand, Anatolia which provided the bulk of the imperial armies was relatively poor, isolated and traditional.<sup>163</sup>

The earliest debates on identity in the Ottoman Empire took place in the period of stagnation in which the Ottoman armies suffered humiliating defeats in Europe. As Hanioglu put it, ‘the confrontation with the West and the endeavour to examine the reasons of the superiority of the West had been the turning point in the history of Ottoman thought’.<sup>164</sup> Following the defeats, Ottoman elites abandoned the idea of Islamic superiority and became increasingly interested in the internal developments in Western Europe. Indeed, Europe became a mirror through which they perceived their own weakness, differences and traits’.<sup>165</sup> As Kasaba put it ‘this represents the first breach in the Ottoman iron curtain’.<sup>166</sup> During the late eighteenth century, Sultan Selim III launched a program of reforms known as

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<sup>161</sup> See Küçükcan, T. (2003), ‘State, Islam and Religious Liberty in Modern Turkey: Reconfiguration of Religion in the Public Sphere’, *Brigham Young University Law Review*, Volume 2003, No: 2, pp. 475-507.

<sup>162</sup> Baer, M. (2007), ‘Globalization, Cosmopolitanism, and the Dönme in the Ottoman Salonika and Turkish Istanbul’, *Journal of World History*, Vol.18, No.2, p.149

<sup>163</sup> It should be noted that in terms of communications, culture and development the Aegean coast of Anatolian peninsula was much more akin to the Southern Balkans than to inland Anatolia. For instance, the important port city of Izmir (Smyrna) which is situated at the westernmost end of Anatolia has never been considered Anatolian due to cultural reasons.

<sup>164</sup> Hanioglu, S. (1995), *The Young Turks in Opposition*, (New York:Oxford University Press), p.17

<sup>165</sup> Müftüler, M. (2000), ‘Through the Looking Glass: Turkey in Europe’, *Turkish Studies*, p. 28

<sup>166</sup> Kasaba, R. (1997), “Kemalist Certainties and Modern Ambiguities” in *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, ed. Bozdogan, S. and Kasaba, R. (Seattle: University of Washington Press), p.21

Nizam-i Cedid (New Order) in a drive to catch up militarily and politically with the West. Furthermore, he created different channels of communication with Europe, the most important being the European instructors in military education and the embassies. Another important development of the period was the dramatic increase in the number of bureaucrats who were sent to various European capitals to observe Western “ways”. As a result of increasing contact with Europe, European (especially French) ideas and lifestyle began to spread among the Ottoman elite, particularly among the military officers and bureaucrats.

In 1839, Sultan Abdülmecid I declared the *Tanzimat Fermanı* in Istanbul, the first of several reforming edicts with the aim of preventing feudalization and restoring the central authority of the Ottoman state. *Tanzimat* reforms included guarantees for life, honour and property of the sultan’s subjects, an orderly tax system, a system of recruitment for the army and equality before the law of all subjects whatever their religion.<sup>167</sup> Although external pressures played a role in the adoption of these reforms, most Ottoman statesmen shared the belief that the only way to save the empire from disintegration was to introduce European-style reforms.<sup>168</sup> During the *Tanzimat* era, the Ottoman economy was incorporated into the world free-trading regime as a peripheral state which intensified economic and political ties between the empire and the West. This created an advantageous position for the non-Muslim millets who established partnership with Western European merchants. Thanks to their European partners, many Greeks, Armenians and Jews were granted protection from European powers and benefited from lower taxes as well as the capitulations.<sup>169</sup> The protected status of the non-Muslims in a period in which trade expanded rapidly paved the way for the emergence of an entrepreneurial non-Muslim bourgeoisie who greatly prospered in a relatively short time. Herkül Milas defined this era as the golden age for the Greeks and other non-Muslims of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>170</sup>

Nevertheless, the *Tanzimat* reforms had not produced the expected results and had not saved the empire from decline. Western norms did not work with the centuries-old Ottoman political culture. Moreover, the intensification of a religious division of labour between Muslims who dominated a greatly increased state apparatus, and non-Muslims who

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<sup>167</sup> Zürcher, E. (1995), *Turkey: A Modern History*, (New York: Tauris & Co), p.53

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid*, p.59

<sup>169</sup> Capitulations refer to the contracts between the Ottoman Empire and Christian nations which provided extraterritorial privileges to foreign merchants conducting business in lands under Islamic law.

<sup>170</sup> See Millas, H. (2003), *Geçmişten Bugüne Yunanlılar: Dil, Din ve Kimlikleri (Greeks From the Past to the Present: Their Language, Religion and Identity)*, (İstanbul: İletişim)



dominated the industrial and commercial sectors under foreign protection meant that economic growth could not be fully exploited by the state to increase its resources.<sup>171</sup> At the same time, the rising prosperity of non-Muslim millets provided a material basis for their intellectual revival and independence struggle in the coming years while causing resentment among large segments of the Muslim society. This resentment contributed greatly to the rise of identity debates and the emergence of opposition groups such as the Young Ottomans.

The main idea of the Young Ottomans was that reforms should not be based on cultural imitation of the West, but on a true and modern understanding of Islam, the argument being that Islam was a rational religion receptive to scientific innovation and that in its original form the Islamic community had been an embryonic democracy.<sup>172</sup> Influenced by such thinkers as Montesquieu and Rousseau and the French Revolution, the Young Ottomans also developed the concept of Ottomanism which aimed to prevent the spread of ethnic nationalism among the minorities by promoting a 'we-feeling' of being Ottoman and an "Ottoman nation" in parallel with this feeling.<sup>173</sup> In time, the Young Ottomans became increasingly influential and began cooperating with Sultan Abdülhamid in a drive to realize a liberal transition with Islamic arguments and balance the *Tanzimat's* imitation of Western norms.

This cooperation paved the way for the promulgation of the first Ottoman constitution in 1876, which was indeed written by the Young Ottomans. Nevertheless, this liberal transition was discontinued when the Sultan abolished the General Assembly and suspended the constitution only two years after its adoption under the guise of Ottoman-Russia War in 1878. Following the defeat of the Ottomans in the war, the Sultan began cooperating with another opposition movement, namely Islamists, which also emerged during the *Tanzimat* period. Islamists argued that Westernizing reforms would result in the loss of Ottoman cultural identity and suggested a return to the values of the Sharia.<sup>174</sup> They were not against

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<sup>171</sup> Zürcher, E.J. (2000) 'Young Turks, Ottoman Muslims and Turkish Nationalists: Identity Politics 1908-1938', in Kemal H. Karpat (ed.), *Ottoman Past and Today's Turkey*, (Leiden: Brill), pp. 150-179.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> Demirağ, Y. (2006), "Pan-ideologies in the Ottoman Empire against the West: From Pan-Ottomanism to Pan-Turkism", *The Turkish Yearbook of International Relations*, XXXVI, p.145

<sup>174</sup> Mardin, S. (1997), *Türk Modernleşmesi (Turkish Modernization)*, (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları), p.91-2

the adoption of Western technology, yet disapproved of Western ideologies especially nationalism and secularism. In line with this view, Abdülhamid opposed Ottomanism and promoted a Pan-Islamist ideology which aimed at the unity of all Muslims.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, it became clear that neither Ottomanism nor Islamism would be able to save the empire from decline. Ottomanism was largely rejected by many in the non-Muslim millets and by many Muslims. To the former, it was perceived as a step towards dismantling their traditional privileges. On the other hand, the Muslims regarded it as the elimination of their own superior position.<sup>175</sup> Due to its multi-ethnic and multi-religious character, the Ottoman society was also vulnerable to an Islamist ideology. In this context, we witnessed the emergence of alternative groups promoting alternative conceptions of identity.

The most influential of these groups was the Young Turks (*Jön Türkler*) who established a secret society in 1889 which would later be labelled as the ‘Committee of Union and Progress (*İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti, ITC*). The birthplace, or more specifically the geographical origins of the family, was an important distinguishing mark among the Young Turks. As Zürcher noted, most of the leaders of the ITC, both military and civilian, shared a common geographic origin in the Southern Balkans (Rumelia).<sup>176</sup> The legacy of growing up in ethnically heterogeneous Rumelia made the prominent ideologues of the Young Turk movement highly aware of the problems of national identity and political allegiance as well as the rising socio-economic gap between the non-Muslim and Muslim millets of the empire. Consequently, they developed a fierce Ottoman Turkish nationalism which defined ‘other’ in religious terms. According to the Young Turks, the ideal identity for the empire was that of Turkish race, Islamic religion and Western Civilization.<sup>177</sup>

In 1908 the Young Turks started a revolution in Rumelia where the threat to Ottoman integrity was the most prominent, and the need for reforms was most evident. However, the revolution rapidly spread to the rest of the empire and resulted in the Sultan announcing the

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<sup>175</sup> Stanford, S. And Shaw, E. K. (1976), *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, (Cambridge University Press)

<sup>176</sup> Zürcher, J. (2002), ‘The Young Turks: Children of the Borderlands’, *Turkology Update Leiden Project Working Papers Archive*, p.5

<sup>177</sup> Karal, Enver, Z. (1981) “The Principles of Kemalism” In *Ataturk*, edited by Kazancigil and Ozbudun, (Hamden:Archon Boks), p.26

restoration of the 1876 constitution and reconvening the parliament on 3 July 1908.

The members of the Young Turk movement were actually united with their opposition to the status quo. In the absence of this common goal following the establishment of the second constitutional era, the movement began to fracture and diverse loyalties started to emerge.

Nevertheless, during the crisis engendered by the Balkan Wars in 1912 the nationalists became dominant whereas the liberal fraction was sidelined. At the end of the Balkan Wars, all of the Young Turk officers and civil servants who had been born in the empire's Rumelian provinces lost their ancestral homes. Indeed, Rumelia, except the area of Eastern Thrace which includes Istanbul, was completely lost. Important Ottoman cities like Salonika, Üsküp and Monastir were incorporated into Christian states of the Balkans. Consequently, a large portion of upper class Rumelian Turks as well as other Muslims and Jews had to flee and became refugees (*muhacirs*) in what remained of the Ottoman Empire. *Muhacirs* were settled primarily in Eastern Thrace and Western Anatolia and adopted these regions as their new homeland. In 1915, at least a quarter of the inhabitants of Anatolia were either *muhacirs* themselves or their children.<sup>178</sup>

The trauma caused by the Balkan Wars deeply affected the identity conceptions and policies of the Young Turks as well as their Kemalist successors. In particular, the feeling that Anatolia should not go the way of the Balkans was certainly instrumental in the ITC's adoption of an aggressive form of Ottomanism which suggested Turkification of all non-Turkish elements within the empire. Thanks to their power monopoly, the Young Turks managed to carry out far reaching secularizing and modernizing reforms which established the basis of the Republic of Turkey, but could not save the empire. In fact, the outbreak of the First World War gave the Young Turks the opportunity to act independently and fully exploit their available resources. Nevertheless, identity politics, aiming at the creation of a Turkish nation in the new homeland Anatolia took precedence over economic and military rationality.

On 1 October 1914, the ITC government unilaterally abolished the age-old capitulations in a drive to create a 'national economy'. Although the 'national economy' programme laid the foundation for the rise of a Turkish entrepreneurial class, for the empire it meant a loss in commercial, technical and managerial skills and a fall in productivity. Similarly, the Young Turks' emphasis on Turkishness paved the way for a rise in ethnic consciousness among the Turks and prepared a suitable ground for the establishment of a

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<sup>178</sup> Karal, Enver, Z. (1981) "The Principles of Kemalism" In *Ataturk*, edited by Kazancigil and Ozbudun, (Hamden:Archon Boks), p.8

nation-state. However, it simultaneously weakened the loyalty of not only non-Muslim millets of the empire but also of other Muslim groups, most notably the Arabs who collaborated with the British and French and revolted against Ottoman rule in 1916. The Arab Revolt was a major cause of the Ottoman Empire's defeat in the First World War. In brief, when external circumstances gave the Young Turks the opportunity to act independently, identity politics, took priority over increasing the financial and human resources of the state and contributed to the empire's dissolution after the end of First World War.

## **ESTABLISHMENT OF THE REPUBLIC & THE SINGLE-PARTY PERIOD (1923-1946):**

As the above discussion showed, contestation between diverse groups over the identity of Turkey dates back to the late Ottoman period. This contestation was interrupted with the establishment of the republic in 1923 under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal. Like most of the Young Turks who dominated the empire in its last decade, Salonika-born Kemal was also of Rumelian origin. During the early years of his military career, he joined the ITC and indeed played a role in the Young Turk Revolution of 1908. Nonetheless, in subsequent years he became known for his opposition to, and frequent criticism of, policies pursued by the ITC leadership. During the First World War, Kemal proved himself as an extremely capable military officer. Following the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in the war, he led the Turkish national movement in a War of Independence. As a result of his successes against the invaders during this war, the Treaty of Sèvres which suggested the partitioning of Anatolia and Thrace was annulled and was replaced by the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923. Following the recognition of Turkey's current borders at Lausanne, Kemal became a national hero which gave him sufficient legitimacy and power to shape a new state in his own image, one that looked west for its inspiration. Unlike the reconciliatory and compensatory westernizing reforms of the *Tanzimat* and the constitutional periods, Kemal's Westernization would be unconditional and radical.<sup>179</sup>

According to Kemal, the westernizing reforms during the Ottoman period created a dualism by establishing new laws, institutions and regulations without abolishing the old ones. In order to end this dualism, Kemal started his mission by abolishing existing state

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<sup>179</sup> See Kubali, H. (1973), *Türk Devrim Tarihi (History of Turkish Revolution)*, (Istanbul: Harp Akademileri Basimevi), p.107-108

institutions which were related to the Islamic and Ottoman past. The first task towards this end was the proclamation of the Republic of Turkey on 29 October 1923 as a *fait accompli*. Unsurprisingly, Kemal became its first president, while his closest ally İsmet İnönü, an Izmir-born pasha with a Rumelian background, formed the first cabinet of the new republic. Following the abolition of the monarchy, Kemal's next target was the institution of Caliphate which represented Turkey's attachment to Islam and the past. The Caliphate was 'the tumour of the middle ages'<sup>180</sup> in his eyes and as such had no place in the new secular Republic of Turkey. Together with the office of sheikh of Islam, the Caliphate was abolished on 3 March 1924 despite a strong opposition who argued that the institution enhances Turkey's influence in international relations. In addition, Kemal disbanded the ministry of religious affairs, closed the religious courts of the Sheriat (Islamic law), and transferred religious schools to secular arms.

Even though Islam was excluded from the state structure, religion was the dominant way of defining the boundaries of Turkey's national identity which is revealed in republican regulations in regards to immigration and naturalization. The government considered Muslim groups such as Albanians, Bosniaks, Circassians, as assimilable and helped them to re-settle in Turkey. On the other hand, Christians including Turkish-speaking Karamanlis from Central Anatolia were seen as inassimilable into Turkishness. Most of them were sent to Greece through a populations exchange agreement in 1929. In accordance with this agreement, Turkey accepted approximately 500,000 Turks and other Muslims, who were forced to leave their homes in the Balkans, in exchange for nearly two million Greeks, who were forced to leave Anatolia.<sup>181</sup> After 1929, Turkey continued to accept Turks and Muslims as immigrants and did not discourage the emigration of members of non-Muslim minorities. More than 90 percent of all immigrants to Turkey arrived from the Balkan countries. As a result, people of Rumelian origin constituted approximately one fourth of Turkey's population in the 1930s and dominated the new republic both politically and economically. A very important part of the CHP leadership, the only legal political group in the country, was composed of people from Rumelia with a shared background in the ITC. Moreover, most of the economic assets which were either seized by state trusts or put under direct state control

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<sup>180</sup> Köker, L. (1995), *Modernleşme, Kemalizm ve Demokrasi (Modernization, Kemalism and Democracy)*, (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları), p.158

<sup>181</sup> The Turks and other Muslims of Western Thrace were exempted from this transfer as well as the Greeks of Istanbul and the Aegean islands of Gökçeada and Bozcaada.

were allocated to managers who were mostly CHP members and Rumelians. In brief, as Zürcher pointed out, ‘although located geographically for more than 90 percent in Anatolia, Republic of Turkey is in fact a creation of Europeans (referring to Rumelian Turks), who shaped the country after their own image’.<sup>182</sup>

After determining the boundaries of Turkish national identity, Kemal focused on its re-construction. The Kemalist doctrine was informed by the dominant European ideologies in the 1930s and perceived modernization as Westernization. However, what the Kemalists understood by Westernization was mostly an adoption of Western culture and lifestyle. According to Kemal, the adoption of Western culture was a pre-requisite for reaching the level of ‘contemporary civilization’ (*muasir medeniyet*). Indeed, the Kemalist reforms were in essence a social and cultural revolution, very much inspired by the nineteenth and early twentieth century Orientalist norms that regarded Islam as the major barrier to modernization. In line with this view, the Turkish state adopted an assertive secularism (*laiklik*) which favoured a secular worldview in the public sphere and aimed to limit religion to the private sphere.<sup>183</sup> In other words, *laiklik* did not only suggest the separation of politics and religion but involved a restructuring of Turkish society in accordance with secular lifestyle and positivist thinking. In practice, this means preventing religious influence in the spheres of education, economics, family, dress code, and politics.<sup>184</sup>

As part of the cultural Westernization project, Mustafa Kemal banned traditional headgear *fez* which he considered as a symbol of feudalism while encouraging Turkish men to wear European attire. Although never officially forbidden, the *hijab* (veil) for women was strongly discouraged; and women were encouraged to wear Western attire too. From 1926, the Islamic calendar was replaced with the Gregorian calendar and Friday was replaced with Sunday as the weekly day of the rest. A more radical reform was made in 1928 when the government replaced the Arabic script with a modified Latin alphabet as the official writing system of the Turkish language. Although this caused a dramatic increase in the literacy rate, practicality was not the main motivation behind this radical decision. As Akural pointed out

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<sup>182</sup> See Zürcher, E. (2005) ‘How Europeans Adopted Anatolia and Created Turkey’, *European Review*, Vol.13, Issue:3, p.385

<sup>183</sup> See Kuru.A (2006), “Reinterpretation of Secularism in Turkey: The Case of AKP” in *The Emergence of a New Turkey: Democracy and the AK Party*, ed. Yavuz, H. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press), p.137

<sup>184</sup> Akural, S. (1984), ‘Kemalist Views on Social Change’, in *Atatürk and the Modernization of Turkey*, ed. Landau, J. (Boulder: West View Press), p.131

Arabic script was the symbol of the past, symbol of the Muslim identity of Turkey. Its abolition enabled the reformers to cut younger generations' cultural ties with the Ottoman past and Middle Eastern civilization.<sup>185</sup>

Kemalist Westernization was a top-down and elitist project rather than a process generated by the society. The determination of national identity was made strictly at the level of the statist republican elites and excluded the mass of society. In a drive to create a homogeneous nation, the Kemalist elites who were mostly of Rumelian origin excluded the traditional and pious Anatolian masses both politically and economically and denied the existence of multiple identities that came to be imprisoned in the periphery. The state was provided with the task of safeguarding the envisaged 'civilized' nation against the 'barbarians' within.<sup>186</sup> Those who expressed the cultural and religious aspirations of the Anatolian population were dealt with by the national gendarmerie and the political police. To a certain extent, the Kemalists succeeded in creating new 'white' Turk, 'defined in terms of his/her ability to imitate external European appearances',<sup>187</sup> while suppressing other ethnic and religious identities, thus making them feel excluded and marginalized. In turn, this exclusion and marginalization generated major reactions from the Turkish people and articulated itself against secularism.

Between 1925 and 1938, there were more than twenty five Kurdish and Islamist rebellions against the Kemalist Revolution. One of the most important of these uprisings was organized by influential Kurdish religious leader Sheikh Said who mobilized some Kurdish tribes as well as a group of Hamidieh soldiers<sup>188</sup> to fight against the new republic. The rebellion was quite important in the sense that it combined two of the most threatening elements, namely Islamism and Kurdish nationalism, against the new secular Turkish republic and its centralization, Turkification and Westernization measures. The rebellion was eventually suppressed with the use of the Turkish army in large numbers. Nevertheless, it slowed down Turkey's political development in two ways. Firstly, military operations intensified the resentment among the Kurds and thus widening the gap between the Turkish state and the Kurdish society. Secondly, the rebellion paved the way for the suppression of

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<sup>185</sup> Akural, S. (1984), 'Kemalist Views on Social Change', in *Atatürk and the Modernization of Turkey*, ed. Landau, J. (Boulder: West View Press), p.131

<sup>186</sup> Waxman, Dov. 'Islam and Turkish National Identity', *Turkish Yearbook of International Relations*, Vol. 30, p.8

<sup>187</sup> Yavuz, H. (2000), 'Cleansing Islam from the Public Sphere', *Journal of International Affairs*, 54:1,p.47

<sup>188</sup> Named after Sultan Abd-ul-Hamid II, *Hamidieh soldiers* were well-armed but irregular Kurdish cavalry

dissident elements including the first opposition party, the Progressive Party (*Terakıperver Cumhuriyet Fırkası, TCF*) which was banned in 1925. In brief, the rebellion interrupted the multi-party regime of the new Turkish state and led to the establishment of a single-party rule which lasted until 1946. Before focusing on the internal developments after 1946 let us have a brief look at how the Kemalist Revolution influenced the foreign policy of Turkey in the single-party period.

As argued in chapter one, any change in the corporate identity of a state due to domestic political developments will eventually affect the identity formation at the systemic level where states will try to re-orient their preferences in accordance with the new identity. Changes in corporate identity can vary from simple modifications to a complete transformation of the identity which will drastically alter the state's foreign policy orientation. The Kemalist Revolution can be considered as a complete transformation of Turkey's corporate identity and required a completely new framework for the formulation of Turkish foreign policy. As a natural consequence of the Ottoman expansion in three continents, Turks were known as 'conquerors'. In other words, Turkey inherited the Ottoman image and was seen as a revisionist power. This image was harmful for developing friendly relations with other countries, particularly with Western ones. Hence, Kemal wanted to prove that Turkey was now a pro-status quo power which is no longer interested in conquering new lands. This pro-status quo position was represented with the new national motto of the republic 'peace at home, peace in the world'.

In line with its pro-status quo identity, Turkey did not pursue a policy of expansionism and avoided any act that was contrary to peaceful co-existence. Kemal signed pacts with Greece, Romania and Yugoslavia in the Balkans, and with Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan in the East. Ankara also maintained friendly relations with the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, in its interactions with the neighbouring countries, Ankara mainly sought stability. Interaction with the Middle Eastern countries was particularly kept at a minimum level. For example, the Saadabad Pact which was signed with Iraq, Iran, and Afghanistan in 1937 was essentially securing non-interference in domestic affairs among its members rather than promoting cooperation.<sup>189</sup>

The need of upholding Turkey's new corporate identity paved the way for the prioritization of Western countries in Turkish foreign policy. Kemal declared all 'civilized'

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<sup>189</sup>For a detailed discussion please see Criss, B. and Bilgin, P. (1997), "Turkish Foreign Policy toward the Middle East", *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Vol.1, No.1



nations, referring to the West, as friends of Turkey. However cooperation with the West was complicated by the unresolved issues with France and the UK including the status of the straits, the status of the oil-rich Mosul region and the Ottoman public debts decided at the Lausanne Peace Conference after the WW1. Furthermore, there was the latent mistrust towards the West due to the memory of the Treaty of Sèvres. Nevertheless, the signing of the Montreux Convention regarding the regime of the straits in 1936 eliminated an important barrier for the development of Turkey's relations with the West. In 1939, Ankara established a tripartite alliance with the UK and France which can be considered as the beginning of Turkey's cooperation with the West.

In brief, the orientation of Turkish foreign policy was determined during the time of Atatürk when he desired Turkey to reach 'the level of contemporary civilization', referring to the West. The construction of a new identity through Kemalist reforms provided the new political elite with the framework within which Turkish foreign policy would be formulated. Consequently, Turkey fully and unconditionally identified itself with the West. Following Atatürk's death in 1938, his successors took further steps to make Turkey an actual ally of the West.

### **TRANSITION TO THE MULTI-PARTY PERIOD: (1946-1980):**

The above discussion showed that Turkey's corporate identity is constructed without a national consensus over the issue. As noted in chapter one when national identity is not a construct negotiated by the citizens of the nation, it creates problems for neglected and excluded groups that can escalate into perceived security threats by the hypersensitive state.<sup>190</sup> In such cases, dominant actors may seek to secure state identity by embedding it in interstate normative structures, notably regimes and security communities. The acceptance of a state to a society of states which often involves membership in an international organization provides an additional source of the state's identity. Turkey's enthusiasm to integrate itself into the West following the end of WW2 is a good example which supports the above argument. Indeed, the emergence of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union in this period provided an excellent opportunity for Turkey to consolidate its institutional links with the West and secure its self-ascribed identity.

Nevertheless, this required further adoption of Western values, notably democracy

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<sup>190</sup> Ergil, D. (2000), 'Identity Crises and Political Instability in Turkey', *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol.54, No.1, p.47

and respect for human rights that came to constitute the key features of Western identity in the post-WW2 period. More specifically, one-party governments were no longer acceptable means of rule for modern Western states. In this context, President İnönü decided to re-introduce the multi-party system in 1946 in an attempt to show Turkey's allegiance to the West and its institutions. Although the capacity of the opposition was restricted to the role of a minority party in the Turkish parliament, the transition to a multi-party system paved the way for Turkey's membership in several emerging Western institutions such as the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC)<sup>191</sup> in 1948 and the Council of Europe in 1949. Turkey's membership in these institutions provided an additional source of its identity and thus reinforced Kemalists' identity security. In turn, rising identity security prepared a suitable ground for the complete liberalization of Turkey's political system in 1950.

The Democratic Party (*Demokrat Parti, DP*) was founded in this context and came to power in 1950 after winning the first free and fair elections in Turkey with 52 percent of the vote. DP's victory has been a turning point for both Turkey's domestic politics and foreign policy. The emergence and rise of the DP was connected with two important transformations within Turkey during the 1940s. Firstly, Turkey experienced a socioeconomic transformation which led to the enrichment of the landowners and the commercial bourgeoisie.<sup>192</sup> The commercial bourgeoisie had been promoted by the state since the early days of the republic, but with its newfound wealth, was now more and more independent from such connections and became increasingly interested in constraining the role of the state both politically and economically. Secondly, the interwar years witnessed notable ideological transformations among political and intellectual elites of Turkey. Since the exceptional circumstances of the newly-established republic were no longer valid, different opinions on how to achieve the national goal of reaching the level of 'contemporary civilization' emerged.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> The OEEC was reformed to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 1961.

<sup>192</sup> Keyder, C. (1987), *State and Class in Turkey: A Study in Capitalist Development* (London and NY: Verso), p.297

<sup>193</sup> Abou-El-Fadl, R., 'Turkey's Accession to NATO: Building a Little America', Paper presented at the 2nd Doctoral Dissertation Conference of LSE Contemporary Turkish Studies, London School of Economics, 1 May 2009. P.6, Available online at: <http://www2.lse.ac.uk/europeaninstitute/research/ContemporaryTurkishStudies/Paper%20RA.pdf>

Since all founding members of the DP were former members of the CHP, the party's ideology was also rooted in Kemalism. Indeed, the Democrats emerged out of decade-long contestation of the diverse interpretations of Kemalism within the CHP. Due to its Kemalist roots, the DP shared the CHP's zeal for the Westernization of Turkey. Nevertheless, unlike its predecessor which had emphasized the necessity of adopting Western culture, the DP interpreted Westernization as achieving economic and political liberalization and fostering relations with the West through NATO membership. In line with this interpretation, the party called attention to the freedom of Turkish citizens vis-à-vis the state and initiated an economic and political liberalization process by taking the United States as the model. As far as the economic dimension is concerned, the DP highlighted the inviolability of private property, and material enrichment of all. It attempted to adjust the economic culture in Turkey by promoting private enterprise, free market and agricultural production while abandoning CHP's trajectory of state-led industrialization. Achieving economic liberalization was portrayed as ensuring Turkey's progress towards its goal of 'contemporary civilization'. The reference point for this was often declared to be the 'liberal democracies' of 'the West', among whom the United States' model would be particularly influential.<sup>194</sup> The DP leaders were speaking of turning Turkey into a 'little America' during the 1950s. Indeed, the first three years of the DP was extremely successful. Living standards of many people, especially those of big landowners, dramatically increased. Between 1948 and 1953 rural income per capita at constant prices rose roughly by 25 percent.<sup>195</sup>

As part of the political liberalization, the DP emphasized religious freedoms. The party portrayed itself as the champion of the Anatolian masses and exploited their resentment at CHP's forced secularization. It smartly used Islam in order to restore the Anatolian masses' psychological bond with the state. For example, one of the first decisions of the DP government was lifting the ban on the recital of the *ezan* (call to prayer) in Arabic. A month later, the government decided to allow the broadcasting of Koran readings over the state radio. Simultaneously, it attempted to expand the scope of religious education. In 1951, the Ministry of Education established Prayer Leader and Preacher Schools (*Imam-hatip Okullari*) in seven cities and expanded their number to sixteen by 1955.<sup>196</sup> Enhancing religious

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<sup>194</sup> Abou-El-Fadl, R.,(2009) 'Turkey's Accession to NATO: Building a Little America', Paper presented at the 2nd Doctoral Dissertation Conference of LSE Contemporary Turkish Studies, London School of Economics, p.8

<sup>195</sup> For a detailed discussion please see Ergil, D. (1975), "Class Conflict and Turkish Transformation", *Studia Islamica*, NO:41, p.137-161

<sup>196</sup> Toprak, B. (1981), *Islam and Political Development in Turkey*, (Leiden: EJ Brill), p.78

freedoms and the relaxation of state control over society was consistent with the DP's re-definition of Turkey's path to a 'Western' model of modernization. When advocating religious freedoms, the party leaders often referred to the example of the West, where freedom of conscience was presented as inviolable.<sup>197</sup> Furthermore, they emphasized that religious freedoms would be helpful to prevent the spread of Communist ideas among the Turkish public and in this way would contribute to reinforce Turkey's Western identity in the international system.

Apart from economic and political liberalization, another important aspect of the DP's understanding of Westernization was establishing direct alliances and cooperation with the Western powers. Thus Westernization in this regard became a general philosophy of DP's foreign policy. Turkey's accession to NATO in 1952 was a logical conclusion of this philosophy. Rationalists explained Turkey's motivation to become a member of the Western alliance merely with the security concerns in the Cold War, more specifically with the Soviet threat. Undeniably, the presence of the Cold War intensified Turkey's preference to integrate itself into the Western alliance. However, as indicated in the previous section, Ankara sought to enhance its institutional links with the West even before the Soviet threat occurred. Moreover, as Ülman underlined Turkey could have stayed neutral in the Cold War and remained protected. In his own words 'in case of a Soviet attack, Turkey would receive help without NATO membership since the United States could not allow the Soviet Union to conquer the Middle East'.<sup>198</sup>

Therefore, Ankara's decision to join the Western alliance was not simply for attaining protection against the Soviets. This was a foreign policy formulated in association with the nation-building project that was dominated by a quest to secure Turkey's Western identity, as well as foreign aid, along with security necessities. Following Turkey's NATO admission, DP leaders often highlighted the contribution of membership to Turkey's Western identity and regarded the membership as the recognition of it by the West. Indeed, as Bozdağlıoğlu put it 'NATO membership has been the most stable of Turkey's institutional connections

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<sup>197</sup> Abou-El-Fadl, R., 'Turkey's Accession to NATO: Building a Little America', Paper presented at the 2nd Doctoral Dissertation Conference of LSE Contemporary Turkish Studies, London School of Economics, 1 May 2009. P.14, Available online at: <http://www2.lse.ac.uk/europeanInstitute/research/ContemporaryTurkishStudies/Paper%20RA.pdf>.

<sup>198</sup> Quoted in Vali, F. A. (1971) *Bridge Across the Bosphorus: The Foreign Policy of Turkey*, (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press), p.159

with the West'.<sup>199</sup> In brief, the quest of NATO membership was much more than a simple reaction to the superpower struggle. It reflected a pre-existent linkage between national and foreign policies in DP thinking, chiefly based on a project of Westernization understood as economic and political liberalism and cooperation with the West. In this regards, the shift in Turkey's development model and its zeal to join the NATO indicates how a state's corporate and social identities interact with each other. The establishment of economic liberalism in accordance with the American model paved the way for closer ties between Turkey and the United States and eventually led to the former's NATO accession in 1952. In turn, membership in NATO reinforced the transformation of Turkey's corporate identity towards a liberal democracy.

Nevertheless, NATO is a military alliance which is defined in defensive terms. Accordingly, its main function has been safeguarding the sovereignty of its member states rather than promoting democracy. In line with this function, NATO created a secret group within the Turkish military, similar to other secret armies throughout Europe such as *Gladio* in Italy, charged with waging sabotage campaigns and resistance in the case of a Soviet invasion. This group which eventually emerged as the so-called 'deep-state' became prone to corruption, interference with domestic politics and society.<sup>200</sup> In this context, the DP leaders felt unconfident despite their electoral strength since they could not manage to reorganize or control the military, the judiciary and the bureaucracy who remained strictly committed to the CHP's understanding of Kemalism and Westernization.

Moreover, DP's economic vision was based on a fragile foundation and gave birth to the formation of two hostile political camps in the country. The first camp consisted of the middle class and urban industrial bourgeoisie who as Ergil noted 'had to shoulder most of the financial burden (as taxes) of DP's miracle'<sup>201</sup> whereas the second camp who mostly benefited from their policies, consisted of commercial bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie and middle and subsistence farmers. Rising friction between these two camps led to a chaos in the country which revealed itself with student riots, street demonstrations, and constant criticism

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<sup>199</sup> Bozdağlıoğlu, Y. (2003), *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach*, (New York: Routledge), p.59

<sup>200</sup> Deliso, C. (2008). *Deep State Coup Averted in Turkey*. [Online], Available at <http://www.balkananalysis.com/2008/02/>

<sup>201</sup> Ergil, D. (1975), "Class Conflict and Turkish Transformation", *Studia Islamica*, NO:41, p.143

of the DP regime by the press. This instability forced the DP government to pass some undemocratic laws against its main competitor CHP and use force against the protestors including students which prepared the necessary ground for the military intervention on 27 May 1960. Although direct military rule came to an end with the elections in 1961 in which the CHP triumphed, the military secured its position within the Turkish political system by establishing the National Security Council (*Milli Güvenlik Kurulu, MGK*) and a second house (Senate) in the Assembly. MGK was supposed to help the government in making decisions regarding the national security. Nevertheless, since national security is a very broad and open-ended term, officers began to interfere in Turkish politics whenever they thought it necessary.<sup>202</sup>

During the first half of the 1960s, two important incidents obliged Ankara to re-evaluate its relations with the United States and NATO's commitment to protect Turkish interests. The first one was the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962-3. During the crisis, Ankara felt exposed since negotiations which involved the withdrawal of United States' nuclear missiles from its territory were concluded in its absence. The second incident was the outbreak of the Cyprus crisis in 1963. When Turkish Prime Minister İnönü informed Washington about its plans to intervene in the conflict to protect the rights of Turkish Cypriots, American President Lyndon Johnson warned Ankara that NATO would not guarantee Turkey's security if a war erupted after a Turkish intervention to Cyprus.<sup>203</sup> Due to experiencing serious problems with the United States and NATO over these two issues, Ankara attempted to diversify its foreign policy but only within the Western camp. As a result, Turkey intensified its relations with Western Europe by signing an association agreement with the European Community (EC) in 1963. The Agreement initiated a three-step process toward creating a Customs Union which would help secure Turkey's full membership in the EC.

When the Justice Party (*Adalet Partisi, AP*), which was established by the body politic of the former DP came to power in 1965 under the leadership of Süleyman Demirel, Ankara attempted to restore its damaged relations with the US and NATO. AP emphasized the importance of NATO membership not merely for Turkey's security and economy but also for the modernization of the country. In the words of Demirel; 'Turkey considered its alliance

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<sup>202</sup> Ahmad, F. (2004), *The Quest for Identity* (London: Oneworld Publication), p.123

<sup>203</sup> Gönlübol, M. (1975), 'NATO, USA and Turkey' in *Turkey's Foreign Policy in Transition, 1950-1974*, edited by Kemal Karpat, (Leiden: EJ Brill), p.18

with NATO as a manifestation of the identity of fate among the countries embracing freedom and democratic ideals'.<sup>204</sup> Since the founding members of the AP were former members of the DP, AP government also promoted an economic development based on American model. Nonetheless, unlike DP's agricultural strategy, AP emphasized industrial and commercial sectors. Large amounts of credits were transferred from the agriculture to urban industrial and commercial investments. Turkish businessmen cooperated with many foreign capitalists who took advantage of high tariff barriers in the country.

Despite these developments, the majority of Turkish society was still struggling with poverty. Moreover, monopolies led to economic stagnation towards the end of the 1960s. In this context, communist ideas became increasingly popular among the Turkish public. Besides, the rising popularity of leftist ideas encouraged the CHP to move to a centre of left position. Apart from leftist movements, political Islam which remained completely underground until 1940s appeared as an alternative in the Turkish political scene. 26 January 1970 witnessed the establishment of the first Islamist party in Turkey, named the National Order Party (*Milli Nizam Partisi, MNP*). In fact, Islam has always been a reference point for the opponents of CHP since it was the most effective instrument for establishing channels with the peripheral masses in Anatolia. Islamist circles backed and played active roles in the DP as well as its successor AP. Furthermore, the AP cooperated with religious movements including the *Nurcus*. However both the DP and its successor were committed to Kemalism as well as its Westernization ideal which they re-interpreted as close relations with the West.

On the other hand, the MNP was the first political party with a dominant Islamic discourse in its party platform which came to be known as the National View (*Milli Görüş*). National View was a direct challenge to the Kemalist project of Westernization and secularization. Emphasizing concepts like morality, virtue and social justice, this ideology distinguished modernization from Westernization and accused the West and the westernizers for the backwardness of the Islamic nations. National view supporters argued that, 'culturally, geographically and historically Turkey does not belong to the West; instead it shared its past, values and institutions with the Islamic world a world that had to be mobilized to balance the power and pressure of the West'.<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>204</sup> Vali, F. A. (1971) *Bridge Across the Bosphorus: The Foreign Policy of Turkey*, (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press), p.125

<sup>205</sup> Dağı, İ. (2005), "Transformation of Islamic Political Identity in Turkey: Rethinking the West and Westernization", *Turkish Studies*, Vol.6, No: 1, p.25

At the beginning of the 1970s, Turkey entered a state of turmoil once again when radical leftists and extreme nationalists became militant. Strikes, demonstrations and explicit challenges to Atatürk's legacy by Islamists had become the last straw for the second military intervention in 1971. After a period of interim military government, Bülent Ecevit became Prime Minister and governed in a coalition with the Islamist National Salvation Party (*Milli Selamet Partisi, MSP*), which was established by the cadre of MNP after its closure. The most important event of this period was the military intervention to the island of Cyprus in 1974 as a response to the Greek military junta's coup against Cypriot President Makarios. Military success boosted the prestige of the Turkish military in the eyes of the public and legitimized its interference in politics. However, it further deteriorated Turkey's relations with the United States. Indeed, Washington imposed an arms embargo against Turkey - by far the most important sanction against Turkey's Cyprus operation. American embargoes and other external shocks brought political instability and economic decline to Turkey in the second half of the 1970s.

These developments triggered strong anti-American feelings in the country. Consequently, Turkey had shifted its attention to Western Europe once again and begun considering an application for EC membership by end of the 1970s. However, then Prime Minister Demirel put off the application in order to receive the support of anti-Western Islamists for his weak minority government. This is a good example which shows how the lack of a consensus on Turkey's identity brings ambivalent policies and unstable foreign policy preferences. During the Cold War when half of the European continent was under Soviet control Turkey possessed a greater chance of integrating itself into Western Europe. As Yılmaz and Bilgin wrote 'the perpetuation of the master narrative of the Cold War – that represented the Soviet Union as the other – helped to (re)produce Turkey's Western identity'.<sup>206</sup> As mentioned above, Turkey joined several Western institutions in the Cold War context without much questioning of its cultural identity. Even if Turkey might not be granted full membership, an application would accelerate the process of establishing the customs union with the EC which was proposed by the Ankara Agreement.<sup>207</sup> This could have brought stability to the country and prevent the subsequent military interventions to

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<sup>206</sup> Yılmaz. E and Bilgin P.(2005), 'Constructing Turkey's 'western' identity during the Cold War: Discourses of the intellectuals of statecraft', *International Journal*, Winter, p.51

<sup>207</sup> Ankara Agreement which was signed in 1963 established an association between Turkey and the EC aiming towards the creation of a customs union between the two sides and the eventual accession of Turkey into the community.



Turkish politics. Yet Islamists prevented Demirel to use this opportunity and Turkey entered another unstable period with unsolved economic and social problems. In this context, the military intervened in politics once again on 12 September 1980 and put an end to the instability while effectively freezing Turkey's relations with the EC and hindering its political development.

## **ÖZAL ERA & TURKISH ISLAMIC SYNTHESIS:**

Following the 1980 coup, the military entirely altered the political system of Turkey by banning all former politicians and designing a new constitution. The adoption of a new constitution by a referendum paved the way for the re-establishment of civilian rule in 1983. In the first elections following the referendum, the newly-founded Motherland Party (*Anavatan Partisi, ANAP*) under the leadership of Turgut Özal emerged as the strongest party in the Turkish Parliament by gaining 45.2 percent of the total vote. Thus the 1983 elections marked the beginning of the Özal era, which would last for some ten years and would transform Turkey both economically and politically. In fact, Özal came from the same tradition as Menderes and Demirel, and that Özalism can be viewed as a representative of the neo-DP or neo-AP current.<sup>208</sup> Nonetheless, Özalism is distinguished from these currents in both domestic and foreign policy terms.

A notable difference of the Özal era was the abandonment of the import-substitution strategy of economic development and the promotion of export-led growth. As a result of this shift, Turkey succeeded not only in diversifying its exports but also in becoming an important market for direct foreign investment. Moreover, the liberalization program overcame the balance of payments crisis, re-established Turkey's ability to borrow in international capital markets, and led to renewed economic growth. Even though the Menderes and Demirel governments supported the conservative Anatolian capital, their success was limited. However, Özal's rural and religious background enabled him to by-pass the boundaries between the traditional and the modern and construct strong links with the Anatolian masses by making use of the Sufi orders, kinship ties and mosque associations.<sup>209</sup> His liberal

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<sup>208</sup> Laçiner, S. (2003) "Özalism (Neo-Ottomanism): An Alternative in Turkish Foreign Policy?" in the *Journal of Administrative Sciences* Vol 1, p. 182-185

<sup>209</sup> See, Öniş, Z. (2004), "Turgut Özal and His Economic Legacy: Turkish Neo-Liberalism in Critical Perspective", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol.40, No:4, p.4

economic and social policies promoted religious interest groups and enabled the periphery, villagers, workers and traditional religious groups to enter the economy. Indeed, the growth of an Islamic business world and of the religious but pro-democratic ‘Anatolian bourgeoisie’ was one of Özal’s main successes.

All these developments accelerated the restoration of Turkish democracy following the coup. During the 1980s, many non-democratic rules were abolished, and the masses gained legal rights to resist pressure from the state. The restoration of democracy and a growing income enabled previously marginalized political and ethnic groups, notably Islamists and Kurds, to press for a new identity and citizenship definition that would include diverse ethnicities, cultures, religion, political ideas and minority languages. In this context, Özal made strong references to the Ottoman past and argued that Ottoman political and cultural systems could be a perfect model to solve Turkey’s identity problems. Most of his suggestions on the issue such as the adoption of the *eyalet sistemi* (state system), the localisation of the administration, and the presidential system were inspired by the Ottoman past. Özal further argued that the United States and the Ottoman Empire were similar political structures: Both allowed different cultures and gave people freedom to exercise their religion, nationality and economic preferences.<sup>210</sup>

In line with these arguments, Özal promoted an American understanding of secularism and a Turkish version of Islam which was more tolerant of other religious groups and more moderate than French *laïcité*. He sought a middle way between Islamism and Turkish nationalism, his goal being to formulate a religious understanding which was suitable for democracy, liberalism and capitalism.<sup>211</sup> The answer was *Türk-İslam Sentezi* (Turkish-Islamic Synthesis) which represented an official re-evaluation of Islam as part of Turkish identity with the aim of promoting national solidarity and integration. In accordance with this ideology, the government expanded state-run religious services and introduced religious education as a compulsory subject in public schools. In school text books the term ‘national’ was often used in a religious sense.<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> Laçiner, S. (2003) “Özalism (Neo-Ottomanism): An Alternative in Turkish Foreign Policy?” in the *Journal of Administrative Sciences* Vol 1, p. 182-185

<sup>211</sup> Ibid.

<sup>212</sup> Toprak, B. (1988), “The State, Politics and Religion in Turkey” in *State, Democracy and the Military*, ed. Metin Heper and Ahmet Evin, (Berlin: De Gruyter), p.131 cited in Yavuz, H. (2003), *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey*, (New York: Oxford University Press), p. 75

The shift in Turkey's corporate identity during the Özal period created a new foreign policy understanding as well which manifested itself in a wider identity abroad, Ottoman rather than Turkish covering all neighbouring Muslim peoples and all minorities in Turkey. In line with this neo-Ottomanist identity conception, Turkey became an attraction centre for the Turkic and Muslim people of the former Ottoman Empire and appeared as their 'natural' ally. Following the end of Cold War, almost all leaders of the Turkic world, Bosnia, Albania and Macedonia rushed to Ankara for support over their economic and political problems. In this context, Turkey began pursuing a much more active foreign policy in its own region. Nevertheless, in contrast to Menderes' security-oriented regional policies, Özal pursued such a policy to promote economic and cultural co-operation between Turkey and its neighbours. For the very first time, Ankara formulated its foreign policy towards the Balkans and the Middle East on common religious and cultural values.<sup>213</sup>

Nevertheless these developments were not a challenge to the traditional Western orientation of Turkish foreign policy. On the contrary, Özal made efforts to combine Turkish and Western interests in the Middle East, the Balkans, Central Asia and the Caucasus. In doing so, he tried to persuade the West that Turkey was an influential regional power; and with its democratic, secular and pro-Western system could be a good model for its neighbouring countries. As will be shown in chapter five, Özal attached a special importance to relations with Washington and saw the Gulf crisis as a perfect opportunity for Turkey to show its value to the Western security system especially to the United States. Apart from these attempts to combine Turkey's interests with that of the West, Özal also highlighted the importance of Turkey's integration with the West. Indeed, one of the most important foreign policy initiatives of Özal was Turkey's application for full EC membership in 1987. In a similar approach with Menderes and Demirel, Özal also prioritized political Westernization rather than the cultural side of it and in line with this view, made efforts to persuade the Europeans to accept the Turks as Muslim Europeans into the European political system. He emphasized that such a development would facilitate the institutionalization of democracy in Turkey.

To conclude, Özal's period can be considered as the first instances through which Turkish foreign policy started to diverge from its traditional Kemalist roots. In line with a

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<sup>213</sup> Laçiner, S. (2003) "Özalism (Neo-Ottomanism): An Alternative in Turkish Foreign Policy?" in the *Journal of Administrative Sciences* Vol 1, p. 182-185

new identity based on Turkish-Islamic Synthesis, Turkey's national interests were re-defined and this paved the way for the development of a multi-dimensional foreign policy understanding. This new understanding marks the beginning of Turkey's activism in its foreign policy towards the Middle East which later become a more usual phenomenon. The details of these developments will be examined in the case study chapters. At this point, let us now shift our attention to the rise of political Islam following the Özal period which transformed Turkish foreign policy into a platform of contestation between diverse identities.

### **THE RISE OF POLITICAL ISLAM & IDENTITY POLITICS:**

Following Özal's unexpected death in 1993, Demirel was elected to be the ninth president of Turkey. In June 1993, he asked Professor Tansu Çiller to form a government, thereby making her Turkey's first female prime minister. Çiller earned high marks from international bankers for taking steps forward in privatizing Turkey's money-losing state enterprises. Economic liberalization continued to increase Turkey's industrial production destined for export as well as foreign direct investment. Despite these developments, the Turkish economy as a whole worsened as Çiller government did not have any strong, clearly defined economic plan and continued to run huge deficits. Moreover, extensive privatization brought a dramatic rise in unemployment and a drastic decrease in the number of jobs. This increased rural-to-urban migration, while the work opportunities for newcomers were shrinking.<sup>214</sup> In addition to rising unemployment, the value of the Turkish Lira continued to decrease in a constant devaluation against harder currencies. In brief, while opening the Turkish economy to the world, neo-liberal policies deepened the gap between the rich and the poor.

In 1994, a huge budget deficit threw the Turkish economy into a serious economic crisis. Annual economic growth fell by thirteen percentage points to -5.5 percent in 1994. Real wages for employees fell by 30 percent between 1990 and 1994, while inflation grew more than 100 percent. In addition to these economic problems, the violent conflict between the Turkish state and the Kurdish separatists had intensified since the beginning of the 1990s. All these developments led to a political and societal malaise in the country. Turkish society

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<sup>214</sup> Ptackova, L. 'Gecekondü: From the Lumpenproletariat to the Subculture'. Available online at [http://www.evropskemesto.cz/cms/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=323&lang=english](http://www.evropskemesto.cz/cms/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=323&lang=english)

began to suffer from a lack of direction with amplified anomie and lawlessness.<sup>215</sup> Several polls clearly showed the decline of confidence in the state and the politicians. Globalization and rapid change in the post- Cold War period also created new pressures on Turkish society to seek a sense of identity and community.<sup>216</sup> These pressures were intensified when the EU began emphasizing the cultural dimension of European identity and seriously question Turkey's European credentials. In this context, we witnessed the rise of identity politics in the country and Islamists started to compete with secularists on the identity and foreign policy direction of Turkey.

The re-evaluation of Islam as part of Turkey's national identity during the Özal period prepared a suitable ground for the rise of political Islam. As Karakas put it the ideology of Turkish-Islamic Synthesis did not only led to a nationalization of Islam, but also to an Islamization of the nation.<sup>217</sup> Demographic change also played a key role in this process. The rural areas of Central and Eastern Anatolia had enjoyed strong population growth during the first republican period and were largely responsible for the growth in the population of Turkey from fourteen million in 1923 to twenty one million in 1950. Since then, the overall population has more than tripled to seventy million, with most of the growth taking place in the rural areas of Anatolia or among first-generation rural migrants in Western Turkey's metropolitan centres. As a result of massive rural-to-urban migration, Turkey's biggest cities which were once the strongholds of Kemalism, have gradually 'Anatolized'. Unsurprisingly, both Istanbul and Ankara have had Islamist mayors since 1994.

Throughout the 1990s, the role of Islam became evident in every sphere of political and social life including the media, art, music, literature and cinema. This corresponded with the rise of the Islamist Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi*, RP) which was established in 1983 by the leadership of MSP after the closure of the party in 1980. By mobilizing groups such as the urban migrants, the Anatolian bourgeoisie and the peripheral masses, the RP emerged as the largest single party at the national elections of 1995. The RP's election victory enhanced the self-confidence of its religious core supporters and led to a politicization of religion which manifested itself especially in the issue of headscarves. The RP organized massive

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<sup>215</sup> Bozdoğan, S. and Kasaba, R. ed. (1997), *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press), p.38

<sup>216</sup> Mellon, J.G, (2006), "Islamism, Kemalism and the Future of Turkey", *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, Vol.7, No:1, p.75

<sup>217</sup> Karakas, C. (2007), 'Turkey: Islam and Laicism Between the Interests of State, Politics, and Society', *Peace Research Institute Frankfurt Reports*, No.78, p.2.

demonstrations with imams sympathetic to its cause and with female students wearing headscarves.<sup>218</sup> This period also witnessed an Islamization of the public sphere: alcoholic beverages were prohibited from state restaurants and cafeterias, several initiatives against prostitution were introduced and “indecent” sculptures were removed from public places.<sup>219</sup> During his short period in power between 1996 and 1997, Erbakan also initiated several Pan-Islamic projects and attempted to re-orient Turkish foreign policy towards the Islamic world.

All these developments fuelled the public debate between Islamists and secularists, intensified the politicization of lifestyle issues and more importantly transformed Turkish foreign policy into an arena of contestation between diverse identities. As will be shown in chapter five, secularists responded to the RP’s pan-Islamic foreign policy attempts by strengthening ties with Israel. The organization of anti-Israel protests by the RP-controlled Sincan municipality near Ankara was the final straw that paved the way for the so-called ‘post-modern coup’ in 1997 when the MGK pressured Erbakan’s government to step down.

The ‘post-modern’ coup has been an important turning point for the transformation of political Islam in Turkey. The members of the banned RP founded the Virtue Party (*Fazilet Partisi, FP*) in 1998. However, this party was not as uniform as its predecessor. A reformist faction emerged under the leadership of Abdullah Gül and challenged the traditionalist party leader Recai Kutan at the party congress in 2000. This was the first signal of the split in Turkish political Islam. Although Gül could not manage to beat Kutan in this congress, he was supported by almost half of the party members. Eventually, Gül and other reformists within the FP such as Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Bülent Arınç and Yaşar Yakış broke away from the National View tradition and established their own party, namely the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP*) following the closure of the FP by the constitutional court in 2001. The traditionalist faction led by Recai Kutan also established its own party which was named as the Felicity Party (*Saadet Partisi, SP*). With the establishment of two political parties, the division of political Islam in Turkey has been institutionalized.

In 2001, the Turkish economy was hit by another major economic crisis, the effects of which were much more severe than that of the first one in 1994. The crisis further weakened the loyalty of the Turkish people to the established parties and reinforced the rise of reformist

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<sup>218</sup> Karakas, C. (2007), ‘Turkey: Islam and Laicism Between the Interests of State, Politics, and Society’, *Peace Research Institute Frankfurt Reports*, No.78 p.25

<sup>219</sup> Ibid.

Islamists. In the general elections of 2002, the AKP emerged as the biggest party in the Turkish parliament by taking 34.3 percent of the vote while the SP, the traditionalist successor of the FP, received only 2.5 percent. The secularist CHP became the only opposition party by winning 19.4 percent of the total vote. Even though the AKP officially broke away from the strictly religious rhetoric of RP's National View ideology, it has attracted voters who had in the past voted in line with this tradition. The 2002 elections have underlined the deep ideological and geographical divisions in Turkey. The secularist-Islamist distinction appeared as the most important political cleavage in the elections. Besides, Turkey exhibited a clear regional polarization. Electoral maps indicated a secular rim along the Aegean and the Mediterranean coasts as well as Thrace and an Anatolian hinterland, dominated by religious conservatives who mainly supported the AKP. The AKP leadership represented a geographic shift in influence as well as a political one, coming from smaller and more conservative cities in the Anatolian interior of the country. Indeed, popular secularist newspaper *Sabah* described the AKP victory as a 'revolution by impoverished Anatolia against the old political guard'.<sup>220</sup>

Despite domestic and international concerns in regards to the direction the AKP would take the country, the new government declared its commitment to EU membership and started an ambitious reform program as soon as it came to power. The transformation of Islamists' position from an anti-Western to a pro-EU position was initially triggered by the so-called 'post-modern coup' in 1997. However, an instrumental logic alone does not fully capture the reasons behind this transformation. As will be shown in chapter three, an equally important factor in the change of the Islamists' position regarding EU membership was the understanding that Europeanization involves more political and economic transformation than cultural Westernization. More specifically, Turkish Islamists realized that Europeanization requires the consolidation of democracy and civil liberties in Turkey on the basis of EU norms and means a more democratic, more plural and more open society emancipating their identity from the limits of Kemalism.

Unsurprisingly, the swift and unexpected change of the Islamists' position towards the EU generated suspicions among the secularist actors in Turkey who were concerned about a 'creeping Islamization' through the strategic use of Europeanization process. Indeed, Turkey

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<sup>220</sup> Sabah Newspaper, 4 November 2002

is a rather unique case in European integration. It is the only EU candidate which has a Muslim-majority population. In this regards, it is the only case in which Europeanization could prepare a suitable ground for cultural de-Westernization. In the words of Jung: ‘in the application of the pluralistic norms of the Copenhagen Criteria to Turkish society, especially the crucial right of the freedoms of expression and religion, the state necessarily will gradually lose its monopoly over the religious field. In this way, the Europeanization and democratization of Turkey might indeed be accompanied by its cultural Islamization’.<sup>221</sup>

Nevertheless, as a result of their strong commitment to the EU process, the AKP managed to receive the backing of Turkish liberals and peak business groups and established a new and powerful pro-EU bloc that cut across the secular-Islamist divide in Turkey. On the other hand, positive signals and incentives from the EU prevented any intervention from the secularist military against the adoption of EU-related reforms even though such reforms significantly reduced its influence on Turkish politics. As chapter three will indicate, the military regarded the civilianization of political system as appropriate in view of its commitment to the ideals of Westernization, its learning from the past experiences, and its socialization within Western institutions such as the NATO. In this context, the country went through a major reform process with regard to its democracy and human rights standards. The constitution was amended twice, and eight comprehensive reform packages were adopted with the aim of fulfilling the political dimension of Copenhagen criteria. On top of that, as will be analyzed in chapter four, Ankara transformed its traditional Cyprus policy and adopted a more conciliatory approach on the issue. As a result of these developments, the EU decided in December 2004 to begin membership negotiations with Turkey in 2005.

Nevertheless, the Union started to send mixed signals to Turkey after the beginning of entry talks. While ambivalent messages were coming from various EU quarters, the AKP attempted to satisfy its culturally conservative grassroots by making several proposals such as lifting the ban on Islamic headscarves in Turkish universities and public buildings and criminalizing adultery in the new Penal Code. Combined with mixed signals from the EU, these developments severely damaged the pro-EU consensus in Turkey. Consequently, the confrontation over secularism and national identity has intensified which was manifested with the crisis over the presidential elections in 2007. The AKP was criticized of using the

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<sup>221</sup> Jung, D. (2007), ‘Turkey’s Future: EU Member or Islamist ‘Rogue’ State’, Online article available at [http://www.diis.dk/graphics/Publications/Briefs2007/dju\\_turkey\\_eu3.pdf](http://www.diis.dk/graphics/Publications/Briefs2007/dju_turkey_eu3.pdf).



Europeanization process as window-dressing for its “real agenda”, the Islamization of Turkey. The candidacy of Abdullah Gül for the presidency in April 2007 was perceived as a symbolic step in that direction. The intensive reaction of the CHP and the bureaucracy led to early elections in 2007 which brought another victory for the AKP.

However, even after the elections, the secularists continued their fear-mongering campaign on the issue of the envisaged Islamization threat.<sup>222</sup> In 2008, Turkey's highest court has been asked to close down the AKP and prevent most of its leaders from having any role in politics for five years. The judges refrained from imposing these penalties and chose instead to fine the party. Therefore the country avoided a major political crisis. Nevertheless, the developments in the *Ergenekon* case which investigates claims regarding the existence of a terrorist group within the state and the military, showed the larger tensions in Turkey between a secular elite seeking to maintain its fading influence and the growing and increasingly assertive religious-conservative masses. In brief, as will be discussed in greater detail in chapter three, the EU context contributed to the transformation of Turkey's conflicting identities and led a short-lived consensus between 2002 and 2005. However, the increasing uncertainty of future relations with the Union after 2005 broke the consensus, intensified the ideological and geographical polarization in the Turkish society and politics which inevitably slowed down the pace of political reforms in the country.

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<sup>222</sup> Grigoriadis, I. (2009), 'Islam and Democracy in Turkey', Available online at [http://en.qantara.de/webcom/show\\_article.php?wc\\_c=476&wc\\_id=1143](http://en.qantara.de/webcom/show_article.php?wc_c=476&wc_id=1143)

## **CONCLUSION:**

To conclude, the history of Turkey's long-lasting identity insecurity goes back to the late Ottoman period. As mentioned above, Ottoman elites promoted different and contesting identity conceptions as possible solutions to questions of independence and modernization. This contestation was paused with the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923 when the secularist westernizers under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk emerged as the dominant group in the country. Atatürk had formalized the goal of 'reaching the level of contemporary civilization', and attempted to realize it through a series of cultural reforms aiming to westernize the country in Europe's image. Nonetheless, Kemalist identity was not a construct negotiated by the citizens of the nation. Therefore, it created problems for neglected and excluded groups that escalated into perceived security threats by the Turkish state. Consequently, Kemalists had sought to enhance institutional links with the West in a drive to secure Turkey's self-ascribed identity.

During the 1950s, the DP formalized this quest and re-interpreted Westernization as enhancing links with the West through NATO membership. In the Cold War context, Turkey managed to attain membership to many Western institutions without much questioning of its cultural identity. Among all other Western political and economic institutions the most stable of Turkey's institutional connections with the West has been its membership in NATO. Throughout the Cold War, Turkey enjoyed a relatively secure identity and an international role attached to it. The maintenance of the major narrative of the Cold War – that represented the Soviet Union as the other – helped to (re)produce Turkey's Western identity in the international system while ideological cleavages were masking Turkey's deeply-rooted identity issues at home.

Nevertheless, towards the end of the Cold War, Turkey found itself increasingly isolated in the new international environment. Moreover, rigid ideological conflicts were being replaced with the politics of identity. The rise of identity politics in Turkey is manifest most notably in the Islamist challenge to the dominance of Westernists. In this context, Turkish foreign policy has become a source of contestation between diverse sub-national identities with distinct readings of national interests and security. As noted above, the EU context after 1999 contributed to the transformation of Turkish identities and led to a short-lived consensus in the first half of the 2000s. Nonetheless, rising uncertainty of future relations with the Union after 2005 broke this fragile consensus and indeed intensified the ideological and geographical polarization in the Turkish society and politics.

Even though developments after 2008 are beyond the scope of this thesis, it is useful to note that Turkey's polarization over lifestyle and value issues continues to this day as indicated by the municipal elections in 2009 and a recent referendum over constitutional reforms in 2010. In particular, the geographical distribution of "yes" and "no" votes in the 2010 referendum showed how politically polarized Turkey has become. The existence of such a deep ideological and geographical division in the society further lessened the chances of forming a consensus on state identity which will bring stable foreign policy preferences. As mentioned in chapter one, if identity of a state is highly contested, its politics will be ambivalent and the resulting foreign policy preferences will be unstable. Contesting identity definitions of Turkey's two key political camps call for diverse behaviours and as a result Ankara has been pursuing an ambivalent foreign policy in the past two decades. This ambivalence which constrains Turkey's foreign policy capacity in the post-Cold War period is most evident in the country's relations with the EU, Greece and the Middle East. Therefore the rest of the thesis will examine Turkey's relations with these countries/regions in greater detail.

## **CHAPTER THREE:**

### **TURKEY'S RELATIONS WITH THE EUROPEAN UNION**

#### **(EU):**

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

Turkey's relations with the EU constitute the main component of the country's foreign policy in the post-Cold War period. Since the end of the Cold War, which had provided such a safe haven for Turkey in the Western camp, Ankara has been trying to improve its institutional links with the EU in order to secure its ambiguous position in the West. Nonetheless, Turkey's relations with the Union encountered serious complexities since they involve factors which are not easy to change such as culture and identity. For this reason, Turkey-EU relations should be examined in the context of Turkish and European identities.

Following this framework, this chapter will examine how Turkey's insecure/dual identity negatively influences the country's political development as well as its relations with the EU and thus complicates its bid to join the bloc. In doing so, it will firstly concentrate on the impact of insecure identity on the development of a European model of civil-military relations in Turkey and the position of the Turkish military regarding the country's EU membership. Subsequently, the discussion will shift to the perceptions and positions of diverse political/social camps in both Europe and Turkey regarding the Turkish accession to the EU. This section is composed of two parts. The first part will focus on the contestation between diverse political camps within the EU in regards to European identity and how this contestation brings an ambivalent policy towards Turkey. The second part will firstly demonstrate how Turkey's insecure identity impedes the development of cooperation between the country's diverse political camps even when they have common interests such as the EU membership. Subsequently, it will analyze how EU's decisions regarding Turkey's membership are interpreted by these camps and how these interpretations affect the formulation of Turkish foreign policy. The last two sections will analyze the role of civil society in Turkey's Europeanization process and Turkey's cultural policy which is central to the projection of Turkey's image abroad.

## **THE TURKISH MILITARY & THE EU:**

The privileged role of the Turkish military in Turkey's domestic and foreign policies is still a case of major concern for the EU and continues to constitute a formidable barrier to Turkish membership into the union. Considering its importance, this section will analyze how Turkey's insecure identity prevents the development of a European model of civil-military relations in the country which will pave the way for a more democratic and successful foreign policy. In doing so, it will firstly examine the military's self-image due to Turkey's insecure identity and will show how its political powers have increased as the country's identity becomes less secure particularly since the 1980s. Subsequently, the focus will shift to the impact of the EU context on the Turkish military's identity and the internal debates within the institution regarding its role in Turkish politics. It will be argued that, the military's identity has started to change after 1999. Nevertheless, this transformation has been incomplete due to the EU's ambiguous attitude towards Turkey which makes the country's identity less secure. Due to this incomplete transformation, civil-military relations in Turkey are still far from being close to European standards. Unlike their counterparts in the EU, the Turkish military is still an autonomous institution which can strongly influence Turkish politics. This threatens Turkey's stability and is detrimental to its relations with the EU.

Starting from the late nineteenth century, the military first became the object and then the subject of the Ottoman-Turkish Westernization project. Unlike civilian institutions, the Turkish army has never been dissolved therefore it has a well-established and mature structure. At the end of the First World War, they did not only save the country from the occupying powers but also built up a new, modern political structure. The military played a decisive role in the establishment of all other institutions in Turkey and in the drawing of all Turkish constitutions.<sup>223</sup> All these institutions which were established by the military served to create a new nation with a European identity.

Nevertheless, this identity which was imposed on the Turkish society has been insecure due to the factors mentioned earlier. Internal and external developments dating back as far as 1940s enhanced the insecurity of Turkey's Kemalist identity. As Turkey's Western identity became less secure, TSK's influence in Turkish politics became more and more evident. National Security Council (*Milli Güvenlik Teşkilatı, MGK*), which was created after

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<sup>223</sup> For a detailed discussion see Aydın, E., Nibatalı, O. And Akyaz, D. (2006), 'The Turkish Military's March Towards Europe', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol.85, Issue 1,p.6

the 1960 coup to offer information to the government was empowered to recommend measures in the 1970s. Following the 1980-83 intervention, the government was to give priority to whatever the MGK advised. Finally, in 1997 the institution has been instrumental in changing a government.

However, the decision of the EU in 1999 to recognize Turkey as an official candidate which was followed by another positive decision in 2002 which suggested to open negotiations with the country ‘without delay’ in case of Ankara’s successful fulfilment of the Copenhagen political criteria enhanced the security of Turkey’s Western identity. As a result, the Turkish military became less enthusiastic for interfering in Turkish politics and more willing to leave politics to civilians. They tolerated the rise of the AKP which has Islamic roots, and more importantly backed the EU-related reforms. Considering the previous powers of the military in Turkey, none of these reforms could be launched without their support. The seventh reform package which was passed from the Turkish parliament in 2003 openly aimed to limit the role of the military through reforms of the MGK.

These reforms firstly emphasized that the MGK is only a consultative body. More importantly, the number of civilians in the council was increased and for the first time a civilian was elected as the secretary general of the MGK. Other reforms included the removal of military representatives from the boards of the Council of Higher Education (*Yüksek Öğretim Kurumu, YÖK*) and the Radio and Television High Council (*Radyo Televizyon Üst Kurulu, RTÜK*) and the abolition of the military courts. In addition, civilian governments are now given the authority to inspect military accounts. The *Financial Times* declared all these developments as nothing less than a ‘quiet revolution’.<sup>224</sup> A good question to ask at this point is why the Turkish military complied with the EU’s demands even if doing so reduced its influence and power.

First of all, one has to bear in mind that the Turkish military’s aim has traditionally been transforming Turkey into a truly Western state and society. In this regards, although they intervened in politics several times, they never actually questioned democracy itself. Nevertheless, due to Turkey’s insecure ‘Western’ identity, the army found some deep-rooted issues such as Islamism, Kurdish separatism and Communism too critical to be left to civilians. This perception led to several interventions in 1960, 1973, 1980 and 1997. However, the military have always set their interventions a self-imposed deadline and all

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<sup>224</sup> Financial Times, ‘A quiet revolution: Less power for Turkey’s army is a triumph for the EU’, July 31st 2003.

military interventions were followed by a swift return to civilian rule.

In addition, the revival of Kurdish nationalism and political Islam in the 1990s despite the military interventions forced the military to re-assess its success in securing Turkey's Western identity. This loss of self-confidence led to an identity problem in the Turkish military which paved the way for a search of a new identity and role as well as a change in their perception of the EU. In other words, the Turkish army have finally understood that its interference to politics fell short of securing Turkey's Western identity.<sup>225</sup> As a result, the military became less persistent in regards to conserving its ideology in its present form and more enthusiastic to transform it in order to suit EU's new identity that emerged after the end of Cold War. This change of mind was expressed by General Özkök in one of his interviews where he said;

'The Turkish military is saddled with new and difficult tasks as a result of the reactionary and separatist movements. However new democratic values and changing concepts of sovereignty make it necessary that we come up with new ideas and doctrines. The Kemalist way of thought, which is free from dogmas and based on reason and science, can and should be reinterpreted to be able to guide light for the future generations too'.<sup>226</sup>

In another interview, Özkök said 'from now on, we should have greater trust in the people. We should have a new vision and our officers should have stronger intellectual capabilities'.<sup>227</sup>

The EU also played an important role, particularly after 1999, in shifting the power relations between different institutional actors. The context provided by Turkey's candidacy empowered civilian and non-dominant actors by altering the normative understandings of dominant actors, providing an external reference point for non-dominant actors and removing the restrictions on the freedom of speech. As a result, Turkish media and intellectual circles started to question the power and role of the Turkish military in domestic politics, which used to be a taboo. For example, in 2003 an academic drew attention to the absence of legislative oversight of policy concerning Northern Iraq. During 2004 and 2005, there were interesting discussions brought about by the revelation in the Turkish daily *Hürriyet*. The newspaper noted that the TSK was planning to update its basic security assessment without taking the

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<sup>225</sup> Tocci, N. (2005), *Europeanization in Turkey: Trigger or Anchor for Reform?*, *South European Society & Politics*, Vol.10, No:1,p.82

<sup>226</sup> *Hürriyet*, 30 September 2002

<sup>227</sup> *Milliyet*, 12 November 2002

opinion of the parliament. Many articles in *Hürriyet* and other newspapers questioned the military's dominant role in drafting such an important document and argued that this was incompatible with European norms.<sup>228</sup>

All these developments triggered change and the military and civilian authorities in the country started to bargain over alternative arrangements. As Fearon and Wendt stated, the *logic of consequentiality (LOC)* which refers to actors' expectations in terms of material interests and the *logic of appropriateness (LOA)* which refers to their anticipations in terms of ideational interests such as reliability and legitimacy coexist and indeed interact with each other during the bargaining process.<sup>229</sup> In this context, actors do not only act tactically with the intention of realizing their material interests. As societal actors, they interact within a normative context. For this reason, they adjust their strategies to these external standards of legitimacy because non-compliance is likely to lead to certain social costs.<sup>230</sup>

The bargaining process between the Turkish government and the military also took place within a normative context. Turkish military officials have been the prime Westernizers of Turkey and expressed their commitment to further Westernization through joining the EU and consolidating the democracy on several previous occasions. In this context, they had to consider the social cost of blocking the EU-related reforms and prioritize their ideational interests, namely military's legitimacy and credibility in the Turkish society. By accepting the reforms, which reduced its own powers, the military aimed to avoid 'blame' for blocking further democratization in Turkey and its further integration with the EU. In other words, its traditional role in the Westernization of Turkey and its strong prestige among the Turkish public compelled the Turkish military to support the EU-related reforms.

The role played by Chief of General Staff Hilmi Özkök and Prime Minister Erdoğan in this process is also worth mentioning. Özkök believed that the armed forces should stay out of day-to-day politics. On security matters, he favoured the resolution of conflicts between the military and civilian authorities by persuasion and accommodation, always on the awareness that the democratically-elected politicians should have the final say. In addition, he acknowledged that devout people can pursue secular politics. In an interview

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<sup>228</sup> *Hürriyet*, 24 November 2004 (Sedat Ergin), *Milliyet*, 25 November 2004 (Fikret Bila) and *Radikal*, 6 August 2003, (Baskin Oran)

<sup>229</sup> Fearon, J. And Wendt, A.(2002), 'Rationalism v. Constructivism: A Skeptical View' in *Handbook of International Relations*, eds. Risse, T., Carlsnaes, W. And Simmons, B. (London: Sage Publications),

<sup>230</sup> Wendt, A. (1999), *Social Theory of International Politics*, (New York: Cambridge University Press)



with Hürriyet he said; 'I respect people's religious beliefs and preferences as long as they are not carried to the public realm as a symbol of political Islam'.<sup>231</sup> On the other hand, Erdoğan tried to avoid situations where the military might feel responsible to challenge the government. For instance, he chose not to press certain issues such as the rights of religious Imam-Hatip (IHL, religious) schools' graduates.

This new understanding on both sides and the positive incentives from the EU led to a consensus between the military and civilian authorities in the country. As mentioned earlier, the military tolerated the rise of the AKP and supported the launching of democratizing reforms even if doing so reduced its power significantly. Nonetheless, this consensus is unfortunately very fragile and is dependent on the progress in Turkey's accession talks with the EU. Without the EU prospect, the military once again will see itself as responsible to maintain the integrity and secure a Western identity of an even more fragmented nation thanks to the EU-related reforms.

Since 2005 the EU started to pursue an ambivalent position towards Turkey's membership. In addition to its ambivalence towards full membership, the union is also not fully straightforward in its interaction with Ankara regarding the civil-military relations. In other words, Brussels has neither clearly expressed what Ankara should do to bring Turkish arrangements closer to European norms and practices nor provided constructive guidance in that process. The EU's ambivalence towards the question of Turkey's full membership and its complex interaction with Ankara regarding civil-military relations prevented the completion of TSK's identity transformation/Europeanization. This was manifested by the appointment of General Büyükanıt who is known for his strong commitment to secularism and his hard-line stance in foreign policy issues to replace General Özkök who approved EU-related reforms and initiated the transformation of civil-military relations in Turkey. General Büyükanıt expressed military's suspicions towards the West by asserting that some members of EU and NATO have intentionally allowed the PKK acting against Turkey, to base and run operations in their own territories.<sup>232</sup> Moreover, before the presidential election in 2007, with the encouragement of other secularist establishments including the main opposition CHP, the Turkish military issued a statement in its official website which included the following sentences;

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<sup>231</sup> Hürriyet, 20 March 2003

<sup>232</sup> Hürriyet Newspaper, 3 October 2006, 'İrtica tehdidi var önlem alın, (Islamic reactionary threats exist, take measures)

‘The problem that emerged in the presidential election process is focused on arguments over secularism. The Turkish Armed Forces are concerned about the recent situation. It should not be forgotten that the Turkish Armed Forces are a party in those arguments, and absolute defender of secularism... The Turkish Armed Forces maintain their sound determination to carry out their duties stemming from laws to protect the unchangeable characteristics of the Republic of Turkey’<sup>233</sup>

This statement was regarded by many as an electronic-coup and as a bullet fired at democracy in Turkey by Prime Minister Erdoğan. Nevertheless, the so-called e-coup only empowered the AKP in the early parliamentary elections in which many Turks used their vote to show their disapproval of any military intervention. The election results significantly damaged the self-confidence of the military which has traditionally been regarded as the most trusted institution in the country despite the previous takeovers. The e-coup also damaged the relations between the Turkish military and the EU. It confirmed the perception of many European politicians and journalists that armed forces in Turkey are like a ‘state within a state’ for all practical purposes and empowered those who are against Turkish membership. In this context, the EU enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn warned the Turkish army not to interfere in politics following the e-coup and debates over presidential elections by saying ‘this is a clear test case whether the Turkish armed forces respect democratic secularization and democratic values’.<sup>234</sup>

In brief, the revival of domestic challenges to Turkey’s integrity and Western identity after the 1980s as well as the emergence of EU accession as a concrete possibility after 1999 contributed greatly to the identity transformation of the Turkish military. However, the EU’s ambivalence towards Turkey after 2005 prevented the completion of this transformation. This injured the consensus between the military and the civilians, brought instability and in this way reduced the speed of domestic political change. These internal developments complicated the definition of Turkey’s national interests and led to an ambivalent and so far fruitless policy towards the aim of achieving full EU membership in the foreseeable future

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<sup>233</sup> Radikal Newspaper, 21 May 2007, Available at: <http://www.radikal.com.tr/haber.php?haberno=221871&tarih=21/05/2007>, [Accessed on 16th March 2008]

<sup>234</sup> BBC News, ‘EU Warns Turkish Army Over Vote’, 28 April 2007, Available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/6602661.stm>,

## **THE POSITIONS OF DIVERSE POLITICAL CAMPS IN THE EU & TURKEY:**

This section will examine the perceptions and positions of diverse political camps in both Europe and Turkey regarding the Turkish accession to the EU. Since social identities are mutual constructions, an interactive analysis will be helpful to better understand the identity issue in Turkey and its implications for the country's political development and foreign policy towards the EU. Both Turkey's and the EU's identity are highly debated among diverse political and social camps. In this context, this section aims to demonstrate how the interaction of two contested identities leads to ambivalence in both side's policies towards each other and prevents them from developing further cooperation and integration. The first part of this section will focus on the contestation between diverse political camps within the EU in regards to European identity and how this contestation brings an ambivalent policy towards Turkey. The second part will firstly demonstrate how Turkey's insecure identity impedes the development of cooperation between its diverse political camps even when they have common interests such as EU membership. Subsequently, it will analyze how the EU's decisions regarding Turkey's membership are interpreted by these camps, how they influence the security of their identity and eventually how they affect the formulation of Turkish foreign policy.

### **A) THE POSITIONS OF EUROPEAN POLITICAL PARTIES:**

The European public disfavour in regards to Turkey's accession influences the perceptions of the European political elite who are still busy constructing the EU's identity. The EU is already experiencing problems in regards to its identity and legitimacy which is well reflected with its democratic deficit and European public disinterest for further integration. Its identity which entails both inclusive and exclusive characteristics is still under construction and contested between diverse camps. On one hand, we have those who highlight the exclusive aspects of EU identity based on geography and culture. On the other hand, we have those who highlight the inclusive aspects of EU identity based on democracy, liberty and human rights. In recent years, this contestation of the EU's identity became even more intense which was reflected by the harsh debates about whether to include a reference to Christianity in the European Constitution or not.

The dualistic and contested nature of the EU's identity brought competing discourses on Turkey's accession. The emergence of Turkey's EU entry as a concrete possibility after the radical domestic transformation of the country since 1999 has triggered a hard debate in

Europe concerning the future of the EU's enlargement. A severe division between the member states of the EU as well as between different political camps within these states has emerged in regards to Turkish membership. While countries like the United Kingdom, Italy and Spain have been in favour of Turkey's admission, the current governments of France, Germany and Austria are leading the camp which proposes a privileged partnership to Turkey instead of full membership. Nevertheless, centre-left parties in Germany and France (that is Social Democratic Party (SPD) and Socialist Party (PS) respectively) took a more positive approach towards Turkish membership.

In general, the centre-left political parties who highlight the inclusive aspects of the EU identity are more sympathetic towards Turkey's accession compared to those on the centre-right who highlight the exclusive aspects of the EU identity. For example, the centre-right political parties of Turkey are denied membership of the European People's Party which is made up of Christian Democrat and conservative parties in EU countries and several times declared that Turkey does not belong in the European project. On the other hand, the leftist parties in the country have been accepted as associate members of the Party of European Socialists which is made up of social democrat parties in the EU. European leftist parties' sympathy towards Turkish membership is related to their social-democrat identity and ideology which supports a secular and socially progressive policy, immigration and multiculturalism and a foreign policy which promotes democracy, protection of human rights and where possible effective multilateralism.

In this context, these parties generally emphasize the importance of Turkey's accession for Europe's security and position in the international arena. In their view, the EU needs Turkey in order to be a true global player in international politics. Since they highlight the inclusive aspects of EU identity they represent Turkey as different only in terms of its socio-economic and political development level. As a result, they see Turkey as eligible for EU membership as long as it achieves a successful transition towards becoming more democratic and liberal. Moreover, they argue that Turkey's accession will eliminate the widespread misperception of the EU as a 'Christian club', will consolidate the EU's identity as a union of like-minded democracies and will contribute to the prevention of a potential clash of civilizations in the future. They particularly see the transformation of Turkish Islamists as an opportunity to spread Western-values among the Islamic world. With its conservative outlook and commitment to democracy and a liberal economy, the AKP is seen as an ideal role-model for democratization of the Middle East.

Regarding Turkey's accession former Foreign Minister of Germany from SPD

Joschka Fischer said;

‘To modernize an Islamic country based on the shared values of Europe would almost be a D-Day for Europe in the war against terror, [because it] would provide real proof that Islam and modernity, Islam and the rule of law... [And] this great cultural tradition and human rights are after all compatible’<sup>235</sup>

Former British Prime Minister Blair also expressed the importance of Turkey’s accession for the identity of Europe by saying;

‘the accession of Turkey would be proof that Europe is "committed not just in word but in deed to a Europe of diverse races, cultures, and religions all bound together by common rules and a sense of human solidarity and mutual respect’<sup>236</sup>

On the other hand, centre-right parties’ such as the German Christian Democrats (CDU) led by Angela Merkel and the French Union for a Popular Movement (UMP) led by Nicolas Sarkozy opposes Turkey’s full membership and proposes privileged partnership with Turkey instead. Their opposition towards Turkey’s membership can be explained by two important factors. First of all, strong public reactions against Turkey’s accession have made the enlargement an important issue for domestic power struggles in these countries. Mr Sarkozy made his opposition to Turkey’s EU entry a central element of his presidential campaign. Right after becoming the official candidate of the UMP he made his strongest statement against Turkey’s EU entry by saying;

‘I want to say that Europe must give itself borders, that not all countries have a vocation to become members of Europe, beginning with Turkey which has no place inside the European Union... Enlarging Europe with no limit risks destroying European political union, and that I do not accept’<sup>237</sup>

Secondly, these parties are holding either a Christian Democrat or conservative identity. The supporters of these ideologies are often conservative on cultural, social and moral issues and generally oppose secularization. For this reason, centre-right parties in Europe emphasize the exclusive aspects of EU’s identity, and are more likely to consider it as a ‘civilisational project’ in which Christianity plays a unifying role. In this context, European

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<sup>235</sup> Quoted in Robert Kagan, "Embraceable EU," Washington Post, 5 December 2004.

<sup>236</sup> Statement by Blair on March 24, 2004, Available at: <http://www.eubusiness.com/afp/040324201934.zs7tbbvc>

<sup>237</sup> Zaman Newspaper, 14 January 2007, ‘Sarkozy: Turkiye’nin AB’de Yeri Yok’, (Sarkozy: Turkey Has No Place in the EU)

parties of the right perceive Turkey as a threat to the collective identity of the union as it subverts the boundaries of European identity and blurs the clear distinction between self and other. In other words, the possibility of Turkish entry into the EU weakens the right camp's claim to a distinct European identity based on a common cultural heritage.<sup>238</sup>

As David Campbell suggested, foreign policy can sometimes be pursued as a boundary-producing practice which makes exclusion and tells people what to fear. In this context, Turkey's differences are represented within discourses of fear and danger. Most discussions regarding Turkey's accession to the EU include statements of the need to defend Europe. For example, former French President Giscard d'Estaing expressed his opposition to Turkey's membership on the grounds that she is not a European country and argued that her accession will be the end of Europe.<sup>239</sup> In a similar manner, in one of his interviews current President Sarkozy stated; 'Turkey is an Asian state which has less European values than Lebanon and Israel... Therefore its membership would affect future enlargement plans and would bring membership demands from such countries or even from Morocco'.<sup>240</sup>

In the context of this contestation over its collective identity, the EU pursues an ambivalent policy towards Turkey. Strong public support in Turkey for EU membership also contributed to this ambivalence by generating an assumption among the European political elite that Turkey cannot turn its back to the EU and will stay in the European sphere of influence regardless of the outcome of the talks. In this context, the eligibility of Turkey for joining the bloc is still openly debated both among the European elite and the public despite the fact that it was confirmed several times by the European Commission. It is no wonder that Turkey, although recognised as a candidate in 1999 and started accession talks in 2005, is still generally seen as being a long way far from full membership

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<sup>238</sup> Rumelili, B. (2004), 'Constructing Identity and Relating to Difference: Understanding the EU's Mode of Differentiation', *Review of International Studies*, Volume 30, pp.27-47

<sup>239</sup> BBC News, 8th November 2002, 'Turkey Entry Would Destroy EU', Available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/2420697.stm>, [Accessed on 1 April 2008]

<sup>240</sup> Turkish Daily News. 26th February 2005, 'Sarkozy's Formula: Turkey's EU bid vs. EU Integration', Available at: <http://www.turkishdailynews.com.tr/article.php?enewsid=6908>, [Accessed on 15 March 2008]

## **B) THE POSITIONS OF TURKISH POLITICAL PARTIES:**

In a country where national identity is highly contested between diverse social/political groups such as Turkey, inclusion or exclusion by the EU strongly influences the positions of actors not only through changing their rational means-ends calculations but also through influencing the security of their identities. This part will demonstrate how EU's decisions towards Turkish membership are interpreted by Turkey's diverse political parties, how these decisions influence the security of their identities and eventually how they affect the formulation of Turkish foreign policy.

Secularist Kemalists, the prime modernizers in Turkey who have been dominant until recent years, have traditionally supported institutional links with the West as they strengthen the security of their self-ascribed 'Western' identity. During the Cold War, security concerns have disguised the identity differences between Turkey and the rest of Europe. In this context, Turkey joined Western institutions such as the NATO and the Council of Europe without experiencing much questioning of its cultural identity. These institutional links with the West enhanced the security of Turkey's and Kemalists' self-ascribed 'Western' identity and brought a determined and stable pro-Western foreign policy at the expense of good relations with the Islamic world. For example, Turkey was the first country with a Muslim majority which recognized the state of Israel shortly after its declaration of independence in 1948. Furthermore, Ankara voted against Algerian independence in the United Nations (UN) during its anti-colonial war with France in 1955.

Nonetheless, the end of the Cold War eliminated the factors which had provided such a safe haven for Turkey in Western institutions. In order to secure its ambivalent position within the West after the end of Cold War, Ankara applied for EC membership in 1987. Nonetheless in an EC emphasising a collective identity based on shared civilisational values, Turkey's European credentials have been increasingly called into question. Although the EC did not directly reject Turkey on the grounds that it is not European, as they responded to Morocco's application, it expressed a great deal of hesitation to declare the country as a candidate.

The EC's ambivalent response intensified the identity debates in Turkey after the end of the Cold War which is manifest in the rise of rival claims to national identity, most notably through of Islamists. The rise of Islamists destabilized the country since it was perceived by the secular authorities, notably the military, as a threat to Turkey's Western and secular identity. As a result, the military forced the collapse of the Islamist Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi, RP*)-led government on 28 February 1997. The so-called 'post-modern coup'

undermined democratic rights of Turkish citizens and introduced several security measures which repressed assertions of religious and ethnic identity, notably Islamic and Kurdish identities, in public space.

Rising instability and domestic developments which undermined Turkish democracy spoilt the relationship between Turkey and the EU as well. In this context, the European Council excluded the country from the list of candidates for EU membership at the end of 1997. This decision engendered a sense of rejection and humiliation among the secular elite and severely weakened the security of their 'Western' identity. Moreover it reduced EU's credibility in their eyes by reinforcing the perception that Turkey is subject to double standards when compared with other candidates in Central and Eastern Europe, because of its cultural differences.

The official response of the Turkish government was partial suspension of the political dialogue with the EU. Foreign minister Cem said that the full EU membership is no longer on the agenda of the Turkish state and implied a move from Western-oriented foreign policy to a more multi-dimensional approach. In one of his statements he said "We don't intend to stand on the doorstep of the EU waiting to be invited in. Turkey is moving from being perceived as a peripheral power to being seen as a central power in Eurasia".<sup>241</sup>

In brief, the EU's ambivalent response to Turkey's application in 1989 decreased the security of Turkey's Western identity and intensified identity debates in the country by empowering rival claims, notably Islamists. The rise of Islamists in the first half of the 1990s and the Kemalists' response to it in 1997 slowed down Turkey's political development and spoilt its relationship with the EU. All these developments triggered the transformation of secularist (Kemalist) identity in Turkey. Kemalist elites, who were once the traditional supporters of the European integration, gradually started to shift to a Euro-sceptic position.

Only two years after the crisis of Luxembourg, the EU finally recognized Turkey's candidacy in the 1999 Helsinki European Council. The institution of EU candidacy with its conditions and incentives creates a strong momentum for identity change. Nevertheless, the primary impetus for change must come from domestic actors. Therefore, domestic actors should be convinced about the EU's credibility as well as the appropriateness of its laws, norms and practices. The decision to accept Turkey as a candidate in 1999 was mostly a symbolic gesture. Despite strengthening Turkey's damaged 'Western' identity to a certain

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<sup>241</sup> Turkish Daily News, 3rd May 1998, 'Cem: Full EU Membership No Longer on Our Agenda', Available at <http://www.turkishdailynews.com.tr/archives.php?id=6981>,



extent, it did not eliminate the formal and the effective gap between Turkey and the other candidates. While all other candidates had a roadmap for accession and clear indications of their future roles in EU institutions, Turkey had neither. For this reason, this decision neither fully restored EU's damaged credibility in Turkey nor convinced the country's political elite, notably Kemalists, of the appropriateness of some aspects of 'Europeanization', particularly with reference to minority rights.

In this context, the weak and unstable coalition government which was composed of secularist (Kemalist) Democratic Left Party (*Demokratik Sol Parti, DSP*), centre-right Motherland Party (*Anavatan Partisi ANAP*) and extreme-right Nationalist Movement Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, MHP*) pursued a hesitant policy towards Europeanizing Turkey's domestic and foreign policies. DSP was ambivalent about the appropriateness of EU's conditions for opening the accession talks. Since the EU's decision to exclude Turkey from the list of candidates in 1997, they have been emphasizing Turkey's exceptionality in Europe in terms of its national security concerns and argued that EU-related reforms might undermine the secular identity of Turkey and its territorial unity. MHP as a far right party was strongly against implementing the EU-related reforms which would enhance the rights of minorities, notably Kurds, as well. The party traditionally supported developing closer ties with the Turkic states in Caucasus and Central Asia instead. ANAP which is a centre-right party supporting a liberal economic system was the most pro-European party yet remained the smaller partner within this coalition.

In this context, debates on Europeanization were made within the discourses of fear and the dangers of disintegration and religious fundamentalism. As a result, Turkey showed a slow performance in terms of implementing EU-related reforms. The first fundamental package of reforms which is called the 'National Program for the Adoption of the Acquis' (NPAA) came two years after the confirmation of Turkey's candidacy. This package attempted to make a balance between the EU's demands and the unwillingness of the DSP and the MHP to implement reforms on the so-called 'most sensitive issues' thus failed to show sufficient commitment to the process. This shows how the identity concerns of the biggest partners of Turkey's coalition government at the time prevented them from pursuing a determined policy towards Europeanization

Nevertheless, in the beginning of the 2000s, pro-EU circles led by influential business groups increased their pressure on the government. This pressure paved the way for the declaration of a new harmonization package in 2002. The package included sensitive issues such as the abolition of the death penalty, the right to broadcast and teach in languages other

than Turkish, and recognition of religious minority's property rights. Despite bringing significant change, the weak coalition government of DSP-ANAP-MHP lacked the cohesion and determination to adopt and implement political reforms required to fulfil EU's Copenhagen criteria. The role of the military, the cultural rights of minorities and the performance of the economy remained as the key areas where significant progress is required. In addition to these areas, the Cyprus Problem was another unofficial barrier on Turkey's further integration with the EU. For this reason, the European Council which met in Copenhagen on December 2002 did not give a clear date of opening accession talks with Turkey and declared that "the EU would open negotiations with Turkey 'without delay' if the European Council in December 2004, on the basis of a report and a recommendation from the Commission, decides that Turkey fulfils the Copenhagen political criteria".<sup>242</sup>

This decision provided strong incentives for the Europeanization of Turkey's domestic and foreign policy. Nevertheless, the victory of the AKP in 2002 elections initially caused anxiety both in the EU and Turkey. After all, the AKP was founded by a reformist faction within the former Islamists Virtue Party (FP. *Fazilet Partisi*). Many of its key members come from the *Milli Görüş (National Vision)* movement which was against further rapprochement with Europe, consider the EU as a Zionist and Catholic project for the assimilation and de-Islamization of Turkey and called for closer co-operation with Muslim countries.<sup>243</sup> Before the elections mainstream secular newspaper *Hürriyet* announced 'Turkey obliged to say goodbye to the EU if the AKP comes to power'.<sup>244</sup> And after the elections the British daily the Independent wrote 'Turkey's voters have delivered the "wrong" result'.<sup>245</sup> However, the AKP surprisingly committed itself to the EU process and started an ambitious reform program as soon as it came to power. Taking advantage of establishing Turkey's first single-party government in more than a decade, the AKP emerged as the champion of the EU process in the country.

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<sup>242</sup> Copenhagen European Council, 12-13 December 2002, Presidency Conclusions. Available online [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressData/en/ec/73842.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/ec/73842.pdf)

<sup>243</sup> Srebrina Bognár, Melanie Cutler (2008-10-22). "Milli Görüş: wolves in sheep's clothing". *Cafebabel*. Available online at <http://www.cafebabel.com/eng/article/19920/milli-gorus-wolves-in-sheeps-clothing.html>.

<sup>244</sup> *Hürriyet* Newspaper, 14 September 2002

<sup>245</sup> The Independent, 5 November 2003

As mentioned in chapter two, the transformation of political Islam in Turkey was initially triggered by punishment from the secular authorities. Islamist parties were banned from politics or were forced to leave office many times. Over time, they drew a valuable lesson from these experiences particularly from the so-called ‘post-modern coup’ in 1997, and realized that they can only survive in a European-style democracy. Nonetheless, this transformation cannot be understood fully with an instrumental logic. Ever since Turkey officially became a candidate for EU membership in 1999, the West and the process of Westernization attained new dimensions. Europeanization involves more political and economic transformation than cultural change. More specifically, it requires the consolidation of Turkish democracy on the basis of European norms. Turkish Islamists have realized this reality by transforming their position towards the EU and supporting Turkey’s full membership. They have understood that Europeanization meant a democratic, plural and open society emancipating their identity from the limits of Kemalism.

When providing a justification for their EU preference, the AKP leaders used moral arguments and made reference to rights, which can be regarded just by all actors irrespective of their cultural identity. In an interview with *Zaman*, both Erdoğan and Arınç have stated their pro-EU ideas while declaring that they had ‘internalized democracy’<sup>246</sup> and ‘had no intention of founding an Islamic state’.<sup>247</sup> Nevertheless, the AKP leaders have avoided using the term ‘Westernization’ but instead spoke of the commonality between Turkey and the EU in terms of universal values that are cherished by both when they argued in favour of Turkish membership of the Union.<sup>248</sup> Similarly, the AKP leadership hardly spoke of Turkey as a member of the ‘European family’.<sup>249</sup>

The AKP’s position towards the EU membership also reflected the changing demands of Turkey’s Islamic social groups who had in the past opposed globalization and Turkey’s integration with the West. Since the mid-1990s, these social groups, such as the so-called ‘Anatolian bourgeoisie’ and the Gülen movement, became increasingly exposed to and

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<sup>246</sup> Erdoğan’s interview with Eyüp Can, *Zaman*, 6 February 2000

<sup>247</sup> Arınç’s interview with Mehmet Gündem, *Zaman*, 6 February 2000.

<sup>248</sup> See Davutoğlu, A. (2009), ‘Turkish Foreign Policy and the EU in 2010’, *Turkish Politics Quarterly*, Vol.8, No.3, pp.11-17 cited in Krammer, H. (2010), ‘AKP’s ‘new’ Foreign Policy between Vision and Pragmatism’, *Working Paper, FG2, 01, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik Berlin*, p.6

<sup>249</sup> Ersoy, E. (2010), ‘Old Principles, New Practices: Explaining the AKP Foreign Policy’, *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, Vol.8. No.4, p.124

demand participation in relations with the outside world, in the form of educational and business opportunities. Unlike the increasingly nationalist attitudes of the secularist establishment, the Anatolian bourgeoisie began to regard globalization as a process which expands their opportunities. The Gülen movement which opened educational institutions abroad has also constructed a pro-globalization and pro-Western attitude due to its interaction with international opportunity structures and its tolerant normative framework which emphasizes religious tolerance and inter-faith dialogue.<sup>250</sup> Considering all these factors, the transformation of Turkish Islamists has been a discursive as well as a materialistic process. Indeed these two processes are not separable from each other.<sup>251</sup> Social learning is not merely adapting to constraints, it is a long process whereby actors begin to redefine their self-understanding and alter their preferences.

Adopting a pro-EU position enhanced the security of the Islamists' new identity which mingles democratic principles, economic liberalism and social conservatism. As a result, they managed to attain the support of Turkish liberals, civil society and big business groups and establish a new and powerful pro-EU bloc that cut across the secular-Islamist divide in Turkey. The enhancement in the security of the AKP's identity facilitated its internalization of European norms, rules and practices. In this context, the leaders of the AKP started to see the Copenhagen criteria as a means to transform Turkey's political and economic structure. They argue that Turkey should launch and implement all the reforms demanded by the EU even if the country will never join the club. In this regards, Prime Minister Erdoğan said 'if the EU does not want us, then we'll replace the Copenhagen criteria with the 'Ankara criteria' and proceed along our own path'.<sup>252</sup> In line with this new understanding, 2003 and 2004 witnessed the highest intensity of EU-related reforms including another major constitutional reform, five additional legislative packages, a new penal code and several other laws and regulations. Moreover, the AKP adopted a conciliatory approach in Cyprus and encouraged Turkish Cypriots to approve the UN's re-unification plan in 2003.

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<sup>250</sup> Kuru, Ahmet T. (2005) 'Globalization and Diversification of Islamic Movements: Three Turkish Cases', *Political Science Quarterly* 120(2): 253–74.

<sup>251</sup> See Fearon, J. And Wendt. A.(2002), 'Rationalism v. Constructivism: A Skeptical View' in *Handbook of International Relations*, eds. Risse, T., Carlsnaes, W. And Simmons, B. (London: Sage Publications),

<sup>252</sup> Radikal Newspaper, 22 September 2004

As a result of all these developments, the European Commission confirmed that Turkey sufficiently fulfilled the political criteria and the European Council which met in 2004 decided to start accession negotiations with Turkey on 3 October 2005. This decision was very much celebrated in Turkey and boosted the security of AKP's new identity. Mainstream paper *Hürriyet* declared 'Dream of Turkey came true'.<sup>253</sup> Prime Minister Erdoğan was greeted at Istanbul Airport like a hero where he said 'the target was full membership, and we took it. As a nation we achieved a silent revolution'.<sup>254</sup> The aim of the negotiations was clearly defined by the EU as full membership, despite Austrian efforts to include 'privileged partnership' as an alternative.

Nevertheless, the long-lasting quarrels between the EU members in the preparation of the negotiation framework and the fact that negotiations are kept open-ended in which membership is not guaranteed failed to restore the EU's credibility in the eyes of Kemalists. Moreover, the secular camp was very much worried that the AKP can take advantage of the EU-related reforms in order to implement a 'hidden agenda' which would undermine secularism in Turkey. In other words, they were concerned about a 'creeping Islamization' through the strategic use of the Europeanization process. The AKP leadership's avoidance of making references to Westernization and its reliance on moral arguments and rights for justifying its EU preference further strengthens secularists' suspicions. As mentioned in chapter one, ethical-political arguments which indicate common cultural values have been more effective in mobilizing support for enlargement as revealed by the EU's prioritization of the CEECs over Turkey in its enlargement policy. In this context, the CHP started to question the intentions of the EU as well as its increasing influence on Turkish domestic politics. They insisted that if full membership will not be achieved, EU-related reforms guaranteeing individual and minority rights will create a breeding ground for Islamic fundamentalism and separatist terrorism. The CHP's leader Deniz Baykal went even further and suggested the suspension of the negotiations and said, 'the EU members are not determined to accept Turkey. The EU is unfair towards us. Open-ended negotiations are not acceptable. At this point we suggest the suspension of the talks'.<sup>255</sup>

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<sup>253</sup> *Hürriyet* Newspaper, 3 October 2005

<sup>254</sup> *Milliyet* Newspaper, 18 December 2004, 'Erdoğan:Hedef Tam Üyelikti, onu da aldık', Available at <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2004/12/18/son/sonabh03.html>, [Accessed on 16 January 2008]

<sup>255</sup> *Milliyet* Newspaper, 18 December 2004, 'Erdoğan:Hedef Tam Üyelikti, onu da aldık', Available at <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2004/12/18/son/sonabh03.html>, [Accessed on 16 January 2008]

Developments in Europe after 2005 strengthened the CHP's concerns while weakening the AKP's security and confidence. Turkey's possible entry to the EU has become a subject of many EU countries' domestic politics. France went even further and decided to hold a referendum on Turkey's EU entry and criminalized the denial of the 'Armenian genocide'. Centre-right parties who support a privileged partnership for Turkey instead of membership came to power in the most influential members of the EU i.e. France and Germany. The results of the referenda on the EU Constitution especially the 'No' votes in France and the Netherlands have been harmful to Turkey's EU bid as well. In this context, the EU Commission began to emphasize the open-ended nature of the talks, permanent derogations and EU's absorption capacity. Moreover, Turkey was told to recognize the Greek Cypriot government and open its ports to Greek Cypriot vessels.

All these developments damaged AKP government's self-confidence and the EU's credibility in their eyes. Moreover, they empowered those in Turkey who opposed the implementation of the democratic reforms. In this context, the AKP slowed down the reform process and rejected opening Turkish ports and airports to Greek Cypriot ships and vessels before the EU ends its isolation on Turkish Cypriots who approved the EU-backed unification plan in 2003. In response, the EU leaders who met on December 2006 agreed to freeze negotiations with Turkey in eight of the thirty five chapters and delay completing any chapter before Turkey opens its ports and airports to Cypriot ships and aircrafts. During the negotiations some countries like Germany and France supported freezing as many as seventeen chapters, while the UK insisted on freezing three chapters only. This caused disillusionment in Turkey but Turkish chief negotiator Mr Ali Babacan said;

'there would be no progress on the ports and airports issue until the European Union honoured a 2004 decision to end the economic isolation of the Turkish Cypriot community...Nevertheless, we will be announcing a programme by which we will be continuing our reforms and this programme will cover all the 35 chapters, even those chapters which will not be opened because of issues...relating to Cyprus'.<sup>256</sup>

This outcome has not been considered as a 'train crash' in EU-Turkey relations. It certainly slowed down the process yet both sides tried not to alienate the other. For instance, when Turkey failed to meet its commitments for implementing the Ankara Protocol, the EU had the option of breaking the negotiations as a whole and offering an alternative to membership. Yet they preferred to freeze only eight chapters. Furthermore, after three

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<sup>256</sup> Hürriyet, 20 December 2006

months from the partial freeze, the EU has opened two new chapters on enterprise and industrial regulations with Turkey. Similarly AKP's decision to continue the reforms despite the partial freeze reveals their commitment to the process.

Nevertheless, in 2007 French President Nicolas Sarkozy managed to block the opening of talks in the vital area of economic and monetary policy although the chapters on statistics and financial control have been opened. This decision was naturally condemned by the Turkish government however Foreign minister Ali Babacan stated 'whatever they say, we will continue our path. For us the important thing is that the negotiation process with Europe remains on track'.<sup>257</sup>

However, due to the ambivalent attitude of the EU, Turkey entered into a period of instability over the presidential elections in 2007. On 14 April 2007, two days before the start of the nominations announcement for the presidential elections, over 300,000 protesters marched in the centre of Ankara chanting slogans such as 'Turkey is secular, and it will remain secular', and 'We do not want an Imam for President' to protest against the possibility of Prime Minister Erdoğan or another member of the AKP standing in the presidential elections. This protest was followed by six other massive rallies in various Turkish cities with the participation of millions of people.

The armed forces also became involved in the elections. General Yaşar Büyükanıt, then Chief of the Turkish General Staff, said that the new president should be loyal to republic principles not only by words but also by heart on 12 April 2007. Moreover, 27 April 2007, the Turkish Armed Forces issued a statement of its interests. The European Union has warned Turkish military not to interfere in politics. EU Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn said:

'This is a clear test case whether the Turkish armed forces respect democratic secularization and democratic values... The timing is rather surprising and strange. It's important that the military respects also the rules of the democratic game and its own role in that democratic game.'<sup>258</sup>

The first round of voting took place on 27 April 2007, which resulted in the victory of Abdullah Gül, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the official candidate of the AKP.

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<sup>257</sup> Newsweek, 18 February 2008, 'Turkey's Western Soul: France Can Say No, But Turkey Aims to Build a Society Europe Can't Refuse'

<sup>258</sup> BBC News, EU Warns Turkish Army Over Vote, 28 April 2007. Available online at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/6602661.stm>

However, the opposition party CHP filed a claim to the Supreme Court, seeking a declaration of nullity in relation to the first round of voting. The constitutional court ruled in favour of the CHP and declared the first round annulled. On 9 May 2007, the presidential elections were postponed due to the lack of a candidate after the pullout of Abdullah Gül. The following day, Tayyip Erdoğan called for an early general election. In the elections, AKP achieved a landslide victory by getting 46.6 percent of the vote. Moreover the AKP's candidate Abdullah Gül was eventually elected President on 28 August 2007.

Nonetheless the secularist camp did not give up in its struggle against the AKP. On 14 March 2008, the senior prosecutor Abrurrahman Yalçınkaya has asked Turkey's constitutional court to ban the AKP and introduce a ban on 70 officials of the party (including PM Erdoğan and President Gül) by arguing that it has become 'a centre for anti-secular activities'. The AKP responded to secularists by using the *Ergenekon* affair, which investigates claims regarding the existence of a terrorist group called *Ergenekon* within the state and military structure, to intimidate its opponents. 86 suspects belonging to Turkey's secular elite, including retired army officers, anti-government journalists and intellectuals were arrested by the police and were blamed with various crimes including "membership in an armed terrorist group," "aiding and abetting an armed terrorist organization," "attempting to destroy the government of the Republic of Turkey or to block it from performing its duties," and other similar crimes.<sup>259</sup>

In this context, Ankara has lost its reformist enthusiasm that amazed the Europeans in the years between 2002 and 2005. EU officials have called on Turkey to return to the path of vigorous reforms, but so far there have been little more than promises from AKP that new reform projects will be put on the agenda soon. Moreover, work on several reform bills has been held up by bitter arguments between government and opposition deputies in the Turkish parliament (TBMM). Under these circumstances, the chances for the Turkish government to pass key legislation to push its EU bid forward and make the country ready for full membership in the near future have become increasingly slimmer.

All these developments show that EU decisions strongly influence Turkey's domestic transformation through affecting the security of domestic actors' identities. Cooperative decisions from the EU accelerate the reform process through securing the national identity,

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<sup>259</sup> The Ergenekon Trial: AKP's Revenge in Power Struggle with Secularists or First Attempt to Hold the Deep-State Accountable?, by Matthias Vermeulen, *The Lift*, Available online at <http://legalift.wordpress.com/2008/10/24/the-ergenekon-trial-in-turkey-akps-revenge-in-power-struggle-with-secularists-or-first-attempt-to-hold-the-deep-state-accountable/>



strengthening the reform-minded segments and contributing to the emergence of a consensus between diverse political camps. On the other hand, uncooperative decisions and messages from the EU revitalizes doubts and fears that trigger the rise of nationalism and Euro-scepticism and slows down or reverses the reforms. For example, positive messages from the EU after 1999 empowered reformists in Turkey and led to emergence of a social cohesion between the country's diverse political camps, as well as between civilian and military authorities between 2002 and 2005. Nevertheless, the EU's ambivalence and its emphasis on conditions and 'negative incentives' after 2005, decreased the security of AKP's pro-European and democratic identity and makes its future policies less predictable. They also empowered the opponents of democratic reforms and prevented the completion of the Europeanization of their identity. All these factors, enhanced the polarization between diverse camps in the country, brought instability, reduced the speed of domestic political change and complicated the definition of Turkey's national interests. And this led to an ambivalent and so far fruitless policy towards the aim of achieving full EU membership in the foreseeable future.

## **THE POSITION OF CIVIL SOCIETY & BUSINESS GROUPS:**

The role of civil society in Turkey is another important political issue which influences the perceptions of the EU's political elite and public in regards to the country's full membership. For this reason, this section will focus on the relations between the civil society and the state in Turkey in the context of identity. It aims to demonstrate how Turkey's insecure identity impeded the development of a strong and independent civil society in the country which will consolidate Turkey's democracy and make it a stronger candidate for the EU membership. In so doing, it will firstly focus on the state's perception of the civil society as a potential threat for its own legitimacy. Subsequently, it will examine the influence of the EU context on state-society relations in Turkey. In keeping with the theoretical interest in how institutions may shape and alter notions of identity and privilege some over others, special focus will be on how this process changed mutual perceptions and transformed the identities of important civil society organizations, particularly business groups, in the country. This transformation has strengthened the standing of civil society organizations on the domestic scene and increased their influence in foreign policy decision-making. Finally, the focus will shift to the EU's ambivalence towards Turkey's membership and how this situation damaged the cooperation between the Turkish government and civil society for the

sake of EU membership goal.

Turkish civil society remained very weak until recent years due to Turkey's insecure national and social identity. Traditionally, a deep mistrust existed between the Turkish state and society since the latter has not sufficiently adopted the identity which was imposed on it by the former. For this reason, the state did not encourage the development of a civil society. In contrast, it attempted to de-politicize the society in order to prevent the rising political and identity-related fragmentation and polarization in the country.

The Turkish state has particularly perceived interest organizations as a potential threat for its own legitimacy and therefore preferred to develop corporate relations with semi-official organizations. These organizations have functioned under the supervision of the state and state regulated and controlled political and economic life through the medium of nongovernmental organizations, but always placed itself at the top. In addition, the state allocated public resources to the business community on a selective rather than collective basis.<sup>260</sup> The most important criterion of this selection process was identity. In this context, the members of the TÜSİAD, the representative of leading secular businessmen, enjoyed monopoly on access to state resources. TÜSİAD members benefited greatly from their clientelistic links with the state. Moreover, since the military has been an important element of the state structure many business groups were dependent on military contracts for survival.<sup>261</sup> In this context, they had prioritized stability and economic concerns and distanced themselves from other political issues.

However neo-liberal globalization and the establishment of closer ties between Turkey and the EU especially after the Customs Union, the dependence of business groups on state resources have diminished. Especially the members of TÜSİAD have become very much integrated into the global economy and in particular the EU market. Moreover, Turkish business organizations have joined pan-European business associations after Turkey's application to join the EU. TÜSİAD and Turkish Confederation of Employer's Associations (TİSK) joined the Union of Industrial and Employer's Confederation of Europe (UNICE)<sup>262</sup>

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<sup>260</sup> For a detailed discussion please see Atan, S. (2004), 'Europeanisation of Turkish Peak Business Organizations and Turkey-EU Relations' in *Turkey and European Integration*, eds. Ugur, M and Canefe, N, (London: Routledge)

<sup>261</sup> For a detailed discussion of military's role in Turkish politics and its linkages with business groups see Parla, T. (1998), 'Mercantile Militarism in Turkey', *New Perspectives on Turkey*, No.19, Fall 1998:pp. 29-52

<sup>262</sup> As from 23 January 2007, UNICE has changed its name into BUSINESSEUROPE, The Confederation of European Business

as full members while The Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB) has elevated its position within Eurochambers.<sup>263</sup> Sector-specific associations such as ITKIB (Istanbul Association of Textile Exporters) and IMMIB (Turkish Association of Metal producers) have also integrated themselves in EU-wide organizations by joining Euratex and Eurofer respectively.

This interaction enabled Turkish business groups to establish closer ties and commercial links with their European counterparts independent of the state. Interaction also helped them in Europeanizing their internal structures.<sup>264</sup> In this process, they understood the importance of transparency and accountability whilst realizing the limits of the Turkish military for maintaining stability in the country. Moreover, they began to see the EU as a mechanism which provides the necessary incentives and discipline for good governance which is essential not only for political stability in Turkey but also for development, economic growth and investment. In this context, Turkey's peak business associations have transformed themselves from narrowly based interest organizations and began to demand the enhancement of democracy in Turkey.<sup>265</sup> This transformation was achieved through their interaction with Europe which altered their values and shaped their interests. Consequently the rules of partly democratic system in Turkey neither match the values of business groups nor serve their interests anymore.

In this context, most civil society organizations are not only in favour of EU membership but also are pro-actively working towards it. Particularly business groups led by the TÜSİAD developed their own pro-active strategies for Turkey's democratization and EU accession. Firstly, they started to press on the Turkish government for launching the reforms necessary for the start of accession talks with the EU. For instance, in 1997 they published a report on the democratization of Turkey which incorporated strong criticisms of the state ideology. The report also included recommendations on many taboo issues including civil-military relations, status of the National Security Council (MGK), and freedom of expression,

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<sup>263</sup> Ülgen, S. (2006), 'Turkish Business and EU Accession', *Centre for European Reforms* p.3

<sup>264</sup> For a detailed discussion please see Atan, S. (2004), 'Europeanisation of Turkish Peak Business Organizations and Turkey-EU Relations' in *Turkey and European Integration*, eds. Ugur, M and Canefe, N, (London: Routledge)

<sup>265</sup> Öniş, Z. (2005), 'Entrepreneurs, Citizenship and the European Union: Changig Nature of State Business Relations in Turkey' in İçduygu and Keyman, eds., *Challenges to Citizenship in a Globalizing World: European Questions and Turkish Experiences*, (London: Routledge),p.4

minority rights and the treatment of prisoners.<sup>266</sup>

The decision of the EU to recognise Turkey as an official candidate in 1999 made the country's 'Western' identity more secure and in this way significantly changed the state's perception of the civil society. The EU prospect presented a political discipline which increased public mobilization and allowed civil society organizations to increase the pressure on the politicians for democratization and good governance. Since 1999 Ankara has made a substantial amount of progress regarding the legal environment in which Turkish civil society operates. Harmonization packages included important changes in the law of association including the easing of the procedures enabling international organizations to open branch offices in Turkey, the extension of the scope of activities allowed for student associations and the establishment of a shorter examination process of by-laws submitted to concerned authorities.<sup>267</sup> In brief, the EU emerged as a strong external supporter of Turkish civil society in its struggle for a more democratic Turkey.

In this context, TÜSİAD initiated the establishment of a civil society alliance that is "The movement for Europe" in 2002 in order to urge the government for the realization and implementation of EU-linked reforms. Besides, whenever there is a delay or slow-down in the reform agenda, business groups did not hesitate to warn the government publicly. Owning the key media outlets in Turkey facilitated their monitoring power on the government. Apart from their pressure on the Turkish government, business groups began lobbying for Turkish membership in EU institutions and governments as well. In this regards, TÜSİAD, TOBB and İTKİB opened offices in Brussels and developed good relations with EU institutions.

Another important business organization which took its place in the pro-EU coalition in Turkey is the Association of Independent Industrialists and Businessmen (MÜSİAD). This organization was founded in 1990 as the representative of the newly-emerged Anatolian bourgeoisie and advocates a different model of economic and social model of development based on a certain interpretation of Islam. Compared to TÜSİAD its membership includes a greater diversity in terms of size and geographic location. MÜSİAD members support the AKP government and have obtained influence on the government's policy agenda. They show an increasing interest in EU accession joining the mainstream expectation in the

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<sup>266</sup> TÜSİAD, (1997), *Türkiye'de Demokratikleşme Perspektifleri (Perspectives on Turkey's Democratization)*, (İstanbul: Türk Sanayicileri ve İşadamları Derneği)

<sup>267</sup> Göksel, D. and Güneş, R. (2005), "The Role of the NGO's in the European Integration Process: The Turkish Experience", *South European Society & Politics*, Vol.10, No:1, p.64

fulfilment of membership obligations for achievement of national political and economic stability.

Apart from business organizations, several think tanks such as the Economic Development Foundation (*İktisadi Kalkınma Vakfı, İKV*), the Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (*Türkiye Ekonomik ve Sosyal Etüdler Vakfı, TESEV*) and the ARI Movement and several human rights NGOs which work on Turkey-EU relations have obtained influence in the debates of public and foreign policy. They influence policy-making through publishing reports, organizing conferences and actively lobbying the government to implement EU-related reforms. They also do research and publish with respect to foreign policy issues. For example, the TESEV actively supports the solution of the Cyprus problem.

As the above discussion showed, the EU's approval of Turkey's candidacy reduced the insecurity of Turkey's identity. By doing so, it improved the relations between state and society by reducing mutual threat perceptions and enhanced civil society's role in domestic and foreign policy-making. Initially, some civil society organizations were worried about the long-term objectives of the AKP government due to its Islamic background. However, the party's strong political will and dedication to implementation of the EU-related reforms reduced such concerns and led to cooperation between the AKP government and civil society in the first half of the 2000s, cutting across Turkey's Islamist/secular divide. As Göksel pointed out NGOs which under different conditions might not have supported the party, have done so in order to complete the Europeanization process in Turkey.<sup>268</sup> This cooperation enhanced the self-confidence of the AKP, facilitated the adoption and implementation of the EU-related reforms and allowed the government to pursue a determined foreign policy.

Nevertheless, ambivalent messages from the EU after 2005 in regards to Turkish membership destabilized the country by intensifying the tension between secularists and Islamists as well as between the government and the military. This unstable environment reduced the self-confidence of the AKP, slowed down the reform process and eventually threatened the cooperation between the AKP and the civil society which cut across the Islamist/secularist divide. In an attempt to restore its self-confidence, the AKP government has announced its plans to redraw Turkey's 1981 constitution in order to give more power to the people (which includes direct presidential elections) as well as launching more freedom of speech and religion. However, their first step in redrawing the Turkish constitution ordered

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<sup>268</sup> Göksel, D. and Güneş, R. (2005), "The Role of the NGO's in the European Integration Process: The Turkish Experience", *South European Society & Politics*, Vol.10, No:1, p.63

an end to the ban on wearing Islamic headscarves in universities. This issue is quite sensitive in the country since the secular circles perceive the headscarf as the symbol of political Islam. Moreover it is considered as internal by the EU. For this reason, it disappointed the liberal circles and civil society who were expecting improvements on more serious human rights issues such as freedom of speech and revitalized their anxieties about the AKP's real intentions and future plans. In brief, the EU's attitude towards Turkey after 2005 enhanced the insecurity of Turkey's identity. Combined with the AKP's attempts to repair its self-confidence among its conservative voter base, this has damaged the cooperation between the government and the civil society, destabilized the country and paved the way for an ambivalent policy towards the EU.

## **TURKEY'S IMAGE IN EUROPE & ITS CULTURAL POLICY:**

Cultural policy is central to the projection of Turkey's image abroad. Bearing this in mind, this final section aims to demonstrate how Turkey's insecure and dual identity prevents the formulation of an effective cultural policy and publicity abroad which eventually can positively transform Turkey's national image in the EU countries. National image expresses personalized feelings of what people know and think about a country and is developed by representative products, national characteristics, economic and political background, history, tradition etc.<sup>269</sup> In the age of globalization, possessing a positive national image abroad has become an important tool of pursuing a successful foreign policy. It does not only enhance a state by contributing to the development of tourism and international business links but also increases the chances of a state to influence public opinion in other countries. In all Anholt/GMI's nation brand index reports published so far, Turkey has never managed to leave the last rank of the list. This indicates that the country suffers from a serious image problem abroad particularly in Europe.<sup>270</sup>

Public opinion in the EU countries generally opposes Turkish membership for different reasons. According to a poll which was conducted by Eurobarometer in autumn

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<sup>269</sup> Ger, G. (1991), 'Country Image: Perceptions, Attitudes and Associations and Their Relationship to Context', in Proceedings of 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on Marketing and Development, International Society of Marketing and Development, New Delhi

<sup>270</sup> Anholt, S. And GMI, (2005a) 'Nation Brands Index. How the World Sees the World'. <http://www.gmi-mr.com>. For detailed discussions on nation branding please see Anholt, Simon (2007). *Competitive Identity: the new brand management for nations, cities and regions*. (London: Palgrave Macmillan) and Anholt, Simon (2003). *Brand New Justice: the upside of global branding* (paperback Ed.). (Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann)

2005, 55 percent of the EU population perceive Turkey to be culturally too different to fit in the union.<sup>271</sup> Among all the potential members of the EU, Turkey is the least-supported country by the European public. A survey of some 6,000 people in the EU's six largest countries revealed greater support for Ukrainian membership (55 percent), which does not even have a membership perspective, than for Turkey (45 percent).<sup>272</sup> The highest opposition to Turkish membership is in Austria where 75 percent of 15 to 24 year-olds and 82 percent of people over 55 is against.<sup>273</sup> According to the 2005 Transatlantic Trends (2005) survey, 43 percent of French and 40 percent of Germans think that Turkey's EU membership is a bad thing.

This negative image can be attributed to two key factors. Historically, European identity (like any identity) was constructed with the creation of an 'other'. According to Neuman and Welsh, the Ottoman Empire or "the Turks", constituted Europe's main 'other' for centuries and consolidated the formation of a collective European identity.<sup>274</sup> The historical prejudice and negative image of Turkey was unfortunately intensified with the Turkish labour migration to Western Europe which started in 1960's. Most of the Turkish immigrants came from the poorest parts of Turkey (mostly Kurdish-speaking Eastern Anatolia) where the Westernizing reforms of Atatürk never actually reached. They were mostly uneducated, unqualified workers who had traditional Islamic and rural lifestyles. Even if this migration had economic benefits for Turkey (since it reduced unemployment, and increased foreign currency which has been very important for Turkey's balance of payments) its unintended consequence was the enhancement of European perceptions that Turkey is culturally very different from Europe.<sup>275</sup> Regarding the image of Turkey in the West, Simon Anholt said;

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<sup>271</sup> European Commission (2005b) Eurobarometer 63: Public Opinion in the European Union September 2005. Available at [http://europa.eu.int/comm/public\\_opinion/archives/eb/eb63/eb63\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb63/eb63_en.pdf).

<sup>272</sup> The Guardian, 'Voters prefer Ukraine to Turkey', 24 March 2005. Available at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/eu/story/0,7369,1444664,00.html>

<sup>273</sup> Repa, J. (2005) Analysis: EU views on Turkish bid, *BBC News*, 30 September. Available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/4298408.stm> (Accessed 7 February 2008)

<sup>274</sup> Ruggie, J.G. (1998), "What Makes the World Hang Together? Neo-utilitarianism and the Social Constructivist Challenge", *International Organization*, Vol.52, No:4, p.873

<sup>275</sup> Bac-Müftüleri, M. (1997), *Turkey's Relations with a Changing Europe*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press), p.21

“Turkey suffers from an image which has been forged during an earlier and very different political era, and which now constantly obstructs its political, economic, cultural and social aspirations. In many ways, Turkey’s brand image today in the West is in the same as if Atatürk had never lived.”<sup>276</sup>

Since Turkey’s accession to the EU will necessitate ratification by all member states, the country’s negative image constitutes an important barrier for its aim of joining the bloc. Indeed it may even block Turkish membership by itself since reducing perceived cultural differences is more difficult than reducing economic and political differences. As İçener pointed out this lack of European public support for Turkey’s admission can entirely change the debates on enlargement from focus on full membership to focus on alternative relationships such as ‘privileged partnership’.<sup>277</sup> For this reason, as President of the European Commission Jose Manuel Barroso said ‘Turkey must win the hearts and the minds of the European citizens’<sup>278</sup> in order to secure full membership.

Despite being difficult, a country can influence how it is perceived by others at least to a certain extent. Considering that, countries with far greater image problems such as Germany after the Second World War, managed to repair their images, it should be possible for Turkey to at least improve its image. Nevertheless, this requires a coordinated cultural policy and publicity abroad which has a clear vision of presenting the European and modern aspects of Turkey’s identity. This will provide EU citizens an alternative discourse on Turkey and will allow them to think of the country in a new way.<sup>279</sup> Nevertheless, intense debates over Turkey’s national identity between its diverse social camps leads to an array of contradictory and often confusing publicity of the country abroad.

Fully aware of the weak public support for Turkish membership across the EU, influential business groups such as TÜSİAD and TOBB have made increasing efforts to contribute to the solving of Turkey’s image problem. In this context, both organizations

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<sup>276</sup> Anholt, S. (2005) ‘Saving Brand Turkey. Keynote Speech at Marka 2005’ (December 1-2), Istanbul, cited in Kemming, J. D and Sandikci, O. (2006), ‘Turkey’s EU Accession as a Question of Nation Brand Image’, *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, Vol.3, No.1, p 38

<sup>277</sup> İçener, E. (2007), “Privileged Partnership: An Alternative Final Destination for Turkey’s Intergation with the European Union”, *Perspectives on European Politics & Society*, Vol.8, No:4 ,p.416

<sup>278</sup> *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 17 December 2004

<sup>279</sup> For a detailed discussion of Turkey’s image problem see Hulsse, R. (2006), “Cool Turkey: Solving the Image Problem to Secure EU Membership”, *Mediterranean Politics*, Vol.11, No:3,



opened offices in Brussels and constructed good relations with EU institutions. In addition, representatives of TÜSİAD have met government leaders in Germany and France (where public support for Turkish membership is quite low) and invited several important European journalists to Turkey to demonstrate the Western character of modern Turkish society and culture.<sup>280</sup> TÜSİAD's publicity focused on contemporary aspects of Turkish culture including contemporary Turkish art, fashion & music.

Unfortunately, the Turkish government have so far not managed to pursue an effective cultural policy to support the efforts of business actors in terms of presenting an alternative discourse on Turkey in Europe. The official publicity of the country has so far been focusing on the traditional aspects of the Turkish culture. The engineers of Turkey's official cultural policy have been neglectful in addressing their country's modern era, which was strongly influenced by Atatürk and his successors. In order to promote tourism, the Turkish state is portraying a very traditional image of Turkey. For example, at the official website of Turkey's Ministry of Culture and Tourism, there are strong references to 'minstrel and dervish literature', 'folk knowledge', 'Folk dances', and 'costume, traditional arts and crafts, folk paintings' under the headline of Turkey's culture. In addition, cultural events organized by Turkish embassies abroad mostly emphasize Turkey's traditional culture. For example, the Berlin Embassy stages performances of Turkish classical music, opera, ballet as well as exhibitions of Turkish painting and sculpture with the goal of conveying an idea of the traditional values of Turkey's culture.<sup>281</sup>

This publicity which puts a strong emphasis on Turkey's traditional and 'Eastern' characteristics was intensified since the AKP came to power in 2002. After all, the founding members of the AKP comes from the 'National Vision' (*Milli Görüş*) movement which rejects Turkey's belonging to Europe and argues that geographically, culturally and historically Turkey is closer to the Islamic world. Due to the transformation of Islamic identity in Turkey, the AKP government represents an alternative image through which Turkey embodies a progressive, democratic and Muslim state. In other words, Turkey's Muslim identity has become increasingly marketable after 11 September 2001, particularly under the stewardship of the AKP which is conservative democratic party with Islamist roots

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<sup>280</sup> Ülgen, S. (2006), 'Turkish Business and EU Accession', *Centre for European Reforms Essays*, p.3. Available at [http://www.cer.org.uk/pdf/essay\\_turkish\\_business\\_accession\\_dec06.pdf](http://www.cer.org.uk/pdf/essay_turkish_business_accession_dec06.pdf)

<sup>281</sup> For a detailed discussion see Hulsse, R. (2006), "Cool Turkey: Solving the Image Problem to Secure EU Membership", *Mediterranean Politics*, Vol.11, No:3,

and indicates the possibility of a successful marriage between secular state and Islamic traditions.<sup>282</sup>

In this context, the Turkish government and various moderate Islamic groups such as Gülen movement started to publicize Turkey's Muslim identity in the West. The AKP put a strong emphasis on the signal that Turkey's membership of the EU would send to Muslim communities within the EU members as well as to the Islamic world in general. For example Abdullah Gül and Tayyip Erdoğan both argued at the Copenhagen Summit in December 2002 for the inclusion of Turkey in the EU, based on its Muslim identity.<sup>283</sup> This was in contrast with the publicity of former governments and business groups who had based membership application on Turkey's supposedly Western identity.

In brief, while the secular groups highlight the modern aspects of the Turkish identity and try to show Turkey's similarities with the West in their publicity, the government and Islamist groups put a strong emphasis on Turkey's traditions and Muslim identity ironically to get closer to the West. This duality in the public representation of Turkey causes confusion in the minds of Europeans and weakens the efforts to improve Turkey's image in the EU. For this reason, Turkey needs to pursue an integrated cultural policy and publicity abroad which puts emphasis on the modern aspects of its culture and its similarities with Europe while providing justification for its differences. This will provide EU citizens an alternative discourse on Turkey and will allow them to think of the country in a new way.<sup>284</sup> EU citizens will be able to perceive Turkey culturally less different and more similar only if Turkey shows its similarities to them. An alternative discourse is necessary. Otherwise EU citizens will not be able to talk, think or perceive Turkey differently. The eastern aspects of Turkish identity can contribute to Turkey's tourism. However, these aspects are already well-known in the West. Hence, Turkey's cultural policy and publicity should be able to surprise Europeans and provide them an alternative discourse on the country. Nevertheless, in order to pursue such an integrated and effective cultural policy and reduce its image problem abroad, Turkey first needs to stabilize its self-image/identity at home.

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<sup>282</sup> Tank, P. (2006), 'Dressing for the Occasion: Reconstructing Turkey's Identity', *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, p.463

<sup>283</sup> Ibid, p.470

<sup>284</sup> For a detailed discussion of Turkey's image problem see Hulsse, R. (2006), "Cool Turkey: Solving the Image Problem to Secure EU Membership", *Mediterranean Politics*, Vol.11, No:3,

## **CONCLUSION:**

As the above discussion illustrated, Turkey's insecure identity has impeded the country's political development as well as its further integration with the EU. In order to illustrate this argument, this chapter firstly examined the negative influence of Turkey's insecure identity on the development of a European model of civil-military relations and the position of the Turkish military concerning Turkey's EU membership. Afterwards, the discussion turned to the positions of diverse political parties both in the EU and Turkey. It was argued that both Turkey and the EU suffer from contested identities. In this context, I tried to demonstrate how the interaction of two contested identities leads to ambivalence in both side's policies towards each other and prevents them from developing further cooperation and integration. Special focus was on the impact of EU decisions regarding Turkey's accession on the security of diverse actors' identities in the country and how this affects the formulation of Turkish foreign policy. The chapter is concluded with an examination of the role of civil society in Turkey's Europeanization process and the country's cultural policy which is essential for the improvement of its image in Europe.

As a conclusion, Turkey has been in the waiting room of Europe since 1987. Although recognised as a candidate in 1999 and started accession talks in 2005, it is still generally seen as being a long way far from full membership. This is the most concrete evidence of Turkey's unsuccessful foreign policy after the end of Cold War. As this chapter showed, this failure is very much related with the country's insecure identity. EU's ambivalent attitude towards Turkey's membership further intensified the identity issue in the country and deepened the polarization between Turkey's diverse camps. This polarization threatens Turkey's stability, reduces the speed of domestic political change and complicates the definition of Turkey's national interests. And this brings an ambivalent and so far fruitless policy towards the aim of achieving full EU membership in the foreseeable future.

## **CHAPTER FOUR:**

### **TURKEY'S RELATIONS WITH GREECE:**

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

For rationalists the historically poor relations between Greece and Turkey are connected to competing economic and security interests but for constructivists the source of these disagreements is the perceptions of the 'other' as a threat or a challenge to its own identity and their interpretation of the other's behaviours accordingly. As Volkan and Itzkowitz put it 'economic, political and military events can be so fixed in the minds of the actors that it becomes impossible to explain the reasons of conflict and offer solutions to end it without understanding the large group psychology'.<sup>285</sup>

NATO membership could neither eliminate the mutual feelings of mistrust and threat perception between Greece and Turkey nor create a strong collective identity between the two allies. In this context, decision-makers in Athens and Ankara perceived NATO as a strategic instrument to serve their predetermined national interests, rather than an institutional platform to realize their collective security interests. Due to the prevalence of this perception in both countries, NATO failed to prevent the two allies from engaging in a war in Cyprus in the summer of 1974.

Nevertheless, the EU strongly influenced the identity security of both Greece and Turkey and in this way contributed to the transformation of domestic structures and social identities in both countries. In Turkey the EU prospect significantly reduced the political power of the military while consolidating Turkish civil society and democracy. In Greece, the EU membership provided economic and political stability since 1981 while strengthening the transformation towards a more tolerant and civic-minded society and state. Apart from transforming the domestic structures, the EU context also brought a significant change in mutual public and elite perceptions in both Greece and Turkey. Changing perceptions of threat legitimized and expanded the commercial, social, educational and political cooperation between the two neighbours. This intense interaction transformed both countries' foreign policy towards each other and paved the way for the Greek-Turkish détente after 1999.

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<sup>285</sup> Volkan, V. and Itzkowitz, N. (1994), *Turks and Greeks: Neighbours in Conflict*, (Hutington: Eothen Pres), p.177

This chapter aims to demonstrate how different institutional contexts influenced the development of Turkey's identity and re-shaped its foreign policy towards Greece and Cyprus. As previously, the chapter examines the positions of the military, political parties, civil society and business groups as well as societal perceptions. In doing so, the special focus will be on the Cyprus problem and the peace talks on the island between 2001 and 2004. There are two main reasons for the choice of Cyprus as the main focus of this chapter. First, it is still the most important issue between Greece and Turkey whose solution is essential not only for the normalization of bilateral relations but also for the acceleration of Ankara's EU accession process. Second, it is a very important issue for Turkish domestic politics and constitutes a good case study to demonstrate how identity security influences its foreign policy choices.

### **THE POSITION OF THE MILITARY:**

As noted in the previous chapter, Turkey's highly insecure identity prevented the development of a European model of civil-military relations in the country. The Turkish military continues to play an active role in the formulation of both public and foreign policy of Turkey. Bearing this in mind, this section will examine the Turkish military's position in regards to relations with Greece and Cyprus. It aims to demonstrate how the military's position regarding these areas is strongly influenced by the fluctuations in the identity security of Turkey within the institutional contexts of NATO and the EU.

To better understand the position of the Turkish military on relations with Greece and Cyprus, one needs to bear in mind the importance of the Cyprus problem for Turkish domestic politics. With the exception of Turkey's participation in the UN force in Korea, the Cyprus intervention in 1974 was the first overseas military operation in the history of republican Turkey. The operation which ended up with a military victory reinforced the prestige of the Turkish military. After the operation, Cyprus was portrayed as a vital point in Turkey's perceived axis of enemy neighbours ranging from cold-war Bulgaria to Greece, Syria, Iran and the Soviet Union. Through this process of securitisation, the Cyprus question served as an instrument for the promotion of the military's role in Turkish politics as the guardian of Kemalism against alternative claims to national identity, notably ethnic nationalism and political Islam. For this reason, the Cyprus problem has been a very important dimension on the military's foreign policy agenda and the military remained the dominant actor in the formulation of Turkey's Cyprus policy until recent years.

Nevertheless, the changing security environment after the end of Cold War and the EU context paved the way for questioning the military's position towards Cyprus. Since then, the Cyprus issue became a source of contestation between the civilians and the military in Turkish politics. Due to this contestation, Ankara has been pursuing an ambivalent policy towards Cyprus since the mid-1990s. To better understand the dynamics of Turkey's ambivalent Cyprus policy, one has to consider the historical and institutional context of NATO and the EU which deeply influences the identity security of the country and in this way the course of its civil-military relations.

Turkey joined NATO in 1952. NATO membership strongly influenced the identity security of Turkey and in this way the course of civil-military relations in the country as well. This influence was particularly strong as far as Turkey's social identity is concerned since it was perceived by the country's military elite as the recognition and approval of Turkey's 'Western' identity by the West. In the context of rising identity security, the military allowed the liberalization of Turkey's political system and the relaxation of the restrictions on the control of religious activity in the Turkish society. Nevertheless, NATO is a military alliance whose main concern is security rather than promoting democracy or a collective identity. For this reason, the dominant actor of NATO, namely the USA, did not hesitate to cooperate with the Turkish military, which interfered into politics several times, during the tensest periods of the Cold War. Furthermore, as noted in chapter two, the Western alliance created a secret group within the Turkish military, similar to other secret armies throughout Europe such as *Gladio* in Italy, charged with waging sabotage campaigns and resistance in the case of a Soviet invasion. This group which eventually emerged as the so-called 'deep-state' became prone to corruption, interference with domestic politics and society, and were in some cases involved with brutality against the Turkish citizens.<sup>286</sup> All these developments led to the strengthening of the reactionary forces in Turkey which paved the way for military coups and intensified tension and conflicts in the country.

NATO's influence on the course of civil-military relations in Greece has been quite similar to its influence on Turkey. To some extent, NATO membership served to institutionalize the military's concentration on national security and away from the matters of civil order. Nonetheless, the CIA and the Greek military began to work closely, after

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<sup>286</sup> Deliso, C. (2008). *Deep State Coup Averted in Turkey*. [Online], Available at <http://www.balkananalysis.com/2008/02/>

Greece's accession to NATO in 1952. Hellenic National Intelligence Service (*Ethniki Ypiresia Pliroforion, EYP*) and the Mountain Raider Companies (*Lohi Oreinon Katadromon, LOK*) which became actively involved in the 1967 coup maintained a very close relationship with their American counterparts. In addition to preparing for a Soviet invasion, they agreed to guard against a left wing coup. The LOK in particular were integrated into the Gladio European stay-behind network.<sup>287</sup> In brief, NATO membership consolidated the position of the military in both countries and failed to hinder the breakdown of Greek and Turkish democracies in 1967 and 1971 respectively.<sup>288</sup> In this context, decision-makers in Athens and Ankara perceived NATO as a strategic instrument to serve their predetermined national interests, rather than an institutional platform to realize their collective security interests. Due to the prevalence of this perception in both countries, NATO failed to prevent the two allies from engaging in a war in Cyprus in the summer of 1974.

This war strongly influenced civil-military relations in both countries. Military defeat undermined the credibility of the Greek military and brought about the fall of the Greek junta. Moreover it created a perception in the Greek political elite as well as the Greek public that NATO is unable to play the role of guarantor between Greece and Turkey.<sup>289</sup> In this context, the European Community (EC) was seen as a stronger system of political solidarity which could provide security for Greece especially against its main local rival Turkey. Eventually Athens applied for EC membership and became a full member of the community in 1981.

As noted in previous chapters, EU membership does not only affect the social identity of a state by providing recognition, but also affect its corporate identity by transforming its domestic structure and foreign policy behavior. In the EU context, Greece experienced a complete devolution of responsibility from the military to the civilians at all levels of government. The Greek foreign policy has also started to be Europeanized, which is manifested with the abandonment of *enosis* (Cyprus' union with Greece) as a foreign policy objective.<sup>290</sup>

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<sup>287</sup> Ganser, D. (2005). *NATO's secret armies: operation Gladio and terrorism in Western Europe*. Routledge. p. 216.

<sup>288</sup> For a detailed discussion see Duman. Ö. And Tsahouras, D. (2006), 'Civilianization in Greece versus Demilitarization in Turkey', *Armed Forces & Society*, Vol.32, No:3

<sup>289</sup> Tsakonas, P. (2007) 'From 'Perverse' to 'Promising' Institutionalism? NATO, EU and the Greek-Turkish Conflict', *Multilateralism and Security Institutions in the Era of Globalization*, ( London: Routledge), p.240

<sup>290</sup> Rumelili, 2004, "The European Union's Impact on Greek-Turkish Conflict", *Working Papers Series in EU Border Conflict Studies*, No.6,p.9

On the other hand, military victory in the Turkish side boosted the prestige of the Turkish military and legitimized its interference in politics. Due to the military's enhanced prestige and power after the Cyprus operation in 1974, most Turkish governments perceived giving concessions in Cyprus as a risky option in terms of maintaining their position and legitimacy. As a result, Ankara remained reluctant to solve the Cyprus problem and perceived the status-quo as an advantage during the 1970s and 1980s. According to the popular saying of those days in Ankara "the lack of a solution *is* the solution."

Nevertheless, the end of Cold War undermined the security of Turkey's Western identity and changed its security environment. In a context where NATO became increasingly 'Americanized'<sup>291</sup>, Ankara attempted to secure its identity by seeking membership of the EU. Taking the Copenhagen criteria into account, the EU could have transformed the civil-military relations in Turkey as well as its foreign policy towards Greece and Cyprus during the early 1990s. Nevertheless, this transformation did not take place until recent years due to the EU's hesitancy in declaring Turkey an official candidate. This hesitation triggered the rise of nationalism and political Islam in Turkey. The Islamic Welfare Party emerged as the biggest party after the general elections on 24 December 1995 and established a coalition government with the centre-right True Path Party (*Doğru Yol Partisi, DYP*). Necmettin Erbakan became the first Islamist Prime Minister of Turkey and attempted to re-orient Turkish foreign policy towards the Islamic world by initiating several new institutions including an Islamic common market and an Islamic security community.

These developments were perceived by the military as a threat to Turkey's Kemalist identity and paved the way for the so-called 'soft coup' in 1997 where Erbakan's government was forced by the military to resign. This was followed by the decision of the European Council which met in Luxembourg in December 1997 to reject Turkey's candidacy one more time while deciding to open up accession negotiations with the Republic of Cyprus. This decision further undermined the security of Turkey's Kemalist identity and in this way reinforced the power of the military in Turkish politics. In this context, Ankara pursued a provocative policy towards Greece and declared that the extension of Greek territorial waters to 12NMS would be considered as *casus belli*. In addition, the Turkish Cypriot President Rauf Denktaş was encouraged to announce that he would no longer accept federation as a

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<sup>291</sup> Tsakonas, P. (2007) 'From 'Perverse' to 'Promising' Institutionalism? NATO, EU and the Greek-Turkish Conflict', *Multilateralism and Security Institutions in the Era of Globalization*, ( London: Routledge), p.240



basis for a settlement and he would only be prepared to negotiate on the basis of a con-federal solution. Denktaş has also stated time and again that unless the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) is recognised there will be no talks. In the mean time Ankara declared Cyprus' EU entry as illegal and threatened to annex the TRNC if the EU accepts the Greek part of Cyprus as a full member before a solution on the island.

Nevertheless, the emergence of membership as a solid possibility reduced the identity concerns of the military and paved the way for the adoption and implementation of important political reforms to meet the EU's accession criteria. These reforms empowered Turkish civil society and altered the balance of power between the civilian and the military authorities in the country. In the meantime, we witnessed the Europeanization of important domestic actors in the country including former Islamists, big business groups and many NGOs which led to the creation of a strong pro-EU coalition in the country. All these developments intensified the struggle between the pro-EU and Euro-sceptic circles within the military and the government. In this context, foreign policy, especially towards Cyprus and Greece, has become the subject of severe debates between these diverse camps. Euroskeptics started to claim that the EU will never admit Turkey as a full member; therefore there is no need to give any concessions in foreign policy, especially in regards to Cyprus and Greece, with the hope of getting closer to the EU. On the other hand, pro-EU circles started to accept the idea that Turkey needs to solve its problems with Greece over the Aegean Sea and Cyprus before joining the EU.

Due to the enhanced security of Turkey's European identity and the restored credibility of the EU after 1999, pro-EU circles became dominant and the Turkish military moderated its adamant position in regards to Cyprus. Consequently, Ankara attempted to show good marks that it is trying to settle problems with Greece and Greek Cypriots. The first sign of this attempt was the decision to abandon the 'two-states' thesis in Cyprus and encourage Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktaş to initiate a negotiation process with his Greek Cypriot counterpart Glafcos Klerides. The negotiations started under the auspices of the United Nations (UN) on 14 January 2002 with the aim of finding a solution to the Cyprus problem by the start of 2002.

While the negotiations were going on between Denktaş and Klerides, two important developments took place in Turkey. Firstly, Hilmi Özkök, who was known for his strong support for Turkey's alignment with the EU, took up the post of the Chief of the General Staff of the Turkish Armed Forces. Secondly, the AKP which initiated a transformation of political Islam and emerged as the strongest supporter of the EU membership won the general

elections in Turkey with 34.28 percent. As soon it came to power, the AKP initiated an impressive track record of EU-related political reforms which further weakened the role of the National Security Council, through which the military influences Turkish politics. As noted in the previous chapter, these reforms were made possible by the military's, notably Özkök's, support.

As far as foreign policy is concerned, AKP's leader Erdoğan declared his party's firm commitment to undertake all necessary steps to get a date for starting membership negotiations with the EU. In this context, transforming Turkey's Cyprus policy became the first issue on AKP's foreign policy agenda.<sup>292</sup> Nevertheless, in order to achieve this, the new government had to overcome the veteran Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denктаş who has had a reputation for being a hard-liner and appeared less flexible than some Turkish leaders in negotiating a federal settlement for Cyprus.

It was expected that the military would support Denктаş and prevent the restructuring of Turkey's Cyprus policy. In fact, some top ranking commanders within the military such as the Commander of the Land Forces General Aytaç Yalman has tried to do so and expressed their support for Denктаş. However, chief of the General staff Hilmi Özkök preferred to leave the political responsibility to the government. Concerning the Turkish Armed Forces views on Cyprus, General Özkök said, 'On no other issue have our reason and our feelings been at such odds. We should follow our reason.'<sup>293</sup> He also stated that the Turkish Cypriots and the Turkish Parliament should have the final say regarding the issue. In the end, fading popularity of Denктаş in North Cyprus, the determination of the AKP government to remove obstacles to Turkey's EU accession and the democratic attitude of General Özkök enabled a new interpretation of the Cyprus issue which paved the way for Turkey's conciliatory approach at the end of the re-unification talks.

As the above discussion showed, Turkey's institutional links with the West in the context of NATO and the EU has had a strong influence on the identity security of the country which strongly affected the position of the military in regards to relations with Greece and Cyprus. The position of other important foreign-policy actors in Turkey such as the political parties, the foreign ministry and the bureaucracy and the details of the

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<sup>292</sup> Kınacıoğlu, M and Oktay, E. (2006), 'The Domestic Dynamics of Turkey's Cyprus Policy: Implications for Turkey's Accession to the European Union', *Turkish Studies*, Vol.7, No:2, p.263

<sup>293</sup> Sazak, D. 'Military and Civilians', *Milliyet*, 16 April 2004. [online] Available at: <http://www.byegm.gov.tr/YAYINLARIMIZ/CHR/ING2004/04/04x04x16.HTM>

negotiation process in Cyprus will be examined in the third section. Before that, let us briefly talk about the policy positions of a range of key political actors in Greece and the transformation of Greek foreign policy towards Turkey in the context of rising identity insecurity from the early 1990s. This is essential to understand the dynamics of the transformation of Turkey's policy towards Cyprus and Greece after 1999 and will lead to a greater interactive analysis of future prospects of Greek-Turkish relations.

### **THE POSITIONS OF DIVERSE POLITICAL CAMPS IN GREECE:**

This section aims to show how the fluctuations in Greek national identity influences the position of Greek political parties in regards to relations with Turkey. From 1974 until the mid-1990s when Greece enjoyed a relatively secure identity, there has been a united policy between diverse political parties and actors in Athens towards Turkey. According to Ifantis this policy had two dimensions: it has been both a policy of deterrence, and a policy of political de-escalation.<sup>294</sup> There was a widespread assumption among the actors that stalemate in Turkish-Greek relations will remain since Turkey is unlikely to democratize due to its political tradition of Kemalism. In this context, there was a consensus in Athens that the best strategy to deal with Turkey is trying to prevent its political, economic, and diplomatic power relative to that of Greece. This would entail efforts to slow down the development of Ankara's further relations with the EU.

Nonetheless, the end of Cold War eliminated the factors which had provided such a safe haven for Greece in Western institutions. During the early 1990s, Greece became the subject of severe criticism within the EU for being a drag on the European economy and for its inability to act in a communal manner while adopting policy positions outside the general EU consensus such as imposing a uni-lateral trade embargo against the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). Moreover other members started questioning the original decision to admit Greece to the EC.<sup>295</sup>

All these developments undermined the security of Greece's European identity and paved the way for the transformation of Greek domestic and foreign policy since the second half of the 1990s. This transformation took place under the leadership of pragmatic Kostas

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<sup>294</sup> Ifantis, K. (2004) 'Perception and Rapprochement: Debating a Greek Strategy towards Turkey' in *Turkish-Greek Relations: Security Dilemma in the Aegean*. ed. Aydin, M and Ifantis, K., (London: Routledge)

<sup>295</sup> Economides, S. (2005), 'Europeanization of Greek Foreign Policy) in *Politics and Policy in Greece*, ed. Featherstone, K. (London: Routledge)

Simitis who replaced Andreas Papandreu in 1996. Simitis attempted to repair the damaged prestige of his country within the EU and secure its European identity. In this regard, he pursued a modernizing domestic reform program which consolidated Greek democracy and economy while improving human rights conditions (including minority rights) in the country.

In a relatively short-time, Simitis achieved to overcome chronic problems of the Greek economy and thus achieved the admittance of Greece into the Eurozone. During the period of his governance, inflation has decreased from 15 percent to 3 percent while public deficits diminished from 14 percent to 3 percent. GDP started to increase at an annual average of 4 percent and factual labour incomes have increased at a rate of 3 percent per year. The most notable example of enhanced human rights during this period was the abolition of controversial article 19 of the Citizenship Law in 1998 which stated that ‘a person of non-Greek ethnic origin leaving Greece may be declared as having lost his Greek nationality’. This article allowed the state to strip approximately 60,000 non-ethnic Greeks (50,000 of them belonging to the Muslim -originally referred to as Turkish- minority) of their citizenship between 1955 and 1998.<sup>296</sup>

This domestic reform program was followed by attempts to ‘Europeanize’ Greek foreign policy in order to secure Greece’s position within the EU. This paved the way for an intense debate on what strategy can best achieve Greek national interests in regards to Turkey. Patriotic nationalists who favour a large state, economic protectionism and an ethno-centric definition of Greek national identity argued that best strategy to deal with Turkey is trying to isolate it by all means and costs. On the other hand modernizing reformists who favour a smaller role for the state in the economy and a more civic definition of Greek national identity sought to maintain and improve relations with Turkey.<sup>297</sup> These two camps were not to be found among but rather within the political parties. For example, although Kostas Simitis who led Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement (*Panellinio Sosialistikó Kínima, PASOK*) as well as the Greek government from 1996 to 2004 was a reformist and sincerely believed in a Greek-Turkish accommodation, a vast majority of PASOK’s rank and file and most members of his cabinet were quite conservative in their foreign policy outlook and sceptical for improving ties with Turkey.

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<sup>296</sup> Human Rights Watch, January 7 1999, “Turkish Minority Rights Violated in Greece”, Available online at <http://www.hrw.org/en/node/65348>

<sup>297</sup> Keridis, D. (1999), *Political Culture & Foreign Policy: Greek-Turkish Relations in the Era of Globalization and European Integration*, (Cambridge)

At this point, one has to bear in mind that while debates were intensified in Greece regarding how to approach Turkey, the leaders of the most influential EU members including those of France and Germany, namely Jacques Chirac and Gerhard Schroeder, were in favour of Turkey's accession into the EU.<sup>298</sup> In this context, debates on Turkey between Greek politicians have been made sense of within the discourse of Europeanization.<sup>299</sup> In order to convince the opponents of approaching Turkey within PASOK, Simitis and other reformists such as the foreign minister George Papandreou encouraged a shift from monolithic to more pluralist perceptions and representations of Turkey. Zoulas wrote in the Greek daily *Kathimerini* that 'Greek foreign minister is deeply convinced that there are two Turkey's. One is the Turkey of civilians: pro-European, moderate and flexible. The other is that of the military: typically eastern, intransigent and aggressive'.<sup>300</sup> The representation of Turkey as pluralistic and changeable enabled its portrayal as open to Europeanization.

In addition, from 1996, deliberate efforts were made to formulate Greek foreign policy, particularly in regards to Turkey, in the discourse of interests rather than rights. This was a significant development since political discourse in Greece have traditionally emphasized Greek rights which are thought to extend back to ancient times rather than interests and portrayed relations with Turkey as a matter of justice. Some important developments during the 1990s allowed pragmatic leader Simitis to convince the conservative camp within the PASOK that conflict with Turkey is jeopardizing Greek national interests and a 'European' Turkey is less likely to be a threat for Greece. Firstly, the dispute regarding the sovereignty rights over a small islet in the Aegean called Kardak/Imia following the occasion of a naval accident brought the two countries to the brink of war in 1996.

Secondly, Abdullah Öcalan, the head of the Kurdish Workers' Party (*Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan, PKK*), was captured in Kenya on 15 February 1999, while being

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<sup>298</sup> See BBC World News, 'Chirac backs Turkey's EU Entry Bid' 16 December 2004, Available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/4100031.stm> and Turkish News Portal, Schroeder's Strong EU Support to Turkey, 23 February 2004, Available at <http://www.turks.us/article.php?story=20040223092241108>

<sup>299</sup> Rumelili, B. (2008) "Transforming the Greek-Turkish conflicts: the EU and 'what we make of it' in *The European Union and the Border Conflicts*, eds. Diez, T., Albert, M., and Stetter, S., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 121

<sup>300</sup> *Kathimerini*, 2003

transferred from the Greek embassy to Nairobi international airport. The capture of Öcalan in the Greek embassy in Nairobi revealed the connection between Greece and the PKK, which is designated as a terrorist group by both the United States and the EU. This has damaged the prestige of Greece by depicting it as a state harbouring terrorism and in this way undermined the security of Greece's European identity. Finally, the positive atmosphere provided by the solidarity after the two devastating earthquakes in both countries in the summer of 1999 legitimized cooperation in the eyes of Greek public.

Combined with the EU context, these developments allowed Simitis to redefine the national interests of Greece and transform the Greek foreign policy towards Turkey despite the existence of a strong resistance. The clearest sign of this transformation was Greece's behaviour during the Helsinki European Council in 1999 where it lifted its veto of releasing aid to Turkey and began to support Turkish membership in the EU. Considering the dangers of excluding Turkey from the EU orientation and losing ground for resolving the bilateral issues, Athens decided to pull Turkey further to the European norms through invigorating its EU prospects which received a deadly blow after the 1997 Luxembourg summit.

This was a surprising development since Greece has been one of the strongest opponents of Turkey's EU accession and has traditionally emphasized the 'non-European' aspects of the Turkish identity in order to block its entry into the bloc. Nevertheless this support was not unconditional. Simitis defended the insertion of two conditions, which are; (i) The Aegean Dispute should be referred to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for adjudication, (ii) the Cypriot accession should not be delayed for the sake of an eventual political settlement<sup>301</sup>. In the end, December 2004 was set as a deadline by the EU for the resolution of Greek-Turkish disputes either through an agreement between the two countries or via the compulsory reference of the disputes to ICJ.

As the above discussion showed, fluctuations in the identity security of Greece within the EU context, strongly influences the position of Greek political actors towards Turkey. The conditionality of European financial assistance, the criticism of EU institutions and the rise of debates regarding the European credentials of Greece during the early 1990s, undermined the security of the country's identity and compelled Athens to transform its domestic structure and eventually re-define its national interests. In this context, Greece lifted its long-standing veto on EU's financial aid to Turkey and approved Ankara's EU candidacy

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<sup>301</sup> Radikal, 8 December 1999

in 1999. By doing so, Athens showed that it can behave in a collective manner with other EU members and thus enhanced the security of its European identity. In this context, Simitis managed to pursue a successful foreign policy and install Turkish-Greek disputes onto the European level, where Greece enjoys a comparative advantage as a full member.

Enhanced prestige of Greece within the EU and the Europeanization of its foreign policy towards Turkey after 1999 contributed to the collapse of the consensus between diverse political parties and other actors in Ankara regarding the Cyprus problem and relations with Greece. Combined with Turkey's greater prospects of joining the EU, it triggered a severe internal debate on how to re-formulate Turkey's Cyprus/Greece policy. Let us now focus on the position of political parties and other important foreign-policy actors in Ankara such as the foreign ministry and the bureaucracy in regards to relations with Greece and the Cyprus problem.

### **THE POSITION OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN TURKEY:**

In a similar manner to Greece, there was a consensus among diverse political parties and the military in Ankara regarding the Cyprus problem during the Cold War when Turkey's identity was relatively more secure. As noted earlier, military victory in 1974 war boosted the prestige of the military and legitimized its interference in politics. Furthermore, the great number of casualties and losses during the military operations created a symbolic connection to Cyprus in the Turkish public. Since then the Cyprus issue, which has been an important legitimizing factor, was seen as a 'national cause' by all political parties in the country. Giving concessions in Cyprus for the sake of the re-unification of the island has been regarded by all parties as a risky option. As a result, all parties maintained a good relationship with Turkish Cypriots' veteran President Rauf Denktaş who has always been a hard-liner in negotiating a federal settlement for Cyprus. Nevertheless, as noted earlier the end of Cold War undermined Turkey's 'Western' identity. Hence Ankara attempted to secure its identity by seeking membership in the EU under the premiership of Turgut Özal from the centre-right Motherland Party (*Anavatan Partisi, ANAP*). Turkey's aspiration to join the EU has damaged the consensus between diverse political parties, the military and the Turkish Cypriot leadership regarding the Cyprus issue. Since then the political parties of the centre-right, which have been the strongest supporters of Turkey's EU membership, have diverged from the official Cyprus policy and adopted a more conciliatory approach. For example, Özal believed that a Cyprus settlement was essential for Turkey's entry. He did not fully trust

Denktaş, and sought to ensure that the Turkish Cypriot leader did not evade negotiations that could yield a settlement.<sup>302</sup>

Ms Tansu Çiller, the leader of centre-right DYP who served as Turkish Prime Minister between 1993 and 1996, has had a similar viewpoint on Denktaş. The two leaders had major policy differences in regards to the acceptance of confidence-building measures presented by the UN in 1993/94. In the meantime, EU's hesitation to declare Ankara as a candidate triggered the rise of political Islam and nationalism in Turkey. In this context, Çiller needed a success against the supporters of a more Islamic orientation in foreign policy.<sup>303</sup> As a result, she decided to initiate the establishment of a customs union with the EU. During the negotiations which led to the signing of the agreement, Ms. Çiller had to approve the beginning of the accession negotiations between the EU and the Greek Cypriots, who applied for full membership in 1990, in order to eliminate the Greek veto to the customs union with Turkey.

However, these developments did not necessarily show that Çiller was prepared to accept a settlement for Cyprus that differed significantly from Denktaş. Indeed, Çiller subsequently adopted a populist line and exploited both Cypriot and Aegean tensions to bolster her popularity at home. She visited North Cyprus in September 1996 to attend the funeral of a Turkish Cypriot soldier who lost his life during the violence along the Green Line.<sup>304</sup> Earlier in January 1996, she risked a war with Athens during the crisis over Kardak/Imia.

The real end of the consensus between a diverse range of political parties, the military and Denktaş in regards to Turkey's Cyprus policy took place with the transformation of Turkish Islamic identity and the establishment of the AKP in 2001. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the AKP initiated a transformation of political Islam in Turkey and emerged as the strongest supporter of the EU in the country. Nevertheless, the party's new identity was largely undefined then. For this reason, Islamists' transformation was approached suspiciously by the secular Turkish establishment as well as the EU. In this context, adopting

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<sup>302</sup> Bahcheli, T. (2001) 'Turkey's Cyprus Challenge: Preserving the Gains of 1974', in Dimitris Keridis and Dimitris Triantafyllou (eds.), *Greek-Turkish Relations in the Era of Globalization*, (Washington DC: Brasseys), p.259

<sup>303</sup> Brewin, C. (2000), *The European Union and Cyprus*, (Huntingdon: Eothen), p.20

<sup>304</sup> Bahcheli, T. (2001) 'Turkey's Cyprus Challenge: Preserving the Gains of 1974', in Dimitris Keridis and Dimitris Triantafyllou (eds.), *Greek-Turkish Relations in the Era of Globalization*, (Washington DC: Brasseys), p.260



a conciliatory approach towards the Cyprus issue was seen as an ideal way to obtain European support and secure the party's new and unapproved identity at home.

Apart from the need to secure its new identity, there are some other factors behind the AKP's position on Cyprus. First of all, one has to bear in mind that Turkish ideological attachment to the island was principally based on Turkish nationalism. Since nationalism is not an integral part of the AKP's identity, its ideological and emotional attachment to Cyprus is weaker. Furthermore, the Turkish Cypriot community is one of the most secularized Islamic people in the world. They embraced Kemalist reforms during the 1920s very easily and quickly and cooperated traditionally with the nationalist-secularist parties and the military in Turkey since then. As a result, Islamist parties find little, if any, electoral support among the secular Turkish Cypriot Diaspora living in Turkey. Finally, identity fluctuations and growing anti-Turkish activism in North Cyprus generated a negative image for Turkish Cypriots in Turkey. It gradually changed the perception of the Cyprus problem in the country and undermined the Turkish public's sensitivity over the issue.

In this context, the AKP undoubtedly modified Islamists' position in regards to Cyprus which has traditionally been influenced by Neo-Ottomanist ideas and accelerated the transformation of Turkey's Cyprus policy. The first signal of the change in the Islamists' position towards Cyprus was revealed by the AKP leader Erdoğan in his interview with the Greek national television NET in 2002. In this interview, Erdoğan stated that AKP approved the adaptation of the 'Belgian model' which includes a strong central government to the island of Cyprus.<sup>305</sup> Erdoğan's statement received diverse responses in Greece and Turkey. The Greek side saw this as a pleasant surprise. Commenting on Erdoğan's statement, the Greek foreign minister said 'for the first time we heard that a Turkish politician is talking in favor of a 'European' model in regards to the solution of the Cyprus problem. If he genuinely meant it, there is a historical opportunity for the island'.<sup>306</sup>

On the other hand, Erdoğan's statement received a strong reaction from the secularist camp at home which became increasingly Euro-skeptic after 1997. The main representatives of the secularist camp such as President Sezer, the Foreign Ministry, the bureaucracy, and the main opposition Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, CHP*) advised Erdoğan to take a briefing on the Cyprus issue and compelled him to abandon his plans to visit Greece

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<sup>305</sup> Sabah, 5 November 2002

<sup>306</sup> Milliyet, *Atina'yi Sevindiridi*, 6 November 2002

after the victory of his party in the 2002 elections. Eventually Erdoğan delayed his trip to Greece and instead went to North Cyprus in order to attend the independence celebrations of Turkish Cypriots on 15 November 2002. This was regarded by many as the submission of Erdoğan to the secularist camp in Turkey.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the EU's symbolic approval of Turkey's candidacy was not sufficient to restore the union's damaged credibility in the eyes of Kemalists. Moreover, the victory of the AKP was perceived as a threat to Turkey's identity. The party's swift and unexpected policy change towards the EU generated suspicions among the secularists who were very much worried that the AKP can take advantage of the EU-related reforms in order to implement a 'hidden agenda' which would undermine secularism in Turkey. In this context, Erdoğan's efforts to dramatically change Turkey's Cyprus policy without consulting the secularist establishment and the Turkish Cypriot leadership, has intensified the secularists' suspicions regarding the party's future intentions. In this context, the secularists opposed giving any concessions in Cyprus with the hope of getting closer to the union and supported Denktaş's con-federal proposition based on the Swiss model.

However, Erdoğan was determined to transform Turkey's Cyprus policy swiftly. In fact, resolving the Cyprus problem emerged as the first thing on the AKP's foreign policy agenda. To this end, Erdoğan started a public fight with the hard-liner Turkish Cypriot President Denktaş and blamed him for the lack of a solution on the island. In one of his statements, Erdoğan said that he was "not in favor of following the Cyprus policy that has been followed for the last 30 or 40 years. This is not Mr. Denktaş's personal business".<sup>307</sup> In return, Denktaş blamed the AKP for sacrificing Cyprus for Turkey's EU membership. This direct and public quarrel between the Turkish government and the Turkish Cypriot leader, who was supported by the secularists, was exceptional in Turkish history and illustrated how Cyprus has become another source of polarization and power struggle between the two opposing political camps in Turkey.

While all these developments revealed the existence of extreme internal divisions in the Turkish side, the UN's Security Council agreed that the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, should present the two parties in Cyprus with a proposal which would form the basis of further negotiations. The original version of the UN peace plan, unofficially known as the 'Annan Plan' was presented to the two sides on 11 November 2002. A little under a month

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<sup>307</sup> The Independent, 3 January 2003

later, and following the modifications submitted by the two sides, it was revised. It was hoped that this plan would be agreed by the two sides on the margins of the European Council, which was held in Copenhagen on 13 December 2002.

While the parties were evaluating their positions on the plan, Erdoğan started a comprehensive tour of EU capitals in order to obtain the support of Europeans and secure its new identity which would consolidate its domestic position. During the visits, Erdoğan assured European leaders that the AKP government is determined to solve the Cyprus problem. In fact, he became the first Turkish leader who explicitly acknowledged the relationship between the Cyprus problem and Turkey's EU membership prospect. In one of his interviews Erdoğan said 'Turkey should be given a date for the start of accession talks in the Copenhagen European Council. Afterwards, we can accept the negotiability of the Annan Plan for Cyprus'.<sup>308</sup>

Before the EU summit, the AKP government put pressure on Denktaş to make concessions and sign a framework treaty with his Greek Cypriot counterpart.<sup>309</sup> Nonetheless, the veteran Turkish Cypriot leader, who was recuperating from major heart surgery, refused to do so and declined to attend the summit. As a result, the Copenhagen Council confirmed the membership of Cyprus into the EU on 1 May 2004 while delaying the decision on a date for Turkey's accession talks until December 2004. The EU also expressed its preference for a united Cyprus and encouraged the two parties to continue negotiations and find a solution until 28 February 2003. Greece saw the decision as a triple triumph as it succeeded in inducting Cyprus whole into the EU, depicted the Turkish-Cypriot leadership as reluctant to reach a compromise on the island, and maintained its detente with Turkey by not blocking the EU's collective decision regarding the accession talks.<sup>310</sup>

These developments seriously reduced the identity security of the Turkish government and generated swift and reckless statements from the AKP leaders. In an interview, Erdoğan said that Turkey should not be seen by the world as the side which is blocking the reunification of Cyprus.<sup>311</sup> Moreover, he treated issues which were the subjects of severe arguments between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots, such as the compensations, territorial re-

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<sup>308</sup> Hürriyet, 26 November 2002

<sup>309</sup> Hürriyet, 13 December 2002

<sup>310</sup> Athens News, Denktash's last chance, Available online at [www.athensnews.gr](http://www.athensnews.gr)

<sup>311</sup> The Independent, 3 January 2003

arrangements and the number of immigrants simply as details. The Turkish foreign minister Yakış also stated that if a settlement were not achieved by the deadline, the Turkish military would be in a position of an occupier of EU territory since the Greek Cypriots would by then have joined the union as the representative of the entire island.<sup>312</sup> These statements created an impression that Ankara was ready to approve any plan regardless of its contents.

Meanwhile, the AKP government intensified pressure on Denктаş to negotiate the plan and sign it before the deadline. Furthermore it began to cooperate with the growing Cypriotist/leftist opposition in North Cyprus, most notably the Republican Turkish Party (*Cumhuriyetci Türk Partisi*, CTP). During the negotiation process, the leftist parties cooperated with various NGOs and trade unions and received massive financial assistance from the EU in order to mobilize Turkish Cypriots against Denктаş. While the AKP started to cooperate with the Turkish Cypriot opposition, some top-ranking generals within the military and secularist CHP gave a loud and clear signal of support to veteran Turkish Cypriot leader. In one of his interviews, CHP's vice-President Onur Öymen said; 'it is very unlikely to reach a settlement until 28 February. This deadline is imaginary and has nothing to do with Turkey's EU bid. The philosophy of the UN plan will eliminate bi-zonality, thus is unacceptable as far as the Turkish side is concerned'.<sup>313</sup>

In the mean time, Kofi Annan made a second visit to the island and a further revision of the re-unification plan took place in February 2003. During his stay Annan called on the two sides to meet with him again the following month in The Hague where he would expect their answer on whether they were prepared to put the plan to a referendum. On 10 March 2003, this most recent phase of talks collapsed in The Hague, Netherlands, when Denктаş told the Secretary-General he would not put the Annan Plan to referendum. Subsequently, Greek Cypriots formally signed the EU Treaty of Accession on 16 April 2003 at a ceremony in Athens.

Throughout the rest of the year there was no effort to restart negotiations. In the mean time, the pro-solution CTP won the parliamentary elections in North Cyprus on January 2004. This paved the way for the Turkish government to push for new negotiations. After a meeting between Erdoğan and Annan in Switzerland, the leaders of the two sides agreed to start a new negotiations process which initially took place in Cyprus and eventually continued in the Swiss city of Bürgenstock. The Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denктаş refused

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<sup>312</sup> Hürriyet, 16 December 2002

<sup>313</sup> Tercüman, 24 January 2003

to attend these talks. Instead, Serdar Denktaş and Mehmet Ali Talat, leaders of the two parties which established the new coalition government in the TRNC after the elections, attended in his place.

The fourth version of the plan was presented to the parties in Bürgenstock. However, this was short-lived. After final adjustments, a fifth and final version of the Plan was presented to the two sides on 31 March 2004. Eventually, Turkish and Greek sides agreed to organize simultaneous referenda on both sides of the island based on the fifth version of the UN proposal. The final version of the UN plan proposed the creation of the United Cyprus Republic consisting of two component states joined together by a loose federal government apparatus. This federal level would have incorporated a collective presidential council, alternating presidency, bicameral legislature and a supreme court composed of equal numbers of Greek and Turkish Cypriot judges.

During the referendum campaign, the AKP explicitly encouraged Turkish Cypriots to deliver a 'yes' vote while Denktaş and secularists in Turkey strongly opposed the plan. The reciprocal criticisms between Erdoğan and Denktaş were intensified as the referendum date approached. Çelenk wrote; 'the relations between Denktaş and the Turkish government become so tense that Prime Minister Erdoğan demanded censorship of statements made by Denktaş during the negotiations on the island from the press'.<sup>314</sup>

In the context of rising polarization on the Turkish side, many Greek Cypriots saw the status-quo as an advantage and preferred to join the bloc alone so their government can increase pressure on Turkey via the EU for a more-favourable solution for the Greek side. For example, EU's directives can prevent the possible Turkish Cypriot demands in a future united Cyprus for restrictions on the freedom of movement and settlement. On 7 April 2004 Greek Cypriot President Papadopoulos spoke out against the plan in an emotional speech broadcast live on television. He said 'I was given an internationally recognized state and I am not going to give back a community without say internationally and in search of a guardian'.<sup>315</sup> Two days before the referendum even the Progressive Party of Working People (*Anorthotikó Kómma Ergazómenou Laoú, AKEL*), which has traditionally been a supporter of united Cyprus and Cypriotist ideology decided to reject the Annan Plan because of its perceived bias.

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<sup>314</sup> Çelenk, A. (2007), 'The Restructuring of Turkey's Policy Towards Cyprus', *Turkish Studies*, Vol.8, No.2, p.350

<sup>315</sup> Tassos Papadopoulos spoke to the nation, (7 April 2004) [Online]. Available at: <URL: <http://www.cyprus-conflict.net/Tassos-Annan.htm>> [Accessed 7 December 2007].

In Greece, new Prime Minister Kostas Karamanlis of the New Democracy Party decided to maintain a "neutral" position over the plan, while his rival George Papandreou of PASOK who initiated low politics cooperation with Turkey after 1999, pushed for a 'yes' vote from Greek Cypriots. Although, some criticized Karamanlis for not doing enough for a solution, his choice of maintaining neutrality enhanced the perception that the issue is between the 'independent and democratic Cyprus' and Turkey while Greece is not a party.

In the end, the plan was rejected by an overwhelming majority of Greek Cypriots (75 percent) whereas Turkish Cypriots approved it with 64 percent. Despite their rejection, Greek Cypriots entered the EU on May 2004 as the only legitimate representative of the entire island. On the other hand, Turkish Cypriots were left out despite their approval of the EU-backed Annan Plan. Nevertheless, Turkish Cypriots celebrated the 'yes' vote since many European and American leaders promised that North Cyprus would no longer be isolated if the re-unification fails because of the Greek side.<sup>316</sup> So far, these promises have proved empty and North Cyprus is still isolated despite the call from the UN to lift the embargoes. Although the positive attitude of the Turkish government towards the reunification plan in Cyprus eased the start of accession talks between the EU and Turkey, the negotiations are open-ended in which the full membership is not guaranteed. Moreover Turkey is still expected to make concessions in Cyprus.

As the above discussion showed, Turkey's policy during the Cyprus peace talks has become another source of polarization and power struggle between diverse political camps of the country which were trying to secure their identities at home by exploiting foreign policy issues. This complicated the definition of Turkey's national interests, led to an ambivalent and 'double-headed' foreign policy and caused confusion about Turkey's exact position on the matter. AKP's commitment to solve the Cyprus problem at all costs, created an impression that Ankara is ready to approve any plan regardless of its contents. On the other hand, Denktas's unconditional support from the CHP and other secularist establishments such as the foreign ministry, bureaucracy and President Sezer encouraged him to abandon the negotiations instead of analyzing the options properly and reaching an agreement before the Greek Cypriots lost their final incentive to share power with their Turkish Cypriots compatriots by joining the EU in 2004.

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<sup>316</sup> Kibris Newspaper, 25 April 2004

As noted earlier, another important factor which paved the way for the Turkish side's ambivalent policy during the peace talks was the fading popularity of Rauf Denктаş in North Cyprus and the rising identity insecurity among the Turkish Cypriot community. The next section will demonstrate how the fluctuations in the security of Turkish Cypriots' identity influenced Turkey's bargaining power during the Cyprus negotiations.

## **IDENTITY DEBATES IN THE TURKISH CYPRIOT COMMUNITY:**

Until recent years, Turkish nationalism was the dominant conception of identity among the Turkish Cypriots. Nevertheless, this particular identity has become increasingly insecure in recent years, as manifest in with the rise of alternative identity conceptions. This situation had two important implications for the position of the Turkish side at the negotiating table. Firstly, it alienated Turkish Cypriots from their political leadership as well as their 'motherland', jeopardized the legitimacy of the unrecognized TRNC and threatened its stability. Secondly, it created a negative image for Turkish Cypriots in Turkey and altered the perception of the Cyprus issue in the country.

Saving the lives of the Turkish Cypriots and safeguarding their rights has been the main justification for Turkey's intervention on the island. In this regard, the relationship between native Turkish Cypriots and Turkish governments is very important as a legitimizing factor for Turkey's presence on the island. Therefore, any factor which damages the relations between Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots has a negative influence for the Turkish side at the negotiation table. At this point, let us briefly examine the identity construction among the Cypriot communities in a historical setting. This is essential to understanding the relationship between the level of Turkish Cypriots' identity security and the negotiating power of the Turkish side in Cyprus peace negotiations.

As Mavratsas put it 'nationalism has undoubtedly been the dominant ideology in the modern history of Cyprus'.<sup>317</sup> Greek Cypriots who have always been the majority on the island see themselves as the true native inhabitants of Cyprus. At the same time, they see no contradiction between being Cypriot and Greek as they traditionally perceived Cyprus to be an extension of Greece. In other words, they associated Cypriot identity with the Greek language and the church and in this way excluded the Turks of Cyprus from the Cypriot

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<sup>317</sup> Mavratsas, C. (2001), 'Greek Cypriot Identity and Conflicting Interpretations of the Cyprus Problem' in *Greek Turkish Relations in the Era of Globalization*, ed. Keridis, D & Triantaphyllou, D., (Massachusetts: Fidelity Press), p.151

identity. Towards the end of British rule, Greek Cypriots started to demand *enosis*, the union of the island with Greece. As a response, Turkish Cypriots adopted Turkish nationalist ideas and started to demand *taksim*, the partition of the island between Greece and Turkey. The bloody inter-communal conflicts during the 1950s and the 1960s further popularized the nationalist ideas among both communities.

Three years of common administration under the umbrella of the bi-communal Republic of Cyprus from 1960 to 1963 was too short to permit a nation-building process on the island similar to other countries in Europe.<sup>318</sup> As a matter of fact, the political elite did not have any intention of promoting a common identity between the island's two ethnic communities anyway. Right after the establishment of the republic in 1960, its first President Archbishop Makarios, is reported to have said 'the agreements have created a state but not a nation'.<sup>319</sup> Even the Communist Party AKEL who is regarded as the architect of the Cypriotist ideology pursued a pro-*enosis* stance between 1963 and 1966. In this context, both communities continued to associate themselves with Greece and Turkey which paved the way for a civil war and the events of 1974 when the Turkish army intervened in the wake of a Greek military coup. This intervention resulted in the partition of the island and the establishment of two *de facto* states in homogenized territories.

The impact of Turkey's intervention on the identity security of Greek and Turkish Cypriots have been enormous. Military defeat on the Greek side proved the perils of extreme nationalism and strengthened Cypriotism as an alternative ideology.<sup>320</sup> On the other hand, the euphoria of a military victory boosted Turkish Cypriots' morale and significantly secured their identity which was based on Turkish nationalism. The Turkish Cypriot declaration of independence and the establishment of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in 1983 (TRNC) which received recognition only from Turkey until now, strengthened the institutionalization of Turkish nationalism in the northern part of the island.

The nationalist approach of the new state saw Turkish Cypriots as an inseparable part of Turkey which is regarded as a '*motherland (anavatan)*', as well as the liberator and

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<sup>318</sup> For a detailed discussion see Ramm, C. (2006), "Assessing Transnational Re-negotiation in the Post-1974 Turkish Cypriot Community: 'Cyprus Donkeys', 'Black Beards' and the 'EU Carrot'", *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol.6, No.4, pp.523-542

<sup>319</sup> Stephen, M, (1997), *The Cyprus Question*, (London), p.1-2

<sup>320</sup> Mavratsas, C. (2001), 'Greek Cypriot Identity and Conflicting Interpretations of the Cyprus Problem' in *Greek Turkish Relations in the Era of Globalization*, ed. Keridis, D & Triantaphyllou, D., (Massachusetts: Fidelity Press)



protector of the Turkish Cypriot '*baby land (yavruvatan)*'. Cypriotness was only portrayed as a geographical definition therefore the official discourse made no distinction between the mainland Turks and the Turkish Cypriots. Asked his opinion about Cypriot identity, nationalist Turkish Cypriot leader Denктаş who established the TRNC said; 'There are neither Turkish Cypriots, nor Greek Cypriots, nor Cypriots...the only Cypriot living in Cyprus is the Cyprus donkey'.<sup>321</sup> The nationalist discourse depicted Greek Cypriots as untrustworthy and blamed them for ruining the bi-communal Republic of Cyprus by continuing to demand *enosis* even after the independence in 1960. In this context, the Cyprus problem was seen by many Turkish Cypriots as merely the unrecognition of the TRNC and its isolation from the rest of the world.

However, Turkish nationalism has become increasingly insecure in recent years, as manifest in the rise of other identifications. As Ramn put it 'Turkish Cypriots have entered into a new process in which a new identity is constructed and negotiated in connection with their trans-national position between Greek Cypriots, Turkey, the Turkish immigrant population in North Cyprus and the EU'.<sup>322</sup> In this process, Cypriotism, which originated with the Greek Cypriot AKEL party, has emerged as the main competitor of Turkish nationalism in the northern part of the island.

This ideology emphasizes the difference of Cyprus from both Greece and Turkey as well as the existence of a common Cypriot culture and citizenship while discouraging any kind of ethnic nationalism. Cypriotists' rejection of ethnic nationalism stems from their original Marxist ideology. During the 1980s Cypriotist parties in North Cyprus adopted a pro-Soviet position due to an influx of members who had been attracted to leftist ideology while studying at Turkish universities.<sup>323</sup> Due to the internationalist approach of Communist ideology and its emphasis on class struggle, nationalism was seen by Cypriotists as a case of false consciousness which serves the interests of the bourgeoisie. Although parties which support Cypriotism on both sides of the island have moved towards a Western European style social-democratic and liberal ideology after the collapse of Communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, ethnic nationalism is still not a part of their identity. Without denying the

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<sup>321</sup> Ortam Newspaper, 13 November 1995

<sup>322</sup> See Ramm, C. (2006), "Assessing Transnational Re-negotiation in the Post-1974 Turkish Cypriot Community: 'Cyprus Donkeys', 'Black Beards' and the 'EU Carrot'", *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol.6, No.4, p.530

<sup>323</sup> For a detailed discussion see Vural, Y. & Rüstemli, A. (2006), 'Identity Fluctuations in the Turkish Cypriot Community', *Mediterranean Politics*, Vol.11, No:3

ethnic plurality on the island, they argue that the people of Cyprus must principally regard themselves as Cypriots first and then Greeks, Turks or others.

In this context, the supporters of Cypriotism in North Cyprus strongly disapprove of the rising immigration from Turkish mainland. They see the immigrants as a major element in Turkey's 'Turkification' policy which in their eyes will not only make indigenous Turkish Cypriots a minority in their own country but will also 'orientalise' their culture. According to them, the only way to prevent this from happening is to create a truly Cypriot and truly independent federal state that would ensure the political equality of the island's two major communities. In addition, they are the strongest supporters of the EU membership and emphasize its role as the only possible framework within which a common Cypriotness can emerge. In other words, they portrayed supra-national European identity as a model for a common and civic Cypriot identity, which they see as essential for the re-unification of the island.

According to a recent study in 2006, 'Turkishness' is still the most frequent way of defining identity among Turkish Cypriots. However 'Cypriotness' which was chosen as the most important component of identity by 35.8 percent of the Turkish Cypriots and is far more popular among the younger generations<sup>324</sup> strongly undermined the security of Turkish nationalistic identity on the island. As noted above, this identity insecurity in the Turkish Cypriot community has a significant impact on the bargaining power of the Turkish side in Cyprus peace negotiations. In order to understand how this happens, let us now focus on the factors which undermined the security of Turkish nationalism in the TRNC.

Generally speaking, we can talk about four major factors which influence the identity debates in North Cyprus. First of all, Turkish Cypriots have been suffering from internationally-imposed embargoes which prevent them from directly engaging in any political, economic, social and cultural activities with the rest of the world for more than forty years. This isolation prevented the development of a strong private sector as well as a competitive market economy in North Cyprus. As a result, the Turkish Cypriot economy is heavily dependent on grants from Turkey. Public sector is the largest employer in North Cyprus; providing about one third of the Turkish Cypriot population with employment. Personnel expenditure is more than a quarter of government spending, going up to one third

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<sup>324</sup> Vural, Y. & Rüstemli, A. (2006), 'Identity Fluctuations in the Turkish Cypriot Community', *Mediterranean Politics*, Vol.11, No:3

of all expenditure in 2006.<sup>325</sup> This ambitious recruitment policy and the waste of effective human capital has not only made North Cyprus' public sector over-crowded, ineffective and inefficient but also created an unsustainable economic system which does not encourage production. As a result, North Cyprus suffers from chronic high budget deficits, low local investments and dependence on Turkish aid and loans.<sup>326</sup>

Apart from its economic dimension, international isolation affects the lives of Turkish Cypriots in many other ways. Since 1974, Turkish Cypriot ports & airports have been closed to direct international trade and travel. The educational institutions of North Cyprus, most notably universities, their students and scholars constantly face academic embargoes. Furthermore, Turkish Cypriots are not allowed to participate or host international teams, or sporting/cultural events. For example, no teams or individuals from North Cyprus have participated at any of the following since December 1963, Olympic and Commonwealth Games, World and European sporting tournaments such as athletics championships or football competitions.<sup>327</sup> Combined with economic insecurity and political uncertainty, all these factors paved the way for a decline in Turkish Cypriots' national morale and confidence.

Secondly, the borders of the internationally unrecognized TRNC do not correspond with the conventional perceptions of ethnic, linguistic and religious boundaries on the island. Turkish Cypriots were traditionally scattered all over the island and moved to Northern Cyprus only after the 1974 war. Many of those who left their properties in the south were settled to the properties abandoned by the Greek Cypriots after the population exchange agreement. Nevertheless, many could not develop a strong affiliation with their new properties and territories. This is partly due to the unrecognition of the TRNC in the international community and the invalidity of the documents given by its authorities (including title deeds) according to international law. Apart from holding internationally invalid title deeds, Turkish Cypriots are also aware that any settlement will entail the return

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<sup>325</sup> Özünlu, S and Thomson, P. (2008), "Educational Reform in North Cyprus: Towards the Making of a Nation/State", *International Journal of Educational Development*, Vol.29, Issue 1, pp.99-106

<sup>326</sup> For a detailed discussion on Turkish Cypriot economy see Arslan, K. (2004), "Integrating North Cyprus into the EU", *Online document on the website of Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Industry*, Available on [http://www.kktcsanayiodasi.org/site/documents/INTEGRATING\\_NORTH\\_CYPRUS\\_INTO\\_THE\\_EU.pdf](http://www.kktcsanayiodasi.org/site/documents/INTEGRATING_NORTH_CYPRUS_INTO_THE_EU.pdf) and Guncavdi, O and Kucukciftci, S. (2008), "Economic Growth Under Embargoes in North Cyprus", *MPRA Paper*, No.9621. Available online at [http://mpra.ub.unimuenchen.de/9621/1/MPRA\\_paper\\_9621.pdf](http://mpra.ub.unimuenchen.de/9621/1/MPRA_paper_9621.pdf) and

<sup>327</sup> [www.embargoed.com](http://www.embargoed.com)

of some territory to the Greek Cypriot side. The number of villages/towns that will be returned in case of a settlement ranges from 50 to 70 which will affect the lives of approximately 65000 Turkish Cypriots. Under these circumstances, developing an emotional affiliation with the territories they currently live in is quite difficult for many Turkish Cypriots.

The third factor which influenced the identity debates among the Turkish Cypriots is the new context that emerged after Greek Cypriots officially began negotiating membership with the EU in 1995 with the consent of the Turkish government. This new context added a new dimension namely 'Europeanness' to the identity debates in North Cyprus and led to the rise of identity insecurity in the country. Towards the end of the 1990s the EU emerged as a key issue in the internal politics of North Cyprus. The immense dialogue between the European institutions and the Turkish Cypriot civil society has played a key role in the transformation of dominant attitudes in the Turkish Cypriot community, particularly in regards to how they define their own identity and an ideal solution to the Cyprus problem. Furthermore, it created an affiliation for the union among many Turkish Cypriots when combined with the political, economic and identity insecurity of the community as a result of its forty year isolation from the rest of the world. This affiliation shows the relationship between the domestic insecurity and attitudes towards a collective identity.

The final and possibly the strongest factor which undermined the identity based on Turkish nationalism in the TRNC is the rising immigration to North Cyprus from Turkey. Until 1974, the Turkish Cypriots used to live in a multi-cultural environment with Greeks, Armenians, and the British. In this cosmopolitan environment they embraced ethnic identity as a source of solidarity and as a response to dominant Greek nationalism on the island. Since 1974, Turkish Cypriots are living in an ethnically homogeneous territory together with Anatolian immigrants who migrated to North Cyprus in large numbers with the encouragement of nationalist Turkish leadership. According to Hatay, the number of Turkish immigrants in North Cyprus which has a total population of 264,172<sup>328</sup> reached to 102,000<sup>329</sup> in 2006.

Although nationalist discourse made no distinction between the new-comers and native Turkish Cypriots, there are noticeable socio-economic differences between the two

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<sup>328</sup> 2006 Census

<sup>329</sup> Hatay, M. (2005), 'Beyond Numbers. An Inquiry Into the Political Integration of Turkish 'Settlers' in Northern Cyprus', *International Peace Research Institute Oslo*

communities most notably concerning the role of religion in society. Turkish Cypriots are one of the most secular Islamic people in the world. Religious practices are kept to a minimum and Turkish Cypriot women do not cover their heads. On the other hand, immigrants from Turkey are mostly from rural backgrounds and are practicing Muslims. Moreover, many of them speak Arabic or Kurdish as their first language.

Augmented interaction between the Turkish Cypriots and the Anatolian migrants had made differences more noticeable and has created tensions in the country.<sup>330</sup> Due to many factors including the experience of British rule, a very high level of education, and intense interaction with the Cypriot Diaspora, most Turkish Cypriots began to perceive themselves as more ‘civilized’ and ‘European’ compared to mainland Turks. In this context, they see rising immigration from Turkey as an immense threat to the original Turkish Cypriot identity. Some circles even declared that the original Turkish Cypriot identity is on the verge of extinction.

Apart from cultural and identity-based differences, Anatolian immigrants are coming from the poorest regions of Turkey and are much worse off than native Turkish Cypriots. This inequality paved the way for a dramatic rise in the level of crime in North Cyprus. Therefore, a widespread notion among the native Turkish Cypriots is linking the immigrants with crime. As a matter of fact, statistics reveal that more than 60 percent of the criminals in North Cyprus’ jails are originally coming from Turkey or other foreign countries.<sup>331</sup> In brief, Anatolian immigrants in North Cyprus played an important role in undermining Turkish nationalism and consolidating the regional Cypriotist identity by providing an internal ‘other’ to the indigenous Turkish Cypriots.

All these factors undermined Turkish nationalism in the TRNC, alienated Turkish Cypriots from their political leadership as well as ‘motherland’ Turkey and destabilized the country. This alienation threatened the nationalist parties’ hegemony in North Cyprus after almost five decades. The rising popularity of Cypriotism and the Turkish Cypriot anxieties over losing their unique identity were manifested with explicit anti-Turkish activism and the rise of leftist (Cypriotist) parties during the peace negotiations between 2001 and 2004. Some leftist activists such as the authors of daily *Afrika* newspaper criticized Turkey and its military presence on the island explicitly to the extent of calling Turkey a colonial, occupying

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<sup>330</sup> Lisaniler, G.F & Rodriguez, L. (2002), ‘The Social and Economic Impact of EU Membership on Northern Cyprus’ in *The European Union and the Cyprus Conflict*, ed. Diez, T. (Manchester: Manchester University Press), p.184

<sup>331</sup> <http://www.ajanskibris.com/index.asp?page=3340332564&hid=74>

power who is trying to assimilate the Turkish Cypriots.<sup>332</sup> Moreover, four massive rallies with the participation of almost half of the entire Turkish Cypriot population<sup>333</sup> were organized between late 2002 and early 2003 to demand the re-unification of the island.<sup>334</sup> The protestors who participated in these demonstrations carried EU flags next to the proposed new flag for the United Republic of Cyprus and banners with slogans that included, “This nation is ours,” “Denktaş resign,” “We can’t wait another 40 years,” “We don’t want to live in a prison,” “Yes to the Annan Plan, yes to the world” and even “Turkish army of occupation.”<sup>335</sup> In 2003 elections, the Republican Turkish Party (*Cumhuriyetçi Türk Partisi, CTP*) which comes from a Cypriotist tradition won the majority in the Turkish Cypriot Parliament for the first time in the history of North Cyprus. CTP’s leader Mehmet Ali Talat, who declared himself as a ‘Cypriot patriot’ rather than a ‘Turkish nationalist’ in 1997 while arguing that the Turkish Cypriots’ interests do not always coincide with those of Turkey, became the new Prime Minister of the TRNC.

The demonstrations and the election results were depicted by the Turkish and international media as a demonstration of the erosion of Turkish nationalism on the island. Special emphasis in the media coverage of the demonstrations was on the abundant appearance of European and united Cypriot flags next to only a few Turkish and Turkish Cypriot flags. The headline of the mainstream Turkish newspaper *Star* after the elections in North Cyprus was ‘yav-rum vatan (half-Greek land): Unfortunately half of North Cyprus which we used to call yavruvatan (babyland) is pro-Greek. The elections revealed this unpleasant reality’.<sup>336</sup> The Turkish media’s coverage of the pro-unification rallies, election results and the growing anti-Turkish activism in North Cyprus generated a negative image for Turkish Cypriots in Turkey. It gradually changed the perception of the Cyprus problem in the country and undermined the Turkish public’s sensitivity over the issue. In this way, it weakened the Turkish position in the negotiating table by undermining Turkey’s justification to be on the island.

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<sup>332</sup> Afrika Newspaper, 13 November 2007

<sup>333</sup> Radikal, KKTC’de Evet Mitingi, 14 April 2004

<sup>334</sup> Radikal, KKTC’de Evet Mitingi, 14 April 2004

<sup>335</sup> Media Monitors Network, 13 February 2008

<sup>336</sup> Star Newspaper 16 December 2003, In the nationalist discourse *anavatan* (motherland) refers to Turkey while *yavruvatan* (babyland) is used for North Cyprus. However, the headline of Star newspaper intentionally used *Yav-rum* which might have a meaning like half-Greek in Turkish.

## **THE POSITION OF CIVIL SOCIETY & BUSINESS GROUPS:**

This section will examine the relationship between the security of Greek and Turkish identities and the civil society cooperation and business ties between the two neighbours. Until recent years, Greek and Turkish businessmen and civil societies were reluctant to cooperate with each other due to their fear of alienating public opinion and leadership. Business groups could not see the benefits of cooperation since they used to see each other as competitors rather than potential partners. In other words, political problems and the antagonistic identities of the two countries prevented the Greek and Turkish business groups and civil society from seeing the benefits of cooperation.

Nevertheless, the rise in the identity security of both countries in the EU context after 1999 legitimized Greek-Turkish cooperation at the civil society level and enabled the business groups of both nations to see their common interests and generally the benefits of cooperation. The EU context provided a legitimate ground for mutual cooperation and empowered domestic actors in both countries who are in favour of closer bilateral relations. Moreover, the institutional status of candidacy made Turkey eligible for many additional forms of EU funding. This has allowed the EU to directly support the development of civil society in Turkey and assist Greek-Turkish confidence-building civil initiatives. Apart from funding, the EU has also become a reference point in the construction of new political and social identities in both countries and in this way legitimized Greek-Turkish cooperation both at governmental and civil society level.<sup>337</sup>

In this context, many Greek and Turkish civil society organizations increased pressure on their respective governments for closer cooperation. In 2000, 230 Greek and Turkish NGOs had joined the confidence-building attempts between the two countries through multi-level cooperation. Cooperation at the civil society level paved the way to cooperation at the state level as well. Since 1999, the two states began cooperating on various issues such as tourism promotion, the fight against terrorism, removal of landmines along the border, trade, mutual investment, illegal immigration and environmental issues. Moreover, many peace-oriented NGOs in Greece intensified pressure on the Greek government for supporting Turkey's bid to join the EU.

Improved relations at both governmental and civil society levels have boosted the economic interaction between Greece and Turkey as well. The annual bilateral trade volume

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<sup>337</sup> Rumelili, B. (2005), 'Civil Society and the Europeanization of Greek-Turkish Cooperation', *South European Society & Politics*, Vol.10, No.1, pp.45-56

between the two neighbours has dramatically increased in recent years and reached \$2.8 billion in 2007, up from \$230 million in 1990.<sup>338</sup> In the same year, Turkey exported 1.309 billion US Dollars worth of goods and services to Greece, and imported 865.6 million US Dollars worth of goods and services from Greece.<sup>339</sup> Greek businessmen also realized that the structural reforms made after 1999 and the customs union with the EU have substantially improved Turkish markets accessibility and investment potential. In this context, they started to see Turkey, which is the most important Balkan partner of the EU, as a dynamic export market and investment area. For example, in 2000 the Athens Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) started a series of contacts with the business groups of Turkey in order to improve the commercial relations between the two countries. In his welcoming speech, Mr. Yiannis Kapralos, the President of the chamber, said;

“The recognition of Turkey as a candidate country for accession sends a hopeful message to the business communities of the two countries...In this context, Greek chambers and mainly the ACCI, can play an important role to the furthering of economic collaboration between Greece and Turkey”.<sup>340</sup>

The President of the Turkish department of the ACCI Mr. Nikolettopoulos also underlined the willingness of the Greek business community for cooperation with Turkey. In his speech, he said;

‘after the earthquakes of 1999, the approach attempted, opened new horizons for cooperation in many sectors including constructions, tourism, shipping...The privatization of Turkish national industries is a high class opportunity for Greek investors’.<sup>341</sup>

These contacts bore fruit and between 2002 and 2006 Greek exports to Turkey increased 130 percent while Greek imports from Turkey increased 105 percent. Moreover, by investing 2.8 billion US Dollars, Greece ranked fourth among countries that made direct foreign investment in Turkey. In April 2006 the National Bank of Greece acquired 46 percent shares of Turkish private Finansbank which is the fifth biggest bank in the country, by paying 2.774 million US Dollars. This is the biggest commercial contract which was signed in the

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<sup>338</sup> <http://www.invgr.com/invgt.htm>

<sup>339</sup> Greek-Turkish Chamber of Commerce (GTCC)).

<sup>340</sup> Athens Chamber of Commerce and Industry, *Trade with Greece*, Vol. 18. Available online at [www.acci.gr/trade/no18/4-8.pdf](http://www.acci.gr/trade/no18/4-8.pdf)

<sup>341</sup> Athens Chamber of Commerce and Industry, *Trade with Greece*, Vol. 18. Available online at [www.acci.gr/trade/no18/4-8.pdf](http://www.acci.gr/trade/no18/4-8.pdf)



history of Greece and Turkey. Moreover, another Greek bank EFG Eurobank-Ergasias acquired 70 percent of Turkish Tekfenbank while Greek Alpha Bank is negotiating with Turkish Alternatifbank in order to establish a partnership. In 2006, 228 Greek firms were operating in Turkey compared to 10 Turkish firms in Greece. Nevertheless, important multinational companies of Turkey such as Linens, Dođtař Mobilya and Ayyıldız Tekstil have opened or planning to open retail outlets in the Greek market.<sup>342</sup>

The AKP government fully supported the establishment of closer economic ties with Greece. In 2003 it signed an important agreement with the Greek government in Ankara to build a natural gas pipeline connecting the two countries which will deliver 500 million cubic meters of natural gas from Azerbaijan to Greece, via Turkey. In 2005 the Turkish economy minister Kürřat Tüzmen met Greek economy minister in Athens to seek ways for boosting trade ties between the two countries. After the meeting Tüzmen said ‘we are welcoming the acquisition of Finansbank by the National Bank of Greece since it is demonstrating the level of confidence between Greece and Turkey’.<sup>343</sup> Big business groups in Turkey also supported AKP’s efforts to boost economic ties with Greece as well as its effort to solve the Cyprus problem as soon as possible. For example, TÜSİAD organized several conferences and other events in order to demonstrate the positive sides of the UN proposal in Cyprus to the Turkish and Turkish Cypriot public. In one of these conferences, TÜSİAD’s head Tuncay Özilhan said ‘thanks to the sensitive balance that the Annan Plan will establish, many concerns of the Turkish Cypriots are not valid anymore’.<sup>344</sup>

On the other hand, rising trade links and particularly direct investment from Greece caused suspicions among the Turkish secularists, notably the main opposition CHP, the military and some state departments and NGOs. As a matter of fact, low politics cooperation between the two countries was initiated by İsmail Cem from the secularist Democratic Left Party (*Demokratik Sol Parti*, DSP) and his Greek counterpart Georgios Papandreou in 1999. Nevertheless, the rising identity concerns of the secularists due to both internal and external factors after 2002, triggered suspicions in regards to rising economic interdependence with Greece.

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<sup>342</sup> Turkey’s Capital Magazine, October 2004

<sup>343</sup> <http://inv.gr/invgt.htm> [Online] Accessed 12 December 2007

<sup>344</sup> Radikal Newspaper, 18 July 2003

Some civil societies belonging to this camp spread rumours that Greeks and Israelis are buying properties in Kurdish-inhabited Southeast Anatolia which created doubts in the Turkish public. Furthermore, the CHP engaged in a lawsuit in order to stop the sale of real-estates to foreigners which was eased as part of the EU reforms.<sup>345</sup> The Turkish military was also not very pleased with the rising economic ties with Greece. Commenting on the sale of some Turkish banks to Greeks, military bank OYAK's President Yıldırım Türker said 'OYAK would not sell out to Greeks at any price, and reportedly praised nationalist sentiments as "noble".<sup>346</sup> Furthermore, in 2007 the Turkish Banking Regulation and Supervision Agency (BDDK) had blocked the entry of a third Greek bank to the Turkish banking sector (following Finansbank and Tekfenbank) in light of report from the National Intelligence Organization (*Milli İstihbarat Teşkilatı, MİT*). According to the report which cancelled a half billion US Dollar agreement, a member of the board of Alpha Bank was a former Greek spy with close past ties to Kurdish terrorist group PKK.<sup>347</sup>

As the above discussion showed, there is a strong relationship between identity security of Greece and Turkey and the level of their business ties and civil society cooperation. The rise in both countries' identity security in 1999 improved political ties and boosted civil-society cooperation and business links. Nonetheless, the rise of identity concerns in Turkey from 2002 onwards particularly among the secularists impeded the further enhancement of interaction between Greek and Turkish civil societies and prevented the business groups from realizing their full potential for economic cooperation. Considering the geographical and cultural proximity between the two countries, the potential for economic and civil-society cooperation is clearly significant. Since the EU's attitude strongly influences the security of both countries' identity, the future prospect of Turkish-Greek civil-society and economic cooperation will be strongly influenced by the progress in the accession talks between Turkey and the EU as well as Greece's position during the talks.

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<sup>345</sup> Sabah, Vatan elden gidiyor mu? (Are we losing our fatherland?), 11 October 2004

<sup>346</sup> Aksam Newspaper, 19th April 2006, OYAK'i Yunanlılara satmayız

<sup>347</sup> Zaman Newspaper, 10 August 2007, Intelligence agency find behind ABank sale veto

## **SOCIETAL PERCEPTIONS:**

This section aims to demonstrate how the fluctuations in the security of Greek and Turkish identities affects the popular perceptions of each other, through shaping the discourses and representations of the ‘other’ in both countries’ history education, media, arts, literature and popular culture. History education is perhaps the most important channel through which nationalist ideologies and their associated enemy perceptions are transmitted to the public opinion. Media also plays a significant role in shaping the public opinion while arts, literature and popular culture are very important channels through which negative or positive images of the ‘other’ are conveyed to current and future generations. Therefore constructive attitudes in these areas can significantly contribute to the positive transformation of societal perceptions. Nevertheless, attitudes in history education, media and popular culture are strongly related with the security of a country’s identity.

During the process of developing a nation-building strategy to construct a secure national identity for Greece and Turkey, Turks and Greeks were attributed the role of the ‘other’ in both countries. Particularly in Greece, the Turks have become an essential component of the nation-building process. The nation-building process generally highlights the positive features of national identity while attributing its negative features to foreign factors. In the Greek case, while the Hellenic past which was full of achievements was embraced, recent history, notably the Ottoman period was rejected. This period was held responsible for the establishment of a religious, anti-rational and bureaucratic system which prevented progress. In this context, the fall of Constantinople (modern Istanbul) was chosen as the major memory and trauma of the Greek nation.<sup>348</sup>

Turks played an important role in the construction of Greece’s collective identity as a member of the modern and Western world as well. As a new state situated on the economic, political and geographical periphery of Europe, Greece perceived its cultural similarities with Turkey, a country with a complex identity between the East and the West, as a threat to its Western identity. As a result, the Greek state tried to sharply differentiate Greece’s identity from Turkey, by highlighting their differences and trying to dissociate the Greek nation from the Turks as much as possible through various channels.

Firstly, the Greek language was purified by eliminating many words of Turkish origin and going back to the Hellenic source to create a new language called Katharevousa. This

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<sup>348</sup> Volkan, V. and Itzkowitz, N. (1994), *Turks and Greeks: Neighbours in Conflict*, (Huntingdon: Eothen Press), p.181

new language which was closer to ancient Greek was used for official purposes until 1976 and created a diglossic situation whereby most of the Greek population was excluded from the public sphere and advancing in education.

Secondly, the educational system emphasized the pre-eminence of European culture over others (most notably Ottoman-Turkish), the contributions of ancient Greeks to European culture, and the continuity of Greek culture over several centuries. School textbooks portrayed the Turks as the main enemy and ‘other’ of the Greeks and denied the common cultural denominators between the two nations. Theodosopoulos wrote “in an indirect manner, national education symbolically relies upon the image of the Turk to foster an understanding of what it means to be a Greek... the logic is one which sees Greeks as civilized, Turks as barbarians, Greeks as peaceful, Turks as warmongers, Greeks as courageous, and Turks as cowards”.<sup>349</sup> In these respects, the Turkish rule of Greece (*Tourkokratia*) was presented as a black period which brought Greek culture to a temporary halt. It is conceptualised as a significant period in the ‘History of Greece’, but as having no relevance for the ‘History of Greeks’. As Soysal and Vasiliou noted, it is via this distinction that the Ottoman Turk becomes the Greek’s ‘other’.<sup>350</sup>

The efforts of the state to dissociate the Greeks from the Turks were supported by the Greek media and intelligentsia as well. While the Greek media depicted Turkey as monolithic, inherently non-European and incapable of changing, Greek intellectual circles put the Turks to a lower cultural position and associated them with negative features which is well-reflected in the words of well-known Greek writer Nikos Kazantzakis who wrote; ‘To gain freedom first of all from the Turk, that was the initial step, after that, later, new struggle began: to gain freedom from the inner Turk- from ignorance, malice and envy, from fear and laziness, from dazzling false ideas, and finally from idols, all of them, even the most revered and beloved’.<sup>351</sup>

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<sup>349</sup> Theodosopoulos, D. (2006), “Introduction: The Turks in the Imagination of the Greeks”, *South European Society & Politics*, Vol.11, No.1, p.3

<sup>350</sup> Soysal, Y and Vasiliou, A. (2000), “A Common Regional Past: Portrayal of Byzantine and Ottoman Heritages from Within and Without”, *Southeast European Joint History Textbook*, p.8

<sup>351</sup> Kazantzakis, N. (1966), *Freedom and Death*, (London: Faber & Faber) cited in Isiksal, H. (2002), ‘An Analysis of the Turkish-Greek Relations from Greek ‘Self’ and Turkish ‘Other’: Causes of Antagonism and Preconditions for Better Relationships’, *Turkish Journal of International Relations*, Vol.1, No:3, p.2

The placing of the Turks into a lower cultural position led to the emergence of a superiority complex among the Greek society against their former colonial masters. Regarding this perception Keridis wrote ‘many Greeks exhibit arrogance based on a perceived “historical superiority” that bestows a status-bearing classical heritage and all its cultural capital on contemporary Greeks and often demonizes neighbouring Turks as “uncivilized Asians”’.<sup>352</sup> In this context, the Greek political elite became reluctant to interact with their eastern neighbour and relied on perceptions of natural difference to explain their conflict with the Turks.<sup>353</sup>

Despite not being a central element, Greeks were not neglected in the nation-building process of Turkey. The dominant representation of Greeks, which is well manifested in school textbooks, is a neighbour unreliable, unfaithful, cunning and insatiable who has made a habit of hostility towards the Turks. In addition, Turks attempted to create their own nationalistic mythology based on a thesis which rejects the connections between modern and ancient Greeks. Due to long years of co-existence, the Turks never thought that their former subjects were the descendants of well-known ancient Greeks. According to the official Turkish history thesis, all great civilizations, including the Ancient Greeks, actually originated in Central Asia and derived from the Turks. In this understanding, the portrayal of modern Greeks as the direct descendant of ancient Greeks was only a dynamic tool of some European powers in order to foster the separatist movements within the Ottoman Empire. For this reason, Greece is often depicted in the Turkish discourse as the ‘spoiled kid of Europe’ and at best a ‘fake European’ which implies immaturity, undeserved-ness and abuse of position.<sup>354</sup>

In brief, both countries used the ‘other’ in order to bolster its own identity to different extents. As a result, the discourse and representations of the ‘other’ in both countries’ history textbooks, media and popular culture have been quite negative until recent years. The media particularly played a significant role in reinforcing negative societal perceptions and impeding reconciliation. For example, a key reason for the failure of the ‘Davos Process’,

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<sup>352</sup> Keridis, D. (1999), *Political Culture and Foreign Policy: Greek-Turkish Relations in an Era of European Integration and Globalization*. (Cambridge, NATO Fellowship final report), pp.43-4

<sup>353</sup> Theodossopoulos, D. (2006), “Introduction: The Turks in the Imagination of the Greeks”, *South European Society and Politics*, p.6

<sup>354</sup> Rumelili, B. (2008) “Transforming the Greek-Turkish conflicts: the EU and ‘what we make of it’ in *The European Union and the Border Conflicts*, eds. Diez, T., Albert, M., and Stetter, S., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p.122

which was initiated by Turgut Özal and Andreas Papandreou in 1988, was the uncooperative attitude of the public opinion encouraged by the media in both countries. In 1996, the media in both countries greatly contributed to the rising tension over the Imia/Kardak, with their chauvinistic rhetoric and irresponsibly escalatory actions such as the planting of a Turkish flag on the islet by Turkish journalists.<sup>355</sup>

Nevertheless, the fundamental changes in Greece's and Turkey's domestic political, economic and social structures, in the context of globalization and European integration, have brought a dramatic change in the discourses and representations of the 'other' in both countries. In particular, the removal of restrictions on the freedom of speech, the enhancement of minority rights and the deregulation of the media sector in both countries during the 1990s which created independent informational networks, reduced the popularity of official nationalist discourses and the antagonistic constructions of identities. All these developments permitted alternative scripts of the conflict and alternative representations of the other which challenged the dominant portrayal of history and the prevalent constructions of Greek and Turkish identities.

Enhanced identity security of both countries within the EU context towards the end of 1990s and the solidarity following the devastating earthquakes in Athens and Izmit in the summer of 1999 also legitimized and accelerated the positive change in the representations of the 'other' in educational textbooks, media and popular culture. In this context, there have been collaborative efforts among historians in both Greece and Turkey to cleanse history textbooks from chauvinistic content and demonizing references. In the Turkish media many articles which praised the political development of the Greek state were published. For example, the well-known journalist Sami Kohen wrote in the Turkish daily *Milliyet*; 'it is also difficult not to admire Greece's current position within the union...just a few years ago certain EU circles harshly criticize its weak economy and uncooperative attitude...Let's admit that the pragmatic, progressive policies of the Simitis administration have played an important role in Greece's successful rise within the EU ranks'.<sup>356</sup>

Furthermore, the language of (and the use of the actual word) "war" which was regularly used in news reports before the 1999 earthquakes, were replaced by the language of "peace" where Greece is no longer depicted as "the other" or 'the enemy' but instead as part

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<sup>355</sup> Rumelili, 2004, "The European Union's Impact on Greek-Turkish Conflict", *Working Papers Series in EU Border Conflict Studies*, No.6,p.16

<sup>356</sup> *Milliyet*, 2 January 2003

of “we” and a close friend.<sup>357</sup>

Greek-Turkish relations are also being addressed in Turkish arts, literature and popular culture. Recent Turkish films and other television shows addressed the aspects of Turkish-Greek relations that not so long ago would have been taboo, such as Derviş Zaim’s *Çamur* (*Mud*, 2003) and Yeşim Ustaoglu’s *Bulutlari Beklerken* (*Waiting for the Clouds*, 2004). In 2008, for the first time, a Turkish film named *Güz Sancısı* (*The Pain of Autumn*) by Tomris Giritlioğlu has taken a serious look at the Anti-Greek riots and mob in Istanbul on September, 6-7, 1955 that accelerated the migration of the city’s Greek population to Greece. According to the distributor Özen Film, more than five hundred thousand have watched the film since its release on March 2008.<sup>358</sup> This sudden interest in a dark chapter of the Turkish past demonstrates the relationship between social and political structures and the emotional lives of individuals, including their perceptions of guilt and shame.

Regarding the general change in the representation of Greeks in the Turkish media and popular culture, Herkül Millas, an ethnic Greek writer from Istanbul, wrote ‘Turks seem to have forgotten the sad experiences with their Greek neighbours in the past, and now remember them mostly with their entertaining sides with a culture of nostalgia’.<sup>359</sup> In a three-day conference on Istanbul’s Greek community, which was a first in the history of republican Turkey, Adnan Ekşigil from Yeditepe University spoke about contemporary trends in Turkey, whereby the former Turkish “culture of conquest” to erase the Greek heritage has been replaced by a popular culture of nostalgia, where anything Greek is now in fashion’.<sup>360</sup> From the increasing number of Turkish tourists in Greece to the rising popularity of Greek music and taverns in Istanbul, there are strong indicators of a changing perception of Greece in the Turkish society.

The representations of Turkey in the Greek media and popular culture also started to change in the post-1999 era. We witnessed a shift from monolithic to more pluralist representations of Turkey in the Greek newspapers which talk about a change in Turkish

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<sup>357</sup> For a detailed discussion on the changing representation of Greece in the Turkish media see Tilic, L.D. (2006), “State-biased Reflection of Greece-related Issues in Turkish Newspapers: From Being the ‘Other’ to ‘We’”, *Global Media Journal: Mediterranean Edition*, Vol.1, No.2

<sup>358</sup> Zaman Newspaper, 21 February 2009

<sup>359</sup> Millas, H.(2003) *Language, Religion and the Identity of Modern Greeks* (Istanbul: Iletisim) p.227

<sup>360</sup> Athens News, 17 July 2006

intentions with a particular focus on Turkish politicians.<sup>361</sup> They emphasized the positive efforts of certain Turkish statesmen such as İsmail Cem, who was the Turkish Foreign Minister from 1997 to 2002, and a particular group which *Eleftherotypia* described as “the Europhile powers of the neighbour and all those who wish to escape the control of the armed forces and to build a democracy, as we know it in the West.”<sup>362</sup> The representation of Turkey as pluralistic and changeable enabled its portrayal as open to EU’s ‘civilizing’ influence.

The 2003 Greek film *Politiki Kouzina* (Kitchen of Istanbul), which attracted a lot of attention in both Greece and Turkey, tells the story of a Greek family from Istanbul and highlights difficulties they faced in adapting to Greek society, and the conformist pressures placed on them by the nationalist ideologies both in Turkey and Greece.<sup>363</sup> The film challenged the prevalent constructions of Greek and Turkish identities and invited its watchers to critically re-assess their viewpoints in regards to history. In 2005, the *Mega* television of Greece started to broadcast a Turkish soap opera, *Yabancı Damat* (Foreign Groom), which tells a love story involving an affair between a Greek boy and a Turkish girl. The drama revolves around the couple’s efforts to convince themselves and their families to move beyond cultural stereotypes and historical prejudices. In many ways, it gives political messages to its viewers. For example, its approach towards the Greek-Turkish rivalry was humorous which is often treated as nothing more than a joke.<sup>364</sup> Moreover, by portraying the couple’s grandparents as the strongest opponents of their relationship, the serial implied that the nationalisms of the ‘old Turkey’ and ‘old Greece’ are the real problem that must be tackled to achieve a civilized and ‘European’ peace between the two countries. The show has become extremely popular among the Greek audience. Schleifer wrote: ‘it was, in many ways, the most significant exposure Greeks had to Turks since, well, they were living

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<sup>361</sup> Lazarou, E. (2009), ‘Mass Media and the Europeanization of Turkish-Greek Relations: Discourse Transformation in the Greek Press 1997:2003’, *Hellenic Observatory Papers on Greece and South Eastern Europe*, No.23

<sup>362</sup> Eleftherotypia, 13 December 1999

<sup>363</sup> Rumelili, B. (2005), “The European Union and the Cultural Change in Greek-Turkish Relations”, *Working Papers Series in EU Border Conflict Studies*, No.17,p.22

<sup>364</sup> Papailias, P. (2005), “TV Across the Aegean : The Greek Love Affair with a Turkish Serial”, Available online at [http://www.lsa.umich.edu/UMICH/modgreek/Home/\\_TOPNAV\\_WTGC/Media%20and%20Culture/TV%20Across%20the%20Aegean.pdf](http://www.lsa.umich.edu/UMICH/modgreek/Home/_TOPNAV_WTGC/Media%20and%20Culture/TV%20Across%20the%20Aegean.pdf)



together as citizens of the Ottoman Empire.’<sup>365</sup> The show's popularity revealed nostalgia in Greece for a glimpse of their common past with the Turks. Unsurprisingly, recent years witnessed an increasing interest in Greek society for Turkish culture which is manifested with rising popularity of Turkish music and mushrooming Turkish restaurants in Athens.

As the above discussion showed, enhanced security of Greek and Turkish national identities especially after 1999, paved the way for a positive change in the representations of the 'other' in both countries' media and popular culture. To a certain extent, changing representations started to eliminate the deep-rooted prejudices and stereotypes regarding the 'other' in both societies and enhanced the level of emotional identification between their members. Nevertheless, rising debates in Europe regarding Turkey's European credentials, the slowdown in Turkey's accession talks with the EU and the continuation of the problems regarding the Aegean Sea and Cyprus is unfortunately impeding this positive transformation in societal perceptions.

## **CONCLUSION:**

As the above discussion showed, the fluctuations in the identity security of Turkey within different institutional contexts strongly influence the positions of all political actors in the country, notably the military, political parties, and civil society and business groups, in regards to relations with Greece and the Cyprus problem. Enhanced identity security of the country after 1999 due to the approval of its EU candidacy with the consent of Greece, significantly transformed the country's domestic structure and influenced the positions of all actors which influence the formulation of Turkey's foreign policy towards Greece and Cyprus, including that of the military. The EU context also brought a significant change in mutual societal perceptions in both Greece and Turkey. Changing perceptions legitimized and expanded the commercial, social, educational and political cooperation between the two neighbours. All these developments triggered a transformation in Turkey's policy towards Greece and Cyprus which is manifested with the initiation of peace talks in Cyprus in 2001.

However, the rise to power of AKP with Islamic roots and the party's attempts to pursue an independent policy from the Turkish Cypriot leader Denktas, transformed the Cyprus problem into another source of polarization and power struggle between diverse political parties and actors in Ankara. This complicated the definition of Turkey's national

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<sup>365</sup> Christian Science Monitor, 14 December 2006

interests, led to an ambivalent and 'double-headed' foreign policy and caused confusion about Turkey's exact position on the matter during the peace talks. In other words, the extreme internal division and polarization prevented the formulation of a coherent foreign policy and weakened the Turkish side's negotiating power at the table.

As a result, Greek Cypriots achieved EU membership in 2004 as the only legitimate representative of the entire island despite their rejection of the EU-backed Annan plan. On the other hand, Turkish Cypriots were left out despite the promises of European leaders that a 'yes' vote will end the isolation of North Cyprus. Although the positive attitude of the Turkish government towards the reunification plan in Cyprus eased the start of accession talks between the EU and Turkey, the negotiations are open-ended in which the full membership is not guaranteed. Moreover Turkey is still expected to make concessions in Cyprus.

All these developments indicate that Greek foreign policy has been more successful in comparison to the foreign policy of Turkey. Greece successfully used diplomacy to internationalize and Europeanize its disputes with Turkey and redefined the Cyprus problem as a post-1974 phenomenon caused by the intervention of Turkey. Since 2004, the relationship between Greece, Cyprus and Turkey is firmly embedded in the EU framework where the former two enjoys a comparative advantage as full members. The accession of Greek Cypriots to the EU, the on-going isolation of Turkish Cypriots, and the ambivalent messages from the EU regarding Turkish membership caused a dramatic decline in the credibility of the union in Turkey. This undermined the security of Turkey's identity and the country entered into a period of instability since 2006.

## **CHAPTER FIVE:**

### **TURKEY'S RELATIONS WITH THE MIDDLE EAST:**

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

Since the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923 domestic concerns in regards to national identity have prevented Turkish governments from making an effort to improve either bilateral or multilateral cooperation with most states of the Middle East. Despite its strong historical and cultural links with the region, Turkey has principally been an observer of events in the Middle East rather than being directly involved. Turkey's isolation in the Middle East is in large part a consequence of the Kemalist perception of foreign policy as an instrument for constructing a secular nation-state with a Western identity. For this reason, relations between Turkey and the Middle East should be examined in the context of Turkish identity.

With its limited interaction, Turkey could not be an effective player in the region's affairs and failed to bridge the gap between Europe and the Islamic world. Nevertheless, Turkey has started to pursue an activist foreign policy towards the Middle East in recent years. Turkey's activism in this region can be explained by the country's enhanced identity security in the EU context after 1999 which has undermined the political power of the military and paved the way for the democratization of Turkish foreign policy. This has altered Turkey's threat perceptions as well as her own image in the region. The conservative outlook and Islamic roots of the AKP has also contributed to the transformation of Turkish foreign policy towards the Middle East. Thanks to its activist policy, Ankara has become an important diplomatic actor in the Middle East in recent years after decades of passivity. Over the past few years, Turkey has established close links with Syria and Iran and become a mediator between Israel and the Arabs. This rising prestige and power of Turkey in the Middle East is illustrated by the choice of a Turk, Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, as the Secretary General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference by a democratic vote.

In brief, a positive relationship with the Middle East is probably the most-enhanced dimension of Turkish foreign policy in recent years. At this point a good question to ask is "will Turkey be able to play a constructive role in bridging the gap between the West and the Islamic world and prevent a possible civilisational conflict in the foreseeable future"? Despite

all the positive developments in recent years, Turkey's ability to engage in the Middle East is still threatened by domestic political instability, likely to stem from identity issues such as the Kurdish nationalism and political Islam.

This chapter will outline the way different conceptions of Turkish identity lead to different foreign policy pathways and how Turkey's unstable corporate identity can hinder development along any one path. In doing so, it will firstly examine the positions of the military and the political parties. Subsequently, the discussion will focus on the Kurdish issue since it has been a major impediment on Turkey's democratization and activism in the Middle East. The next section will focus on business links between Turkey and the Middle East. Unlike previous chapters, this chapter will not talk about civil society since Turkish civil society does not play a major role in the formulation of Turkey's Middle East policy and civil society remains relatively weak in this region. The final section will concentrate on mutual perceptions between Turkey and the Middle East since they also influence the political attitudes and behaviours of foreign policy makers.

### **THE TURKISH MILITARY & THE MIDDLE EAST:**

This section aims to illustrate how the variations in the identity security of Turkey influences the Turkish military's position in regards to relations with the Middle East. To better understand the position of the Turkish military on relations with the Middle East, one has to bear in mind the two most important internal political issues in Turkey namely Kurdish nationalism and political Islam. These issues which constitute the greatest challenges for the military's aim of creating a secular, nation-state with a 'Western' identity, were perceived and portrayed as Middle Eastern in origin. By doing so, the military externalized the unwanted parts of Turkey's identity and legitimized the use of extraordinary measures for tackling these issues. This strategy required de-orientalization at home and alienation from the Middle East in the foreign policy.<sup>366</sup> In this context, interaction with the Middle East was kept to a minimum level and Ankara has only sought stability in its Middle East policy.<sup>367</sup>

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<sup>366</sup> Yavuz, H. (1997), "Turkish-Israeli Relations Through the Lens of Turkish Identity Debate", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. XXVII, No.1, p.23

<sup>367</sup> A good example of Turkey's efforts to prove its rupture with the Islamic world was Ankara's vote at the United Nations against Algeria's independence. For a detailed discussion please see Ozel, S. (1995), "Of not being a Lone Wolf: Geography, Domestic Plays, and Turkish Foreign Policy in the Middle East", in *Powder Keg in the Middle East*, ed. Geoffrey Kemp and Janice Stein, (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield), p.161-94

For instance, the Saadabad Pact which was concluded with Iraq, Iran, and Afghanistan in 1937 was actually securing non-interference in domestic affairs among its members.<sup>368</sup> Likewise, the Baghdad Pact which is considered as the strongest interaction between Turkey and the Middle East before the end of the Cold War was only an extension of Turkey's NATO obligations. In order to enhance the security of its 'Western' identity, Ankara appeared to see itself as the NATO's vehicle in the region and formulated its Middle East policy from a non-regional perspective.<sup>369</sup>

Nonetheless, as noted in the previous chapters, Turkey's 'Western' identity has been severely undermined after the end of Cold War due to both external and internal reasons. The EU showed a great hesitancy about declaring Turkey as a candidate and prioritized the entry of former Eastern bloc countries. At home, Islamists became increasingly important in the 1990s and the Welfare Party's (*Refah Partisi, RP*) share of the total vote increased to 19 percent in the municipal elections of March 1994. Welfare Party candidates for mayor won in twenty-nine cities and in four hundred towns, including Istanbul, Ankara and almost all of the predominantly Kurdish municipalities in the southeast.<sup>370</sup> In the context of rising identity insecurity, the military has sought to overcome Turkey's isolation within the Western world through the new alliance with Israel.

Turkey's military elite and the Ashkenazi elite of Israel share a common identification with the West. According to the Turkish military, Israel is the only 'Western' and 'civilized' country in the region. In this regards, relations with this country was perceived in terms of Turkey's historic Western orientation in foreign policy. Moreover, in both countries the military plays an important role in politics. Regarding the role of the military in Israeli politics Richard Sale, an intelligence correspondent for United Press International (UPI), wrote;

'the setting of national strategies and priorities is a consensus issue in Israel, not carried out by bodies headed by political appointees, but by men in uniform... All previous Israeli governments have given 'a tremendous amount of attention' to suggestions by the

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<sup>368</sup> For a detailed discussion please see Criss, B. and Bilgin, P. (1997), "Turkish Foreign Policy toward the Middle East", *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Vol.1, No.1

<sup>369</sup> Robins, P. (1991), *Turkey and the Middle East*, (London: Thomson Learning), p.25

<sup>370</sup> See Akinci, U., (1999) 'Welfare Party's Municipal Track Record: Evaluating Islamist Municipal Activism in Turkey', *Middle East Journal*, Vol.53, No.1

military'.<sup>371</sup>

Many Israeli leaders have military backgrounds including David Ivry, Amnon Lipkin-Shahak and Ehud Barak. This common identity between the Turkish military and the Israeli political elite led to common threat perceptions such as religious fundamentalism and general instability in the Middle East. In addition to the common threat perceptions, ongoing terrorism is the most important security problem in both countries. For this reason they have been more tolerant towards each other in regards to progress on human rights. Unlike the EU and the United States, Israel has been selling military hardware to Turkey on an unconditional basis. When asked by the Jerusalem Post, whether Israel considers human rights when it sells arms to other countries, David Ivry, an advisor to the Israeli defence minister said "Israel to this day has a policy of not intervening in any internal matters of any country in the world, we don't like it when others interfere in our internal matters. For this reason, our policy doesn't touch on such matters."<sup>372</sup>

Considering these factors, Israel was a very attractive option for the Turkish military. Consequently, Israeli-Turkish military cooperation began to accelerate in mid-1990s. The two countries signed a secret security agreement on 13 March 1994 which was followed by an unpublished accord on training exercises in 1995.<sup>373</sup> Until 1995, Ankara seemed to favour the development of military cooperation with Israel but out of the public eye. Nonetheless, the emergence of the RP, which promised to abrogate agreements with Israel and develop closer relations with the Islamic world during the election campaign, as the largest single party at the national elections of 24 December 1995 brought a change in the military's strategy. Since then, relations with the Middle East illustrate an example of the historical power struggle between the civilians and the army in Turkish politics. In this context, the military publicly signed a far-reaching military coordination agreement with Israel in early April 1996. The accord provided, among other things, for Israeli air force planes to utilize Turkish air space for training purposes.<sup>374</sup>

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<sup>371</sup> Reinhart, T., "Israel: The Military in Charge?", *Open Democracy*, May, 24, 2002, Available at: [http://www.opendemocracy.net/conflict-middle\_east\_politics/article\_230.jsp]

<sup>372</sup> Washburn, J., 'Turkey and Israel Lock Arms', *The Progressive Magazine*, December, 1998. Available online at: [http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/New\_World\_Order/PowerBloc\_TurkeyIsrael.html]

<sup>373</sup> Robins, P. (2001), *Turkish-Israeli Relations: From the Periphery to the Centre*, (Abu Dhabi: The Emirates Centre for Strategic Studies and Research), p.16

<sup>374</sup> Bir, C. and Sherman, M. (2002), 'Formula for Stability: Turkey Plus Israel', *The Middle East Quarterly*, Vol.9, No.4

Six months after the elections, the RP's leader Necmettin Erbakan established a coalition government on 28 June 1996. As soon as coming to power, Erbakan signalled his intention to re-orient Turkish foreign policy towards the east and turn Turkey into a leader in the Islamic world. The military did not wait too much to respond and concluded the signing of the Defence Industry and Co-operation agreement with Israel in order to give a message to the RP that they were powerful enough to determine the orientation of Turkey's foreign policy. In response, Erbakan chose Iran and Libya as the destinations of his first official visits. During his visits, Erbakan initiated several institutions including the 'Developing Eight', an Islamic common market and even an Islamic NATO. On 30 January 1997, the mayor of Sincan near Ankara whose municipality was in the RP's control, held an event on Jerusalem, attended by Iranian Ambassador Ali Reza Bagheri who made a call for the implementation of Shariah. The military responded by sending tanks through the town, arresting the mayor, declaring the Iranian ambassador as *persona non grata* and launching an investigation against the RP.<sup>375</sup> On 24 February, General İsmail Karadayı paid a visit to Israel without even informing the government, which was interpreted as a response to Erbakan's attempts to develop ties with the Islamic world. This was followed by the so-called post-modern coup when the National Security Council ordered the government to implement a package of measures to prevent the spread of Islamic political and social movements in Turkey.

During this tense time of rising disagreements between the military and the government Israeli foreign Minister David Levy visited Ankara on April 1997 and met with Chief of Staff General Karadayı.<sup>376</sup> During this visit, Prime Minister Erbakan was forced to sign a free-trade agreement with Levy. The military aimed to humiliate the government and show that it is in the charge of Turkish foreign policy. Ironically, Turkey and Israel concluded their most important military cooperation agreements during Erbakan's tenure, which ended in June 1997, when he tendered his resignation under pressure from the MGK.

The parameters of Turkey's relations with the Middle East started to change after 1999. The transformation of Islamists after the 'soft-coup' with the establishment of AKP, the capture of the leader of the terrorist organisation PKK and the approval of Turkey's candidacy by the EU enhanced the security of Turkey's identity. The EU context brought

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<sup>375</sup> Zaman Newspaper, 'Anatomy of February 28 Post-modern Coup' 1 March 2009, Available at: <http://www.sundayszaman.com/sunday/detaylar.do?load=detay&link=168324>

<sup>376</sup> Yavuz, H. (1997), "Turkish-Israeli Relations Through the Lens of Turkish Identity Debate", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. XXVII, No.1, p.30

stability, empowered civilians vis-à-vis the military and triggered a rapid democratization process in public and foreign policies of Turkey. As mentioned earlier, due to the enhanced security of Turkey's identity, the military tolerated the EU-related reforms which caused a decline in their power. In addition, the military preferred to remain silent regarding recent foreign policy developments such as the support of the Turkish government for the Annan Plan in Cyprus and the Turkish Parliament's refusal to support the US-led coalition in Iraq.

In brief, due to the enhanced identity security of Turkey after 1999 the military became less active in the formulation of Ankara's policy towards the Middle East. At this point, let us focus on the position of political parties to better understand the relationship between the level of Turkey's identity security and its capability to play a role in the Middle East commensurate with its size and capabilities.

### **THE POSITION OF TURKISH POLITICAL PARTIES:**

As noted above, Turkey's enhanced identity security after 1999 allowed a more democratic foreign policy. In this context, political parties and civil society started to play a greater role in the formulation of Turkey's policy towards the Middle East. Due to its identity, the AK party has been particularly enthusiastic and capable of playing a greater role in the re-structuring of the Middle East in the post 9/11 context. After all, it comes from a political tradition which takes pride in Turkey's Ottoman past and perceives its Muslim identity as an asset for Turkish foreign policy. Moreover, the AKP displayed a more cautious and coherent approach compared with its predecessor Welfare Party. Instead of proposing a hegemonic relationship with the Islamic world, the AKP suggested a relationship based on mutual interests and cooperation. Unlike Erbakan, Erdoğan has never explicitly mentioned an aim to establish an Islamic union under Turkey's leadership. He merely emphasized his government's interest for cooperation and the maintenance of a conflict-free relationship with the region.

While seeking to consolidate Turkey's ties with the Islamic world, the AKP has taken reasonable care not to damage Turkey's strong ties with the West. It made use of institutions like the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) to intensify cooperation between the Islamic world and the West. The meetings of EU-OIC are an example of AKP's approach in foreign policy. This new approach is an attempt to enhance Turkey's international status as spokesman for the Muslim world both within and outside the union through a combination of the Western orientation of foreign policy with Turkish society's cultural and historical links



to the Islamic world.<sup>377</sup>

Nevertheless the AKP's self-perception and policy vision which aimed to make a balance between the West (including Israel) and the Islamic world has complicated the definition of Turkey's national interests. The first and probably the biggest foreign policy test for the AKP government was the crisis between the United States and Iraq in 2003. In order to open a northern front for the invasion of Iraq Washington asked its strategic NATO ally to allow the deployment of almost seventy thousand American soldiers on Turkey's southern border. The decision to allow the northern front or not required great diplomatic ability since it was involving the most fragile of balancing acts for Ankara.<sup>378</sup> However the environment for Turkey was not as helpless as it was during the first Gulf Crisis in 1990-91. First of all, 9/11 and other developments had already restored the country's strategic importance for the West. Secondly, Turkey has improved its democracy and achieved significant progress towards EU accession which greatly enhanced its identity security.

In this context, Ankara prioritized its own national preferences rather than its commitment to the NATO and denied the opening of a northern front despite the United States offer of a multi-million dollar economic compensation package. Most members of both the ruling AKP and the main opposition CHP voted negatively in the parliament session. The cooperation between the AKP and CHP showed that when Turkey's identity is relatively secure, the two opposing parties are more likely to cooperate on foreign policy issues. Since almost 80 percent of the Turkish public disapproved of the Iraq war this was considered as the most democratic foreign policy decision in recent years. Furthermore to a certain extent it challenged Turkey's negative image in the Middle East and has been a turning point for its relations with the region.

Although Turkey did not join the US-led occupation forces in Iraq, Ankara has put tremendous effort into mobilizing regional support for a stable Iraqi state. In order to contribute to political stability of Iraq, the Turkish government initiated the Platform for Iraqi neighbours which met in Istanbul for the first time on 23 January 2003 with the aim of finding a peaceful solution to the problem. The platform maintained its activities after the beginning of the war. Through the platform, Iraq's neighbours agreed on the territorial

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<sup>377</sup> Duran, B. (2006) 'JDP and Foreign Policy as an Agent of Transformation' in *The Emergence of a New Turkey: Democracy and the AK Party*, ed. Hakan Yavuz, (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press)

<sup>378</sup> Özkan, M. (2006), 'Turkish Activism in the Middle East After the 1990's', *Turkish Review of Middle East Studies*, Vol.17, p.157-185

integrity and political unity of Iraq.<sup>379</sup> This was the first time Ankara was cooperating with its neighbours on the future of Iraq and the Kurds. Some meetings of the platform were attended by representatives from the EU and the UN. Ankara's Iraqi diplomacy also found sympathy in the region. A clear indicator of this sympathy was Erdoğan's invitation to the Arab League summit in 2006 as a special observer.

Turkey's rising prestige paved the way for a pro-active role for Ankara in the Arab-Israeli conflict as well. Considering the deep-rooted issues between the two sides maintaining neutrality whilst playing this role has been a difficult task for the AKP. Its attempts to win the hearts of one side often threatened its relations with the other. For instance, Prime Minister Erdoğan's participation in the Arab League Summit in 2006 and his harsh critique of Israeli policies in the Palestinian territories was resented by Israel. And this was only the beginning of a 'cooling down' process between the two allies. In the same year, Turkey has established close ties with Iran and Syria; with which Israel have very tense relations. On top of that, Khaled Meshal, the newly elected leader of the Hamas, was invited to Ankara by Erdoğan in February 2006.

Israel's ambassador in Ankara responded to Erdoğan by comparing Hamas with the Kurdish terrorist organization PKK. Subsequently, one of the strongest Jewish interest groups in the United States, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), has formally recognized the 'genocide of Armenians' at the hand of Turkey, marking a dramatic U-turn over the organization's position on the issue.<sup>380</sup> Considering AKP's Islamist roots, its contact with a fundamentalist Islamist group like Hamas naturally enhanced the suspicions of the Turkish secularists, particularly in the context of rising identity insecurity due to the slowdown in the EU process. Speaking about Khalid Mashaal's visit, the main opposition CHP's deputy leader Haluk Koç said;

"With this visit Turkey came to a position where it can't make its point on similar groups...HAMAS aims to turn Palestine into an Islamic republic and govern it according to Islamic law. After this visit, Turkey came to a point where it can't say, 'This is a terrorist group, and this group has certain troubles finding a diplomatic solution'".<sup>381</sup>

Nevertheless, in the same year Ankara has managed to restore its ties with Israel. In

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<sup>379</sup> Aras, B. (2009), 'Turkey's Rise in the Greater Middle East: Peace-building in the Periphery', *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, Vol.11, Issue 1, p.32

<sup>380</sup> Lappin, Y. "ADL Recognizes Armenian Genocide", *YnetNews*, August, 21, 2007, Available online at: [http://www.ynet.co.il/english/articles/0,7340,L-3440382,00.html]

<sup>381</sup> http://www.hri.org/news/turkey/trkpr/2006/06-02-21.trkpr.html

order to soften the ‘ Hamas crisis ’, the AKP by-passed the foreign ministry and invited the Israeli ambassador to the party’s headquarters. With this party diplomacy, Erdoğan has ensured the Israeli side that its aim of meeting Hamas’ President is putting forward international demands to stop violence and work with Israel. In this meeting Erdoğan even offered to act as a mediator between Hamas and Israel. Israeli ambassador Avivi’s statement after the meeting revealed the success of AKP’s party diplomacy. He said; ‘ the relationship between Turkey and Israel is excellent. Hamas should not influence our relations ’.<sup>382</sup> The AKP also pleased Israel by proposing to send Turkish troops to Lebanon.

This proposition received strong opposition at home. CHP’s MP and vice-President Onur Öymen criticized the government for not sending troops to Northern Iraq which he described as the source of terrorism in Turkey, but sending them to Lebanon to fight for Israeli interests.<sup>383</sup> Another CHP MP Ali Topuz warned the government by saying ‘ a government which is unable to clean its own house looks eager to clean other’s houses. This might be the straw that broke the camel’s back ’.<sup>384</sup> President Sezer, some officers within the military and many civil society organizations also expressed their concerns. Nevertheless, the AKP has managed to suppress the opposition and send Turkish troops to Lebanon. After this decision, the Israeli ambassador in Ankara said;

‘ We are not expecting anyone to fight for us. Turkey is sending its troops to secure its own national interests and regional responsibilities... Yet, the relationship between Turkey and Israel is as good as it has ever been before ’.<sup>385</sup>

Under the rule of the AKP, Ankara has also strengthened its relations with other countries in the Middle East. Saudi King Abdullah and Egyptian President Mubarak visited Turkey in 2006 and 2007 respectively. These visits established a new strategic dialogue and partnership between Turkey and these states on energy cooperation and regional security. More importantly, close ties have been established with Syria and Iran, with which Turkey had problematic relations during the 1980s and 1990s. Syrian Prime Minister Mohammad Mustafa Miro visited Turkey in July 2003. This visit which was the highest level of diplomatic contact between Turkey and Syria since 1985, paved the way for cooperation

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<sup>382</sup> Cumhuriyet, 22 February 2006

<sup>383</sup> Cumhuriyet 6 September 2006

<sup>384</sup> Radikal, 29 July 2006

<sup>385</sup> Cumhuriyet, 9 September 2006

agreements on health, oil, natural gas and customs. Furthermore, in January 2004 President Bashar al-Assad became the first Syrian head of state to visit Turkey in fifty seven years. This visit further enhanced the cooperation between the two neighbours and started a personal relationship between Erdoğan and al-Assad.

Since then the two leaders have met frequently and are known to have a friendly relationship. This relationship contributed greatly to the acceptance of Turkey as the mediator by both sides in Syria's peace talks with Israel. Another implication of the improved relations was Damascus' support for Turkey's military operation in Northern Iraq in 2007 as a response to rising terrorist attacks in the country. Commenting on the approval of the operation by the Turkish Parliament Syrian President Assad said 'Turkey has a right to defend itself against this separatist and terrorist organization. As Syria, we are glad that the Turkish Parliament approved the operation'.<sup>386</sup> In 2008, Al-Assad and his wife Asma chose Turkey's popular resort Bodrum for their first holiday outside of their country.<sup>387</sup> This demonstrated the extent of improvement in Ankara's relations with Damascus since according to Syria's protocol rules, Presidents do not go to foreign countries for holidays. The Syrian couple was welcomed by Erdoğan and his wife in Bodrum Airport and the two leaders discussed the latest developments in the peace talks between Syria and Israel.

Turkey's relationship with Iran has also improved in recent years. The two neighbours began to cooperate in a wide variety of fields that range from fighting terrorism, energy and drug trafficking through to promoting stability in Iraq and Central Asia. In this context, Iranian President Ahmedinejad was invited to Turkey by the Turkish President Abdullah Gül despite the American efforts to isolate this country. Ahmeninejad arrived in Istanbul on 14 August 2008. This visit was the highest level of diplomatic contact between the two countries since 1996. It strengthened Turkey's cooperation with Iran and confirmed her independent policy in the region. Nevertheless, it did not bring an energy deal between the two countries as expected. According to the *Guardian*, the United States tolerated this visit with the condition of not signing any agreement on energy cooperation.<sup>388</sup>

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<sup>386</sup> Sabah, 'Esat: Kuzey Irak'a Operasyon Yapılsın. Yanınınzdayız', October, 13th, 2007. Available online at [<http://arsiv.sabah.com.tr/2007/10/18//haber,51E403EE2C73406D8F94274252DE5637.html>]

<sup>387</sup> Turkish Daily News, 'Syria's al-Assad Family in Bodrum for Time Off', August, 5, 2008. Available online at [<http://www.turkishdailynews.com.tr/article.php?enewsid=111690>]

<sup>388</sup> BBC Turkish Press Review, August, 15, 2008. Available online at: [[http://www.bbc.co.uk/turkish/pressreview/story/2008/08/080815\\_pressreview.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/turkish/pressreview/story/2008/08/080815_pressreview.shtml)]

In addition to the external reactions, this visit also created a tension between the diverse camps of Turkey. The main reason behind this tension was the location of the meeting since the Iranian leader preferred to meet his Turkish counterpart in Istanbul instead of capital Ankara in order to avoid visiting Atatürk's mausoleum. During his visit, Ahmedinejad prayed in Istanbul's famous Sultanahmet (Blue) Mosque. With permission from Turkish authorities, he allowed Iranian television to videotape him during the entire prayer. As he left the mosque, Ahmadinejad got out of his car to greet a crowd of his sympathizers who were chanting, "Death to Israel! Death to America!".<sup>389</sup> Following the visit CHP President said 'with his attitudes and messages Ahmedinejad made Iranian regime's propaganda. AKP tolerated his non-compliance to the state protocol and turned Turkey into an area of propaganda for him'.<sup>390</sup>

To conclude, Turkey has become an increasingly important actor in the Middle East after 1999. However the AKP's paradoxical attitudes due to its complex identity threatened Turkey's ties with the West particularly in the context of the slowdown in EU accession talks. These attitudes also increased the concerns of the secularists who are worried about the maintenance of Turkey's secular and Western identity. These concerns brought an end to the consensus between Turkey's diverse camps in regards to the Middle East policy and severely limited Ankara's ability to act as an effective player in the region's affairs.

## **THE KURDISH ISSUE & TURKEY'S MIDDLE EAST POLICY:**

Since the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, domestic conflict over Kurdish identity has been slowing down Turkey's political development. Considering its terror dimension since the 1980s, Kurdish separatism has been the most important threat to Turkey's stability. Its implications threaten the development of democracy and human rights and endanger the balance between civil society, the state and the military in Turkey.<sup>391</sup> Apart from its domestic dimension, it has also been a major issue in Turkey's relations with the Middle East, particularly with other Kurdish-inhabited countries such as Iraq, Iran and Syria. Turkey's involvement in Northern Iraq which threatens Turkey's relations with the West and

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<sup>389</sup> Hürriyet, 16 August 2008

<sup>390</sup> 'Baykal Ahmedinejad Ziyaretini Elestirdi (Baykal Criticized Ahmedinejad's visit), *Guncelnet*, August, 21, 2008, Available online at: [<http://www.guncel.net/gundem/politika/2008/08/21/baykal-ahmedinejad-ziyaretini-elestirdi/%C3%B6%C4%9Flle%20namaz%C4%B1/>]

<sup>391</sup> For a detailed discussion please see Barkey, H. (1997), "Turkey and the New Middle East: A Geopolitical Exploration" in *Reluctant Neighbour: Turkey's Role in the Middle East*, (New York: US Institute of Peace Press),

Israel is also related with the Kurdish issue. For these reasons, this section will focus on the Kurdish problem and will demonstrate how the changes in the identity security of Turkey influences its policy to tackle the problem and how this influenced Turkey's Middle East policy in general.

To the Kemalist founders of Turkey, Eastern Anatolia, and particularly the Kurds represented tribalism, backwardness and banditry.<sup>392</sup> Kemalists generally looked down on the Kurdish culture and perceived the Kurds as an economic burden on their country. As Göle pointed out 'Turks who were considered barbarians in the West, tried to enter into the civilized world by creating their own barbarians in the form of first Muslims and second the Kurds'.<sup>393</sup> Despite this perception, Kemalists remained highly committed to the pre-dominantly Kurdish-inhabited South-eastern Anatolia. This commitment cannot be explained merely by the region's economic or strategic importance.

It has a deeper emotional and psychological dimension which is connected with the so-called 'Sèvres Paranoia'.<sup>394</sup> For this reason, the loss of the Kurdish-inhabited southeast would be perceived as a big blow to the spatial identity of Turkey. In this context, any demand for Kurdish cultural freedoms was seen as an existential threat to the integrity of Turkey. The Kurdish identity also challenges the Kemalist aim of creating a modern, centralized and secular nation-state with a Western identity. As Barkey pointed out the recognition of the existence of the Kurds in Turkey makes rejecting the Middle Eastern identity more difficult for the Turkish state.<sup>395</sup> In this context, Kemalists denied the Kurdish identity and strongly opposed increasing the local autonomy of the region. Instead, they attempted to assimilate the Kurdish population by banning the use of Kurdish names, language and the word 'Kurdistan'. Foreign policy was also used as an instrument of nation-building and assimilation. As noted above, Kurdish nationalism was portrayed to the public as an external phenomenon with its roots in the Middle East. In this context, the Turkish state pursued an isolationist and non-active foreign policy in the region in order to strengthen internal cohesion and secure its identity.

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<sup>392</sup> Lundgren, A. (2007), *The Unwelcome Neighbour: Turkey's Kurdish Policy*, (New York: I.B. Tauris & Co.)p.45

<sup>393</sup> Göle, N. (1997), "The Quest for the Islamic Self within the Context of Modernity" in *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, ed. Bozdoğan, S. and Kasaba, R., (University of Washington Press), p.85

<sup>394</sup> Suspicion that Western powers promote the disintegration of Turkey

<sup>395</sup> Barkey, H. (1997), "Turkey and the New Middle East: A Geopolitical Exploration" in *Reluctant Neighbour: Turkey's Role in the Middle East*, (New York: US Institute of Peace Press), p.33

Nevertheless, these policies failed to integrate the bulk of the Kurdish minority into the new secular Turkish Republic for various reasons. First of all, the establishment of new borders and a national economy destroyed the traditional economic networks between the Kurds in Turkey and its neighbouring countries.<sup>396</sup> Secondly, the state did not implement any land reform in Eastern Anatolia. Therefore, the Kurds remained as a semi-feudal society with little chances for economic development. Thirdly, the exclusion of Islam from the public sphere destroyed the most important bond between the Turkish state and the Kurds. As İçduygu, Romano and Sirkeci noted ‘religious and traditional Kurds had little appetite for a secular Turkey’.<sup>397</sup> Unsurprisingly, the early rebellions of the Kurds in 1920s and 1930s which were harshly suppressed by the state were more religious and tribal in nature than ethnic nationalist.

After the establishment of the multi-party system in 1946, Turkish political parties, particularly centre-right parties, began to cooperate with powerful local Kurdish landowners (known as Aghas) in order to secure the loyalty of the Kurdish population. In time *Aghas* have become assimilated members of the Ankara government. According to Taşpınar, one third of the Turkish Parliament during the 1950s was composed of powerful Kurdish landowners.<sup>398</sup> However, most of the Kurdish population was still living in an environment of extreme poverty and psychological insecurity. Since Turkey’s cleavages developed along ideological lines rather than ethnic and religious during the Cold War years, most members of the Kurdish intelligentsia were attracted by Marxist ideas. Nonetheless, in line with the rise of ethnic nationalism and identity politics towards the end of the Cold War, Kurdish nationalism in Turkey had become much more prominent. The Kurdistan Worker’s Party (*Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan, PKK*) politicized and united Turkey’s Kurds on an ethnic nationalist basis and started a guerrilla war against the Turkish state in 1984.

The Turkish state responded to Kurdish terrorism with military actions. Kurdish regions were placed under martial law and the regional governors who controlled these provinces were granted extraordinary powers such as the power to evacuate villages and

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<sup>396</sup> For a detailed discussion please see Yeğen, M. (1999), “The Kurdish Question in Turkish State Discourse”, *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol.34,, p.555-568.

<sup>397</sup> İçduygu, A., Romano, D. And Sirkeci, I. (1999), “The Ethnic Question in an Environment of Insecurity: the Kurds in Turkey”, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol.22, No.6,p.993

<sup>398</sup> Taşpınar, O. (2005), *Kurdish Nationalism and Political Islam*,(London: Routledge) p.87

farmland, close media outlets, and later forcibly resettle citizens.<sup>399</sup> Although these actions brought a temporary stability to the region, they further weakened the loyalty of the Kurds to the Turkish state. As a result, the PKK increased its members and sympathizers in Turkey, acquired more resources and modern military weapons and became almost like a national army. At the same time, thousands of Kurds migrated to Western Europe due to unstable conditions, which to a certain extent internationalized the issue.<sup>400</sup>

In a regional context, Turkey, Syria and Iran did not cooperate on the Kurdish issue despite the fact that the domestic policies of one government could influence the stability of others. Each state responded differently to the Kurdish problem which shows the difficulty of achieving cooperation between countries with diverse political identities. Turkey particularly avoided interaction due to its anxieties over the spread of Islamic fundamentalism. While Turkey was avoiding interaction with these governments, the PKK developed closer ties with them. Until the end of the 1990s, Syria had provided valuable safe havens to the PKK in the region of Beqaa Valley and tried to use it for getting concessions from Ankara over the supply of water. Iran provided the terrorist organization with supplies in the form of weapons and funds. The PKK also found support in some European countries such as Belgium, Greece and Cyprus. In addition to state support, many international human rights organizations started campaigns throughout the world for supporting the enhancement of Kurdish cultural and political rights in Turkey.

In the meantime, the PKK changed its ideology from Marxism to Islamic discourse after the end of the Cold War which boosted its popularity among the traditionally religious Kurdish society of Turkey. Rising domestic instability and international pressure forced the Turkish state to change its strategy as well. Complete denial of the Kurdish identity was abandoned, and the Turkish state began to focus on economic and cultural aspects of the problem rather than security. In this context, a \$20 billion integrated project which provided the construction of 21 dams and 17 hydroelectric power plants (known as the Southeast Anatolian Project, *GAP*) was introduced. The aim of this project was to improve the agricultural production and infrastructure in the region which will eventually provide employment and prosperity.

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<sup>399</sup> Natali, Denise (2005), *The Kurds and the State: Evolving National Identity in Iraq, Turkey, And Iran*, (NY: Syracuse University Press)

<sup>400</sup> For a detailed discussion please see Barkey, H. (1997), *Reluctant Neighbour: Turkey's Role in the Middle East*, (New York: US Institute of Peace Press)



In the 1990s the Kurdish identity began to be recognised at least on a private and individual level. The ban on speaking the Kurdish language was lifted in 1991 under the premiership of Özal. According to Somer, these measures were related with Özal's foreign policy vision. He wrote 'foreseeing the potential disintegration of Iraq after the Gulf War, Özal determined that the best Turkish response to the possibility of a U.S-backed Kurdish entity in Iraq was to sponsor Kurds'.<sup>401</sup> As a result of this thinking, a long-time state policy of avoiding any formal relations with the Iraqi Kurds was abandoned.

After the death of Özal, his liberal approach did not continue. The EU's hesitation to declare Turkey as a candidate for membership and the rise of political Islam at home severely undermined the security of Turkey's identity in the eyes of secularists, notably the military. As a result, Ankara turned back to its militaristic strategy in order to tackle the Kurdish problem. Military conflict between the state and the PKK was intensified until the capture of the terrorist leader Abdullah Öcalan in 1999. After this event, the Turkish state has declared victory against the PKK on the combat zone. Nonetheless, this did not bring an end to the multi-dimensional Kurdish question in Turkey.

Despite being portrayed by the Kemalists as merely a security issue, the most important source of the Kurdish problem is the socio-economic inequality between the Kurds and the rest of the Turkish population. Statistics reveal that the economic frontier between the least developed areas and the rest of Turkey roughly corresponds to the ethnic divide between the Turkish majority and the Kurdish minority of Eastern Anatolia.<sup>402</sup> Due to several reasons the GAP did not bring the desired prosperity to the region. The issue of land ownership and redistribution is imprecise. Besides, private-sector is still hesitant to invest in this instable and isolated area. Consequently, per capita income in Eastern Anatolia is only about 40 per cent of the national average.<sup>403</sup>

This economic disparity is one of the most important barriers for the integration of the Kurds into mainstream Turkish culture and society. It paved the way for the massive Kurdish migration in the 1980s from Eastern Anatolia to the more developed parts of Western Turkey. Augmented interaction between urban Turks and rural Kurds made differences more noticeable and created a social snobbery among the former group towards the latter. This has

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<sup>401</sup> Somer, M. (2005), "Resurgence and Remaking of Identity: Civil Beliefs, Domestic and External Dynamics, and the Turkish Mainstream Discourse on Kurds", *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol.38, No.6, p.618

<sup>402</sup> For a detailed discussion please see Icduygu, A., Romano, D. And Sirkeci, I. (1999), "The Ethnic Question in an Environment of Insecurity: the Kurds in Turkey", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol.22, No.6

<sup>403</sup> Ibid.

generated to a sense of exclusion among the Turkey's Kurds. Also, it made using the political process more difficult for them which impeded their integration into the mainstream Turkish society and eased their mobilization by the terrorist organizations.

However, the approval of Turkey's EU candidacy and the capture of PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan in 1999 brought a rise in the identity security of the country. This softened up the political climate in Ankara and allowed a more democratic policy to tackle the Kurdish problem which is necessary to meet EU's 'Copenhagen criteria'. As former Prime Minister Mesut Yılmaz, declared in December 1999 'the road to the EU passes through Diyarbakir'<sup>404</sup>, the largest city in predominantly Kurdish-inhabited South-east Anatolia.

As a party which prioritizes EU membership, the AKP adopted a relatively liberal approach compared to previous Turkish governments. Due to the features of AKP's identity which stems from an anti-establishment and Islamist tradition, Erdoğan did not hesitate to adopt a liberal approach. After all, nationalism is a concept alien to Islam because it calls for unity based on tribalistic ties, whereas Islam binds people together on the belief in Allah and His Messenger. In other words, Islam calls for the ideological bond. Erdoğan's personal history of fighting for more religious freedom (and his subsequent imprisonment under the Article 312 of the Turkish criminal code for reading a few lines from a poem) may have also encouraged him to challenge the status quo not only in matters of religion/secularism but also those of ethnicity.<sup>405</sup>

In this context, the AKP emphasized the social and economic aspects of the Kurdish issue instead of focusing merely on its security dimension. As soon as coming to power, the party has announced some economic investment plans in the south-eastern provinces and improved the cultural and educational rights of the Kurds. On 30 November 2002, the emergency rule in the south eastern Anatolia was lifted completely. As part of EU-related reforms and new political climate, Ankara started allowing Kurdish broadcasting and the teaching of Kurdish at private language institutions in 2002.<sup>406</sup> Subsequently, the parliament

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<sup>404</sup> Mesut Yılmaz spoke to the nation in Diyarbakir, (16th December 1999) [Online] Available at: [http://www.mesutyilmaz.gen.tr/YILMAZ/konusmalar/1999/aramlik/99-12-16\\_dbakir.htm](http://www.mesutyilmaz.gen.tr/YILMAZ/konusmalar/1999/aramlik/99-12-16_dbakir.htm),

<sup>405</sup> Polat, R.K. (2008), 'The AKP and the Kurdish Issue: What Went Wrong', *SETA Policy Brief*, No.14,p.1. (Ankara: SETA), Available online at [http://www.setav.org/document/Policy\\_Brief\\_No\\_14\\_Rabia\\_Karakaya\\_Polat.pdf](http://www.setav.org/document/Policy_Brief_No_14_Rabia_Karakaya_Polat.pdf)

<sup>406</sup> Wilgenburg, W. (2008), *AKP's Language Policy Towards Kurds in Turkey*, Available online at <http://www.students.let.uu.nl/3417786/akplanguagepolicywilgenburg.pdf>

passed laws allowing parents to give their children Kurdish names. In 2003, Turkey passed a law that allowed Kurds to have their own radio stations for the first time which resulted in limited Kurdish broadcasts. The abolition of the death penalty and the release of former Kurdish parliamentarians from prison in 2004 were other important developments in regards to the Kurdish problem.

In addition to these developments, the government adopted a new discourse in the fight against PKK terrorism. On August 2005 Prime minister Erdoğan declared that Turkey had a "Kurdish problem," had made "grave mistakes" in the past, and now needed "more democracy to solve the problem."<sup>407</sup> On December 2005 he explicitly stated that there are Turkish citizens of Kurdish origin who have certain problems that have to be settled. Erdoğan suggested that the Turkish citizenship is the supra-identity (*üst-kimlik*). According to him, the Kurdish identity should also be recognized a sub-identity (*alt-kimlik*). These statements generated livid reactions from Turkey's secularist and nationalist circles. CHP blamed the Prime Minister for being vague about, and failing to fully describe, the Kurdish problem. According to this group, Erdoğan fell into the trap where he helped to legitimize the demands of the illegal PKK which was an unfortunate situation for the country.<sup>408</sup>

During an official visit to New Zealand in the same month, Erdoğan pushed the limits of the secularists by saying 'Turkey's dozens of ethnic groups were tied together by their shared religion - meaning Islam: "Turkey is 99 percent Muslim, and above all, it is our religion that ties us all together."<sup>409</sup> Erdoğan's statements on Turkish identity occupied the public agenda throughout December 2005. On the subject of Prime Minister Erdoğan's definition of Islam as the "cement" of the people of Turkey, opposition CHP member of parliament Ali Topuz said;

"[...] if religion [Islam] is the cement of our people, what are we supposed to do about our non-Muslim minorities [and] the atheists? Are we going to exclude them from our nation? [...] The prime minister must remember that Atatürk brought us secularism, and absolute separation of state and religion is one of the most important principles of the Turkish

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<sup>407</sup> Sabah, 'Erdoğan: Kürt Sorunu Bizim için Demokratikleşme Sorunudur', 10 August 2005

<sup>408</sup> Sozen, A. (2006), 'Terrorism and the Politics of Anti-Terrorism in Turkey' in *National Counter-Terrorism Strategies*, eds, Orttung, R. and Makarychev, A., (Amsterdam: IOS Press), p.141

<sup>409</sup> Middle East Media Research Institute, 'PM Erdogan: Islam is Turkey's Supra-Identity', 7 February 2006, Special Dispatch, No.1086. Available online at: <http://www.memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=sd&ID=SP108606>.

revolution. [...] I call on the prime minister to demonstrate political maturity."<sup>410</sup>

Despite these debates, the Supreme Board of Radio and Television (RTÜK) decided to allow limited broadcasting in Kurdish (45 minutes) by the end of January 2006.<sup>411</sup> Moreover, the AKP started to pursue a more cooperative foreign policy towards the Kurdish-dominated Northern Iraq and Iraqi neighbours. The AKP had agreed with the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) to begin air flights between Erbil and Istanbul for humanitarian reasons. Turkish companies were encouraged to invest in oil and gas companies which operate in Northern Iraq. Furthermore trade with Northern Iraq was improved and reached to a volume of \$2.5 billion in 2007. Rising trade and other economic ties has not only provided employment for nearly two hundred thousand people in the southeast of Turkey but also increased the interdependence between Turkey and Northern Iraq which may possibly restrain the Iraqi Kurds from demanding greater autonomy.<sup>412</sup> On the other hand, Ankara started to pursue regional diplomacy in order to legitimize its war against the PKK. In this context, it utilized the formalized meetings of Iraq's neighbours and managed to generate support from Syria and Iran regarding its sensitivities on the territorial integrity of Iraq and the PKK terror.

The AKP's relatively conciliatory approach to Kurdish demands, its allocation of significant funds to the Kurdish regions, its Islamic identity which appeals to the traditional and pious Kurds and finally its strategy of nominating ethnic Kurds as candidates<sup>413</sup> gave its fruits in the 2007 elections. A notable aspect of the AKP's electoral success was its huge appeal among the Kurdish voters. In many provinces heavily populated by the Kurds, the party more than doubled its share of the vote and won a victory against the Kurdish separatist Democratic Society Party (*Demokratik Toplum Partisi, DTP*). This victory provided the AKP with an opportunity for initiating new reforms but the party faced strong pressure from the secularists and nationalists in the context of rising identity insecurity due to both internal and external reasons. The AKP's priority to lift the headscarf ban in Turkish universities instead

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<sup>410</sup> Middle East Media Research Institute, 'PM Erdogan: Islam is Turkey's Supra-Identity', 7 February 2006, Special Dispatch, No.1086. Available online at:

<http://www.memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=sd&ID=SP108606>

<sup>411</sup> Yavuz, H. Ozcan, N. and A. Ozcan. (2006). "The Kurdish question and Turkey's Justice and Development Party", *Middle East Policy*, VOL. XIII, NO. 1, Spring., p.114

<sup>412</sup> For a detailed discussion please see Olson, R. (2006), "Relations among Turkey, Iraq, Kurdistan-Iraq, the Wider Middle East, and Iran", *Mediterranean Quarterly*, Vol.14, No.4

<sup>413</sup> Around 100 of the AKP's 341 MPs are believed to be of Kurdish origin.

of initiating a comprehensive democratization package attracted harsh criticisms from the civilian military bureaucracy, media groups and certain civil society organizations. Indeed, the AKP faced being completely disbanded by the constitutional court. The rise in PKK terror since 2006 also strengthened the secularists and provided an opportunity for the military to publicize its views through press releases, briefings to journalists and interviews with top officers.<sup>414</sup> Ambivalent messages from the EU were another factor which undermined Turkey's identity security and in this way overshadowed the reform process in the country including the Kurdish issue. Undoubtedly, the feelings of isolation and humiliation in the EU context triggered the rise of nationalism and alienated those who are in favour of improving the cultural and political rights of the Kurds.

In this context of rising identity insecurity, the AKP government did not want to take the risk of bringing the Kurdish issue into the agenda. On the contrary, it surrendered to the secularists' pressure and adopted a relatively nationalistic discourse compared to its earlier position of early 2000s. On October 2007, the government went further and approved cross-border raids on the PKK bases in Northern Iraq. Thanks to earlier diplomacy, this decision found some support in the region. Syrian President Assad said 'Turkey has a right to defend itself against this separatist and terrorist organization. As Syria, we are glad that the Turkish Parliament approved the operation'.<sup>415</sup> Eventually, Turkish Air Forces started an aerial bombardment against the PKK camps in Northern Iraq on 16 December 2007. This was followed by a ground incursion of Northern Iraq on 21 February 2008. The Turkish army declared that their goals had been achieved and the operation came to an end on 29 February 2008. This short-lived operation triggered strong criticism from the opposition. CHP's leader Deniz Baykal argued that the operation was short-lived because the United States does not want the PKK to be completely eliminated in the region.<sup>416</sup>

Although the operation did not last long enough to eradicate the PKK, it was a big blow for the terrorist organization. Moreover, by keeping the operation limited and short Ankara secured its regional support regarding its war on terror. The short military incursions did not raise strong criticism in Iraq either. During the operation the Iraqi President Jalal

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<sup>414</sup> Polat, R.K. (2008), 'The AKP and the Kurdish Issue: What Went Wrong', *SETA Policy Brief*, No.14,p.3 Available online at [http://www.setav.org/document/Policy\\_Brief\\_No\\_14\\_Rabia\\_Karakaya\\_Polat.pdf](http://www.setav.org/document/Policy_Brief_No_14_Rabia_Karakaya_Polat.pdf)

<sup>415</sup> Sabah, 'Esat: Kuzey Irak'a Operasyon Yapılsın. Yanınızdayız', October, 13th, 2007. Available online at [<http://arsiv.sabah.com.tr/2007/10/18//haber,51E403EE2C73406D8F94274252DE5637.html>]

<sup>416</sup> NTV (16:32 TSİ 03 Mart 2008). [Baykal: ABD, PKK'nın bitirilmesini istemedi](#) (Baykal: USA did not want the elimination of the PKK)

Talabani emphasised that the operation is only against the PKK and said “We see the PKK as a terrorist organization. I recommend them to leave their bases in Qandil Mountains’.<sup>417</sup>

Kurdish regional leader Barzani also stated that they do not want to be a part of the conflict between the PKK and Turkey.<sup>418</sup>

After these operations, 2008 witnessed a revival in the government’s interest in initiating reforms on the Kurdish issue. This can be explained with the AKP’s enhanced self-confidence after the constitutional court’s decision not to ban the party and the government’s efforts to secure Turkey’s identity by getting membership talks with the EU back on track. The party announced its plans to open a Kurdish state television channel. In January 2009 the state-owned TV channel TRT 6 launched 24-hour broadcasting in the Kurdish language. Erdogan spoke Kurdish in his welcoming message to TRT 6. Several CHP officials, including the party leader Deniz Baykal strongly criticized the government for the launch of the TRT6 and claimed that this would go against the “basic understanding of the state.”<sup>419</sup> In another statement he said; “It is not right to spend the money of the state and 70 million people in line with the ethnic demands of a certain group of our citizens. The duty of the state is not to encourage ethnic identities. Turkey is heading in the wrong direction.”<sup>420</sup>

In 2009, AKP went even further and declared plans to introduce a comprehensive ‘Kurdish opening’ very soon. The details of the plan are still not finalized. Nevertheless, some possible measures which are being discussed currently include the acceptance of Kurdish as a second language at schools, restoring the names of the geographical locations to their original Kurdish names and the establishment of Kurdology institutes that will study Kurdish language and literature. The main opposition CHP has already announced that it will not become part of the government’s ‘Kurdish opening’. Baykal said; Baykal said: “I would like to inform Mr. Prime Minister that we will in no way become part of this process that we don't know who is behind. Mr. Prime Minister has set out on a wrong path. He will not find

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<sup>417</sup> NTVMSNBC, “*Kürt liderlerden uyarı üstüne uyarı*” (Kurdish leaders keep warning), 27 February 2008, Available online at: <http://arsiv.ntvmsnbc.com/news/437248.asp>

<sup>418</sup> Ibid.

<sup>419</sup> Zaman, ‘CHP Displeasure with TRT Transformation Draws Criticism’, 25 January 2009, Available online at: <http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/detaylar.do?load=detay&link=165025>

<sup>420</sup> Ibid.

us to be companions during this journey.”<sup>421</sup>

As the above discussion showed, the identity of diverse actors and the identity security of Turkey in the EU context strongly influence Ankara’s position on the Kurdish issue. The most radical reforms on the issue and the most active cooperation with other Kurdish-inhabited countries took place under the rule of AKP which has Islamic roots and coincided with the period in which relations with the EU were at their best. Since 2005, however, ambivalent messages from the EU in regards to Turkish membership, controversy over presidential elections, the AKP’s focus on lifting the headscarf ban in universities and rising PKK attacks undermined the identity security of the country. This context threatened the stability of Turkey and revitalized the discourse of encirclement and distrust to the EU. As a result, the government has turned to a nationalistic stance on the Kurdish issue and engaged in military activities in Northern Iraq. Since 2008 we witnessed a revival in the AKP’s interest to initiate new reforms in the Kurdish issue due to the party’s willingness to get Turkey’s accession talks with the EU back on track which will undermine identity insecurity of the country and soften the political climate in Turkish politics. Nevertheless, this triggered a furious reaction from the secularists. The debates were continuing in the country at the time this chapter is being written. We will wait and see if the AKP can overcome the secularists’ objections and realize the reforms to improve the political and cultural rights of Turkey’s Kurds.

## **BUSINESS TIES:**

This section will examine the relationship between the variations in the security of Turkey’s identity and its business ties with the Middle East. Until recent decades, Turkey’s economic contacts with the Middle East were rather low. Both Turkish and Middle Eastern businessmen were reluctant to cooperate with each other. A deep-seated mutual suspicion prevented them from seeing the benefits of economic cooperation. Although some Turkish businessmen attempted to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the newly-rich oil exporting countries after the first oil shock in 1973, this effort was too little, too late. The ignorance of Arab culture, language and trading procedures and the lack of a direct trade legacy enhanced mutual prejudices on both sides. Moreover, as Robins put it; “even at the height of Arab economic power in late 1970s and early 1980s there was always a sense of

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<sup>421</sup> Zaman, ‘CHP Refuses to Support Kurdish Initiative’, 7 September 2009, Available online at: <http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/news-186372-100-chp-refuses-to-support-kurdish-initiative.html>

distaste in Turkey for the Arabs”.<sup>422</sup> Whenever Turkish companies attempted to establish commercial ties with this region they were criticized by the state and the military which was simply not interested in the so-called ‘Green Capital’ (the unofficial term used to describe the financial assets of domestic Islamists and Islamic states) due to identity concerns.

Nevertheless, the 1980s witnessed a dramatic increase in the value of trade between Turkey and the Middle East. In 1982, 44.2 percent of Turkish exports were going to the Middle East. In particular, Iran, Iraq and Saudi Arabia emerged as important trading partners of Turkey. Turkey’s neutrality during the Iraq-Iran War secured its commercial ties with both countries. Before the Gulf War Iraq was the most important trading partner of Turkey in the Middle East. In 1990, Turkey had \$2.5 billion worth of annual trade with Iraq, making it the fourth largest trading partner in the world. This dramatic increase in the economic interaction between Turkey and the Middle East was triggered by the changing structure of the Turkish political system and economy from an import substitution model based on etatism to a liberal and export oriented model during the 1980s. Turgut Özal, prime minister from 1983 to 1989, played a key role in this process which reflects the importance of the political elite’s perceptions on the determination of development strategies and the economic relations of a country. According to him, increasing trade with Turkey’s neighbours will not only enhance his country’s prosperity but also its value as an ally of the West.

Ankara’s choice to support the United States in the Gulf War by allowing American forces to fly missions from its air bases, despite its strong economic interaction with the Middle East, particularly with Iraq, showed that the second motivation was in fact more important for Özal’s government. At the end of the Cold War, Turkey was in an effort to prove its strategic significance to the West. Turkey’s ‘Western’ identity and the international role which was attached to it were threatened with the changing determinants of Western identity in the post-Cold War period. In this context, Özal attempted to enhance the security of Turkey’s ‘Western’ identity and prioritized Ankara’s strategic commitment to the West over its economic interests.

The cost of this pro-Western policy for the Turkish economy has been enormous. When the UN sanctions were put in place after the war ended in 1991, trade between Turkey and Iraq fell practically to zero. Turkey has lost somewhere between \$30 and \$50 billion in

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<sup>422</sup> Robins, P. (2003), *Suits and Uniforms: Turkish Foreign Policy Since the Cold War*, (London: Hurst & Company), p.95



trade because of the UN embargo.<sup>423</sup> Other Arab states were also provoked to punish Turkey with economic penalties. For example, a \$21 billion project to transport surplus water from the Seyhan and Ceyhan Rivers to Arab states and Israel through a so-called 'Peace Pipeline' was suspended. The economic cost of the Iraq war brought its political and social costs as well. Most of Turkey's trade with Iraq before the war was made through country's south-eastern provinces, making it the worst affected region from the UN sanctions. Since this region is mostly inhabited by Turkish Kurds, ending trade with Iraq enhanced the social discontent among this group and increased the political tension in the country. In the environment of rising unemployment and other economic problems, the Kurdish terrorist organization PKK easily recruited new members and intensified its attacks against the Turkish state. Although Turkey gained international praise for siding against Iraq, this was not sufficient for securing its place within the Western camp. Moreover, Turkey could neither increase its exports to the Middle East nor received sufficient compensation from the United States to cover its loss from the war.

During the 1990s identity-related domestic issues, notably the rise of Islamism and Kurdish nationalism, and the support of some Middle Eastern states to these movements continued to affect Turkey's commercial links with the region negatively. Nevertheless, the election of the reformist Mohammad Khatami as the President of Iran in 1997, the end of Syria's support to the PKK after the Turkish threat in 1998 and the capture of terrorist leader Öcalan prepared the political atmosphere for better economic relations. The approval of Turkey's EU candidacy which boosted the country's identity security and the rise of the AKP with a 'conservative/Muslim democrat' identity to power after the 2002 national elections have further enhanced this positive environment.

From the very beginning, the AKP has showed a great enthusiasm to improve Turkey's economic and political relations with the Middle East. Most Middle Eastern leaders too, especially Arab monarchs who owe their legitimacy to religion, have felt more comfortable to deal with the AKP compared to previous militant secularist governments of Turkey. Most leaders of the AKP have Islamist backgrounds. Some of them including current President Gül and Bülent Arınç, spent many years in the Arab countries and can speak the Arabic language fluently. These factors helped many AKP leaders to establish business partnerships with the Arab companies. When combined with the impact of the EU related

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<sup>423</sup> Carroll, P. Thomas, (2002), 'In a War Against Iraq, Can the US Depend on Turkey?', *Middle East Intelligence Bulletin*, Vol.4, No:3. Available online at [[http://www.meib.org/articles/0203\\_t1.htm](http://www.meib.org/articles/0203_t1.htm)]

economic reforms, the existence of a conservative government, have transformed Turkey to an exciting market to invest for the oil rich states of the Persian Gulf. In recent years Turkey received massive investments from the Middle Eastern countries, most notably the United Arab Emirates, Lebanon, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Qatar. In 2006 Arab capital invested in Turkey was \$2 billion.

Arabs mostly invested in the finance sector, tourism and real estate. In 2005, the Lebanese company Oger purchased 55 percent of the Turkish Telecom by paying US\$5.5 billion. After winning the bid, the company's vice-president Mohammad Hariri said 'AKP's strong reference to Islam was an important factor which influenced our decision to take part in the bid and pay this amount of money'.<sup>424</sup> In the same year Oger did manage to buy Turkcell, the largest Turkish mobile company, for \$6.6 billion while Prince Muhammed bin Rashid al-Makhtum of Dubai visited Istanbul to sign a deal for investing US\$ 300 million in an office and business complex consisting of two, three hundred meter high buildings to be called the 'Dubai Towers'. In January 2006, the Dubai Islamic Bank bought Turkey's MNG Bank for \$160 million. Several Arab companies bid on government-owned companies that were to be privatized, including various sea ports. Many others, such as Salma Harib and Umar Ayish visited Turkey to investigate the possibilities of investment. According to Jordanian entrepreneur Mohammed Asfour who is also an advisor to King Houssein 'the most important reason behind the recent interest of the Arab capitalists in Turkey is the fact that AKP is ruling the country'.<sup>425</sup>

Turkish companies too showed great enthusiasm to do business in the Arab countries. In December 2005, the Istanbul Chamber of Commerce paid a several-day visit to Dubai and Qatar. In the same year, *Baytur*, the biggest Turkish construction company had signed two contracts worth \$379 million to build the Qatar Islamic Art Museum and the Qatar National Library while another Turkish company, *Tekfen*, announced its engagement in constructing a 158-kilometer natural gas pipeline for \$115 million. In 2006 Turkish-Austrian Company TAV was awarded an \$869 million contract to participate in the building of the new terminal for Doha International Airport<sup>426</sup>. Apart from these mutual investments, trade between Turkey and the Middle East has also grown from \$3 billion to \$17 billion over the last decade

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<sup>424</sup> Hurriyet Newspaper, 'Telekomu Almamızda AKP'nin İslami Yönünde Etkisi Var' (AKP's Reference to Islam Influenced Our Decision to Buy Telecom), August, 29, 2005

<sup>425</sup> Aksam Daily, 'Körfez Sermayesi AKP için Geliyor', (Gulf Capital is Coming for the AKP), November, 9, 2005

<sup>426</sup> Olson, R. /2006), 'Relations Among Turkey, Iraq, Kurdistan-Iraq, the Wider Middle East and Iran', *Mediterranean Quarterly*, Vol.17, No:4, p.37

and today the vast majority of it is non-oil business.

Despite its apparent economic benefits for the Turkish economy, secularists have become increasingly suspicious of the rising economic interdependence between Turkey and the Islamic world. In the context of rising identity insecurity due to the slowdown in the EU process, economic interaction with the Islamic world has become another source of tension between the diverse camps of Turkey. Big-scale investments from the Arab countries caused particular anxiety among the secularists despite their contribution to the economic growth of Turkey. For example, in 2005 the rumours about selling a state farmland in Yalova, which was established by Atatürk, to the Arabs caused severe reactions in the secularist camp. CHP'S MP Gürol Ergin stated 'selling Ataturk's farmland to the Arabs is disrespecting his legacy thus it is unacceptable. We will do our best to prevent this deal'.<sup>427</sup> Secularist media started to publish articles which expressed the concern about the cultural impact of the increasing Arab investment in Turkey. Journalist Haluk Şahin wrote;

'Capital might not have a race or nationality but it surely has a culture. It brings its culture to wherever it goes. For this reason the source of capital is important. As people of Istanbul we should ask ourselves; 'What kind of a culture will the Arab capital bring to our city? How it will influence our daily lives? What modes of attires, entertainment, and social activities are going to be encouraged with this money? And who is this capital going to cooperate with?'<sup>428</sup>

In 2008, AKP's cooperation with Arab capital has come to light once again. Turkey's second biggest media conglomerate, Sabah ATV, was purchased by Ahmet Çalık who is a close associate of Prime Minister Erdoğan. This deal has caused controversy in the country since Mr. Çalık who raised money for the purchase from two state-owned banks and a Qatari company, was the only bidder. Moreover, according to the *Economist*, 'Mr. Erdoğan has lobbied the Emir of Qatar personally to invest in the deal. CHP has asked the parliament to investigate the deal, saying that it stinks'.<sup>429</sup>

These debates show that until Turkey achieves a securer identity and eliminates all prejudices and fears about the Islamic world, especially regarding the development, it will not be able to fulfil its economic potential with the Middle East. Despite the recent developments,

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<sup>427</sup> Hürriyet, 15 July 2005

<sup>428</sup> Radikal Newspaper, 'İstanbul Araplaşacak mı? (Is Istanbul in the Process of Arabization?)', 26 October 2005.

<sup>429</sup> Economist, April, 2008

Arab countries account for only 10 percent of Turkey's foreign trade, and oil-rich Oman, for example, represents only 1 percent of this number. In brief, Turkey has not yet fully transformed its geographic and cultural proximity with the Middle East to economic benefits. Despite the positive trend in recent years, Turkey's economic ties with the Islamic world continue to be volatile due to its fluctuating identity security.

## **SOCIETAL PERCEPTIONS:**

Most of the Turks and their Middle Eastern neighbours continue to see each other in the light of their acquired images. Although most countries in the Middle East are not democratic, societal perceptions still have an influence on the political attitudes and behaviours of foreign policy makers. For this reason, this final section will examine the construction of historical images in Turkey and the Middle East. Subsequently, the discussion will shift to recent changes in the mutual images.

As a matter of fact, perceptions between Turkey and the Middle East can show significant differences from one country to another. After all, unlike the European countries, the states of the Middle East do not form a unified block with common principles and policies. Nonetheless, we can broadly talk about three distinct areas, the Arab world, Iran and Israel.

### **A. THE ARAB WORLD:**

Arabs and Turks have traditionally had negative perceptions of each other. From a historical point of view, the Arab uprising in collaboration with Britain during the First World War is remembered in Turkey as an act of betrayal. As former President Cemal Bayar confirmed 'Turkey was simply not disposed...to re-establish a close relationship with a nation which has stabbed the Turkish nation in the back'.<sup>430</sup> For a long time after the war, this perception has legitimized Kemalists' reluctance to establish ties with the Arab world.

During the process of developing a nation-building strategy to construct a secular nation-state with a 'Western' identity, the Turkish state has implemented a far-reaching policy of de-Arabization and de-Islamization of the Turkish society.<sup>431</sup> The Ottoman script which was based on the Arabic alphabet was replaced with a new variant of the Latin alphabet. In addition, the newly established Turkish Language Association initiated a

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<sup>430</sup> Robins, P. (1991), *Turkey and the Middle East*, (London: Thomson Learning), p.12

<sup>431</sup> Yavuz, H. (1997), "Turkish-Israeli Relations Through the Lens of Turkish Identity Debate", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. XXVII, No.1, p.23

campaign to reform the language by getting rid of Persian and Arabic loanwords and replacing them with native variants and coinages from ancient Turkic origins. The influence of Islam, which was the most important link between the Turks and the Arabs, was also methodically reduced with the Kemalist reforms. Eventually, Islam lost its status as the official religion of the Turkish state in 1928.

In addition to the reforms of the state, intellectual circles of the time associated Islam and particularly the Arab world with backwardness. Many writers of the period expressed a lack of respect for the Arabs and attributed the lack of sufficient development in the Ottoman Empire to their cultural influence on Turkish society.<sup>432</sup> For example, novelist Burhan Cahin wrote;

‘We came near to extinction as we tried to free ourselves from this race (the Arabs) which has lost all nobility and vitality. I personally would much rather see as neighbours on our southern frontiers fashionable Parisians, than Syrians who have made the pilgrimage to Mecca’,<sup>433</sup>

The placing of the Arabs into a lower cultural position generated a sense of superiority in the Turkish society against their former co-patriots. Images of the untrustworthy Arab and the uncivilized, backward Arab states governed by Sharia law are common in Turkey, particularly among the secularized upper classes in urban centres. Nonetheless, most of the people living in rural areas remained conservative, religious and as such aware of their similarities with the Middle Eastern Arabs.<sup>434</sup>

While Kemalists were portraying the Arabs as a backward nation, the Arab discourse on Turkey emphasized the notion of the ‘terrible Turk’ who suppressed the development of Arab nationalism. During the nation-building processes of many Arab states, Ottoman rule was presented as a period of foreign domination which prevented the economic development of the Arab lands.<sup>435</sup> In the history textbooks, the Turks were portrayed as brutal, domineering and arrogant oppressors or colonialists. In addition, the Westernizing reforms in

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<sup>432</sup> For a detailed discussion please see Mango, A. (1968), “Turkey in the Middle East”, *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol.3, No.3, p.225-236

<sup>433</sup> Quoted by Andrew Mango, in ‘Turkey and the Middle East’, *The Middle East in Transition*, ed. Walter Laqueur, (London: 1958), p.188

<sup>434</sup> Andrew Mango, in ‘Turkey and the Middle East’, *The Middle East in Transition*, ed. Walter Laqueur, (London: 1958), p.228

<sup>435</sup> For a detailed discussion please see Robins, P. (1991), *Turkey and the Middle East*, (London: Thomson Learning)

Turkey during the 1920s and the 1930s were presented by the Arab media as the abandonment of Islam and turning into Christianity. For instance, even many years later, in radio broadcasts Saudi Arabia declared the secular Turkey and its founder Atatürk as an ‘enemy of Islam’.<sup>436</sup> In this context, many Arabs perceived Turkey as a traitor in the Middle East and an instrument of Western politics especially after its accession to the NATO in 1952. Due to these perceptions, Arab states neglected Turkey in their foreign policies for so many years and established their own links with the West and other parts of the world.

Mutual perceptions between Turkey and the Arab world have started to change during the 1980s. Turgut Özal who served as the Prime Minister of Turkey between 1983 and 1989, made frequent visits to Arab countries and opened his country to the Arab world. During this period, Arab tourists constituted a large part of Turkey’s total revenues from tourism.<sup>437</sup> Nevertheless, this momentum did not last long enough to destroy the negative perceptions on both sides. Even the rise of Islamists in Ankara during the 1990s did not make a significant change on the perception of Turkey in the Arab world. This was due to the fact that traditional Islamist movements in Turkey maintained a sense of superiority against other Muslim countries in a similar manner with their Kemalist rivals. For this reason, they explicitly aimed to establish an Islamic union under the leadership of Turkey.

This aim was greeted with suspicion in the Arab world due to the perception of Ottoman Turks as an imperial power. At home, it was perceived as a threat to Turkey’s identity by the military and paved the way for the so-called ‘soft coup’ and the implementation of several measures to prevent the spread of Islamic political and social movements in the country including a strict head-scarf ban in Turkish universities. On top of that, it encouraged the military to reveal and strengthen its cooperation with Israel. These developments contributed to the reinforcement of Turkey’s negative image in the Arab world. Another important factor which damaged Turkey’s prestige in the region during this time period was the EU’s decision on December 1997 to reject Ankara’s candidacy for full membership. This decision undermined the perception of Turkey as a European state in the Middle East and was seen as a confirmation of the failure of the Kemalist modernization project.

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<sup>436</sup> Bozdağlıoğlu, Y. (2003), *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach*, (London: Routledge), p. 114

<sup>437</sup> Ashark Alawsat (Arabic International Daily), ‘The Arabs, the Turks and Islamic Bourgeoisie’, March, 13th, 2008. Available online at: [<http://www.aawsat.com/english/news.asp?section=3&id=12084>]

Nevertheless, in recent years important developments led to a dramatic change in Turkey's image in the Arab world. First of all, the EU's approval of Turkey's candidacy in 1999 enhanced the identity security of the country in the eyes of the military. This perception paved the way for a rapid democratization process in Turkey's public and foreign policies with the consent of the military which supported the implementation of the EU-related reforms and tolerated the rise of a political party with Islamic roots. The AKP which has been in power since 2002 transformed Ankara's vision towards the Middle East. As noted earlier, reformist Islamists support Turkey's EU membership and by no means see the country as the leader of the Islamic world. Nonetheless, they expressed a strong interest for cooperation and the maintenance of a conflict-free relationship with the Arab world.

In this context, Ankara started to pursue a more balanced foreign policy between the West and the Islamic world. Since almost 98 percent of the Turks are Muslims (at least nominally), a more democratic foreign policy generated a closer approach in the Middle East to the Arab position. A good example of Turkey's more democratic foreign policy was forbidding the US troops from using Turkish territory in the war against Iraq in 2003 which has been a turning point for Turkey's relations with the Middle East.<sup>438</sup> This new approach received appreciation from the great majority of Arabs, particularly when they compared Turkey's position to that of their own governments; most Arab leaders were implicitly cooperating with the United States, making military bases available and providing logistical help.<sup>439</sup> There were many articles in Arabic media at the time admiring the Turkish position and asking that their countries learn from Turkey how to say no to the USA. Prime Minister Erdoğan's strong criticism of the US military operations in Iraq and of Israel's murder of Sheikh Yassin, founder of the Hamas movement further enhanced Turkey's rising prestige in the Arab world. While Erdoğan described the assassination as "state terrorism", none of the Arabic leaders spoke out against the attack on Yassin, confined to a wheelchair.<sup>440</sup>

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<sup>438</sup> According to the polls almost 80 per cent of the Turkish public disapproved the invasion of Iraq.

<sup>439</sup> Dialogue with the Islamic World, 'Are there any Muslims in Turkey: Turkey's Image in the Arab Countries', 29 October 2008, Available online at: [http://www.qantara.de/webcom/show\\_article.php/\\_c-476/\\_nr-1054/i.html](http://www.qantara.de/webcom/show_article.php/_c-476/_nr-1054/i.html)

<sup>440</sup> Dialogue with the Islamic World, 'Are there any Muslims in Turkey: Turkey's Image in the Arab Countries', 29 October 2008, Available online at: [http://www.qantara.de/webcom/show\\_article.php/\\_c-476/\\_nr-1054/i.html](http://www.qantara.de/webcom/show_article.php/_c-476/_nr-1054/i.html)

The rising prestige of Turkey in the Arab world generated an interest for Turkish popular culture as well. For instance, Turkish soap operas dubbed into Arabic using a colloquial Syrian dialect such as ‘*Gümüş/Noor*’ and the ‘*Lost Dream*’ has been extremely successful in many Arab countries. In Saudi Arabia only, 3-4 million viewers admit to watching *Gümüş/Noor* daily on the Saudi-owned MBC channel. According to *New York Times* the final episode of the show attracted a record 85 million Arab viewers.<sup>441</sup> Thanks to these television shows which simultaneously portray conservative and secular values, Arabs were able to "experience" Turkish customs and habits. Associated Press reported that they attracted a lot more attention than Western TV shows because they offer new content (i.e. a secular lifestyle) in a familiar setting (i.e. a Muslim society)<sup>442</sup> just like Turkey’s new image which combines democracy with a conservative political elite.

Interest in the soaps has brought a surge in visits to Turkey by Arab tourists. The number of Middle Eastern and North African visitors increased 50 percent in two years and reached nearly two million in 2008.<sup>443</sup> The picturesque Abdul Efendi villa overlooking the Bosphorus strait in Istanbul in which the Turkish series *Gümüş/ Noor* was filmed has become a major attraction for the Arab tourists visiting Turkey and tourism offices around the Arab world are offering organized trips to this palace.

Turkey’s success in commencing accession talks with the EU under the rule of the AKP further enhanced the country’s prestige in the region. Since full membership became a concrete possibility, some Middle Eastern states, notably Turkey’s neighbours, began to see the potential opportunities of becoming EU’s neighbours. In this context, the outcome of the accession talks became an important issue to be followed in the Arab world. For example, Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan’s press conference on 17 December 2004 after Turkey was offered a chance to start accession talks was followed by two hundred representatives from the Arab media.<sup>444</sup> Syrian Information Minister Dr. Mehdi Dahlallah expressed Syria's support for Ankara's bid to join the EU and said “Turkey will be a bridge between the Arab countries and the EU... Syria is very pleased that Turkey will be an EU member in the near

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<sup>441</sup> New York Times, ‘Arab TV Tests Societies’ Limits With Depictions of Sex and Equality’, 27 September 2008

<sup>442</sup> Associated Press Report, 28 July 2008

<sup>443</sup> Zaman, ‘Turkey’s Brad Pitt Stirs Wide Arab Interest’, 12 March 2009

<sup>444</sup> Aras, B., (2005) ‘Turkey and the GCC: An Emerging Relationship’, *Middle East Policy*, December, p.1



future, making them a neighbour to the EU".<sup>445</sup> Likewise, during Erdoğan's Damascus visit on 22 December 2004, Syrian President Assad who has a personal, friendly relationship with the Turkish Prime Minister said;

"You (Turkey) follow an honourable foreign policy. We admire you. We take you as model for our foreign policy... Turkey's EU membership process is being watched by the Arab world. We are pleased; Turkey will be an EU member. This will be crucial for us and for our region. When you enter the EU we will be a neighbour of Europe".<sup>446</sup>

This strong interest indicates the rising power of Turkey in the region and the importance of her EU bid for the entire Middle East. In this context, the outcome of Turkey's accession talks has become even more important in the sense that it is now more likely to send either a negative or positive message to the entire Islamic world. This has naturally enhanced the negotiating power of Turkey and its supporters within the EU against those who disapprove of the prospect of full membership.

#### **B. IRAN:**

The perception of Turkey in Iran is quite different from that in the Arab world. In this regard, Jung wrote that: 'in Iran, despite all ideological differences, in general Turkey seems to be treated with interest and respect, the Arab position in contrast has been by neglect'.<sup>447</sup> Likewise, the Turks have historically distinguished Iranians from the Arabs and showed an admiration for this nation. Both countries have seen their independence threatened but never lost. Therefore many Turks and Iranians feel a sense of superiority in the Middle East and see each other as equal competitors.<sup>448</sup> In this context, Turkish-Iranian relations have traditionally been developed on the basis of mutual respect between two independent and strong states. It is no wonder that Turkey and Iran shares one of the oldest borders in the world which has not changed since 1639.

Despite this peaceful historical record, since the 1979 Iranian revolution these two countries perceive each other as threatening for their own political and social structures. The Islamic Revolution altered the self-perception of the Iranian state which started to see itself as

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<sup>445</sup> Turkish Weekly, 23 December 2004

<sup>446</sup> Laçiner, S.,(2006) 'Turkey's EU Membership's Possible Impacts on the Middle East', *The Journal of Turkish Weekly*, April

<sup>447</sup> Jung, D. (2005), 'Turkey and the Arab World: Historical Narratives and New Political Realities', *Mediterranean Politics*, Vol. 10, No.1,p. 3

<sup>448</sup> Robins, P. (1991), *Turkey and the Middle East*, (London: Thomson Learning), p.21

the protector of all Muslims in the world. In this context, since 1979 the Turkish military and the secularist establishment lost trust in Iran and blamed the Iranian governments for supporting Islamic fundamentalists in Turkey. As a matter of fact, 'turning into a second Iran' has been portrayed as the worst nightmare by the Turkish secular elite. On the other hand the Iranian state has perceived Turkey's secular system as a potential threat for the legitimacy and survival of its own regime. These perceptions did not allow the two countries to see their mutual interests and reduced the chances of cooperation. Nevertheless, due to historical factors and mutual respect, Iran and Turkey have never come to the brink of war despite having conflicting political regimes.

In recent years, perceptions of Turkey in Iran have been significantly improved. As noted above, the rise in the identity security of Turkey in the EU context after 1999 paved the way for the democratization of Turkish foreign policy. In this context, Ankara became more open for dialogue with Iran. Moreover, democratization of foreign policy brought the transition of Turkey's relations with Israel from hyperactivity to normal ties. This has been another important catalyst for the change in Turkey's perception in Iran. The Islamic background of Turkey's new political elite also contributed to the restoration of its image in Iran. Apparently, for the ruling AKP, the Islamic Republic of Iran appeared much less threatening than it did to previous Turkish governments. This perception was illustrated by some statements of AK party leaders concerning the Iranian nuclear program which greatly increased the sympathy for Turkey in Iran. For instance, after a public meeting Prime Minister Erdoğan said; 'asking a country to stop its nuclear program is not fair when you continue producing weapons of mass destruction'.<sup>449</sup> Turkey's rising prestige in Iran which is illustrated with a dramatic increase in the number of Iranian tourists in the country which reached to one million in 2005, made Ankara a potential mediator between Iran and the West.

### **C. ISRAEL:**

Respective perceptions between Turkey and Israel are totally different from the rest of the region. From a historical point of view, the acceptance of Jews who fled from persecution in Spain during the fifteenth century to the Ottoman lands is still remembered in Israel as an act of saving. Turkey also served as a transit for European Jews fleeing Nazi persecution during the Second World War and became the first country with a Muslim majority to formally recognize the State of Israel in 1949. Since then the two countries have been engaged in military, diplomatic and economic cooperation. As noted above, the 1990s were

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<sup>449</sup> Cumhuriyet, 20 September 2007

the heyday of relations between Turkey and Israel. Nonetheless, the bilateral relations become strained in recent years due to the deterioration of mutual perceptions.

The outbreak of the second intifada in fall 2000, Israel's rising ties with the Kurds of Northern Iraq after the war in 2003, the war between Israel and Hezbollah in 2006 and the more recent activities of Israel in Gaza has severely damaged Israel's image in Turkey.<sup>450</sup> The Turkish media which have reported Israeli attacks against Palestinians in great detail contributed to the spread of Anti-Semitism in Turkey. In 2005, *Mein Kampf*, the book which was written by Hitler while he was in prison before he rose to power in 1933, has become a bestseller in Turkey. According to the book's publishers more than 100,000 copies have been sold in two months.<sup>451</sup> During the war in Lebanon in summer 2006, Israeli tourists who visited Turkey's southern region met some hostile reactions from locals. A shop window in Alanya displayed a placard, "For Children Killers, Israelis No Sale, No Entry." One Israeli family was actually attacked by an individual in the same town.<sup>452</sup> The Turkish daily *Yeni Şafak* took the Turkish Radio and Television Association (TRT) to task for including in its programming the Roman Polanski movie *The Pianist*, which deals with a Polish Jewish pianist during the Second World War. In response, the TRT removed the program.<sup>453</sup>

In this context, Turkish politicians did not hesitate to strongly criticize Israeli policies in the Palestinian territories. Erdoğan led the way by warning Israeli leaders that "history will judge them for the black stain they are leaving on humanity".<sup>454</sup> He even went as far as to declare that the blood of the dead Palestinian children would not be left on the floor<sup>455</sup>, and

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<sup>450</sup> Bengio, O. Turkey and Israel in the Aftermath of the Gaza War, 11 February 2009. Available online at <http://www.israelpolicyforum.org/blog/tel-aviv-notes-turkey-and-israel-aftermath-gaza-war-relations-crossroad>

<sup>451</sup> BBC News, Hitler Book Bestseller in Turkey, 18 March 2005, Available online at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/4361733.stm>

<sup>452</sup> Bali, R. (2009), 'Present Day Anti-Semitism in Turkey', *Institute for Global Jewish Affairs*, No.84, Available online at: [http://www.jcpa.org/JCPA/Templates/ShowPage.asp?DRIT=3&DBID=1&LNGID=1&TMID=111&FID=624&PID=0&IID=3048&TTL=Present-Day\\_Anti-Semitism\\_in\\_Turkey](http://www.jcpa.org/JCPA/Templates/ShowPage.asp?DRIT=3&DBID=1&LNGID=1&TMID=111&FID=624&PID=0&IID=3048&TTL=Present-Day_Anti-Semitism_in_Turkey)

<sup>453</sup> Bali, R. (2009), 'Present Day Anti-Semitism in Turkey', *Institute for Global Jewish Affairs*, No.84, Available online at: <http://www.jcpa.org>

<sup>454</sup> Zaman, 'History Will be Israel's Judge, Erdogan Says', 7 January 2009

<sup>455</sup> Al-Jazeera, 6 January 2009

that Israel's deeds were "a crime against humanity".<sup>456</sup> On 29 January 2009, Erdoğan heavily criticized the Israeli President Shimon Peres and his policies in Palestine during the World Economic Forum in Davos, and subsequently walked out of the forum in protest.

These developments did a great deal of damage to Turkey's image in Israel as well. For example, many Israeli travel companies initiated a boycott of Turkey after harsh criticism of Turkish official to Israel's operations in Gaza. According to daily *Hürriyet*, Turkey's popular holiday resort Antalya alone lost sixty one percent of its Israeli visitors in 2009.<sup>457</sup> In brief, the intensification of the war between Israel and the Palestinians in the second half of the 2000s and AKP's self perception of being the spokesman of Muslims in the West gradually deteriorated the mutual perceptions between the Turkish and Israeli societies and damaged the bilateral relations between the two countries.

## **CONCLUSION:**

As the above discussion illustrated, variation in its identity security strongly influenced Turkey's political development as well as the formulation of its foreign policy towards the Middle East. Due to having a highly insecure corporate identity, the secularists, notably the military has pursued an isolationist and non-active foreign policy in the Middle East until recent decades. When Turkey's identity became even less secure due to the EU's exclusionary attitudes and the rise of Islamism during the 1990s, the military has sought to overcome this insecurity by establishing an alliance with Israel. Since then, relations with the Middle East illustrate an example of the historical power struggle between the civilians and the army in Turkish politics.

Nevertheless, the transformation of Islamists with the establishment of AKP, the capture of the leader of the terrorist organisation PKK and the approval of Turkey's candidacy by the EU enhanced the security of Turkey's identity and changed the parameters of its Middle East policy. The EU-related reforms empowered the civilians vis-à-vis the military and triggered a rapid democratization process in public and foreign policies of Turkey under the rule of AKP. As a result, Ankara started pursuing a more balanced foreign policy between the West and the Islamic world. By co-chairing the UN sponsored 'Alliance of Civilizations' with Spain in November 2006, Turkey proved that it does not hesitate to

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<sup>456</sup> Cumhuriyet, 12 January 2009

<sup>457</sup> Hürriyet, 20 August 2009

represent or speak on behalf of the Islamic world. These developments enhanced the prestige of Ankara in its region and paved the way for an intense economic and political interaction between Turkey and its Middle Eastern neighbours.

Nevertheless, the AKP's inconsistent attitudes in recent years due to its complex identity threatened Turkey's ties with Israel and the West. These attitudes also increased the concerns of the secularists who are worried about the maintenance of Turkey's secular identity particularly in the context of the slowdown in EU accession talks. These concerns brought an end to the consensus between Turkey's diverse camps in regards to the Middle East policy and severely constrained Ankara's ability to play a greater role in the region. In brief, Ankara's ability to act as an effective player in the region's affairs is still constrained by its identity-related issues.

## **CONCLUSION:**

The purpose of this study was to show the complex links between identity and Turkey's foreign policy and foreign policy capacity. The main research question of the thesis is 'how a complex and insecure identity influences Turkey's foreign policy behaviour and its capacity to develop an international role commensurate with its size and capabilities'. In line with this purpose, the investigator adopted a constructivist approach which argues that the identities of states are essential for understanding international relations and they must be examined in concrete historical settings. Before evaluating the achievements and limitations of this thesis and suggesting possible further research based on or related to this thesis, the first part of this final chapter will evaluate how the constructivist approach contributed to a better understanding of Turkey's foreign policy and foreign policy capacity in the post Cold-War period while highlighting the main findings of each chapter.

As indicated in chapter one, rationalist approaches argue that states' preferences and identities are exogenously given by the international system. Accordingly, all states have egoistic and fixed interests that are limited to a narrow conception of utility maximization.<sup>458</sup> On the other hand, constructivists treat identity and interest as endogenous and socially constructed. Consequently they can vary depending on historical, cultural, political and social context. In line with this view, they rejected the neo-realist assumption that there is a single logic of anarchy and argued that relations between states are shaped by 'distinct cultures of anarchy', so Wendt, for example, distinguishes between i.e. Hobbesian, Lockean, and Kantian variants.<sup>459</sup> Each of these is constituted by a particular notion of the basic relationship between self and other, namely; enemy, rival and friend. Consequently, only the Hobbesian culture is a truly self-help system and transformation from one culture to another is possible.<sup>460</sup>

If Hobbesian culture lasts over a long period of time, then, it would be useful to think of the system in rationalist terms. Nevertheless, depending on the process of interaction with others, states define and re-define their identities and base perceptions of their interests on the

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<sup>458</sup> Waltz, K. (1979), *Theory of International Politics*, (New York: Random House), pp.246-311

<sup>459</sup> Wendt, A. (1999), *Social Theory of International Politics*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)

<sup>460</sup> Ibid. P.247

new definitions of their identities. Likewise, domestic developments such as demographic changes or shifts in political elites with different role identities may change the identity of the state, which can transform their behaviours and eventually the nature of systemic interaction. Rationalism operates to artificially restrict the possibilities to conceive change both within and of the system itself. After the end of the Second World War, a shift from a Hobbesian to a Kantian culture of anarchy started to develop in Western Europe. Since the end of the Cold War, the continent has entered a post-modern system in which bipolarity and rivalry has been replaced by the development of a Kantian security community. In a post-modern security system, we have two partially overlapping pluralistic security communities in Europe, namely NATO and the EU.

Turkey's engagement with these two pluralistic security communities has deeply influenced its 'culture of anarchy' as well. Turkish approach with regard to international relations has traditionally been influenced by the Hobbesian and Lockean interpretations of anarchy. The long tradition of seeing the world from a *realpolitik* perspective relates to Turkey's political culture which is deeply influenced by the military establishment.<sup>461</sup> In other words, Turkey's security-seeking identity was not exogenously given but shaped in a historic process and within an institutional context. Therefore, an examination of domestic cultural-institutional context in which Turkey's national interests were formed is essential to understand Turkish foreign policy even when it was informed by Hobbesian logic.

As shown in chapter two, Turkey had been a militarist society since its foundation as a republic in 1923. The armed forces, led by Kemal Atatürk, played a decisive role in the establishment of the Turkish state as well as all of its institutions. This highly militaristic political culture was legitimated with several discourses of legitimations. Central to these discourses of legitimations were a definition of Turkish national identity as Western, homogeneous and secular. Other legitimations were related with Kemalists' interpretation of the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire after the First World War and include geographical

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<sup>461</sup> See Berger, Thomas U. (1996). "Norms, Identity and National Security on Germany and Japan". In: Katzenstein, Peter J. (ed) . *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*. (New York: Columbia University Press)

determinism, the Sèvres Syndrome<sup>462</sup>, and several types of fear, notably Islamic counter-revolution (*Irtica*), encirclement by enemies and disintegration.<sup>463</sup> Turkey's militarist political culture was translated into an isolationist foreign policy which was characterized by a tendency to shy away from cooperation. The foreign policy of the early republican period mainly sought stability and non-interference in Turkey's domestic affairs.

Nonetheless, the beginning of the shift from a Hobbesian to a Kantian culture of anarchy in the West after the end of WW2 and the Kemalists' need to uphold Turkey's state-sponsored construction of Western identity at home, brought a new understanding of international politics and paved the way for Turkey's Western orientation in foreign policy on the basis of its NATO membership. This was a foreign policy formulated in association with the nation-building project that was dominated by a quest to secure Turkey's Western identity, along with security necessities. During the Cold War, national security and foreign policy issues were mostly considered as a function of Turkey's NATO membership and other Western institutions. This arrangement enabled a degree of parliamentary democracy to arise while a range of sensitive domestic issues such as the Kurdish issue, as well as some foreign policy issues, such as bilateral conflicts with Greece and the Cyprus problem, remained beyond the realm of democratic debate and decision-making. Ankara's position towards its Middle Eastern neighbours was also continued to be shaped by a Hobbesian logic as Turkey perceived itself as the only 'civilized' country in its 'uncivilized' neighbourhood.

Since the 1980s, Turkey has been experiencing a major political and economic transformation. This transformation has brought Turkey much closer to Kantian values which are manifest in both its domestic and foreign policy behaviour. The engagement of Turkey by the EU and the principle of conditionality that the Union employs with applicant countries have been critical in the transformation of Turkey's domestic and foreign policies. However, this transformation cannot be fully understood without considering the changes in Turkey's corporate identity during the 1980s. As highlighted in chapter two, a series of political and

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<sup>462</sup> Sèvres syndrome which refers to the conviction that Turkey is surrounded by enemies intent on dividing up the country, as aimed in the Treaty of Sèvres in 1920.

<sup>463</sup> See Sandrin, P. 'Turkish Foreign Policy After the End of Cold War: From Securitising to Desecuritising Actor', Available online at <http://www2.lse.ac.uk/europeanInstitute/research/ContemporaryTurkishStudies/Paper%20PS.pdf>. [Accessed on 9 November 2010]



economic liberalizing reforms of this period paved the way for the emergence of a Turkish civil society and empowered Islamic groups, which eventually started to question Turkey's security conceptions and foreign policy practices. On the other hand, the revival of Kurdish nationalism and political Islam in the 1990s despite several interventions significantly reduced the army's prestige in the eyes of the country's liberal and intellectual circles. These developments led to a re-definition of Turkey's corporate identity and influenced Ankara's foreign policy understanding which manifested itself in a wider identity abroad, Ottoman rather than Turkish covering all neighbouring Muslim peoples and all minorities in Turkey.

The transformation of Turkish domestic and foreign policies was paused with the rise of political Islam and the increasing identity insecurity of the secularists in the context of Turkey's envisaged isolation in the West following the end of the Cold War. The EU's hesitation to declare the country as a candidate also facilitated the predominance of the military and the hardliners within the state establishment and undermined the efforts of the reformists. As a result, Ankara's long tradition of viewing the world from a *realpolitik* perspective was revitalized in the second half of the 1990s. The violence surrounding the Kurdish problem and the security challenges created by the PKK left Ankara on various occasions emphasizing the significance of military capabilities and means over political ones.<sup>464</sup> Consequently, Turkey regularly intervened in Northern Iraq and incessantly suspected neighbouring countries of backing the PKK and of trying to weaken Turkey's integrity. Indeed, Turkey threatened to use military force against two of its neighbouring countries, namely Greece and Syria, in 1996 and 1998 respectively. During this period, Ankara was earning itself a reputation for being a 'coercive regional power'.

Nevertheless, as shown in chapter three, the EU's decision to recognize the country as an official candidate for membership in 1999 consolidated Turkey's emerging political-military culture and its shift towards a Kantian vision. The EU's conditionality has been the most important catalyst for change and reform in Turkey's domestic and foreign policies. By making basic norms of liberal democracy a condition for the most important incentive that it has to offer, namely membership, the Union developed the policy of 'conditionality' as an effective policy instrument to transform the governing structures, economies and the civil

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<sup>464</sup> Kirişçi, K. "Turkey's foreign policy in turbulent times", *European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS) Chaillot Paper* - n°92, September 2006. P.101

societies of its candidates.<sup>465</sup> Nevertheless, as Checkel and Zürn noted, ‘the success of the EU’s incentives depends on the construction of a certain relationship between those involved in the process and the diffusion of ideas that leads to valuing membership’.<sup>466</sup>

In the construction of this relationship among the Turkish political actors, different logics of action interacted with each other. The transformation of the Islamists’ position from an anti-Western to a pro-EU position was initially triggered by the so-called ‘soft coup’ against the Islamist-led government in 1997. However, an instrumental logic alone does not fully capture the reasons behind this transformation. An equally important factor in the change in the Islamists’ position regarding EU membership was the understanding that a European-style democracy will enhance civil liberties in Turkey, including those of devout Muslims. Moreover, this transformation, which took shape under the guide of the AKP, reflected the changing demands of Islamic social groups who had in the past opposed globalization and Turkey’s integration with the West. During the last decade, these social groups, notably the ‘Anatolian bourgeoisie’ became increasingly exposed to and demanded participation in relations with the outside world, in the form of educational and business opportunities.

In this context, the AKP emerged as a policy entrepreneur in Turkey and presented the EU-related reforms as long-overdue policies that would benefit the Turkish society at large rather than interference in Turkey’s domestic politics. Moreover, the party rejected the argument that reforms would undermine the unity of the Turkish state. In its election manifesto, it highlighted the positive impact of the Copenhagen criteria on human rights and civil liberties in Turkey. On that basis, the party leaders began to state constantly the Copenhagen criteria should be seen as ‘Ankara criteria’ that would be met in full with or without EU membership. The consistency of their statements and justifications for complying with EU norms suggested a certain learning process and norm internalization which was subsequently reflected in their behaviour.

As soon as coming to power in 2002, the AKP government issued a program and action plan that emphasized EU norms as a basis for constitutional/legal reforms.

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<sup>465</sup> See Grabbe, H. (2001), ‘How Does Europeanization affects CEE Governance? Conditionality Diffusion and Diversity’, *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol.8, No.6

<sup>466</sup> Checkel, J. And Zürn, M. (2005), ‘Getting Socialized to Build Bridges: Constructivism and Rationalism, Europe and the Nation State’, *International Organization*, Vol.59, Issue 4, p.1064

Nevertheless, changing the decades-long ‘state’ policies on secularists’ redlines, i.e. the Kurdish problem and the role of the military and the Cyprus problem would not be an easy task for the AKP. In the course of 2002, as Turkey debated the adoption of reforms to fulfil the Copenhagen criteria, there were numerous public figures from the secularist camp who made references to the Europeans’ or the West’s intentions of undermining and dividing up Turkey. These arguments intensified particularly in the context of reforms that would enhance the cultural and educational rights of the Kurdish minority. Initially, the military was also highly concerned about the consequences of the suggested reforms on the national security of Turkey.

Nevertheless, the military did not veto the EU-related reforms even though they would significantly reduce its political powers. In view of its commitment to the ideals of Westernization, its learning from the past experiences, and its socialization within Western institutions such as NATO, the military regarded the civilianization of political system as appropriate. The military’s traditional rhetoric of democratization has also led to *rhetorical entrapment* or what Schimmelfennig also calls ‘community trap’.<sup>467</sup> However, as Sjurseen pointed out the effectiveness of such processes of shaming is dependent on the actors’ belief that the norms at stake exist and are valid.<sup>468</sup> In brief, the EU norms did not function merely as constraints on Turkish actors’ policy preferences to support EU-related reforms. They also legitimized the construction of new interests and enabled them to adopt new and different behaviour. Consequently, Turkey experienced a major reform process with regard to its democracy and human rights standards. As a result of these reforms, it has become much more open to pluralism and much more at ease with its cultural and ethnic diversity. Turkish foreign policy, especially towards its neighbouring countries, has also changed and evolved to become more ‘soft-power’ based and cooperation-oriented, instead of being focused on the long-prevailing threat perceptions.

The introduction and the first widespread appearance of the ‘win-win’ rhetoric in the context of the Cyprus problem was the first indicator of the changes that would occur in

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<sup>467</sup> See Schimmelfennig, F. (2001), ‘The Community Trap: Liberal Norms, Rhetorical Action, and the Eastern Enlargement of the EU’, *International Organization*, Vol.55, No.1, pp.47-80

<sup>468</sup> Sjurseen, H. (2002), ‘Why Expand? The Question of Legitimacy and Justification in the EU’s Enlargement Policy’, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol.40, No.3, p. 500

Turkish foreign policy.<sup>469</sup> However, as chapter four showed, the transformation of Turkey's decades-old 'state' policy on Cyprus has been an uneasy process. As the deadline for reaching a settlement based on the Annan Plan, 28 February 2003, approached, opponents of the plan invoked the Sèvres Syndrome. This was manifested with the statements of the secularist opposition party CHP as well as some leading public figures from the secularist groups. These groups gave a strong support to hardliner Turkish Cypriot President Denktaş who was refusing to further negotiate the plan while publically fighting with the AKP leaders. Some top-ranking military officers also voiced their opposition to AKP's new Cyprus policy. Nevertheless, the military eventually preferred to remain silent on its reluctance and leave the political responsibility to the government. The military's silence on a 'high politics' issue such as the Cyprus problem was another indicator of its changing attitude in regards to the civilian contributions to foreign and security policy making and the need for democratic accountability.

The extent of debates and the existence of a strong opposition to change in both domestic and foreign policy issues, namely the adoption of EU-related reforms and a new Cyprus policy, was actually a reflection of Turkey's contested identity. Due to a lack of consensus on its state identity, Turkish politics have been ambivalent and the resulting foreign policy preferences have been unstable. This was manifested with the 'double-headed' policy of Turkey during the Cyprus peace talks between 2002 and 2004. Ambivalence in its Cyprus policy caused inestimable damage to both Turkey's political development and its foreign policy capacity. Even though the AKP managed to overcome the secularists' resistance and changed Turkey's Cyprus policy through dialogue and debate, the 28 February deadline for settlement was missed and Greek Cypriots secured EU membership in 2004 regardless of the outcome of UN's re-unification talks. This removed one of the strongest incentives of Greek Cypriots to back the Annan Plan and contributed greatly to the overall 'No' result in the 2004 referendum on the re-unification of the island. Consequently, Ankara failed to eliminate the 'Cyprus obstacle' on its progress towards achieving its most important foreign policy goal, namely EU membership.

Although, Turkey started EU entry talks in 2005, Greek Cypriots have frequently used their position in the Union to prevent the opening of chapters, or areas to negotiate to ensure

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<sup>469</sup> Kirişçi, K. "Turkey's foreign policy in turbulent times", *European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS) Chaillot Paper* - n°92, September 2006. P.51

policies meet EU standards, as a pressure tactic on Turkey. Ankara is also under EU pressure to open its ports and airspace to Greek Cypriot shipping and aviation, which it has so far failed to do. As a result, the negotiating process between Turkey and the EU came to a virtual halt in 2006. The deterioration of relations with the EU damaged the pro-EU consensus in Turkey and resulted in the intensification of the confrontation over secularism and national identity. In this context, the AKP failed to pursue substantial reforms between 2005 and 2008 enhancing the EU's skepticism about its commitment to the accession process. All these developments are a clear manifestation of the negative consequences of lacking a consensus-based, secure identity for Turkey's political development as well as its ability to pursue its foreign policy goals.

However, despite the failure in Cyprus and the deadlock in the EU process, the shift of Turkey's foreign policy from a Hobbesian logic towards a Kantian one, in line with the EU requirements, continued. The AKP government has embraced the EU rhetoric of 'good neighbourly relations' and the goal of 'developing an area of peace and stability'. In recent years, Ankara sought to normalize its relations with all of its neighbouring countries. This is manifested with the maintenance of its support for the resolution of the Cyprus problem even after the Annan Plan referenda, its efforts to resolve the Aegean dispute with Greece, its attempt at rapprochement with Armenia, its increasing cooperation with Russia, and most importantly its dialogue-oriented policy towards Iran, Iraq and Syria. All these policies indicated the consequences of a change in behaviour of Turkey in the 'Kantian' direction, hinting at a certain learning process and successful norm internalization in the EU context.

As shown in chapter five, this change has been most evident in Turkey's policies towards the Middle East. Since 2002, Ankara has been cooperating with its Muslim neighbours in a range of areas going beyond security needs. It pursues a pro-active trade, energy and cultural policy towards them and has indeed become a strong promoter of regional integration. Apart from enhancing bilateral ties and fostering cooperation in a wide range of sectors, Ankara has also put much effort into improving its regional diplomacy which is manifest in its engagement with the Palestinian issue. As a result of its enhanced ties with Muslim countries, Turkey has attained a new role of mediator between the West and the Islamic world. Ankara mediated between Syria and Israel during the Lebanon War in 2006, between Israel and Hamas in 2008 and between the West and Iran concerning the latter's nuclear programme in 2010.

Rationalist scholars understand Ankara's recent interest in the Middle East as a rational response to structural changes in its security environment since the end of Cold War.<sup>470</sup> They particularly highlight rising concerns with regard to terrorism and Kurdish separatism in the post-Cold War period. Structural factors, notably the resurgence of PKK terrorism, have certainly influenced Turkey's threat perceptions and encouraged Ankara to reconcile with its neighbours. Nevertheless, they do not give us a clue about why Ankara's reconciliation with its Muslim neighbours did not happen when the Turkish foreign policy was dominated by secularists. Consequently, structural accounts are also less helpful to understand why different leaders adopted diverse approaches to deal with Turkey's security concerns. As chapter five indicated, Özal, for example, attempted to co-opt Kurdish rebels and launched good relations with Kurdish leaders in Northern Iraq and the Arab world in general. Erbakan sought Pan-Islamic initiatives with Iran and Libya. On the other hand, Kemalists attempted to balance this by consolidating ties with the United States and Israel and by launching radical, hard-line measures in regards to the Kurdish issue.

In order to understand the reasons behind Turkey's changing approach to tackle its security issues as well as its shifting foreign policy in the Middle East, one needs to know the perceptions of its political leaders at decision-making level which are shaped by diverse sub-national identities. Each sub-national identity possesses an inter-subjective meaning of the 'self' which shapes actors' interpretation of the 'other' and in this way their foreign policy preferences. As noted in chapter one, national interests in 'torn' societies are defined and re-defined through a clash of sub-national identities. This is well illustrated with the change and ambivalence in Turkey's foreign policy towards the Middle East since the end of the Cold War.

Turkey's ignorance of the Middle East until the 1980s relates to its previous state identity that was defined by Kemalist values and belief systems. As part of Kemalist nation-building, Ankara was inclined to externalize its domestic problems, notably Kurdish separatism and political Islam. In this regards, while attributing the rise of Kurdish separatism to Syrian support, the rise of Islamism was linked to Iran's goal of exporting Islamic revolution to other Muslim countries. Kemalist security culture also perceived the Arab countries through the lens of historical events during the First World War. These

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<sup>470</sup> See Danforth, N. (2008), 'Ideology and Pragmatism in Turkish Foreign Polic: from Atatürk to AKP', *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, Vol.7, No.3, and Larrabe, F.S. (2009), 'Turkey Rediscovered the Middle East', *Foreign Affairs*, 86:4

interpretations and perceptions certainly influenced the way Kemalists defined Turkish national interest in regards to the Middle East and indeed constrained Turkey's relations with the region.

On the other hand, Turkey's rising interest in the region in the post-Cold War period relates to the political transformation of the country and social actors' perceptions that shapes its state identity and determines the framework in which national interests are defined. Turkey has been in a process of democratization since the 1980s. This process was speeded up in 1999 by the EU's decision to recognize the country as a candidate for full membership. Democratization has brought a change in perceptions through which securitized issues, notably minority issues, have begun to be de-securitized. As mentioned above, EU-related reforms also brought a significant decline in the role of the military in the securitization of political issues, and in this way narrowed the range of 'others' both inside and outside Turkey.

These developments prepared a suitable ground for the transformation of Turkey's position towards the Middle East which gained momentum after the AKP came to power in 2002. The foreign policy of Turkey since then is based on Ahmet Davutoğlu's strategic depth' (*stratejik derinlik*) doctrine which can be regarded as an external manifestation of the AKP's attempt to transform Turkey's society and politics through a process of identity reconstruction. This doctrine emphasizes the Islamic dimension of Turkey's identity both internally and externally, promotes multi-dimensional and pro-active relationship with neighbouring countries and stresses the use of 'soft power' tools to enhance Ankara's influence and prestige in the region.<sup>471</sup> According to Davutoğlu, Turkey is a central country with multiple regional identities and should not be limited just to one unified character. In contrast to the secularist elites' understanding of Turkey as part of the West, Davutoğlu's doctrine claims that Turkey cannot be explained geographically or culturally within one single region.<sup>472</sup>

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<sup>471</sup> Davutoğlu, A. (2001), *Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu (Strategic Depth: The International Position of Turkey)*, (Istanbul: Küre Yayınları),

<sup>472</sup> Ibid.

The key principle of the ‘strategic depth’ doctrine is the policy of ‘*zero problems with neighbours*’. This policy demonstrates a revolutionary alteration in the Turkish perception of the international environment since it is not in the line with the notion that Turkey is surrounded with enemies who continually seek to undermine its integrity.<sup>473</sup> One of the major policy outcomes of ‘strategic depth’ is Turkey’s identification with the former Ottoman regions and a return to the Middle East with a special focus on Syria and Iran. Theoretically speaking, the AKP expanded the boundary of the Turkey’s ‘self’ and the previous ‘other’ became an extension of the ‘self’. Consequently, Iran, for example, which was a major source of threat perception during the 1980-90s, is no longer defined in Ankara as an enemy or as a threat despite its enhanced military capabilities and nuclear ambitions.

While including certain Islamic elements, Turkey’s new position towards its neighbourhood does not signify the Islamization of its foreign policy but rather a transformation of its security culture due to domestic changes and its engagement with the EU. As mentioned above, Turkey is seeking to enhance ties with all of its neighbours. Put differently, Turkey’s relations with its non-Muslim neighbours are not deteriorating while its relations with the Muslim ones are enhancing. Furthermore, Ankara’s continuing zeal for EU membership confirms that Turkey’s Middle Eastern policy and its rising importance as a regional power is not antagonistic to or incompatible with its strong ties with the EU and the West in general.

Nevertheless, some of the change in Ankara’s behaviour is the result of a certain preference of the AKP leaders to enhance political, economic and cultural ties with the Islamic countries, particularly with the former enemies of the Kemalist regime such as Syria and Iran, sometimes at the expense of damaging relations with Israel. Indeed, Turkish foreign policy towards the Middle East in recent years indicates how certain contradictory elements of the AKP’s identity affect the definition of Turkey’s national interests. These are related with the contrast between the principle of ‘zero problems with neighbours’, on the one hand, and the moderate Islamic identity of the party, on the other. Therefore, the transition of Turkey’s relations with Israel from a very close alliance to a normal and recently a

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<sup>473</sup> Dağı, İ. ‘Davutoglu: Turkey’s new foreign policy chief’, *Today’s Zaman* (May 2009), available at <http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/columnists-174256-davutoglu-turkeys-new-foreign-policy-chief.html>



problematic relationship is consistent with a constructivist explanation and shows how identity insecurity can undermine alliances.<sup>474</sup>

As should be clear throughout the thesis, the shifts in Turkey's foreign policy have stemmed from its engagement with international institutional contexts, notably with the EU, as well as from the shifts in power of its diverse groups with different role identities. In this regards, a constructivist account is more useful than a rationalist explanation to understand the dynamics of Turkey's shift in its foreign policy behaviour for two reasons. Firstly, it accurately emphasizes the discontinuity and change in Turkish foreign policy. Considering this change, rationalist assumptions with regard to fixed interests and rational actors do not fit with the nature of Turkey's foreign policy. Secondly, an identity-based account can throw light on the relationship between Turkish leaders' own perception of themselves and their perception of others as a key determinant of Turkey's foreign policy choices. The significance of decision-makers' perception is not related only with material interests but also with their views regarding the nature of international relations, as well as their own identity and role conceptions, which ultimately influence the formulation of their foreign policies.

To conclude, the transformation of Turkey's domestic structure that has started in the 1980s and gained momentum after 1999 in the EU context deeply influenced its 'culture of anarchy'. This transformation within Turkey has significant repercussions for the European integration project as well. Due to the way in which it has evolved as a result of its transformation, Turkey is becoming increasingly capable of contributing to the EU's efforts to promote peace and stability in its close neighbourhood. Therefore, when analyzing the influence of Turkish membership to the EU, it is important to consider the meaning of Turkey's domestic and foreign policy transformation in the context of the future of the EU's neighbourhood.<sup>475</sup>

Nevertheless, Turkey's capability to exercise 'soft power' and contribute to stability and democratization in its region is still constrained by its insecure identity. The process of Turkey's transformation towards an EU-style liberal democracy is certainly not yet complete and is ongoing. Therefore, Ankara must keep on its transformation and complete its reform process. However, due to a lack of consensus on state identity, there are still circles in the

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<sup>474</sup> See Barnett, M. (1996), 'Identity and Alliances in the Middle East', Peter Katzenstein (ed.), *The Culture of National Security* (New York: Colombia University Press)

<sup>475</sup> Kirişçi, K. "Turkey's foreign policy in turbulent times", *European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS) Chaillot Paper* - n°92, September 2006. P.102

country who are resisting reforms. These circles indeed stand a chance of disturbing the process considering that Turkey is still struggling to resolve difficult identity related issues. These issues range from finding a workable solution to the Kurdish problem that goes beyond granting basic cultural rights to reconciling democracy and secularism with Islam in a way that will provide the country with a sense of consensus and stability rather than polarization and instability. How these issues will be dealt with and solved and whose preferences will prevail is very much related with Turkey's relations with the EU. Whether the EU will maintain its commitment to Turkish membership prospects or not will be critical for the future transformation of Turkey.

## **EVALUATING THE RESEARCH:**

After looking at the benefits of the constructivist approach to a better understanding of Turkey's foreign policy and foreign policy capacity, it is appropriate to evaluate the contribution the thesis makes to our knowledge of the subject. A number of aspects deserve particular attention.

This thesis has in a number of ways carried out original work. It has contributed to the understanding of the formulation, execution and effectiveness of Turkey's foreign policy by showing how diverse identities and their interaction shaped Turkish national interests, which in turn suggested contradictory foreign policy goals and paved the way for an ambivalent foreign policy in the post-Cold War period. Part of the thesis' originality consisted in examining the contested and insecure nature of Turkey's state identity and its impact on the foreign policy orientation of the country as well as its foreign policy capacity. In doing so, it provided further insight to the role of the clash between diverse sub-national identities in the formation of Turkey's threat perceptions and national interests. Many studies of Turkish foreign policy have been cynical of prioritizing identity or even ideology in explaining Ankara's foreign policy behaviours. There are a few scholars who have paid closer attention to the relationship between Turkey's identity and its foreign policy choices. However, even these studies treated Turkey's identity as a unitary and domestically unquestioned entity.<sup>476</sup> This thesis moved our attention from a singular understanding of Turkey's identity to a range of contesting identities at the domestic level.

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<sup>476</sup> See Dağı, I., Gözen, R., and Çalış, S, (2001), *Türkiye'nin Dış Politika Gündemi: Kimlik, Demokrasi, Güvenlik (Turkey's Foreign Policy Agenda: Identity, Democracy, Security)*, (Ankara: Liberte)

The analysis of sub-national identities is an important contribution since in many cases such as Turkey state identities were not constructed through a national consensus. The identity conceptions of excluded groups can survive and indeed continue to shape societal perceptions and affect political debates. In the process of democratization, these groups become more assertive of their identities in political life, thus bringing the state against society and social groups against each other. The result is an intense identity insecurity which influences not only a state's behaviour in the international system but also its ability to pursue stable foreign policy goals. Thereby, this thesis also shed light on how identity insecurity affected Turkey's political development as well as its capacity to develop an international role commensurate with its size and capabilities. More specifically, it showed the relationship between Turkey's insecure identity and its ambivalent politics which brings instable and contradictory foreign policy behaviour, especially towards the EU and the Middle East.

In addition, this thesis highlighted the important role that the EU plays in the transformation of Turkey's identity and security culture. It showed that positive signals from the EU accelerate the reform process through securing the national identity, strengthening the reform-minded segments and contributing to the emergence of a consensus between diverse political groups whereas by contrast ambivalent messages revitalize identity insecurity, damages national consensus and in this way slows down the reform process. This thesis also addressed some under-researched issues which influences the formulation of Turkey's foreign policy. These included the identity debates in the Turkish Cypriot community which have an influence on Turkey's Cyprus policy as well as its relations with the EU and the deterioration of Turkish-Israeli relations during recent years which lends support to the view that the maintenance of international alliances is contingent upon mutual identification.

Despite these contributions, there are a number of elements worth mentioning which this thesis did not address or did not do so in great detail. This thesis dealt with Turkey only and concentrated on its relations with the EU, Greece, and the Middle East due to the reasons mentioned in the introduction. Consequently, one of the limitations of this thesis includes the lack of an in-depth discussion of Turkish foreign policy's other dimensions. Even though some aspects of Turkey's relations with the United States, the Caucasus and Central Asia were addressed throughout the thesis, this could have been done in more detail. Relations with the Caucasus and Central Asia could indeed constitute another case study for this thesis. However, the cases studied clearly demonstrate the method and type of findings one might use and expect in such cases.

Although Turkey constitutes a unique case due to its history and geography, some other countries experience similar issues with it in terms of their foreign policy choices and foreign policy capacity. Therefore, whilst it was not possible given the limits of a PhD thesis an interesting avenue of development would have been to compare the Turkish case that of other states/societies that also have an insecure identity, e.g. Russia. While discussing some aspects of identity issues in other countries such as Greece and the CEECs, the discussions did not go into detail. Furthermore, this thesis did not draw attention to some countries which are experiencing similar issues with Turkey due to the contested nature of their identities.

Finally, this thesis did not draw substantial benefit from the interviews that were conducted by the investigator in Turkey. The data gathered via these limited number of interviews was helpful in the process of shaping the ideas of the thesis and expanded the horizons of the research by revealing some important points which did not seem relevant previously. The full potential of this method was reduced by financial and time constraints as well as by the unwillingness of some interviewees to state their opinions on sensitive identity-related issues. Nevertheless, the use of a wide range of Turkish and international newspapers and internet news sources was particularly useful, as they helped to identify actors' public statements and justifications for their actions. Newspaper articles also helped to show how diverse groups constructed different meanings for significant events in Turkey's foreign relations in the post-Cold War period.

## **FUTURE RESEARCH:**

Based on the findings of this thesis, but also taking its limitations into account, subsequent follow-up work seems necessary and promising, and the following research aspects being recommendable.

- *Comparing the theoretical findings of the case studies with other dimensions of Turkish foreign policy*

Future work could include placing the findings for selected cases into a wider analysis of Turkish foreign policy in the post-Cold War period. Turkey's foreign policy towards the Caucasus and Central Asia deserves particular attention. Indeed, Turkey's failed attempt to normalize its relations with Armenia in 2009 is a good example which shows how identity shapes Turkish foreign policy choices. Even though normalization of relations with Armenia would have a positive effect on Turkey's EU bid while bringing trade opportunities for both

sides and facilitating the further stabilization of the region, the Turkish government prioritized solidarity with its fellow Turkic ally Azerbaijan and linked the issue to a preliminary improvement in the negotiations on the Nagorno-Karabakh.

- *Comparing the linkage between identity and foreign policy capacity of Turkey with other countries*

This thesis argued that identity debates, and in particular the clash between secularist and Islamist ideologies, have dominated and shaped Turkey's foreign policy formulation and undermined the country's ability to develop a stable role in the post-Cold War period. Since the analysis is carried out on the Turkish case only, further research is required to increase consistency and validity of the findings of the thesis regarding the linkage between identity security and foreign policy capacity. As mentioned above, severe debates on national identity is also observable in some other countries. In particular two cases, namely Russia and Ukraine, which show numerous similarities with the Turkish case deserves special attention.

In Russia, identity issue is as old as Turkey and date back to the nineteenth century debates between Slavophiles and westernizers. In both countries, unstable identity is fed by feelings of injured national pride which is a result of their historical exclusion from the rest of Europe. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russian leaders fluctuated between their own historical anchors of identity – westernism, on the one hand, Slavophilism, on the other, and, finally, Eurasianism. As Mankoff pointed out, Russian foreign policy is under the pressure of these conflicting identity conceptions.<sup>477</sup> Consequently, Moscow lacks a clear idea of its foreign policy goals and pursues an erratic foreign policy under the influence of contradictory identity conceptions. The frequently mixed signals from the West—sometimes treating Russia as an equal partner, sometimes warning that it still needs to be encircled and contained—also affects Moscow's behaviour.

Ukraine also shows similar characteristics as its Black Sea neighbour Turkey. Ukrainian foreign policy is also guided by two conflicting anchors of identity, namely European and Slavic/Eurasian. Furthermore, the choice of foreign policy orientation in the country is also complicated by the identity preferences of the Ukrainian society.<sup>478</sup> Electoral

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<sup>477</sup> Mankoff, J. (2009), *Russian Foreign Policy: The Return of Great Power Politics*, (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield), p.4

<sup>478</sup> Half of Ukrainian population speak Russian language and a quarter of it define their ethnicity as, to a varying degree, both Ukrainian and Russian.

maps are similar to those in Turkey and reveal a long-standing east-west divide among the country's population. Unsurprisingly, Kiev constantly re-defines its identity and pursues an ambivalent foreign policy especially towards the EU and Russia. As Molchanov pointed out redefinition of identity in Ukraine has passed full circle from Russia to Europe to Russia and to the EU once again.<sup>479</sup>

Considering the similarities involved between the above cases and Turkey, further examination on the identity issue in Russia and Ukraine will be helpful for a better understanding of the relationship between identity, foreign policy orientation and foreign policy capacity and will allow us to make more general conclusions on this important question in International Relations. Further research could include a comparative analysis of the Turkish case with other similar cases such as Russia and Ukraine. An important difference between these three countries can be observed in their level of engagement with inter-democratic Western institutions. Due to its NATO membership and EU candidacy, Turkey currently possesses the strongest institutional links with the West. Therefore, a comparative analysis between these three cases can provide further insight into the role that international institutions play in the domestic and foreign policy transformations of their members, candidates and neighbours.

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<sup>479</sup> Molchanov, M. (2002), National Identity and Foreign Policy Orientations in Ukraine in Jennifer D.P. Moroney, Taras Kuzio, Mikhail Molchanov, eds., *Ukrainian Foreign and Security Policy: Theoretical and Comparative Perspectives*, (Westport, CT: Praeger), pp.227-263. For a detailed discussion also see Molchanov, M. (2002), *Political Culture and National Identity in Russian-Ukrainian Relations*, (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press)

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Tercüman

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Turkish Daily News

Zaman

## **APPENDIX I**

### **LIST OF INTERVIEWS**

- Yaşar Yakış (Turkish Foreign Minister between 2002 and 2003 from Justice and Development Party)
- Mevlüt Çavuşođlu (Member of Turkish Parliament and Deputy Chairman of the Justice and Development Party's Foreign Affairs Department)
- Onur Öymen ( Member of Turkish Parliament and Deputy Chairman of Republican People's Party)
- Mustafa Bayburtlu ( Chairman of the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey's EU Department)
- Prof. Dr. Lerzan Özkale (Secretary General of the Economic Development Foundation)
- Dr. Ayşe Bener ( Representative of Turkish Businessmen and Industrialists Association)
- Sanem Güner (Representative of the Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation)
- Arda Batu (Representative of ARI Movement)
- Asli Toksabay Esen (Representative of the Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey)







