



REFORM AND TRANSITION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

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Turkey's Challenges and Transformation

Politics and Society on the Centennial
of the Republic

Edited by
Harun Arikan
Zeynep Alemdar

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Reform and Transition in the Mediterranean

Series Editor

Ioannis N. Grigoriadis, Bilkent University, Ankara, Turkey

The series of political and economic crises that befell many countries in the Mediterranean region starting in 2009 has raised emphatically questions of reform and transition. While the sovereign debt crisis of Southern European states and the “Arab Spring” appear *prima facie* unrelated, some common roots can be identified: low levels of social capital and trust, high incidence of corruption, and poor institutional performance. This series provides a venue for the comparative study of reform and transition in the Mediterranean within and across the political, cultural, and religious boundaries that crisscross the region. Defining the Mediterranean as the region that encompasses the countries of Southern Europe, the Levant, and North Africa, the series contributes to a better understanding of the agents and the structures that have brought reform and transition to the forefront. It invites (but is not limited to) interdisciplinary approaches that draw on political science, history, sociology, economics, anthropology, area studies, and cultural studies. Bringing together case studies of individual countries with broader comparative analyses, the series provides a home for timely and cutting-edge scholarship that addresses the structural requirements of reform and transition; the interrelations between politics, history and culture; and the strategic importance of the Mediterranean for the EU, the USA, Russia, and emerging powers.

Harun Arıkan · Zeynep Alemdar
Editors

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Editors

Harun Arkan
Cukurova University
Adana, Turkey

Zeynep Alemdar
Okan University
Istanbul, Turkey

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*We would like to dedicate the book to the loving memory of our friends,
colleagues and students who have lost their lives to the devastating
earthquakes. We will heal in solidarity.*

*February 2023
Harun Arıkan
Zeynep Alemdar*

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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Zeynep Alemdar is Professor of political science and international relations in Istanbul Okan University, where she currently acts as Dean of the Business and Administration Faculty and head of the Gender Studies Research Center. She received her Ph.D. degree in Political Science from the University of Kentucky, Master of Arts degree from the Patterson School of Diplomacy and International Commerce at the same university, and B.A. Degree in Economics from Galatasaray University in Istanbul. Her scholarly research focusing on a broad range of topics from Turkey-EU relations to democratization, citizenship and civil society issues is published in *Middle Eastern Studies*, *New Perspectives on Turkey*, *European Journal of Turkish Studies* and *International Relations*. She is also leading practionner in gender projects, having done extensive policy oriented research for the EU, UNWomen, and the World Bank. Dr. Alemdar served on the editorial boards of *International Studies Perspectives* and *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, has taught international politics in various capacities. She was a visiting professor at the Center for Turkish Studies and the Mark O. Hatfield School of Government at Portland State University. In 2014, she was awarded the Next Generation Hurford Fellowship of the Euro-Atlantic Security Initiative at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington D.C. She is a senior Member of the European Leadership Network.

Harun Arıkan is Professor of Political Science and International relations at Çukurova University in Turkey. Harun Arıkan graduated from

Istanbul University; then he received a master degree in European Studies from Manchester University and Ph.D. in International Relations from Birmingham University in the United Kingdom. He worked as a research fellow at the Oxford University and a visiting scholar at University of Southern Maine and Portland State University in the United States. Dr. Arıkan has published a number of books and journal articles in English and Turkish on European Integration, Turkish foreign policy and democratization. Some of his recent publications include, *Turkey and the EU: An Awkward Candidate for EU Membership?* (Routledge, 2018), *The CEAS and the Europeanization of Turkey's Asylum Policy after the Syrian Crisis* (European Review, 2021) and *Europeanization and De-Europeanization of Turkey's Gender Equality Policy: The Case of the Istanbul Convention*, (Journal of Common Market Studies, 2022).

Mert Arslanalp is an assistant professor of Political Science and International Relations at Boğaziçi University. Before joining Boğaziçi in 2016, he received his Ph.D. in Political Science from Northwestern University. His research interests include social movements and protest repression, democratization and autocratization, and comparative urban politics with a regional focus on Turkey and Latin America. He has been a visiting fellow at Universidad Torcuato di Tella, Universidad Nacional de General Sarmiento, El Colegio de Mexico, and Özyeğin University. He has published in *Democratization*, *South European Politics and Society*, *Comparative Sociology and Territory*, *Politics, Governance* among others.

Umut Azak is an associate professor in the Department of International Relations at Istanbul Okan University. She completed her Ph.D. in 2007 at Leiden University, Department of Turkish Studies. She was 2008/09 fellow of the Berlin-based research program “Europe in the Middle East – The Middle East in Europe” (EUME). Her research focuses on history of secularism and memory politics in Turkey.

Gökçe Balaban is an assistant professor at the Department of International Relations, Istanbul Okan University. His research interests lie primarily in critical approaches to security and the political history of Turkey with a specific focus on the Kurdish issue.

Sevgi Balkan Şahin is an associate professor of international relations at Çağ University, Turkey. Her research interests include international political economy and counter-hegemonic movements. She has published articles in journals such as *Cooperation and Conflict*, *Environment* and

Planning C: Politics and Space, and Journal of Balkans and Near Eastern Studies.

Sanem Baykal is a professor of EU Law at the TOBB-ETU Law Faculty. She graduated from Ankara University Law Faculty and continued her academic career there till 2019. She also worked as the deputy director and then director of EU Research Centre (ATAUM) of Ankara University and as the director of the EU Law Directorate at the Turkish Ministry for EU Affairs between 2009-2012. She has an LL.M. on “European Law” from Queen Mary College London and did a post-doc fellowship as an “Emile Noel Fellow” at NYU Law School. Sanem Baykal’s research interests are “European integration”, “EU Law” and “Turkey-EU relations”.

Marella Bodur-Ün is an associate professor in the Department of Political Science and International Relations at Çukurova University, Turkey. She received her B.A. and M.A. degrees from Boğaziçi University and her Ph.D. degree in Political Sciences from Carleton University, Canada. Her research interests include social movements, gender and politics, norm contestation, IR theory and migration. Her recent work has been published, among others, in *JCMS- Journal of Common Market Studies*, *Review of International Studies and Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space*.

Yüksel Alper Ecevit is an associate professor at the Department of Political Science and International Relations, Çukurova University. He received his Ph.D. degree from Binghamton University, USA. His research focuses on political parties, candidate nominations, executive-legislative relations and electoral systems. His research has been published in leading journals such as *Party Politics*, *Political Research Quarterly*, *International Political Science Review*, *Parliamentary Affairs* and *Acta Politica*.

T. Deniz Erkmén is an assistant professor at the International Relations Department at Özyeğin University, Istanbul. She got her B.A. degree in Political Science and International Relations from Boğaziçi University, Istanbul and her Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Her teaching and research fields lie in comparative politics and political sociology, involving transnationalism, new middle classes, and authoritarian consolidation. She has published in *Sociology*, *Democratization*, *South European Politics and Society*, *Current Sociology* and *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*.

Çiğdem Nas is an associate professor of International Relations, and Secretary-General of the Economic Development Foundation. She is a member of the academic staff at the Yıldız Technical University's Department of Political Science and International Relations. She is a graduate of the Political Science Department of Bosphorous University and received her Masters degree on European social policy at the London School of Economics and Political Science. She completed her Ph.D. on the European Minority Rights Regime at the Politics and International Relations of the EU Department of the Marmara University EU Institute.

Habibe Özdal is assistant professor in International Relations at Istanbul Okan University. Dr. Özdal has focused the majority of her research on Russia and the Eastern Europe with particular reference to the Russian domestic and foreign policy, Turkey-Russia relations, and Ukraine politics. She has authored and co-authored book chapters, articles and reports on Russian foreign policy and Turkey-Russia relations.

Özden Selcen Özmelek is an assistant professor at Political Science and International Relations at Çukurova University since 2017. Before Çukurova University, Dr. Özmelek received her doctorate from Galatasaray University. Her main research areas are International Politics, Conflict and War, Geopolitics, and International Organizations. She is the author of *Inward and Outward - Tracing the Paths of Internationalized Civil Wars in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Iraq* (Nobel Bilimsel Eserler, 2019).

Hasan Deniz Pekşen completed his undergraduate education at Istanbul University, Faculty of Political Science. He received his master's degree from the Institute for Strategic Studies of Turkish War Colleges, International Security Strategies program and obtained his Ph.D degree at Galatasaray University. He worked as a researcher in a TÜBİTAK project for 3 years. His research focuses on security strategies, great power transitions, transformation of war and war- foreign policy nexus.

Deniz Sert is an associate professor at the Department of International Relations, Özyeğin University, Istanbul. Before joining OzU, she was a Senior Research Associate at the Migration Research Center, Koç University. She received her B.A. in International Relations from Koç University, an MSc in European Union Policy Making from the London School of Economics, and an MPhil in Political Science from the City University of New York. She got her Ph.D. in Comparative Politics from the City

University of New York. She has published extensively on international migration within Turkey.

Özlem Tür is Professor of International Relations at Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey. Her main expertise includes Turkey's relations with the Middle East (especially Syria, Israel and Lebanon) and the Arab-Israeli conflict. Her publications include *Turkey-Syria Relations—Between Enmity and Amity* (London: Ashgate, 2013, co-edited with Raymond Hinnebusch); "Turkey and Israel in the 2000s" (*Israel Studies*, 2012); "Political Economy of Turkey's Relations with the Middle East" (*Turkish Studies*, 2011). -"Turkey's Role in Middle East and Gulf Security", (*Asian Journal of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies*, 2019), "Turkey and Egypt in the Yemen Crisis" in Stephen W. Day and Noel Brehony (eds.), *Global, Regional and Local Dynamics in the Yemen Crisis*, (Switzerland: Palgrave-Macmillan,), 2020.

Alper H. Yağcı is an assistant professor at Department of Political Science and International Relations of Boğaziçi University in Turkey. He received his Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Massachusetts Amherst in 2016. His research focuses on political behavior, institutions and political economy, especially in the context of Turkey. His articles have been published in *Comparative Political Studies*, *Party Politics*, *Journal of European Public Policy*, *New Political Economy*, *Electoral Politics*, *Government and Opposition*, *Mediterranean Politics*, and *Turkish Studies*.

Birol Yeşilada is Professor of Political Science and International Studies. He holds an endowed chair in Contemporary Turkish Studies and is Director of the Center for Turkish Studies as well as the Mark O. Hatfield School of Government. Professor Yeşilada is the principal investigator for the World Values Survey project in Cyprus and has served as Coeditor-in-Chief of *International Studies Perspectives* and Associate Editor of the *Middle East Studies Bulletin*.

Uğur Yıldız is an assistant professor at the Department of International Relations, Aksaray University. His teaching and research fields are migration, citizenship, and political theory. He received his B.A. in Political Science from Bilkent University, Ankara, an M.A. in International Relations from Koç University, Istanbul. His Ph.D. on transnational migration is in Political Science from Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada. His research focuses extensively on forced migration.

ABBREVIATIONS

AKP	Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Justice and Development Party)
AP	Adalet Partisi (Justice Party)
BMENA	Broader Middle East and North Africa
CAATSA	Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions
CDSP	Common Security and Defence Policy
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CEES	Central and Eastern European Countries
CHP	Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (Republican Peoples Party)
CU	Customs Union
ECHR	European Court of Human Rights
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EŞİK	Eşitlik için Kadın Platformu (Women's Platform for Equality)
EU	European Union
JDP	Justice and Development Party
KADEM	Kadın ve Demokrasi Vakfı (Women and Democracy Foundation)
KEFEK	Kadın Erkek Fırsat Eşitliği Komisyonu (Equal Opportunity Commission for Women and Men)
KRG	Kurdish Regional Government
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MHP	Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi (Nationalist Movement Party)
NATO	The North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSC	National Security Council
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

PCA	Paris Climate Agreement
PRA	Presidency of Religious Affairs
TBMM	Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi (Turkish Grand National Assembly)
UN	The United Nations
UNFPA	United Nations Population and Development Fund
UNSC	United Nations Security Council

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Introduction

Harun Arikan and Zeynep Alemdar

For the past two decades, Turkey has been undergoing fundamental changes on domestic and foreign policy levels. Domestic political, legal, and social transformations are abundant. Under the dominant party system of the Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP, *the Justice and Development Party*) since 2002, Turkey's state institutions have gone under tremendous changes in the legislative, judiciary, and executive branches, as well as in political parties and the election system. These changes have brought about various pressures and questions on democratization, human rights, and identity-related issues. Transformation on the institutional level came with ideological divergences tearing up the republican fabric of the society.

H. Arikan (✉)

Çukurova University, Adana, Turkey

e-mail: harikan@cu.edu.tr

Z. Alemdar

Istanbul Okan University, Istanbul, Turkey

e-mail: zeynep.alemdar@okan.edu.tr

None of these developments happened in an isolated country. On the contrary, changes in the international and the sub-regional system have had important impacts on transformation of Turkish domestic and foreign policy. Post-Cold War era has not only represented a rise of globalization and regionalism, but also witnessed democratic backsliding and rise of electoral autocracies, including Turkey. Emergence of any form of authoritarianism, the upsurge of nationalism, and political instability in sub-regional systems surrounding Turkey, including the Middle East, Russia, and Europe, have affected developments in Turkish domestic and foreign policy.

This book aims to analyze these transformations in Turkey in the past two decades through both domestic and international lenses, highlighting the interaction between these two spheres as well. As an analytical framework, the book looks at external and internal factors affecting Turkish politics and society. It seeks to construct a more comprehensive framework by examining Turkish case not merely on domestic factors in isolation from developments in international and regional politics, but on the basis of interplay of external and internal factors. The following questions are addressed throughout the book:

- (1) To what extent have international and regional politics impacted the transformation process and changes in Turkish politics and society in the past two decades? How has the trend of democratic backsliding in Turkey and its periphery affected the form of transformation process in Turkish domestic and foreign policy?
- (2) To what extent have external actors such as the US and Russia as well as international organizations such as the EU, NATO, and the UN been effective in influencing Turkish domestic issues including democratization, human rights, and its foreign policy toward the Middle East and the Eastern Mediterranean?
- (3) To what extent have domestic historical legacies of institutions, party politics, debate on secularism /religion, and Kurdish issue impacted transformation and challenges in Turkey?

The book is designed to look into the future of Turkey's domestic and international politics through the prism of critical scholars. All chapters refer to a specific issue, yet with a keen look at the interaction between the domestic and international factors of policy choices of the past 20 years.

It covers an analysis of the past, present, and the prospects of Turkish politics and society with a focus on current developments and challenges. The book includes a wide range of topics on Turkish domestic and foreign policy, as well as contentious issues, such as democratization, rule of law, and social movements.

This book consists of 17 chapters, including this one. In the second chapter, Alper Ecevit provides a descriptive account of the transformation of political party and electoral system in Turkey in the last two decades. He underlines how the dramatic shift to a predominant party system in the 2000s brought about a change in electing the executive and how this engendered a majoritarian view of democracy.

In the next chapter, Harun Arkan and Alper Ecevit explain the “Turkish Type of Presidentialism” that transformed the parliamentary system into a presidential one in 2017. They present an analysis of the development and changes in executive-legislative relations with particular reference to the debate on parliamentarism *versus* presidentialism in Turkish politics. They explain the majoritarian view of democracy further and explain how in this new system separation of powers and judicial independence are subject to review, due largely to the relative weakness of checks and balances. The authors also discuss the changes in the constitution and provide a comparison of the new political system to the contemporary examples by relating it to the expansive literature on the topic.

In Chapter 4, Sanem Baykal dives into the role of the judiciary over the last two decades, explaining different societal and political forces on the Turkish judiciary. She demonstrates the damaging impact of the struggle between different forces on principles of democracy and protection of human rights. Her analysis is nuanced in its survey of the enabling/accelerating, as well as hindering factors and dynamics that transformed the Turkish judicial system, and she provides an insightful observation of how this transformation came with a magnitude of difficulties and hints at how to build a resilient political system with a strong state capacity for Turkey in the impending decades of potential turbulence.

In Chapter 5, Alper Yağcı explains the economic backdrop of the past two decades and the major international dynamics that contributed to Turkey’s substantial economic growth. His chapter contributes to our understanding of the later chapters focusing on Turkey’s domestic and foreign policy. Moreover, putting forth how Middle East became a major

source of immigrants, turning Turkey into a country with a large non-Turkish-speaking immigrant population for the first time in recent history, this chapter can be read as a preamble to Chapter 10 that focuses on the migration regime in Turkey.

Umut Azak's contribution opens the domestic politics part of the book. Azak discusses the transformation of secularism in Turkey in Chapter 6. After reviewing the historical background of the debate over secularism, Azak explains how the AKP government promoted a much more conservative understanding of Islam than its predecessors as the basis of Turkish national identity. Through her analysis, Azak also shows how and to what extent the AKP government's policies in the last two decades reflected a more visible Islamist agenda at both national and international levels. Zeynep Alemdar's chapter on gender equality in Turkey complements this analysis, demonstrating how the AKP's policies regarding women have changed over the course of its government, in interaction with its international dealings. In Chapter 7, Alemdar shows the interconnectedness of the international and national levels in affecting gender politics.

Chapter 8 provides a critical appraisal of the changing dynamics of protests under Turkey's authoritarian transformation. Mert Arslanalp and Deniz Erkmen assess the transformation and continuities in the protest arena in connection with regime transformation under the AKP. Using an original protest event dataset, they examine the repertoires of protests in the past two decades and explain how they changed under the progressively repressive regime.

In Chapter 9, Gökçe Balaban discusses the Kurdish issue, showing its constitutive effect on domestic and foreign policy practices of Turkey since the early Republican period. Through his chronological and thematic analysis of how the Turkish government reacted to regional and international politics in the past two decades, securitizing and desecuritizing the issue, the author argues that the waning of national security discourse in Turkey's Kurdish issue will be unlikely in foreseeable future.

In Chapter 10, Uğur Yıldız and Deniz Sert present an analysis of the transformation of migration governance in Turkey. By providing a brief account on the past periods on migratory regime in Turkey, the authors focus mainly on the post-2011 period. Showing how Turkey created an official bureaucracy and transformed its migration policy to a state-controlled system and how it marketized migration with state-imposed

regulations. Yıldız and Sert shed light into the economic underpinnings of the transformation of the past two decades of AKP government as well.

In parallel with this contribution, Sevgi Balkan Şahin and Marella Bodur Ün explain the strategic economic and political calculations of the AKP in selectively implementing European Union norms in environmental policy. In Chapter 11, Şahin and Ün explain how after holding off for five years, Turkey ratified the Paris Climate Agreement in 2021, prepared the Green Deal Action Plan, and declared its commitment for a carbon-neutral economy. They argue that this transformation is due to the international investment climate that has urged AKP to reconsider its preferences at a time when the economic crisis in Turkey has substantially eroded its electoral support base.

In Chapter 12, Çiğdem Nas documents the Turkey-EU relations of the past 20 years, showcasing this pragmatic approach, as well as the interaction of the domestic and international policy scenes. Nas explains how Turkey-EU relations regressed especially since the accession process started and how Turkey has moved further away from the EU membership, embroiled in internal political struggles, spillover effects from Arab uprisings, and the Syrian crisis and waning impact of the EU conditionality.

Chapter 13 follows with a focus on Turkish-Greek relations. Birol Yeşilada, after reviewing the historical background of critical conflicts in the Cyprus-Greece-Turkey triangle, provides an analysis of Turkey's current foreign and security priorities. Yeşilada explains how emergent issues in the region such as the refugees and natural gas discoveries and economic zones in the Eastern Mediterranean are likely to present challenges to Turkey's future in the region, EU, and her membership in the Western Alliance.

In Chapter 14, Hasan Deniz Pekşen examines Turkey-US relations, and the temporal overlaps in both domestic and global transformations for both countries. He shows how regional processes such as the Arab Spring, the BMENA Initiative, and Syrian Civil War and domestic processes such as the system change in Turkey, election of Trump administration, and the military coup attempt in Turkey have shaped the bilateral relations. Pekşen demonstrates the purely strategic nature of relations.

Habibe Özdal focuses on the transformation and challenges in relations between Turkey and Russia in Chapter 15. Özdal posits that Russia and Turkey were brought closer together by their deteriorating relationships with the West, mutual economic interests, and pragmatic realization

that failure to manage some of their differences is fraught with negative consequences for both. Through a depiction of the relations of the past two decades, she shows how their partnership is limited as it lacks both the institutionalization and common vision to go beyond its selective nature.

Özlem Tür's chapter on Turkey-Middle East relations, Chapter 16, captures the pragmatisms, ideological convergences and divergences, and the thick security concerns of the AKP governments' past two decades. Her succinct analysis of the domestic, regional, and international developments puts Turkey's Middle Eastern relations in perspective. Tür also discusses the continuing security challenges and possibilities for cooperation in Turkish-Middle East relations within the context of Turkey's domestic politics as well as regional dynamics.

This volume closes with the 17th Chapter on Turkey's relations with international organizations, documenting the past twenty years' engagement in global affairs. Özden Selcen Özmelek explains how Turkey interacted with international organizations, showing when and how it became more or less active, whether and how it has moved closer to or further from the organizations and their principles in light of the domestic and international developments.

This arduous affair of bringing in the domestic and international and their interaction into a single volume with each chapter aiming to put light onto a variety of factors was not going to be possible without a common understanding of the aim of the book and a penchant for a critical outlook. On the centenary of the Republic, in 2023, we would like to underscore the importance of understanding the complexity of the domestic situation in Turkey, and of its international affairs, and we hope that this volume contributes to a more sophisticated analysis of the country.



Transformation of Party and Election System in Turkey

Yüksel Alper Ecevit 

A party system is the result of competitive interactions between parties. It can take a competitive form to control public policy making or in some cases become a cooperative game for coalition building (Caramani, 2020). Political parties form a party system as they compete with each other for elective office and control of government (Wolinetz, 2006).

The major assumption behind the operation of a political party system is availability of an ‘electoral market’ where political parties compete for citizens’ electoral support. Hence, under certain circumstances where polarization is high and/or partisanship is a major source for support or loyalty, applying a system’s theory over political parties’ behavior becomes inapplicable (Kitschelt and Wilkinson, 2007). Turkish politics in the last two decades is considered as highly polarized and increasingly identity

Y. A. Ecevit (✉)

Department of Political Science and International
Relations, Çukurova University, Adana, Turkey
e-mail: acecevit@cu.edu.tr

based (Laebens & Öztürk, 2021; Somer, 2019). If that is a fact, the party system in Turkey should no longer be a factor to cause further variation in outcomes of interest in Turkish politics. On the contrary, the ever-changing structure of Turkey's political party system is influenced by electoral institutions, party strategies (e.g. forming alliances, merges, new entrants), and constitutional changes. In addition to this, the constituent elements of party system (e.g. numbers of effective parties and the relationship among them) are constantly changing. The stability of the political party in executive power since 2002 and the durability of its leader Recep Tayyip Erdoğan along with the presence of *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi* (CHP—Republican People's Party) as their staunch opposition mark an illusion of a monotonic and stable party system even though noteworthy changes took place. This chapter reveals the continuity and changes in the political party system of Turkey in the last two decades (2002–2022) and presents an overview of the literature by referring the Turkish case and offers a projection.

Based on the earliest efforts of party system classifications built on the number of political parties as the only dimension (Downs, 1957; Duverger, 1954), Turkey always fell into the multi-party system category since the end of military rule in 1983. Only after the General Elections in 2002, Turkish party system in the legislature resembled a two-party system as all parties failed to pass the national electoral threshold of ten percent, except *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* (AKP—Justice and Development Party) and CHP. As a result, AKP formed the single-party government and CHP took the role of main and the only oppositional party within the parliament. However, even under this peculiar period and without any seat in the parliament, the Turkish and Kurdish nationalists, and center-right parties remained to pose a significant alternative. Only two years after in the 2004 local elections, where a First-Past-The-Post system is applied, six parties managed to receive over four percent of the total votes and five parties were able to win at least 100 municipalities across the whole country. Those results indicated that a durable two-party system in Turkey was not within reach even though the parliamentary composition suggested otherwise.

The course of events has reinforced this expectation. Currently, the governing alliance is constituted of two major parties, AKP and *Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi* (MHP—Nationalist Action Party), and is supported by minor parties from within or outside the parliament including *Büyük*

Birlik Partisi (BBP—Great Union Party) and the *Vatan Partisi* (VP—Homeland Party). On the other hand, the oppositional forces are joined by six different parties of various sizes and are known as ‘*Altılı Masa*’ (The Table of Six).

In the current party system, five political parties hold more than 5% (30 seats) of the parliamentary seats and no single party can form parliamentary majority. Therefore, Turkey presents a continuous multi-party system since 1990s. Yet, scholars of Turkish politics would easily pick it up from here and argue the following: (a) Turkish party system is ever-changing, (b) AKP’s dominance marks the last two decades, (c) parties at the center of the ideological spectrum are in decline, and (d) parties are evolving around charismatic leaders with prior experience in party politics and bureaucracy (e.g. Akşener, Babacan, Davutoğlu), some hardliners on issue-based politics (e.g. Demirtaş, Özdağ, Bahçeli) and two long-serving leaders of two major parties (e.g. Erdoğan and Kılıçdaroğlu). Therefore, it would be simplistic to state that the party system has been stable and/or multi-party throughout the last two decades. To capture and explain parties’ activities, it is necessary to delve into the changes and continuities in the party system and make a careful read of the context in which politics operate.

PARTY SYSTEM TYPES

Sartori’s (1976) seminal work on party systems recognized the above-mentioned potential pitfall of categorization of party systems exclusively by the number of parties and suggested an alternative typology based on the inter-party relations. He classified party systems into two major groups: *Party systems under competitive systems* and *party systems under non-competitive systems*. In competitive systems, the alternative to the two-party systems is as follows: (a) polarized pluralism, (b) moderate pluralism and segmented societies, and (c) predominant party systems. Non-competitive systems include one-party systems and hegemonic party systems. These distinctions are crucial for understanding the Turkish case. The literature on Turkey, to be explained in the next section, offers a general agreement on the idea that party system after AKP’s second landslide victory in 2007 gradually but confidently was transformed into a predominant party system. This general agreement by scholars dated until very recently when the presidential system was established through

a constitutional referendum in 2017. During the debates over transition to presidential system, the major concern for empowering the *Cumhurbaşkanlığı* (the Presidency) with executive powers was the potential of the party system to turn into a hegemonic one. The hegemonic party system falls under Sartori's non-competitive category that would also signal the end or suspension of already fragile democracy in Turkey. The past record of Republic with one-party systems, electoral authoritarianism, and military coups speaks for itself and explains why scholars are pre-occupied with understanding to where the regime would lead (Turan, 2019).

Sartori offers the concept 'predominant' to define party system type as a contradistinction from the concept of hegemony (Sartori, 1976: 173). One distinguishing feature of predominant party systems from non-competitive one-party systems is that parties other than the major one are antagonistic oppositions and they legitimately and legally compete even though they are ineffective in challenging the government. In predominant party systems, the major party receives the absolute majority of seats in the parliament. Additionally, for a system to be called as a predominant, the major party should remain as predominant for three legislatures. Three consecutive absolute majorities can be a sufficient indication, if the electorate appears stabilized and that the absolute majority threshold is clearly surpassed, and/or that the interval is wide. The two-party systems and predominant party systems are fragile in nature. Small differences in returns or electoral system changes can transform the nature of the system. The particular distribution of power among parties is the defining feature of predominant systems, and if parties have equal opportunities to compete, then the change is possible. In predominant party systems, alternation in government does not happen, but it is not ruled out. Sartori (1976) carefully points out to potential inequalities in terms of access to resources between the governing and opposition parties, but he distinguishes predominant party systems from hegemonic systems by the level of opportunities provided for the minor parties. In the latter one, these opportunities are much more limited or non-existent. Sartori offers two other competitive party system types: moderate pluralism and polarized pluralism. The former is associated with low fragmentation and shorter ideological distance between parties while the latter is associated with high fragmentation and larger ideological distance. It is important to reveal the distinctive features of these systems because these are viable options as a follow-up to predominant party systems in competitive systems. First,

the polarized pluralism includes an anti-system party that is opposed to principles rather than issues. They are not necessarily revolutionary, but they offer a maximum level of ideological distance to the system. Anti-system parties undermine the legitimacy of the regime they oppose. Second distinctive feature is that there exists a bilateral opposition. In other words, there is more than one group of opposition and these groups are closer to the governing party than to each other. Other distinctive features of the polarized pluralism are the presence of a center-party, polarization, centrifugal drives, ideological patterning, irresponsible oppositions, and politics of outbidding. Moderate pluralism on the other hand differs from others with the following criteria: a relatively small ideological distance among its relevant parties, a bipolar coalitional configuration, and centripetal competition.

Even though Sartori's categorization is the most prominent and widely used one, Siaroff (2019) provides alternative and empirical approach to this categorization. Siaroff (2019) combined number of parties with their relative size and strength. His classification necessitated calculation of effective number of parties. Based on the effective number of parties, his major categories are two-party, two and a half party, moderately multi-party, and highly multi-party. These categories capture most of Sartori's categories but exclusively leaves the predominant party systems out. Following Mair's (2002) criticism, Siaroff agrees that predominance is not a category of its own; instead, it is party type that can fit into any category. According to Siaroff's analysis, Turkey, since 1980, is assessed to be a 'moderately multi-party system.'

TRANSFORMATION OF TURKEY'S PARTY SYSTEM

Arslantaş and Arslantaş (2020) present one of the most comprehensive accounts on political party system since the foundation of the Republic in 1923. In their analysis, they point to distinctive features of different time periods throughout the last century and evaluate each period within its own merits and provide an all-encompassing party system description for each period. Their evaluation of these periods is based on Sartori's (1976) above-mentioned and well-known taxonomy on party systems. The period of interest of this chapter is 'the 2002-onwards,' and Arslantaş and Arslantaş (2020) define the party system throughout this period as 'predominant party system with a leaning toward a hegemonic party system.' Their study ends in 2018 and therefore does not capture the

party system under the new presidential system adopted in 2018. The all-encompassing definition of each period implicates a stability in the party system since 2002. In this study, my major objective is to take a deeper look into this period and point to the contextual changes in it.

It was evident that the 2002 General Elections marked a major turning point in Turkish political history. The ten-percent threshold proved its role for the first time after banned political leaders were returned to electoral competition in 1989 elections. AKP and CHP collectively received barely over 50% of votes while they held 98% of total seats in the parliament. This was one of the most disproportional electoral results of Turkey and AKP entered into the political system as a governing party. Two prominent scholars of Turkish politics immediately turned their attention into the potential changes in the party system and revealed their projections only few years after the elections (Özbudun, 2006; Sayarı, 2007). According to Sayarı (2007), the outcome of 2002 General Elections created a party system that differed a great extent from the 1991–2002 period where political party system is largely fragmented and polarized. Even though electoral fragmentation remained stable, a two-party system emerged in the parliament when distribution of seats is concerned. As a result of this, government formation was facilitated as single-party government was formed by the AKP thanks to the majority in the parliament. Sayarı (2007) was unsure about the stability of the party system as it was not accompanied by the stabilization of the electorate. Sayarı (2007) proposed four alternative scenarios for the upcoming period including a predominant party system, a two-party system, the return of coalitional politics, or an alliance of political opposition. The history unfolded and the first, possibly Sayarı's most likely scenario, became the most favored explanation in Turkish politics.

Esen and Ciddi (2011), and Çarkoğlu (2011) were early announcers of the party system change in Turkey toward a predominant party system. Gümüşü (2013) affirmed that the predominant party system was emerging and she was one of the first scholars to offer a causal mechanism through 'initial mobilization, expansion of core support through material benefits, delegitimization of the opposition and selective use of ideological rigidity and flexibility' on why predominant party system was being established (p. 225). Özbudun (2006), in a similar fashion, attempted to understand the changing circumstances in Turkish politics. According to his major argument, the AKP was not a continuation of Islamist political

parties. Instead, it was an alliance of large blocs including center, center-right, Islamists, and nationalists. Özbudun's main contribution, though, was to argue for the continuity in the party system. According to him, voting pattern, or ideological voting along left-right spectrum, remained stable. In 2002, the 68% of support to political parties of the right was not even interesting or the highest number of vote share for right parties. On the other hand, AKP marked an ideological discontinuity between previously Islamist parties and center-right parties as its voters showed a hybrid view of these two major groups in public opinion survey. So, Özbudun, whose argument would be proven by the upcoming elections, indicated that AKP is a new, national, and a party of alliance which was likely to remain if it manages the delicate balance of modernists and Islamists within the party. Kalaycıoğlu (2013) supports parts of this analysis by revealing that positioning on the right side of the ideological spectrum is more advantageous for party competition in Turkey. Conversely, he points out to the importance of leadership, but specifically Erdoğan's significance for AKP in generating support for the political party. In a circumstance where political party organizations are not appropriately organized, leaders' role in party preferences seem to play even a larger role than ideology.

In a later study by Özbudun (2013), well-known social cleavage theory by Lipset and Rokkan (1967) has been applied to Turkish case in an historical analysis. That study assumes that the Turkish party system presents a continuity from Ottoman era where the center-periphery cleavage proposed by Şerif Mardin shapes the political sphere. Military coups are external shocks to the system and fosters already existing social cleavages. The rise of political Islam or ethnic cleavages reflects *the 'renewed saliency'* of center-periphery cleavage nested in Turkish politics (Özbudun, 2013: 51). Özbudun points out to three enduring and defining maladies of political party system in Turkey: *Fragmentation, Volatility and Polarization*. First, the fragmentation of the political party system dates back to 1960s and was increasing until 2002 elections. Between 2002 and 2011, Özbudun points to the decline in the fragmentation and he links this with the emergence of a predominant party system in Turkish politics. Second, interbloc volatility is comparatively low in Turkish politics. The concept of interbloc refers to the left-right dimension of party politics. Özbudun argues (2013) that, party system in Turkey converged with social cleavages, and therefore, economic voting was the only factor offering room for intra-bloc volatility. Following

other scholars' findings, he suggests that between 2002 and 2011 the AKP increased its vote share as a result of retrospective and prospective economic voting. The third malady, the polarization, on the other hand, remains to be one of the defining practices of Turkish political party system according to Özbudun (2013). The AKP period indicated major examples of polarized politics particularly around the religious and ethnic cleavages. In a recent study, Mete-Dokucu and Just (2022) analyze the party system in Turkey by evaluating the level of polarization since 1950s. After carefully investigating Comparative Manifesto Project's enriched dataset, they found that polarization in the Turkish party system is not a constant feature and is significantly reduced by undemocratic involvement of military through coups. As far as post-2002 years are concerned, polarization is steadily increasing since AKP came into power; however, the level of party polarization is moderate when compared to the Turkey's multi-party era in general.

Decline in fragmentation and volatility along with enduring polarization paves the way for a predominant party system. The results of the 2011 elections suggested that the predominant party system was established and a hegemonic party system was no longer out of sight. The institutionalization of the party system could be expected to sustain this trend. However, Yardımcı-Geyikçi (2018) claims that Turkey lacks party system institutionalization. She conceptualizes the party system institutionalization with two major components: *political entrenchment and inter-party trust*. The first one requires 'principles, norms and codes of political competition that should prevail for a long period of time and be accepted by the political parties to ensure the stability and legitimacy of the rules of the game' (Yardımcı-Geyikçi, 2018: 219). The inter-party trust is conceptualized by the level of recognition between political parties as legitimate agents and not as a threat to the political regime. A careful investigation of these two components in the Turkish context leads Yardımcı-Geyikçi to conclude that the party system in Turkey lacks institutionalization and this plays a crucial role in Turkey's authoritarian drift. Öney and Selck (2017), in a similar vein, analyze the Turkish party system between 1980 and 2015 and argue that the Turkey's party system is yet to be fully institutionalized; however, scores better than new democracies and the dominant party bring a certain degree of stability and predictability to the regime.

Öney and Selck (2017)'s analysis is an empirical one and is based on well-accepted theoretical and empirical frameworks by Siaroff's (2019)

on types of party system and Croissant and Völkel's (2012) party system institutionalization (PSI). The application of the PSI model to the post-1980 reveals some important findings. Turkish party system offers a high level of electoral volatility after 1980s; however, since 2007, the electoral volatility dropped significantly and the electoral results have become much more predictable. Political parties are seen as legitimate actors of politics, and the linkage between parties and citizens is strong. The trust rates are higher compared to new democracies of Europe, and party membership significantly increased between 2007 and 2013. In terms of party organization (operationalized as party age), Turkish political parties are stable and have a clear pattern of leadership. In almost every indicator, Turkey's political party system is more institutionalized than the new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe and less institutionalized compared to established democracies of Western Europe. The party system, on the other hand, has changed from multi-party system to a predominant party system in 2007. The electoral volatility dropped to lower levels, polarization is increasing and the party fragmentation decreased until 2015 elections. The findings of Öney and Selck are cut in 2015. In an analysis of 2018 General Elections, Moral (2021) finds that there is a slight increase in electoral volatility and forty percent of this change is due to İYİ Parti (İYİP—Good Party)'s entrance into the political party system. Therefore, the electoral results until today (February 2023) reveal that the electoral volatility in Turkey is considerably low since 2007. Below, I replicated and updated the table from Öney and Selck (2017) displaying major indicators of the post-1980 Turkish party system (Table 2.1).

Within the scope of this manuscript, I focus on the changes in the last two decades. The effective number of electoral parties (ENEP) and legislative parties (ENP) is two different indicators to measure number of political parties in elections and parliament. In Turkey, they are both relatively stabilized since 2007. In Turkey, two parties emerge as the arch rivals, AKP and CHP, with two minor but effective parties, Halkların Demokratik Partisi (HDP—People's Democratic Party) and MHP. A major change in 2018 has been the electoral emergence of İYİ Parti as a splitter from the MHP. In 2018, İYİP received 9.96% of the vote, and as they joined the alliance under *the Millet İttifaki* (the Millet Alliance), they were able to win seats in the parliament. İYİP leader, Meral Akşener, also received 7.42% of the votes as a presidential candidate which marks the genuine support for the party and their leader. İYİP also received 7.45% of the votes in the 2019 local elections even though the party made alliance

Table 2.1 Indicators of the post-1980 Turkish party system types

<i>Election year</i>	<i>ENP</i>	<i>ENEP</i>	<i>Disproportionality</i>	<i>Fractionalization</i>
1987	2.05	4.35	20.77	0.75
1991	3.59	4.67	11.27	0.79
1995	4.40	6.50	7.26	0.84
1999	4.80	6.88	6.20	0.85
2002	1.85	6.05	24.23	0.82
2007	2.25	3.52	10.94	0.71
2011	2.34	2.95	7.34	0.66
2015 June	3.13	3.65	5.12	0.72
2015 Nov	2.45	2.98	6.83	0.66
2018	3.11	3.72	5.58	0.73
Average	2.99	4.52	10.55	0.75

Sources Öney and Selck (2017), Moral (2021) and authors' own calculations. The table is an updated replication of Table 9 in Öney and Selck (2017)'s article with up-to-date data

with the CHP in major metropolitan areas. These results imply that İYİP is likely to endure within the Turkey's political party system.

Another important mechanism operating within the Turkish party system since 1980s has been the existence of an unprecedentedly high national threshold of ten percent. The disproportionality became a major issue as most votes were not represented in the national parliament. 2002 was a remarkable election year as it left over 40% of the votes as unrepresented in the legislature. However, since 2002, political parties made strategic moves such as party merges (e.g. AKP and HAS Party), independent candidates (e.g. HADEP and BDP's strategies until 2015), and electoral alliances (e.g. Cumhuriyet and Millet Alliances). Therefore, disproportionality tremendously declined. Last but not least, the party system is fragmented and the fragmentation seems to be stabilized around 0.75.

AKP: THE HEGEMON OF TURKEY?

It is convenient, for scholars, to claim that the Turkish party system forms a predominant party system. The AKP's unrivaled success in national and local elections along with no failure in nation-wide referenda since 2002 is hard to be overlooked. The major question is: 'Is there more to come?'. There are significant concerns in the rise of authoritarianism in Turkey, and the adoption of presidentialism fueled the debate as the head of the

executive has been strengthened vis-à-vis the parliament and other potential institutional veto powers in the political system. President Erdoğan already won two consecutive presidential elections in the first round and currently is the leading candidate for the first round of upcoming elections in 2023. As mentioned above, Arslantaş and Arslantaş (2020) define the political party system in Turkey as a ‘predominant party system with a leaning toward a hegemonic party system.’ If that is a correct assessment, Turkey’s competitive party system will transition to a non-competitive one. That implies the end of democracy. In Sartori’s conceptualization, hegemonic systems do not allow alternation in power because alternative political parties, if any, are satellite parties. Additionally, the governing party cannot be held accountable for policies. Çınar (2019) presents a comprehensive study of the decline of democracy in Turkey and analyzes the role of hegemonic parties in a comparative perspective. According to him, hegemonic-party systems are ‘ruled by single political parties without interruption under increasingly authoritarian political conditions while holding regular multiparty elections.’ Hegemonic parties govern under ‘quasi-authoritarian systems dominated by a single party which is pluralistic in organization, pragmatic rather than rigidly ideological in outlook, and absorptive rather than ruthlessly destructive in its relationship to other groups’ (LaPalombara & Weiner, 1966: 38–39). According to Çınar, constitutional referendum in 2017 marks the turning point for the AKP from being a competitive authoritarian to a hegemonic party. He lists the following five criteria for qualifying a party as a ‘hegemon’: (a) dominating the electoral competition by winning more votes than the sum of all opposition, (b) holding a strategic position in the political spectrum such as making it impossible to form a government without inclusion of hegemonic party, (c) remaining as a governing party for a long time (at least three terms), (d) being governmentally hegemonic by the creation of interrelated and mutually supportive public policies and institutions, and e) authoritarian tendencies manifested by electoral competition and beyond.

First three conditions should be less arbitrary, and they would be revealed as the elections are unfolded. However, it is not straightforward in Turkish case. Çınar’s analysis does not include the presidential and parliamentary elections in 2018, so to project for the near future, it is necessary to discuss these elections. First I would like to touch upon how the transformation in the electoral system created incentives for parties to

cooperate and conflict, and second, I will discuss whether AKP is likely to become a hegemon or not.

The major impact of the transition to presidential system on the party system was through the transformation in the electoral rules. Since 1995, Turkey used a proportional representation (PR) system where constituencies are defined by city administrative borders and a number of MPs were proportionate to the population of the city. The allocation of seats was done by using D'hondt formula and a ten-percent national threshold. This electoral system was a distorted version of PR systems and was favorable toward larger parties. The executive, prime minister and her ministers, was enacted due to a vote of confidence in the parliament. After transition to presidentialism, the executive office has been directly elected by the people. The presidential election is similar to French presidential elections where absolute majority (50%+1) is required to get elected and a two-round run-off system is applied if no candidate receives the required majority in the first round. This creates incentives for political parties to act strategically and make pre-electoral alliances. In 2018, MHP, for example, did not nominate any candidates and supported the President Erdoğan's candidacy. Aside from that, the changed rules for General Elections created more incentives for parties to cooperate. As a result of a change in electoral system in March 2018, the restrictions over electoral alliances were lifted. According to the new rule, parties could make formal and pre-electoral alliances. Voters were given two options in the ballot: (1) to vote for their favorite party and (2) to vote for the alliance. If the total vote of the alliances (a sum of alliance's votes and each parties' votes) passes the national threshold, each party of the alliance was considered to avoid the consequences of the threshold. Votes of the alliance (surplus votes) were distributed proportionally to the parties on the ballot. This created incentives for minor parties to merge with larger ones to avoid national threshold. This rapprochement between distinct political parties created a moderate environment among them. For example, CHP, İYİ Parti, and *Saadet Partisi* (Felicity Party-SP) created the *millet ittifakı* (the millet alliance). These parties are not in the same ideological camp, and they represent different groups in the societal cleavages but their electoral coordination created incentives for further cooperation before 2019 local elections and 2023 presidential elections. In 2022, a new change in the electoral rules lowered the national threshold to seven percent of the national votes and eliminated the distribution of surplus votes. These changes are likely to reduce the attractiveness of the alliance system as it

creates more incentives for parties to run independently. For the 2023 elections, İYİ Parti and MHP are potential candidates to split from their alliances and run as independently as both parties are likely to receive seven percent of the votes independently. These changes, overall, created a venue for cooperation, communication, and coordination both for parties in power and for parties in opposition. As a result of this, currently, we see two large camps of parties. On the one side, there is MHP and AKP usually working together for legislative and executive decisions. On the other side, there is *Altılı Masa*, which means six oppositional parties led by CHP that are coordinated for creating electoral strategies for the 2023 elections. These six parties are CHP, İYİP, SP, *Demokrat Parti* (DP—Democrat Party), *Gelecek Partisi* (GP—Future Party), and *Demokrasi ve Atılım Partisi* (DEVA—Democracy and Progress Party).

The 2018 presidential elections in Turkey created a presidential candidate, President Erdoğan, who received more votes than the sum of all opposition. Yet, his candidacy has been supported by some of the opposition parties, MHP and BBP, openly. One may question whether these parties offered any policy alternatives to AKP to be recognized as an opposition. However, they have been traditionally separate parties, and particularly, MHP received 11.13% of the votes in the 2018 parliamentary elections. These parties made a peculiar arrangement where ministerial positions have not been distributed among parties as it happens in more common practices of coalition formation. Instead, Erdoğan chose, from within or outside the parliament, the ministers. But it is necessary to admit that without MHP's support Erdoğan would not be able to win the presidency. In addition to that, parliamentary composition also requires MHP's support for creating a law-making simple majority. When all opposition parties, including MHP, make an alliance, it is possible for them to form a parliamentary coalition to create deadlock in legislation process. So, it is hard to claim that it is impossible to create a government without Erdoğan and AKP's inclusion. Instead, it would be fair to say that opposition is not united and MHP simply prefers AKP's rule to a coalition with other opposition parties. The only condition fulfilled in Çınar's hegemonic party rules is the longevity of AKP's government. The party is in power for the fifth term and has been the leading party for the last seven national-level elections. Other behavioral conditions such as authoritarian tendencies and being governmentally hegemonic are surely open to discussion, but a scholar of Turkish politics would find adequate

evidence to support the thesis. The local elections in 2019 are encouraging for the opposition. The major opposition, CHP, allied with the electorate of İYİP and HDP to win metropolitan areas, such as İstanbul and Ankara, which have been controlled by AKP and its predecessors for almost three decades and were seen as the symbols of AKP's dominance over the Turkish electorate. Even though this chapter has been written before the elections calendar has been announced for 2023, the opposition leader Kılıçdaroğlu provides optimistic messages for winning the presidential seat. These conditions are sufficient to expect that Turkish party system will remain under the competitive party systems category in the near future, too. Having said this, it is necessary to mention that the impact of the exogenous shock, *the Kahramanmaraş earthquake*, to the system is yet to be known.

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Transformation and Challenges in the Governmental System in Turkey: The Turkish Type of Presidentialism

Harun Arikan and Yüksel Alper Ecevit

INTRODUCTION

Transformation of governmental system has been (and will mostly like be) one of the most controversial topics on the agenda of the Turkish politics. Therefore, this chapter presents an analysis of the development of transformation and challenges in the governmental system in Turkey. It firstly analyses parliamentary system in Turkey from a historical perspective, and then, it moves on to identify features of the Turkish type of presidentialism.

H. Arikan (✉) · Y. A. Ecevit
Department of Political Science and International
Relations, Çukurova University, Adana, Turkey
e-mail: harikan@cu.edu.tr

Y. A. Ecevit
e-mail: acecevit@cu.edu.tr

PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM IN TURKEY IN A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Albeit with some structural deficiencies, Turkish parliamentary system has a long history dating back almost 150 years. The first Ottoman Constitution of 1876 (Kanun-i Esasi) established *a sui generis* governance of constitutional monarchy in which the Sultan had the total executive authority, with the extensive control over parliament (Meclis-i Umumi), including an absolute veto power of any act of parliament. In other words, parliament had a limited legislative authority, as it had to obtain permission from the Sultan to propose a bill (Kydyralieva, 2019: 242). However, the first Ottoman Constitution lasted for only two years, as the Sultan Abdulhamit II suspended it on the ground of social unrest, caused by war with Russia in 1878 (Earle, 1925: 73). Despite a short period for constitutional order, parliament played a crucial role in providing forum for political debate as a means of bringing diverse issues onto the agenda of the government (Kayalı, 1995: 267).

Due to a strong reformist movement by the Young Turks and the Committee of Union and Progress, constitutional order was re-established under the framework of the Constitution of 1908. The new Constitution had provided greater scope for parliament to participate in policymaking process, with some considerable power over the executive. As one scholar described it “*a liberal character of parliamentary government*” (Earle, 1925: 79). In fact, the Constitution of 1908 made the executive fully responsible to the parliament. In addition, a number of articles in relation to fundamental rights, including equality and freedom of expression, were included in the new Constitution. Nevertheless, it had not fully implemented due, largely, to the First World War. In short, as the above analysis indicates that since the first Constitution of 1876, governmental system of Ottoman Empire had slowly transformed from absolute monarchy to somehow a form of parliamentary monarchy. Yet, this does not necessarily imply that a parliamentary monarchy in Ottoman Empire had reached the level required in parliamentary democracy. In fact, there were serious shortcomings in the Ottoman governmental system, as compared to a well-functioning of parliamentary system.

The Constitution of 1921 is the first constitution of modern Turkey, which had served as an interim and transitional constitution during the War of Independence. Therefore, its fundamental nature and contents had been shaped by the conditions of the war. The constitution was

based on the unity of powers principle in which executive and legislative powers were exercised by the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (Özpek, 2012: 156). It should be noted that the 1921 Constitution did not include articles in relation to fundamental rights for citizens and freedoms. Throughout 1922–1923, the Grand National Assembly of Turkey passed some constitutional amendments, including the abolitions of the Sultanate, the Caliphate, and proclamation of the Republic, to clarify principle of the new Republic.

The 1924 Constitution provided highly centralized political structure with the absence of judicial review. Although Article 103 of the 1924 Constitution stated that “*No law shall be in contradiction to the Constitution,*” the Constitution did not establish Constitutional Court mechanism for judicial review. Therefore, it was the Grand National Assembly of Turkey to have the final say on the constitutionality of its own laws (Lord, 2012: 246). The philosophy and contents of the 1924 Constitution reflected a majoritarian type of government with the supremacy of the parliament (Lord, 2012; Smith, 1958). As Edward C. Smith pointed out that “*The sovereignty of the nation could best be expressed through the concentration of powers in the nation’s representatives in the Grand National Assembly*” (1958: 105).

It should be noted that although the 1924 Constitution seemed to provide parliamentary system where the executive derived its democratic legitimacy from the Turkish Grand Assembly, effectiveness of parliamentary governmental system in Turkey was restricted by a number of factors. One of the main reasons behind the inadequacy of the Turkish parliamentary system was a lack of multi-party politics in Turkish politics up to the end of the Second World War. Moreover, as a single party, *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi* (CHP, the Republican People’s Party) was characterized as a centralized and highly disciplined party under the strong leadership of the founders of the Republic, namely Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and İsmet İnönü. Therefore, the CHP became the most decisive political actor in the political system (Ayan, 2010: 199). Indeed, during the single party period, due to the centralized nature of party politics, the legislative and executive branches were dominated by the same political party elites. As a result, checks on the governments by the parliament, which is critical importance in the parliamentary system, were not exercised effectively. Although a multi-party politics was introduced in the late 1940s, polarization and fragmentation dominated the Turkish politics between 1946 and 1960, as Turkish political parties and their leaderships failed

to tolerate political opposition (Kalaycıoğlu, 2001: 55; Sayarı, 1977). As evident from the analysis above, governmental system in Turkey between 1923 and 1960 experienced serious difficulties resulting from essential incompatibility of its system with the principles of parliamentary system.

Transition from a one party state to a multi-party system ended up by the military coup of 1960. Soon after the military coup, the 1961 Constitution came into force which represented the form of parliamentary system. Although the Constitution introduced principle of separation of powers, the Turkish Grand Assembly, based on bicameral legislature of the National Assembly and Senate of the Republic, was the dominant branch of government (Szylowicz, 1963: 372). It also introduced a dual executive system in which President shared executive powers with the Council of Ministers. Although President had a significant impact on the politics in many ways, he or she was not politically responsible, while the prime ministers and ministers were collectively and individually responsible to Turkish Grand Assembly (Gözler, 2018: 186). Furthermore, judicial system was strengthened with the establishment of Constitutional Court.

Although the 1961 Constitution included provisions to advance social and institutional pluralism, it failed to establish a well-functioning parliamentary democracy, due, largely, to the lack of political tolerance between the political parties and political actors. As an example, after the 1960 military coup, while Adalet Partisi (AP, *the Justice Party*) always questioned the legitimacy of the new regime and accused the CHP on the ground of taking advantage from the military regime, CHP perceived the AP as a political party undermining Turkish revolution (Kalaycıoğlu, 2001: 55). Without a doubt during the late 1970s, the Turkish Parliament and the governments were unable to operate, due to weak and short-lived coalition governments. Furthermore, social and political polarization within society and clashes between radical political groups had generated political and economic instability in Turkey (Kalaycıoğlu, 2001: 55; Hale, 2012: 105). Consequently, the military coup of 12 September 1980 put an end to the 1961 Constitution.

The military regime under General Kenan Evren was not satisfied with the governmental system of the 1961 Constitution. Therefore, the Constitution of 1982 established a form of hybrid regime, reflecting some features of both parliamentarism and semi presidentialism. Heper and Çınar (1996) described the political system as the “*Parliamentary Government with a strong President.*” At first, the Constitution not only

increased powers and responsibilities of the executive, but also made the National Security Council, consisting of various cabinet ministers and representatives of the Armed Forces, a crucial actor in policymaking process. The democratic transition process was highly influenced by the military in several aspects and this created a legacy for Turkish politics with military's tutelary powers (Ecevit, 2020). This clearly strengthened the role of military in Turkish politics. Additionally, the President, with considerable constitutional powers over the executive, legislative, and the judicial branches without political responsibility, shared executive authority with the Council of Ministers. Besides, the 1982 regime aimed at creating a strong state at the expense of fundamental freedoms. In short, some characteristics of governmental system of the 1982 Constitution were not compatible with principles of parliamentary system (Atar, 2001: 221). The role of the President was very contextual. For a while, the party with the highest number of seats was able to get their leader elected as the President and this created ambiguities in executive power. The behavior of the presidents resembled the political system to a semi-presidential system at different times (Ecevit & Kapan, 2020). As a result, during the 1990s, Turkish governmental system had experienced serious difficulties resulting from a number of factors, including the essential incompatibility of party politics with a lack of coalition building culture.

A New System: The Presidential Government System in Turkey

Changing the parliamentary system with presidential type of governance had become a matter of debate in Turkish politics since the late 1980s. In particular, a change of request had come from the leadership of political parties within the right political spectrum (Cillier, 2022: 263). Failure in implementation of parliamentary system had enabled leadership of some political parties to legitimize their request to replace parliamentary system with the presidential ones. Turgut Özal, who served as the President and Prime Minister of Turkey, was the first party leader to bring up the issue for political discussion. In the same manner, Süleyman Demirel, former President, and Tansu Ciller, former Prime Minister, continued the debate on transition from a parliamentary system to presidential system on the grounds that presidential system would provide political stability with a strong executive to transform Turkish politics and society. More recently, since 2003, shortly after Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP, *Justice*

and Development Party) came to power under the leadership of Erdoğan, the debate over presidential system had become more apparent. As an example, soon after the 2011 general election, the AKP recommended “the Executive Proposal” to introduce presidential system, yet opposition parties rejected it (Yilmaz, 2018: 4; Tosun, 2016: 127). Following the 2007 Turkish constitutional referendum on electoral reform which introduced a popular vote for the presidential election, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan became the first elected President in 2014. These were early signs of erosion in the role of parliamentary system in Turkey because election of President by a popular vote with a considerable executive power created a dual executive which would practically transform the Turkish parliamentary system to a semi-presidential system (Tosun, 2016: 128). After the 2014 presidential election, the AKP under Erdoğan provided ambiguous signals whether they intended to continue with a parliamentary system or a presidential one. However, soon after the July 15 failed coup attempt in 2016, the AKP and Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi (MHP, *the Nationalist Movement Party*) proposed numbers of constitutional amendments, including introducing executive presidency. Finally, with the referendum on April 16, 2017, the new era of Turkish governmental system has started. Nevertheless, the timing of the 2017 referendum received severe criticism as it took place under the political conditions of *the State of Emergency*. By implications, political circumstance in Turkey during the referendum had raised concerns over democratic norms on the grounds of participation of political actors, free and open debate, and principle of equality opportunity (European Commission for Democracy Through Law (Venice Commission, 2017: 7). The opposition campaign failed to garner more than half of the votes and the *Yes Vote* received 51.41 percent of the votes. The majority in major cities such as İstanbul, Ankara, İzmir, Antalya, and Adana rejected the constitutional change; however, presidentialism was established via referendum. The research on the determinants of the voters’ support for presidentialism revealed that partisanship was the major driver for the vote choice as AKP and MHP voters predominantly voted for change (Aytaç et al., 2017). These parties organized their campaign around the idea of “stronger Turkey,” political stability, and effective governance (Esen & Gümüşçü, 2017: 308–309). On the other hand, the CHP and Halkların Demokratik Partisi (HDP, *People’s Democratic Party*) voters along with MHP dissidents which later organized under a new split party opted for parliamentary system and warned against the potential of authoritarianism and one-man rule (Esen & Gümüşçü,

2017: 310–312). The findings also showed that the support for presidentialism started to increase since June 2015 when the coalition talks have taken place and failed to establish a coalition as AKP lost its parliamentary majority for the first time since their rise to power in 2002 (Aytaç et al., 2017).

As for as the credentials of Turkey's new presidential government system is concerned, criticisms are primarily centered on the highly centralized and powerful executive, with partisan affiliation of the president, the relatively weakness of checks and balances in the systems, and the lack of impartiality in the judicial system (Cillier, 2022; European Commission for Democracy Through Law 2017). With regard to executive power of the Turkish Presidential Government, the Article 8 of Turkish Constitution stated that *executive power and function shall be exercised by carried out by the President of the Republic in conformity with the Constitution and laws* (Constitution of the Republic of Turkey, 1982). As is seen from the above, Article 8 ended the dual authority in the executive by the abolishment of the office of Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers. As Head of the State, the President represents the state and the unity of the Turkish Nations, appoints and dismisses the deputies of the President, the ministers, and the high-ranking executives, determines national security policies, receives diplomats, and ratifies and promulgates international conventions and treaties (the Article 104, Constitution of the Republic of Turkey).

As for the legislative power of the President, although the President does not have the power to propose bill, the President, as the chairperson of the political party, can influence in legislative process. Without a doubt, the amended Constitution has not only provided an immense executive power on the President, but has also increased the President's influence over the legislation. In other words, given the role and power of party leadership in highly centralized party system in Turkey, partisan affiliation provides the President an effective tool to exert considerable influence over the Parliament (Cillier, 2022: 269). This is clearly incompatible with principle of checks and balances, as required in presidential system. Moreover, the President may issue presidential decrees on the matters concerning executive power, with the exception of the matters in relation to fundamental rights and individual rights (the Article 104, Constitution of the Republic of Turkey). Yet, it seems to require a clear definition of what constitutes executive matters which are highly debatable and vague areas. Turkey's recent withdrawal from the İstanbul Convention

with the presidential decree is a clear example of vagueness and different interpretation of the scope of presidential decrees on executive matters. Furthermore, the President has a power to renew parliamentary election (the Article 116). Additionally, the Constitution provides the President with the power of sending the laws back to the Parliament for reconsideration. In this case, an absolute majority is required to override the presidential veto power (the Article 89). Besides all, the President can propose laws regarding amendment to the Constitution to referendum (the Article 104). Last but not least, the President can declare state of emergency under the circumstances stipulated in the Article 119 of the Turkish Constitution. As is seen from the above analysis, the amended Constitution presents a greater legislative scope for the President than before.

Whenever the credentials of Turkish democracy and the independence of the judiciary are evaluated, the judicial powers of the President are identified as a problem. The President has the right directly or indirectly to appoint the twelve members of the Constitutional Court (Article 146, Constitution of the Republic of Turkey), the Chief and Deputy Chief of Public Prosecutor (Article 154), and one-fourths of the member of the Council of State (Article 155). Besides, the President appoints the four members of the Council of Judges and Prosecutors (Article 159, Constitution of the Republic of Turkey).

Parliament has always an essential role to check and challenge the work of the executive in a democratic society. The Turkish Parliament has failed to act as an elected institution to scrutinize the work of the Turkish governments since 1982. The strong and centralized executive with the lack of an effective checks and balances in Turkish governmental system seems to have been one of the main reasons behind this failure. The amended Constitution of 2017 has continued to centralize the executive without providing necessary mechanism to hold the executive accountable (European Commission, 2021: 3). According to the Constitution, the Turkish Parliament does not have power in the appointment of the ministers, and thus, it cannot exercise supervisory power and vote of confidence over the executive. Furthermore, the Parliament has no role of approval in appointment process of the high-ranking executives. It can only exercise its power in the form of obtaining information, parliamentary inquiry of examination on a specific subject, and parliamentary investigation in relation to deputies of the President and the ministers (Article 98, Constitution of the Republic of Turkey). Absolute majority is

necessary to table a notion for parliamentary investigation over the President, the deputies of the President, and the ministers. Then two-thirds of the total number of Parliament is required to refer the case the Supreme Criminal Tribunal (Article 106, Constitution of the Republic of Turkey). Given the complexity of procedure and partisan affiliation of the President and ministers (in the case of the majority of members of Parliament who belong to the same political party as the President), parliamentary scrutiny over the executive seems to be very difficult to implement.

The increasing capacity of executive to exercise political control over other institutions, particularly the legislature and the judiciary, is defined as institutional hegemony (Pérez-Liñán et al. 2019). The Turkish case explained above presents a clear example of increasing institutional hegemony of the executive, namely the presidency. Transition to presidential systems is usually defended by its potential to eliminate executive-legislative deadlock. According to this approach, deadlock is often associated with lack of elite-level cooperation and thus the undermining of political legitimacy of both executive and legislative institutions which would result in below-par democratic performance. Recent findings challenge this view and reveal that presidential hegemony in Latin American democracies has been the major driver for political instability and caused democratic backsliding (Pérez-Liñán et al., 2019). Contrary to the expectation, Pérez-Liñán et al. (2019) found that the institutionally weaker presidents created better results for democratic survival throughout the twentieth century in Latin American cases because their alternatives used their control of political institutions to weaken political opposition and that is an indispensable component of democratic regimes. Not only in the Latin American cases, but across the world the accumulation of too much power in the hands of the incumbent is a persistent threat to the democratic stability in the Post-Cold War era (Svolik, 2015). Pérez-Liñán et al. (2019) developed a quantifiable measure of institutional hegemony of presidency. The indexed measures are a combination of legislative and judicial control of the presidency. The legislative component is measured by the arithmetic average of the weight of presidents' political party in the Congress (or parliament) and the weight of the governing coalition in the Congress. The judicial component is measured according to the appointment year of the Constitutional Court members and whether the appointment is made during the incumbent president's term in office. Based on these measures, the hegemony score ranges between 0 and 1 where 1 refers to president's full institutional hegemony.

When we evaluate Turkish case based on this measure, we found that president’s institutional hegemony score is 0.69 in 2022. Turkey scores 0.53 in presidential control over legislative and 0.83 in judicial control. For a comparative analysis of Turkey with contemporary Latin American political systems, Table 3.1 displays president’s institutional hegemony over legislative and judiciary in 19 countries. Pérez-Liñán et al. (2019)’s analysis reaches until only 2016. Therefore, Latin American cases are evaluated on 2016 and Turkey is evaluated with existing 2022 scores. Turkey ranks 5th among 19 cases and it refers to high levels of president’s institutional hegemony. Particularly in judicial power scores Turkey presents a case where the President has extensive influence on the appointments of Constitutional Court. As of October 6, 2022, 10 out of 15 Constitutional Court judges have been appointed during the President Erdoğan’s existing term or previous term and all of them have been appointed during a government led by his political party as the AKP remained in power over 20 consecutive years.

Table 3.1 Presidents’ institutional hegemony in Latin America and Turkey

<i>Country</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Legislative power</i>	<i>Judicial power</i>	<i>Overall</i>
Ecuador	2016	86	93.83	91
Bolivia	2016	34	100	78
Colombia	2016	92	63.18	73
Brasil	2016	81	64.07	70
Turkey	2022	54	83.3	68.4
Uruguay	2016	71	66.66	68
Peru	2016	81	61.9	68
Chile	2016	75	60.31	65
Venezuela	2016	49	70.31	63
Dominic Rep	2016	27	76.56	60
El Salvador	2016	40	70	60
Nicaragua	2016	31	62.5	52
Paraguay	2016	39	44.44	43
Mexico	2016	22	46.15	38
Panama	2016	50	10	23
Argentina	2016	69	0	23
Honduras	2016	24	16.66	19
Costa Rica	2016	28	9.09	15
Guatamala	2016	29	0	10

Notes Latin American measures are Pérez-Liñán et al. (2019)’s calculations and retrieved from their publicly available dataset. Turkey’s scores are measured by the authors

Another measure of the relationship between executive and other branches of the political system is provided by the V-Dem dataset. The V-Dem is an expert survey covering a wide range of countries throughout a long period of time. The below figures provide a comparative analysis of Turkey with three politically and institutionally relevant regions, i.e., Latin America, Europe, and MENA. These figures display comparative legislative and judicial constraints on the executive in the constitution regardless of whether the country operates under a parliamentary or presidential system. The results indicate that constitutional changes via referendum in 2010 severely lifted constraints over the executive in Turkey. Transition to presidential system has been able to moderate the course of direction in Turkey only partly and the existing constraints on the executive is severely limited (Fig. 3.1).

The Legislative Constraints on the Executive Index is formed by taking the point estimates from a Bayesian factor analysis model of the indicators for legislature questions officials in practice, executive oversight, legislature investigates in practice, and legislature opposition parties. The Judicial Constraints on the Executive Index is formed by taking the point estimates from a Bayesian factor analysis model of the indicators for executive respects constitution, compliance with judiciary, compliance with high court, high court independence, and lower court independence (Fig. 3.2).¹

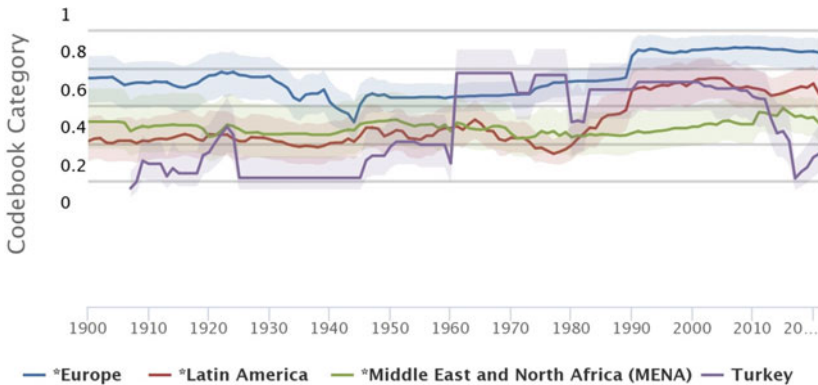


Fig. 3.1 Legislative constraints on the executive index: Europe, MENA, Latin America, and Turkey

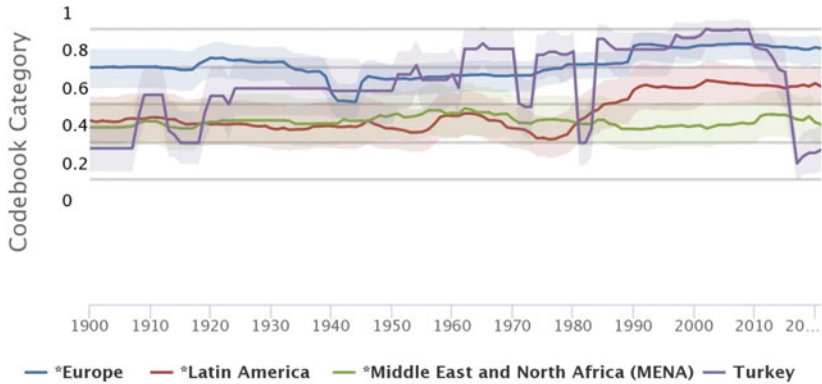


Fig. 3.2 Judicial constraints on the executive index: Europe, MENA, Latin America, and Turkey

According to V-Dem indices, Turkey has fewer constraints on the executive compared to all of these three regions' averages. European political systems, where parliamentary system is the most common form of political practices, score highest among other regions for both legislative and judicial constraints. Executives in Europe are constrained and the constraints on them have been in steady increase since the Second World War. Significant increases in executive constraints took place in Latin America since the transition to democracy in 1970s and 1980s. Historically, Latin America and MENA region in average always had fewer constraints than Turkey from the foundation of the Republic until 2010 constitutional changes except the military rule in 1980–1983. The dramatic decline in Turkey took place between 2010 and 2017 while the transition to presidential system has somewhat moderated the decline. Since 2010, Turkey scores even lower than MENA region where democracies are under severe threat or non-existent. Lower legislative and judicial constraints on the executive could result in executive unilateralism which has recently attracted scholarly attention in various contexts including established democratic systems including United States (Barber et al., 2019; Bolton & Thrower, 2016).

CONCLUSION

As can be seen from an analysis of Turkish governmental system from historical perspectives, although Turkey had a remarkable experience in parliamentary democracy, it has not been able to sustain high levels of democracy. Last two decades have not been an exceptional period given the history of the Republic. One of the main challenges toward democratization was that the structure of Turkish parliamentary system had not been fully compatible with the standard of a liberal and representative democracy. The high levels of party discipline (Kumbaracıbaşı, 2009), the political culture in favor of strong party leadership (Gümüş, 2022), high levels of clientelism (Yıldırım, K. 2020), and restrictive electoral rules (Arslantaş et al., 2020) hindered the consolidation of parliamentary democracy. The constitutional referendum in 2017 opened the new era of Turkish governmental system by increasing the role of President as executive. The proponents of the reform considered that the new system would create a stronger, more efficient, and effective executive. Nevertheless, transformation from parliamentary system to a presidential system with a strong executive has become the subject of heated debate on the continuity of the new system in Turkey. Combined with the impact of COVID-19 and Russia-Ukraine war on economy, public trust in institutions is in decline and a reform on presidentialism or reverting back to a strengthened parliamentary system is already being discussed at all levels (Esen & Gümüşçü, 2018). Major opposition political parties publicly declared that they would return the parliamentary system if they acquire power through next elections. It seems that the viability of Turkish type of presidential government is conditional on the AKP's electoral success, and in the long run, its sustainability is questionable.

NOTE

1. For a more detailed explanation of how these indices are created, see. V-Dem Codebook available at: <https://www.v-dem.net/vdemds.html>.

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Transformation of Judiciary for a Turkey in Transition: Dynamics and Consequences

Sanem Baykal 

INTRODUCTION

The first two decades of the twenty-first century can be described as a time of change without a firm direction, resulting in an unstable, almost drifting state for the Republic of Turkey, in respect to both its state structures and its political and societal dynamics. Yet, more significantly, the dynamics and consequences of such change have been quite contradictory for the first half of that period compared to the second half.

From 2000 to 2005, democratic, legal and economic reforms paved the way to accession negotiations with the EU. The objective to join the top ten economies of the world on the Republic's 100th anniversary in 2023 was being declared. This momentum of reforms continued to a limited extent till 2010 and then has been reversed gradually and

S. Baykal (✉)
Law School, TOBB University of Economics and
Technology, Cankaya-Ankara, Turkey
e-mail: s.baykal@etu.edu.tr

drastically in the following decade. Rising populism and deep divisions in the society have been manifesting itself in every aspect of the social and political life of the country. Rising dominance of identity politics and the government distancing itself not only from the West but also from its traditional priorities and principles, with an intensely ambitious, emotional and reactionary foreign policy, all culminated in a step-by-step reversal of democratic and economic reforms and a so-called democratic backsliding in the next decade of the twenty-first century.¹

The significance of judiciary in the structure and basic tenets, as well as their protection in a polity, goes without saying. The placard in every court room in Turkey symbolises such significance, which proclaims that “Justice is the very foundation of the State”. The “we-feeling” in a community and sense of belonging in a political structure derive from the values it embraces and represents. In that vein, justice as such occupies the very centre of such value system, which forms the basis of civic citizenship, as well as providing security and stability to any such polity. A legal system should support and serve these multifaceted functions of justice by securing and applying the formal and substantive elements of rule of law by a well-functioning, largely trusted, fair and reputable judicial system recognised as such by an overwhelming majority of the people.² Without such judicial system and a strong perception on the part of the people that it provides them security and reliability, the political and societal bonds of the people between themselves and with their state could not be considered as tenable. Moreover, the democratic and human rights safeguarding credentials of such a state system would become highly questionable too.

With this theoretical and normative background in mind, this chapter focuses on the interaction between different societal and political forces on the Turkish judiciary over the last two decades and demonstrates the damaging impact of such struggle, not only on the conceptualisation of the principle of rule of law, but also on the proper internalisation and observance of principles of democracy, and promotion and protection of human rights. In that context, both enabling/accelerating and hindering factors and dynamics are briefly analysed in order to underline the magnitude of difficulties of such a transformation. This transformation is particularly hard since it requires a shift of mentality without an overwhelming political and social consensus on the fundamentals and constituent elements of such norms and principles or the direction of such transformation. Such analysis might be instrumental in providing both the indications for the limits and prospects of a resilient political system with

a strong state capacity for Turkey in the impending decades of potential global and domestic turbulence, as well as the basic requirements and tools for building such crucial resilience and capacity.

The structure, functioning and role of judiciary in Turkey have been an issue of contention almost since the establishment of the Republic. Such contention has intensified in the first two decades of the twenty-first century. Both the judiciary regarding its training, recruitment and composition itself, together with its independence and impartiality, its effective functioning and its role in upholding the rule of law had already been intensely debated in the public sphere by various segments of the society and over various periods of the Republic. Legal professionals and legal scholars as well as academics from other disciplines, business community, civil society and of course political parties joined in that debate over the years from diverse perspectives and viewpoints.³ The international interlocutors, such as the European Union and the Council of Europe, also came up with critical reviews and offered proposals for reform.⁴ Despite their variety, there was one theme common to various eras, sources and perspectives: the functioning of the judiciary branch satisfied no one. The transformative first couple of decades of the twenty-first century for Turkey inevitably intensified this debate on the judiciary, regarding its status, role and functioning. We will try to analyse briefly the dynamics and consequences of those two separate decades on the Turkish judiciary, focusing on the main external dynamic to be identified as the EU and the limits of its leverage over the domestic context and its actors.

THE FIRST DECADE OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY: LIMITED, YET NECESSARY REFORMS ON JUDICIARY

This period helps us to identify the external dynamic for the transformation of judiciary in Turkey in the first two decades of the twenty-first century as the EU and Turkey's EU accession process. With the candidacy status of Turkey being declared in the European Council Helsinki Summit in 1999, the country concentrated its efforts on complying with the Copenhagen political criteria, consisting mainly of the amendment or enactment of legislation comprising rules and principles for enhancing democracy, protection of human rights and rule of law. Accession to the EU presupposes the existence of an independent and impartial judicial system to ensure the acceding country has a stable and democratic system. Enhancement of the judicial capacity in a candidate country is of crucial

importance for the EU, since first of all, this is a component of rule of law, which is one of the essential aspects of the Copenhagen Political Criteria. In that context, the independence, impartiality and efficiency of the judiciary are regarded indispensable for “the stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and the protection of minorities” (Copenhagen European Council Conclusions, 1993). Similarly, for the proper functioning of the EU legal order and its market integration, mutual trust between the national judiciaries of the Member States is a prerequisite. Similarly, judicial capacities are required because candidate countries are expected to enable judicial actors to enter a pattern of judicial cooperation (Piana, 2008, 176).

Arguably, it could be maintained that the first half of that period, between 2000 and 2009, concentrated mainly on strengthening the promotion and protection of fundamental rights and freedoms and expanding and strengthening the foundations of participatory democracy, without focusing much on the proper application of such reforms through a judiciary with strengthened capacity in order to do just that.⁵

The reform efforts with regard to structure and functioning of the judiciary were not at the heart of the reform process during that period in Turkey, and only started to accelerate in the late 2000s and early 2010s. Instead, during the first half of the 2000s, the legislative framework that the judiciary expected to apply was the focal point for the government and for the reform agents (Baykal, 2015, 86–90). These changes also included certain reforms of the judicial mechanism, abolishing the State Security Courts, the establishment of the Justice Academy for the training of judges and public prosecutors and the setting up of the National Judicial Network Project (UYAP) for the efficient and timely functioning of the judicial procedures. The most significant reform in that era regarding the judiciary concentrated on the promotion and protection of fundamental human rights in Turkish constitutional and legal system. The Constitution was amended to grant primacy to international conventions on human rights to which Turkey is a party over conflicting national legislation. Since such conflict would generally be invoked and redressed during judicial procedures, the main duty arising from such constitutional provision was to be undertaken by the Turkish courts through the interpretation of the domestic law and the international convention and its judicial application. This amendment might be regarded as the main judicial reform in this era.

Such reforms, however, remained scattered, not corresponding to or reflecting an overall strategy in order to strengthen the judicial capacity for EU membership at that period. Instead, they concentrated on passing the first hurdle of starting the accession negotiations by fulfilling the Copenhagen political criteria up to the necessary minimum. Yet, not only a genuine system of rule of law, but also the effective protection of human rights and consolidation of democratic governance necessitate a well-functioning, efficient, impartial and independent judicial system, so this essential requirement remained.

It can be argued that the envisaged plan of action was to deal with the judicial application and guarantees for the democratisation and safeguarding of human rights reforms as the next step, with the democratic consolidation based on the transformation of the judiciary to uphold the reforms through its judicial interpretation and judgements. Even if that was the case, this plan failed and failed spectacularly.

THE SECOND DECADE OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY: TRANSFORMATION OF THE TURKISH JUDICIARY-FOR BETTER, OR EVEN WORSE?

There are many factors behind the state we find the Turkish judiciary a decade later in the 2020s. Yet, it can easily be maintained that the deterioration regarding the Turkish judicial system from 2010 onwards within context of Turkey's accession to the European Union became one of the most significant policy areas to demonstrate the constraints of "Europeanization" in the accession process, especially in the case of Turkey, without a firm EU membership anchor and efficient methods and tools.⁶

First of all, it was apparently not taken into consideration neither by the EU nor by the Turkish authorities that capacity building yields the results only in the long haul, especially when the judiciary is concerned, due to the need for significant mentality shift.⁷ Such mentality shift would take a longer period and require more effort in a country like Turkey with a comparatively more entrenched and static judicial order, where all the actors have a well-established understanding of their role in the state system as the guardians of the "national interest" and the status quo.⁸ This deeply entrenched perception of public or national interest being the same with that of the state, as well as being easily conflated with that of the ruling elite, and impairs both the impartiality and consequently the

independence requirement. Similarly, the isolated creation of new agencies, institutions or legislation will not produce any transformative change if the actors inside the agency do not change their mentalities (Mendelski, 2011, 242).

Secondly, before the loss of credibility of the EU accession, Turkey's EU bid provided the context for democratic reform and constitutional and legal changes, realised from 1999 to 2005 in particular, saw the emergence of broad coalitions that supported EU-driven reforms (Eldem, 2013, 126). Yet, since 2005, the credibility of the EU accession perspective's significant descent seems to have both hampered the government's efforts to reform the Turkish judiciary based on claims of aligning the system with that of the EU requirements and standards and also intensified the re-modelling in accordance with its own requirements and priorities (Baykal, 2015, 96–100).⁹ Consequently, the broad coalition in Turkey for EU reforms could no longer be maintained when the judicial restructuring started to materialise as of 2010.

Thirdly, encouragement from the EU for certain reforms, for instance for the new structure of the Supreme Board of Judges and Public Prosecutors, following the 2010 constitutional amendments, reflecting only certain selective aspects of formal templates that worked in certain member or accession countries, but without corresponding to the political and legal/judicial traditions and culture of Turkey and its requirements added to the challenges.¹⁰

Alignment with the EU rules and principles, classified under different headings, includes *inter alia* the judiciary in Chapter 23.¹¹ This issue obviously “presents multifaceted difficulties for the accession country as well as the EU in order to advance, promote, monitor and anchor alignment and progress. On the one hand, the relative lack of hard *acquis* in this area feeds into the criticism towards the EU institutions based on employing ambiguous standards. Especially as regards the judiciary, EU has not been transferred any concrete competences to shape the judicial systems of the Member States. Instead, for setting the standards for internal and external policy purposes, such as enlargement, the EU mostly refers to the work of various organs of the Council of Europe such as Venice Commission or the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) as well as United Nations (UN) and Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) documents and standards”, as well as best/good practices of its Member States (Baykal, 2015, 88–89).

The inconsistent application of European norms and standards, in particular regarding the rule of law, has several significant consequences. Narrowing/restricting approach to the fundamental rights and freedoms, increasing the domain of the executive, while restricting the reach of the judicial control of acts and actions of the legislative and executive branches of government are amongst those. All of these perverse effects amount to an instrumentalisation of such concepts without a wide and open debate on what they entail. Moreover, not communicating what kind of individual and common benefits would accrue from their consistent and proper application in order to promote their acceptance had severe consequences. Such inconsistent and selective application in turn resulted in a loss of perception of legal predictability and certainty which had serious consequences for effective and genuine democratic governance.

Furthermore, EU seemed unable as well as unwilling to see through the motives and dynamics behind such changes since it seemed to be firmly convinced on the direct causality of the application of certain templates of structures and norms and their successful end results. This became quite apparent during the political and judicial struggle between the government and the Gulenists in the years following the constitutional amendments of 2010 and the 15 July 2016 coup attempt, resulting in the purge of a significant number of judges and public prosecutors from the Turkish judiciary. The Gulenist (later on the “FETÖ”) movement attempted and almost succeeded in capturing the judiciary, starting as early as the first half of 2000s, continuing very bluntly and forcefully with the cases brought against certain nationalist and/or secularist factions of the Turkish Army and other relevant actors, and reached its peak with the 2010 constitutional amendments and its aftermath.¹²

Their places were filled with haste, both resulting from the urgent need to provide some sort of efficient functioning of the judiciary, together with the need to fill those posts with jurists that might be more amenable to the perspective and requirements of the ruling elite and consolidate their control (Soyaltın Colella, 2022).

The acceleration in the judicial reform efforts in Turkey coincides with the inclusion of Chapter 23 into the *acquis* headings, yet the main reasons for efforts to be intensified in this area by the government appear to be based on domestic factors and dynamics. In that regard, as a final and most decisive factor, it can be argued that a supposed alignment with the EU *acquis* in this field mainly had benefits rather than costs for the government. Despite a stalemate in the overall accession

process, certain political and societal actors were empowered thanks to the rigorous reforms required in this area starting from 2005 onwards and accelerating since 2010 (Soyaltın-Colella, 2022).

Due to the strong connection between participatory democracy, promotion and protection of fundamental rights and respect for rule of law, both the proponents of democratisation and authoritarianism first focused on the judiciary and the constitutional or legislative instruments governing both the composition and the role and function of this branch of government.

Moreover, the interplay of internal and external dynamics brought the judiciary to the centre of the debate. In that regard, the judicial reform packages, judicial reform strategies¹³ and the constitutional amendments purportedly aiming at the fulfilment of the EU political conditionality, in both the accession process and various designs of functional issue-based cooperation, such as the visa liberalisation and the modernisation of the Customs Union can be cited as few cases in point.¹⁴

Furthermore, the divides or discords in the political community and the society came into the surface when the time for construal of the written rules and principles became necessary for the administrative implementation and judicial application of those legislative reforms. The decades-old understandings of the conceptions like “state”, “security and stability”, “national will”, “public good/interest”, “unity and integrity of the nation and the territory” continued to take the centre stage due to the insufficient mentality shift in both the judiciary itself and all its interlocutors including the political elite.

The pendulum between the authoritarian/statist/nationalist and liberal/democratic approaches, as well as power struggles of various factions between the ruling political and economic elite, resulted in the constant overhaul of both the legislative, normative and structural composition and functioning of the judiciary.

In that vein, despite using EU requirements and templates as justification very often, the domestic reform agents in Turkey were decisive regarding the reform of the judiciary rather than the external incentive of the EU membership bid of the country, taking initiative consistent with the domestic agenda.

Hence, this approach and method of selective reference to the EU accession process and employing this rhetoric to soften the discontent and dissent resulted in inconsistent, limited, reversible and in most cases just a pretention of “progress”, which endangered the whole democratic reform

process of the previous decade, since without proper administrative and judicial application such enhanced and progressive legislation would not be able to serve its purpose.

In fact, the transformation set in motion in the judiciary in the 2010s took exactly the direction serving the interests of government and its supporters—and arguably designed by them—instead of the direction purported by the EU induced and supported reforms. Rather than towards the rule of law, independence and impartiality, the judiciary structure transformed from the old guard of static and statist, nationalist and secularist structure in its core, to the “new” old guard, mainly with the same credentials, except a largely diluted form of secularism, yet still positioning itself as the guardian of the national interest. A monolithic, unlayered, singular understanding and conflating of the concept of “national interest” with concepts like “public interest” and associating “national interest” and “interests of the Government” exacerbated the problem. The constitutional amendments of 2017 introducing the governmental regime of Presidency intensified these problems and the control of the executive over the judiciary.

In that regard, domestic factors such as Gezi protests and the government’s response together with the political and judicial power struggle between the government and the Gulenists (FETÖ) shaped the policy of the ruling elite towards the judiciary during that period. The rhetoric on the constant and varied form of so-called existential threat to the nation and state dominated all aspects of public life and state structure, including, inevitably, the judiciary.

Judiciary thus becoming an instrument in the allocation of favours for the supporters of the ruling elite and reinforcing the clientelist approaches, since even the partial control of the judicial power enables both transfer of power to the detriment of the judicial authority to the legislative and executive branches of government through rendering judicial control of the acts and actions ineffective—thus distorting the principles of separation of powers and legality as well as judicial control of all acts and actions of the legislative and executive authorities. Moreover, the distortion of even the perception of fairness and justice emanating from a well-functioning, independent and impartial judiciary is negated/undone, which in turn distils a sense of anxiety and vulnerability to the ordinary citizens in the face of power, reinforcing their submission and preference to side with the powers that be. The distorting effects of such factors on the strengthening of democracy, civic citizenship, organised

civil society and advocacy for rights and freedoms are easy to contemplate and experience in the Turkish society.

In that vein, the significance of a strong and properly functioning judiciary for good economic governance as well as economic and social welfare, stability and security clashed with clientelism and crony capitalism, and hence brought the judiciary into the spotlight.

As a result, we can assert that the power accumulated by the executive branch through the judiciary proved to be too comfortable and empowering to give up for the political elite, in order to promote and enable a genuine mentality shift, as was the case in all previous governments.

CONCLUSION

Hans Kelsen, the prominent twentieth-century legal scholar argued in his work that “the essence and value of democracy is compromise” (Kelsen, 2013)

Yet, in order for such proposition for a well-functioning democratic polity to work, there should be a widely shared premise, a somewhat deep-rooted understanding or perception, an overwhelming majority at least, in the political community, in the public opinion of a country on the shared values which inform the foundational principles of the state and their content, so that they would be able to find the necessary compromises in the political process.

Deep and consolidated polarisation renders such coming together on some level of “consensus” on the content of foundational values of the polity in order to establish and strengthen the bonds between people with different political, economic, social preferences and affiliations almost impossible.

Republic of Turkey has been searching a widespread majority which might amount to a de facto consensus for such common grounds since its establishment to a certain extent. Yet, both the internal and external dynamics of the last two decades proved to be rather challenging with regard to that endeavour. Certain reforms in that regard served to deepen the cleavages instead of bringing those various segments of the society together.

The holy trinity of democracy, human rights and rule of law have been the prominent values or foundational principles in Turkish constitution. Their inviolable and indisputable nature despite being embraced by the

Constitution and the ruling elite in rhetoric, the widespread and deep-rooted agreement regarding their content and essential elements proved to be elusive right from the early days of the Republic. The inclinations of the ruling elite during first decades before the multi-party democracy in Turkey can be explained by the urge to guarantee the strengthening and success of the new and revolutionary Republic inside and the external dynamics of the in-between the two world wars period, as well as the second world war, same arguments are difficult to sustain in a country which becomes a member of all post-war organisations of the West such as NATO, Council of Europe, etc., and expressed a very determined ambition to become a member of the European integration by establishing an association relation as early as 1959.

Unless, Turkey decides to open a transparent and participatory debate on basic elements, components, requirements, significance and multi-faceted functions of democracy, respect for fundamental rights and freedoms and the rule of law, comprising the independence and impartiality of the judiciary, and embrace their reflections and meaning in the twenty-first century, such political compromise will continue to be elusive. Consequently, the political capture of the judiciary will continue, at least to a certain extent and from time to time, despite possible changes in the identity of the culprits.

NOTES

1. See for example Eldem (2013), Tansel (2018), Müftüler-Baç and Keyman (2015), Özbudun (2015a), and Müftüler-Baç (2019).
2. See on the meaning and elements of rule of law for instance Tamanaha (2004), Pech (2010), and Baykal (2011).
3. See in general Özbudun (2013, 2015a, 2015b), Çelenk (2016), and Giegerich (2009).
4. Venice Commission Declaration on Interference with Judicial Independence in Turkey, Venice, June 20, 2015. <https://www.venice.coe.int/files/turkish%20declaration%20June%202015.pdf>, Venice Commission. 2017. Turkey—Opinion on the Amendments to the Constitution adopted by the Grand National Assembly on 21 January 2017 and to be submitted to a national referendum on 16 April 2017 (Opinion No. 875/2017) and the European Commissions Progress Reports on Turkey, in particular since 2013.
5. For a list of the democratic reforms of the first decade of the twenty-first century in Turkey, see for instance the Republic of Turkey Prime

- Ministry Secretariat General for EU Affairs, Political Reforms in Turkey, 2007, available at www.abgs.gov.tr.
6. See, for instance, Saatçioğlu (2014), Aydın Düzgüt and Kaliber (2016), and Saatçioğlu (2016).
 7. EU has changed its approach accordingly from 2012 to 2013 onwards with its new enlargement strategy by prioritising the opening of chapters 23 and 24, the areas that are related to the judiciary and fundamental rights to a certain extent, as early as possible and closing them at the end of the overall accession process, taking into consideration the time needed for the absorption of such transformation. On the basis of the Enlargement Strategy endorsed by the Council in December 2011, the more recent Negotiating Frameworks, such as the one prepared and adopted for Montenegro in 2012, underlines the significance of Chapters 23 and 24 in the accession process in various paragraphs and specifically states that “Given the challenges faced and the longer term of the nature of the reforms, these chapters are expected to be among the first to be opened”. According to the Commission, “The rule of law is now at the heart of the enlargement process. The new approach, means that the countries need to tackle issues such as judicial reform and the fight against organised crime and corruption early in accession negotiations. This maximises the time countries have to develop a solid track record of reform implementation, thereby ensuring that reforms are deeply rooted and irreversible”.
 8. Sancar and Ümit Atılgan (2009) and Benvenuti (2011).
 9. It can be argued that although Turkey provides a striking example regarding the analysis of Europeanisation of the judiciary within the accession process, it cannot be considered as an exceptional case either. Uneven results in all accession countries, depending on state structures, legal and judicial traditions and political culture, have been observed and this proves to be one of the most selective and hard to sustain areas of progress and transformation, even in countries which have acceded to the Union. See, for instance, Öniş and Kutlay (2019), Petrov and Kalinichenko (2011), Mendelski (2011), Mendelski (2012), and Noutcheva and Aydın-Düzgüt (2012).
 10. See, for instance, European Commission Peer Review Mission to Turkey (17–21 January 2011)—Chapter 23: Judiciary and Fundamental Rights Report on the Turkish High Council of Judges and Public Prosecutors. Assessment of Its Initial Track Record of Operation prepared by Thomas Giegerich and European Commission Peer Review Mission to Turkey (25–27 April 2012)—Chapter 23: Judiciary and Fundamental Rights Report on Independence, Impartiality and Administration of the Judiciary prepared by Thomas Giegerich. Moreover, see the findings of the European Commission’s Progress Reports on Turkey in particular since 2013.

11. As of 2005, the EU *acquis* chapters have been revised in order to include a specific heading of “Judiciary and Fundamental Rights” for the accession countries to align their legislation and practices with that of the European norms and standards. As far as EU is concerned, the consolidation of the principle of rule of law in a candidate country is related to both the Copenhagen Political Criteria and the Chapter 23 of the accession negotiations, i.e. the “Judiciary and the Fundamental Rights”. In that respect, the EU enumerates the basic components of that Chapter as (a) the independence, impartiality, professionalism/competence and efficiency of the judiciary; (b) anti-corruption, including both a legal framework (domestic and international) and institutional capacity; and (c) fundamental rights.
12. For instance, the Ergenekon and Balyoz trials.
13. See, for instance, Ministry of Justice (MoJ). (2009). *Judiciary reform strategy*. Republic of Turkey Ministry of Justice. <http://www.sgb.adalet.gov.tr/Judicial-Reform-Strategy.pdf>. Ministry of Justice (MoJ). (2015). *Judiciary reform strategy*. Republic of Turkey Ministry of Justice. <http://www.sgb.adalet.gov.tr/Judicial-Reform-Strategy.pdf>. Ministry of Justice (MoJ). (2019). *Judiciary reform strategy*. Republic of Turkey Ministry of Justice. <http://www.sgb.adalet.gov.tr/ekler/yayin/Stratejik-Plan2019-2023.pdf>.
14. See, for instance, Saatçioğlu (2020) and Bashirov and Yilmaz (2020).

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Turkey's Political Economy in International Context

Alper H. Yağcı 

This chapter provides an overview of Turkey's political economy during the first two decades of the twenty-first century, interpreting it as the interplay of three transformative dynamics: long-term demographic factors, government policy, and the international context. The three dynamics interact to generate opportunities or bottlenecks relating to economic development, and enable political coalitions to manage and steer them.

During the period under investigation, Turkey experienced substantial economic growth. Growth occurred in a context of ongoing rural to urban migration and a demographic opportunity window where the ratio of the working-age population reached its zenith. While associated with high private sector indebtedness, sclerotic unemployment, and some

A. H. Yağcı (✉)

Department of Political Science and International Relations, Boğaziçi University, Istanbul, Turkey

e-mail: alper.yagci@boun.edu.tr

premature deindustrialization, the economic growth model came with significant improvement in human development indicators, transforming the lives of millions. Economic performance thus probably contributed to the electoral victories of Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Justice and Development Party, AKP), which came to power in 2002 and presided over much of the growth performance. However, while growth bounced back after being interrupted by the 2008 global financial crisis, it ultimately lost steam as successive AKP governments descended deeper into authoritarian, crony governance and international liquidity was drained.

During the overall period, three major international dynamics contributed to the pace and structure of Turkey's economic development. First is the monetary policies of the advanced industrialized countries like the USA, which affected the availability of funds going to developing countries like Turkey. Second is Turkey's relationship with the European Union (EU), which stalled in a process of "externally differentiated integration" after initially seeming to move toward membership. Third is the geographical diversification of Turkey's trade and finance links with a growing role for the Middle East, paralleling the increasing importance of this region in Turkish foreign policy agenda. The Middle East also became a major source of immigrants, turning Turkey into a country with a large non-Turkish-speaking immigrant population for the first time in its modern history.

To conceptualize Turkey's political economy during this period, several concepts have been in offer. A commonly used trope is to see the policies implemented as the unfolding of a "neoliberal" ideology.¹ If this is to be taken either as a narrowly defined policy recipe or the establishment, under the supervision of international financial institutions, of rule-based mechanisms of governance that insulates the markets from political intervention, it is not adequate as a description for most of AKP's term in office. As soon as the AKP government found the political capital to chart an autonomous path, it started to display pro-growth populism, disdain for rules, and a taste for eclectic social and economic policies that seem to be at odds with this label. A second concept is that of the "trading state".² This term implies a state that prioritizes cooperative relations with the rest of the world, to achieve mutual gains from trade, rather than aspiring to achieve superior relative positions through conflict. Foreign trade indeed grew under AKP governments, but alongside an increasingly conflictual international posture that saw the country marred in problems with its neighbors and engaged in multiple military

engagements. In fact, the trade to GDP ratio, after following a stable trend of around 50%, has reached new highs only after 2017 and 2018, when the Turkish currency collapsed and the industry was then pushed toward an export-driven growth path. Thirdly, Turkey's increasing alienation from its traditional Western allies has prompted scholars to describe its growing relations with Russia, China, and the Persian Gulf countries as entailing "new forms of dependency".³ This is worth considering, but it should also be noted that relations with these powers still display an important degree of flexibility, and economic ties do not seem to prevent Turkey from entering into occasional conflicts with Russia over contested areas such as Syria and Libya, maintaining a strong degree of foreign policy autonomy. In short, what characterizes Turkey's behavior during the period under investigation may be eclecticism in domestic policies and transactionalism internationally—where deals are made on an individual basis, with managerial discretion rather than institutional routinization. This should make one skeptic toward the application of conceptual labels with precise, thick content.

While providing some conceptual commentary, this brief chapter focuses on providing a bird's eye view of the economic situation. In line with the dynamics mapped out above, we first start with a discussion of demographic trends, then move onto government policy, and then focus on international connections. Any statistics, unless otherwise noted, come from the official Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜİK), available for data inquiries at www.tuik.gov.tr.

DEMOGRAPHIC AND STRUCTURAL CHANGE

The last three decades have witnessed major demographic transformations in Turkey that are often overlooked in discussions of economic policy. In the late twentieth century, Turkey was conspicuous for its still large peasant population. In Eric Hobsbawm's (1995: 291) words, "[o]nly one peasant stronghold remained in or around the neighborhood of Europe and the Middle East - Turkey, where the peasantry declined, but, in the mid-1980s, still remained an absolute majority." There is a case to be made that the Turkey's growth underperformance at the time, compared to the newly industrialized countries of East Asia, can be explained by the prolonged survival of low-productivity peasant agriculture.⁴

By the last year of the twentieth century, the rural population was down to 36% of the population, and though official employment statistics in this

area are marred by contradictions, they suggest that at least a similar ratio of the employed population were engaged in agriculture.⁵ That year, a coalition government headed by the Demokratik Sol Parti (Democratic Left Party, DSP) came to power, and spent most of its subsequent term administering unpopular IMF programs that were meant to replace the inflation-ridden, stop-and-go economic growth pattern that marked the 1990s. This involved a major restructuring of the agricultural economy by not only phasing out support prices for many traditional crops like sugar beets—“Turkish people will consume cheaper sugar” proclaimed the economic program⁶—but also eliminating input subsidies that could keep small producers afloat. The policy was maintained in the earlier part of AKP’s term in office and resulted in a staggering reduction in the agriculture’s share in employment to 23.5% by 2007. Though some of the subsidies were phased back in later, the downward trend eventually brought the ratio to 16% in 2020.

Three consequences of this transformation were palpable by the first decade of the new century. First, female labor force participation took a major hit, as many women who were previously recorded as engaged in unpaid labor for family agriculture units now appear as urban housewives.⁷ Secondly, the simultaneous female-driven shrinkage of both employment and labor force participation meant that the unemployment rate (which is calculated as a share of the labor force) reached a new high that economic growth under AKP could not bring down, as urban employment creation proved slow. Thirdly, however, due to a long-standing urban bias in Turkey’s public infrastructure and social protection policies combined with the stronger grip of patriarchal culture in rural areas, the mass movement to the urban sector coincided with substantial changes that can be best summarized under the title of modernization (see Table 5.1).

Table 5.1 Selected social indicators

	1990	2000	2010	2020
Mortality rate under 5 (per 1000 live births)	74	38	18	10
Life expectancy at birth (years)	64	70	75	78
Underweight children (% of children under 5)	8.7	7	1.9	1.5
School enrollment, secondary (% gross)	51	74	84	104

Data source World Bank

Consequently, attention should be paid to demographic changes underway. In 1985, the year when the urban population became as large as the rural population for the first time—and two years after abortion became legal in Turkey—the fertility rate was 3.68 per woman. It came down to 2.53 in 2000 and 2.12 in 2010, with the net population replacement rate reaching down to 1.0 that year (i.e., each generation of mothers having exactly enough daughters to replace themselves in the population), indicating a stationary population for the future.⁸ Declining fertility rates in a still relatively young country like Turkey meant that as the ratio of children kept declining, the ratio of senior people was not yet large, and the economy was poised to enjoy a demographic dividend where the ratio of the working-age population reaches its peak point. Hoşgör and Tansel (2010) projected this point as 69%, to be reached in 2020, and that year the projected ratio was indeed recorded for Turkey's officially resident population (which does not include refugees with “temporary protection” status). This means that economic growth recorded during AKP's term in office occurred during an exceptionally conducive demographic window of opportunity. The window is expected to narrow down after the peak point, barring major reversals in fertility behavior or net immigration. The specter of a stationary population and increasing old-age dependency ratios likely prompted the growth-minded AKP government's reversal of the anti-natalist family planning policy that had been in place since the early 1960s.⁹ The pro-immigration policy AKP has adopted despite widespread public misgivings should also find a partial explanation in the same nexus of demographic stagnation and economic ambition, although vagaries of international politics and Erdogan's ideological proclivities no doubt played critical roles in encouraging immigration from the Muslim Middle East.

Structural change, which only dimly responds to short-term policies, has therefore been an important part of Turkey's economic transformation in the early twenty-first century. The movement of people from a rural sector to the more modern urban sector, even under conditions of high unemployment, brought significant improvements in social indicators. According to the Human Development Index of the United Nations, which builds on the three pillars of average years of education, life expectancy, and per capita income, Turkey was the third country after China and Vietnam that improved its index ranking the most during 1990–2019 among the 119 (very broadly defined) “highly developed” countries of 2020. Turkey was the top country to do so during

2010–2019. That the latter was a period that has been subject of criticism due to increasing authoritarianism and questionable policy choices might render this performance somewhat surprising, but education access and life expectancy reflect the cumulative effect of improvements over time, and income growth—which responds to short-term policy better—has been the component that contributed the least to Turkey’s overall improvement in this composite development index.¹⁰

ECONOMIC POLICY AND GROWTH

During the 2000–2020 period, Turkey’s GDP experienced a cumulative annual growth rate (of chained volume index, in constant prices) of 4.6% on average, and for the 2002–2020 period, corresponding to AKP’s term in office, the figure rises to 5.1%. By the standards of a developing country, this is neither a miracle nor unsubstantial. More remarkable still is the fact that growth was accompanied by moderate (often single-digit) inflation rates that the country had not enjoyed since the early 1970s. The combination of price stability and growth, interrupted only during the global financial crisis, was a novelty for an entire generation and it did much to establish AKP’s reputation as capable economic managers, at least until major imbalances became visible from mid-2018 onward.¹¹

For the overall period, the sector that contributed the least to growth performance was of course agriculture, forestry, and fishing, whose aggregate share in the sectorial GDP fell from 11.5% in 1999 to 6.9% in 2017. More troubling was the fact that Turkey experienced premature deindustrialization: the GDP share of manufacturing fell from 25% in 1999 to around 22% for most of the period, reaching even lower depths during the global financial crisis. While the share of services remained high, the biggest sectorial locomotive of growth has been construction: The latter’s GDP share was 6.1% in 1999 and reached 9.7% by 2017. Construction was encouraged by a housing boom led by the public mass housing agency TOKI, by mega-projects for building new bridges around the Turkish straits, and a large-scale transportation investment program that increased the dual carriageways from 10 to 35% of inter-provincial roads from 2002 to 2015.¹² However, the new economic era starting with 2018 saw some reversal of these sectorial patterns, as the government tried to muddle through a series of self-made and international crises by adopting a policy of cheap currency and export-led industrial growth. Consequently, by 2020 the GDP share of construction fell to

5.9%, and those of agriculture and manufacturing increased to 7.5 and 26.5%, respectively.

As such reversals hint, the sustaining of growth performance for long periods of time masks important discontinuities in policy-making. One can distinguish between at least three policy phases. The first one, usually dubbed as a period of neoliberalism, would include both the DSP-led coalition government that unenthusiastically found itself at the helm of Turkish economy's painful restructuring at the turn of the century, and AKP's earlier orientation that lasted more or less until the global financial crisis. The defining pillar of this period was three IMF standby agreements. The first of the agreements in 1999 was followed by a banking sector collapse while failing to address Turkey's chronic inflation problem that it was devised for. It was replaced in late 2001 with "Turkey's Transition to a Strong Economy" program (the relevant IMF agreement was officially signed in February 2002), which set the tone of policy-making for years to come. It aimed to reduce public debt and inflation, thus establishing market trust and subsequently bringing down the impoverishing interest rates attached to the outstanding government debt. To these ends, it required austerity in fiscal and monetary policy, which was duly implemented, and achieved the stated aims while inducing a painful short-term recession. It is by another twist of historical luck for AKP that the coalition government was prematurely dissolved by its junior partner *Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi* (Nationalist Action Party, MHP) just as the rebalanced economy was about to bounce back, and early elections were held in November 2002, leading to a single-party AKP government. The new government supplemented the existing program with a series of privatizations that increased government revenue and was thus able to maintain fiscal discipline without limiting public expenditures, which actually rose significantly in absolute and relative terms for social policy purposes. Interest rates came down, but because inflation was also down, there was a substantial positive real interest margin, leading to strong currency and a growth model with powerful domestic consumption component. This was also a period of foreign capital inflows, attracted to the prospect of a Turkey with ever closer relations with the European Union, and to supplement the credibility of this vision AKP signed in 2005 its own IMF standby agreement despite the apparent absence of an immediate need for liquidity. This IMF deal remains as the last one Turkey made, and the only one with AKP in power.

The expiration of the IMF deal in May 2008 may be taken as a symbolic turning point that marks the beginning of the second policy phase. For a year, the government gave the impression that another deal could be made but ultimately this was shelved, in order to evade the pressure for rule-based, institutional constraints to policy-making.¹³ The previous programs had not only come with policy prescriptions but also entailed the establishment of a series of autonomous institutions. The Public Procurement Law, for example, was to take the administration of public tenders away from the government ministries to an independent agency, and facilitate the participation of international firms. From day one, AKP leader Erdogan opposed the implementation of this law and it ended up being amended hundreds of times to fit political needs.¹⁴ This was instrumental for both cultivating a politically loyal business clientele consisting of major domestic construction firms, and steering the economy by using this sector as a locomotive. Gradually, the AKP government transformed or phased out the independent institutions of economic governance that it inherited, giving greater managerial discretion to the head of the executive.¹⁵

The global financial crisis, which manifested itself in Turkey as a 2009 recession, gave the government the need and opportunity to chart a more autonomous path in macroeconomic policy too. The recession was dealt with, in counter-cyclical fashion, with monetary and fiscal expansion. But the policy never really went back to its pre-crisis mode and (apart from a brief rebalancing act in 2012) fiscal and monetary expansion replaced the previous high (real) interest, high currency exchange rate combination. In 2011, Turkish economy broke the growth record of its multiparty era, and AKP received its highest vote share in the parliamentary elections. By this point, unemployment had congealed as a permanent problem but welfare increase was nevertheless palpable and sufficiently broad. The ratio of households with a washing machine had risen from about 64% in 2002 to 94% in 2011, dishwashers from about 15 to 50%, and private cars from about 22% to above 30%.¹⁶ In the meantime, a series of social policies, from housing to social assistance, had come of age and established AKP's policy footprint in the lives of a large mass of citizens. The healthcare reform is documented to have reduced income-based inequalities in access to healthcare, and has been widely popular.¹⁷ Investment in the road network, much touted in government discourse, was probably another major contribution. Coşar et al. (2021) find that improved road connectivity increased domestic trade transactions and real income, and

Akbulut-Yuksel et al.'s (2020) analysis suggests that it might have caused one-third of the increase in AKP's vote from 2002 to 2011. It should be noted that, financially speaking, prosperity during the second policy phase was again underwritten by strong foreign capital inflows but this time less by foreign direct investment (FDI) than portfolio investments (see Orhangazi, 2020; Table 4.1), which was directed as credit to businesses and households. The credit to GDP ratio, which was below 30% in 2006, surpassed 50% in 2013 and approached 65% in 2017 (Yazgan, 2020: 127).

In terms of economic performance, the failed anti-Erdogan coup attempt of July 2016 marks another turning point. The uncertainty that naturally follows such a violent event, the distinctly authoritarian turn the government took afterward, and the worldwide contraction in financial flows to developing countries together led to a drying up of international finance, currency depreciation, and a halt in economic activity for a few months. The break in policy orientation, though, may perhaps be better placed after mid-2018, which can therefore be taken as the beginning of a third phase. By that point, the government had been trying to sustain the long-accustomed growth rates with an inflationary, credit-fueled expansion despite deterioration in fundamental balances, in order to get past the most important election of recent memory: In June, simultaneous parliamentary and presidential elections were to be held and the newly formulated hyper-presidential system would take effect. Erdogan did win the election, but the pent-up economic pressure was let go right after, taking advantage of a bout with the US president Trump that made the following economic crisis look like a foreign-orchestrated event. During the first two weeks of August, Turkish lira lost 30% of its value against the US Dollar. Real GDP growth was recorded as 3% for 2018, a little less than 1% for 2019, and, according to the increasingly disreputable official statistics, 1.8% for 2020. And inflation started to get out of hand. In this context, although initially tolerating the Central Bank inclination to go along with orthodox advice and raise interest rates, President Erdogan in time adopted a loud, seemingly ideological counter-discourse condemning usury. To the extent that it involved any technical explication, this discourse implied that Turkish inflation was supply-sided and could be made only worse with higher interest rates, for they would lead to lower economic output. Consequently, the monetary authority was bullied into reducing overnight lending rates repeatedly, with three consecutive Central Bank chairmen losing their jobs in the meantime,

which led to a loss of market confidence, a massive hike in Turkey's CDS risk premium, and a rise in long-term interest rates prevailing in the market.

Expansionary policies had been periodically utilized by AKP governments before, but insisting on them in a context of spiraling inflation and with an almost complete disregard for usual confidence-building measures was new. The exact motives behind this turn is a matter of ongoing debate. It is likely that the chief policy-makers, who are increasingly being confined to the person of President Erdogan himself, believe in the economic growth-vote connection (which has indeed been documented for Turkey),¹⁸ and have been trying to boost growth in the only way they know how, rather than allowing for economic cooldown—which had probably contributed to AKP's loss of Istanbul and Ankara mayoral races in 2019. When the outcome of policy turned out to be further inflation coupled with currency depreciation and an increase in the volume of the now cheaper Turkish exports, the government tried to put the best picture on the result by claiming that a shift to a more “competitive” growth pattern was due anyways—as long argued, in fact, by many critiques of AKP. As already mentioned above, the GDP share of manufacturing has seen an increase in this latest policy phase, and the public-driven national defense industry has been its widely advertised locomotive. It seems that such emerging linkages are hoped to bring into AKP's orbit new constituencies from the bureaucratic-industrial complex as well as the electorate, to partly compensate for the loss of those economic voters who may regret the shrinking of their consumption basket.

THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT AND EVOLVING CONNECTIONS

Turkey is a country with chronic trade deficits, and this long-standing pattern has been reinforced during the twenty-first century. Sustaining economic growth under these circumstances means attracting ever bigger amounts of foreign capital in the form of investment or loans, to find the foreign exchange needed to pay the import bill. AKP government's international posturing can be partially read as an effort to address this need, by finding new export outlets and capital sources, in a context of progressively deteriorating relations with the West.

Europe has traditionally been Turkey's biggest source of investment capital and trade partner. The relationship took an institutional form with

the Customs Union agreement that went into effect on the first day of 1996. Because Turkish manufactured goods had already been enjoying duty-free access to the European markets since the 1970s, what the 1996 Customs deal brought was elimination, on Turkey's side, of tariffs against EU producers and adoption of Union tariffs vis-à-vis third countries, except for agricultural goods. According to Kaminski and Ng (2006), this made "Turkey's applied MFN [most favored nation] tariff rates for industrial products, the same as those of the EU ... one of the lowest, if not the lowest, levels of MFN tariff protection among economies at a similar level of economic development".¹⁹ The Customs Union deal also came with a legal package harmonizing Turkish commercial and competition policy with that of the EU, which was supplemented by the IMF programs explained earlier through the formation of autonomous regulatory institutions, and was hoped by the Turkish policy-makers at the time to strengthen the credibility of Turkey's bid for EU membership. Following the agreement, there was a growth in the share of consumer products in Turkey's imports from the EU, as critiques feared. However, the share of EU in Turkey's overall imports did not much increase, and it actually followed a downward trend during the twenty-first century, reaching what may be a historical low point in 2022. Ex-post empirical analyses of the Customs Union tend to find its quantitative effect on the trade volume between Turkey and Europe to be positive but small.²⁰ Perhaps its bigger effect was on Turkey's imports from the rest of the world, which were now subject to tariff rates over which Turkey virtually had no say, at a time when larger Asian economies were beginning to export aggressively. Consequently, Turkey's imports from Asia (other than Middle East) have grown considerably in the new century and this region, driven by China, is now rivaling EU as Turkey's top source of imports (see Fig. 5.1). Note that all relative increases should be evaluated in a context of increasing absolute import (and export) volumes.

Turkey's own production profile and export performance underwent a qualitative change following the Customs Union agreement. The intimate connections formed with European capital and markets allowed Turkish producers to join producer-driven value chains (see Gereffi, 2019) in sectors such as automobiles and information technology (IT) in various capacities. Motor vehicles, machinery, and processed metals joined the previously dominant textiles as Turkey's top export products, and the share of "medium and high technology goods" in exports rose from 23% in 1995 to 43% in 2007. However, the ratio has remained about the same

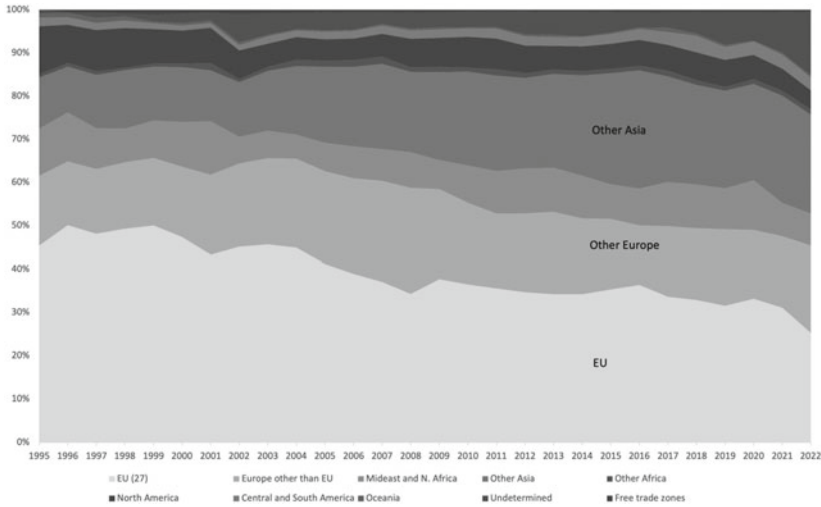


Fig. 5.1 Turkey's import sources (*Data source* Turkish Central Bank)

since then. Besides, much industrial upgrading occurred in collaboration with multinationals—conspicuously in the automobile industry—and did not necessarily generate Turkish-controlled brands that could penetrate world markets. In other words, the early twenty-first century saw a somewhat rapid transformation of Turkey into a medium-technology exporter, yet further upgrading proved elusive. This seems to be a fundamental dimension of the “middle income trap” that Turkey finds itself in, and an explanatory factor worth discussing may be inadequate industrial policy and the failure to invest in national firm-based assets (see Amsden, 2001), in addition to the widely acknowledged descent into authoritarian cronyism and problems in skill acquisition (Acemoğlu & Üçer, 2020).

In terms of export destinations, Europe remained as critical during the decade following the Customs Union but some reshuffling of Turkey's trade partners occurred around the global financial crisis (see Fig. 5.2). The crisis hit core countries badly and Turkey's Western markets shrank for several years. The share of Middle East and North African markets filled in by growing dramatically in 2008. This was building up on a boost that the region had already received upon AKP's coming to power, who ventured to pay greater attention to this region that had been ostensibly neglected by the more secular economic and foreign policy establishment

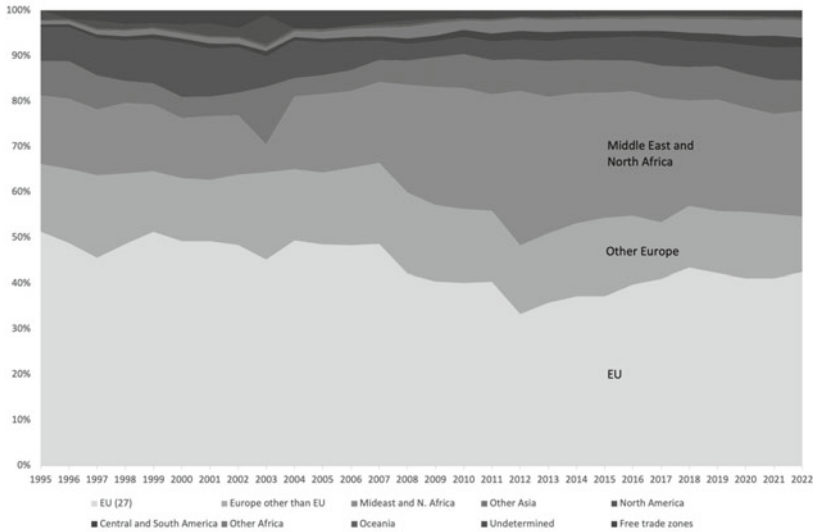


Fig. 5.2 Turkey's export destinations (*Data source* Turkish Central Bank)

of the past. Examining the 2003–2009 period, Lo Turco and Maggioni (2018) estimate that Turkish firms based on regions of the country with higher mosques per inhabitants were more likely to export to countries with a higher share of Muslim population. They also suggest that membership in MÜSİAD (a pro-AKP business organization enlisting religiously conservative business people) made it more likely for firms to take advantage of trade agreements signed with Muslim countries, of which AKP concluded at least 10 during the said period.

Overall, the share of Middle East and North Africa in Turkey's exports progressively increased to reach a peak in 2012. This expansion corresponds neatly to Erdogan's "Middle Eastern moment"—between his loud denouncing of Israeli violence toward Palestinians in a Davos World Economic Forum panel, which solidified his popularity in the Arab street, and the maturation of the Arab Spring, for which many considered Erdogan as an inspiring role model. Afterward, Syria's descent into a destructive civil war and the ending of Egypt's brief Muslim Brotherhood government by a military coup put Erdogan at odds with several Arab powers and thus the political winds became less favorable for Turkey's export cargo bound for the region. Conspicuously during the Qatar crisis

of 2017, when its Gulf neighbors tried to discipline this country over issues relating to Syria and Iran, the Saudi Kingdom and the Emirates took measures to discourage their citizens from engaging in trade and tourism with Qatar's ally Turkey, and even if these measures did not lead to major bilateral reductions they must have curbed further growth.²¹ In any case, Turkey's relationship with the region is now more multidimensional than it has ever been since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and is likely to remain dense. Nonetheless, Turkey's exports to the region substantially feature traditional items such as foodstuffs, and the growing importance of this export outlet may have something to do with the loss of momentum in industrial upgrading.

The partial replacement of Europe by Asian import and Middle Eastern export partners, the dismantling of some of the regulatory institutions, and the slowing down in industrial upgrading have a connection with the fortunes of Turkey's bid for EU membership—and this is a topic that has been written about extensively. The EU connection is also an important backdrop for the pace and source of Turkey's foreign capital inflows. When Turkey obtained at the end of 2004 a starting date for its EU accession talks, this was seen as increasing the credibility of Turkey as a market to invest in and was accompanied by a flurry of foreign money that came in various (debt-generating and other) forms. FDI in productive assets registered a still unbroken record, facilitated by major privatizations during 2005–2007. However, Turkey's EU accession talks were eventually derailed, most concretely due to the Cyprus issue.²² Afterward, external incentives for institutional harmonization disappeared on Turkey's part, and the AKP government reverted to a managerial and transactional style of forming connections with new sources of capital, such as Russia, China, and the Gulf countries. For some time, this was made easier by the quantitative easing policies of the US Federal Reserve in the immediate post-crisis period, which facilitated a resumption of capital flows to peripheral countries and Turkey enjoyed another period of investment lasting through 2015. Afterward FDI progressively dried up, in the face of the visibly deteriorating political climate and growing uncertainty about the country's future (see Fig. 5.3).

Almost in tandem, the sale of real estate to foreigners picked up, as the government encouraged this form of asset liquidation—in addition to growing indebtedness—as a compensating source of foreign exchange for the national economy. Substantial real estate acquisitions by foreigners was virtually prohibited until 2003, after which it started to increase

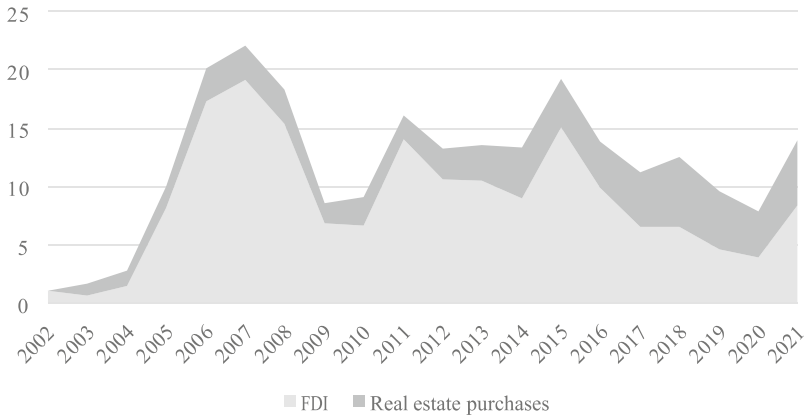


Fig. 5.3 International investment to Turkey (*Data source* Ministry of Industry)

moderately. As Habibi (2019) reports, a major change came in 2012 with the elimination of the reciprocity restrictions and raising of the land size limit, at a time of growing Middle Eastern interest in Turkey's residential and commercial markets. More controversially, in 2017 the government allowed foreigners to qualify for citizenship if they invested at least US\$1 million in Turkish real estate, and this threshold was lowered to US\$250,000 in September 2018 (to be later readjusted up to US\$400,000 in May 2022). "This reduction came a month after Turkey's banking and currency crisis of August 2018, when the Turkish government was desperately trying to attract foreign investment" (Habibi, 2019: 5). According to Central Bank data, the number of residential units sold to foreigners rose from 22,991 in 2016 to 59,282 in 2021. In the meantime, imbalances caused by the government's inflationary policies and problems in the construction sector have made real estate prohibitively expensive for local natives. According to OECD data, nominal house prices around the country went from an index value of 100 in 2015 to 286 by the end of 2021²³ with substantially higher hikes in dense urban areas like Istanbul.

While middle and upper classes from Iran, Iraq, and the Gulf take the lead in the market for citizenship and residency, the more conspicuous immigrant group has been at least 3.7 million Syrian refugees who have poured into Turkey mostly after the intensification of the Syrian Civil War

in 2014. There are also unknown numbers of undocumented immigrants from countries like Afghanistan and Somali, whose entry seems to have been facilitated once Turkey adopted a permissive refugee intake policy. This mass arrival of Middle Easterners puts the country in a novel position in terms of immigration—economically and culturally. Immigration was of course not unknown to Turkey, since the dislocations of the early twentieth century involved the movement of a large number of people in and out of the country's modern territory. But this had followed the familiar pattern of co-ethnics returning from the former imperial provinces to the diminished national core, almost all consisting of either Turks or Circassians, Bosniaks, and Pomaks who easily assimilated. Later, during the 1975–1995 period, Turkey was the nineteenth country in the world to receive the most migrants—roughly on par with its economic size ranking—and these were consisting mostly of ethnic Turks from the Balkans or returning Turkish migrants from Western Europe. Yet because of an equally large outflow of emigrants, there was practically no net immigration (see Hoşgör & Tansel, 2010: 29).

It is not automatic that countries become net immigration receivers once they pass a certain economic or demographic threshold, since the state will have a say in this. Countries like Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan are known to have tolerated the inefficiency of labor shortages and high wages for “dirty, dangerous, difficult” jobs, presumably to maintain their ethnic and social homogeneity by limiting immigration (Fong, 1994). Economically, immigrants are expected to provide competition for jobs while also generating new jobs through their consumption needs and the capital they may bring with them, although the specifics depend much on skill levels. Rather than adopting skill-based admission criteria, Turkey had to do with an open-door policy that seems to have naturally grown out of the need to accommodate refugees in need. Consequently, the large immigrant population has markedly lower education levels compared to natives. Econometric studies show that while Syrian immigration in Turkey has contributed to economic growth and employment creation for skilled natives—for whom the immigrants' skills are not rival but complementary; it has put downward pressure on the wages and employment opportunities of unskilled natives.²⁴ Public opinion surveys show that the open-door immigration policy is unpopular but the government, apart from the humanitarian discourse about refugee accommodation, has justified the policy with the argument that many jobs would be left undone without immigration. Given the persistently high unemployment rate, it

is more likely that with less immigration most jobs would still be done, but would require higher wages and imply lower profits for business owners. GDP share of profits has been growing in Turkey,²⁵ and there is econometric evidence suggesting that Turkish firm profitability is positively affected by refugee inflows.²⁶ One thing that AKP governments consistently maintained over the years has been the exertion of tight discipline over the organized labor movement and suppression of strike activity, but at least there was progress toward greater formalization of the labor market where more workers enjoy social security protection. As most immigrants work informally, their condition represents a step back for Turkey's moderate achievements in this area and toward the formation of a labor regime with greater potential for exploitation.

CONCLUSION

At this point, it is tempting to offer a scorecard for Turkey's economic performance during the twenty-first century. For a developing country, such a long period of time is bound to record substantial material improvements in almost any area and Turkey is no exception, in spite of the marked deterioration of the last couple of years. In fact, over the last quarter century or so, Turkey's performance in certain social indicators has been even more impressive than its moderate economic growth record and its volatile, populist politics may suggest. In this chapter, I invited attention to demographic factors that have played a role in this outcome and are often overlooked. With the ratio of working-age people at its peak, Turkey has been enjoying a demographic window of opportunity that is posed to start narrowing down in the near future. This should raise the question of missed opportunities—to what extent could better governance have delivered a better development performance, and prepared the country for the challenges ahead? The question is now more pertinent as ever, as Turkey has recently found itself marred by not only persistent unemployment but a resurging of inflation, amid an economic crisis that has been visibly made worse by the idiosyncratic policies of an increasingly personalized regime.

International factors have been shaping the pace and direction of Turkey's economic development. Around the turn of the new century, Turkey formed a new kind of institutional relationship with the West, and spent some effort to harmonize its economic policy-making style in line

with EU requirements and IMF advice. This period saw Turkey transforming into a medium technology exporter, but while economic growth continued later under a somewhat different set of policies, further technological upgrading failed to materialize. Economists attribute this inertia to the abandoning of the earlier approach (Acemoğlu & Üçer, 2020) or alternatively, to the built-in limitations of that approach, which prioritized financial management over productive investments (Orhangazi & Yeldan, 2021). In any case, when the relations with the West deteriorated, the AKP government turned to a more managerial, transactional style of forming connections with Russia, China, and the Middle East. Trade with these regions have started to rival that with the EU, and they became new sources of the foreign capital that Turkey badly needs as a country with chronic trade deficits. The composition of incoming capital, however, changed with increasing shares of portfolio and real estate investment, and a lower share of FDI, which is generally considered as a source of technological knowhow.

During the period under investigation, immigration emerged as a novel dimension of Turkey's international connections, politically and economically. The effective maintenance of at least 3.7 million strong population of Syrian refugees in Turkey has become the new cornerstone of the relations with the EU, which obtained Turkey's cooperation in this area with the so-called refugee deal of 2016. Syrian refugees are the main pillar of a growing immigrant population, which has lower education and higher fertility levels compared to the natives, and their growing presence in the informal labor market is giving new life to an old dualism where gains in minimum wage and social security protection are irrelevant for a substantial working population. This issue is likely to remain as a main policy challenge for Turkey for the years ahead.

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NOTES

1. For example, Özden et al. (2017). A recent interpretation along similar lines sees (Akçay, 2021) economic policies during AKP's long tenure as efforts to manage a "crisis of neoliberalism," after neoliberalism per se was exhausted relatively early on.
2. Kirişçi (2009) borrowed the term from Rosecrance and applied to Turkey.

3. Kutlay and Öniş (2021).
4. Altuğ et al. (2008).
5. Different data series record different figures, and the most reliable one seems to entail a methodological break around the year 2000. See İlkaraçan and Tunalı (2010) for the details.
6. See p. 19 of the program, “Türkiye’nin Güçlü Ekonomiye Geçiş Programı,” <https://www.tcmb.gov.tr/wps/wcm/connect/26640b7b-9641-4c35-99eccd10a9d4e51b/program.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=ROOTWORKSPACE-26640b7b-9641-4c35-99eccd10a9d4e51b-m3fB7oF>.
7. According to the ILO estimate (see data.worldbank.org), female labor force participation was at 36% in 1990, down to 25% in 2007, and 39% in 2019. Combined rate for both genders was 60, 49, and 58% respectively.
8. Hoşgör and Tansel (2010).
9. AKP leader Erdogan adopted a pro-natalist discourse in 2008, and this was reflected in policy with the tenth 5-year development plan prepared in 2013 (Gökburun, 2020).
10. See for the UNDP Human Development Report 2020 statistical annex Table 2: Human Development Index trends, 1990–2019 for the rankings and http://www.hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/TUR.pdf for Turkey’s performance details.
11. For a detailed analysis of growth performance, with a comparison of pre- and post-revision TÜİK growth statistics, see Subaşı (2020).
12. See Coşar et al. (2021) for road construction. The earthquake disaster of 2023 revealed the mixed legacy of AKP’s construction-oriented growth model: Major destruction ensued due to poor public enforcement of building codes (and bad emergency response), while TOKİ’s own public projects seemed to withstand much better.
13. See Atiyas (2012).
14. See Çeviker-Gürakar (2016) for details.
15. Özel (2012).
16. See Çarkoğlu and Kalaycıoğlu (2021: 136; Figure 4.1).
17. Çınaroğlu (2018) and Özen (2018). Healthcare reform regularly turns out as the most popular government policy in public opinion surveys. For an analysis of its contribution to AKP vote, see Adıgüzel et al. (2022).
18. Akarca and Tansel (2006) for a macro picture, and Aytaç (2022) for individual-level analysis.
19. A MFN tariff rate, originally granted as a trade privilege to individual countries in the early modern period, today means pretty much the opposite—the base (highest) rate charged on a country’s trade partners—because all WTO members are supposed to be equally “favored.”
20. See the review by Ayтуğ et al. (2017) and Ketenci (2017).
21. Habibi (2019).

22. See Hale (2013; chapter 8) for the details of Turkey's accession bid and Saatçioğlu (2020) for a more recent overview.
23. <https://data.oecd.org/price/housing-prices.htm>.
24. Altındağ et al. (2020) and Cengiz and Tekgüç (2022), with the latter finding negative findings to be of more temporary nature.
25. Seasonally adjusted operating surplus as a ratio of the GDP has increased from 56.6% in late 2016 to 62.8% in early 2021 and labor payments declined (Oyvatt, 2021), despite that the population ratio of wage earners keep increasing.
26. Akgündüz et al. (2018).

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Transformation of Secularism in Turkey

Umut Azak

The Turkish experience of secularism in the twentieth century has been either interpreted as a successful example of a secular democracy in a Muslim-majority society, or criticized as a case of state-directed secularism impeding democratization. Those who praised it as a “miracle” of democracy in the Islamic Middle East, especially in the context of the Cold War, did so on the basis of a Eurocentricist modernization paradigm. Critics of the Kemalist modernization project and its pillar principle of secularism such as Islamists condemned Turkish version of secularism as an authoritarian intervention in public life. Since 2002, when Justice and Development Party (AKP), an offshoot of the Islamist National Outlook movement, took power, secularism’s authoritarian legacy was claimed to be rejected and to be replaced by a more democratic model. This new model was categorized as an example of “passive secularism” that allegedly differed from the “assertive secularism” of the pre-AKP period (Kuru,

U. Azak (✉)

Department of International Relations, Istanbul Okan University, Istanbul,
Turkey

e-mail: umut.azak@okan.edu.tr

2006). However, the AKP government has been even more active in controlling the religious sphere. Turkish secularism in both the pre-AKP and AKP periods has been in contradiction with the secular democratic principle of equal citizenship. A pluralist secularism equidistant to all religious groups, that the AKP had officially advocated in its initial years, is still far from the current reality. The AKP government has been much more reluctant than its precedents in ending the privileged position of Sunni Islam within the state apparatus and accelerated policies that officially promote it as the basis of Turkish national identity. Ministries of education, culture, as well as the gigantically expanded religious bureaucracy have been major tools of social engineering for “fostering pious generations”, a slogan and an action plan of conservative nationalist and Islamist critics of Kemalist commitment to secularism and Westernization. This chapter will analyze how the AKP government’s policies in the last two decades fluctuated between its formal commitment to a pluralist and democratic secularism and its gradually more visible Islamist agenda at both national and international levels. In order to understand this ideological shift, we need first to examine its historical background.

“ASSERTIVE” SECULARISM

Secularism has been the central tenet of Kemalism, the official ideology of the Turkish Republic. In 1928, the second article of the 1924 Constitution, which declared Islam the official religion of the state, was removed. Reforms which secularized the legal, cultural, and political fields were implemented in the 1920s and the 1930s. In 1937, the principle of secularism became a non-amendable article of the Constitution. The Turkish nation-state was established after the victory over the “infidel” occupying powers at the end of World War I, as a result of the resistance of Muslim groups from different ethnic background in Anatolia uniting on the basis of an Islamic solidarity (Zürcher, 1999). However, Kemalists aimed to create a nation-state on a secular basis, rejecting to derive their political legitimacy from Islam. Thus, the elimination of Islamic sources of power such as the Caliphate was deemed essential for strengthening the political authority of the secular state. But with the Law No. 431 in 1924 which abolished the Caliphate and the function of the Sheikh ul-Islam, a new institution, the Presidency of Religious Affairs (Diyânet İşleri Reisliği/Başkanlığı), was charged with the administration of the mosques

and religious personnel (Gözaydın, 2006; Kara, 2000). Kemalists institutionalized their control over Islamic practices via this administrative unit and attempted to eliminate uncontrolled Islamic activity. While reincorporating Islamic scholars (ulema) into the bureaucratic ranks of the republic, the new regime also curbed their influence by fully secularizing the field of education via the implementation of the Law of the Unification of Education (Tevhid-i Tedrisat Kanunu) in 1925. Traditional Islamic seminaries were closed down so that education could be standardized under a national and secular curriculum. Religious activity was further restricted by outlawing Sufi dervish lodges and prohibiting the use of traditional and Islamic titles, costumes, and ceremonies.

Secularism aimed at least in the public realm at a radical transformation of gender relations as well. Women who benefitted from the new educational and legal reforms of the Republican state were at the center of this state-led secularization. The adoption of the Swiss Civil Code (as well as the Italian Penal Code) in 1926 became a major step in the secularization of the law. In the new secular Civil Code (Medenî Kanun), polygamy was banned; women gained equal rights in inheritance law and could apply for divorce. Newly educated republican women embodied the shift from an Islamic to a secular way of life and became the social markers of the nation's modernity. Western-style clothing and accompaniment of men in public arenas of entertainment were seen as proof of their emancipation from tradition (Göle, 1996: 55–63). Although in the first decade of the Republic, women were deprived from their equal citizenship rights when it came to suffrage, the long struggle for political equality led by the Turkish Women's Association (Türk Kadınlar Birliği) resulted in full voting rights for women by 1934 (Zihnioğlu, 2003).

Secularism was also understood as requiring an overall temporal and spatial transformation. Eliminating the influences of Islamic culture by emulating Europe as a model was a key feature of Kemalist nationalism. Secularism was accordingly perceived as a policy needed for making Turkey a part of the Western civilization, by breaking its ties with the Islamic world. The replacement of the Arabic alphabet by the Latin one in 1928, the adoption of the European clock and calendar in 1926, European numerals in 1928, and European measures and weights in 1931 have been symbolic steps which distanced Turkey further away from the Islamic world and the Islamic-Ottoman heritage (Zürcher, 1997: 196). The West in this repositioning vis-à-vis the Islamic world was accepted as the source of universal norms.

Thus, secularist reforms, replacing traditional Islamic forms with its European versions, were not just about internal politics. They were closely related to how Turkey situated herself in wider international arena: The new Turk would no more imagine him/herself as a part of the Islamic umma but as outside or at least beyond it. Meanwhile, to be part of the “West”, imagined as the normative present and the future to be reached at, was perceived as the only formula for acquiring recognition and equal treatment at the international level (Bilgin, 2015). All opponents of secularism departed from the critique of this Eurocentric construction of the national identity and formulated alternative, anti-Westernist nationalist narratives framing Turkey as the leader of an Islamic regeneration against the West, perceived merely as Christian. Hence, one of most influential intellectual movements, which largely shaped the ideological outlook of the Islamist youth in the 1960s and 1970s—i.e., the future members of the AKP in the 2000s—was called “the Great East” (“Büyük Doğu”, further explained below).

While secularization has been experienced as a program of political and cultural Westernization, as the intensification of a process initiated in late Ottoman period, Turkish secularism was also marked by the peculiar dynamics of state-religion relations, also rooted in the imperial past. Islam no longer served as a legitimizing ideology in the new Republic and it was largely removed from political and legal spheres as well as in the fields of education and culture, as explained above. However, despite radical reforms of secularization, a complete separation of religion from the political apparatus did not occur.

Although *laiklik*, the Turkish term for secularism, had its source in the French experience of secularism (*laïcité*) where state and religion have been strictly separated since 1905, such a structural secularization was not implemented in Turkey. The state not only controlled the religious field but also promoted a specific religion, Sunni-Hanefi school of Islam, as in the Ottoman era. Through the Presidency of Religious Affairs (PRA), functioning as a directorate under the office of the Prime Minister, the government allocated a large amount of national budget to “serve the people’s religious needs” by promoting a “correct” and “enlightened” Islam via salaried state preachers. Actively intervening in determining the boundaries of legitimate Islam, the secular regime along with the orthodox Sunni ulema—now employed as republican clerks—neither totally removed Islam from the public sphere nor just left it to individual consciences (as claimed by the Kemalist elite), but instrumentalized it for

nation-building. The control of Islam went hand in hand with the elimination of political adversaries of the regime (Bozarslan, 2000: 63–66; Cizre-Sakallıoğlu, 1996: 236). Unofficial forms of Islam that were outside of the state's control were condemned for being obstacles to progress and modernization, and were hence depicted as anti-revolutionary and reactionary-allegations used for demonizing and fending off critics of the regime. Secularism and its central principle, the freedom of conscience, was reformulated as the protection of Turkish citizens from “wrong” or “bad” Islam associated with “reactionary” Islamic figures or other groups who opposed Kemalist modernization project (Azak, 2010).

Briefly, far from propagating irreligion, as claimed by its conservative and Islamist opponents, the secularist government in fact incorporated Islam and bred a state Islam in line with its nationalist policies. Kemalist secularism was “assertive” in the sense of imposing its version of “true” religion rather than a stringent secularist ideology pitted against a Muslim society. The state-led reform which replaced the Arabic call to prayer with its Turkish translation and forbade the former for almost eighteen years until the fall of the Republican People's Party in May 1950 proves how the government at least attempted to actively control the religious sphere (Azak, 2010: 45–60). It should be noted here that while conservative nationalists and Islamists criticized such state interventions in religious sphere, they have not questioned the PRA's promotion of Sunni Islam at the expense of other religious beliefs and its struggle against allegedly “superstitious” practices.

“PASSIVE” SECULARISM

Can the AKP government be seen as the promoter of a “passive secularism”, which defends religious freedoms as main priority and guarantees state neutrality toward religions (Kuru, 2006: 140) as opposed to the Kemalist secularism described above? Such a passive and/or neutral position vis-à-vis different religious beliefs has not been observed yet. Instead, an active promotion and instrumentalization of Sunni Islam has been central to the AKP government's policies. The latter need to be understood, however, as a continuation of a long process rooted in the Turkish experience of democracy.

Since the transition to multi-party democracy in the mid-1940s, the legacy of Kemalist secularism and its basic precepts outlined above have been safeguarded by the army, upper ranks of the judiciary, and civil

bureaucracy. In the multi-party era, intellectuals and journalists, who shaped public opinion through the print media, and civil society organizations defended Kemalist secularism in response to new challenges. Since the beginning of the democratic period in the mid-1940s, however, Kemalist secularism has been questioned by self-proclaimed representatives of the “Muslim” nation, i.e., conservative nationalist (and since the late 1960s, Islamist) intellectuals and politicians who emphasized Islam’s centrality in Turkish national identity. This conservative nationalist drive was fueled by a will to revive an imagined Ottoman/Turkish glory framed as the apex of the Islamic civilization.

In its most crystal form, this anti-Kemalist position took the form of “Hagia Sophia Cause”, a series of public campaigns aiming to reopen the museum as mosque again and culminating with success in 2020 under the AKP government (Azak, 2021). These Hagia Sophia Cause united different nationalist groups, among which was also the “Great East Movement” led by the poet Necip Fazıl Kısakürek (1904–1983). The reopening of the Hagia Sophia as a mosque was demanded and framed by such publications as a symbolic gesture initiating Islamic/Turkish regeneration, which was allegedly impeded by secularist and Westernist outlook of the previous governments. Nationalist youth were attracted by these revivalist narratives generating a collective memory of Ottoman and Islamic superiority over the West. The rise of this Islamic and Ottomanist nationalism was also facilitated by the anti-communist fervor at the international level led by US against the perceived threat of the Soviet Union, seen as the source of communist and atheist propaganda.

The Kemalist model of secularism was criticized in this framework in as early as the 1950s for being “hostile” to religion and restricting the “freedom of conscience” via state interventions in the religious sphere (Yavuz, 2009). This critique was found in its most systematic form in the work of Ali Fuat Başgil (1893–1967), a legal scholar who published widely in the 1950s and 1960s in several conservative nationalist publications. Başgil’s collection of writings on secularism and religion, with its stress on the freedom of religion, inspired generations of intellectuals and politicians who would be in the highest ranks of the Turkish political system in the 2000s, such as Yalçın Akdoğan, the former deputy prime minister and advisor to Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who formulated “the basic parameters of the AKP’s political identity” named as “conservative democracy” (Akdoğan, 2004).

Başgil's critique of Kemalist secularism was based on the claim that religion was subordinated to the state during the republican period. He stated that unlike in the West secularism in Turkey was "not the guarantor of the freedom of religion and conscience, but was a mask, a disguise, which covers the state's intervention in religious affairs" (Başgil, 1998: 192). Başgil's defense of secularism stemmed from his liberal belief in religious freedom, as well as his dissatisfaction with politicians' insufficient level of religiosity. According to Başgil, the state's control of religion was dangerous because of the then (in the 19540s and 1950s when he was writing his work) scarcity of religious/pious statesmen (Başgil, 186). It was thus safer for religion to be autonomous from the state because politicians were not truly religious. However, he claimed that the principle of state neutrality would, no longer be a necessity if those in power were good Muslims. In other words, according to Başgil, for a "true" secularism, the state had to be totally separated from religion for the sake of protecting religion from the state's intervention, but this protection would not be needed if the government were led by pious leaders who would assumedly act in the interest of the majority. In Başgil's words, as it was the state's duty to respond to people's religious needs (ibid.: 187), religion and state would act "as two friends arm-in-arm on the same path as they both serve individuals' well-being, security, peace and comfort" (ibid.: 183).

According to some commentators, the model of secularism suggested by Başgil and adopted by governments from the 1950s onwards was a shift from "laicism" (Kemalist secularism) to "national secularism" which was in harmony with Islam (Hocaoğlu, 1995). In many respects, the AKP is heir to this interpretation of secularism as formulated by Başgil. The AKP's program "depicts secularism as 'an assurance of the freedom of religion and conscience' and rejects 'the interpretation and distortion of secularism as enmity against religion.' It considers the discrimination against pious people due to their religious preferences as antidemocratic" (AK Parti, 2002). AKP leaders, like Başgil, approach secularism from the perspective of "freedom of religion". However, their most powerful motivation is to protect and strengthen the majority religion of Sunni Islam, with the help of a reconstructed "religion/Islamfriendly" state.

Put it briefly, democratic shifts and populist politics in Turkey facilitated the revision of official secularism in the service of Sunni Islam. This can be seen as a formula for restoring citizens' loyalty to the state (Mert, 2001: 208). From the DP in the 1950s to the AKP of the

2000s, a new version of secularism, defined as “passive” or “national” as explained above, has been side by side with conservative nationalist and/or Islamist political agendas. This “revised” secularism, despite the claims of its proponents, did not result in a fundamental rearrangement of religion-state relations. The state continued to be involved actively in the religious sphere with the PRA extending its control of existing infrastructural apparatus, expanding the scope of religious services, and diversifying and proliferating the channels through which Sunni Islam has been promoted within the country and abroad.

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

The AKP is the first political party having roots in the Islamist National Outlook movement and not closed down by the Constitutional Court for violating the principle of secularism. Successive electoral victories since 2002 have allowed the AKP to be refashioned as “conservative democrats” and to extend its support base by engaging in alliances with liberals, the EU, several Islamic communities, and the Gülen movement. Their liberal rhetoric, however, has gradually been replaced by an authoritarian discourse after the presidential elections of 2007, which rendered the executive power a purely AKP branch (Kaya, 2015: 50). Kaya describes the period since 2007 as “subtle Islamization of society and politics in everyday life”, in the context of “the weakening of the legitimacy of the Turkish military as ‘the guardian of national unity and the laicist order’” (Kaya, 2015: 63). As a matter of fact, under the AKP government, the Kemalist tradition of social engineering within the framework of state-led modernization, formerly condemned by “conservative democrats” (of the AKP) as “oppressive” and “antidemocratic”, has been adopted for serving the needs of their pious Sunni electorate. State agencies continue to regulate religion and determine the boundaries of acceptable religious conduct. The AKP has been in many respects even more active in extending the religious sphere and implementing a social engineering agenda. “Turkish secularism” in its peculiar tradition of state’s intervention in religious affairs has been firmly preserved by the AKP government. The latter has never questioned the role of the PRA, but in fact expanded its capacity by increasing the number of its service unit within and outside the mosques; and its official status was elevated from “general directorate” to “undersecretariat” in July 2010 (DİB, 2013). State funding of the PRA within the total state budget

has increased twofold in the 10 years after the AKP came to power in 2002 (from 0.54 to 1.2% in 2012). Since that date, this ratio did not decrease below 1% and the budget allocated to this institution has been even higher from the one allocated to the ministry of education (Kaplıca, 2018; DİB İstatistikleri). According to the statistical data published in the PRA's web page, the size of the institution's huge bureaucracy has expanded with the number of employed personnel increasing at the rate of 67% between 2004 and 2014. Between 2014 and 2021, another 10 thousand new personnel were employed, reaching the total number of 130.004. At the same time, more than 12.500 new mosques were built in the same period, adding up to 89.817 mosques in total in 2021. While these numbers can be seen as reflecting the rate of the increase in the population, the increase in the number of the Koran courses has been much beyond this rate: While in 2000 there were only 3000 of them, their number has reached 16.346 by August 2022 (DİB İstatistikleri).

The PRA has continued to promote Sunni Islam as the basis of national identity at the expense of other forms of Muslim and non-Muslim beliefs. Besides, the use of religious idiom in the political sphere has amplified in the AKP period, as political leaders publicly expose their religiosity publicly. The freedom of religion is increasingly being understood as the dominance of a particular understanding of Islamic morality which restricts the freedom of expression of those who do not subscribe to the AKP's notion of Sunni Islam and religiosity. As part of this will to transform the public sphere along Islamic lines, several official protocols have been signed with the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Family, Work and Social Services, student dormitories, youth centers, hospitals, and prisons for offering spiritual support and services. Public services concerning "family and women" have been intensified along with the inclusion of more women preachers within the existing cadres. Put in a nutshell, not only the existing capacity and activity of state Islam been increased, but also its area of influence has expanded with new instruments and channels of propaganda (Adak, 2021; Çitak, 2020; Maritato, 2020; Mutluer, 2018; Öztürk, 2021).

These accelerated services of the PRA had an international dimension too. With consultancy services and offices at 90 different cities in the world and around 2000 appointed officials abroad, the PRA continues to serve in more than 100 countries as well as offering training programs to foreign religious officials (DİB Stratejik Plan 2019–2023). Educational activities are being enhanced also via its cooperation with the Türkiye

Diyanet Foundation attracting thousands of foreign students willing to study theology, enrolling in preaching schools and Koran seminaries in Turkey (DİB Stratejik Plan 2019–2023). All these did not require any structural and constitutional changes in the regime, the former secularist order based on the control of religion became also beneficial for conservative nationalist and Islamist cadres.

The expansion of official religious services abroad and international activities of the DRA, as well as the opening of the international branches of Yunus Emre Foundation as part of a new cultural diplomacy, can be seen as a reflection of the foreign policy approach adopted since the initial years of the AKP government. Former Minister of Foreign Affairs and Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu (2001) was the initiator of this new approach claiming and aiming leadership in the larger Islamic geography on the basis of a shared Muslim identity and Ottoman legacy (Gözyaydın, 2013). Later AKP governments continued to promote this policy of promoting Turkey's engagement with the Muslim world and shaped a foreign policy along Ottomanist lines, attempting to emerge as a soft power in the Middle East and Islamic world and stressing "the superior qualities of the country's Ottoman and Islamic past as opposed to an exploitative West" (Uzer, 2018: 34–35). The closure of the Hagia Sophia Museum and its reopening as a mosque in July 2020 needs to be seen in this framework: This radical step reversed the early republican government's 1934 decree which had transformed the monumental mosque to a museum for exhibiting both Byzantine and Ottoman imperial legacies. President Erdoğan's decree, pleasing nationalist and conservative electorate, was a move away from the republican commitment to "universal civilization". Erdoğan used this occasion to enhance Turkey's image as leader of Muslims, strong enough to challenge the Western world. Hence his speech heralding the opening of the mosque:

Today, Hagia Sophia is having another resurrection, many of which it has witnessed since its construction. The resurrection of Hagia Sophia heralds the liberation of the al-Aqsa Mosque. ... is the footsteps of the will of Muslims across the world to come out of the interregnum. ... is the reignition of the fire of hope of not just Muslims but together with them of all the oppressed, wronged, downtrodden and exploited. ... (T)he Hagia Sophia, as a mosque is an overdue recovery. It is the strongest answer ever given to the brutal attacks against our symbols and values across the Islamic world. ... (Erdoğan, 2020)

These statements reflecting the government's commitment to a civilizational revenge in the name of "Muslims and the oppressed peoples" prove how the mid-twentieth-century critics of the Kemalist secularism such as the Great East movement of Kısakürek, as explained above, shaped Turkey's foreign policy orientation along Islamist and anti-Westernist lines.

THE CASE FOR A GENUINE SECULAR DEMOCRACY

Despite the visible ideological shift as sketched above, it would be wrong to describe the AKP period as post-secular, simply because there has never been a strictly "secular" regime totally separated from the religious field. The control of the latter, a republican legacy of the Kemalist secularism, is now in the hands of politicians who this time aim to de-secularize the public sphere in line with the AKP's vision of creating "pious generations". This legacy of secularism has been also questioned, however, by both secular and religiously-motivated actors who search for ways to live in a pluralistic society where no religious view is idealized and imposed as the basis of national identity from above. The Gezi Park protests, which took place in June 2013 in Istanbul and all over the country, was a reaction to the AKP government's arbitrary interventions in urban spaces as well as the restrictions on citizenship rights and freedoms. Protests in Istanbul had created a platform where secular groups such as feminists, LGBTI activists, and anarchists together with Islamic groups such as the small but active "anti-capitalist Muslims" movement cooperated in resistance to neoliberal, moralistic, and authoritarian governance. Moreover, the Alevi movement and its civil society organizations continue to claim and demand secularism as a guarantor of their rights of equal citizenship regardless of religious affiliation, a principle which is stated in the constitution. The demand for a truly neutral and secular democratic government in Turkey has gathered momentum and is growing ever since.

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Gender Equality in Turkey

Zeynep Alemdar 

Women's movement in Turkey has historically been a strong force for Turkish state's gender policies on the international scene. In late 1970s and 1980s, when the international community was organizing and institutionalization of women's rights through the UN mechanisms started, it was a small group of feminists who represented Turkey at the UN's women conferences. These women's efforts to bring about the international norms and values and implement those in Turkey coincided with the efforts of the Turkish state to find itself a reputable place within the global system, in line with its Western orientation. Women were effective in challenging the patriarchal language of the law-makers, and pointing out to the various regulations in the Civil Code and the Turkish Penal Code, which date back to 1930s and mostly adopted from that era's Italian codes that were clearly very far from gender equality. By the 1990s, thanks to these efforts and again in line with Turkey's Western

Z. Alemdar (✉)

Istanbul Okan University, Istanbul, Turkey

e-mail: zeynep.alemdar@okan.edu.tr

inclination and its quest for the European Union membership, the institutionalization of gender equality within the state started. Institutions were formed, and regulations were written and implemented. The 1995 UN Fourth World Conference in Beijing, which still comprises the backbone of the international women's movement created a mobility that emerged in the Turkish civil society as well. During this period, the number of active women's organizations increased rapidly, and different and effective methods were used in order to create public opinion and influence policies.

With the revision of national legislation from the second half of the 1990s to until about 2005, when Turkey finally got the green light to start accession negotiations with the European Union, women's situation in Turkey improved legally, in diverse areas, from situation in the family to working life, to protection from different types of violence against women. From 2007 to 2013, there were many contradictory currents on the political scene concerning women's rights. In 2007, the Justice and Development Party AKP, which portrayed a political standing compared to the Christian Democrats of European states, consolidated its electoral base in Turkey. By then, the liberal, egalitarian discourse that came to the fore in the 1990s in terms of women's rights gradually began to give way to the "gender justice" discourse. In 2008, the then Prime Minister Erdoğan started his discourse that "every family should have 3 children," as a population and family policy, and the idea of *fitrat*, that women complement men rather than the idea that women and men are equal, started to be circulated within policy circles and in general public. The discourse of gender justice, rather than gender equality, thus became the main operating mechanism of family and women policies of the Turkish state.

By 2013, when the Gezi protests, which started off as a protest against the demolition of the Gezi Park, only green space in Taksim Square, Istanbul's social and cultural center, turned into a wholesale resistance around the country against the conservative and repressive policies of the AKP; a new women's association, one that was headed by Erdoğan's daughter, was founded. The Women and Democracy Association, KADEM, practically a Government-Oriented Nongovernmental Organization (GONGO), at the time, declared its aim as "protecting the core values of women in Turkey," positioning women solely in the family in line with the *fitrat* discourse (KADEM, 2013).

Since 2013, in tandem with the discussions around the world about gender equality, and disruptions of women's rights from the United States to Hungary, women's rights in Turkey are in decline. Women are now struggling not to lose the rights that they earned over the years. Surely, the year 2019, when President Erdoğan declared that the Istanbul Convention, the most progressive and practical international human rights treaty to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence can be annulled, was a turning point as well. Yet, looking at the current climate within Turkey's women's rights scene as of November 2022, it is fair to argue that the struggle continues.

The rest of this chapter chronicles the main events and the juxtapositions of the domestic and international factors in the past 20 years and how they affect the women's movement in Turkey. Yet, in order to understand the background of the women's struggle in Turkey, a very brief history since the nineteenth century is also included. As explained above, the events of the past 20 years will be organized in three main time periods, from 2002 to 2007, from 2007 to 2013, and since 2013, underscoring specific dates such as the five general, four local elections, and three referenda.

WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN TURKEY: FROM OTTOMAN SISTERS TO REPUBLIC'S WOMEN

In the period known as first-wave feminism (roughly from the end of the eighteenth century to the First World War), women were fighting for their rights to vote, receive education, and own property all over the world. Urban women of the Ottoman Empire, especially in the environment created by the Tanzimat era, also began to question their lives in the private sphere and to make demands. After the Second Constitutional Monarchy (1908), women established charity associations, as well as educational and cultural organizations. These organizations formed the first stage of the Ottoman women's movement. The first association established by Ottoman women to defend women's rights, that is also the first legal women's association in the Ottoman Empire, Osmanlı Müdafaa-i Hukuk-ı Nisvan Society (Association for Advocating the Law of Ottoman Women), dates back to 1913 (Çakır, 1996: 43–54).

Yet, the Ottoman Empire missed out on the industrial revolution, and Ottoman and early Republican era women did not participate in the workforce like their sisters in the West did; therefore, they played more of

a role as the founder of the modern family in the establishment of the nation-state in the modernization process. Still, women in Turkey organized to the extent to establish an all-women political party, in order to help women who are behind in political, social, and economic issues as early as 1923. Women in Turkey gained the right to vote and to run for office in municipal elections in 1930 and to be elected for the national parliament in 1934. The recognition of women's right to vote and be elected in Turkey attracted attention in the world. The Twelfth Congress of the International Alliance of Women (IAW) was held in Istanbul in 1935, with participation of women rights defenders from various countries (Libal, 2008). Yet, in the process of foundation of the modern nation-state, women were portrayed as strong modern mothers as educators of the nation, and due to this dominant mentality, it has not been possible to internalize gender equality in Turkey (Sancar, 2011: 77). This continued until the 1960s; when liberation movements spread all over the world, the women's movement spread with this modernization approach.

SECOND WAVE FEMINISM AND WOMEN IN TURKEY

In the 1960s, women around the world opposed to unequal burden of domestic chores with the slogan "private is political" pointing out to the structural inequalities built through the economic system. Women in Turkey were surely aware of this wave, which became to be named Second Wave Feminism. Yet, even the progressive political movements were male-dominated and women in those movements could not raise their voices (Akkaya, 2011).

The 1975 Mexico City Women's Meeting organized by the United Nations marked the beginning of the Women's Decade. International women's movement's efforts in those years would bear the fruit of institutionalizations of women's rights. The Mexico City meeting was also observed by women in Turkey, mostly academics and lawyers. In Istanbul, those women from different disciplines were starting to establish the field of women's studies. In the late 1970s, women in Turkey began to read translations of Western feminist sources and academics uncovered the intellectual and social movement that existed before the Republic in Turkey bringing about a collective historical consciousness to the feminist movement in Turkey (Durakbaşı, 2011: 189). In the symposium organized by the Writers and Translators Cooperative (YAZKO) in Istanbul in 1982 at the Journalists' Association, the word feminism was spoken

from the podiums for the first time in Turkey. However, looking at the history of the women's movement, it is fair to say that feminism as a social movement came to Turkey only after 1980.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the UN treaty that is one of the most constitutional documents of women's rights around the world, was adopted by the UN in 1979. Turkey signed and ratified the Convention in 1985 after a petition, underscoring its importance, with signatures of women from every walk of life, was sent to the Turkish General Assembly (Tekeli, 2017). Women from Turkey also attended the Nairobi Conference held by the UN in 1985 to close the Decade of Women. After CEDAW came into force in Turkey, creation of special policies for gender equality has accelerated, national mechanisms have been established, women's studies have moved to the academic field, and women's organizations started to form more effective pressure groups through cooperation (Moroğlu, 2016: 296).

1990S, WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN THE WORLD AND IN TURKEY

The 1990s was a decade in which the women's rights movement expanded in Turkey. In tandem with Turkey's efforts to become a member of the European Union, the civic space extended for women's rights groups. In the larger international arena, too, were pressures to expand and institutionalize women's rights. The 1995 Beijing Conference was an important turning point for the world's women's movement, bringing together women from 189 countries and displaying the universality of women's rights.

On the other hand, the 1990s was a radical transformation for the world's political and social history. After the end of the Cold War, the issues of identity, ethnicity, and nationalism were on the agenda of the feminists as well, and the Third Wave of the feminist movement emerged. One of the most important arguments of the Third Wave Movement is their assertion that Second Wave Feminism is limited to middle-class white women, a claim that found support among feminists in Turkey as well. A group of Islamist feminists argued, for instance, that the veil was based on the free will of women, and it was not the domination of religion over the female body (Sancar, 2011: 80–82).

On the legal plane, the international convention CEDAW, Turkey's 6th Five-Year Development Plan and the Nairobi Strategies, envisaged the establishment of a coordinator or an executive unit related to women in Turkey. For this reason, the General Directorate of the Status of Women, as it is now known, was established in 1990, under the name of "Presidency on the Status and Problems of Women." At the meeting of the United Nations International Center for Research and Education for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) in 1992, the General Directorate of Status and Issues of Women was accepted as the contact point on women in Turkey, and programs and projects began to be implemented in cooperation with the UN. While regulations continued in the public sector, thanks to the structures required by international conventions and organizations, the atmosphere created by the women's movement in politics and society, and the parties that brought the needs of women to the parliament, the women's movement started to gain strength. For instance, women's civil society was active during the amendment of the Civil Code, through an initiative they founded, Platform of Women's Associations on the amendment of the Civil Code, submitting 100 thousand signed petitions to the Presidency of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey in 1993 (Karakuş, 2020).

HOPEFUL 2000S

The first half of the 2000s can be defined as the golden years of women's rights in Turkey in an institutional sense. In the special session of the United Nations General Assembly on "Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the 21st Century" in New York, the Turkish delegation consisted of representatives of the government of Turkey, women parliamentarians from different political parties, and the civil society (Anıl et al., 2001). This type of cooperation and positive relations would be hard to come by in the later years.

Women's rights in Turkey were also on the agenda of the European Parliament and the European Commission. Women's rights, violence against women, the role of civil society, women's education, and women's participation in employment and political life in Turkey were on the agenda of the European Parliament, with the 2005 and 2007 reports. Women's issues in Turkey started to take place in the Progress Reports written by the EU Commission.

There were many changes in the national legislation regarding gender equality. United Nations conventions, such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights were signed and ratified. From 1999 to 2005, the European Union accession process liberalized Turkey's domestic scene, and women worked with successive coalition governments in changing the Penal Code and the Civic Code in line with the requirements of the twenty-first century, and even a Parliamentary Committee committed to gender equality was introduced.

Regulations on civil rights and human rights have positively reflected on women, especially with the amendments to the Civil Code, Penal Code, and the Constitution. The Civil Code, which came into force in Turkey in 2002, was at the forefront of the agenda of the women's movement from 1985 to the end of the 1990s (Tekeli, 2017: 339). While the Civil Code in 2001 and the Penal Code and Labor Law in 2003 were renewed during the efforts to harmonize with the EU *acquis*, women's organizations put a lot of pressure on the state (Alemdar, 2008).

While the parliamentary work on the amendments to the Penal Code in 2004 was continuing, the women's movement was a platform representing thirty women's organizations and many women lawyers who personally participated in drafting the law, which were taken from the Italian Penal Code of 1926. Women carried out intense lobbying activities to change the law that works against women on issues such as virginity control, sexual harassment, honor killing, and adultery (Tekeli, 2017: 400). The constitutional amendment in 2004, though, granted the assurance of international law as a reference for women's rights in Turkey. The provision that reads "in case of conflicts that may arise due to the fact that international agreements on fundamental rights and freedoms and laws that have been duly put into effect contain different provisions on the same subject, the provisions of international agreements shall prevail" was added to the Article 90 of the Constitution. With this amendment, national law was to reflect the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which is accepted as the constitution of women's rights and to which Turkey has been a party since 1985 (Eryilmaz Dilek & Ayata, 2010: 4).

All these changes occurred under the political environment where the AKP came to power as the first majority party after the consecutive coalition governments of the 1990s, after the general elections in 2002.

Erdoğan, the leader of the party, who was banned from elections because of “incitement to religious hate,” became the Prime Minister in 2003 after a by-election. The reforms of the past governments and the EU membership prospects kept the liberalization process going only until 2007, when the AKP consolidated its electoral base.

2007 TO 2013: START OF THE DECLINE

The liberal, egalitarian discourse that came to the fore in the 1990s in terms of women’s rights gradually began to give way to the “gender justice” discourse. Women’s groups, who were once attending the UN conferences and whose gender expertise were a source of pride for the Turkish delegation, were sidelined. Starting in 2006, women’s groups started not to be invited to the UN Commission on the Status of Women meetings (Bianet, 8 February 2006). In the period that started with the advice of then Prime Minister Erdoğan in 2008, “every family should have 3 children,” the discourse of *fıtrat*, which argues that women and men complement each other rather than being equal, started to spread (Eslen Ziya & Kazanoğlu, 2020).

While the transition from the discourse of gender equality to the discourse of gender justice was slowly taking place in the Islamist circles, the legal changes that have been worked on for a long time and required by the international system continued to be implemented with the influence of politicians who defend women’s rights. Thanks to the ongoing struggle of women’s organizations, a special Equal Opportunity Commission for Women and Men (KEFEK) was established in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey in 2009. The Commission prepared reports on violence against women, early and forced marriage, the problems of women in rural areas and women in working life, and brought these issues to the Turkish Grand National Assembly.

There were also international projects carried out in Turkey training judges, prosecutors and lawyers on equality, discrimination, women’s rights, and domestic violence with technical and financial support of the United Nations Population and Development Fund (UNFPA) (Eryılmaz Dilek & Ayata, 2010: 4). The Women Entrepreneurs Association of Turkey (KAGİDER) and the Women’s Labor and Employment Initiative (KEİG) Platform were established during this period and still continue to work.

As mentioned above, in the first half of the 2000s, the women's movement in Turkey advocated for women's rights in interaction with both the state and international organizations and international civil society. While women's organizations established platforms among themselves and carried out important advocacy activities during the amendment of the Civil and Penal Code, they also communicated with different women's organizations from different EU countries. The relatively positive years of the 2000s for women's rights ended with the perverse effects of the financial crisis that started in the United States in 2008 on Europe, and then the EU financial crisis, with the states closing in and sinking into security problems.

In the meantime, the AKP government was ambitious in its international dealings. There were serious efforts at mediation during these years, between Palestinian Authority and Israel in 2007, Syria and Israel in 2008, and Syria and the EU in 2009. Turkey secured a rotating seat on the UN Security Council, and Erdoğan became an increasingly outspoken champion of "Muslim cause," like his act in Davos in 2009 against the Israeli President Shimon Peres (Akkoyunlu, 2021: 250). Turkey was also active in the UN system and at the European Council, where the most comprehensive agreement ever signed against violence against women was passed in 2011. The Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence was signed in Istanbul and supported strongly by the government. Yet, by 2011, the EU discourse, which is an important anchor in Turkey's progress on human rights, started to lose its importance in the political agenda.

From 2007 to 2013, in the midst of AKP's multilateral and proactive foreign policy, women's human rights were still an issue that united different segments of the society, not creating the polarizing effect that is witnessed by 2022. Domestic violence, for instance, an all encompassing problem that does not have any limits of class, ethnicity, or ideology, was an issue to be tackled with, and the state's obligation to protect women was not discussed. Yet, both around the world and in Turkey, as the first decade of the 2000s ended, women's rights started to become a divisive issue through the manipulations of conservative right-wing groups, partly as the consequence of the expansion of the anti-rights groups.

The EU Parliament study reporting that in Austria, Poland, Hungary, Italy, Romania, and Slovakia, women's rights were eroding, explained how the concept of "gender ideology" that is invented by right-wing groups as undermining families and cultures has become "symbolic

glue” (European Parliament Study Report 2018: 11). This symbolic glue “united many groups and their critiques of numerous issues: modernity in its postmodern form, the identity politics that they identify with gender equality, same-sex marriage, some women’s rights issues (such as sexual and reproductive rights), sex education, challenging restrictive traditional gender roles, and the instability of the post-2008 crisis world.” The effects of this could also be observed in Turkey. A closer look at what the AKP cadres were pushing for reveal how they were also introducing anti-gender policies. A research query on the reasons of divorce was introduced in 2009; Erdoğan declared that he sees abortion as homicide in 2012, and an anti-abortion bill was introduced (Scorecard for AKP).

In the meantime, AKP won less votes in the 2009 local elections than its landslide victory in 2004 and passed a constitutional change package through a referendum in 2010, expanding the powers of the executive and politicizing the judiciary. AKP won the 2011 general elections yet could not secure the majority in the General Assembly to change the constitution to secure the presidential system that it has been working on. On the international scene, the Arab Spring started, and Turkey’s Middle Eastern ouvertures collapsed. From the United States to the Middle East, there was also a wave of social movements, decrying the inequality of distribution of income, and unjust policies of governments, from Occupy Wall Street to Arab Spring. On this backdrop, Gezi Movement started in Turkey and turned into a nationwide protest. Gezi turned into an oppositional force against AKP’s restrictive policies on the cultural scene as well. The secular space was under attack. Youngsters were attacked for displaying, sale of alcohol was being regimented, there were bans of certain artwork and monuments. Women and LGBTİ groups were also active in Gezi and their participation in other protests in later years would be the target of the conservative government as exemplified in Arslanalp and Erkmen’s chapter in this volume. After the summer of Gezi, Prime Minister Erdoğan’s call to police and governors to look into complaints about young men and women living together in student houses was criticized by conservative women’s rights activists as well. Fatma Bostan Ünsal, who is also one of the founders of the Justice and Development Party (AKP), likened Erdoğan’s approach to liberal choices among students to the past secularist interference in the choices of conservative students who were living in the “community” houses (*cemaat evleri*), criticizing repressive measures imposing “morality” on students (Alemdar, 2013). While some conservative women’s rights activists like

Ünsal were also criticizing the Prime Minister on his unwillingness to lift the ban on headscarves in the past, another group of conservative women were forming the Women and Democracy Foundation, KADEM. Headed by Erdoğan's daughter, to protect traditional gender roles, KADEM's entrance to women's rights scene led to the loss of power of feminist organizations in the field of both national advocacy and international advocacy (Eslen Ziya & Kazanoğlu, 2020). KADEM's aim of "protecting the core values of women in Turkey" positioned women solely in the family and led to silence about violence against women. On the international level, such as the UN meetings, KADEM replaced secular women's organizations. For instance, at the Beijing +20 Conference in New York, in 2015, the Ministry of Family and Social Policies followed a strict stance that the discussions should only be held by ministry representatives and diplomats (Alemdar & Çetin, 2020). This was a clean break from earlier experiences of women's rights groups.

Yet, 2015 was also quite turbulent in terms of Turkey's recent history. Two general elections were held in June and November 2015. Following the events that started in the southeast of Turkey in September 2015, martial law was declared in some cities in December 2015, which lasted until March 2016. In this atmosphere, and after the coup attempt in July 2016, many non-governmental organizations were closed in Turkey, and the pressure on journalists, academics, and intellectuals increased. In this environment, women's organizations were also under pressure. Women's organizations, which could at least access the Equal Opportunities Commission in the Grand National Assembly (KEFEK) and provide information on draft laws on women and children, even if their opinions differ, began to be unable to maintain these relations.

In 2016, during the reorganization of the article of the Turkish Penal Code regulating the penalties to be imposed on sexual abuse of children,¹ a proposition to amnesty abusers in case of marriage was stopped at the very last minute thanks to efforts of the women's movement (KKİH, 2022). This was the only example that could be defined as the achievement of women's organizations in recent years. In 2017, there was another draft law on the agenda of women's organizations. The law and the draft law on the Amendment of the Population Services Law and Some Laws authorized muftis to marry officially and paved the way for birth registration to be made with an oral declaration instead of a written document. It was claimed by some women's organizations that news of the marriage of Syrian women from the Southeast was one of

the reasons why this law was passed. However, the law in the Turkish Penal Code (TCK), which prevents religious ceremonies from being held without seeing a marriage certificate and punishes religious officials who do this, was annulled in 2015. Women's organizations have argued that the fact that muftis gain the right to civil marriage with this law is also against the secular civil law (Bianet, 2017).

In 2017, the AKP was successful in passing the constitutional change to transform Turkey's governance into a Presidential system. The "Turkish style Presidential System," as it is referred to, gave all executive power to the President and annulled all veto powers (Adar & Seufert, 2021). One of the results of Turkey's transition to the Presidency system in 2017 is the merging of the Ministry of Family and Social Policies with the Ministry of Labor and Social Security, first as the "Ministry of Labor, Social Services and Family" and then as the "Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Services" thereby situating women only in the family and the labor force. As per measures, legal regulations and policies taken by Turkey to eliminate violence against women, the once protective and individual rights-based approach to women's rights, left its place to emphasize women's traditional roles as mothers and as "care providers." Persistent impunity for violence against women, sexist prejudices in court files, discretionary rebate of victim blaming, low reporting rates for gender-based violence, and increasingly restrictive conditions for independent women's organizations became the norm (GREVIO, 2018).

PRESIDENTIAL SYSTEM AND LEAVING THE ISTANBUL CONVENTION

After the referendum to switch from the parliamentary system to the presidential system in April 2017, Turkey went to the general elections once again on June 24, 2018, and fully passed to the presidential system. Although 2019 was the fifth year that the Istanbul Convention entered into force in Turkey, it was a year in which femicides did not cease and deficiencies in implementation were not eliminated (Karakaş, 2019). After the local elections in March 2019, during which the AKP lost three major cities to the secular opposition, the spread of conservative discourse against women gained momentum. Religious conservative critics started arguing that Istanbul Convention was against Islamic values, undermined family unity, and promoted homosexuality, calling on the government

to withdraw from the Convention (Bodur-Ün & Arkan, 2022). Moreover, they started to target the hard earned and poorly implemented legal frameworks that protect women, such as the Law No. 6284, the law to protect family and prevent violence against women. In August 2019, President Erdoğan said that the Istanbul Convention could be terminated at an iftar program organized by one of the Islamist congregations, the “National Will Platform.” In July 2020, discussions over the demands for the annulment of the Istanbul Convention increased. However, women’s organizations, even KADEM, pointed out the misinterpretation of the Istanbul Convention, arguing it is neither against family, nor promotes homosexuality, two main threads of arguments supported by similar conservative religious groups in European countries as well. Religious anti-rights groups in Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, Croatia, Slovakia, and Czech Republic have advanced similar arguments, denigrating the Convention and blocking its implementation (Alemdar & Ürgen, 2021).

Women’s movement in Turkey launched an all-out campaign against the misinformation, bringing together over 340 women’s and LGBTİ organizations, under the Women’s Platform for Equality (EŞİK), yet in March 2021, Turkey withdrew from the Istanbul Convention with a presidential decree.

CONCLUSION

This chapter analyzed the domestic and international factors and their interaction that affected AKP’s women policies. Taking stock of the history of women’s movement in Turkey through the lens of international developments and foreign policy of the country is not a common endeavor among academics. In the past 20 years, women’s rights became a divisive issue all over the world under the pressure of the economic crises, the intensifying security issues closing countries in, and populist policies of conservative governments. Women’s issues became an object of social polarization not only in Turkey and Europe but also in the United States, as characterized by how abortion became one of the breaking points at the midterm elections in November 2022.

On the other hand, in the case of Turkey, the AKP took advantage of this international wave to expand and deepen its conservative hold of the society. As explained, the legacy of the EU accession process waning down by 2007, the AKP started to come harder on anti-women’s rights

policies. When, in 2013, Gezi events became a divisive issue within the conservative women as well, and a GONGO started to replace the Turkish women's organizations' international women's rights lobbying efforts, the political environment started closing in on women in Turkey. Through domestic concerns to win the many elections, securitization of international relations, and influenced by the international conservative wave, AKP managed to circumvent women's rights in Turkey immensely and pull out of the Convention on Domestic Violence that took its name from Istanbul.

NOTE

1. This reorganization brought an age level to the law, increasing the penalties for sexual abuse crimes under the age of 12 only.

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The Changing Dynamics of Protests Under Turkey's Authoritarian Transformation: Actors, Repertoires, and Strategies of Oppression

Mert Arslanalp^{ID} and *T. Deniz Erkmen*^{ID}

INTRODUCTION

There is now a broad agreement in scholarly literature that Turkey has become a competitive authoritarian regime in the last two decades (Esen & Gümüşçü, 2016; Somer, 2016; Sözen, 2020). This authoritarian

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M. Arslanalp
Boğaziçi University, Istanbul, Turkey

T. D. Erkmen (✉)
Özyeğin University, Istanbul, Turkey
e-mail: deniz.erkmen@ozyegin.edu.tr

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transformation driven by executive aggrandizement (Bermeo, 2016) has shaped various facets of the political system in ways that constrain political contestation, accountability, and individual rights and freedoms. One of those arenas affected by authoritarian transformation has been the protest arena, which while fundamental to democratic politics, did not receive as much attention in its relationship to the regime transformation in Turkey.

In this chapter, we assess the transformation and continuities in the protest arena in connection to regime transformation under the Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP—Justice and Development Party) rule. Regime transformations directly affect how and to what extent the state controls and represses protest activity. We assess the repression of protests during the autocratization of Turkey, emphasizing the transformation of the tools of repression, pointing to forms of repression that lie beyond police violence and tend to be understudied. We then examine how the aggregate levels, temporal and geographic distribution, specific issues, and repertoires of protests have changed under the impact of this tightening protest control.

As we explore how repression and mobilization have shaped each other in Turkey under the AKP rule, we adopt a historical sequential perspective that pays particular attention to various inflection points the Turkish regime has undergone particularly from 2010 onward. We focus on three key historical events as turning points: the peace process and its aftermath, the Gezi protests of 2013, and the State of Emergency of 2016. We claim that these historically crucial periods affected street protests in Turkey in significant ways. Moreover, we situate these developments in both the national and the international context which matters for the protest arena in shaping how the regime responds to protests.

We use two original datasets to empirically support our arguments in this chapter. The first of these datasets is on protest bans announced by authorities in Turkey between 2007–2019 and reported in newspapers *Hürriyet* and *Bianet* (see Arslanalp & Erkmen, 2020a for a discussion of this dataset). For this chapter, we primarily use our second dataset which contains all protests reported in *Bianet* between 2007–2019. In order to create this dataset, all news in archives of *Bianet* were manually traced for each day between 2007 and 2019 to identify protest news which were then coded across 34 variables by our research assistants. *Bianet* is a news outlet that specializes in human rights violations, and therefore is expected to pay special attention to protest events particularly by groups that are

not represented in the mainstream media. What we share in this chapter is our preliminary findings based on one news outlet.

As methodological discussions on protest event analysis (PEA) admit the output of this research endeavor provides only a slice of protest events that had occurred during the specified period (Hutter, 2014; Uysal, 2017). Any dataset that is only based on news archives is necessarily incomplete and is marked by editorial biases and organizational limitations in the coverage of events. But we believe, the dataset nevertheless helps us identify some of the historical patterns and constitutes the preliminary ground for their empirical analysis.

PROTESTS AND THEIR REPRESSION IN TURKEY—AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

As a method of political participation, protests and street politics are not widely used by Turkish citizens. Existing research on protest participation demonstrates that participation rates are relatively low in Turkey (see Arslanalp & Erkmen, 2022b: 385–387 for a summary). Low rates of participation, however, do not indicate the rarity or insignificance of protests in Turkish politics. In the second half of the twentieth century, under large-scale urbanization and increasing industrialization, protests were commonly used by various organized groups such as students and workers to make claims on the political system (Alper, 2010; Gümrükçü, 2014; Uysal, 2017).

The quantity of protests, however, have varied greatly over the years depending on the openness of the political system as well as the level of repression by the state (Gümrükçü, 2014; Uysal, 2017). As groups active in street protests have been perceived at best with suspicion and at worst as an enemy by the state, repression has been a consistent feature of the protest arena. The Turkish state utilized not only direct violence but also legal processes such as detainments, imprisonments, state security courts as well as state of emergencies to control protests. The military coups have repressed and silenced street politics along with all forms of civilian politics; as such, protest patterns in Turkey are negatively related to coups (Gümrükçü, 2014). The 1980 coup decimated street politics and although protests re-emerged after the country returned to civilian politics, the legacy of the 1980 coup lived on through restrictive legal frameworks and the loss of activists who had to leave the country or activism due to repression. One of the legacies of this period is the Law

2911 that regulates meetings and protests. Even after, it was repeatedly amended during the European Union integration process, this law retained its illiberal character, giving the police and governors extensive powers over protests (Atak, 2017: 204), echoing the dominant national-security worldview of the post-coup establishment (Bezci & Öztan, 2016). While the protest arena continued to expand reflecting changes in national and international politics in the 1990s, repression of groups perceived as a threat by the state has been an ongoing feature of the political system. Leftist movements, unions, students, Kurds, and Islamists all faced repression when protesting in this period (Uysal, 2017; Yonucu, 2021). Crucially, Southeastern provinces with prominently Kurdish populations remained under a State of Emergency which gave governors extensive powers and banned all protests in the region.

THE AKP PERIOD: INTENSIFICATION OF REPRESSION IN THE PROTEST ARENA

It was only in the early-2000s that a certain liberalization of protest politics in Turkey emerged, parallel to the broader liberalization of the political arena at the time. The momentous 2001 elections, reshuffling Turkish political landscape, brought AKP and its leader Erdoğan to power. Facing opposition from formidable tutelary actors within the state, namely the military and judiciary, Erdoğan's AKP was eager to build support from a wide social coalition including the business elites and intellectuals besides mass support. It has thus committed itself to the European Union membership process, which already accelerated in the late 1990s. The reforms entailed stronger protections to basic liberties on freedom of expression and assembly along with increasing civilian control over security apparatus (Bakiner, 2017). This included removal of some of the most anti-democratic limitations in the constitutional article on freedom of assembly as well as changing the way the existing framework is interpreted and enforced by the authorities (Atak, 2017). It also encompassed the ending of a two-decade long state of emergency in the Southeast to improve the civil and cultural rights of the Kurdish population, a major reform item in the EU accession process (Müftüler-Baç, 2005).

These changes had significant effects on the protest arena reflected in rising protest numbers (Uysal, 2017). Uysal (2017: 106) pinpoints

2004 as the year in which there was a shift in state policies as demonstrated in decreased number of detainments as well as number of protests coded as “illegal” in police archives. Yet, even in this relatively liberal period repression of groups that were perceived as threats to the state continued (Bakiner, 2017: 28). For example, using data from 2000 to 2009 Atak and Bayram (2017) demonstrate that protests by the Kurdish movement were repressed more regularly and strongly compared to other movements. Moreover, and importantly, as we will claim below, this liberalization did not last long and was reversed starting from the AKP’s second term in office onward.

In previous research, we documented how after 2012 the regime resorted to increasing use of protest bans, which are forms of legal repression, to control protests. We have defined this regime of protest control mobile emergency rule and demonstrated its temporary and targeted suspensions of protest rights in the name of ensuring public security as one of its key techniques, which uses the state’s prerogative to regulate public space (Arslanalp & Erkmén, 2020a, 2022a). These bans became even more ubiquitous, comprehensive, and durable with month-long bans on all protest activity in various provinces during the two-year long State of Emergency following the failed coup attempt in July 2016 (Arslanalp & Erkmén, 2020b). Legal termination of the State of Emergency has not put an end to the repressive protest regime but in fact normalized some of the practices of the emergency era resulting in a bolstered mobile emergency rule (Arslanalp & Erkmén, 2020b). Though our dataset does not include the pandemic period, other research (Sever, 2022) and anecdotal evidence reveals that public health justification has only empowered the authorities’ resolve and mandate for a discretionary protest rights regime.

Protest bans are only one facet of Turkey’s authoritarian protest repression. Expectedly, what is routinely deployed by the state is physical violence exercised by police force. Even before the increase in protest bans, violent interventions to protests by the police were prevalent and rooted in a police force that perceived protestors as social and political deviants posing a threat to the state and the nation (Atak & della Porta, 2016; Uysal, 2017). Our dataset reveals that 18,5% of all protests (excluding extended protests) in Turkey were repressed by the police in the period we are examining. There are, however, fluctuations over the years. 2013 with Gezi protests ranks as the year with the highest percentage of protests repressed by the police and 2014 as the second highest, with, respectively, 32.4 and 24.7% of protests repressed. There is

a dip after 2014 and a slight increase in 2018 and 2019 (22.7 and 20.2%, respectively) putting the repression levels above what they were before 2013.

Though it was neither the first nor the most violent, police violence during Gezi Park protests have manifested this modality of protest repression to the entire world. Early protests in the park were repressed severely when police burned tents and used water cannon and tear gas, the images of this violence circulating via social media. Researchers argue that it was this unleashing of violence that triggered the unprecedented mobilization (Aytaç et al., 2018; Demirel-Pegg & Rasler, 2021; Över & Taraktaş, 2017). Police repression continued in the coming days, leading to over 9000 injured and a total of 8 civilians dead. Our data shows that when it comes to police repression Gezi protests rank at the top, with 44% of protests related to Gezi repressed.

With the unprecedented level of mobilization, explosion of creativity involving repertoires, and large-scale police violence, Gezi protests present a unique episode in Turkish protest history. They are also an important milestone which was followed by increasing securitization of the protest arena and limiting of protests rights (Arslanalp & Erkmén, 2020a, 2020b; Sever, 2022). For both the opposition and the regime Gezi became a symbol; of defiance against authoritarianism for the opposition, and of an open threat whose recurrence was to be avoided for the regime. As such, Gezi left its mark not only on the psyche of the participants but also on the regime. It revealed how the regime perceives protests and protestors opposing the regime: protests are seen not as part of democratic participation, which is to be exercised at ballots and ballots only, but rather as vandalism, as expressed famously by the then prime minister Erdoğan's depiction of protestors as *çapulcu*—marouder. They entered the lexicon of the regime as a shorthand for an attempt at overthrowing the government, violent, and illegal, a provocation organized and led by a handful of people who are the enemies of the regime, supported by foreign powers (Gümrükçü, 2022). This framework was applied to basically any significant protest (i.e., environmental protests in Artvin in 2017 or Boğaziçi University protests in 2021) in the coming years, sometimes with direct reference to Gezi, associating them with illegitimacy, illegality, and even terrorism. This discursive stigmatization was sustained by protest bans mentioned above, which regularly frame protests as “illegal,” as well as by various levels of the state apparatus, including the highest echelons such as ministers, as well as the government-controlled media (Arslanalp &

Erkmen, 2020a; Gümrükçü, 2022). The stigmatization itself presents another facet of increasing repression, possibly shaping public opinion, and encouraging the police on the street.

Lastly, it is important to emphasize that neither police repression and violence nor protest bans present a complete picture when it comes to protest repression. Protest repression happens through other means as well, during, before, and after the actual protest, with mass arrests of activists during protests, pre- and post-protest detentions and arrests, court cases, and legal fines, sometimes directly using the counter-terrorism legal measures. These techniques primarily rely on ensnaring protestors in the authoritarian legalism of the regime and are enabled by a subservient judicial branch that operates as an extension of the security apparatus (Kaygusuz, 2018; Över & Tuncer-Ebetürk, 2022). There are many atrocious cases that provide examples for the use of the judiciary to repress protestors in the period we are examining. The most internationally well-known is the Gezi case, where 16 defendants have been charged with multiple offenses including “attempting to overthrow the government.” Because of this case, the businessman and philanthropist Osman Kavala remained imprisoned since 2017. Kavala was sentenced to an aggravated life sentence in 2022 along with seven defendants who were given 18-year prison sentences. The ongoing Çarşı case involving fans of the football team Beşiktaş who were active during the Gezi protest similarly prosecutes 35 defendants for attempting to overthrow the government. These tactics are not only used for the Gezi case. See also the imprisoned Boğaziçi students in 2021, or the METU students who faced a court case via the request of the Ankara public prosecutor after the Pride March in 2019.

It is easy to imagine that the combination of these techniques, deployed regularly over time, as well as in a targeted fashion at crucial junctions, has a chilling effect on the protest arena at large. In the following section, we will examine how this increasingly repressive environment affected the protest arena by analyzing the aggregate numbers, issues, and repertoires of protests in this period.

UNPACKING THE DYNAMICS OF THE PROTEST ARENA IN TURKEY (2007–2019)

Aggregate Levels: Temporal and Spatial Distribution

Our dataset entails 12,402 protest event days for the period between 2007 and 2019. A significant share of these protest events consists of small-scale protest campaigns that lasted for long stretches of consecutive days such as a group of workers protesting their dismissal for over 300 days. Often, these extended protests are sustained by the participation of a few individuals. Concentration of few such cases in a given year can create major biases when comparing overall patterns in protest activity across years. Yet, disregarding such prolonged protest activity can also blind us to other patterns. Therefore, we have developed two alternative counts with and without the event days of extended protests (which are then counted as a single protest). Excluding extended protests, our dataset contains 5064 protest event days. Figure 8.1 shows the temporal distribution of these.

According to both counts, we see protests increasing from 2009 onward with a peak in 2011. Another inflection point is 2013, the year

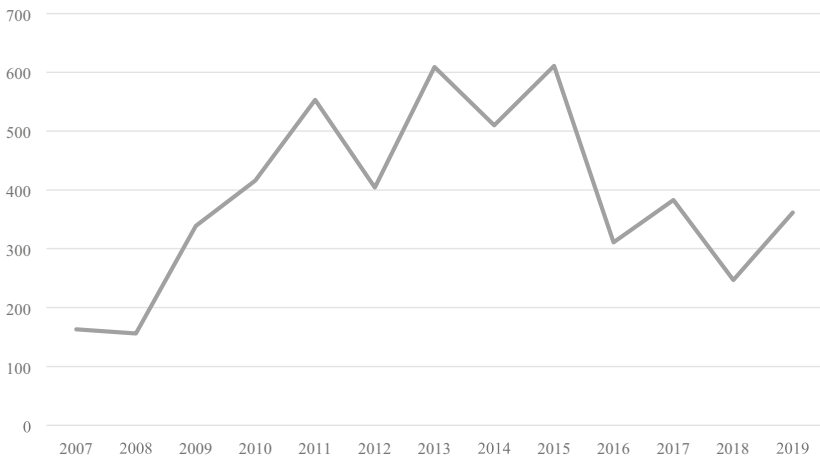


Fig. 8.1 Annual number of protest-event days^a (*Source* Original dataset of authors, based on Bianet newspaper reports. ^aExcluding extended protest event days)

of Gezi protests, which marks one of the two highest points of protest activity. Though the protest wave initiated by Gezi slightly declined in the subsequent months under heavy-handed repression, we see a recovery of protest activity in 2015, recording the highest number of protests ($N = 611$) in the dataset. As repression significantly heightened in 2016 first under counterinsurgency operations with prolonged curfew decisions in the Southeast, then across the entire country following the failed coup attempt with the declaration of the State of Emergency, number of protests almost halved in comparison to the previous year.

In 2017, we see an interesting divergence between the two protest counts. This is the year we see the highest number of protest event days when we include recurring protests, even though the numbers remain more or less the same without them. This is the result of several prolonged protest campaigns by a small group of individuals resisting emergency measures which included massive purges from public employment discussed below (also Birelma et al., 2022). We observe a similar pattern in 2019 after the termination of the State of Emergency, this time because of multiple prolonged protest campaigns, which include hunger strikes by imprisoned members of the Kurdish movement and various socialist organizations, sit-in protests by workers dismissed by emergency decrees and by Halkların Demokratik Partisi (HDP—People’s Democratic Party) members against the dismissal of elected mayors, as well as by Kurdish mothers protesting Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê (PKK—Kurdistan Workers’ Party) and HDP.

When we examine where protests took place, we see that between 2007 and 2019, there has been at least one protest in 79 out of 81 provinces in Turkey. Bayburt and Yozgat are the two provinces where Bianet did not report any protest within this time-frame. Istanbul accounts for 52% (2670) of all protest event days between 2007 and 2019. Istanbul is followed by Ankara (490), Izmir (190), Diyarbakır (190), Mersin (101), and Kocaeli (85). We observe continuity in the geographic distribution of protests across the last two decades as these results are broadly in line with the findings of Uysal (2017: 62), whose research covers 2000–2013 and identifies five of these provinces as the provinces with most protests. Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir are the three largest metropolitan areas in the country. Kocaeli is one of the largest industrial zones within the global city region in northern Marmara. Both Mersin and Diyarbakır are large metropolises, with Diyarbakır also the center of the Kurdish movement. These are therefore metropolitan areas with well-developed

oppositional civil society organizations and networks often connecting educated middle classes with the capacity and willingness to participate in extra-institutional politics. In addition to metropolitan areas, we observe the eastern and southeastern provinces with a large Kurdish population (16 provinces) as another spatial cluster with high protest activity. More than 10% of all protest event days ($N = 611$) in the dataset occurred in these provinces. Therefore, the territorial distribution of protests does not only reflect Turkey's urbanization pattern, rather it also reflects its main lines of sociopolitical mobilization, Kurdish question being one of the most important of those.

ISSUES OF PROTESTS

What are the issues that motivate protests during this period and how did these issues change over time? We see socioeconomic protests (including worker strikes) and Kurdish protests as the top two categories when we consider protests including extended campaigns in the dataset. Labor protests constitute more than half of all the protest event days. Protests over civil and political rights, women and LGBTI issues (primarily driven by women protests), and urban and environmental issues are some of the other important ones.

Looking at protests by excluding extended ones (see Fig. 8.2), we see a different order. Kurdish protests lead with almost 1500 protest event days, which constitute almost 30% of those reported in the dataset. Socioeconomic protests come second. The difference between the two counts is due to the extended nature of labor protests. These findings also demonstrate the capacity of Kurdish movement for contentious politics. Moreover, they reveal persisting concerns with civil and political rights, environmental issues, and urban politics, as well as the potency of women and LGBTI movements in launching protests.¹

Three other issues occupy a significant place within the protest arena during this period, but to a much lesser extent than socioeconomic and Kurdish protest. First is the urban and environmental protests that often emerge in localized forms in reaction to AKP's neoliberal developmentalist policies targeting cities and rural areas alike. The highest number of such protest events took place between 2010 and 2013. Gezi Park protests were at least partially built on such a pattern, although it had its own peculiar dynamics. The second important issue category is civil and political rights. Protests over these issues manifest a steady increase

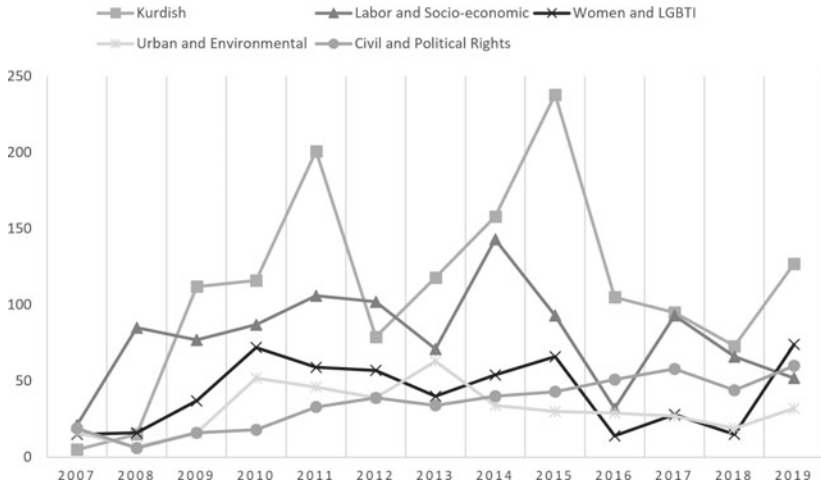


Fig. 8.2 Number of protest-event days according to Issues^a (*Source* Original dataset of authors, based on Bianet newspaper reports. ^aExcluding extended protest-event days)

since 2009, overlapping with Turkey's gradual autocratization process. A central theme motivating many protests in this category has been the various pressures on media freedoms, most importantly the imprisonment of journalists. Finally, we see women and LGBTI protests as a third significant issue(s) area that witnessed consistent mobilization during this period. Women's issues, most importantly rising visibility of violence against women and heightening social conservatism of the regime motivated protest activity. LGBTI protests also gained increasing visibility between 2010 and 2015 but faced a much more severe crack-down than women's movements since 2015. Although women's protests also declined between 2016 and 2018, unlike any other category, in 2019 it surpassed its highest level until then. Women's rights organizations have been very successful in mobilization even under the State of Emergency and have seized the opportunities granted by the increasing public legitimacy of this issue (Arslanalp & Erkmén, 2022b).

The primacy of issues in protest arena changes over time concomitant to governmental policies and preferences, which create both opportunities and threats that motivate grassroots mobilization. For instance, we observe socioeconomic protests driving the increase in protest activity in

reaction to a new social security law in 2008, privatization attempts in 2010, workplace accidents in 2014, and purges from public employment in 2017. Likewise, complex dynamics of Kurdish question, particularly how different branches of the state position itself vis-a-vis this issue, shape the dynamics of mobilization. Significant rise in protest activity between 2009 and 2011 is primarily driven by the combination of opportunities (onset of negotiations between the PKK and the state, declaration for democratic reforms by key government officials) and threats (prosecution of Kurdish activists, and politicians, closure of pro-Kurdish Demokratik Toplum Partisi (DTP—Democratic Society Party) by the constitutional court). Similarly, we observe a relative decline in the number of Kurdish protests in 2012–2013 during the peace negotiations, and then an escalation in 2014 during ISIS attacks on Kurdish town Kobane in Syria and more so after the termination of the peace process and onset of the counterinsurgency operations against Kurdish provinces in 2015. Nevertheless, deepening repression and militarization of politics in 2016 and 2017, particularly during the State of Emergency, led to demobilization, which only partially recovered in 2019 in reaction to the decertification of elected mayors from the pro-Kurdish HDP. Yet, the state once again responded with repression measures including month-long protest bans and heavy-handed police intervention.

REPERTOIRES OF PROTESTS

While the extraordinary episode of Gezi protests displayed the full range of protest actions, from the most ordinary, such as the marches taking place on Istiklal Street, to less common and more unordinary forms, like the occupation of the park and the organizing of communal life in the Gezi Park, overall, the repertoire of protestors in Turkey is limited, dominated by a handful of protest acts (Uysal, 2017: 184–187). Uysal's (2017) data demonstrates public statements and marches with public statements to be the most prevalent forms between 2000 and 2013. Similarly, our data reveals public statements and marches with a public statement as the two most common forms. These are followed by sit-ins and these three forms account for 54% of protests taking place in Turkey between 2007 and 2019. Commemoration/ceremonies are also a consistent feature of Turkish protest repertoire and come as the sixth most common form.

When we examine extended protests, however, sit-ins and hunger strikes appear as the most prevalent protest forms. These protests are

often done by a single individual or a small group of individuals and go on for significant stretches of time. For example, in our dataset, there are a total of 85 hunger-strikes spanning across 1965 days, mostly (but not always) taking place in various prisons in Turkey.² While these make up a very small part of protest event days (1.7%—excluding the extended campaigns) which is not surprising given the extraordinary nature of the protest, they do account for almost 16% of all protest-event days when we include extended protests.

Two observations are important here to reflect on possible effects of autocratization in the protest arena. First, while public statements are the most common protest form for the whole period and over the years, accounting for 26.5% of all protests, their share varies over the years, dipping to 16 and 10% in 2013 and 2014, respectively, and then rising to 42 and 52% in 2018 and 2019. There does seem to be an expansion in the variety of protest forms used between 2013 and 2014. Not only marches without a press statement (which has its highest share among protests in 2013 in the period under consideration) but also most of the other protest forms such as blocking, commemorations, occupations, boycotts, strikes, and dramaturgical protests show an increase in 2013 and/or 2014. This expansion, however, does not last, and the variety of protest forms start contracting again significantly after 2015, with both marches and marches with press statements decreasing. When we look at 2019, beyond press statements which by themselves make up 52% of protests, we only see limited protest forms: demonstrations, marches, marching with press statements, sit-ins, rallies, and hunger strikes each make up between five to six percent of the protests.

Second, comparison of density plots of protest activity according to the two different counts suggest an increasing share of hunger strikes and sit-ins after 2016. Along with rallies and demonstrations, these are the only two forms that show some increase after 2016. What seems to dominate during and after the State of Emergency are protest forms that rely on a small number of individuals and are stationary. Marches are drastically reduced. This picture may be an outcome of/or a reaction toward the increasing repression via extensive protest bans during the State of Emergency and in its aftermath. The increase in share of hunger-strikes and sit-ins might also be related to the nature of the grievances in this period. As mentioned above, under the state of emergency we see a surge in labor protests, which are related to the purges that the regime initiated

in this period. As many were individually purged from public employment, they may have taken to individualized forms of protest to contest these decisions.³ A pertinent example is the hunger strike of Nuriye Gülmen and Semih Özakça, two educators affiliated with the radical left, who were purged from their positions via emergency decrees during the State of Emergency. Gülmen and Özakça first started a sit-in in Ankara in November 2016, and then a hunger strike in March 2017 which lasted for 324 days. Another major wave of hunger strikes concerns the Kurdish movement, initiated by the imprisoned HDP MP Leyla Güven in November 2018, demanding an end to the isolation of the PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan who was not allowed to talk to his lawyers or family for multiple years. Güven was joined by three other HDP MPs and more than a thousand prisoners. While part of the repertoire of the Turkish protest scene, the Kurdish movement's hunger strikes at this particular time might attest to the multipronged, extensive, and harsh repression that the movement has been facing since 2015 which have decreased its capacity to resort to other forms of resistance.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION: FACTORS AFFECTING THE DYNAMICS OF THE PROTEST ARENA IN TURKEY

This data sheds light on how Turkey's protest arena has evolved since the end of AKP's first term. Here, we locate these dynamics within the broader macro-political processes shaped by the intersection of domestic and international developments to draw a more comprehensive picture of the transformation of the protest arena.

The period examined in this chapter was defined by rising political polarization amid gradual autocratization when the secularist forces and the AKP had their first major clash over the election of the new president. During this period, AKP introduced a series of constitutional, legislative, and administrative changes, which eliminated all constraints (democratic and anti-democratic) on executive power, as well as instrumentalized counter-terrorism legal and discursive frameworks to prosecute Kemalist military officers, journalists, intellectuals, and civil society in the name of undoing tutelage. These trials marked the onset of expansion and deepening of the securitization of the public sphere, a long-time reality for Kurds and socialists. Yet, this securitization was an uneven process, shaped by the coalitional dynamics of the ruling party. Particularly in the Kurdish case it operated in tandem with periodic governmental initiatives declaring

plans for peaceful and democratic resolution to the Kurdish question (Çiçek, 2018).

As revealed in our data, the initial impact of this broader political environment on the protest arena was not the contraction of protest activity. On the contrary, amid the political turmoil of the period, we see a rise in protest activity as different social sectors mobilized to resist various government policies. Workers, environmentalists, and urban activists resisted various facets of the government's neoliberal development agenda or made new claims by appropriating the discourse of democratization. Kurdish movement particularly showcases rising street mobilization both to resist political repression and to push for reforms by seizing the discursive opening. In the meantime, increasing crackdown on freedom of expression also paved the way to increasing protests on civil and political rights to resist such changes. Finally, we observe a rise in the visibility of feminist and LGBTI movements, reflecting both the impact of global and domestic transformations which ideologically and organizationally empowered them but also the increasingly pronounced social conservatism of the AKP particularly in its third term.

Gezi Protests occurred against such a backdrop and represented the high point of social mobilization. Alarmed with the unprecedented scope of this dissent, the government responded by stepping up its repressive and securitizing measures. The subsequent era then is marked by consecutive milestones, each of which further institutionalized Turkey's transformation to a competitive authoritarian regime. 2015 marks the end of the peace negotiations with the Kurdish movement and onset of counterinsurgency measures in the Southeast provinces. In 2016, the State of Emergency was declared following the failed coup and in 2017 an autocratic presidential system was instituted following a referendum.

In this context, protests had to navigate an extremely repressive protest arena which, as explained above, affected both the number of protests as well as the specific repertoire, but did not entirely decimate protests. Particularly during the State of Emergency, small contingents of resilient groups continued protesting while the scope of dissent narrowed down. The end of the State of Emergency in July 2018 did not lead to a meaningful opening for the protest arena as authorities clearly signaled that they would continue with emergency practices against protestors under Turkey's new authoritarian presidential system. Besides repression, the opposition political party's reluctance to mobilize with the concern that

it could feed into political polarization that strengthens the government, kept the scope of protest activity limited despite rising grievances.

Although domestic political calculations and power relations were the primary drivers behind the developments in the protest arena, international factors at both regional and global levels also played a role, by removing constraints on the regime, by diffusing tactics and discourses on repression, as well as by increasing the regime's threat perception.

First, the EU accession process experienced a major stall following the election of Sarkozy and Merkel to the top executive positions in France and Germany with vocal opposition to Turkey's EU membership (in 2007 and 2005, respectively). Then, an immense refugee flow resulting from conflict in Syria strengthened Erdoğan's hand against the EU as a bargaining chip, creating a *modus vivendi* where European leaders turned a blind eye to autocratization in return for Turkey keeping refugees within its borders (Saatçioğlu, 2020). With the EU's strong democratizing and anchoring effect weakening, the impact of criticisms and legal judgments by European institutions regarding oppression in Turkey were also reduced.

Several regional and global developments also facilitated the government's authoritarian turn in general, and its repressive protest policing in particular. At a more global scale, the 2008 economic crisis fueled new grievances, discontent, and mobilization all over the world, a key example being the Occupy Wall Street protests of 2011. The crisis and the discontent it stirred up fed into the global autocratization wave, leading to the rise or strengthening of populist authoritarian leaders. It is foreseeable that there is a diffusion effect among autocrats when it comes to targeting of political opposition, including protests, discursively as well as tactically, and that the authoritarian wave itself serves to remove constraints on leaders, encouraging repressive policies. In fact, these regimes share a strong polarizing discourse of "we vs them," vilifying political opposition, as well as nativist/nationalist and conservative/patriarchal policies and language, manifested in the attack on immigrants, LGBTI movements and women's rights. Their populist/nativist discourse allows them to frame protestors against their policies as a minority, cut off from the "real" people of the country, backed by foreign powers. The framing of opposition as "public enemies" is also visible in the militarization of the police, for example, in the US case, who uses military grade weaponry and tactics against citizens.

Relatedly, in the long-durée it is possible to see the rising global discourse of war on terror following the 9/11 attacks which legitimized the diffusion of draconian counter-terrorism measures and practices across the world as another mechanism that removes constraints on authoritarian leaders targeting domestic oppositions. While Turkey has its own national history of institutionalizing these legal frameworks in the context of the war with the PKK, AKP came to power in the post-9/11 world which witnessed the increasing adoption of similar measures across western democracies as an extensive scholarship documents, making it easier for authoritarian leaders to legitimate their use of such measures.

Lastly, Gezi protests led to the government turning increasingly wary of protests, possibly by a heightened sense of threat due to developments in the region during and post-Arab Spring mobilizations, which had regime-changing and destabilizing effects in multiple countries.

Hence, the criminalization of protests and securitization of the public sphere described in this chapter in Turkey has happened against such a national, regional, and global backdrop, which can be interpreted as a perfect storm regarding democratic politics in Turkey and the globe. As we have shown in this chapter, the protest scene in Turkey suffered greatly due to these developments, but was not eliminated, thanks to particularly resilient elements within civil society. We expect these actors to continue to play a role in the coming years as Turkey continues its struggle between forces of authoritarianism and democracy.

NOTES

1. Besides these five issue categories, the dataset entails 12 other categories including Gezi protests coded as a distinct category given the heterogeneity of the demands it articulated once it became a nationwide protest wave.
2. Hunger strikes, one of the most unforgiving and committed forms of protests, are an important part of the protest repertoire in Turkey, especially among the radical left, with a particularly painful and violent history of encounters between prisoners and the state (see Bargu, 2014 for a discussion).
3. Individualized forms of protest do not necessarily mean that they are unorganized. These protests might be planned, initiated, and supported by an organization but performed by individuals affiliated with that organization.

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(De)Securitization of the Kurdish Issue in Turkey: The Nexus of Foreign Policy and Domestic Politics in the Twenty-First Century

Gökçe Balaban 

Since the early Republican period, the Kurdish issue in Turkey has been constructed first and foremost as a security issue by state elites. The Kurdish issue's priority on the security agenda meant that the topic has been continuously securitized, which legitimized the state's use of extraordinary measures to deal with it. Yet, in the twenty-first century, there were ruptures from this securitization practice, where, at times, state elites desecuritized the Kurdish issue by discussing it in the political field and implementing some democratic reforms for Kurds. This chapter analyzes the continuities and ruptures in this securitization by

G. Balaban (✉)
Istanbul Okan University, Istanbul, Turkey
e-mail: gokce.balaban@okan.edu.tr

focusing on the interaction between foreign policy and domestic politics. The foreign policy dimension is particularly important here because especially during the 2000s the international and regional developments have had a great influence on the (de)securitization of the Kurdish issue in domestic politics. This does not mean that foreign policy did not have any effect on the securitization of the Kurdish issue during the twentieth century, yet its influence was rather limited, especially when compared to domestic dynamics. As will be shown, from the EU reform process to the Syrian civil war, many international developments have affected the way Turkish governments approached the Kurdish issue in domestic politics after 2000.¹ The focus on the foreign policy-domestic politics nexus will fill a gap in the literature, where most studies seek the reasons for the securitization of the Kurdish issue in the domestic area only (Geri, 2016), somehow overlooking the complex interplay between foreign policy and domestic politics.

The chapter starts with a brief discussion of the securitization theory, originally developed by Ole Weaver (1995) and Buzan et al. (1998). The second part engages in the securitization of the Kurdish issue during the twentieth century and explores its reasons. The chapter then examines the ruptures and continuities in the securitization during the 2000s by focusing on the foreign policy-domestic politics nexus. The EU reform process between 2001–2005 and Turkey's foreign policy toward Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in Iraq after 2007 contributed to the desecuritization of the Kurdish issue in Turkey. However, this did not last long, and due to changing domestic and regional dynamics, state elites resecuritized the Kurdish issue after each desecuritization period. Especially after the Syrian war, when Kurds started to control a large part of northern Syria, Turkey's fear of an independent Kurdish state on its southern border was resuscitated. The close relations between the Kurdish administration of the Democratic Union Party (PYD) in the region and the Kurdistan Workers' Party² (PKK) in Turkey further triggered the fear of separatism which has resulted in the securitization of the Kurdish issue since 2015. Thus, unlike previous examples in this century, foreign policy and regional developments after 2015 led to the securitization of the Kurdish issue in Turkey's domestic politics.³

SECURITIZATION AND DESECURITIZATION

Securitization theory was primarily developed by Ole Weaver (1995) and Copenhagen School scholars (Buzan et al., 1998). The theory analyzes how some problems/challenges are constructed as security issues and the political consequences of this specific construction.

For Weaver (1995), security could be analyzed only by concentrating on its field of practice, meaning that, how it has been studied in the literature and what meanings have been given to it. In this specific field of practice, security first and foremost refers to state survival. In other words, security problems are “developments that threaten the sovereignty and independence of a state” (Weaver, 1995: 52). Thus, when something is portrayed as a security problem, or as an existential threat, there is an implicit meaning that the survival of the state (or nation) is at risk. The state then could claim a special right to use whatever means are necessary to block this problem, because everything else, such as the lives of citizens, the survival of common identity depends on the survival of the state. The staging of a problem as a security problem, hence, brings urgency: the problem should be dealt with immediately by any means possible.

Such an approach to security brings more questions. What is a security problem or who decides something posits an existential threat? In the security field, traditionally, state elites have been entitled to define something as a security problem. In other words, “something is a security problem when the elites declare it to be so” (Weaver, 1995: 54). This brings out a rather different security understanding: security does not have an objective existence prior to language. Security becomes possible only through its utterance in the language. To this end, Weaver defines security as a “speech-act”: its utterance means that some act will be taken. By uttering security, “a state-representative moves a particular development into a specific area, and thereby claims a special right to use whatever means necessary to block it” (Weaver, 1995: 55).

Securitization is closely related to this understanding of security. It refers to the process of securitizing actors’ presenting a problem/challenge as an existential threat to a referent object (actor to whom security refers) and thereby claiming the right of using emergency measures to block that problem/challenge. It is a process of moving an issue beyond the established rules and dealing it with extraordinary measures that stall normal political logic- rules/traditions that would be followed or be bounding at non-securitized times.

Yet, not any issue that is presented as an existential threat to a referent object constitutes securitization. For securitization to be successful, the audience, to which securitizing move is addressed, should accept that normal political logic could be stalled and extraordinary measures could be applied (Buzan et al., 1998: 25). Thus, there is a process of arguing and persuasion in securitization and only after common sense is established about applying extraordinary measures that securitizing move turns into securitization.

As issues are securitized by actors, they could also be desecuritized by them. Desecuritization is “shifting of issues out of emergency mode and into the normal bargaining processes of the political sphere” (Buzan et al., 1998: 4). Since existential threats are inter-subjectively constituted by elites and the audience, desecuritization also requires a common understanding that an issue does not pose an existential threat to a referent object anymore.

In analyzing the securitization and desecuritization of the Kurdish issue in Turkey in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, we see that in both periods, the securitizing actors were mainly state elites, mostly governments and bureaucrats. Hence, in this chapter, the focus will be on the discourses and practices of those state elites, showing how and why the Kurdish issue has been (de)securitized and examining the extraordinary measures that have been applied or ceased to be applied as a result. There is no specific analysis of the audience’s (Turkish public opinion) reaction to securitization because the securitizing move by the state elites seems not to generate a strong dissenting voice, which signifies the general acceptance of the audience toward state elites’ securitizing move.

SECURITIZATION OF THE KURDISH ISSUE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

For most of the twentieth century, the Kurdish issue in Turkey was constructed as a security issue in the state discourse: one that was threatening the ideals of the new Republican regime in the late 1920s and 1930s; one that was aiming to separate the country and hence threatening its national integrity from the 1960s on; or one that was undermining national security and public order (Balaban, 2021). This meant that state elites securitized the Kurdish issue since it was posing an existential threat to the Turkish nation-state. There were three reasons behind this securitization practice: Kurdish rebellions’ posing a physical security

threat, Kurdish collective identity's generating ontological insecurity for the Turkish self, and the political power of the military in Turkey.⁴

Kurdish Rebellions as Physical Security Threat

Since the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923, there occurred more than twenty Kurdish uprisings in Turkey. Most of those rebellions were small-scale guerilla movements. Yet, two of them are worth mentioning here because they challenged the physical security of the state by undermining its authority/sovereignty and, hence, were perceived and constituted as existential threats to the survival of the state. Those were the Sheikh Said Rebellion and the PKK uprising.

Organized by the Kurdish nationalist group Azadi (Bruinessen, 2003) and led by Zaza speaking religious leader, the Sheikh Said Rebellion emerged in February 1925 and it heavily influenced Turkish discourse on the Kurdish issue in the following years, since it posed a direct threat to both the physical and ontological security of the state. To understand how this rebellion posed a physical security threat to the Turkish state, it is useful to look at decisions that were reached at the Azadi congress and Sheikh Said's meetings with tribe leaders in the region before the uprising. The primary aim of Azadi members was to establish an independent Kurdish state in the southeast of Turkey (Bruinessen, 2003: 417). Said's strategy was to convince tribe leaders to control their region by deporting Turkish authority and gendarmerie forces (Bruinessen, 2003: 421). Moreover, the rebels planned to open several fronts in the region by which they aimed to control cities (Bruinessen, 2003: 421; Genelkurmay Belgelerinde Kürt İsyanları, 1992: 156).

When the rebellion broke out, the rebels were able to control several towns (that are between today's Elazığ, Bingöl and Diyarbakır) and the city of Elazığ. This means that, from the very start, the rebels aimed to undermine state sovereignty by taking control of some of its territory and they achieved their objective until the Turkish military suppressed the rebellion. Thus, the rebellion threatened the Turkish state's physical security and to overcome this existential threat, state elites implemented some emergency measures such as the "Law on the Maintenance of Order", which gave state elites exceptional powers to deal with the Kurdish issue.

Another insurgency that threatened Turkey's physical security was that of PKK which started in 1984 and has been going on intermittently since

then. From the outset, the objective of the party was to establish an independent Kurdish state on the Marxist-Leninist line (Gunter, 2013). The strategy of the party was to start an armed campaign against the Turkish state. The use of force became an effective mean for the PKK to have an upper hand in the southeast of Turkey in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Through the sheer use of force, the party was able to exercise some degree of authority in numerous villages and towns (Plakoudas, 2014: 42). This was also reflected by former civil and military bureaucrats who worked in the region. In an interview with the journalist Hasan Cemal, former general Necati Özgen said that when he was appointed to the region in 1991, “there was no state authority, just an appointed governor who cannot leave his office” (Cemal, 2003:163). Thus, it could be argued that PKK threatened the physical security of the state by undermining its sovereignty and territorial integrity. As a result, the state implemented extraordinary measures such as the state of emergency in cities where Kurds are the majority, which resulted in the stalling of rule of law and the breach of human rights.⁵

Kurdish Rebellions and Kurdish Identity as Ontological Security Threat

Kurdish rebellions in the early Republican period not only created physical insecurity but also generated ontological insecurity for the Turkish state. After the Sheikh Said Rebellion, the constituting traits of the Kurdish identity, such as tribal and religious structure and Kurdish language, started to generate uncertainty in the Turkish self because those characteristics of Kurdishness disrupted and challenged the narratives of being a Turk, which in turn led to ontological insecurity (Balaban, 2021: 262).

In his book *Islam, Secularism and Nationalism in Modern Turkey Who is a Turk?* Soner Çağaptay (2006) makes an analysis of Turkishness by concentrating on early Republican state discourses and practices. In the 1920s, there were a few pillars of Turkishness: common religion (Islam), common territory (Anatolia), common language (Turkish) and common culture (Turkish culture). Thus, according to this early biographical narrative, a Turk would be a Muslim living in Anatolia, speaking Turkish and living a Turkish culture. To those, one may also add modernization, which could be read as westernization, as an important pillar of the new Turkish identity (Bozdaglioglu, 2008).

The decision-makers had thought that Muslim groups would willingly be assimilated into Turkishness through the Turkish language (Çağaptay, 2006: 21). However, there was an important obstacle to the realization of this narrative: not all the Muslim groups living in Anatolia wanted to adopt the Turkish language, Turkish culture or western identity. The Kurdish rebellions between 1925 and 1938 revealed this unwillingness. Especially, the Sheikh Said Rebellion demonstrated that Kurds had a distinct identity from the Turkish one, and they did not want to be assimilated into Turkishness. The rebellions being led by a religious leader to reinstate the caliphate further disrupted the continuity of the Turkish self, which had positioned itself within western civilization. Thus, Sheikh Said Rebellion not only threatened physical security but also generated ontological insecurity for the Turkish state, since it threatened the continuity of the Turkish self in the early Republican period, which state elites were trying to constitute. As a result, the state elites securitized those characteristics of Kurdish collective identity, Kurdish culture and Kurdish language, and approached the issue from “national security” mindset during the twentieth century (Balaban, 2021).

The Military as a Securitizing Actor in the Kurdish Issue

During most of the twentieth century, the military was a dominant political actor in Turkish politics. The army interfered in politics directly in 1960 and 1980 by coup d'états and by issuing memorandums and warnings to elected officials in 1971 and 1997. After the coup d'états, the army enhanced its political power through legal changes. The most important change in terms of interfering in politics was the establishment of the National Security Council (NSC) in the 1961 Constitution. The Council consisted of “ministers as provided by law, the Chief of General Staff and representatives of the armed forces” and its duty was to “communicate the requisite fundamental recommendations to the Council of Ministers, to assist in the making of decisions related to national security and coordination” (Turkish Constitution, 1961, Art. 11§3). With this law, the military institution was given the legal right to participate in the political process and became part of the executive branch.

It was the 1982 Constitution, Law on the National Security Council and the General Secretariat of the National Security Council (Law No., 2945) of 1983 that enabled the military to be fully involved in politics. The duty of the Council was amended to “submit decisions to the

Council of Ministers in the formulation, establishment and implementation of national security” (Turkish Constitution, 1982, Art. 118). The Council of Ministers would give priority consideration to the decisions of the Council.

How national security was defined by law would give one a better idea of the military’s increasing power in political life. According to Article 2/a of Law No., 2945, “national security encompasses conservation and protection of the constitutional order, national entity, integrity, all international political, social, cultural and economic interests, and conventional law of the state against all manners of domestic and external constraints”. National security was thus linked to policies at all levels—political, economic, social and cultural. When this broad definition of national security and the legal authority given to the NSC in the determination, formulation and implementation of security policies are considered together, it is fair to say that the NSC and its Secretariat were given the power to directly intervene in political life. In other words, “the military regime, which prepared the new constitution, gave the NSC and its General Secretariat legal authority to be involved in political life by making them responsible for national security, which is defined in a way to cover almost any political issue in the state” (Balaban, 2016: 91). This put Turkey into a process of constant securitization, where topics ranging from EU membership to economic privatization were discussed as threats in the National Security Documents prepared by the NSC.

The increasing power of the military in politics and national security agenda-setting coincided with the period of birth and rise of the PKK. The emergence of the PKK transformed the threat perception of Turkey from external to internal threats (Balta, 2010: 412). With the rise of the PKK and the shift in the national security threat mentality, the military began to perceive and constitute the Kurdish issue as a national security issue which resulted not only in the securitization of the PKK but also in the securitization of sociocultural characteristics of Kurds. Law No., 2932—the law on publications that will be made in languages other than Turkish—that was passed by the military regime in 1983 was a clear example of this. The law prohibited “expressing, publishing and spreading the thoughts on languages other than those mother tongues of the countries recognized by the Turkish state” with the objective of “protection of national security and public order”. Hereby, the military regime securitized the Kurdish language and as a result prohibited its use.

To sum up, during the twentieth century, the Kurdish issue was constituted as a national security issue that threatened the physical and ontological security of the state. The military's increasing political power further spread this security language. Thus, the domestic dynamics played a central role in the securitization of the Kurdish issue in this period.⁶ However, the Kurdish issue also has a regional and international dimension, and the next section demonstrates that foreign policy has had a more central role in (de)securitization of the Kurdish issue in the new millennia.

FOREIGN POLICY AND (DE)SECURITIZATION OF THE KURDISH ISSUE IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

While securitization was a common state practice vis-à-vis the Kurdish issue in the twentieth century, with the start of the new century ruptures from this policy started to be noticed. This change in state policy could be attributed to the developments in foreign policy and to the nexus between foreign policy and domestic politics.⁷ In the twenty-first century, foreign policy of Turkey has become more assertive and ambitious than before (Altunışık, 2011: 195), a change which also affected securitization practices. In this light, this section analyzes three foreign policy developments which affected (de)securitization of the Kurdish issue: the EU reform process, the improving relations with the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and the civil war in Syria. While the first two contributed to the desecuritization of the Kurdish issue, the last one engendered its resecuritization.

EU Reform Process and Desecuritization of the Kurdish Issue

At the dawn of the twenty-first century, developments in both domestic and foreign policy transformed the traditional securitization practice of Turkey vis-à-vis the Kurdish issue. Considering the domestic changes, the capture of the PKK leader, Abdullah Öcalan in 1999, and the subsequent laying down of the arms by the PKK allowed the Turkish governments to consider the Kurdish issue in non-military terms. Yet, arguably, the most important factor behind this change was the EU reform process. The recognition of Turkey as a candidate country by the EU in 1999 gave Turkish governments an impetus to adopt political, social, economic and cultural reforms to start accession negotiations. To accomplish this task,

the Turkish governments adopted two constitutional and nine legislative reform packages between 2001 and 2006 (Bilgic, 2009: 819). The reforms that were undertaken in civil-military relations, human rights and democracy created ruptures in the securitization of the Kurdish issue by which the topic started to be discussed in the normal political sphere. Legal amendments made in the duties and the structure of the NSC and the General Secretariat of the NSC were significant in this respect since they reduced the military's power as a securitizing actor.

The first legal change regarding the NSC took place in 2001 when Article 118 of the Constitution was amended. Accordingly, the number of civilian members in the NSC was increased at the expense of military ones. This was an important step toward non-militarization because the decisions of the NSC were being taken by the majority. Moreover, the role of the Council was rebalanced to make it an advisory body: NSC decisions were to be considered as "recommendations", not as "priorities" as was specified in the 1980 constitution (Bilgic, 2009: 804). Further changes were made in 2003 with the Seventh Harmonization Package. Accordingly, the duties of the NSC were restricted to cover defence policies only, contrary to the broad coverage of security policies, and the executive powers of the Secretariat were curbed (Bilgic, 2009: 805). Those amendments were important to civilize the security policies of the state. What is more, the NSC was going to meet every two months, instead of one, and thereby its operational influence over the political process would be decreased.

The reforms to civilize the NSC and its General Secretariat continued in 2004. A new bylaw that limited the authority of the General Secretariat came into force, whereby the Secretariat's sub-committees were closed. Another crucial move was the appointment of a civilian to the head of the General Secretariat. Under the civilian presidency, the Secretariat became more transparent and the number of staff with military background decreased. What is more, the demilitarization was not limited to the General Secretariat. The same year NSC representatives in the Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTUK), Higher Education Council (YOK) and Turkish Radio and Television (TRT) were retracted.

As a result of those changes, not only did the military's political power diminish but also the army lost its power to set up the security agenda. In other words, the army lost its grip as a securitizing actor which helped to move the Kurdish issue out of the national security context. This also coincided with the flourishing of civil society organizations (CSOs)

after the amendments made in the Law on Associations as part of the EU Harmonization Packages. As a result, there occurred both qualitative and quantitative changes in the CSOs, and those organizations started to speak on political and social matters, including the Kurdish issue. Thereby, the steady rise of the CSOs diminished the state's discursive hegemony in the Kurdish issue, which further contributed to the desecuritization of the topic because those organizations did not see the issue from security lenses. In other words, while the military's role as securitizing actor diminished, new actors that evaluated the Kurdish issue outside of the security context emerged in political life. Subsequent to those developments, the state of emergency rule was ended in the southeast of Turkey in 2002, Turkish state television TRT made a one-hour Kurdish broadcasting in 2004 and private courses on the teaching of Kurdish were made possible the same year, which were all signs of desecuritization of the Kurdish issue and Kurdish language.

Relations with the KRG and the Democratic Opening

While EU reforms helped to the desecuritization of the Kurdish issue in the first half of the 2000s, its effect was rather limited and the Turkish state started to rely on security discourse after 2005 for two reasons. First, the PKK had ended the ceasefire in 2004 and had restarted its armed campaign, and second, the EU reform process had slowed down shortly after accession negotiation talks started in 2005. Amendment made in the Anti-Terror Law in 2006, where terror definition was broadened in a way to limit freedoms (Aytar, 2006), was an example of this securitization practice.

However, Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP—Justice and Development Party) government started a new initiative under the Democratic Opening label in 2009, where a political solution to the Kurdish issue was aimed. In this process, the government's goal was to convince PKK to lay down arms in return for more rights and freedoms for Kurds. This change in state policy could be attributed to the developments in foreign policy that had been taking place since 2008. A prominent goal of this new foreign policy was to improve relations with the KRG in northern Iraq.

For so long, an autonomous/independent Kurdish state in northern Iraq had been presented as an existential threat to Turkey by Turkish policymakers (Pusane, 2020: 392), who thought that it could trigger the political demands of Turkey's Kurds. Turkish governments had therefore

securitized their relations with the KRG since the early 1990s (Pusane, 2020). Moreover, after the Gulf War, northern Iraq had become a safe haven for the PKK, which further deteriorated relations between Turkey and the KRG. Yet, from late 2007, there occurred significant improvement in relations between the two sides as a result of few developments.

First of all, at the end of 2007, the US government declared that it would start to withdraw its troops from Iraq (NPR, 2007). Feeling the need to stabilize the region before its withdrawal, the USA wanted closer cooperation between Turkey and the KRG. In the eyes of Turkish decision-makers, this could have been possible if the PKK lost ground in the region. Recognizing Turkey's concerns, the US government, starting from late 2007, decided to give intelligence support to Turkey in its fight against the PKK in northern Iraq (Taspinar & Gönül, 2014: 9). Around the same time, the KRG administration started to exert political pressure on the PKK (Pusane, 2020: 405) and cooperated in Turkey's fight against the PKK (Tocci, 2013: 68). This decreased doubts about the KRG's intentions toward Turkey which opened the way to further cooperation.

Second, Turkey started to implement a new foreign policy under the guidance of Ahmet Davutoğlu, who sponsored the “zero problems with neighbors” mantra to maximize Turkish interests in the region. This policy also included improving ties with the KRG, which resulted in rapid economic cooperation with northern Iraq. Energy agreements were signed between Turkey and the KRG, and an increasing number of Turkish firms made investments in northern Iraq (Tocci, 2013).

The Democratic Opening initiative in 2009 which aimed to find a peaceful solution to the Kurdish issue could be read within this foreign policy context, where the USA was seeking stability in the region at the dawn of withdrawing its troops from Iraq, and where the KRG, a long-standing enemy for Turkish governments, turned into a close ally of Turkey in the region. Last, but not least, a credible and convincing “zero problem with neighbors” policy could only be possible if Turkey managed to have “zero problems” with its own Kurdish population.

Syrian War and Resecuritization of the Kurdish Issue

Foreign policy has not always contributed to the desecuritization of the Kurdish issue in Turkey in the twenty-first century. On the contrary, at

times, it engendered its securitization as the civil war in Syria has demonstrated. Shortly after the start of the war in Syria, Syrian Kurds took the control of northern Syria under the leadership of the PYD and its militia force People's Protection Units (YPG). Turkish government's fears of an independent Kurdish state in its borders resurfaced after the increasing influence of the PYD in the region, which had strong ideological links to PKK in Turkey (Gunes & Lowe, 2015). PKK's increasing prestige in the international area after PYD's victory against the Islamic State (IS) in 2014 (Savran, 2020: 787) further fed this fear.

Those regional developments in Syria had deep effects on the domestic politics of Turkey, especially on the Kurdish issue. In 2013, the government had initiated another peace process to end the armed struggle with the PKK and a ceasefire had been held. However, the ceasefire came to an end in October 2014, when Turkey refused to allow help and supplies to Kurds in northern Syria, who at the time were fighting IS. This created a backlash among Turkey's Kurds and they held large-scale protests in Turkey to criticize the Turkish government's policies (Gunes & Lowe, 2015: 10). Police suppressed the protests harshly, and more than fifty people were killed in two days. This showed the Turkish government that a strong Kurdish presence along the border could strengthen the Kurdish demands at home. Unless some action was being taken, the PKK, due to the strengthening position of the PYD in Syria, could have enhanced its influence in Turkey.

This ringed alarm bells for Turkey which started to see a strong Kurdish presence on the border as an existential threat. Starting from early 2015, national security mindsets dominated the Kurdish issue once again and as a result, extraordinary measures were applied in domestic politics. The Turkish government relied on military operations against PKK's urban warfare that started in the southeast in 2015. Operations were so harsh that many neighborhoods were destroyed and there occurred civilian casualties (Onat & Çubukçu, 2019: 164). Moreover, the government discharged elected mayors in predominantly Kurdish provinces and instead appointed trustees from Ankara. The AKP government also harshly suppressed those who criticized its Kurdish policy. Academics who signed a petition that asked the end of the violence in the southeast were discharged by decree law and were put on trial (BBC News Türkçe, 2016).

Yet, securitization of the Kurdish issue was not only limited to domestic politics in this period and the developments in northern Syria also

brought about a securitized foreign policy toward the region. Seeing the presence of PYD/YPG on its border as a national security threat (MGK, 2018), Turkey initiated four cross-border military operations toward northern Syria between 2016 and 2020. There were two major objectives of those operations: first, to prevent a land corridor controlled by the YPG along the border, especially one reaching from Iraq to the west of the Euphrates river; second, to establish a buffer zone along the Turkish border that will be controlled by Turkish forces (Çevik, 2022). Thus, after 2015, while regional developments in Syria affected the securitization of the Kurdish issue in domestic politics, the state discourse toward the region also securitized the foreign policy which resulted in cross-border military operations and controlling some part of Syrian territory close to Turkish border by Turkish forces.

CONCLUSION

During the twentieth century, the Kurdish issue was first and foremost a security issue in the eyes of Turkish state elites. Having defined it as an existential threat, the state elites moved the Kurdish issue to a special area, where they legitimized the use of extraordinary measures. With the start of the twenty-first century, there occurred ruptures from this traditional practice of securitization, and the Kurdish issue started to be discussed at the normal political level. Foreign policy had an important role in this transformation. The EU reform process, improving relations with the KRG and change in foreign policy approach, directed Turkey to find a peaceful solution to its Kurdish issue. However, the foreign policy not only contributed to the desecuritization of the Kurdish issue but at times, also engendered its securitization. PKK affiliate PYD's controlling a large part of northern Syria after the Syrian civil war resurrected Turkey's fear of an independent Kurdish state in its borders. The rising influence of PYD and YPG in Syria also meant stronger PKK in the region which was unacceptable for Turkey. As a result, one more time the issue was constituted as a security issue in state discourse, one that was threatening the survival of the state. This practice of securitization has become one more time the dominant state practice vis-a-vis the Kurdish issue since 2015.

How could foreign policy affect (de)securitization of the Kurdish issue in Turkey in the near future? The answer will mostly depend on the developments in Syria and Turkish foreign policy toward the region. Lately, there have been rumors of re-establishing direct contact between the

Ankara government and the Assad regime (Bianet, 2022). In such a case, the governments could cooperate with Syria against the autonomous existence of the PYD in northern Syria, which would probably prolong the securitization of the Kurdish issue in domestic politics. However, international public opinion may not tolerate dual pressure against the Kurds in the region, who fought successfully against the IS in Syria and hence they could pressure both governments to find a peaceful solution to their Kurdish question. Independent of developments in Syria, the Turkish government could also feel the need to initiate democratic reforms on the Kurdish issue to increase its international legitimacy amidst the economic crisis. In any case, it seems that the (de)securitization of the Kurdish issue in future will be greatly affected by the developments in foreign policy in the years to come.

NOTES

1. Certainly, there is not a unidirectional causation here—from international to domestic politics. Rather, domestic politics also affected the foreign policy, and at times, independent of foreign policy, it has been an important variable in the (de)securitization of the Kurdish issue on its own.
2. The PKK is a separatist group that was formed with the idea of establishing an independent Kurdistan state in the Northern Kurdistan region. To this end, it started a terror campaign in 1984 in the southeastern and eastern regions of Turkey.
3. All those regional developments and Turkish foreign policy should be considered against the background of changes in domestic politics as well. Especially, AKP's changing identity—from conservative democracy to authoritarian conservatism, and the party's alliance with ultra-nationalist MHP, pushed national security mindsets to the forefront and also influenced governments' foreign policies and their attitudes vis-à-vis the Kurdish issue.
4. Physical security/ontological security dichotomy is developed by scholars of ontological security (Mitzen, 2006). According to this understanding, actors do not only seek for physical security, but they also strive for maintaining ontological security. While on the individual level physical security refers to the security of body, on the state level it is rather difficult to make such a clear description. For Rumelili (2015: 53), physical security is freedom of pre-constituted self from harm, threat or danger. She sees physical security as "security-as-survival". From this perspective, anything that threatens state's survival could be a physical security threat against the state. Since states are sovereign entities that exercise authority within

a specified territory, loss of sovereignty or territory could be considered as threats against physical security. On the other hand, ontological security refers to the security of self, not the body (Mitzen 2006: 344). It refers to agents having consistent and stable sense of self (Mitzen, 2006; Steele, 2008). This stability is achieved by routinizing relations with others, and by behaving according to auto-biographical narratives—narratives about self (Mitzen, 2006: 346–347; Steele, 2008: 3). Both routines and autobiographical narratives help to stabilize identity and hence generate ontological security. The lack of ontological security generates anxiety, which leads to ontological insecurity where agents become incapable of answering questions about doing, being and acting (Kinnvall, 2004). Ontological insecurity is an intolerable feeling and when faced with it, actors usually reform their behavior (Krickel-Choi, 2022: 8).

5. Unidentified murders, extra-judicial killings, disappearance under custody, village evacuations and forced resettlements were some of the extraordinary practices used by the Turkish state in the 1990s regarding its fight with the PKK and in the Kurdish issue in general (Bozarslan, 2001).
6. However, this does not mean that foreign policy and international context did not have any role in this securitization. Especially, Turkey's close alliance with the USA during the Cold War begot the hostilization of leftist revolutionary movements in the country. Since the 1960s, the Kurdish movement had been taking part in revolutionary groups, which made them an internal security threat in the eyes of the state. For instance, a leftist Kurdish organization of Revolutionary Eastern Cultural Hearts (RECH) was closed and its members were arrested since they were "aiming to destroy Turkey by undermining Turkey's national integrity" (Toplum ve Kuram 2, 2009: 239–246).
7. Again, changes in domestic policy should not be underestimated here. Especially, the capture of PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan and subsequent laying off arms by the PKK lowered the physical security threat for the state and contributed to desecuritization of the Kurdish issue. However, as it will be explained, regional and international developments played a central role in (de)securitization of the Kurdish issue in this period.

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The Transformation of Migration Governance in Turkey

Uğur Yıldız^{ID} and Deniz Sert^{ID}

INTRODUCTION

Turkey in the last two decades has witnessed important changes at both the domestic and foreign policy levels. Migration governance is a manifest policy area of this transformation. On one hand, with the new law on foreigners and international protection, migration governance in Turkey was institutionalized for the first time under the establishment of the Directorate General of Migration Management, later renamed as the Presidency of Migration Management (hereafter PMM) after 2021. This transformation at the institutional level, i.e., designating a civil

U. Yıldız (✉)

Department of International Relations, Aksaray University, Aksaray, Turkey
e-mail: uyildiz@aksaray.edu.tr

D. Sert

Department of International Relations, Özyeğin University, Istanbul, Turkey

public institution rather than the police to deal with international migration, came about from an ideological divergence. On the other hand, the massive, rapid, and visible inflow of Syrian refugees following the outbreak of civil war in 2011 redefined the scope and role of migration in Turkey. Within this context, the chapter aims to explain the interactions between the domestic and international factors and the dynamics of these transformations over the past two decades in Turkey's migration history.

Even though migration is not a new phenomenon to Turkish academia, society, and politics, discourse on migration has become a more politicized public topic than ever before. While the rising numbers of foreigners, especially with the arrival of Syrians, has been an important factor in shaping the discourse on migration, there has also been a more ideological transformation. As a contentious domain in politics, migration in Turkey has been largely divided into five broad periods in terms of the migration waves and related scholarly works. The first period, between 1923 and 1950, focused on policies of settlement and citizenship, where scholars explored the transition from an ethnically and religiously heterogeneous demographic structure to a more homogeneous one conditioned by "belonging" to the Turkish descent and culture hinging on the Sunni-Turkish identity (Erder, 2018; Kirişçi, 2000; Tekeli, 1990). The second period focused on labor migration, especially the Turkish-German migration system, as an emergent trend starting from the 1960s into the present, where the destination countries have multiplied over time (Abadan-Unat, 2002; Kaya & Kentel, 2005). In the third period, Turkey's migration experience in the beginning of the 1980s entered a new phase with the increasing growth of international protection deriving from social and political instabilities in neighboring countries like Iran and Iraq. During this historical phase, the mobility of asylum seekers and refugees gained prominence among scholarly works (Kirişçi, 1996, 2000, 2001; Yıldız, 2020; Yıldız & Sert, 2021). The fourth period, separate from the current movements of asylum, began in the 1990s as Turkey started to attract a more diverse categories of migrants, analyzed in the literature under topics such as irregular migration (Ozcurumez & Şenses, 2011), circular migration (İçduygu, 2008), and retirement migration (Balkır & Kırkulak, 2009). The fifth period has started with the crisis in Syria in mid-2011, resulting in the exodus of more than three million Syrian refugees into Turkey, in which scholars explored different aspects including integration (Erdoğan, 2018), their engagement with the job market (Bélanger & Saracoglu, 2020), their

ambiguous legal and social situations (İçduygu & Sert, 2019; Rygiel et al., 2016; Sert & Danış, 2021), as well as the impact of EU-Turkey relations and externalization policies on Syrians (Karadağ, 2019; Müftüler-Bac, 2021; Üstübeci, 2017, 2019).

Following this brief account on the past periods of migratory regimes in Turkey, this chapter focuses mainly on the post-2011 period in a descriptive and critical way. It aims to depict how certain changes in the last decade have influenced the transformation in Turkey's migration governance. To do so, the chapter underlines five significant developments in explaining transformation in migration governance: (i) the promulgation of the Law on Foreigners and International Protection (LFIP) in 2013; (ii) the formation of the Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM), known as the Presidency of Migration Management (hereafter PMM)¹ since October 2021, and Provincial Directorates of Migration Management (PDMM); (iii) the extended scope of Turkish scholarships for international students in higher education institutions since 2012; (iv) the transfer of the UN Refugee Agency's (UNHCR) function in registering asylum applicants and determining refugee status process to the DGMM and PDMMs in September 2018; and (v) the amendments on Turkish Citizenship Law in 2016, 2018, and 2022 to make Turkish citizenship possible for foreigners in return for certain amounts of investments. Hence, the chapter argues that the post-2011 period in Turkey marks two significant transformations in managing international migration. The first is the transformation from institutional and categorical uncertainties into a more state-controlled system through the formation of its own official bureaucracy. In relation to this bureaucratization, the second transformation is the marketization in migration with state-imposed regulations in favor of market logic. Considering the decline in asylum applications vis-à-vis the rise in the number of international students and foreigners purchasing real estate and making investments, this transformation is well underway.

¹ On 29 October 2021, the Directorate General status of the institution was regulated and changed to "Presidency" status, replacing DGMM with officially "T.R. Presidency of Migration Management of the Ministry of Interior". For more information about the status change, please visit <https://en.goc.gov.tr/announcement2> accessed on July 30, 2022. In this paper, the institution will be used as the Presidency of Migration Management (PMM in short).

BUREAUCRATIZATION OF MIGRATION GOVERNANCE

Even though Turkey's reform process in line with the EU *acquis* has largely been frozen, and the EU has lost much of its credibility in Turkey, the migration domain seems to be an exception and its policy alignment has kept its pace with new institutions and new law (Bürgin, 2016). The process of harmonization during the heydays of accession negotiations in the early 2000s did not stop but has instead accelerated in the post-2011 period, including the enactment of new laws and establishment of new institutions. One crucial development during this period is the mass arrival of Syrian refugees, which has facilitated Turkey's institutional and legislative reform process. The existence of hundreds of thousands Syrian refugees in Turkey has become a point of leverage for Turkey to re-open the frozen accession negotiation process, to find ground in accessing funds and resources from the EU, and to harmonize its legislation with the possibility of sharing burden. Then, the new laws and migration bureaucracy can be seen as a continuity of the path that Turkey had entered in the early 2000s with its attempts to harmonize its migration domain. The LFIP is crucial, not only to update Turkey's outdated migration regulations, but also as a cornerstone for the establishment of the PMM as the civilian border and migration bureaucracy in Turkey under the Ministry of Interior (MoI). Turkey has successfully attempted to regulate and institutionalize its international migration and protection policies. Both policies in Turkey's migration governance should be read as a critical juncture beginning with the EU accession process (Icoz & Martin, 2021).

There are some important implications of the LFIP and PMM in Turkey's migration governance. The first implication of the LFIP is the clarification of categorical uncertainties within the legal framework. The new law has clearly defined migrant and asylum-related categories by introducing further categories after the mass inflow of Syrian refugees. To be more precise, Part Three of the LFIP details three international protection types which are refugee (Article 61), conditional refugee (Article 62), and subsidiary protection (Article 63), in addition to the temporary protection category (Article 91). Not only are legal-bureaucratic labels clarified, but also the procedures as well as enumerated rights and responsibilities, including education, health, and work, are clearly explained in it. Another implication is the change in the accountable institution. Prior to the LFIP and PMM, the outdated migration and 1994 asylum regulation

designated the Turkish National Police (TNP) as responsible for dealing with visa proceedings, the registration of asylum applicants, collection of weekly signatures from asylum seekers, and deportation procedures. The accountability transfer to the PMM signals the mentality shift from police scrutiny to the civilian bureaucracy, within which the TNP naturally approached affairs from a security perspective, especially when considering complaints against the violation of non-refoulment principle.

This institutionalization thus illustrates that while there is an ongoing divergence in relations with EU, Turkey has maintained coordination with the EU on the asylum and migration domains. In relation to the EU alignment, these institutional steps suggest a transformation from governing through uncertainty to governing through specialization. This transformation is in line with the transfer of responsibility from police departments to the civil bureaucracy. During the process of transformation, Turkey in its specialization attempts has received greater attention from different international and intergovernmental organizations, including the International Organization for Migration (IOM), International Centre for Migration and Policy Development, and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). As Fine (2018) aptly calls the specialization process “bordercratic interventions”, they have participated and wielded their influences during the process by providing guidelines to the new bureaucracy and conducting activities for the new bureaucracy’s capacity building, training of new bureaucrats, the sharing of technical and expert knowledge, and projects, as well as funding and management of funds (Fine, 2018). This exchange can be considered in line with the EU’s externalization policy upon the massive arrivals of Syrian refugees to Turkey. In sum, Turkey’s motivation to access full membership to the EU has created a certain path with the initiation of reform packages in different domains. Reform in migration policies, in accordance with the path offered by the EU accession process, has become the most salient domain in the post-2011 period. This is to say that Turkey’s migration governance has been Europeanized on the one hand. On the other hand, at the EU level, the EU has extended its borders toward a third country, i.e., Turkey, as a part of an externalization policy and external governance (Karadağ, 2019; Müftüler-Bac, 2021). By keeping millions of Syrian refugees in Turkey as safe third country, the utility of the EU’s externalization of its borders to Turkey has thus become effective, especially following the crisis in Syria since mid-2011,

which led millions of Syrians to leave their country. While it has demonstrated that the refugee card is a bargaining tool for Turkey, the march of Syrian refugees to Europe in the summer of 2015 forced the EU member states, particularly Germany, to make a refugee deal with Turkey on March 2016.

Under a climate of deteriorated relations with the EU, the EU-Turkey refugee deal, which is part of the EU's externalized and differential cooperation in certain policy areas with non-member states, has signaled a period of functionalism between both sides (Saatçioğlu, 2020). Accordingly, the March 2016 deal proposed financial aid and visa liberalization for Turkish citizens on the condition of Turkey's revision of its anti-terror law, and progress in membership negotiations. More importantly, it included the bargaining on the resettlement of Syrian refugees to regulate the resettlement of irregular migrants who crossed from Turkey to the Greek islands. The bargain is based on reciprocity, obliging the EU to resettle a Syrian refugee from Turkey in exchange for Turkey's admission of each irregular border crosser from Greek islands (Saatçioğlu, 2020). The march of Syrians toward Europe in the summer of 2015 illustrated that the EU member states, in a hypocritical way, recaptured the importance of Turkey as the EU's strategic partner and a candidate country, while concomitantly in 2016, the European Council announced not to open negotiation chapters upon the alleged backslide of democratization in Turkey.

Following bureaucratization, an important change took place in the context of asylum practices and policies in Turkey. The ratification of the 1951 Geneva Convention and its related protocols was an important juncture in Turkey's asylum regime. To gain legitimacy during the Cold War's ideologically bipolar world, domestic actors in Turkey were therefore willing to admit the recognition and circulation of asylum norms in international and regional politics. The Convention was a significant juncture for Turkey to form a path dependency in its asylum governance by increasing the cooperation between Turkey's Ministry of Interior (MoI) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which opened its Ankara office in 1960. In its original formulation, the 1951 Convention was designed with temporal and geographical limitations in defining refugees, in which it referred to events occurring before 1 January 1951 in the European continent (Yıldız, 2020). The 1967 Additional Protocol, with an inclination to remove these limitations, however, left the decision to remove

or maintain them to the signatory countries. This in turn provided the signatory countries with more latitude in their asylum legislations. While removing the temporal limitation, Turkey maintained the geographical limitation which is still part of Turkey's asylum legislation today. This allows Turkey to grant refugee status to asylum applicants from European countries; however, non-European asylum applicants, upon recognition of their application, are recognized as non-convention refugees who can stay in the country until their resettlement to conventional third countries like the United States, Canada, and Australia (Yıldız, 2020). At the time, this preference stemmed from the fact that almost no asylum applicant from non-European countries arrived in Turkey until the end of the 1970s.

Events such as the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran, Saddam Hussein's use of violence against Iraqi Kurds in late 1980s, and the US invasion of Iraq in 2001 produced hundreds of thousands non-European refugees who fled their countries of origin and arrived in Turkey to seek asylum and international protection, albeit with no chance of obtaining refugee status. While these asylum seekers are still allowed to remain in Turkey until the commencement of their resettlement to a third country, imposing geographical limitations on non-European asylum applicants has created a binary asylum system in which the UNHCR has become the responsible institution for registration, status determination, and coordination of the resettlement process (Kirişçi, 1996, 2001). In this binary system, both Turkey's MoI and the UNHCR conducted registration while UNHCR decides who is to be recognized as refugees or not. Another repercussion of the UNHCR's accountability in this process is that Turkey came to adopt a governing through uncertainty and irresponsibility rationale in dealing with its non-European asylum applicants (Biehl, 2015; Sert & Yıldız, 2016). Until the formation of the official migration bureaucracy, Turkey evaded responsibility in both the refugee status determination and resettlement processes. If something were to go wrong in their application, the UNHCR, not Turkey's MoI, was seen as the institution to blame (Yıldız, 2020). Governing through uncertainty in Turkey's asylum governance has been closely linked to the geographical limitation practice, ambiguities in Turkey's regulations in legal and social rights of asylum applicants, and temporal ambiguities during the stay of asylum seekers in Turkey.

MARKETIZATION IN MIGRATION GOVERNANCE

Developments in Turkey's migration governance have not been limited to the enactment of more Europeanized migration law and the establishment of civilian bureaucracy. Turkey has importantly realized the economic dimension of migration in the post-2011 period. It has introduced new policy agendas in accordance with market priorities and neoliberalized its migration governance. Citizenship-by-investment is one of the relatively new migration categories, with this group's numbers increasingly significantly every year as individuals purchase real estate in Turkey. It is also a new category which reflects the expansion of market logic into the migration domain. This category is at the outset related to the Turkish Citizenship Law (5901) and its implementation through the Regulation on the Implementation of the Turkish Citizenship Law, which came into force in 2010 (2010/139). The Regulation prescribes not only the implementation of citizenship services, but also the acquisition and loss of Turkish citizenship. Article 20 of the Regulation on the exceptional acquisition of Turkish Citizenship was amended in 2016 with the decision signed by the President, coming into force on 12 January 2017 (decree number: 2016/9061).

The Presidential Decree, which has been revised and amended in 2018 and 2022, has been the first detailed regulation that amends the citizenship-capital nexus in Turkey. Accordingly, the 2016 Regulation determined the methods and financial figures for the acquisition of exceptional Turkish citizenship status: (a) at least \$2 million of fixed capital investment in Turkey; (b) at least \$1 million in real estate purchase(s) with the condition of not selling for three years; (c) the creation of employment opportunities for at least 100 persons; (d) at least \$3 million of deposits to be held in Turkish Banks with the condition of holding for three years; and, (e) at least \$3 million of purchases of state debt instruments with the condition of holding for three years. On 5 May 2017, a new regulation (2017/10008) came into force, adding a new clause: (f) at least \$1.5 million in the creation of real estate investment trusts or venture capital funds with the condition of holding for three years.

The 2017 Regulation was further revised in September 2018 with a Presidential decree (Decree 106, on 19 September 2018) which reduced the amounts significantly: specifically, the clause (a) reduced the amount from \$2 million to \$500,000 or an equivalent amount of foreign

exchange or Turkish Lira; (b) from \$1 million to \$250,000 or an equivalent amount of foreign exchange or Turkish Lira; (c) from 100 persons to 50; (d) from \$3 million to \$500,000 or an equivalent amount of foreign exchange or Turkish Lira; (e) from \$3 million to \$500,000 or an equivalent amount of foreign exchange or Turkish Lira; and the clause (f) was changed to ‘at least \$500,000’ or an equivalent amount of foreign exchange or Turkish Lira. The final change regarding the Regulation was recently published in January 2022 (Decree 5072, on 5 January 2022). It changed the name of institutions which are responsible in implementing and evaluating the process. One reason for this change is that as in the case of clause (e) regarding state debt instruments, responsibility has been transferred from the Undersecretariat of Treasury to the Ministry of Treasury and Finance. Moreover, the new decree removed the “equivalent amount of Turkish Lira” expression from each clause.

Then, how can we interpret the emergence and changes related to the acquisition of exceptional Turkish citizenship? It is firstly related to what Adamson and Tsouparas (2020) call the neoliberal migration state, in which states tend to increase the capitalization of their cross-border mobility to create revenue from migration through the marketization of some migration categories. In essence, this global trend relates to the commodification of citizenship. In the expansion of this process to different national contexts, commodification has been made easier by the flexibility and arbitrariness of neoliberal policies, in which the state’s regulatory role benefits from this flexibility to function in favor of market logic (see Yağcı in this volume). Thus, by noticing the importance of the revenue-generating potential of migration, Turkey has taken concrete steps toward the commodification of citizenship. With the decision to introduce such a regulatory framework to create a market for citizenship, domestic actors have officially formed a migration trajectory which was absent in the Turkish migration context. More importantly, the introduction of new norms and the subsequent formation of this migration path have impacted the preferences of some migrants. As this category requires certain amounts of investment, not all migrants can participate in this migration form. Participation in citizenship-by-investment migration by some migrants proves the ability of neoliberalization to create new forms of hierarchies within the context of mobility. This suggests the transformation of the notion of citizenship which, in a normative way, had the ability to create a community of equals in a territorial nation-state by confirming the higher position of citizens over foreigners in their

localized hierarchy. Citizenship-by-investment challenges the basis of such conceptions of citizenship by diminishing the classical national-foreigner hierarchical relation at the domestic level, and by concomitantly reproducing new hierarchical relations at the global level (Joppke, 2019). In other words, the rich have a chance to live anywhere with the opportunity to obtain citizenship status in any country.

Going back to the question of how this policy choice impacts the preferences of some migrants, it is useful to provide some data on real estate purchases by foreigners in Turkey. Real estate sales to foreigners have significantly increased since 2016 following the Regulation and its several amendments regarding exceptional acquisition of Turkish citizenship. According to TURKSTAT data, while around 12 thousand foreigners purchased real estate in Turkey in 2013, the number reached 18 thousand in 2016. The trend of real estate has continued to grow by reaching 40 thousand in 2018 and 58 thousand in 2021. In terms of the provincial preferences of foreigners in real estate purchases, metropolitan cities like Istanbul and Ankara, and the coastal cities like Antalya, Yalova, Mersin, and Bursa demonstrated larger increases in the sales. To put it concretely, the number of foreigners purchasing real estate in Istanbul has risen from 2,447 in 2013 to 25,469 in 2021. For the same years, it has risen from 175 to 3,672 in Ankara, and from 5,548 to 12,384 in Antalya. In addition to these cities, over the last two years, the number of foreigners purchasing real estate in Izmir is increasing as well: while foreigners purchased 908 real estate assets in 2020, sales in 2021 reached 1,411 in Turkey's third largest city. Table 10.1 illustrates TURKSTAT data on the real estate purchases by foreigners by countries, showing the overall increase from 2015 to 2022, especially in the numbers of Iraqi and Iranian individuals purchasing real estate.

Table 10.1 demonstrates that change in institutional settings and policy agendas shapes not only the behaviors of actors but also the preferences of individuals. What we see in the post-2011 period is that policy shifts have impacted their preferences by assigning citizenship-by-investment as an alternative migration category in their mobility to Turkey. In other words, regulatory change renders cognitive templates for individual actors who, at the micro level, reconfigure and reorient their migratory preferences, in this case, of mobility toward Turkey under the citizenship-by-investment category. This reflects what historical institutionalists have underlined (Hall & Taylor, 1996, 937), that changes in policy agendas play a greater

Table 10.1 Real estate purchases by foreigners by countries (2015–2022)

<i>Nationality</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2016</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>2018</i>	<i>2019</i>	<i>2020</i>	<i>2021</i>
Iran	744	664	792	3652	5423	7189	10,056
Iraq	4228	3036	3805	8205	7596	6674	8661
Russia	2036	1224	1331	2297	2893	3078	5379
Afghanistan	656	1205	1078	2084	2191	1929	2762
Azerbaijan	815	610	942	1250	1191	1279	1517
Saudi Arabia	2704	1886	3345	2718	2208	679	–
Germany	869	714	772	1866	1723	1265	2358
Kazakhstan	540	380	334	542	776	1171	2090
United Kingdom	1054	827	794	1237	1353	1126	1089
Kuwait	2130	1744	1691	2199	1903	1231	1791
Other countries	3514	3067	3638	6899	8802	7542	11,370

Source TURKSTAT, <https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Kategori/GetKategori?p=in%C5%9Faat-ve-konut-116&dil=1>, last accessed on 25 February 2022. The data is compiled by the authors

role ‘in structuring collective behavior’, as seen in the steady rise in numbers of Iraqi and Iraqi individuals purchasing property in Izmir.

The regulation making citizenship into a market good in Turkey is also related to the financial turmoil that the country has been experiencing in recent years. This is to say that Turkey’s initiation to amend the exceptional acquisition of Turkish citizenship has a practical and functional motivation. The motivation lies at the heart of the AKP’s policy priority to support investments in the construction industry by subsequently driving the real estate sector as an engine for the economy (see Yağcı in this volume). After the economic crisis in 2001 led the AKP to be the ruling party, the construction sector has become the sixth largest sector in Turkey (Erol & Unal, 2015). At the macro level, Turkey initiated several reforms after the 2001 crisis: first, it financialized the real estate market by regulating a mortgage system for middle- and upper-income groups, and second, it adopted state-led urban gentrification projects (Erol, 2019). Both steps increased the importance of the construction sector and real estate market, as well as these sectors’ impacts on Turkey’s economic growth in general. While neoliberal structural reforms from 2001 to 2008 had a significant impact on appreciating the Turkish Lira by around seventy percent while simultaneously increasing external debt, Turkey began to experience instability problems including unemployment, inflation, and the payment of external debts after the second half of

2010 (Orhangazi & Yeldan, 2021). Since August 2018, Turkey's growth has slowed down significantly, and its credit ratings were downgraded due to declining foreign capital flows and a burgeoning currency crisis (Orhangazi & Yeldan, 2021). Therefore, amendments in the citizenship-by-investment category are not distinct from Turkey's ongoing currency and debt crisis. Introduction of this migration category and related amendments since 2016 should be then considered along with the value loss of the Turkish Lira and crises in both the real estate market and construction sector. This suggests that Turkish officials have just noticed the functional and practical role of the institution of citizenship as a profit-making venue. By accommodating a citizenship-by-investment migration category into the Turkish migration governance, they seek to find at least a temporary remedy against the decline in foreign capital flows and to balance the value loss of the Turkish Lira vis-à-vis increasing capital outflows. Thus, these regulations in turn have increased the commodification of citizenship in favor of market preferences and prioritizing the real estate and construction sectors.

Neoliberal policies have also become effective in the commodification of higher education. The transformation of higher education to a sort of a private-sector industry is also a part of global trend. The developed countries, like the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia, began initially to adopt policies and initiatives to attract international students through state and university-level marketing and branding activities (Findlay et al., 2017). In general, studies examining international student mobility highlight the internationalization of higher education institutions by mainly focusing on the social and cultural reasons in this migration category (Bilecen, 2014; Brooks & Waters, 2011). Moreover, the literature discusses the financial benefits of student mobility for both the host countries and their universities within the framework of education-migration industry (Baas, 2019; Haussen & Uebelmesser, 2016). From the 1970s onward, through regulations like visa facilitations and permanent residency opportunities, countries including Canada, Australia, and New Zealand have begun to be attractive new centers for international students, aside from the countries that had previously occupied that position such as the United States and the United Kingdom (Baas, 2019).

In the case of Turkey, international student mobility has two main reasons: one is the commodification of education to generate income, and the second reason, as briefly discussed below, is part of Turkey's public

diplomacy initiation, as stated in the 2018 Regulation of Turkey Scholarships. Higher education as a commodity and market good is indeed a recent phenomenon with the eased and expedited conditions during the registration process to Turkish universities. This suggests that in addition to the citizenship-by-investment category, neoliberalization in Turkey's migration governance can also be observable in the domain of international student mobility. Historically, the country started to admit international students through the Foreign Student Exam (YOS) in 1981 but the number of incoming students remained very limited due to the absence of scholarships until the early 1990s. While the first systematic international student policy was introduced under the Özal Presidency in 1992 with a project called the "Great Student Project", the Turkey Scholarships program became effective and systematic in 2012. With the Great Student Project, new entrance exams for international students were introduced, such as the Turkish and Relative Communities Examination (TCS), and fellowship opportunities were extended. As a result, the number of international students from Azerbaijan and Turkic countries, including Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, began to increase significantly, reaching 35,000 in 2012 (Kiroğlu et al., 2010; Yılmaz et al., 2016). However, the turning point has been the introduction of new scholarships under the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB) in 2012, which as in Table 10.2 illustrates resulted in the increase of both the diversity and the number of international students in Turkish universities.

Table 10.2 clearly indicates that there is a constant increase in the number of international undergraduate students in Turkey from Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Iraq, Turkmenistan, Somalia, and Syria. The main reason behind the rise of international undergraduate students is that many state universities in Turkey do not require an entrance exam for them, and they can apply only through their high school transcripts, even though registration to some departments like Medical Schools and Engineering Departments are still conditional upon certain exams, including the YOS exam and/or international exams like the SAT.

What makes international student mobility an industry is the adjustment of tuition fees in accordance with the reputation and location of the university. It should be noted that tuition is free for Turkish undergraduate students who enroll in any state university. However, for a foreign student enrolling in the Faculty of Medicine at Ankara University, the tuition for the 2021–2022 education year is 40,000 Turkish Liras, and for

Table 10.2 International undergraduate students in Turkey (2015–2021)

<i>Nationality</i>	2013–2014	2014–2015	2015–2016	2016–2017	2017–2018	2018–2019	2019–2020	2020–2021
Azerbaijan	6901	10,638	12,504	14,878	17,088	19,383	21,069	23,770
Iran	4343	5302	5661	6099	6418	7154	8776	11,223
Iraq	1585	3033	4414	5012	5187	7608	9752	14,799
Afghanistan	2332	3672	4338	5251	5826	6804	7517	8428
Turkmenistan	6941	9092	9903	10,418	12,247	17,571	18,016	19,384
Somalia	638	915	1383	1735	2310	3764	6104	8141
Syria	1785	5560	9589	15,042	20,701	27,034	37,236	47,482

Source YOK, istatistik.yok.gov.tr, last accessed March 2022. The data is compiled by the authors

the English as the instruction language, it is 60,000 Turkish Liras. This amount is same for the foreign students who enroll in School of Medicine at Istanbul University, in which while the tuition for the 2020–2021 education year was 30,000 TL, it is 40,000 for the 2021–2022 education year. For the Medicine and Engineering Departments, the applications are competitive, and applicants are more selective in comparison to the Social and Humanitarian Science departments. This selectiveness and competition have led universities and some departments to require exams for registration (exams including AYÖS [Ankara University Foreign Students Exam], or SAT). It would be useful to also provide an example from social science departments. For instance, while the tuition for the Faculty of Law at Ankara University is 13,200 TL, it is 8800 TL for the Faculty of Political Science for the programs of which the instruction language is Turkish. Another point to be raised is that the fees can also change based on the popularity of the city and recognition level of the university. For instance, tuition for a foreign student enrolling to the Faculty of Social Sciences at Aksaray University is 4200 TL, which is one of the lowest tuitions among Turkish state universities.

As stated before, Turkey's initiation to attract foreign students has been systematically institutionalized since 2012 with the formation of the Turkey Scholarships Program under coordination of the YTB established in 2010. Turkey Scholarships is a government-sponsored and state-funded higher education scholarship program for undergraduate and graduate level international students. Numbers provided by the Turkey Scholarships and YTB websites portray the increasing numbers of foreign students enrolling higher education, hence proving the success of the initiative to attract foreign students. According to the statistics of Turkey Scholarships, while 40,000 foreign students applied to Turkey Scholarships in 2012, the number of applications reached at 165,000 in 2021. According to the YTB website, Turkey hosts nearly 110,000 international students, of which 25,000 are benefiting from the Turkey Scholarships program. Upon the applicants' eligibility and success in an interview, the scholarship covers tuition fees, free Turkish language course for one year, accommodation, flight tickets, health insurance, and a monthly stipend.²

² 1000 TL for undergraduate; 1400 TL for masters; and 1800 TL for PhD level. For more information, visit turkey scholarships and <https://www.ytb.gov.tr/en/international-students/turkey-scholarships>.

One reason to attract international students is the neoliberalization of Turkey's migration by transforming education into a market and industry, as the Global North has done for years. Another reason for Turkey's policy to attract international students to the country is public diplomacy. In understanding whether Turkey's intention is to attract successful students by accommodating and keeping them in the Turkish labor market or to attract them purely through a market logic motivation, we have conducted several unofficial meetings. Accordingly, YTB's main motivation is not to include international students into Turkey's labor market upon their graduation. The YTB encourages students to return to their country when they graduate and provides scholarship for mostly international students who are not planning to stay in Turkey. As the 2018 Regulation of Turkey Scholarship (Official Gazette: 30,497) asserts, the aim is to strengthen the social, political, and economic bonds and interactions through international students who register in Turkish universities. Also, it is clearly stated that the scholarship program aims to enhance diplomatic relations, and support Turkey's internationalization effort by pursuing public diplomacy.

CONCLUSION

The Chapter has focused on the post-2011 developments leading to the neoliberal transformation of Turkey's migration governance. The period is significant not just due to the eruption of the crisis in Syria in 2011 and the subsequent arrival of thousands of Syrian refugees to the country, but this period is also critical in terms of the institutionalization and changes in policy preferences in the migration domain. In understanding this transformation, the chapter has begun with the historical context of asylum-related migration to Turkey, the dominant form since the early 1980s. At the institutional and legislative level, Turkey's reform attempts were facilitated in the early 2000s through its willingness to be a full member of the EU. These initiatives, accelerated with the mass arrivals of Syrian refugees, materialized through the developments in the post-2011 period when Turkey introduced its new migration law (LFIP) and civilian bureaucracy (PMM). Therefore, the chapter claims that Turkey maintained policy alignment with the EU instead of de-Europeanization in migration domain, even though the country still maintains the geographical limitation in its asylum legislation.

The chapter articulates that both institutional and legislative reforms are significant in terms of the changing rationale in Turkey's migration governance, in which the post-2011 period witnessed rising volumes in the citizenship-by-investment and international student mobility migration categories. As these capital-intensified migration categories recently blossomed in Turkey, their rise directly derives from regulations related to these categories initiated during this period. Turkey's efforts to increase the volume of capital heavy migration categories are closely related to the country's financial turmoil, decline in foreign capital flows, and currency crisis. While the citizenship-by-investment category commodifies the notion of citizenship in accordance with the 2016 Regulation amending the exceptional acquisition of Turkish citizenship, the flexibility delegated to higher education institutions in determining admission of international students has led to the rise of international students as higher education has become commodified. In other words, new regulations have led to the neoliberal transformation of Turkey's migration governance by commodifying both citizenship and higher education in line with market logic.

Finally, the chapter demonstrated that the increasing numbers in both migration categories indicate the importance of policy choices to shape and impact the preferences of migrants and migratory trajectories. Turkey's regulations in the migration domain demonstrated that while policy makers can be instrumental and functionalist in their decision to initiate new policies, the preferences of migrants are modified through instrumental reasoning in deciding to participate in citizenship-by-investment and/or international student mobility. Changes in institutional settings and policy preferences commodifying citizenship and higher education in the post-2011 period have led Turkey to enter a neoliberal path in its migration governance by prioritizing the demands of the market.

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Transformation of Turkey's Environmental Policy: A Case of Selective Europeanization?

Sevgi Balkan Şahin  and *Marella Bodur-Ün* 

INTRODUCTION

Keeping the environmental issues high on its agenda since the early 1970s, the European Union (EU) recently declared its commitment for a transition to a carbon-neutral economy by 2050. Embarking on an ambitious plan of harmonizing economic development, environment and social justice, the European Commission (2019a) adopted the European Green Deal that aims to change production methods and consumption patterns in a comprehensive way. Through the Deal, the EU has set goals

S. B. Şahin (✉)

Çağ University Department of International Relations, Mersin, Turkey
e-mail: sbalkan@cac.edu.tr

M. Bodur-Ün

Department of Political Science and International Relations, Çukurova University, Adana, Turkey
e-mail: mbodur@cu.edu.tr

such as increasing the share of renewable energy in energy production, making supply value chains sustainable, and encouraging organic agriculture. Desiring to spread this comprehensive transformation beyond its borders, the EU has also urged the candidate countries to take substantive actions for aligning their environmental policy with that of the EU.

The recognition of Turkey as a candidate for the EU membership in 1999 has boosted Turkish incentives to adopt EU norms in various policy areas, including the environment. To align with the EU environmental *acquis*, Turkey has adopted significant legal and institutional changes. However, the recent stagnation in EU-Turkish relations has slowed down Turkey's alignment with European norms. The European Commission's progress reports on Turkey since 1998 reveal a substantial mismatch between Turkey's environmental policy and that of the EU. The EU highlights three areas that Turkey should focus its efforts to catch up with the EU environmental governance (European Commission, 2019b). Turkey is expected to implement the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive correctly, effectively implement the *acquis* on public participation and the right to access to environmental information, and mitigate climate change. To trace Europeanization of Turkey's environmental policy in these three fields, this study examines various official documents, including the EU Progress Reports and accession partnership documents, the National Programs for the Adoption of the *Acquis* (NPAAAs), National Environmental Action Plans, Five-Year Development Plans, the National Climate Change Action Plan, and the Green Deal Action Plan.

Composed of three parts, the first part of this study examines the Europeanization literature to emphasize the role of the strategic preferences of domestic actors when endorsing policy change in line with EU norms. The second part provides an overview of the Turkish environmental policy to demonstrate how the authoritarian tendencies of the ruling Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*—AKP) coupled with its priority to ensure rapid economic growth regardless of its consequences on environment, and society has prevented Europeanization in the areas of public participation in environmental governance and environmental impact assessment. The third part examines the selective Europeanization of the Turkish climate change policy based on the material calculations of the governing AKP to pursue its domestic agenda.

OVERVIEW OF TURKEY'S EUROPEANIZATION

Following the European Council's decision to grant Turkey candidate status in 1999, studies on Turkey's Europeanization process have proliferated. Early studies focused on the EU's impact on Turkey's domestic institutions, policies, and discourses. Exploring the process of "EU-ization", defined "as a formal process of alignment with the EU's institutions, policies and legal structure" (Kaliber, 2013: 54), these studies pointed to the credibility of EU conditionality in engendering a reform process in various policy areas in Turkey (Müftüler-Baç, 2005). This well-established literature has shown comprehensively how the role of the EU membership process has led to a major transformation in Turkey in certain areas including democracy (Kubicek, 2005; Müftüler-Baç, 2005), immigration policy (İçduygu, 2007), foreign policy (Oğuzlu, 2010), and gender policy (Dedeoğlu, 2012).

When Turkey-EU relations stagnated after the disputes over the Cyprus issue, the increasing democratic backsliding in Turkey coupled with the rise of ultra-nationalist parties in the EU, the literature has shifted to examine the "de-Europeanization process" in Turkey since the 2010s. De-Europeanization refers to "the loss or weakening of the EU/Europe as a normative/political context and as a reference point in domestic settings and national public debates" (Aydın-Düzgüt & Kaliber, 2016: 5). Several studies have explored the increasing reversal of political reforms, demonstrating forcefully the process of de-Europeanization of Turkey's judicial system (Saatçioğlu, 2016), gender policy (Bodur Ün & Arıkan, 2022), and discourses and activism of civil society organizations (Boşnak, 2016; Kaliber, 2016) in the post-2010 Turkey. These studies have revealed that local actors, including political parties and civil society organizations, avoid referring to the EU to justify their demands and legitimize the reforms launched (Aydın-Düzgüt, 2016; Boşnak, 2016; Kaliber, 2016; Yılmaz, 2016).

Rejecting the EU conditionality as the main cause behind the domestic changes in the country, other scholars have criticized the focus on Europeanization as a top-down process, for overemphasizing the impact of the EU (Alpan & Diez, 2014: 2), for downplaying the domestic context and the crucial role of local actors (Tocci, 2005), including advocacy networks, political elites, the media, and the government, who interpret EU norms at the domestic level (Alpan & Diez, 2014; Kaliber, 2013; Yılmaz, 2014). Much of this literature has pointed to domestic

actors as the “creators of Europeanization”, who draw on the European “normative-political context” to further their sociopolitical interests (Kaliber, 2013: 54–58). Much of this scholarship has also explored the “puzzle” of continuing reforms in various policy areas, such as the fight against corruption and minority rights (Yılmaz & Soyaltın, 2014), without a credible EU conditionality (Saatçioğlu, 2010, 2014; Yılmaz, 2014). Focusing on AKP’s strategic calculations, several studies have examined the political agenda of the ruling party to account for “selective Europeanization” (Saatçioğlu, 2014; Yılmaz & Soyaltın, 2014).

This chapter builds on and contributes to the rational choice institutionalist perspective within the Europeanization literature by exploring selective Europeanization of Turkey’s environmental policy. The few existing studies that focus on Turkey’s reforms in the area of the environment/climate change point to either EU’s conditionality (İzci, 2012) or both EU conditionality and domestic actors and discourses (Yıldırım et al., 2013) or to the social learning of domestic bureaucrats/officials through EU projects (Bürgin & Oppermann, 2019; Savaşan, 2019; Unalan & Cowell, 2009) to explain the partial alignment of Turkey’s environmental policy with the EU. By examining how the AKP government has selectively Europeanized Turkey’s environmental policy, this study contributes to this body of literature that focuses on material calculations of domestic political actors in the Europeanization process. The study argues that the ruling AKP has cherry-picked climate change mitigation policy for aligning with EU norms while ignoring the reform of public participation in environmental governance and environmental impact assessment. AKP’s focus on rapid economic growth both in discourse and in practice not only fails to pay attention to damaging environmental consequences but also ignores the views of environmental civil society organizations, often formulating policies behind closed doors.

OVERVIEW OF TURKEY’S ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

Although Turkey has been involved in global efforts to solve environmental problems since the 1972 Stockholm UN Conference on Human Environment, its legislative and administrative capacity in environmental governance have remained limited. To improve the environmental situation in Turkey, the Environmental Act (no. 2872) was adopted in 1983 and the Ministry of Environment was established in 1991. While Turkey attempted to modernize its environmental policy by becoming a party

to various international agreements on environmental protection, the harmonization process with the EU revealed that its environmental legislation, administrative capacity, and policymaking were incompatible with the European environmental *acquis* (European Commission, 2000, 2001, 2002).

Upon Tukey's becoming a candidate country in 1999, as part of the process of preparing Turkey for transposing and implementing the EU *acquis*, the European Council announced its accession partnership document that describes short- and medium-term EU conditionalities in 2001. With this document the EU urged Turkey to align with the directives of the environmental *acquis*, transpose the EIA directive, calculate potential costs of alignment with the *acquis*, and draft a plan for covering necessary investments (European Council, 2001/235/EC). Moreover, through its Environmental Action Programs adopted since the 1970s, the EU clarified key principles and objectives to be followed to ensure a sustainable environment in which biodiversity is maintained, natural resources are efficiently used, climate change mitigation efforts are implemented, and decisions are taken with the active participation of all stakeholders (European Commission, 2014).

To show how it would respond to such EU priorities, Turkey announced the National Program for the Adoption of *Acquis* (NPAA) (2001, 2003, 2008). Turkey declared its intention to undertake environmental measures, including tackling pollution, using renewable resources in a sustainable way, facilitating citizens' access to environmental policymaking, and reducing environmental risks in various five-year development plans as well (SPO, 2000, 2006, 2013).

To increase its administrative capacity and enforce the environmental legislation properly, Turkey amended the 1983 Environment Law in 2006 (Law no. 5491) and embedded the concept of sustainable development, promoted by the EU, to the new law. The law re-institutionalized the main departments in the Ministry of Environment and Forestry. The Ministry (2006) issued important documents such as the EU Integrated Environmental Approximation Strategy that set out institutional and legal arrangements to be followed in line with the EU *acquis* between 2007 and 2023. The Strategy emphasized the need to take measures for ensuring sustainable development, preventing the pollution,

protecting domestic resources, promoting the environmental consciousness among the public, and encouraging public participation in environmental decision-making processes. Turkey has failed to implement this Strategy particularly in the area of public participation in environmental governance.

FAILURE TO EUROPEANIZE THE RIGHT OF PARTICIPATION IN ENVIRONMENTAL POLICYMAKING AND THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The right of participation in environmental policymaking and the right to have access to the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) have been fundamental pillars of the environmental *acquis* (EIA Directive, 2014/52/EU). EU directives in the field of environmental policy aim to ensure that a vast array of public and private plans, programs, and projects are subjected to environmental assessment before their approval. The European Commission's EIA Directive (85/337/EEC) (1985) required certain groups of public and private projects to be subjected to environmental assessments to determine their potential environmental impacts. The 1985 EIA Directive was amended three times (in 1997, 2003 and 2009) to increase the number and scope of projects, programs, and plans, which are likely to have substantial environmental consequences, to undergo mandatory "environmental impact assessments" (Directive 97/11/EC; Directive 2009/31/EC), to incorporate principles and processes about screening, public participation and access to environmental information, and post-decision monitoring (Directive 2003/35/EC). The amendments aimed to increase public involvement in the process of environmental decision-making and access to environmental information.

These objectives were further embedded in the EU environmental *acquis* through the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive (2001/42/EC), which aimed at ensuring public consultation and participation in policymaking processes. The SEA Directive aims "to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development" (Article 1, Directive 2001/42/EC; OJ L 197/30, 21.07.2001). It "moves the emphasis of environmental assessment away from environmental consequences of decisions ... to the

decision-making processes themselves” and enhances the public scrutiny of environmental policymaking processes, underlining the importance of transparency, accountability, and post-project monitoring (Unalan & Cowell, 2009: 35).

Such provisions have made public participation a key dimension of the EIA process. With its emphasis on transparency, availability, and accessibility of information on environmental decisions, the Public Participation Directive (2003/35/EC) served as an important instrument for ensuring public participation and access to environmental information. Furthermore, the Espoo Convention (Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context) and the Aarhus Convention (Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters) constitute the basis for the official incorporation of the right of public participation into the EU legislation (Tekayak, 2014).

Although Turkey has declared its intention to fully transpose the EIA directives to the Turkish context through the 2001 and 2003 NPAA, it has failed to fully align public involvement with European standards (European Commission, 2007). In the three NPAA (2001, 2003, 2008), Turkey declared its intention to undertake the necessary legal, technical, and administrative measures to provide access to environmental information. Turkey also announced its intention to become party to the Aarhus Convention (NPAA, 2008). To fulfill the requirement of increasing the environmental consciousness of the public through having access to proper information on the environment, Turkey became a party to the European Environmental Agency in 2003. The 2006 Environment Law emphasized the responsibility of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry to ensure public participation in environmental policymaking by encouraging cooperation between civil society, trade unions, professional organizations, and the government (Savaşan, 2019).

Moreover, Art.56 of the 1982 Constitution indicated the rights of citizens to live in a healthy and clean environment. Art.3 of the 2006 Environment Act (Law no. 5491) highlighted the right of participation of civil society in environmental governance. It pointed out the necessity of improving the administrative capacity of relevant ministries and local authorities to ensure the right of participation in the design and implementation of environmental policies. Art.4 of the same act also highlighted the need to “invite representatives of civil society, academics and independent experts to the meetings of the Higher Board for

Environment depending on the agenda and expertise field due to be discussed”.

Despite this legal basis for civil society to use their rights of participation, the active participation of societal actors remained much limited in practice. Despite the emergence of a more dynamic civil society in the early 2000s, the NGOs were unable to put pressure on the government for domestic reforms because of their limited capacities and lack of resources (İçduygu, 2008). Moreover, the ruling AKP often ignored the opinions of NGOs while designing policies. For example, despite the discursive focus on ensuring the right of participation, Turkey has not signed agreements such as the Espoo Convention and the Aarhus Convention, which ensures accessing information and public participation in environmental issues (European Commission, 2005, 2006).

Furthermore, since the early 2010s, under AKP rule, civil society has been “tamed”, that is “politicized, disabled and segregated” (Yabancı, 2019) to be able to publicize their demands and to monitor governmental policies. Environmental policies have been developed and implemented by the government and the bureaucracy (Savaşan, 2019). For instance, the Coordination Board on Climate Change and Air Management, the main body dealing with climate change issues, involved relevant bureaucracy and businesspeople organizations such as the TUSIAD (Turkish Industry and Business Association) and the MUSIAD (Independent Industrialists’ and Businessmen’s Association), but not members of civil society (Şahin, 2016; Savaşan, 2019: 549). The EU has criticized this insufficient level of public consultation and the lack of institutionalization of participation of civil society to environmental governance in its progress reports (European Commission, 2013, 2015, 2018, 2019b).

Another important problem in terms of public participation has been the ignorance of various environmental resistance groups that question the social or environmental consequences of AKP government’s rapid growth strategy. Environmental civil society organizations challenged specific investment projects that are thought to lead to serious environmental problems (Adaman et al., 2019; Erensü, 2016). For instance, the anti-nuclear groups resisted nuclear energy which they described as a threat to public safety and the protection of nature (Adaman et al., 2017; Balkan Şahin & Bodur Ün, 2022). The local people of Bergama pursued a decisive resistance against the Eurogold Company that attempted to extract gold and decompose by using the cyanide leaching chemical

process (Çoban, 2004). Civil society organizations such as the “Protection of Loç Canyon” and “The Blacksea is Uprising” resisted the hydroelectric power plants and the anti-coal power plants movements, such as “the Çırpılar Movement” in Çanakkale, resisted thermal power plants for their potential threat to the ecological system (Erensü, 2016; Şahin, 2016; Taşdemir et al., 2021).

By framing infrastructural investments as necessary for Turkey to diversify energy resources and boost economic growth, the AKP government has sidelined these oppositions. Moreover, to accelerate its rapid development program, the ruling AKP began to exclude large infrastructure projects, including hydropower plants, the third bridge in Istanbul, the new Istanbul Airport, and nuclear power plants from the EIA process (European Commission, 2013). The European Commission’s recent Progress Report (2019b: 93) considered “the 2016 law that waived licensing and other restrictions for strategically important investment projects” as a major concern. The Report also raised concerns regarding the way the EIA Directive is implemented in Turkey, pointing to “complaints about the application of the rule of law in court decisions on environmental issues and about public participation and the right to environmental information.” It stressed the need for developing “better coordinated environment and climate policies”, which require “strategic planning, substantial investment and stronger administrative capacity.”

The AKP government has refrained from responding to these EU demands because of the nature of the Turkish political-economic system in which the ruling elites consolidate their power by excluding civil society from environmental decision-making processes, increasing the scale of centralization, and by promoting the capital accumulation process through coercive legal and administrative practices (Tansel, 2018: 199–200). The government, however, had to reconsider its reluctance in Europeanization after it became clear that the EU’s Carbon Adjustment Mechanism (CBA), expected to be put in force in 2026, would substantially cost to the Turkish economy. The CBA has constituted a major incentive for the AKP government to adjust its climate change policy, as the EU is a major export market for Turkish goods. Moreover, the increasing link between a country’s level of commitment to climate change mitigation efforts and access to European and global financial resources has further urged the ruling AKP to opt for the Europeanization of Turkey’s climate change policy.

SELECTIVE EUROPEANIZATION OF TURKEY'S CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY

Climate change constitutes a major concern for the EU that plays a leading role in global mitigation efforts (Parker & Karlsoon, 2010). Through its membership conditionality, the EU has urged Turkey to undertake legal and institutional changes to align its climate change policy with that of the EU. When Turkey refrained from becoming a party to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the EU insisted that Turkey acceded to the UNFCCC and ratify the Kyoto Protocol (European Commission, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2008). After Turkey was removed from the Annex II list of the Convention during the 7th Conference of the Parties (COP7) of 2001, Turkey became a party to the Convention in 2004.¹ The opening of the EU accession negotiations in 2005 and the subsequent intensification of public debate on Turkey's membership to the Kyoto Protocol led Turkey to ratify the Protocol in 2009. Yet, unlike the EU that had 8 percent emission reduction obligation for the 2008–2012 period of the Protocol, Turkey did not undertake any such obligations.

With its 0.7% share of the global emissions, Turkey is not among the top polluters (INDC, 2015); however, its emission rates have been steadily increasing since the 1990s. The Global Carbon Budget report reveals that Turkey ranked 15th in carbon emissions in 2019 (Bianet, 2019). An analysis of emissions by sector reveals that electricity, manufacturing, and transportation sectors account for the largest share of emissions in Turkey (Kumbaroğlu, 2011). The energy sector constitutes 70% of the emissions, industrial processes and product use account for 14.3%, and agricultural activities represent 7.3%, while waste has an 8.2% share in emissions (INDC, 2015).

Despite the unwillingness to undertake emission reduction targets, various five-year development plans, action plans, and strategy documents on climate change highlighted the importance of energy efficiency and global competitiveness of Turkey, while maintaining sustainable climate change policies. The Eighth (2001–2005), Ninth (2007–2013), and Tenth (2014–2018) Five-Year Development Plans, the National Climate Change Strategy (2010–2020), the Climate Change Action Plan (2011–2023), the Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan, the National Energy Efficiency Action Plan (2017–2023), and the Strategic Plan (2015–2019) all contained similar discourses that emphasize the need to cope with

climate change challenges. The Climate Change Action Plan, for instance, focused on energy, industry, building, agriculture, and the forestry sectors for contributing to greenhouse gas emission reduction targets (European Commission, 2013). It highlighted the use of renewable energy resources for achieving low-carbon intensity and decent life (European Commission, 2013). The National Energy Efficiency Action Plan (NEEAP) (2017–2023), declared to be important for harmonizing with the EU Directive on energy efficiency (2012/27/EU), aimed at reducing the primary energy consumption of Turkey by 14 percent by 2023 (NEEAP, 2016).

After the adoption of the Paris Agreement in 2015 to tackle climate change, Turkey submitted its Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC) to the UNFCCC in 2015. Turkey undertook an emission reduction target up to 21 percent by 2030 (INDC, 2015). It also pledged to “increase its use of solar, wind and hydro power; to commission the building of a nuclear power plant; to reduce electricity transmission and distribution losses to 15 percent; and to rehabilitate its existing power plants” (INDC, 2015). These objectives that would contribute to the development of Turkey’s carbon market mechanisms were welcomed by the EU (European Commission, 2013). The EU also appreciated the adoption of measures to monitor and report emissions stemming from industrial installations in accordance with EU norms (European Commission, 2018), and the submission of the annual report on greenhouse gasses and the national inventory to the UNFCCC (European Commission, 2019c).

Despite these discursive commitments and climate change mitigation measures, the Turkish climate change adaptation strategy lacked a sound legal basis and enforcement (European Commission, 2018). Turkey refrained from ratifying the Paris Agreement and adopting a strategy compatible with the EU 2030 framework on climate and energy policies (European Commission, 2018, 2019b). To ensure transparency of climate action, the EU urged Turkey to align with the EU’s greenhouse gas monitoring mechanism and accounting rules on greenhouse gas emissions (European Commission, 2018, 2019b). The EU also insisted that Turkey aligns with the Emission Trading Directive, fully implements the Fuel Quality Directive, the EU Regulation on Emissions Standards for New Cars, and prepare an alignment plan for the Carbon Capture and Storage Directive (European Commission, 2018, 2019b).

Turkey's unwillingness to undertake such directives of the environmental acquis can be attributed to the trade-off between the AKP government's rapid economic growth and climate change policies. As recognized by the EU, there is an inconsistency in Turkish climate change strategy with other strategies, such as the energy strategy (European Commission, 2014). This inconsistency resulted from the increasing priority given to economic development objectives regardless of their environmental consequences. After the announcement of its Vision 2023 development strategy in 2011, which envisaged Turkey to be among the 10 largest economies in 2023, the AKP government has committed to increase its energy supply to support its growing economy. To steer economic growth, production in carbon-intensive sectors, including energy, construction, iron, steel, cement, and transportation, increased considerably (Aşıcı, 2015). To meet increasing energy needs of these sectors, the government engaged in supporting heavy energy investments in coal.

Despite the discursive commitment to increase investments in renewable, nonpolluting energy in Turkey (European Commission, 2013), the Electrical Energy Market and Supply Security Strategy Document (2009) has put domestic coal mining and using domestic coal for energy generation at the heart of Turkey's development priorities. The Strategy Document declared the objective of ensuring supply security by running thermal power plants and using both domestic and imported coal for energy generation purposes. The Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources announced the year 2012 as the coal year and since then accelerated its plans to meet Turkey's increased energy demand by constructing new coal-fired power plants. The New Incentive Law no. 3305 (2012) designated domestic coal mining and energy generation with domestic coal as strategic investments that would be supported by various incentives (Acar et al., 2015). Providing direct payments from the Treasury for the import of hard coal, research and development costs, subsidies for new coal-based power plants, and price and purchase guarantees are among the incentives provided to promote the coal sector (Acar et al., 2015). Incentives provided to the coal sector amounted to more than 700 million \$ in 2013 (Acar, 2016: 46). Thanks to these incentives, coal has become one of the fastest growing sectors in the Turkish energy market (Acar, 2016).

The commitment to benefit from coal in energy generation to ensure rapid economic growth would increase emission levels in Turkey and clash

with Turkey's climate change mitigation strategy. The AKP government had to take crucial steps for ending this trade-off after the EU adopted the European Green Deal, and it became clear that further access to global and European financial resources depended on Turkey's commitment to green policies. At the G-7 meeting held in June 2021, industrialized countries announced their intention to stop international funding of fossil fuel-based investments, particularly coal to fulfill their globally agreed climate change commitments (Reuters, 21 May 2021). Emphasizing the need to shift away from fossil fuels globally at the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in September 2021, China similarly announced that it would stop financing coal-based projects internationally. At the UN Climate Change Conference (COP-26) held in Glasgow in November 2021, more countries agreed to join efforts to stop international public financing of fossil fuels by the end of 2022. As it became clear that access to resources to finance its rapid economic growth policy required a shift from fossil fuel, particularly coal, the ruling AKP had an important incentive to adjust its climate change policy with that of the EU at a time when the economic crisis in Turkey have substantially eroded its electoral support base. Moreover, the EU's announcement of the implementation of the CBA Mechanism as of 2026 urged the AKP government to take further steps for harmonizing its climate change policy with European standards and regulations.

Through its Emissions Trading System (ETS) put in force in 2005, the EU requires its companies engaged in energy and carbon-intensive sectors, including electricity generation, cement, chemical goods, iron and steel sector, and air transportation, to pay carbon tax for the emissions they have generated (Aşıcı, January 2021: 3). As this carbon tax put European producers in a disadvantaged position in terms of international competitiveness, the EU announced the implementation of CBA Mechanism to extend this carbon pricing system to the imported goods according to their carbon content. Extending the EU's ETS on the global scale, the CBA served as a major incentive for Turkey to decarbonize its economy. Unless Turkey adjusts to the ETS and implements a national carbon pricing mechanism, Turkish exporters will have to pay carbon taxes to the EU at the border. The failure to set up a national Emissions Trading System may cost Turkish exporters 1.1–1.8 billion Euro annually (Aşıcı, January 2021). To prevent a potential financial transfer to the EU through carbon taxes, the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization announced in February 2021 Turkey's intention to set up a national

carbon pricing mechanism soon. This step becomes more reasonable considering the current dire situation of the Turkish economy suffering from severe instability.

The AKP government took another crucial step for complying with the European Green Deal by publishing its Green Deal Action Plan in July 2021. The Plan sets up a roadmap for aligning with the European Green Deal through undertaking several interconnected actions, including limiting carbon emissions, shifting to a green and circular economy, and ensuring a clean energy supply and sustainable agriculture. Such discourses reflect the strategic preferences of the ruling AKP toward the Europeanization of the climate change policy. AKP increasingly appealed to the European Green Deal for both justifying and generating support for the objective of decarbonizing the Turkish economy.

The government's efforts to adjust Turkey's climate change policy with that of the EU were rewarded by the European Commission that held a high-level dialog on climate with the Turkish Ministry of Environment and Urbanization in September 2021. Turkey was rewarded further after the ratification of the Paris Climate Change Agreement in October 2021 just before the COP-26 Conference held in Glasgow. Upon ratification, Turkey had the opportunity to have access to \$3.2 billion worth of financial resources to be provided by Germany, France, the World Bank, and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development for its green transformation (IKV, 2021).

CONCLUSION

This study has examined the Europeanization of Turkey's environmental policy with reference to climate change, the EIA directive, and the lack of public participation and access to environmental information—the three areas where the EU Commission has urged Turkey to implement the EU environmental *acquis*. The analysis has revealed despite Turkish efforts to align its legal framework with the EU environmental *acquis*, Turkey has refrained from fully complying with EU environmental norms in three areas examined in this study.

The non-compliance of Turkey with the EU environmental policy can be attributed to the political and economic dynamics of Turkey in the 2000s as the ruling AKP has prioritized the issue of economic growth both in discourse and in practice over the environment and civil society. However, recent developments such as the EU attempt to implement the

CBA Mechanism as of 2026 and the restrictions put on international funding on fossil fuel-based investments have urged AKP to reconsider its preferences at a time when the economic crisis in Turkey has substantially eroded its electoral support base. AKP's electoral concerns and the need to ensure economic growth by accessing international funding for energy investments constitute the basis of the strategic calculations of the ruling AKP.

As the EU environmental governance requires balancing the relation between developmental goals and environmental protection by ensuring that developmental and economic decisions are made by taking environmental consequences into account, the AKP government has opted for a preferential adoption of the EU environmental norms. While the AKP government has undertaken crucial steps for harmonizing its climate change policy in accordance with European regulations, it has failed to undertake reforms concerning the EIA directive and public participation and access to environmental information. This finding has demonstrated the limits of the EU conditionality for triggering policy change in Turkey. Examining the role of domestic factors, particularly the strategic calculations of the ruling AKP in explaining the selective Europeanization of Turkey's environmental policy, this study attributed the ongoing climate change-related reforms to the domestic agenda and political preferences of AKP despite the lack of a credible membership prospect for Turkey. This finding speaks to that of Europeanization literature that emphasizes domestic change through domestic preferences with the EU conditionality in a selective manner.

NOTE

1. The main reason for the failure of Turkey to ratify the Kyoto Protocol resulted from its being added to Annex-I and Annex-II of the UNFCCC in 1992. Rejecting to be involved in both Annexes, Turkey did not become a party to the UNFCCC until 2004. Being an OECD member, Turkey was considered as a developed country and was expected to provide financial and technical transfers to developing countries under the Annex-II list of the UNFCCC.

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Transformation and Challenges in Turkey-EU Relations: A Case of Foreign Policy with Domestic Implications

Çiğdem Nas

Turkey-EU relations has undergone a process of transformation since the turn of the century with important domestic policy implications. The progress and then regression in Turkey-EU relations impacted the process of democratization and identity-based transformation in Turkish politics and society. Following the declaration of Turkey's candidacy to the EU at the Helsinki European Council in 1999, Turkey-EU relations took the form of an accession process which required the candidate country to fulfill the membership criteria and adopt the *acquis* of the Union. Hence, it was a quite specific relationship which could not be considered only as a foreign policy issue but rather a wholesale transformation

Ç. Nas (✉)

Department of Political Science and International
Relations, Yıldız Technical University, Istanbul, Turkey
e-mail: cgdmnas@gmail.com; cnas@yildiz.edu.tr

involving transition toward a liberal model. During the 20 years in question, Turkey's relations with the EU continued in several interrelated formats including candidacy, association including the Customs Union, cooperation in the area of migration and more recently a positive agenda based on an understanding of common interests.

Turkey engaged in an extensive reform process in the 2000s with a view to fulfilling the political aspects of the membership criteria which led to the opening of accession negotiations in 2005. However, the Cyprus conflict and French President Sarkozy's challenge regarding Turkey's suitability for membership in addition to other factors created important hurdles in the successful continuation of the negotiations. The second decade of the twenty-first century witnessed a deterioration of the relations whereby Turkey moved further away from the membership criteria, embroiled in internal political struggles, spillover effects from Arab uprisings and the Syrian crisis and waning impact of the EU conditionality. Several crises, spats and tensions dominated the relations whereby the optimistic mood of the initial years turned into estrangement and questioning of the values and practices of the EU. As the promise of membership became weaker, Turkish leadership began to treat relations with the EU as more of a foreign policy issue than an issue of convergence and adaptation. Internal political developments in Turkey increasingly took a course contrary to EU criteria which preached rule of law, democracy, human rights and freedoms. The July 15 coup attempt and transition to a highly-centralized presidential regime created a further rift in the relations. Turkey's actions in the Eastern Mediterranean concerning drilling activities off the coast of Cyprus and in the Aegean were severely criticized by the EU, which created a renewed complication in the foreign policy and security realm. Tension in the Eastern Mediterranean subsided at the end of 2020 linked with the start of a positive agenda in the relations only to emerge again recently over questions of territorial waters and airspace over the Aegean, sovereignty and militarization of the Aegean islands.

The chapter aims to critically assess Turkey-EU relations in the recent era in three parts: a summary of the last 20 years, problems and disputes in the relations, and domestic implications in terms of the trajectory of EU reforms and changes in domestic politics as well as foreign policy orientation. The chapter will end with concluding notes on the failure of Turkey's EU accession process and its impact on geopolitical identity, economic relations and status between the West and the rest.

TURKEY-EU RELATIONS BETWEEN ASSOCIATION AND CANDIDACY

Turkey has been a member of almost all regional organizations in Europe in the post-World War II era save for the most extensive one, the European Union. It made an early application in 1959 to the EEC which led to the signing of the Association Agreement in 1963. The Ankara Agreement still forms the basic legal text governing Turkey-EU relations. Turkey later applied to become a member of the EC in 1987 as a part of the normalization following the 1980 military takeover. The application was evaluated by the EC Commission which concluded that despite its eligibility, Turkey was not yet ready for membership (Commission of the EC, 1989). The 1990s witnessed the completion of the Customs Union based on the Association Agreement, followed by Turkey's candidacy to the Union (Arikan, 2018). The candidacy status exerted a positive influence over political and economic reforms in Turkey strengthening the country's anchoring to the liberal system in terms of both a democratization process and implementation of an IMF economic program (Öniş, 2008). Extensive reforms in line with the Copenhagen political criteria produced results whereby EU Member States reached an agreement to start accession negotiations with Turkey as of October 3, 2005. As negotiations took off, the unsettled Cyprus conflict created an obstacle to the swift progress of the negotiations. The European Council decided not to open eight chapters which they saw as related to the Customs Union and not to close any of the chapters (General Affairs and External Relations Council, 2006).

The partial freeze of accession negotiations coupled with objections to Turkey's membership on grounds of identity complicated the process and led to a loss of hope and trust between the parties. As the process came to a standstill after 2016, Syrian refugee crisis and the refugee deal dominated the relations transforming them from a gradual accession process to an interest-based transactional relationship. While the EU critically emphasized Turkey's movement away from Europe, the Turkish leadership adopted an indignant discourse accusing the EU of not being fair and objective and making Turkey wait for membership for 53 years (Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye, 2016). The deterioration of Turkey-EU relations was also paralleled by a growing anti-Western attitude in the government, growing authoritarianism and failure to carry out EU reforms (Esen & Gumuscu, 2016). While Turkey became involved

in regional conflicts following the Arab Spring events, its involvement in Eastern Med rekindled disputes with Greece and Cyprus which also impacted on the EU's policy in the region. As the Turkish government concentrated on and identified the country's geopolitical identity as a regional relevant power, identified in IR literature as a "middle power" (Kayhan Pusane, 2021), the EU leadership also chose to refer to Turkey as an important neighbor and strategic partner rather than as a candidate or potential Member State.

The Turkish leadership moved away from the EU norms and values especially in the political area and adopted a more centralized, hierarchical and authoritarian governance structure. The loss of the EU membership perspective and internal power calculations led to the reversal of the reform process. Coupled with foreign policy disputes over Cyprus and the Aegean as well as differences over Libya and Nagorno Karabakh conflict, Turkey-EU relations became a relationship of necessity and interest rather than of identification and trust building (Janning, 2018).

PROGRESS OF THE RELATIONS: CANDIDACY AND THE ACCESSION PROCESS

The Luxembourg European Council of 1997 which was one of the decisive EU summits about further enlargement of the Union in the post-Cold War era kicked off accession negotiations with the first group of six candidate countries including South Cyprus.¹ Turkey was not declared as a candidate state and was evaluated under the title "a European strategy for Turkey" (Luxembourg European Council, 1997). The Turkish government of the time reacted quite indignantly to this exclusion coupled with the decision to start accession talks with Cyprus, refused to be involved in the "European conference" which was proposed as a mechanism including EU Member States, candidates and Turkey, and adopted a counter-strategy. Turkey refused to discuss any political issues with the EU and decided to enhance its integration with the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in return for the EU's decision to start accession negotiations with Cyprus. Prime minister of the time Mesut Yılmaz said that he would revoke the membership application if the situation was not rectified in the June European Council (Sazak, 1997).

Relations were going through a critical juncture. Either Turkey would be left outside the borders of the EU as an associated neighbor or it would be a prospective member country. In a meeting of Christian democratic

parties of Europe, it was declared that Turkey was not considered as a European country due to its religious and cultural heritage (Müftüler-Baç, 1998). Hence, Turkey's eligibility to be a member of the EU was now coined in the framework of a civilizational discourse that aimed to construct Turkey as the other. The EU's approach to the question of Turkey's candidacy altered in the meantime resulting in the declaration of candidacy in the 1999 Helsinki European Council (Eralp, 2000; Öniş, 2000). Several developments were effective in this change including the capture of Abdullah Ocalan, the PKK leader and the declaration of cease-fire leading to a more peaceful environment in the southeast of Turkey, rapprochement between Greece and Turkey following the 1999 earthquake, the eruption of the Kosovo crisis which drew attention to the need for an inclusive enlargement policy, the US President Clinton's attempts to persuade the Union to grant candidacy status to Turkey and commitment by the Ecevit government of the time to undergo comprehensive reforms to improve the democracy and human rights environment, the situation in the southeast and relations with Greece as expressed by an exchange of letters with the German Chancellor Schröder before the Cologne Summit of June 3–4, 1999 (Naegele, 1999).

The Helsinki European Council declared Turkey as a candidate country "destined to join the Union on the basis of the same criteria as applied to the other candidate States" (Helsinki European Council, 1999). While this expression meant that Turkey would be evaluated on the basis of the Copenhagen criteria, the Council conclusions also referred to two other issues that could be regarded as additional conditions for Turkey: the urge to make an effort to resolve any outstanding border disputes (para. 4) and resolution of the Cyprus issue (para. 9(a)). Hence, Turkey would also be expected to resolve its disputes over the Aegean with Greece before any probable accession to the Union. Regarding the Cyprus issue, the European Council noted that the Union would support a political settlement on the island. However, this would not be regarded as a condition to be fulfilled by the Greek Cypriots before the conclusion of their membership talks. While Turkey would be under pressure from the EU to support and work for a settlement on the island, the Greek Cypriots could be a member of the Union without any conditions to do so. This asymmetry in the EU's approach to the two sides of the Cyprus conflict complicated the process and later created a definite bottleneck in Turkey's negotiation process.

The Ecevit government accepted the candidate status after an initial hesitation which was cleared by a letter from the term presidency represented by the Finnish Prime Minister Lipponen and a surprise visit to Ankara by the Commissioner responsible for enlargement, Gunther Verheugen and the High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy, Javier Solana (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1999). Turkey's declaration as a candidate to join the EU after years of waiting was met with positive reactions in the media and the general public. It provided for a clear perspective of membership and created a strong stimulus to make an effort in the direction of meeting the Copenhagen criteria. The strong Europeanization effect influenced the relevant institutions and political actors as well as civil organizations in terms of both adoption of norms and identity references and aligning with the membership conditions in order to achieve the final goal of membership (Nas & Özer, 2012).

The Accession Partnership Document of 08.03.2001 included a list of short- and medium-term tasks that had to be fulfilled by Turkey to comply with the Copenhagen political criteria. Turkey's reform process to start membership negotiations with the EU started during the coalition government under Ecevit and continued with the AKP government that came to power following the November 2002 elections. While the 2001 crisis resulted in a government crisis and the failure of the three coalition parties in the ensuing elections, it also gave life to a new political movement that was a continuation of a center right conservative and Islamist legacy. The AKP diverged from its predecessors in that it adopted a pro-EU and more liberal stance. It included in its party program Turkey's aim to join the EU and fulfill the membership criteria (AKP, 2002). The reforms carried out during the first half of the 2000s was regarded as the golden years of Turkey's EU process (Öniş, 2008) and was supported by the major opposition party, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (CHP, Republican People's Party). Hence, it was based on a bipartisan consensus reflecting also the support of the general public to the EU perspective. The reforms were found to be sufficient in the 2004 report of the European Commission which was then upheld by the European Council in December 2004 after lengthy debates due to intransigence of some Member States especially Austria (European Commission, 2004).

What could be viewed as a victory for pro-EU reformists in Turkey and the culmination of a decades-long struggle to accede to the Union was paradoxically a Pyrrhic victory since the negotiation process that was started included its own seeds of destruction within itself. The accession

process was based on an intergovernmental conference framework, and the opening and closing of chapters had to be decided unanimously by the Member States. With Cyprus's entry to the EU as of May 1, 2004, and the rejection of the Annan plan to settle the Cyprus conflict as a result of Greek Cypriot votes, at least one Member State would be in a position to prevent the process from advancing.

The EU's internal problems regarding the future of European integration created further obstacles for Turkey's integration to the Union. The rejection of the Constitutional Treaty in two founding members of the European Communities fueled debates about Turkey's eligibility for EU membership (Binzer Hobolt & Brouard, 2011). The new Chancellor of Germany Angela Merkel reflected the approach of her party to the issue stating that she was in favor of a privileged partnership for Turkey (Guttenberg, 2004). This position was also supported by Nicholas Sarkozy who became President of France in 2007. Debates about whether or not Turkey was European became a controversial and topical issue that was indirectly tied to debates about Europe itself, i.e., where the borders of Europe would end, would the pillars of European identity be based on culturalist grounds, would the EU evolve to become a federal or inter-governmental structure, etc. (Grigoriadis, 2006). This politicization of the issue was reflected in President Sarkozy's veto to block the opening of certain chapters in Turkey's talks with the EU that were directly related to the accession perspective (Bilefsky, 2007). Later, France lifted these vetoes one by one under President François Hollande (Yackley & Çağlayan, 2012).

The last chapters to be opened in Turkey's EU accession negotiations were economic and monetary policy and financial and budgetary provisions. They were opened in December 2015 and June 2016 respectively in the sidelines of the Syrian refugee crisis. The EU promised to re-energize the accession process in an effort to rekindle Turkey's spirit and enable its acquiescence to collaborate in the containment of the refugee crisis. With the July 15 coup attempt, relations were again placed on a backburner. As of today, 16 chapters have been opened and only one chapter, science and research, had been provisionally closed. The negotiations remain frozen. Despite calls by the EP and several Member States, the European Council did not adopt a formal decision to suspend or end the negotiations. This could be due to the importance and value of Turkey for strategic reasons related to European security, its role in fending off migratory pressures and the vast economic relations and European investments in the country.

ONE STEP BACK: ASSOCIATION AND THE CUSTOMS UNION

The Customs Union that entered into force at the end of 1995 was based on the Ankara Agreement which stipulated the realization of a Customs Union during the last stage of the association relationship (1963). The Additional Protocol of 1970 laid down the particulars of the transition phase based on timetables for gradual lowering of tariff barriers and alignment with the EU's Common External Tariff regarding trade in industrial goods.² Several legislative reforms were carried out in order to prepare the framework for the entry into force of the Customs Union including the adoption of a competition law, consumer protection legislation and several political reforms regarding rights and freedoms. The government of the time was intent on starting the Customs Union process before membership to the EU despite opposition from more nationalistic circles that questioned the appropriateness of adapting to the common external tariff of the Union before actual accession took place (Nas & Özer, 2017).

The start of accession negotiations was also quite significant in relations to the proper functioning of the Customs Union since Turkey would become a member with decision-making powers at the end of the process. The 2006 decision of the Council of the European Union not to open chapters related to the Customs Union due to Turkey's not opening its ports and airports to vehicles originating from Greek Cyprus dealt a blow to the accession negotiations and tied its successful conclusion to the resolution of the Cyprus dispute (General Affairs and External Relations Council, 2006). Problems in the functioning of the Customs Union remained unsolved in the meantime. One of these problems concerned the EU's increasing number of free trade agreements (FTA) which had to be followed by another FTA between Turkey and third country concerned due to the requirements of the Customs Union. The EU's recourse to bilateral and multilateral trade agreements especially after the failure of the 2011 Doha Round of the WTO also spurred Turkey to increase its FTAs. At the same time, in the absence of FTAs between Turkey and the third countries in question, goods could enter the Turkish market via the EU although Turkish goods could not enter the third country market tariff-free. This situation was resented as being unfair and not taking into account Turkey's trade interests. Transport quotas implemented to trucks carrying goods from Turkey to EU markets and lack of effective dispute settlement mechanisms for trade irritants were also other problems that

needed to be resolved for a better functioning Customs Union (Nas, 2018).

In addition to the problems emerging in the Customs Union, changes in world trade, EU trade policy and Turkey's trade capabilities increased the need to revise and also modernize the Customs Union. Its focus was limited to industrial goods and the industrial components of agricultural goods, and did not embody trade in services or agricultural trade. A report by the World Bank which was commissioned by the European Commission drew attention to the problems in the Customs Union and need for its revision. The report created a watershed for efforts to modernize and reform the Customs Union and trade relations between Turkey and the EU (World Bank, 2014).

In 2015, Turkey's Minister of the Economy Nihat Zeybekçi and Commissioner in charge of international trade Cecilia Malmström issued a political statement announcing the parties' will to start formal negotiations for the upgrading and modernization of the Customs Union (Delegation of the EU to Turkey, 2015). This step was followed by preparations and impact assessment studies conducted by the European Commission and Turkey's Ministry of the Economy at the time. Both studies found positive impact of the process on bilateral trade as well as welfare gains (European Commission, 2016b). The European Commission recommended the start of negotiations and requested a mandate from the Council to conduct these negotiations on behalf of the EU (European Commission, 2016a, b). However, formal negotiations could not be started due to reservations of some Member States such as Germany and Austria on grounds of deficiencies in Turkey regarding rule of law and human rights standards. It became clear that any advancement in the institutional setup of the trade and economic relationship would be conditional upon sharing a common perspective regarding democratic standards.

In 2018, the Council assessed the situation and concluded that the start of this process is not foreseen since Turkey was moving away from the EU in terms of values and standards (Council of the EU, 2018). The limitations of rights and freedoms, transition to the highly hierarchical and centralized Presidential regime, problems in the functioning of the judiciary and regression in freedoms and democratic standards were sanctioned by the EU. What could be an alternative route to closer relations between Turkey and the EU could not be operationalized. Although the Customs Union is still in operation, both parties complain about several

problems in its functioning. The European Green Deal created further pressures on the trade relationship since it triggered a green transition process which also affected production methods and product standards requiring adherence to sustainability criteria and decarbonization strategies (Aydıntaşbaş & Dennison 2021). The Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) which is planned to be implemented to carbon-intensive products such as cement, aluminum, steel and fertilizer that are imported to the EU also creates the need to adapt and learn to produce by emitting lower carbon. In this way, the EU is still exerting a transformative influence on production and trade practices through the use of rewards in the form of green funding resources and sanctions in the form of financial burdens such as the CBAM (European Commission, 2021).

CHALLENGES AND DISPUTES IN RELATIONS

From the start of accession negotiations, the Cyprus issue became a constant irritant and obstructing factor. It may be said that the accession process was stillborn since a country that was not recognized by Turkey; that is, the Republic of Cyprus became a member of the EU and hence acquired a veto power over Turkey's accession negotiations. The conclusions of the Helsinki European Council noted the EU's support to the resolution of the Cyprus issue. However, the Council also underlined that the resolution of the question would not be regarded as a "precondition" for Cypriot membership (Helsinki European Council, 1999). This statement made an important impact on the progress and outcome of the Annan Plan proposed under the UN auspices for a comprehensive solution to the division of the island. The added conditionality regarding the Cyprus issue also made an impact on the Turkish government's approach to the question of uniting Cyprus. AKP government that came to power in 2002 radically changed its approach to the Cyprus issue by supporting the Annan plan and pushing for a resolution of the question (Celenk, 2007; Suvarierol, 2003). However, this support was not enough to convince the Greek Cypriots to adopt a positive attitude to the Annan Plan. They were aware that the resolution of the Cyprus question was not a precondition for accession as the EU already regarded them as the sole representative of the Republic of Cyprus. While the Greek Cypriots rejected the plan in a referendum held on 24 April 2004 days before the actual accession to the EU, the Turkish Cypriots approved the plan in a

parallel referendum held in the north of the island. Commissioner responsible for Enlargement Gunther Verheugen resented this outcome of the process stating that he felt “cheated by the Greek Cypriot government” (Spiteri, 2004).

As Cyprus became a member of the EU, the North under the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus recognized by Turkey was designated as area “where the Government of the Republic of Cyprus does not exercise effective control” and EU legislation was suspended there under Protocol 10 to the 2003 Act of Accession.³ The EU took some measures to ease the international isolation of the Turkish Cypriots with the Green Line Regulation⁴ and aid program for the Turkish community.⁵ However, the direct trade regulation which would allow for trade with the Turkish Cypriots could not be passed due to objections by Cyprus and Greece.⁶

The 2006 decision of the Council not to open eight chapters and not to close any chapter in Turkey’s accession negotiations was also related to the Cyprus problem as outlined above. The Cypriot government unilaterally blocked the opening of five more chapters in 2009 on grounds that the Turkish government failed to resolve the issue of opening ports for Cypriot vessels. These five chapters included education and culture, foreign, security and defense policy, judiciary and fundamental rights, justice, freedom and security, free movement of workers and energy (Müftüler-Baç, 2016). Thus, critical chapters regarding the independence of the judiciary, fundamental rights and liberties which were consequential in the candidate country’s fulfilment of the Copenhagen criteria could not be opened and the EU failed to exert its transformative influence in this direction. Despite Turkey’s role as transit hub for energy and the need for foreign and security policy coordination with Turkey, the related chapters also remained closed.

Following the discovery of natural gas in Cyprus’s economic zone, the relations again became tense as the proclamation of an exclusive economic zone by the Greek Cypriot government was not recognized by Turkey and TRNC. Turkey prevented a drilling boat belonging to ENI from searching for natural gas in the 3rd exploration zone off the coast of Cyprus and also started its own explorations in contested waters. Turkey’s signing a maritime boundary treaty with Libya was also regarded antagonistically by the EU. As tensions rose in the Eastern Mediterranean, Turkey was mostly criticized for violating international law and disrespecting the sovereignty of EU Member States, Greece and Cyprus. In 2019, the Council adopted a series of sanctions against Turkey aiming

to make an impact on the country's position regarding the Aegean and Cyprus issues. The sanctions included suspension of negotiations on the Comprehensive Air Transport Agreement, suspending the meeting of the Association Council and High-level Dialogue meetings, reducing the pre-accession assistance to Turkey for 2020 and proposal to the European Investment Bank to reconsider its lending to Turkey (Council of the EU, 2019).

Efforts by the High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy, Josep Borrell and German Chancellor Angela Merkel aimed to ease the situation and prevent a further rift emerging with Turkey. In October 2020, the European Council introduced a new initiative the Positive Agenda in order to start a process of engagement with Turkey by initiating progress in trade and modernization of the Customs Union, people-to-people contacts, high-level dialogue mechanisms and continuation of migration and refugee cooperation (European Council, 2020). These measures would be conditional upon Turkey's reversing its stance in the Eastern Mediterranean and ending drilling operations. Lacking a comprehensive perspective or a clear roadmap, the Positive Agenda initiative could not elicit the expected improvement in the relations.

DOMESTIC IMPLICATIONS: EU REFORMS, INERTIA AND BACKSLIDING

Turkey-EU relations aimed to carry Turkey to the final destination of membership. These relations cannot be evaluated only under the rubric of foreign policy due to their comprehensive implications for internal political and economic conditions. The politics of democratic conditionality which was a landmark of the EU enlargement policy required Turkey to fulfill the Copenhagen criteria and to make progress in the resolution of the Cyprus and Aegean conflicts. Turkey's democratization process had been hampered by frequent military takeovers. The last one dating back to 1980 left the legacy of a new constitution that aimed to strengthen the executive and limit the scope of rights and freedoms for security reasons and overarching interests of the state. With the return to multi-party politics, liberalization of the system mostly ran in difficulty due to security concerns especially over the Kurdish issue and fight against the PKK during the 1990s. With the declaration of candidacy in 1999, opening of accession negotiations became a target that also demanded further democratic reforms (Saatçioğlu, 2011). The 2001 economic crisis

in the country also laid out the need for a radical transformation in both the political and economic area. While Turkey adopted an IMF-induced economic program, the EU criteria became the blueprint for the political reform process which included the following priorities among others (Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Secretariat General for EU Affairs, 2007):

- expanding the scope of democratic rights and fundamental liberties in line with the Council of Europe conventions,
- limiting the role of the military and the National Security Council to only a consultative one,
- expanding the scope of cultural rights and gender equality,
- achieving progress in democratic institutions embodying a system of checks and balances,
- zero tolerance for torture and ill treatment under custody,
- guaranteeing the effectiveness, neutrality and independence of the judiciary,
- functional autonomy of technical bodies such as the Central Bank,
- effective fight against corruption and public sector reform.

The reforms which started during the Ecevit government with the abolition of the death penalty and civilianization of the State Security Courts were continued under the JDP government when harmonization packages were passed in the TGNA based on a consensus between the governing party and opposition party. The AKP having been founded on an Islamist political tradition adopted a pragmatic stance toward ties with the EU and included the aim of membership in its political program. For the AKP, the political reforms necessitated by the EU conditionality such as the fight against military tutelage over the regime and expansion of democratic space were a guarantee against the threat from military and civilian bureaucracy. The EU Membership perspective was mostly employed by the Party for “domestic political incentives” (Saatçioğlu, 2011: 29).

The problems blocking progress in accession negotiations after 2006 stifled the appetite for reforms in the country and worked against liberal pro-EU forces. Continuing debates about Turkey’s eligibility for membership including both Chancellor Merkel’s approach and President Sarkozy’s veto over the opening of several chapters were reflected in the

Turkish public opinion and the political elite in terms of disappointment and loss of belief in the actual probability of membership. EU reforms were relegated to a secondary position behind power struggles and polarization of the electorate between Islamist and secularist agendas as well as growing instability in the region following the 2011 Arab Spring events. The July 15 coup attempt and the following state of emergency led to a further limitation of political freedoms and paved the way for a regime change that intensified the process of de-Europeanization (Alpan, 2021).

In the meantime, the EU enlargement process nearly came to a standstill as EU Member States became especially concerned about the preparedness of candidates for accession in the aftermath of democratic backsliding in some countries that became members in 2004. While lip service was being paid regarding the eventual membership of the Western Balkans, Turkey was rarely mentioned as a genuine candidate country to join the EU. Most of the references to Turkey were regarding foreign policy and security issues, cooperation in areas of common interest as well as criticism regarding conflicting viewpoints especially over the Eastern Mediterranean. Turkey was cited as a regional actor and important neighbor for the EU rather than a country along the accession path (Delegation of the EU to Turkey, 2020). The EU's hesitancy over the accession process underwent a radical change in 2022 with Ukraine's application for membership followed by Moldova and Georgia's applications. The EU in support and solidarity with Ukraine granted a candidacy status to Ukraine and Moldova in the June European Council and guaranteed a European perspective for Georgia (European Council, 2022).

In view of a larger EU, several plans regarding a renewed architecture of European integration were spelt out by EU leaders. President Macron of France expressed his proposal for a European Political Community (EPC) that would include Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia together with the Western Balkans (2002) while Chancellor Olaf Scholz of Germany talked about his vision of a larger EU with possibly 36 Member States (Scholz, 2022). He also underlined the need for the reform of the decision-making process within the Union before such a largescale enlargement could ever take place. Turkey was not considered as one of the probable candidates to be included in a larger Europe. Problems over Cyprus and with Greece over the Aegean mostly defined the focus of the EU toward Turkey which was seen as a challenge for the EU in that region. While the crisis in Ukraine drew attention to the role of Turkey as a NATO member and arbiter between the belligerents as seen

in the Grain Deal brokered by Turkey, this shifting focus was not enough to alter the EU's approach to Turkey.

TURKEY BETWEEN THE WEST AND THE REST: IDENTITY, GEOPOLITICS AND ECONOMICS

During the 23 years between 1999, Turkey's declaration as a candidate, and 2022, Turkey's relations with the EU reached a climax point only to retreat to a point of stalemate and regression. During this period Turkey still remained as a candidate country with which accession negotiations had been in a state of de facto freeze. What is more the membership perspective has dimmed and became a probability referred to only by a select groups of veteran experts of Turkey-EU relations. During this period of change, domestic developments and developments in Europe and around the globe influenced the framework of the relations.

Firstly, Turkey underwent political and economic crises and shifts. Turkish government under the AKP and Recep Tayyip Erdogan evolved in the direction of an authoritarian and security minded state which was the opposite direction required by EU conditionality. The Former President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker referred to it as "Turkey moving away in giant steps from the EU" (Radosavljevic, 2017). The Gezi park protests and the 15 July coup attempt could be seen as milestones in this shift toward a more culturally conservative, nationalistic and authoritarian government style which came to a fruition with the transition to a presidential regime with limited checks and balances. The transition to a presidential regime also went in parallel with a deinstitutionalization and personification of the regime as the President was the supreme authority, arbiter and decision-maker. As EU reforms had already subsided at the end of the 2000s, the EU anchor was totally neglected. The failure to act in line with the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights to which Turkey was a signatory especially in the Kavala and Demirtas cases also reflected the movement away from common values regarding rule of law and fundamental rights which was not only a part of EU conditionality but also the Council of Europe's system as well (European Court of Human Rights, 2022). The referendum held in 2017 over the constitutional amendment regarding the transition to a presidential regime was criticized by not only the EU but also the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly's observation mission as being not in line with Council of Europe standards since the

referendum took place under the state of emergency and the opposition campaign lacked a “level playing field” (PACE, 2017).

Geopolitical changes also played an important role in Turkey’s movement away from the EU and from Europe in general. While Turkey remained as a relevant geopolitical actor especially in issues of common interest such as security, fight against terrorism, migration, climate and energy, its internal regime lacked common ground with European values. Serious regression in democratic institutions was noted in the European Commission’s annual reports as well as deficiencies in rule of law, independence of the judiciary, autonomy of civil society, fundamental rights and freedoms as well as efficiency, predictability and transparency of economic governance. As the European anchor lost its effect, other actors gained priority in Turkey’s foreign relations, especially Putin’s Russia. Relations intensified in diverse areas such as natural gas, nuclear energy, tourism and agricultural exports. Both actors became involved in the war in Syria although they had contrasting positions regarding the Assad regime in power. President Erdogan’s statements regarding a probable membership of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization also reflected the growing influence of rising authoritarian powers over Turkey’s choices (Reuters, 2022). Coupled with the increasingly problematic relationship with the USA, foreign policy disagreements with the EU and the rift over the Aegean with Greece and the EU, the anti-western discourse of the government became more reflective of a growing detachment in terms of both values and geopolitical orientation.

Even in the midst of fiery exchanges with European leaders, insolent accusations or warming of waters in the Aegean, Turkey-EU economic relations remained extensive. Turkey was the 6th trading partner of the EU while the EU was Turkey’s first trading partner. Nearly 41.4% of Turkish exports were destined to the EU in 2021. The Customs Union created a strong bond and interdependency between the parties. Yet the modernization process could not be initiated owing to democratic backsliding in Turkey regarding especially rule of law conditions and the low popularity of the government in EU public opinion. The European Green Deal created a new impetus to upgrade the relationship especially regarding the green production methods and decarbonization agenda brought about by the Green Deal priorities and the proposed CBAM (Koch & Keljzer, 2021). The Positive Agenda failed to provide a revitalization of Turkey-EU relations save for the start of high-level dialogue mechanisms in areas such as climate and health. The refugee deal was for

a time the only working mechanism in Turkey-EU relations underlining the interest-based and transactional nature of the changing relationship (Saatçioğlu, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted Turkey's importance for the EU as a major supplier which may be preferable as a production hub in a nearby geography with extensive linkages in terms of trade and investment relations. Russia's aggression against Ukraine created a major threat for European security which necessitated collaboration under NATO. Turkey emerged as a critical actor as it supported Ukraine's defense effort by way of military equipment such as Bayraktar drones and signed a FTA just days after Russia's invasion began. At the same time, Turkey stayed out of the EU sanctions mechanism against Russia intensifying its trade relations which led to criticism from the EU. Thus, the shift in power structures and the geopolitical threats emerging presently further consolidated the EU's approach toward Turkey as a relevant actor with which cooperation should be conducted on issues of common interest.

Turkey was invited to the European Political Community Summit which took place in Prague on October 6, 2022, together with 43 other states including EU Member States, candidate countries including Ukraine and Moldova, and countries of the Eastern Neighborhood, leaving Russia and Belarus out. While Turkey was accepted as a member of a larger, more flexible and diffuse European structure, its accession process remained in limbo. The upcoming elections of 2023 will act as a litmus test regarding Turkey's future trajectory as a member of democratic nations or a member of the authoritarian club of countries. The outcome of the elections will determine whether or not the EU membership process may be revived. Even if Turkey turns toward a democratic revival, the chances of EU membership in the near future seems to be quite questionable due to the EU's internal issues and outlook toward enlargement. Moreover, the unsettled Cyprus issue and problems with Greece hinder the process. In any case, a return to a democratic regime with safeguards regarding fundamental rights and freedoms and rule of law would definitely improve Turkey's standing in European structures, end the monitoring process of the PACE and accelerate Turkey's integration to the EU by way of an upgraded economic relationship which would also impact on common norms and values.

In conclusion, the Turkey-EU relationship at the centenary of the Turkish Republic displays a mixed record regarding its achievements and prospects. While Turkey engaged in a process of approximation to the EU

acquis by way of the Customs Union and the accession process, recently it has diverged a great deal from the EU's membership criteria in both the political and economic areas. In addition, the Customs Union integrated Turkish industry to the EU supply chains and created a significant interdependence on the basis of the extensive trade and investment flows. However, the political problems between Turkey and some EU Member States such as the Cyprus conflict as well as Turkey's failure to fulfill fundamental conditions regarding democracy, rule of law, human rights and freedoms created obstacles that blocked progress in the accession negotiations. Alternatives to membership such as privileged partnership were rejected by Turkey and efforts to revitalize the relations produced very limited results. While Turkey-EU relations continue to be very significant for both parties, steady progress toward further integration could not be maintained.

As Turkey diverged from EU conditionality, its belonging to Europe defined on the basis of common values was increasingly being questioned. However, shared interest brought the parties together such as in the case of the trade relationship, common security concerns and refugee cooperation. Turkey's geostrategic position played a vital role in terms of European security, migration management, energy transmission and proximity to supply chains. Hence, Turkey remained a vital player in the wider European region while its credentials for EU membership faded. The trajectory of the relations in the last 20 years points to an uneasy relationship that is also affected by geopolitical shifts in the global system, the EU's internal problems and crises, Turkey's assertive regional role and its domestic transformation toward a more centralized and authoritarian regime. As the centenary of the Turkish Republic approaches, it is yet to be seen whether the country will be able to make a U-turn toward a more democratic regime and embrace its European identity. The answer depends largely on the complex interplay of political and economic forces in Turkey as well as the appeal the European idea may still have for the varied aspirations of the Turkish people.

NOTES

1. The term "South Cyprus" is used in order to draw attention to the division of the island and exclusion of the Turkish Cypriots from the Greek Cyprus Administration.

2. Additional Protocol and Financial Protocol signed on 23 November 1970, annexed to the Agreement establishing the Association between the European Economic Community and Turkey and on measures to be taken for their entry into force, Document 21970A1123(01), OJ L 293, 29 December 1972, pp. 3–56.
3. Act concerning the conditions of accession of the Czech Republic, the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Cyprus, the Republic of Latvia, the Republic of Lithuania, the Republic of Hungary, the Republic of Malta, the Republic of Poland, the Republic of Slovenia and the Slovak Republic and the adjustments to the Treaties on which the European Union is founded—Protocol No 10 on Cyprus, Document 12003 T/PRO/10, OJ L 236, 23 September 2003, pp. 955–955.
4. European Commission, Green Line Regulation, https://ec.europa.eu/info/departments/structural-reform-support/green-line-regulation_en#the-greenlineregulation.
5. https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/find-funding/eu-funding-programmes/support-turkish-cypriot-community/aid-programme-turkish-cypriot-community_en.
6. Council Regulation on special conditions for trade with those areas of the Republic of Cyprus in which the Government of the Republic of Cyprus does not exercise effective control, Brussels, 7 July 2004 COM(2004) 466 final 2004/0148 (ACC).

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An Agent-Based Rationality Analysis of Turkey's Relations with Greece

Birol Yeşilada

INTRODUCTION

Since the start of the Cyprus conflict in December 1963, Turkey and Greece came close to an all-out military confrontation on several occasions. Almost every observer of these countries believes that a total war between Turkey and Greece would be nothing short of mutual catastrophe that could spill over into a regional war. For the last half-century, the US and the United Nations tried to find a just and lasting solution to Greek-Turkish problems without success. Areas of disagreement include airspace, continental shelf, territorial waters, the militarization of the Greek islands in the Aegean, and Cyprus. Most recently, claims of Extended Economic Zones (EEZ) by Cyprus, Greece, Turkey, and the

B. Yeşilada (✉)

Hatfield School of Government, Portland State University, Portland, OR, USA

e-mail: yesilada@pdx.edu

Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) in the Eastern Mediterranean coupled with an arms race that threatens peace and stability with unimaginable consequences beyond the region.

For a brief period during 1999–2004, the Turkish and Greek leaders took significant steps to ease tensions between their countries. In 1999, George Papandreou decided to move forward with a rapprochement with Turkey. He used the EU-NATO meetings over Kosovo in the spring of 1999 to initiate the process. Afterward, the two countries signed cooperation agreements on bilateral projects in culture, economy, tourism, energy, seismic monitoring, combating crime, terrorism, security, and military affairs. As a result, the foreign trade volume between Greece and Turkey reached \$3.4 billion in 2020 and raised to \$5.2 billion in 2021, with a 69.2% increase over a year.¹ Remarkably, the trade volume between the two countries has tripled since 2005. A more significant investment was a joint effort between the two governments on a natural gas pipeline. The Interconnector Turkey–Greece–Italy (ITGI) is a natural gas transportation project proposed in the framework of the Southern Gas Corridor for the transportation of natural gas from Azerbaijan’s Shah Deniz gas field Phase II to markets in Europe via Greece and Italy. The Turkey–Greece pipeline portion was completed in 2007 and inaugurated on November 18, 2007, by the two countries prime ministers, Mr. Karamanlis and Mr. Erdogan, over the Evros River in Thrace.

Such initiatives need further encouragement. Failure to seize this opportunity carries the danger of reversing the gains made since 1999 and sending the two countries back into adversarial relations. In his extensive review of Greek-Turkish affairs since 1923, George Koukoudakis (2015) argued that the current Greek-Turkish détente held more promise than those in the past not only because there was a serious prospect for EU membership for Turkey but also because the societies of both states were involved through nongovernmental civil society organizations that promoted dialogue and bi-communal activities. For example, the Greek-Turkish Forum actively lobbies their respective governments to further rapprochement between these two countries. The Turkish-Greek Joint Economic Committee (JEC) met four times through 2010 to sign agreements for expanding economic relations.

The optimism over better relations between these two NATO Allies continued during the 2000s with a brief setback when the Greek Cypriots rejected the UN-sponsored Annan Peace Plan for the reunification of

Cyprus. However, despite the setback, there was hope for improved relations as Turkey's EU accession talks started in 2006. The disagreements between Ankara and Athens mentioned above, coupled with the nationalist foreign and security policies of the Greek and Turkish governments since 2010, reversed this optimism and replaced it with growing tensions threatening stability and peace in the region. One positive development that signals that all is not lost is the revival of the JEC in 2022.

Amid all the current saber-rattling across the Aegean, one bright moment signals the potential for cooperation rather than conflict between Greece and Turkey. The fifth meeting of the JEC took place in Athens in January 2022, where Deputy Trade Minister Mustafa Tuzcu of Turkey and Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Diplomacy Kostas Frangogiannis of Greece signed the fifth Term Protocol for cooperation (Daily Sabah, January 26, 2022). The delegations discussed bilateral trade volume, encouraging companies to develop joint ventures in Greece and Turkey, strengthening energy cooperation as well as cooperation in the transportation sector, expanding tourism, improving joint moves against climate change, environmental protection, and the resumption of bilateral cooperation in research and technology. In case the governments commit to this agreement, the fifth JEC meeting will play an essential role in maintaining the positive momentum in trade and economic relations with the country and move Greece and Turkey further on the path of cooperation.

THE CURRENT MESS: HOW DID IT COME TO THIS, AND WHAT IS AT STAKE?

Turkey's grievances with Greece can be separated into interconnected areas of the Aegean, EEZ, and Cyprus.

THE AEGEAN

Ankara and Athens have quarreled over interrelated controversial issues covering sovereignty and related rights over the Aegean with no end (Arikan, 2006; Athanasopoulos, 2001; Heraclides, 2011). The most contested disputes over the Aegean Sea include:

1. The delimitation of the territorial waters, national airspace, continental shelf, and EEZ,

2. The issue of the demilitarized status assigned to some of the Greek islands in the area and,
3. Turkish claims of “grey zones” of undetermined sovereignty over many small islets, most notably the islets of Imia/Kardak, and the “grey zones” issue raised by Turkey.

None of these issues have been resolved thus far, fueled by media on both sides; tensions flare up very quickly. The main problem concerning the Greek Islands is their proximity to Turkey and how that would play a role in determining each country’s territorial waters, airspace, and economic zone. Since 1974, these disputes produced four crises on the brink of war: the August 1976 crisis when the Turkish oceanographic vessel *Sismik I* sailed into the disputed water for oil exploration; the March 1987 crisis around oil extraction beyond Greece’s six-mile territorial waters near the island of Thasos; the February 1996 Imia/Kardak islets crisis; and the EMZ dispute in 2020 when sides came to the brink of military conflict as tensions rose over energy resources in the eastern Mediterranean.

TERRITORIAL WATERS, CONTINENTAL SHELF, AND AIRSPACE

The initial dispute over territorial waters emerged in 1964 when Turkey decided to extend its territorial sea from three to six nautical miles and the dispute intensified in the early years of the 1970s, when Greece started to express its choice in favor of 12-mile limit (İnan & Başeren, 1996: 57). Effective enforcement of the twelve-mile zone would turn the Aegean into a Greek lake by establishing continuous Greek territorial waters across the entire southern Aegean and eliminate the international corridor found north by south in the middle of the sea. Tensions between the two countries flared in the early 1990s when the Law of the Sea came into force, with Greece announcing its full intention to enforce the new limits. On June 9, 1995, the Turkish Grand National assembly responded with a declaration that such unilateral action by Greece would constitute a *casus belli*.

The second dispute in the Aegean, the continental shelf, refers to a country’s exclusive right to economic exploitation of resources on and under the seabed in the area directly under its territorial waters and

extending into the High Seas. According to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea of 1982, the width of the continental shelf is not to exceed 200 nautical miles. Where territories of two adjacent countries lie close to each other, more than double this distance, the division is to be determined as the median line between them (UN, 1982: 47–56). While Greece signed the declaration, Turkey refused to do so because of disagreement over the status of the Greek Islands.

The Turks maintain that the individual status of these Islands is irrelevant as the concept of continental shelf implies the distance between Anatolia and mainland Greece. The “special circumstances” mentioned by the Convention on the Continental Shelf (Art. 6.2) justify, in this case, the non-application of the median line method. This implies that Turkey is entitled to an economic zone that extends to the middle of the Aegean Sea, leaving out territorial waters around the individual islands. The Greek government strongly objects to this position and argues that all islands, regardless of their geographic location, must be taken into account on an equal basis, meaning that almost all of the Aegean is within the economic rights of Greece.

The two countries’ respective positions are divergent. Regarding the legal reading, the Greek government argues that the Law of the Sea supports their position. However, the Convention restricts the application of this rule to islands of considerable size as opposed to small islets and rocks that pepper the Turkish coastline and adjacent Greek isles. As Umit Dogan (2019) notes, it is doubtful that this disagreement between Greece and Turkey will be resolved without international arbitration. The explosive nature of this dispute between Greece and Turkey is best illustrated in the Imia/Kardak crisis in 1996.² Yet, Greece submitted the controversy to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in August 1976. At that time, Turkey refused to recognize the jurisdiction of the Court over the matter. Nonetheless, in December 1978, the ICJ declared itself incompetent on the case due to reservations of Greece on the jurisdiction of the International Permanent Court of Justice (which had preceded the ICJ) over the issues about the territorial status of Greece. Greece continues to insist that the matter should be taken on by the Court.

The third disagreement between Greece and Turkey concerns national airspace over the Aegean. The Greek national airspace is exceptional because it does not coincide with the country’s boundaries of territorial waters. Since 1931, Greece has claimed ten nautical miles of airspace compared to six nautical miles of territorial waters (now claimed to be 12

miles but not enforced). When Greece began to use this ten-mile limit for military purposes in 1975, Turkey raised objections and began challenging the Greek air force planes that violated the six nautical limit. As far as the Turks are concerned, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) statutes of 1948 make it clear that both zones, territorial waters, and national airspace must coincide. This position would limit the airspace to 6 miles. Greece, in turn, maintains that it has the right to increase the limit because its 1931 claim of ten miles predates the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO, 1948), where the two zones are defined to have the same limit.

When Greece revised its territorial waters to 12 nautical miles, enforcement of a ten-mile zone took a narrower interpretation of its legal claim. Therefore, one could question Greece's position on 6-, 10-, and 12-mile airspace over the Aegean. Over the years, this disagreement over national airspace resulted in daily tactical provocations between the Turkish and Greek air forces flying in the outer 4-mile zone of contention. In several instances, these dogfights ended in casualties on both sides.

MILITARY STATUS OF THE GREEK ISLANDS

With increased Greek military activities on islands close to mainland Turkey, the Turks worry that Greece is trying to turn the Aegean effectively into a Greek lake. Since the 1960s, successive Greek governments have established military bases on islands close to the Turkish mainland, including airfields and naval bases. Furthermore, Greece has claimed sovereignty over numerous islets peppered in the area between the Greek Islands and Turkey, disregarding Turkish claims and objections. The Greeks point to the Erdogan government's current foreign and security policy over territorial borders known as the *Mavi Vatan* or the *Blue Homeland* to justify arming these islands (Jager & Norris, 2021). It is beyond the scope of this chapter to provide an extensive legal analysis of the issues. The legal bases are found in the treaties of Lausanne (1923), Montreux (1936), and Paris (1947), whereby the treaties signed in Lausanne and Paris regulate which island belongs to which country. As far as the militarization of the islands is concerned, the Treaties of Peace [Paris] of 1947 recognized Athens' sovereignty over the islands while emphasizing, as found in the Treaty of Lausanne, that Rhodes, Kastellerizo, and other islands in the chain "shall be and shall remain demilitarized" (Treaty with Italy Article 14).³

THE EXTENDED ECONOMIC ZONE (EEZ)

The discovery of large natural gas deposits in the Eastern Mediterranean and southeast Cyprus, made the EEZs an ever-important issue for Turkey. In the beginning, it was hoped that the potential for economic gains from natural gas explorations could forge joint ventures and serve as a catalyst for the reunification of Cyprus and better relations between Greece and Turkey. However, those hopes were dashed when the Greek Cypriots formed an anti-Turkey alliance between Cyprus, Greece, Israel, Egypt, the Palestinian Authority, United Arab Emirates, and France, aimed at bypassing Turkey in this area even though the cheapest option for exporting this natural gas to European markets would be through Turkey. It was Erdoğan's foreign policy that brought about this alliance. His policy of squandering Turkey's strategic partnership with Israel handed this country over to Cyprus and Greece. His policies also alienated the Egyptian government because of his continued support for Muslim Brotherhood and Libya. Cyprus signed EEZ agreements with Egypt and Lebanon in 2010, defining their respective EEZs. As Demiryol (2019, p. 453) and Tanriverdi (2013) explain, Turkey signed a continental shelf delimitation agreement with the TRNC in 2011.

The situation was further complicated when French President Macron decried Turkey's threats to Cyprus and Greece during his visit to Cyprus in January 2019. Later, he called for Turkey to withdraw its warships and claims from the area and sent French naval ships and fighter jets to the region to support Cyprus (<https://www.financialmirror.com/2020/07/23/macrondecries-turkey-threats-to-cyprus-greece/>). Greece and Turkey further moved to solidify their claims to EEZs by signing agreements delineating their maritime boundaries between Greece and Egypt and Turkey and Libya.

MAVI VATAN

The topics discussed above all come together under a new single doctrine of foreign security policy named Blue Homeland (Mavi Vatan) developed by retired Turkish admirals. As a comprehensive policy, it identifies Turkey's jurisdiction over parts of the Eastern Mediterranean, defense of continental shelf, and sovereignty at sea. It places foremost emphasis on the principle of forward defense by declaring, delimiting, and defending maritime boundaries in the Aegean.

SEA, BLACK SEA, AND EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN, MAVI VATAN⁴

A growing portion of the Turkish population, bombarded by a massive media campaign by pro-government media, believes that Western powers and Israel plan to ally with Greece to revive the spirit of the Treaty of Sèvres with a new version. Citizens usually do not realize that the current challenges Turkey faces with its neighbors to the south are self-inflicted by the AKP's constantly shifting foreign and security policies. The destruction of the security alliance with Israel and decision to purchase S-400 missiles from Russia have cost more than the benefits realized. Turkey's military-industrial complex, while making significant advances, still relies heavily on intermediate goods imported from Western companies. Greece took advantage of worsening relations between Turkey and the US. The Greek Prime Minister Mitsotakis lobbied the US Congress to put conditions on the sale of new F16 jets and modernization of older Turkish F16s. Erdogan responded angrily, calling off dialogue with Mitsotakis and going as far as saying, "he no longer exists for me" (Duvar.English, Monday May 23, 2022).

CYPRUS

Cyprus will probably remain the thorniest problem for Greek-Turkish relations and links to other disputes discussed above. In the late 1990s, the then Greek and Turkish Foreign Ministers George Papandreou and Ismail Cem managed to separate Cyprus from other bilateral disputes and paved the way for gradual rapprochement. Yet, since the failure of the Annan Plan Cyprus regained its critical position in conflicts between Turkey and Greece. As a member of the EU, Cyprus began to use its position to put conditions on Turkey's accession talks. The AKP government's position on the Cyprus reunification efforts and its EU membership aspirations soured when the Greek Cypriots rejected the Annan Plan, and the EU proceeded to admit a divided Cyprus to the Union. According to Kinacioglu and Oktay (2006: 271), AKP put itself in a tight position by first giving concessions on Cyprus only to face a dual Cyprus-Greece opposition in her relations with the EU.

Having been dealt a severe blow to his peace efforts in 2004, former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan argued that "membership of [politically divided] Cyprus in the European Union [EU] coupled with Turkey's

membership aspirations have seriously complicated future peace negotiations on the island” (Hürriyet, June 17, 2006). He was right. Successive rounds of peace talks between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders failed to bear fruit. Today, there is no negotiation between the two sides for the reunification of Cyprus. As Cyprus is linked to other significant areas of Greek-Turkish conflict, finding a resolution to this problem should be a priority for governments in Ankara and Athens. The discovery of natural gas reserves further strengthened the hand of the Cyprus government as it forged economic venture agreements with Israel, Egypt, and energy companies from France and the US. These agreements aim to exclude Turkey from any deal in Eastern Mediterranean. Turkey’s reaction to these agreements was relatively swift and resulted in a display of force without war when Turkish warships arrived in the disputed region (*Economist*, August 20, 2020).

The bargaining space in Cyprus remains complicated, with several key topics intertwined with each other. The reasons for this are several: Greek Cypriots’ EU membership, loss of trust toward the EU and the international community among Turkish Cypriots, the attempt of the Greek Cypriots to turn the Cyprus problem into a legal issue rather than a political one through successful court decisions in Europe—most notably the European Court of Justice (ECJ), the discovery of natural gas in the Eastern Mediterranean, and the absence of a third-party mediation with a time table containing binding commitments in these talks. To make matters worse, the current leaders of the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities do not show any urgency to restart reunification talks. Instead, the two sides are busy following the aggressive policies of Ankara and Athens and have resigned themselves to being pawns in a larger chess game between Greece and Turkey.

In this section, I employ an agent-based analytic model to identify critical differences in issues separating the two Cypriot communities, their allies in Greece and Turkey, and other vital actors to assess whether or not potential for reunification exists. Why is this so central to the bigger picture described above? Because a reunified Cyprus, with its Greek and Turkish populations, would catalyze finding a resolution to more significant issues: (1) resolving disputes between Greece and Turkey; (2) improved relations between EU and Turkey and eventual Turkish accession to membership; (3) finalizing EU-NATO partnership with its total capacity.⁵ An agent-based stakeholder analysis of critical issues in current

talks in Cyprus shows how the two parties have moved further away since 2004 and why an aggressive third-party mediation is needed.

Bargaining is complicated. It is a setting where rational actors attempt to attain an outcome that would maximize their payoff (expected utility). The selfish stakeholders pursue dominant bargaining strategies to maximizing their most preferred outcome and, in the process, often end up in a deadlock that places both sides in a result worse than what they would have mutually received if they had compromised. Furthermore, bargaining scenarios often follow no rules or timetable, making it even more challenging to attain cooperation among egotists. Such bargaining scenarios are called non-cooperative and conflictual bargaining games. Over the last four decades, all the inter-communal peace talks between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots fell into this category except the 2003–2004 negotiations that resulted in the Annan Plan. That last round involved a timetable with third-party arbitration where parties committed to taking a final peace plan to their respective communities for a referendum. In that sense, negotiations over the Annan Plan were a cooperative game but lacked the necessary binding threat that would have punished the two sides for breaking the rules. Case in point is permitting Cyprus to join the EU with or without reunification.

SENTURION SIMULATION ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT BARGAINING SPACE

In this section, I utilize a computer program called SENTURION© (Abdollahian and Kugler 2006), a complex agent-based simulation model (ABSM). The program assumes that agents (individual/party) are rational utility maximizers who want to achieve their preferred policy to attain an optimal outcome but are constrained by information availability and subject to the pulling and hauling political negotiations. It models negotiation dynamics by identifying the winning coalition based on changing alliance structures (clusters), which are anticipated by a general game-theoretic interaction between agents, modified by risk and thus their perceptions. Finally, it translates agent perceptions into a social network of exchanges that result in agent movement and set up subsequent political dynamics. SENTURION models the intuition behind each stakeholder's political calculus in the policy process by breaking down the process into sub-elements that can be modeled. Each element models a particular part

of the decision process. By combining the elements sequentially, SENTURION can anticipate how all stakeholders will interact with arriving at a specific decision or political outcome. The scenario is multi-level bargaining that captures bargaining between the major stakeholders. Each sub-element of the modeling process is designed to help predict how stakeholder positions will change and thus anticipate the evolution of the policy process in toto. The approach is a dynamic and recursive estimation of how stakeholders will interact to produce the resulting compromises and coalitions that will form in response. Outcomes are detected on a policy scale defined by the analyst. To understand the flow of negotiations surrounding the solution of the Cyprus problem, six major issues of contention are analyzed that divide the Greek and Turkish stakeholders in Cyprus. Each issue is described along a vector of preferences ranging from one extreme option to the other (from 0 to 100 with respective alternatives in the middle). The stakeholders' preferences are marked along these preferences on each vector, including their relative power within and across groups of stakeholders (i.e., Greek Cypriot players, Greece, Turkish Cypriot players, Turkey, etc.) and the salience each stakeholder places on its preferred option. Table 13.1 provides the main issues of the Cyprus problem and their possible alternative outcomes.

The major stakeholders in the current Cyprus negotiations are critical players in the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities in Cyprus, significant actors in Greece and Turkey, and third parties which have a stake in the outcome of these negotiations (the UN, EU, US, and the UK). The UK is separated from the EU because the two do not have consistently similar preferences. The UK is the former colonial ruler and one of the three guarantor powers of Cyprus. In order of importance, let us now consider the main issues that still separate the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot sides in Cyprus.

POLITICAL SYSTEM

Greek and Turkish Cypriots are dissatisfied with the current political scenario and agree that a shift in the form of Cypriot government is needed for unification to succeed. At this point, the agreement ends. Figure 13.1 indicates the results of negotiations on a future political system.

Only the first round of negotiations is reported because no meaningful changes occur in subsequent rounds. This analysis shows that foreign

Table 13.1 Main cyprus issues and options

<i>Bargaining issue</i>	<i>Alternative outcome</i>
Territory	20% land for Turkish Cypriots (TCs) 29.2% land for TCs 36% land for TC (status quo)
Regime type	0 = unitary state 20 = consociational system 40 = strong federalism 60 = weak federalism 80 = confederalism 100 = two independent states
Guarantorship	0 = No Guarantee 10 = UN Guarantee 20 = EU Guarantee 50 = NATO Guarantee 75 = Annan Plan 100 = 1960 arrangement
Freedom of movement	0 = no freedom 100 = full freedom
Freedom of settlement	0 = no freedom 100 = full freedom
Freedom of property rights	0 = no freedom 100 = full freedom

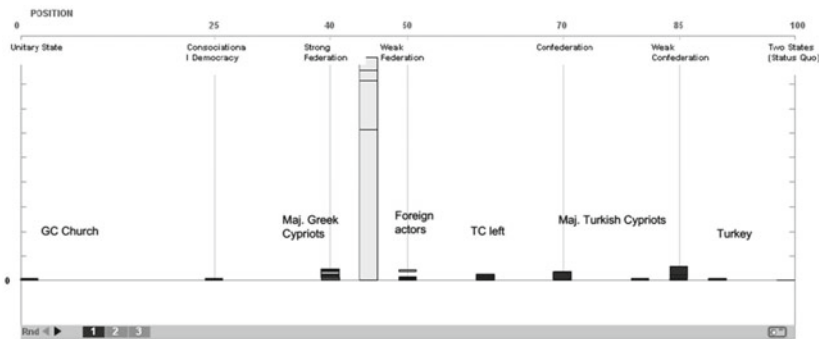


Fig. 13.1 The outcome of the political system

actors desire a federal state—but despite their influence, cannot convince Greek and Turkish Cypriots to agree. Turkish Cypriots favor a weak confederation if not a two-state solution, while Cypriot Greeks advocate consociational democracy, close to a unitary state, or a powerful federation. Currently, the two Communities are more distant from one another than in 2004 and have hardened their preferences. The resulting deadlock is persistent, and, despite their overwhelming influence, foreign actors cannot impose a solution under the current rules of negotiations. Here, an arbitration role of a third party becomes essential to formulate a system that distributes power between the two federal states between a weak and strong system.

TERRITORIAL ADJUSTMENT

Territory is a challenging issue in Cyprus negotiations. The Turkish Cypriots always assumed they would return some territory to Greek Cypriots. The extent of this territory has been a tricky subject. Over the years, at least three UN-sponsored plans proposed that the Turkish side keep around 29% of total land.

Initial Greek Cypriot and Greece's position is to let Turkish Cypriots hold on to 20% or less of the land they currently hold. Turkish position is status quo, which is between 28 to 36.4%. Through third-party arbitration and bargaining, the parties could merge on an agreement initially presented in the failed Annan Plan, which will be around 28%. This means that Turkish Cypriots living on land that will be required to relocate, which adds to the cost of post-reunification and needs to be added to the overall monetary estimations.

This compromise is supported by the Greek Cypriot President Anastasiades and most Turkish Cypriot parties (if a two-state solution is not decided in the previous issue area).

Opposition by smaller but determined Greek Cypriot factions will continue. So, is it possible for the President of Cyprus to win the support of the Greek Cypriots? After protracted negotiations, Greek Cypriots would accept this compromise. Strengthening this potential coalition of foreign actors by including the UN, US and EU could increase support for the 28–29% solution. Thus, external intervention as a mediator is significant for resolving this issue.

FREEDOM OF SETTLEMENT AND PROPERTY RIGHTS

Freedom of settlement and securing property rights are fundamental rights of EU citizens. Given the history of Cyprus, it is unlikely that Turkish Cypriots would be willing to accept such requests without conditions. Instead, the Turkish side will likely continue to demand some restrictions on settlement and property rights to preserve the integrity of their community. Turkey is also sensitive to such bizonal arrangements and continues to pressure Turkish Cypriots not to compromise too much on this matter. The previous Annan Plan recognized the sensitivity of these issues.

Property rights are an even more sensitive issue in Cyprus. Tens of thousands of settlers from Turkey immigrated and now reside in homes once owned by Greek Cypriots. These properties have changed hands over time through sales and resales and inhabitants of Greek Cypriot-owned properties have built homes on lots and/or improved houses left behind. Thus, any agreement on unification needs to consider the ownership of what has been left behind as well as the right of every Cypriot citizen to own property anywhere in the EU, particularly across the dividing line in Cyprus. Closely related to territory is freedom of settlement in each other's states and property rights.

The results of the computer analysis are consistent and congruent with self-interest and lack of trust between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots. If left alone, the two sides will not be able to agree. So, the third-party role rises as an important issue. External actors, like the EU and US, support limited freedom of settlement partly in response to Turkish Cypriot fears of a Greek takeover of the island. Greek Cypriots and their Greek allies demand more freedom. Most of the Cypriot Turks and Turkey wish to limit settlements even further. As negotiations proceed, some convergence emerges around the 30–33% freedom of settlement point, but it cannot be achieved without third-party arbitration.

Property rights produce outcomes very consistent with those on freedom of settlement. Negotiations again follow self-interest. During round 1 of negotiations, foreign actors supported limited property rights (33%), seemingly to avoid a Greek takeover of the island. Greek Cypriots and their Greek allies demand full property rights. Turkish Cypriots and Turkey advocate further limiting property rights. In Round 3, Greek Cypriots and their Greek allies are willing to accommodate to some degree. Still, as in the previous case, Turkish Cypriots and Turkey do

not join unless it is an outcome of a mediation. While progress is possible along both dimensions, no majority support will likely emerge on settlement and property rights. These are essential issues to the inhabitants of Cyprus, sufficient to derail attempts for unification.

Significant third-party intervention in the form of arbitration that links this issue to other possible trade-offs (like distribution of power-sharing in the central government) would be essential for a compromise between the two communities.

FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

Freedom of movement across state borders is the fundamental right of EU citizens. While both communities in Cyprus favor membership in the EU, the Turkish Cypriots were concerned that total freedom of movement could affect their security. Such fears were not well-founded. The recent opening of the borders by the TRNC government on April 23, 2003, proved that freedom of movement for Greek and Turkish Cypriots did not result in acts of violence. Instead, people are enjoying this newly acquired freedom, which comes as a total shock to their respective governments. The ABSM analysis shows that practically all Cypriot parties favor total freedom of movement. This unanimous outcome is a significant victory for the pro-unification forces.

Finally, the assessment of the Guarantorship issue, which brings Greece and Turkey directly into the formulation of the future of Cyprus, shows that this is a matter that could only be resolved with unification. The Greek Cypriots favor retraction of the Treaties of Guarantee and “protection of all” under the EU umbrella, while the Turkish Cypriots insist on the guarantorship of Turkey.

The international community is initially committed to the 1960 Treaty and supports adding guarantees by NATO and the EU but will support the EU as the sole guarantor. Analysis of Cypriot stakeholders shows that Greek Cypriots support this option, but the Turks will not (Fig. 13.2).

OVERALL RESULTS

In the pre-Annan Plan referendum, Greek and Turkish Cypriots were more flexible because both sides wished to enter the EU. Today, with Cypriot Greeks' EU membership, unification prospects look bleaker. Turkish Cypriots also lost their goodwill toward the EU and the peace

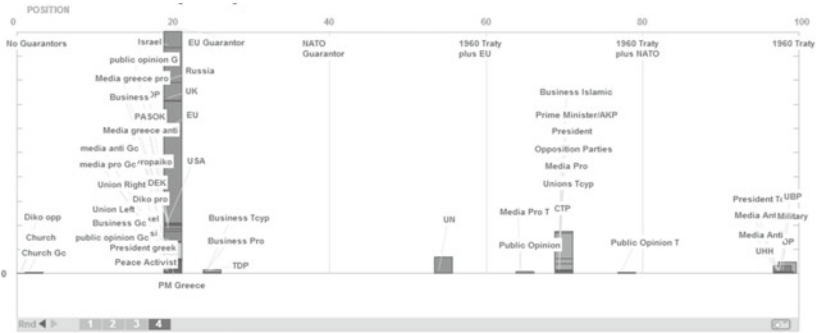


Fig. 13.2 Guarantors over Cyprus (The final round of bargaining)

process. Experiences of the past years created a sense of despair. They now favor a two-state or confederal system. The Greek Cypriots prefer a unitary or a strong federal state.

Disagreement on the type of political system, settlement, and property rights has hardened for both sides. The only realistic outcome from this impasse is to engage influential third parties in arbitration regardless of how much the Cypriots might object to the idea. With Turkey and Greece moving into a more adversarial relationship over other bilateral disputes, it would be wishful thinking to expect Erdogan and Mitsotakis to take on the role of arbitrator. This would indeed be a great tragedy for Cyprus and would only add to the worsening relations between Turkey and Greece.

Despite this gloomy picture, there are some positive signs. All groups on the island now support freedom of movement and have a reduced security concerns. The key territorial issue that divides the two communities can be politically resolved because the Turkish and Greek Cypriot presidents and the foreign community agree that the Turkish side should be reduced to around 29% of the island around a federal system. And there is no alternative to arbitration with binding threat (cooperative bargaining game) to solve the other issues.

PROSPECTS

This chapter shows that intertwined issues that have plagued Turkey's relations with Greece have reached new heights that could potentially spill over to an armed confrontation. As the governments in Ankara

and Athens face domestic criticism for their handling of their economies and lose public support, they seem to focus on external “threats” in a desperate attempt to stay in power. They look for allies to put pressure on each other. How reliable are these newly founded allies? For example, would France risk war with Turkey over these disputes? Does it have the means to sustain a campaign in the Eastern Mediterranean?

For the Turks, the growing threats around their borders, brings memories of past experiences. As James Jeffrey (2022) explains, “[they] see US and other Western, notably French, military arrangements with Athens as aimed at them, citing.

Washington’s and Paris’s criticism of Turkey’s actions while ignoring Greek sins (its troops on Aegean islands demilitarized in various treaties, illegitimate air space claims, and Law of the Sea provisions imposed on non-signatory Turkey).”

With goodwill and realistic arbitration, preferably led by the US, it is possible to ease tensions and find a comprehensive solution to each dispute. This must start with Cyprus because it is the glue that holds everything together. The reunification of Cyprus would spill over to a multilateral agreement on the natural gas pipeline to European markets through Turkey. That is the most cost-efficient option and would lead to more collaboration on other economic ventures, including in the Aegean.

NOTES

- 1 For example see (<https://oec.world/en/profile/bilateral-country/tur/par/tner/grc>) and <https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/turkey-market-overview>.
- 2 On 25 January 1996, the Mayor of Kalymnos (capital city of the Kalymnos District, of which the Imia islets are part of according to Greek claims) raised a Greek flag on his initiative to stress that the islets belong to Greece. Subsequently, the Greek Foreign Minister Theodoros Pangalos, known for his inflammatory views and comments toward the Turks, announced that Ankara was raising the level of confrontation in the Aegean by claiming that Imia/Kardak was in Turkish territorial waters. Some Turkish journalists picked up the comments and, on January 28, 1996, rented a helicopter, flew to Imia/Kardak, removed the Greek flag, and replaced it with a Turkish one in front of the cameras of a private Turkish television channel. The next day the Greek flag was raised again, and this time twelve Greek commandos were placed on the larger of the two Imia/Kardak islets to protect the national symbol. The situation worsened when Turkish naval forces started

assembling in the waters near the islets, soon to be met by Greek naval units. Tension rose dramatically during the night of January 30–31, when a small contingent of Turkish special operation forces landed on the smaller of the two Imia/Kardak islets. This dangerous military situation eventually diffused through intense pressure from the US, which included phone calls to both sides by President Bill Clinton and Undersecretary of State Richard Holbrook. A compromise was reached where both countries withdrew their forces and flags and returned to the “status quo ante.”

- 3 <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2181&context=ils>. Accessed August 10, 2022.
- 3 For a map of Mavi Vatan, see (<https://www.turkishnews.com/tr/content/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/turkdeniz-yetki-alanlari-mavi-vatan.png>).
- 4 It is important to note that connection between these issues is nothing new. The US recognized how Cyprus was the critical link between the prior to the Copenhagen Summit in 2002 and pushed its European allies (including Turkey) and two Cypriot leaders to come together in Copenhagen to solve three problems at once—to kill three birds with one stone. Sign an agreement to reunite Cyprus under a federal system, start EU accession process with Turkey, and sign the EU-NATO partnership. All leaders but one, Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktas, came to Copenhagen. Denktas’s absence derailed the entire process as France was not so keen to playing second hat to the US. For problem of failure of national leadership in Cyprus, see Harry Anastasiou (2007).

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Turkish-American Relations: From the Catalyst of the Model Country Image to the Reference Point of Defensive Discourses

Hasan Deniz Pekşen 

The last two decades of Turkish–American relations were heavily influenced by the global transformations when ‘borders’ in many fields such as economy, security, society, and politics became blurred. Undoubtedly, the ‘blurring of the borders’ led to the interpenetration of the domestic and foreign policy in many fields and cases (Özcan, 2012: 5). In such an environment, examining the ‘vector’ of domestic and foreign policy effects can provide a better understanding for bilateral relations.

As Putnam’s (1988: 434) two-level game conceptualization clarify, on the one hand governments are trying to respond to geopolitical pressures in the new millennium environment, and on the other hand managing internal expectations shaped by the pressures of different pressure groups.

H. D. Pekşen (✉)
Istanbul Okan University, Istanbul, Turkey
e-mail: hasan.peksen@okan.edu.tr

In this context, global developments can play a role in the pressure created by domestic expectations. Similarly, foreign policy can be a catalyst for internal structural transformations.

In addition to the difficulty created by the intertwining of the two levels in determining the vector of the last twenty years of Turkish–American relations, there is also the temporal overlaps. For example, a temporal parallelism occurred between the September 11 attacks, which transformed the US policy in the Middle East, and the AKP’s coming to power, which created a significant transformation in Turkey. Another overlap occurred between the AKP’s openings to the *Middle East and North Africa* (MENA) region and the United States’ transition to the concept of ‘leading from behind’ with the Obama administration. Again, with the transition to the presidential system in Turkey, the decisiveness of the leader figure coincides with the establishment of the Trump administration in the US.

In this context, to evaluate the extent to which domestic and foreign developments are decisive in relations due to temporal overlaps it is best to use turning points. Through these turning points, it will be possible to determine the transformations in Turkey and make a general assessment of which pressure element is more effective in the bilateral relationship.

2002–2007: DOUBT AND TRUST

The temporal overlap between the first AKP administration’s coming to power and the September 11 attacks, which is one of the turning points in the transformation of American foreign policy, plays an important role in shaping bilateral relations. The second Iraq War in 2003, considered as the ‘second wave’ of American reactions to September 11 attacks, shaped the bilateral relations.

The evolution of the Iraq issue, which was the most important determinant of Turkish–American relations in the Middle East after the Cold War (Altunışık, 2004: 177) toward an American intervention in 2003 brought relations to a critical situation. Abramowitz, the former US Ambassador to Turkey, described this situation as “*the most important experiment that will test Turkish-American relations*” (Abramowitz, 2000: 15; cited by Türkmen, 2012).

When the Bush administration brought the idea of a military intervention in Iraq on the agenda, the Iraq issue began to affect bilateral

relations. As the Cheney-Wolfowitz-Rumsfeld approach, proposing a military solution to the Iraq issue, prevailed over the Powell-Rice approach, that sought a diplomatic-economic sanctions based solution, the first contacts started. Two issues were observed in these meetings. First, the coalition government in Turkey at that time had a negative attitude toward a military operation that didn't have an international legitimacy. In parallel, American government's desire to meet with the *Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri* (TSK-Turkish Armed Forces), which had been its prominent partner throughout the Cold War, came to the fore at a time when a change in Turkish government was expected. However, TSK avoided to take a leading role in the negotiation process. This attitude of the TSK was based on the determination that the *Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan* (PKK-Kurdistan Workers' Party) found a living space (Özcan, 2009) due to the *Poised Hammer* (Charountaki, 2012: 128) created by the US after the first Iraq War (Demiryol & Pekşen, 2018: 134). In other words, the suspicions that the US was providing an indirect support to the PKK in the Poised Hammer region also created doubts about the intention of the US in a second Iraq war.

When it came to 2003, there was a rather mixed picture of Turkey. It was the first months of AKP Government and Erdoğan was not yet the Prime Minister. Prominent figures of Government like Bülent Arınç and Ahmet Davutoğlu were against the resolution (Türkmen, 2012: 214). Prime Minister Abdullah Gül supported the proposal, however, he didn't play an active role for encouraging parliamentarians (ibid.). Only person in the AKP Government, who clearly support American proposal was Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (ibid). Beside AKP Government, TSK didn't take the initiative, contrary to its preeminent role in foreign policy during the 90s. Simultaneously, other critical governmental institutions were giving different signals (Bila, 2007: 179). In such an environment, the US conveyed its proposal in December 2002. The proposal was a package that included permission to enter Iraq, using Turkish territory as a base for soldiers, aircraft and logistics resources, and distributing weapons to opposition groups through the CIA (Bölükbaşı, 2008: 28–29). The American commanders stated that the support of the Turkish side should be “provided at any cost” (Gordon & Trainor, 2007: 127; cited by Türkmen, 2012: 195).

Despite the US efforts and the expectation of a positive resolution from the Turkish Parliament, the plan envisioned by the Bush Administration did not actualize. Despite obtaining a majority,¹ the 267 votes required

for approval couldn't be reached. This crisis put Turkish–American relations on a negative course with profound effects. The first result emerged shortly after the US invasion of Iraq. After the US defeated the Iraqi army swiftly, the situation in the north of Iraq became critical. This tension exploded in July 2003 with the *Hood Incident*. American soldiers, taking the peshmerga with them, simultaneously surrounded the Turkish Special Forces office in Sulaymaniyah and the Iraqi Turkmen centers (Bila, 2003). Hoods placed over the heads of the Turkish Special Forces members, who were ordered not to fight. The detention of Turkish soldiers ended after 55 hours. The fact that the 'operation' was on American Independence Day and the public holiday of July 4 gave the impression that it was planned (Uzgel, 2017: 278).

After the March shock, Hood Incident damaged relations worse than ever. The reflection of this was a swift turn to anti-Americanism in the Turkish public opinion (Oran, 2017: 27–28). This was not only due to the Hood Incident as a revenge against the March Resolution. Leaked photos of torture in Ebu-Gureyb Prison and the American attitude, which favor Kurds against Turkmens in Kerkuk Region, also played a role in the rising anti-Americanism. The swift turn on the societal level also affected the AKP's Middle East policy in 2004. Erdogan's definition of Israel's Gaza policy as 'state terror' was met with great reaction, especially from the 'neocons' (Uzgel, 2017: 260). Similarly, the statements of some AKP parliamentarians, describing the Fallujah events as a 'genocide', received a strong reaction. The tense relations started transforming as 2004 ended.

George W. Bush, who was elected once again at the end of 2004, reduced the neocon weight in the administration and developed a new strategic approach toward the Middle East. New strategic approach echoed in Turkey positively. Moreover, it created the ground that will enable the AKP to find support for the structural transformations it was looking forward to actualize in the domestic level.

In 2005, two important transformations occurred in the Bush administration's policy toward Turkey. The first of these is the tendency not to see the AKP government as primary responsible for the tensions between 2003 and 2005. Prime Minister Erdoğan's attitude to the crises was decisive in this tendency. After the March Resolution, he published an article titled *My Country is Your Faithful Ally and Friend* in the Wall Street Journal (Erdoğan, 2003). After Hood Incident, he rejected the demands for sending a diplomatic note by saying, "*this isn't a musical note*" (Hürriyet, 2003b). Instead, *Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri* (TSK—Turkish

Armed Forces), the subject of the Hood Incident and also wasn't take initiative in March Resolution, started to be questioned. TSK was very effective in security policy and foreign policy fields throughout 1990s, however as US based Turkish experts² allege, the effective role of TSK could not provide a reconciliation between Turkish Foreign Policy and US Foreign Policy for many cases in 2000s. Simultaneously, AKP was emphasizing that a structural reform has to be made, which aims to 'demilitarization' of foreign policy and security policy-making processes. Thus, a ideational consensus began to emerge between the Bush Administration and the AKP Government. Think-tanks in both Turkey and the US played an important role in the communication of this consensus and supporting the scientific researches on structural transformation in Turkey (Akyüz, 2006: 227–230).

The second transformation in the Bush Administration's foreign policy was the *Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative* (BMENA). Following the reduction of neocon effect, by observing costs of direct interventions, American decision-makers initiated a policy to eliminate the radicalism in the MENA region (Gordon, 2006: 155–165). The project was based on the use both soft and coercive power of US to impose democratic transformations on the MENA Region governments. However, in practice, the imposition of this project, which would mean ending their regimes in the medium term (Uzgel, 2017: 260) was not embraced by the authoritarian MENA Region states. The AKP government, which defines itself as a *conservative democrat* (Hürriyet, 2003a, 2003b) and operates democratic principles in a predominantly Muslim society, was shown as an 'exemplary country' (Hürriyet, 2005) even though it wasn't yet projected as a 'role model'. In a such positive conjuncture, both sides defined each other as 'strategic partners' (Uzgel, 2017: 262).

However, in the Turkish public opinion, BMENA was interpreted as an imperialist initiative that would divide the Middle East into pieces and the initiative was met with strong opposition. The AKP would be able to overcome this opposition in the public opinion only after carried an absolute victory in the 2007 elections. The momentum gained with the 2007 elections would help also the transformation in the decision-making processes of Turkey. Consequently, a period began in which domestic developments and bilateral relations will positively affect each other like a spiral.

2007–2013: A POSITIVE SPIRAL

The 2007 elections marked the beginning of a conjuncture in which each of the developments in both domestic and foreign policy would affect each other positively like a spiral. AKP won the elections by a wide margin and received more votes than the sum of all opposition parties. In addition, ‘Davutoğlu effect’, which aims to actualize a new foreign policy concept toward the ‘near abroad’ of Turkey, increased gradually in this period.

The temporal overlap of election victory and BMENA Initiative created space to second AKP Government for new openings. Parallel to the BMENA concept, US promoted ‘moderate Islam’ (Altunışık, 2013: 164) that proposes both the normalization of ‘political Islam’ for democratic representation and opening of BMENA countries with a broader tolerance to political Islam. In this context, Turkey, in which a party succeed to cut its ties (Milliyet, 2003) from a relatively sharp ‘National Vision Movement’ and came to power alone after transformed to a ‘moderate’ policy, would be defined as a *role model*.

AKP completed many structural transformations before Turkey was declared as a role model. Parallel to EU full membership process, many reforms were made in the *Milli Güvenlik Kurulu* (MGK—National Security Council) and the influence of TSK reduced. The Secretary General of the MGK, who was accused of being the “*shadow prime minister of the soldiers*” (Bayramoğlu, 2002: 44) by the liberal intelligentsia, began to be appointed from the civilians. Significant changes were made in the personnel of the judiciary and critical seats were changed. The domestic transformation process and the election success set an example for other countries in the MENA region.

Progress in foreign policy affected also the Turkish economy positively. The economic program prepared after the 2001 crisis embraced by the AKP governments and implemented aggressively (Altıok, 2007). In addition, the first decade of the 2000s coincided with global capital surplus. Turkey, a role model for the BMENA Region and candidate to EU, became an ideal investment area. This was followed by the investments Turkey made in the region as a ‘trading state’ (Kirişçi, 2011) and the lifestyle exported through TV series (Yazar, 2020: 533–535). Economic and political advances followed by strong public and intellectual support paved the way for the structural transformations.

The transformation was started with the EU-Reforms process and accelerated with the AKP policies. In 2007, the AKP government made its first constitutional amendment. Through this amendment, Abdullah Gül, one of the founders of AKP, became Turkish President. A party closure trial filed against AKP in 2008 was rejected by the Constitutional Court. AKP reorganized the judicial branch with a second constitutional amendment in 2010. In the meantime, many media institutions purchased by pro-AKP entrepreneurs and series of trials³ reduced the effectiveness of TSK and a part of social opposition. By the end of 2010, AKP expanded its power to a vast extent in the bureaucracy, as well as in the political- and social-economic life of Turkey.

In parallel to the AKP's power expansion, the election of Obama as President in the US caused a significant impact on bilateral relations. One of the commitments of Obama was to withdraw American troops from Iraq. Because the Iraq War costed trillions of dollars to US (Stiglitz, 2008) and 2008 economic crisis made the burden of that war heavier. In this context, the Obama administration decided to transform US engagements in the MENA Region (Karademir, 2019: 30). The new concept was based on not directly involving to the social processes in the MENA region. This process, also called 'leading from behind' (Lizza, 2011) was evaluated by AKP Government as a geopolitical opportunity for Turkey.

In this conjuncture, Turkey took one step ahead from being a role model and started taking initiatives to become a regional leader. Ahmet Davutoğlu was the prominent figure who assessed the opportunity for Turkey to become the regional leader within this conjuncture. He was Chief Advisor of Prime Minister Erdoğan and he became the Minister of Foreign Affairs in 2009. He had long ago formulated and manifested his ideas on the vision of Turkish foreign policy in his book called *Strategic Depth* (Davutoğlu, 2001). In *Strategic Depth*, the Middle East was defined as "*inevitable hinterland of the near land basin*" for Turkey (Davutoğlu, 2001: 129). Regional leadership attempt took place in two phases.

In the first phase between 2009 and 2011, the image as the defender of the Muslim world was strengthened. On the one hand, mediation efforts expanded among conflicting actors and development funds increased (Mehmetçik, 2019). On the other hand, the Palestinian issue began to be defended in a louder tone. Turkey tried to increase its influence in the MENA region at the expense of breaking relations with Israel with

the ‘One Minute crisis’ in 2009 (Reuters, 2009) and the ‘Mavi Marmara Incident’ in 2010 (*Guardian*, 2010).

The second phase, started in 2011, created a major break. The uprisings in the MENA region confronted authoritarian regimes with the public. The Al-Ikhwan movement aligned with Davutoğlu’s foreign policy (Reynolds, 2015) was very active in the uprisings. At this juncture, AKP’s desire to transform itself from being a role model to a regional leader became clear (Yeşiltaş & Balcı, 2013: 15–16). The AKP Government supported the opponents of the regimes throughout the region and provided a clear support to the new administrations. However, with the return of the Arab ‘Spring’ to ‘Winter’, the foreign policy positioning backfired like a boomerang.

2013–2017: SPIRAL IS REVERSING

2013 has been a turning point for bilateral relations in many respects. The reactions of Turkish and American Governments to the transformations both in Turkey and MENA Region initiated a chain reaction in bilateral relations.

The spring of 2013 was a period of turbulence for the AKP Government. The balance in Syria did not change in disfavor of Assad like the AKP Government hoped for. Moreover, the first largest migration wave experienced this year: In a single year, around 250.000 Syrian refugees started living in Turkey. This has been a rather large and certainly unexpected wave, compared to dozens of people who arrived in 2011, followed by 14.237 people in 2012 (Göç İdaresi, 2022).

The spring of 2013 was a turning point for domestic politics as well. The Gezi protests played a game changing role both by resisting to the rising authoritarianism of AKP Government and paradoxically expanding it. The main reasons of the Gezi protest were the AKP Government’s tendency to neglecting judicial responsibilities and way of life of a big part of Turkish society. This tendency was highly related with the structural transformation in Turkey. The judicial column of this transformation took place after the 2010 Referendum. Similarly, many mass media corporations started to controlled indirectly by government. The influence of the TSK in the MGK and policy-making process diminished after a series of trials fabricated prosecutors that are member of *Fettullahçı Terör Örgütü* (FETÖ—Fettullahist Terror Organizaton). The AKP was able to enact any law and the President, who has the authority to approve/refuse laws,

was elected from AKP and he was approving all of the proposals. The reactions started to concentrate on Prime Minister Erdoğan, who gradually increased his statements toward different segments of Turkish society because of their way of life.

The Gezi protests, started against the planned construction project in Gezi Park and transformed toward protesting the rising authoritarianism of the AKP, spread throughout Turkey. Through protests, a large part of the society gave a clear warning to the government (Özel, 2014: 9). Parallel to Gezi Events, Arab revolts tended to be reversed. Strong protests started against the Morsi administration in Egypt, which can be considered the heart of the Arab ‘Spring’. The AKP Government’s perception of protests revealed the AKP’s turbulence: Instead of considering protests as a warning, the AKP Government tended to seek parallelism between Egypt and Turkey (Altunışık, 2020: 5). According to this perspective, the forces which stopped the ‘liberation movement’ in the Arab world were also trying to overthrow the AKP. The overthrow of the Morsi administration in Egypt with a military coup is considered as proof of that perspective.

The disputatious perspective of the AKP Government did not only affect the domestic politics, it also reversed the position of Turkey in the MENA Region constructed in the last seven years. Uprisings in Syria and Libya turned to open-ended civil wars. Since the One Minute and the Mavi Marmara crises, diplomatic relations with Israel have been marginalized and downgraded. Turkey did not recognize the new Egyptian Government. Relations with Iraq and Saudi Arabia were very volatile. Turkey and Iran have been rivals in Lebanon and Palestine. The response to the conjuncture was not a policy change, but an approach called *precious loneliness* (Kalin, 2013). This concept, which was appeared with İbrahim Kalın’s tweet,⁴ has become frequently used to summarize Turkey’s diplomatic stalemate after 2013. In the light of ‘precious loneliness’ perspective, the AKP Government continued to support Ikhwan-leaning groups on the one hand, and to assess democratic demands as a part of a global agenda that aims to change government in Turkey on the other hand.

The opposite perspectives of Turkish and American Governments on Gezi Events and Arab ‘Winter’ made a negative impact on Turkish–American relations and triggered doubts and indecisions. For the US, the *Westernization* of Turkish foreign policy was at the heart of the strategic

partnership in the MENA Region. As a member of NATO and full candidate to EU, Turkey was a role model with not only embracing Western values in a Muslim populated country, but also with its value based, prudent foreign policy considers regional balances and geopolitical risks. In addition to rising authoritarianism which neglects the democratic traditions, Turkey's Ikhwan based ideological foreign policy which neglects the regional balances deepened the skepticism by adding historical integrity to the previously held *axis shift* debates and focuses on the potential of the *Middle Easternization* of Turkey. Increased American skepticism echoed as less cooperation and assessment of regional alternatives. The reverse spiral progressed further with two developments: the confrontation of the AKP and the Gülenists and the worsening of the situation in Syria.

The emergence of the *Islamic State of Iraq and Syria* (ISIS) in 2014 and the rapid gaining of territory both in Iraq and Syria led to a deterioration in bilateral relations. In this juncture, the US preference to consider the PYD, the Syrian extension of the PKK, as the local partner in order to defeat ISIS created a new issue for bilateral relations. Turkey, declared the PKK as an existential threat, reacted sharply to the American preference and the diversion in preferences strained bilateral relations (Park, 2015: 585). Some statements made by Turkish decision-makers also contributed to the American perception to consider *Yekineyen Parastina Gel* (YPG-People's Defence Units) as a reliable actor against ISIS. For example, Ahmet Davutoğlu defined ISIS as a "reactionary organization" (Diken, 2014) in very mild terms, even though the Turkish Consulate in Mosul, Iraq was captured by ISIS and 49 people were taken prisoner. This approach formed a basis for the claims that Turkey has given covert support to ISIS. Similarly, Erdogan's statement that "Kobane is about to fall" (Cumhuriyet, 2014) during the period when ISIS is trying to seize the Kobane region fed the same perception.

The expansion of ISIS has affected the spiral of distrust and disengagement in Turkish-American relations in two more ways. First, the controversial *solution process*⁵ was damaged mostly by the Kobane-related 6–7 October Events. The solution process was one of the prominent arguments against claims on the authoritarianism of the AKP Governments. The loss of this argument worsened the perceptions against the AKP Government. Another effect of ISIS has been the enormous increase of the Syrian refugees. The total number of asylum-seekers in Turkey increased to approximately 1.500.000 people in 2014 and to 2.500.000

people in 2015 (Göç İdaresi, 2022). Turkey has become the country that hosts the most refugees in the world (UNHCR, 2022).

The fact that the number of Syrian refugees reached a world record number and the threat of ISIS could not be eliminated by the international coalition aroused Turkey's aim to directly involve in Syria. Moreover, Turkey reacted to the US military, financial, and logistic support to the YPG with harsh statements. Still, Turkey could not succeed in intervening in the region. The prominent reason was not the American attitude toward Turkey, but the Russian negative attitude of Turkish presence in Syria since the downing of the Russian warplane.⁶

As a result of the chain of events, the interests of the two actors almost completely diverged. The US adopted a new balance in Syria, together with Russia. The US also institutionalized cooperation with the YPG to fight ISIS and counterbalance the Russian-backed Assad regime. Turkey, on the other hand, attempted to intervene to Syria in order to stop ISIS, which operated many terrorist attacks in its homeland, and to neutralize the YPG before it controls the north of Syria (Altunışık, 2020: 8–11). However, Turkey couldn't act due to its diplomatic isolation. In this context, Turkey accused the US of indirectly supporting PKK terrorism and that US left Turkey alone in supporting the 'Arab Spring'. The US, on the other hand, assessed Turkey as an actor that could not fully perceive the threat posed by ISIS due to ideological blindness (Karademir, 2019: 38).

The event that brought the spiral of negativity to the bottom was the coup attempt in 2016. On July 15, 2016, Turkish–American relations were affected very negatively after a junta acting under Fethullah Gülen attempted to overthrow the government. The allegations on the US support to the coup attempt was not considered seriously in the early stages of the post-coup attempt period. However, the US wanted proof for Fethullah Gülen, whose extradition was requested by Turkey, and ultimately did not extradite Gülen (AA, 2020). Parallel with this, many FETÖ members who fled abroad obtained refugee status in NATO countries. This process led to the allegations that the US supported the coup attempt.

In the period following July 15, Erdoğan transformed the Turkish political system with a referendum in 2017. The new system was largely devoid of the checks and balances mechanism found in other presidential systems and provided undivided powers to the president. The new system

and the referendum process expanded the perception of authoritarian Turkey to the highest level.

The new system has strengthened the influence of Erdogan in Turkish politics as no other leader obtained before. Simultaneously, Donald Trump was elected as the new US President in the same year. Trump would use his presidential powers quite widely and act individually in a way that would damage traditional mechanisms many times. Consequently, two leaders brought relations to a volatile and inconsistent ground. In this respect, the last four years of Turkish–American relations transformed to a period of crises.

2017–2021: PERIOD OF CRISES

The last four years of bilateral relations was a tidal period shaped with tensions. The potential of both Erdoğan and Trump to disable traditional mechanisms created the risk of individualization of processes. The fact that both leaders frequently made harsh statements to the public in a way which prevents negotiation processes had a negative impact on relations. Erdogan’s public speeches and Trump’s *tweets* caused complex issues to be discussed on a populist base. In light of this framework, specific cases have led to an increase in tension.

The first case of the period was the Brunson issue. Turkey, requesting Gülen’s extradition since July 15, has not succeeded. Parallel to Gülen’s failed extradition process, Brunson was arrested on charges of espionage as part of the coup attempt investigation (Euronews, 2018). Erdoğan expressed in a public speech that he offered to swap Brunson with Gülen (Cumhuriyet, 2017). Thereby, the two issues were linked. As Erdoğan stated that Brunson would not be extradited (Hürriyet, 2018) the US indirectly began to impose economic sanctions. This case not only demonstrated the change in perception on both sides, but also revealed that the relations had regressed to a level of sanctions.

The second crisis was the S-400 case. Turkey had been negotiating to import a defense system for two decades. Due to the fact that Turkey couldn’t obtain missile systems from NATO countries for various reasons, it turned to purchasing Russia’s S-400 system in 2018. It is argued that Turkey’s S-400 decision was not taken only by security requirements, but also shaped by Turkish-Russian relations in the post-June 15 period (Kıbaroğlu, 2019: 166). Turkey’s S-400 process worsened the tense relations, and the idea of imposing sanctions on the US side

started to be discussed. From the US perspective, the S-400 issue was not only considered within the bilateral relations. The Turkey's position in NATO also started to be questioned. The aforementioned debates since 2010s like axis shift, Middle Easternization and authoritarianism debates, started to be discussed in a broader, normative ground. It was questioned whether Turkish-Russian convergence is a part of normative shift and an 'authoritarian solidarity', which is assumed as the opposite norm of NATO.

The third crisis was shaped by Turkey's operations in Syria. The goal of creating a safe zone in the North of Syria had been on Turkey's agenda since at least 2015 (Shapiro & Taşpınar, 2015). Turkey was declaring three basic justifications for potential operations: Millions of refugees from Syria, ISIS&YPG attacks in Turkey, and the YPG presence in Syria. The first operation launched toward ISIS and it was reacted positively by the US. However, when Turkey initiated new operations toward the YPG, the American reaction changed. Operation Peace Spring played a turning point with the American reactions. The scandalous reaction toward Operation Peace Spring was the 'Trump Letter' (BBC, 2019). The letter was written in a rather unkind and undiplomatic tone and contained threats. Turkey responded to this letter by launching the operation on the day the letter arrived. Reactions were also put forward openly by the US public and the American Congress against the Turkish operations. The accusation toward Turkey was the allegation that Turkey was destroying the only local partner against ISIS terrorism and protects the ISIS indirectly. Beside the crises that directly affect the bilateral relations, the two sides have been indirectly confronted in the Eastern Mediterranean issue. In addition, the *Halkbank Trial* in the US, became another important crisis topic, directly involving Turkey and Turkish government officials. In such conjuncture, two sanctions applied to Turkey by the US.

The first sanction is the exclusion of Turkey from the F-35 program, of which Turkey is one of the stakeholders. Although Turkey fulfilled all technical requirements, it was excluded from the project due to S-400-based cooperation with Russia. On the other hand, the proposal of an act to exempt India from sanctions for 10 years, which negotiates to buy the S-400 from Russia (Sözcü, 2021) demonstrated the divergence between Turkey and the US is not technical. This was the reflection of a whole process with doubts and distrust in means of geopolitics, institutions, and norms. The second sanction imposed on Turkey was the application of CAATSA.⁷ Sanctions imposed on the high-level coordinators of Turkish

defense institutions on the grounds of ‘cooperating with Russia’ (BBC, 2021).

The rising populism both in Turkey and the US made bilateral relations an instrument of domestic politics in both countries. At least, half of the Turkish public opinion embraced the government’s discourse that the sanctions are the reflections against Turkey’s rising power and independent foreign policy. Furthermore, a very large part of the Turkish public agreed that the US was behind the July 15 coup attempt (Al-Monitor, 2021). The debate on the reasons of American sanctions turned to a political struggle between the government and the opposition in Turkey. Similar to Turkey, bilateral relations played a central role US domestic politics. However, unlike Turkey, the government and opposition came to a consensus on the policy toward Turkey (Roberts, 2019).

As this tense agenda continues, Joe Biden was elected as the President. The Russian-Ukrainian War started before it became clear which direction the relations would turn in the new period. This war is such an important development that it can put Turkish–American relations on a different ground, as well as today’s international relations. Therefore, it is still early to make an assessment about the bilateral relations with the Biden administration.

CONCLUSION

The best start to make an assessment for the last twenty years of Turkish–American relations would be to evaluate the general framework of the relationship. Professor Türkmen describes the framework of the bilateral relations as follows:

The main problem underlying Turkish-American relations is that the relationship is purely strategic based on common threats. (...), this has greatly weakened the relationship and made it overly dependent on the presence or absence of strategic interests based on current conjunctures. (Türkmen, 2012: 362)

Considering the last twenty years of Turkish–American relations, it can be accepted that the assessment above proved with many cases and processes. As observed in the BMENA and the Arab Spring process, a ‘strategic relationship based on current conjunctures’ improved bilateral relations. However, it is also clear that a common identity to make

relations stable and permanent could not be built. Despite the common existence for seventy years in Western institutions, bilateral relations are still at a 'purely strategic' level. This background provides a perspective on the vector of the last two decades of bilateral relations and makes it easier to evaluate the future.

According to the US perspective, the main factor negatively affected relations in the last two decades is the AKP's inability to truly embrace democratic values and using bilateral relations as an instrument to legitimize its attempts to authoritarianism. Furthermore, AKP Governments' efforts to support the Arab Spring perceived as an attempt to expand its influence in the region.

Paradoxically, the Turkish perspective is based on similar justifications. According to the Turkish perspective, the US followed a policy based only on national interests, not on values. The US used bilateral relations as an instrument to make openings toward the MENA Region. Moreover, the US did not extradite Gülen and Gülenists, who tried to overthrow the government in Turkey.

In conclusion, considering that the main determinant of bilateral relations is strategic issues, it can be accepted that the global and regional environment will determine the future of Turkish-American relations. Beyond regional issues, the global power transition will also determine the perspectives of both Turkey and the US. In this context, the power transition and the diversifying of Turkey's strategic alternatives may increase the possibility of divergence. As one specific issue, the US positioning on the YPG presence in Syria will continue to shape relations directly. In the light of these findings, it can be alleged that bilateral relations will experience a tough test shaped by both national and international pressures.

NOTES

1. The voting ended with 264 approval, 250 dissentive, and 19 abstaining votes.
2. Many experts, who observe Turkey closely, contributed this approach. Among these names, Uzgel highlights Abramowitz, Parris, Barkey, Fuller, Larrabee, Lesser (Uzgel, 2017: 257).
3. The 'Ergenekon' trials, started in 2007, made a part of social opposition the subject of trials. The 'Balyoz' trial, started in 2008, made a significant impact on the TSK. There were four other trials targets TSK. All the judges and prosecutors of those trials were followers of Fettullah Gulen.

4. Kalın was the Turkish Presidential Press Secretary in 2013. As 2023 he is the Chief Advisor of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.
5. The negotiation and public diplomacy process, seek to the demilitarization of PKK on the one hand, and political, judicial, and constitutional transformations for a stable peace in Turkey on the other.
6. For detailed information, please see the chapter: Habibe Özdal, Chapter 15, pp. 249.
7. Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act.

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Transformation of Turkish Foreign Policy and Its Reflections on Turkey–Russia Relations

Habibe Özdal

INTRODUCTION

Turkey–Russia relations in the twenty-first century has a complex nature due to its different dimensions. In terms of bilateral relations, the first decade of 2000s was the scene of a great momentum. The characteristics of relations have been shifted from rivalry to a cooperation—with its own limits. Due to regional, global and domestic political developments, rapprochement between Ankara and Moscow has raised the questions of whether “Turkey was shifting from West to the East”, or whether Turkey–Russia represented the “axis of excluded” from the Western world (Hill & Taspinar, 2006). In more than two decades, both of those arguments have been tested on several critical incidents. This chapter addresses

H. Özdal (✉)
Istanbul Okan University, Istanbul, Turkey
e-mail: habibe.ozdal@okan.edu.tr

Turkey–Russia relations by focusing on the developments that shaped the characteristics and have put specific limits on the bilateral relations. Moreover, the main determinants of Turkey–Russia relations seem to have changed over the time. During the first decade, Russia has been one of many “partners” in multidimensional approach of Turkish foreign policy. Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP, Justice and Development Party) continued negotiations with the European Union (EU) and adopted harmonization laws in the first years in power. During the second decade, however, Turkey’s relations with its traditional Western allies deteriorated significantly. In the meantime, relations with Russia continued albeit in a different “nature”.

Turkish foreign policy neither has been multidimensional nor pro-western for a while now. Relations with Russia, however, continued in a certain path despite of irreconcilable differences. In order to understand the change in Turkish foreign policy and its repercussions on relations with Russia this chapter argues that in terms of foreign policymaking process, domestic politics has started to determine foreign policymaking process in Turkey especially after the Arab Spring and—in terms of domestic developments—after the 2011 elections. While the developments in Syria broadened the gap between Turkey and its Western allies (the U.S. and the EU), Gezi Park protests and the coup attempt in July 15, 2016, further escalated the “trust crisis”. This chapter sheds light on how domestic issues and agendas affected foreign policymaking process in Turkey since then, and where Russia stands in that regard.

BILATERAL RELATIONS AFTER THE END OF THE COLD WAR

Turkey and Russia have been rivals for over five centuries. The political atmosphere of the Cold War had added to this rivalry, as the border between the two marked a frontier between “West” and “East”. During the Cold War, the Soviet Union has been a major security threat, as Turkey was a NATO member. The cooperation between the two countries was limited. However, by the mid-1980s, Turkey was able to develop better relations with both the Soviet Union and the western powers simultaneously, for the first time since the 1930s’, and the value of bilateral trade increased from 476 million US\$ to 1.8 billion US\$ between 1987 and 1990 (Hale, 2013: 121). This was mostly due to the first natural gas agreement which was signed in 1984. The end of the Cold War, however,

did not put an end to their rivalry. Even after the end of the Cold War, the 1990s were a decade of “lost opportunities” for Turkey–Russia relations (Özbay, 2011: 70). Indeed, regional rivalry between Russia and Turkey has had put limits on opportunities for cooperation during 1990s. Specifically, Ankara and Moscow seemed to have long-term irreconcilable differences over the Caucasus and the Black Sea basin (Çelikpala, 2015: 123). However, during the 1990s economic relations began to revive, as energy cooperation and ‘shuttle trade’ between small businesses in each country expanded. Relations broadened and deepened throughout 2000s. However, two decades long period cannot be elaborated as a single period since there have been certain turning points. At the beginning of period, thanks to compartmentalization approach, Turkey and Russia focused more cooperation. The war plane incident in November 2016 has been the most important crisis that tested the strengthening relations. Even though normalization step has been taken after an eight months long break, the main characteristic of relations since then seems to be changing since then.

NEW INITIATIVE: FROM RIVALRY TO COOPERATION

The early 2000s marked the beginning of a new phase in Turkish-Russian relations. After Vladimir Putin won Russia’s Presidency (in 2000) and Recep Tayyip Erdogan became the Prime Minister in Turkey (2002), the two leaders adopted a more cooperative approach. They built on the growing economic ties between the countries to begin a renewal in political relations. In addition to increasing volume of bilateral trade, large-scale investment by Turkish construction companies made further cooperation possible. During the 2000s, Russia became not only the key energy supplier to Turkey but also a major trading partner (Özdal, 2020: 100). Energy relations have been the main engine of the relationship and date back to 1980s. The first energy agreement was signed between Turkey and the Soviet Union in 1984 and cooperation in energy sphere continued with Blue Stream. The degree of economic interdependence expanded considerably in trade, investment, energy, tourism, and human interaction (Öniş & Yılmaz, 2015: 9). As a result, trade volume between the two countries had reached almost \$38 billion in 2008, with Russia overtaking Germany as Turkey’s largest trading partner. However, it needs to be mentioned that there is an asymmetrical interdependence

in Turkey–Russia economic relations where Turkey is the more vulnerable (Köstem, 2018: 14).

The more collaborative approach had fitted well within the respective foreign policy agendas of each leader, both of whom had ambitions for their countries to play a more influential role on the world stage. Indeed, both leaders at the beginning of 2000s were interested in deepening their respective relationships with Europe and the U.S. Russia, not yet fully recovered from its troubles of the 1990s was still exploring partnership with the U.S. and Europe. Similarly, during the first years in power, Turkey's relations with the West reached a level that was unprecedented in Turkey's recent history due to its strengthened institutional ties with the EU (Balta, 2019: 77) Erdoğan's AKP proceeded with the rapid implementation of EU harmonization packages in line with the party's stated commitment to joining the Union. Defined by the catchy phrase of "zero problems with the neighbors", Turkey aimed to both improve relations with its neighborhood and slowly emerge as the regional power. It was a classic case of enhancing soft power through democratization and economic reforms at home, coupled with shrewd diplomacy aimed at establishing Ankara as a mediator in the region's conflicts (Barkey, 2016).

The U.S.'s war in Iraq raised Russia's criticism first in 2003. That was followed by 2007 Putin's speech during the Munich Security Conference where he strongly stood against American exceptionalism. Russia's war in Georgia in August 2008 further fueled the tension in international sphere. AKP on the hand has started to lose its interest by mid-2000 in terms of EU accession process. The two countries have been brought closer together by their deteriorating relationships with the West, mutual economic interests, and pragmatic realization that failure to manage some of their differences is fraught with negative consequences for both. Yet, Turkey–Russia partnership was limited since it lacked both the institutionalization and common vision to go beyond its selective nature. However, despite many irreconcilable differences, Ankara and Moscow successfully compartmentalized their relations by focusing on cooperation (with the expectation of a positive spill-over effect) and by so doing they aimed to prevent those crisis or disagreement areas overshadowing mutually beneficial aspects of bilateral relations.

Even though Turkey's relations with Russia were not problem free, due to compartmentalization approach, relations between two states were elaborated from time to time as an alternative engagement of Turkey vis a vis the West. Moreover, deteriorating relations with the West further

accelerated the discussion about Turkey shifting its axis. The first discussion of the potential emergence of a “strategic partnership” or “axis” between the two countries dates back to the Iraq War of 2003. For example, Hill and Taspinar (2006) referred to Russia and Turkey as the “axis of the excluded”, arguing that these two natural rivals intensified cooperation due to a mutual need to prevent a potential American intervention in the Black Sea region and the Middle East. Aktürk (2006) claimed that bilateral relations transformed into a “strategic partnership” in the early 2000s due to cooperation in antiterrorism, defense industry, and opposition to Iraq War.

Even though Ankara and Moscow opted for cooperation on areas where mutual interests existed and successfully managed differences by 2010 the question of whether relations have reached to their natural boundaries started to be raised. The reason behind this was the lack of institutionalization and lack of problem-solving capacity between the two. Indeed, despite of booming trade relations and a high level of diplomatic relations, Ankara and Moscow were not coming one step closer to each other on issues such as the Cyprus, Nagorno Karabakh in order to play a more constructive role in these long-lasting conflicts. The two countries have opposing views on the conflict in eastern Ukraine, the Russo-Georgian War of 2008, the status of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. On the other hand, developments such as the Arab Spring in 2011, the Ukraine crisis in 2013 and Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014 further tested the limits of compartmentalization. Russia’s annexation of Crimea in 2014 shifted the military balance in the Black Sea in favor of Russia. Ankara has consistently referred to Russia’s action as a clear violation of international law and supported Crimean Tatars. In spite of growing economic interdependence and diplomatic initiatives of the policymakers in Turkey and Russia in recent years, bilateral relations continue to be characterized by significant elements of conflict. Therefore, the strategic partnership concept can be said is an overstatement of Turkish–Russian relations in the present stage of their evolution (Öniş & Yılmaz, 2015: 72). It would be at best called “multidimensional partnership”.

SYRIA CRISIS: THE END OF COMPARTMENTALIZATION

The Arab Spring and the crisis in Syria particularly have had enormous impact on Turkish foreign policy and on Ankara’s relations with the Moscow. From the very beginning, foreign policy practices of Turkey and

Russia differed significantly toward the Arab Spring. The same has been observed during the crisis in Syria. While for Turkey Arab Spring was the people's demand for democracy in authoritarian states, as for Russia uprisings were terrorist activities mostly supported by Western states—aiming to change legitimate regimes. In Syria after being unsuccessful in convincing the regime to make the necessary reforms in order to satisfy the demand of the people, Turkey started to support the opposition groups who were aiming a regime change. It soon became clear that foreign policymakers in Turkey made all their calculations on the assumption that the Ba'athist regime would collapse in a short span of time (NTV, 2012a, 2012b). In line with that Ankara supported opposition groups in different forms from supplying arms to opening its territories for the meetings of these groups for their negotiations.

The foreign policy preferences of Moscow have been totally different in comparison with Turkey. Since for Moscow the Arab Spring was another attempt of the West to promote democracy in the Middle East, its response was in line with this perception. Moreover, Syria has been a strong ally of the regime since Soviet times. In addition to the historical ties, especially with experiencing the consequences of international intervention in Libya, Moscow strongly supported President Assad in Syria. It directly got involved in Syria by September 2015 and the situation on conflict area had fundamentally changed in favor of the regime.

As a result of totally different policy preferences, aims, and interests in Syria, tension between Turkey and Russia increased significantly. Turkey shot down a Russian warplane which was bombing Turkmen villages near the Syria-Turkey border and in the meantime violating Turkish airspace on November 24, 2015. The incident represents a turning point in bilateral relations. President Putin called the incident a “stab in the back” (BBC, 2015) and immediately signed a decree imposing economic sanctions against Turkey, primarily targeting Turkish food exports. Foreign Minister Lavrov called Turkey “dangerous” and warned Russian citizens not to travel to Turkey (Ü Ministry, 2015). As a result, Russian travel agencies halted holiday travel packages to Turkey and charter flights from Russia to Turkey were banned (Sputnik, 2015). Moreover, not only the energy projects of Turkish Stream and the Mersin Akkuyu Nuclear Power Plant but also all agreements between the two countries on education and culture were suspended as a result of the incident (Kremlin Website, 2016; Sputnik, 2015). Turkey–Russia relations have experienced its lowest level in every area for eight months, until the “apology letter” which was sent

by Erdoğan on June 27, 2016. In the letter, published on the Kremlin website, Erdoğan expressed his deep condolences to the family of the Russian pilot who had lost his life. As for the shooting down of the Russian warplane, Erdoğan said, “we regret this incident”. The letter also emphasized the importance of the two country’s bilateral relations and called for relieving the damage in order to have friendly relations again (Kremlin website, 2016).

Geostrategic and geo-economic reasons have lied behind this diplomatic letter. First of all, stymying dynamic economic relations immediately after the incident have had a dramatic effect on both sides, but especially on Turkey. Turkey’s tourism, construction and agriculture sectors, as well as ordinary citizens who work in those sectors, were seriously damaged due to the sanctions Russia applied. From this standpoint, moving on bilateral relations and leaving the crisis behind would bring relief to the economy and to society. Moreover, political and military contacts also expected to re-commence in the mid-term with normalization. Finally, considering regional conflicts in Turkey’s immediate neighborhood, the importance and need of re-starting this dialogue was obvious. Moreover, Russia was one of the first countries to condemn the failed coup attempt on July 15 and express its support to the democratically elected Turkish government. All those factors accelerated normalization process in Ankara (Özdal, 2020: 105–106). As for Moscow, the warplane incident introduced uncertainty into the future of vitally important energy projects of Turkish Stream and Mersin Akkuyu nuclear power plant. As the second biggest customer of Gazprom, Turkey is not only an important market for Russia, but also an important transit country for Russian energy. On the other hand, cooperation with Turkey on Syria became prominent for Moscow in order to gain not only military but also diplomatic success.

AFTER THE JET CRISIS: NORMALIZATION OR THE NEW NORMAL FOR TURKEY AND RUSSIA?

Turkey–Russia relations started to “normalize” gradually in many areas after the jet crisis but have never turned back on the level before the incident on some specific areas. For instance, economic sanctions were removed partially and steadily. However, the visa free regime between two which started to be implemented in 2011 never took place again. Currently, Russian citizens may visit Turkey without a visa however Turkish citizens need to have a visa in order to visit Russia. An interesting

anecdote was that with the start of normalization the two countries negotiated simultaneously the export of S-400 anti-aircraft missiles on the one hand and ending sanctions on Turkey's export of tomatoes to Russia on the other.

While normalization took place in a slower manner than it was suggested, particularly in area of bilateral relations, cooperation and dialogue on Syria intensified swiftly. Developments in Syria have had dual effect on Turkey–Russia relations. On the one hand, it created huge crisis and became a reason for backlash in terms of cooperation. On the other hand, it was mostly developments in Syria which motivated foreign policymakers in Turkey to take the initiative in order to normalize relations with Moscow. A thorny process lasted for eight months. During this period, two important developments took place which directly affected the foreign policymaking processes. On the one hand, war in Syria continued. Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), which is a sister organization of the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK)—terrorist organization for Turkey—took a control of a certain area neighboring Turkey. While SDF received a military and political support from the U.S. since it was fighting against Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), for Turkey this new situation represented a security concern. While the situation in Syria was changing on daily basis in conflict area, Turkey was unable to carry any operation there due to lack of a direct contact with the Russia. From this stand point, cooperation in Syria was in line with the national interests of both. Since 2015, Turkey has prioritized countering the SDF threat in Syria. In line with that Ankara was able to carry out three military operations in Northwestern and Northeastern Syria once normalization has started. As for Russia, by cooperating with Turkey, it would be possible not only to take under control the Turkish-backed rebel forces, but also to undermine the transatlantic alliance and most importantly to prevent Western-led regime change in Syria.

CHANGING SECURITY CHALLENGES AND THREAT PERCEPTIONS OF TURKEY

One of the most important events that affected not only domestic politics but also the making of the foreign policy in Turkey has been the coup attempt of July 15, 2016. A faction of the Turkish military who were from the Gülen movement have launched a coordinated attempt to topple President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's government. Gülen is a

Turkish cleric who has lived in the state of Pennsylvania in the U.S. since 1999. After the unsuccessful attempt, Gülen movement was called as a terrorist organization (FETÖ). Turkey declared a state of emergency, tens of thousands of people were arrested pending trial and at least 125,000 civil servants, military personnel, and academics were sacked or suspended from their positions over suspected Gülen links (Aljazeera, 2016). Turkey was ruled with the emergency law for two years afterward. Turkey held a constitutional referendum in 2017 to change its political system from a parliamentary system to an executive presidential one. The more authoritarian rule adopted by the AKP the more gap between Turkey and its Western partners broadened. Russia, on the other hand, had no conditions such as democratization, etc., when it comes to cooperation, but mutual understanding was enough. Those differences on approaches brought Turkey closer to Russia since then. Therefore, even though the coup attempt of July 15 is a domestic political issue, it has had undeniably important implications for the Turkish foreign policy. First of all, the coup attempt further fueled the change in security concerns in Turkey. After the coup attempt, security concerns of the government were put at the very center of AKP's domestic and foreign policies (Oğuzlu, 2020: 136), and security was mostly equated with the regime security or the continuation of the President Erdoğan's rule. Second, the coup attempt created enormous confidence crisis between Turkey and its Western allies. The U.S. and most of the European partners have been reluctant to show direct support to the elected government in Turkey while President Putin has been the first foreign leader to call and give a support. The U.S. and the EU accused Turkey of being undemocratic and violating human rights especially with the practices after the failed coup attempt. In return, Turkey has accused both the U.S. and the EU of supporting the PKK and its Syrian branch the SDF, and backing FETÖ and its followers who attempted to overthrow the democratically elected government. Since then, it has been hard to see any positive development in diplomatic relations between Turkey and its Western allies other than pragmatic rapprochement mainly on limited areas such as of migration control.

The most striking example of changing threat perceptions in Turkey has been the decision to purchase S-400 missile defense systems from Russia. Turkey's purchase of S-400 systems were first was announced by President Erdoğan in August 2016 during their first meeting in Sochi

after the jet crisis. According to Arda Mevlütoğlu (2021) the first candidate for Turkey's requirement for an air and missile defense system, which came to the agenda in the early 1990s, was naturally the U.S. made Patriot system. The Patriot was the natural candidate, as there was no other Western made equivalent air defense system capable of intercepting tactical ballistic missiles and capable of hitting warplanes and other air targets at long range. The Franco-Italian SAMP/T system was to enter service only in the early 2010s (Mevlütöğlu, 2021). The need for such an air defense system was felt when the war has started in Syria in March 2011. In response to Syria's shooting down of a Turkish military reconnaissance aircraft in the international airspace of the eastern Mediterranean in June 2012, the issue was brought on NATO Council agenda. The Council discussed and eventually approved, in December 2012, the deployment of Patriot battalions in Turkey's southeastern cities along the Syrian border, namely Adana, Kahramanmaraş, and Gaziantep, as a protective measure against possible attacks coming from Syria again (Kibaroglu, 2019). However, the systems were removed in 2015 due to the assessment that the threat from Syria was over. Spanish Patriots took their place (Topchi, 2017).

While Turkey's request for such a system continued, Russia first offered the predecessor of the S-400 but it was excluded from the competition from the very beginning once it put forward an extremely high price. In September 2013, China's offer was selected as the winner. China's offer was around \$3.44 billion, and it was followed by the \$4.4 billion SAMP/T and \$4.6 billion Patriot offers, respectively. However, the 2013 contract negotiations with China were terminated in November 2015 on the grounds of disagreement on technology transfer and co-production (Mevlütöğlu, 2021).

Two important developments took place before the decision of Turkey's purchase of S-400 missile defense systems: At first, from the end of 2014, the U.S. started cooperating with SDF in Syria, the Syrian branch of the PKK (even though PKK was considered as a terrorist organization both by Turkey and the U.S.) as of being its main partner, started to receive intensive U.S. weapons and training assistance. Then, as of August 2015, the U.S. and Germany decided to withdraw the Patriot air defense system batteries they deployed to Turkey as part of NATO assistance against the possible air threat from Syria.

The coup attempt that took place on July 15, 2016, and the U.S. reluctance to show solidarity with and support to Turkey thereafter

was another blow to bilateral relations. Against the background of such a military-diplomatic environment, in the autumn of 2016, right after the coup attempt Turkey started negotiations with Russia for the purchase of the S-400 system. The contract signed in April 2017 covered two S-400 systems, one of which was an optional. The delivery of the first system took place in July 2019, and the test firing was carried out in October 2020. As for the second batch, Defense Minister Akar told by January 2021 that negotiations still continue. There has been rising concern in the U.S. about this purchase by a NATO ally. The S-400 is considered to be one of the most advanced systems in the world but it is incompatible with NATO systems. Indeed, even if not networked, potential backdoors in the S-400 system could study critical operational data and electro-magnetic signatures of the high-end aircraft, and transmit them to the Russian military intelligence (Kasapoğlu & Ülgen, 2018). Therefore, it was made clear by Trump administration that the U.S. would implement sanctions against Turkey through “Sect. 231 of the Countering America’s Adversaries Through Sanctions Act” (CAATSA). The Trump administration decided to impose sanctions under CAATSA in December 2020, Turkey was removed from the F-35 project, and the delivery of F-35 jets produced for the Turkish Air Force was canceled (Reuters, 2019).

Considering all the implications mentioned above, as Kasapoğlu and Ülgen argued one should also evaluate the “costs” of proceeding with this decision. When deliveries of F-35’s fall coupled with the potential CAATSA sanctions on the F-16 s of the air force and rotary wing platforms of the army aviation, the S-400’s costs could dwarf its benefits (Kasapoğlu & Ülgen, 2019). Ankara has said it was forced to opt for the S-400s because allies did not provide weapons on satisfactory terms since Turkey looked from the very beginning for the transfer of technology. At the end of the day, the agreement on the S-400 systems included neither technology transfer nor joint production. Moreover, by the mid-2022 S-400 is not installed and activated yet.

Considering the foreign policymaking process and the securitization of the decision acquiring Russian made defense systems, it is hard to explain that crucial decision with only the foreign policy developments. Turkey’s main argument about the S-400 procurement was centered on the West’s reluctance in military cooperation, especially when it comes to defensive strategic weapons. However, open-source pieces of evidence suggest that the Russians offered no co-production, offsets, or technology transfer for the S-400 sale (Kasapoğlu & Ülgen, 2019). The critical decision of

Turkey to buy S-400 systems made it the second country in the world after China and the first and only NATO member state to have purchased these advanced Russian strategic weapons (Erşen & Stem, 2020: 232).

DOMESTIC DETERMINANTS OF TURKEY'S RELATION WITH RUSSIA

As a result of a process that began with the Gezi Park protests in May 2013 and continued with the failed coup attempt on 15 July 2016, Turkish foreign policy seems to experience an important break down with regard to its relations with the Westerns partners. However, one need to go even beyond that to see the changing dynamics in foreign policymaking process of AKP; victory in Turkey's parliamentary elections in 2011 by the Party, and even the beginning "Arab Spring" the same year represent symbolic changes. "Yet, it has been in the post-2013 era that the de-Europeanizing dynamics in Turkish foreign policy discourse have been systematically replaced by anti-Westernism, which has come to be the main tenet of the era of thick populism in Turkish foreign policy" (Kaliber & Kaliber, 2019: 2). Since then, it seems as Ankara has adopted more authoritarian principles in line with Russian style top-down executive control.

The structure of international system has also changed after the first decade of 2000s. At the beginning of 2000s, Turkey's perception of international order was more Western oriented. Given the unipolar world order, decision-makers in Turkey assumed that adopting liberal democratic values would provide the most appropriate solutions to the structural, economic, social, and political problems (Oğuzlu, 2020: 132). It can be said that the Turkish government has moved much closer to the Russian position on multipolarity during the past decade since both represented emerging power due to booming economic capacities especially after 2008 while Western economies were sharply declining. However, Turkey is neither a member of G20 anymore in terms of its economic performance or an emerging power even though it has been between 2008–2011 period. Turkish economy has been struggling for the last two years significantly. Therefore, it may well be argued that the reversals in Turkish foreign policy derives from the economic reasons as well. Along with mistakes in economic policy and shortcomings in the rule of law, the country's "splendid loneliness" in foreign affairs hastened financial decline as foreign investment dried up. Thus, the quest for new

investors and attempts at mending relations, especially with the Middle Eastern kingdoms. The economy is Turkey's Achilles' heel. This is one of the reasons why it keeps its options open with Russia with an energy crisis is looming (Yenel, 2022). With elections in 2023, Erdoğan is also concerned with burnishing his image as a grand statesman (Outzen, 2022). Less than a year ahead of presidential elections, Erdoğan's desire to stabilize the economic situation and financial markets, Turkey's dependence on Russian gas, the Russian state-owned atomic agency's work on the Akkuyu Nuclear Power Plant project, and increasingly anti-American public sentiment make cooperation with Russia a must (Gaber, 2022).

As for Russia, domestic politics of Turkey and the political future of President Erdoğan also seems to be important. Especially, considering that there is no other leader who would buy the S-400 from Russia other than Erdoğan. Or, Erdoğan alone could have given Russia the tender for a nuclear power plant like Akkuyu, which does not transfer technology, and is guaranteed to be delivered on a turnkey basis and with a purchase guarantee far above the market price. Another party and leader would at least come under intense criticism and would have difficulty explaining this tender. In addition, Erdoğan is a leader who can take the decision to shoot down the plane and apologize, and negotiate when necessary. These advantages must make him a very valuable leader in Putin's eyes. For example, the fact that he was the only NATO member head of state to meet with Putin after the war must have been important to Putin. Again, from Erdoğan's point of view, unlike Biden, it should be a comfort to be close with a great country leader, whom he talks to whenever he wants and for as long as he wants (Uzgel, 2022).

CONCLUSION

Turkey–Russia relations in the twenty-first century has been one of the most interesting case studies for foreign policy researchers. On the one hand, it represents an important shift from centuries long rivalry. On the other hand, it shows “rapprochement” does not necessarily mean an “alliance” and there is a thin line between those two different levels of engagement. In order to understand better the characteristics and the structural limits of Turkey–Russia relations, it is important to remember that current state of relations between the two is mostly a Putin-Erdoğan project. Indeed, during the whole process of new stage in Turkey–Russia relations which started at the beginning of 2000s those two leaders has

been in power. At the beginning, multidimensionalism has been the main aim in Turkish foreign policy. Russia as of being an important regional player and already gas supplier represented one of those dimensions. As for Russia, Turkey has been not only an important market but also a NATO member who can say “no” to its Western partners as evidenced with the 1 March motion. Thanks to booming trading relations and a political will to cooperate on areas where interests overlapped, compartmentalization approach has been preferred by both Putin and Erdoğan. This approach enabled two leaders to focus on cooperation and gain as much as possible not only in economics but also in political areas while underestimating differences and challenges. Thus, a great momentum has been achieved. Diplomatic visits in a highest level became almost a routine at the beginning of 2010s. However, bilateral relations remained fragile and inconsistent since Russia and Turkey have been partners on some areas and competitors on some other. Therefore, as has been experienced with the jet crisis, Turkey–Russia relations could easily spin out of control. Compartmentalization, which has been key concept to define the nature of bilateral relations during the first one half decade long period of the 2000s, has been ended by the jet crisis. There have been other disagreement areas such as Moscow’s intervention in Georgia in 2008 or the annexation of Crimea in 2014. However, Russia’s military involvement in Syria in late 2015 have had radically changed the security concerns of Turkey in Syria. Due to the worsening security environment in the region and its negative consequences on Turkey’s domestic politics, foreign policymakers in Turkey opted for a change (Oğuzlu, 2020: 136). After an eight months long interruption, dialogue restarted. But it can be argued that, normalization has never taken place thenceforward. Rather the “reset” was initiated by Turkey with the apology letter that was sent in August 2016.

Particular developments in domestic politics started to have utmost role in shaping Turkish foreign policy, its relations with the traditional allies and also Turkey’s approach toward Russia. General elections of 2011 have brought a detachment for the liberals who supported AKP since 2002. In foreign policy that was reflected as a pursuit of “strategic autonomy” which have put Turkey in a position closer to Russia. Moreover, the failed coup attempt of July 2016 further accelerated the process of alienation from the West and the need for normalizing relations with Russia became a must. As a result of growing disappointment of the Turkish leadership in the West’s failure to acknowledge Turkey’s security

concerns Turkey opted for buying Russian S-400 missile defense systems, despite serious objections from NATO members. After the failed coup attempt of July 2016, Erdoğan's monopoly was extended under state of emergency regulations, and these were institutionalized in the nascent presidential regime. Foreign policymaking process also has been dominated by Erdoğan and his close associates. Therefore, to assess trends in contemporary Turkish foreign policy, we need to understand Erdoğan's mindset on Turkey's status in a changing international order, and the importance he attaches to foreign policy initiatives in terms of bolstering his domestic popularity to sustain his monopoly on power (Kutlay & Öniş, 2021: 1087–1088).

Turkey's growing isolation from the West due to its geopolitical rupture with the U.S. as well as its ongoing rift with the EU can be clear signs for a reorientation of Turkey's foreign policy goals. It is obvious that in contrary to its relations with the Western partners, Turkey and Russia try to reconcile their differences in different cases from Syrian conflict to the war in Ukraine. Still, the partnership of Ankara and Moscow is neither problem free nor relays on common interest. Rather what brings Ankara and Moscow together has been only the need of working together. What also renders the Turkish–Russian relationship striking is the two countries' continuing perceptions of themselves as decisive regional and global actors, which perhaps go well beyond their actual capabilities (Öniş & Yılmaz, 2015: 72).

Considering that Turkey and Russia lacking strong institutional relations on state level—beyond leader-to-leader relations—shared culture and history; common interest in their shared neighborhood; and a vision regarding the future of international system, it would not be surprising to see many ups and downs in the upcoming future. It would be hard to replace Turkey's relations with its Western partners with that of Russia's. However, one also need to bear in mind that the long-term identity-based alliance relationship has been replaced with short term, pragmatic, and issue-oriented strategic partnerships (Wilkins, 2012). This trend perfectly matches the shift in Turkish foreign policy. Russia will continue to be an important regional and probably global actor with whom Turkey should have good relations. However, for Turkey, relations with Russia and the West should not be a question of either/or. As has been the case, Turkey will most probably try to maintain its relations with all sides, but on different levels in military, political, and economic areas.

The shifts, however, will be still possible based on domestic, regional, and international developments.

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Turkey and the Middle East

Özlem Tür 

INTRODUCTION

Turkey's relations with the Middle East had been problematic and dominated by security concerns until the end of the 1990s. Traditionally, the legacy of the Arab Revolt during the First World War, the military-bureaucratic elite's pro-Western stance, and the Cold War dynamics kept Turkey aloof from the developments in the region. Although Turkey made attempts to play an active role in the region in the 1950s with the Baghdad Pact, it marred rather than improve the relations with the Arab world. Its attempt to build good relations in the 1970s remained mainly instrumental and designed to gain Arab support with regards to the developments in Cyprus. Turkey's relations with the region strained at the beginning of the 1980s as Dev-Yol, ASALA, and the PKK found shelter and support in Syria and became a source of security threat for

Ö. Tür (✉)

Department of International Relations, Middle East Technical University,
Ankara, Turkey

e-mail: tur@metu.edu.tr

Turkey. For Turkey, the end of the Cold War, meant that the threat from the North,—the Soviet Union—disappeared only to be replaced by an increasing threat from the South—Syria, Iraq, and Iran. During the 1990s, the PKK and the water issue—how to partition the waters of Euphrates and Tigris—had become increasingly linked to each other and became the major source of conflict with Syria and Iraq, while the threat posed by Iran to the secular nature of the Turkish regime constituted another problem. Tension reached such a level that Turkey and Syria came to a brink of war in 1998; Turkey held many military operations into Iraq to eliminate the PKK threat at its border—the 1995 Operation being especially important due to its scope and the installation of communication posts in Northern Iraq; and the assassinations of prominent journalists and scholars in Turkey linked to Iran, strained the relations. This feeling of insecurity became an important factor bringing Turkey and Israel closer during this decade, leading to signing of a series of agreements in 1996.

The end of the decade witnessed positive developments for Turkey. The expulsion of the PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan from Syria, the consequent signing of the Adana Accords, and Turkey's declaration of the military defeat of the PKK changed Turkey's policy towards Syria in particular and the region in general. These developments helped to de-securitize Turkey's foreign policy and with 'the regionally based foreign policy' approach initiated by the then Minister of Foreign Affairs Ismail Cem, cooperation began to increase with the Middle East. It is interesting to see how, within only a decade, this cooperation reached such unprecedented levels during the first decade of the 2000s, yet later only to be strained once again in the second decade.

Looking at the literature, two major explanations arise in the analysis of this development of relations during the 2000s. One explanation focuses mainly on the coming to power of the AKP and the policies of Ahmet Davutoğlu. This view, by placing the Islamist worldview, the ideological stance of the AKP leaders, and the search for new markets to the forefront, emphasizes domestic reasons. The other line of thought underlines how the regional and international developments—9/11, the power vacuum created after the US invasion of Iraq—affected and changed Turkey's position and underlines that it was a matter of national interest for Turkey to be active in the newly emerging regional dynamics and rivalries. Taking both of these views into account, the following section will look at the domestic and international dynamics in bringing Turkey from the brink of war to integration with the Middle East countries in the first decade of the 2000s and then back to conflict in the second decade.

A DECADE OF ACTIVISM, PROFOUND OPPORTUNITIES, AND DEEPENED COOPERATION WITH THE MIDDLE EAST: 2000–2010

As Turkey began to normalize its relations with its neighbours in the last years of the 1990s, the 9/11 attacks brought a series of changes internationally, with important consequences for the Middle East and new challenges and opportunities for Turkey. As heated debates on ‘Islamic radicalism’ and ‘Islamic terror’ continued, Turkey emerged as a model as having reconciled Islam and democracy (Keyman, 2009). The argument relied largely on the idea that Turkey was unique, being the only NATO member with an overwhelmingly Muslim population. Turkey’s domestic context at the time, with its ongoing EU reform process, helped its emergence as a model for the region (Altunışık, 2008: 42–43). The coming to power of the *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* (AKP—Justice and Development Party), seen as a good example of the evolution of political Islamism, was received positively by the West and further enhanced Turkey’s role as a model for the region.

Right after coming to power, the AKP began negotiations with the US administration, which was preparing for the invasion of Iraq under its regime change strategy. As heated negotiations continued, US ships began to navigate in the Mediterranean to deploy troops to Turkey for a northern front to Iraq to oust Saddam Hussein regime. Despite the expected positive vote for troop deployment from the Turkish Parliament, its rejection in March 2003 have deeply shaken Turkish-US relations. US went ahead to invade Iraq without a northern front, and as the invasion became extremely costly and Iraq became mired in intense insurgency and sectarian conflict, US singled out Turkey as the reason for its failure. Turkish-US tension was coupled with the empowerment of Kurdish groups in Iraq as they became US’s main allies in maintaining the calm in the North. In this context, developments in Iraq emerged as a security threat for Turkey with concerns over the strengthening of Kurdish groups and a possible dissolution of the Iraqi state. This concern was shared by Syria and Iran, bringing them closer to Turkey. It was interesting to witness the relations with Iran at the time. On the one hand, Turkey cooperated with it to encounter the Kurdish empowerment but at the same time entered into a rivalry with it for regional influence in the subsequent power vacuum created by the collapse of Baghdad. Faced with the increasing Iranian role in Iraq and the emergence of what would

later be called as a Shi'ite Crescent—Iran, extending its role in south Iraq, reaching directly to Syria and its ally Hizballah in Lebanon—Turkey needed to play a more active regional role to balance Iran. While straining relations with the US, the ‘no vote’ by the Turkish Parliament increased Turkey’s popularity in the Arab streets (Akgün et al., 2010). This move was interpreted in the Arab world as Turkey, for the first time and in sharp contrast with the experience of the Baghdad Pact, siding with the Arabs against Western interventionism. These regional developments helped the AKP leadership to pursue close relations with the Middle East.

Domestically, the AKP leadership with ‘a new agenda by redefining priorities, objectives, and methods in Turkish foreign and security policy’ (Abramowitz & Barkey, 2009) put the Middle East at the centre of the change it was seeking in its foreign policy. The appointment of Ahmet Davutoğlu as the chief advisor on foreign policy issues, and then as the Minister of Foreign Affairs in 2009, is key in this context. Criticising the foreign policy stance of the pre-AKP period as ‘static’ and ‘reactionary’, Davutoğlu called for a ‘visionary policy’—a pro-active foreign policy based on ‘rhythmic diplomacy’—, changing Turkey’s ‘peripheral, flank country in a bridge role’, to a ‘centre country’, which he hoped would ‘contribute [to] the surrounding regions and [to] the global peace’. (Davutoğlu, 2010) A new ‘vision’ based on ‘zero problems with neighbours,’ ‘security for all’, and ‘economic interdependency and integration’ were introduced in this context. Arguing that the existing world order, based on the hegemony of the Western countries, is in decline and new global centres of power are on the rise, Davutoğlu emphasized the need to re-define Turkey’s role in this rapidly changing geopolitical context, placing it at the centre of world politics, with responsibilities based on historical legacies for the region.

Davutoğlu put forward the idea of integrating with neighbouring countries and aimed to unite Turkey with the territories that it was separated from after the First World War with artificial borders and in a way aimed to re-establish the times of a rather romanticized Ottoman past in the region. Davutoğlu said:

You must reinterpret your geography and history when the international context is changing. [...] Turkey has to reintegrate with the neighbouring zones. [...] For example, Turkish-Syrian territory is not natural at all. Throughout the centuries, there was not such a border between Turkey and Syria or between [Gazi]Antep and Aleppo. Antep and Aleppo, they

were “twin cities” for thousands of years, then suddenly there was a border. First it was a national border between Turkey and Syria then it became a border of two poles during [the] Cold War and we had to protect that border with mines. ... Mosul and Diyarbakir, Arbil and Mardin, they were not alienated from each other throughout the centuries. Suddenly, all these cities were alienated from each other. ... These cities have lost their importance as well because they have lost their hinterlands. (Davutoğlu, 2010)

2009 became an important year when the quest to rebuild this ‘hinterland’ through economic integration (through the lifting of visas with Syria, Iraq, and Iran and the Free Trade Agreement brought its fruits) and a political one (with the creation of Joint Cabinet Meetings) were materialized. This vision and enhanced economic relations and trade that followed have no doubt supported the argument that Turkey was becoming a ‘trading state’ as foreign trade has steadily grown and come to constitute a growing proportion of its economy (Kirişçi, 2009: 33).

Turkey’s activism in the Middle East, especially with Syria, at times contradicted with the policies of the US and continued despite heavy US criticism. Although Turkey kept on arguing that its growing relations with the region did not exclude its relations with the West, it started to pursue closer relations with different actors in the region, such as Hamas, considered as terrorist by the West. When Turkey invited the political leader of Hamas to Ankara after the 2006 Palestinian elections, Turkey was criticized by the international community and Israel harshly. Turkey’s rejection of the UN Security Council’s proposal to place sanctions on Iran was also criticized. Turkey presented these developments as part of its policy to ‘talk to all parties’ and communicate its messages of democracy and dialogue with every group and sect in the region. Not only was it involved in mediation efforts in Iraq and Lebanon, it also played a significant role in its quest to solve one of the toughest conflicts in the region—that between Syria and Israel. Bringing the two countries into indirect talks in Istanbul from 2007 onwards in five rounds, Turkey has managed to solve critical points of tension between the two parties opening the road for direct negotiations. This was seen as a great success at the time and an achievement of the AKP leadership and its ‘new vision’ as both Syria and Israel underlined their appreciation by underlining ‘Turkey of the past decades would not be able to play such a role’ (Tür, 2012: 55–56). However, the expectation of direct talks between

Israel and Syria under Turkish mediation were cut when the then PM of Israel, Olmert, on the way back to Israel from Istanbul started Operation Cast Lead on Gaza. Erdoğan, deeply resenting this development, showed his reaction explicitly in a panel in Davos on Gaza in 2009, when he interrupted Peres as he was talking and blamed Israel to know best how to kill innocent people. The Mavi Marmara incident,¹ and the killing of Turkish citizens on board, increased the level of tension in the already strained relations leading to withdrawal of ambassadors and halting of all military agreements (Tür, 2012). While Turkish-Israeli relations reached a low, Turkey's popularity in the Arab streets reached its zenith. At the official level as well, relations reached unforeseen levels, marked by the establishment of bilateral High Level Strategic Councils—regular joint cabinet meetings negotiating and deciding on critical political issues cooperatively with Syria and Iraq. In 2010, Turkey put into effect the Levant Project—“East Mediterranean Four: Levant Business Forum” bringing Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan together towards the free movement of people and goods—thus initiating a regional economic union, ‘aiming to create a sphere of welfare at the heart of the Middle East’ (Habertürk, 2010). A common future based on the common past was presented as an asset. Erdoğan recited an old poem just months before the Arab Uprisings: ‘A Turk cannot live without an Arab, he who says otherwise is mad’ (Ergan, 2010).

POST-2010: IDEOLOGY, ISOLATION AND BACK TO NATIONAL INTEREST?

The cooperative state of Turkish-Middle East relations witnessed a sharp contrast in the second decade of the 2000s, with the beginning of the Arab Uprisings. It is possible to divide this period into three sub-periods where we can identify different features of engagement with the changing region.

2010–2013: Opportunities for Turkish Role in a Rapidly Changing Region

Turkey's vision towards the Middle East, formulated in the first decade, was based on the continuation of the status quo and existing regimes. Once the authoritarian regimes began to change one by one in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya, Turkey found itself unprepared but yet surrounded

by new opportunities to manage the upcoming change. Ousting of Ben Ali and Mubarak regimes and the coming to power of Muslim Brotherhood (MB) in Tunisia and Egypt boosted Turkey's influence in the region. According to Karagül of pro-government newspaper *Yeni Şafak*, the change in these countries was making Turkey's dream come through. In his words: 'For years, our motto for the region and our analysis regarding the future of the region has always been "Zone of Muslim Brotherhood from Sudan to Syria"...From Sudan to North Africa, Egypt to Jordan and Syria, the most organised structures of the region are those coming from the Muslim Brotherhood school' (Karagül, 2012).

The coming to power of al-Nahda in Tunisia and later Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt were seen as cornerstones to build this MB unity in the region, and thus, Turkey's efforts were tuned into bringing and sustaining MB regimes. Turkey's policy became increasingly ideological at this time as it read the regional developments through the MB lens. The MB groups acquiring legitimacy and a political role in Tunisia and Egypt were given active guidance by the AKP cadres, were invited to Ankara, and, in the words of Bulaç (2014), 'acted under the guidance of Turkish advisers from the beginning to end.'

Turkey's policy revolved around efforts to bring about a regime change in Syria, and thus complete the MB unity—al-Nahda in Tunisia, MB in Egypt, Hamas in Palestine, and MB in Syria—during this period. As the Uprisings began in Syria and Bashar Asad refused to open up room for the MB, Turkey started to openly call for a regime change strategy in Damascus, which failed terribly. Expecting a United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution, like in Libya, to materialize for Syria, Turkey gave open support for the Syrian opposition, allowed it to open an office in Istanbul and began to support and host the Free Syrian Army (FSA) which fought the Asad regime. Turkey thus became an active supporter of the opposition and party to the conflict in Syria.

Turkey's expectations for a swift regime change in Damascus and bringing in the MB failed when the decision to endorse an international intervention in Syria was rejected by Russian and Chinese vetoes in February 2012 at the UNSC. Turkey, becoming deeply frustrated, turned its effort to facilitate regime change through covert operations on its own (Tür & Kumral, 2016). In the meanwhile, Turkey became more actively involved with the Syrian opposition—especially with the MB—and continued to be a vocal advocate of a solution to the nearly collapsing Syria without Assad.

Turkey opened its borders to Syrians escaping the conflict, initially with the idea that they will go back after a swift change. Yet, as the crisis in Syria deepened, Turkey was confronted with the huge toll of hosting these Syrians that in the following periods would be a domestic political debate as well (Erdoğan, 2020). Yet, staunchly underlining its regime change strategy, Turkish policy-makers began to underline how the futures of Syria and Turkey were one, and by extension, Syria's issues were Turkey's domestic affair. As the Uprisings in Syria began to turn into a civil war with a sectarian character, Turkey's role as a Sunni player became more explicit. Turkey found itself confronting Iran in Syria, that immediately came to help the Asad regime, while at the same time cooperating with it in other regional developments. Domestically, while the refugee flows and the cutting of trade ties created an economic toll, formation of the PYD and its fighting units YPG as extensions of the PKK in northern Syria led to the emergence of a significant security threat. This led Turkey to use more of its hard power, which was not seen towards the region since the last decade that witnessed Turkey's growing soft power. In spite of the downing of a Turkish jet by Syria in June 2012, the impact of the mortar attacks on Turkish border passages showed that the Syrian crisis was increasingly becoming a direct threat for Turkey.

Despite the increasing challenge from the Syrian case, this period led to a new activism in Turkey's foreign policy towards the region, which was under intense transformation. Turkey presented itself as leading the change by cooperating with the new governments in Tunisia and Egypt. In the deeply sectarianized regional context, Turkey's role as a Sunni actor began to be more explicitly pronounced, and in the growing rift within the Sunni camp between pro and anti-MB states, Turkey championed the pro-MB groups with Qatar against Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Although Davutoğlu kept on arguing for the opportunities this new period presented for Turkey, by giving it the chance to become the engine of change, by narrowly supporting one group and becoming an active party to the Syrian civil war, Turkey began to drift away from the principles of its foreign policy, zero problems with neighbours, ability to talk to every group, and mediate in disputes.

*2013–2016: Years of Regional and Domestic
Challenges and Isolation*

Turkey's regional vision and policy took a cold shower when MB regime in Egypt under Mohammed Morsi was removed from power in July 2013 by the Egyptian military under Sisi. Losing an important ally, and a major cornerstone in its regional policy, Turkey named the development as a coup and called the international community to boycott the new regime. Erdoğan adopted the 'Rabia' symbol, which became a symbol of rejection of Sisi regime and commitment to the MB, showing four fingers of his hand at every public occasion. At the time, Turkish newspapers reported that over 5000 members of the Egyptian MB who were escaping the new regime were welcomed to Turkey and that they all met in 2013 in Istanbul to determine the future strategy of the movement, which was critical for Turkey's regional policy at large (Bulaç, 2014; Taştekin, 2019).

The removal of the MB from power in Egypt changed the dynamics of Turkey's regional policy and relations with its allies. Turkey found itself at opposite ends not only with the new Egyptian regime but also with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates that supported the Sisi government. As al-Nahda left power in Tunisia and Syria moved into a deep quagmire with no regime change in sight, Turkey's vision for the region went bankrupt. Turkey in this period, while increasingly being isolated in regional politics, found further common standing with Qatar (Başkan, 2016). The growing ties with Qatar increased as Turkey's relations with other Arab countries soared and Turkey began to see Qatar as its main ally economically, politically, and militarily. It began building a military base in Doha, which was opened in an official ceremony attended by Erdoğan in 2015.

During this period, Turkey's threat perception from Syria increased tremendously. The Syrian regime, which had been cooperating with Turkey against the PKK since the 1998 Adana Accords, decided once again to play the Kurdish card and openly provided the Democratic Union Party (PYD), the Syrian affiliate of the PKK, logistical support, and a free hand in organising the Syrian Kurds. This has strengthened the PYD's position, and it embarked on a wave of attacks in Turkey against both civilian and military targets. Turkey tried to counter this development by cooperating with non-PYD Kurds in Syria as well as supporting them within the Kurdish National Council under the initiative of Barzani, President of the Iraqi Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). Turkey

developed a differentiated approach towards the Kurds during this time, those that it cooperated—the KRG under Barzani with which it entered into dialogue—and the ones to crush—the PYD and later the Syrian Democratic Forces. Keeping the two Kurdish groups apart and preventing their unity by intense cooperation with Barzani became important for Turkey's policy in its immediate South at this time.

As Syria began to fragment into zones of influence of different warring parties, with Kurds controlling the North, from 2014 onwards the country witnessed the emergence of one of the bloodiest terrorist groups—the Islamic State (IS). Declaring itself a Caliphate and calling on all Muslims from around the world to come and fight against infidels in Syria and Iraq and later the wider globe, Syria came back to the international agenda, as a global security threat. As an international coalition was formed against the IS, Kurdish groups demonstrated a legendary resistance against it, which helped them to receive wide support from the West. The developments in Kobane attracted a lot of international attention and became a test case for Turkey's policy at the time. When this Kurdish-populated border town came under siege by the IS, Turkey found it difficult to act with the Kurdish groups against IS. Although Turkey took humanitarian action, opening its border to refugees from Kobane, it was only after heated domestic debate and criticism and the international attention that Kobane received, that Turkey accepted the passage of the Kurdish peshmerge of the KRG through its borders to help their fellow fighters in Kobane. This became a test case to keep the two Kurdish groups apart, yet underlining the humanitarian role Turkey played at this time. Although Turkey joined the international coalition against IS, it was more concerned about the empowerment of the PYD than the IS, which put Turkey at odds with the international public opinion in general and that of the US that cooperated actively with the Kurds in particular.

The coming into Syria of Russian troops in 2015 to rescue the Asad regime became the last move in proving the failure of Turkey's regime change strategy in Syria. In 2015, Turkey has shot down a Russian jet over Syria, claiming that it was violating the Turkish airspace. The issue became a hard test for Turkey which could have triggered an all-out confrontation with Russia that was now based in Syria (Kardaş, 2019: 3). Looking at the developments in Syria, and despite its ongoing support for the MB, Turkey left the idea of toppling the Asad regime aside, and from this point onwards, began to concentrate on how to encounter the Kurdish threat

from Northern Syria and cool off relations with Russia, through compartmentalizing it. Unable to persuade the US to cut its support for the PYD, and right after the failed coup attempt, Turkey carried out a military operation into Syria—Operation Euphrates Shield in August 2016 bringing active Turkish military presence in the country. Despite the success of the operation for Turkey in confining the growing power of the PYD in the North, also justified as a fight against IS, Turkey lacked any tools at this stage to confront the Russian support for the Asad regime without further escalation at this time. Feeling deeply isolated internationally as well in the region and domestically trying to recover from the failed coup attempt, Ankara changed its policy in Syria and began a series of negotiations with Russia and Iran, supporters of the Asad regime. In late 2016, Turkey became part of what would be known as the Astana Process where Turkey, Russia, and Iran agreed on a nationwide ceasefire plan for Syria to come into effect by the end of 2016 and formed a joint monitoring body to work to enforce the UN Resolution 2254 ceasefire. For some observers, this was the end of Turkey's isolation—what İbrahim Kalın coined as a 'precious loneliness'—and a sign of its new foreign policy activism.

*2017–2021: Syria, Gulf Crisis, Libya,
and Growing Cooperation with Russia*

Although Turkey continued to cherish the possibility of a MB-led change in the region and has moved closer to Qatar against the rest of the Arab countries, its growing ties with Russia in the following period and its hard power, with boots on the ground, helped it secure a firm place in the negotiation table on Syria. As a part of negotiations with Russia and Iran, Turkey helped maintain de-escalation zones, and as the Syrian regime began to capture major cities and drive the opposition to the North, to Idlib, Turkey got the responsibility for keeping the calm in Idlib (Tür, 2019). Considering that Idlib in time came to host opposition groups of all kinds, some of which, like Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, are in the terrorist list of major Western powers and of Turkey itself, Turkey began to face the challenge to deal and control these groups in Idlib. This will be one of the most challenging issues in the future of Syria as well, which Turkey will have to deal with. Additionally, Turkey created its own major military ally, Syrian National Army through which it actively cooperated during its

Operations, and fight against the PYD or the Syrian Democratic Forces in general.

Turkish-US relations which were already at a low due to US's refusal to distance itself from the Syrian Kurds and disarm the PYD/YPG (Tür, 2019), Turkey's growing cooperation with Russia added another strain on the relations. Not only its support for the MB but also active relations with Iran raised further eyebrows in Saudi Arabia and the UAE that saw Iran as the main threat to be checked in the region. It was during this period that Turkey's growing alliance with Qatar became a part of a regional rift. In 2017, relations between the Gulf countries and Qatar witnessed a crisis as a result of which a severe blockade was imposed on Qatar. One of the conditions put forward to lift the blockade was the closing of the Turkish base in Doha. During the blockade, Ankara became Qatar's lifeline by providing food supplies and sending troops. This put Turkey further at odds with Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the UAE, and Bahrain (Aras & Akpınar, 2017) and thus increased its regional isolation and pushed it further towards Russia in Syria.

As the crisis was already underway with Saudi Arabia, another development further deepened it—the murder of dissident Saudi journalist, writer for the Washington Post, Jamal Khashoggi, in the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul. Khashoggi has been calling the Saudi regime to open a dialogue with the MB. It was reported by many that Istanbul was chosen as the place of the murder to give a direct message to Ankara for its support of the MB and Qatar and decrease Turkey's prestige in the region (Habertürk, 2018). Ankara was quick to pinpoint Muhammed bin Salman (MBS) as the figure that ordered the murder and demand an international investigation. Turkey also tried to put pressure on MBS, however failed to achieve this. Not only did the Trump administration sign a huge military deal with Saudi Arabia but also MBS held many high-level visits since the murder without being held accountable. As the issue was put on the backburner and became a subject of negotiation, Turkey seemed to turn its attention to Abu Dhabi's crown prince, Muhammed bin Zayed, as the 'actual bad guy fomenting enmity against Turkey' (Taştekin, 2019). Bin Zayed was portrayed as the major financier of the failed coup attempt in Turkey in 2016 with interests in overthrowing the Erdoğan regime (Karaman, 2019). During this period, the media in both Turkey and the Gulf had launched campaigns against the other side. While the Saudi press had been personally attacking Erdoğan and aimed to financially hurt Turkey by preventing Saudi investment and visits by tourists, Turkish

sources rushed to associate the policies of the Gulf States with that of the Kurdish issue—the PYD. Growing UAE and Saudi relations with the PYD were reported widely in the Turkish media and seen as plots to weaken Turkey (Wilgenburg, 2018).

Turkey's crisis with major Arab countries and its regional standing took a new turn when Turkey got involved in Libya and managed to change the course of developments there. While Turkey and Qatar supported the UN-recognized Government of National Accord (GNA), almost all other regional players including Russia and major European states supported Hafter's Libyan National Army (LNA). Not surprisingly, it is possible to see Turkey's support to the GNA from a pro-MB lens as GNA included the MB members. As Hafter's forces were advancing to take Tripoli, Turkey's decision to use its military power and its ally in Syria, the Syrian National Army, to avert the advance and later its ability to keep the stalemate is important in showing the terms of engagement of Turkey with the region at large. First of all, it is possible to see Turkey's involvement in Libya as an extension of its ongoing conflictual relations with regional countries (Kardaş, 2020: 328). It entered into Libya to prevent the victory of its adversaries in the region. Secondly, despite this fact, the ideological dimension, the support for MB in Libya cannot be disregarded. Thirdly, the developments in Libya show Turkey's readiness to use hard power in regional disputes, even in rather far away crises. Fourth, Turkey's involvement in Libya, although unexpected, garnered domestic support as Turkey linked it with the larger rivalry ongoing in Eastern Mediterranean. Turkey justified its military involvement in support of the GNA not only by arguing that it was the UN-recognized party and needed to be defended but also underlining it as a necessity to thwart its encirclement in the Eastern Mediterranean by Greece, Cyprus, Egypt, and Israel. By signing a continental shelf agreement with the GNA, Turkey was not only breaking such encirclement but gaining new areas in the East Mediterranean to its advantage. Therefore, the operation in Libya gathered a domestic support within Turkey and Turkey's use of hard power was considered a part of its national interest (Kardaş, 2020: 331). Although Turkey and Russia supported different parties in Libya, Russia's involvement in Libya remained rather indirect and both parties refrained from bold acts that could impact the delicate balance in their relations in Syria and their growing military ties.

In the meanwhile, Turkey's decision to buy S-400 missiles from Russia came as a cold shower for Turkey's Western allies. It led to the further

straining of already troubled ties with the US that consequently excluded Turkey from the F-35 deal. Growing military relations with Russia brought a debate questioning Turkey's commitment to NATO. While Turkey tried to deepen its relations with Russia as a part of its growingly coercive role in the region and Syria, it also tried to use this relationship as a bargaining chip in its regional politics vis-a-vis the US, especially in its relations with the PYD. This remained, no doubt, a difficult game to play for Turkey, and especially proved futile in persuading the US for a change of policy in the Kurdish **question**.

*Post-2021: Domestic and Regional Challenges Culminating
in a U-Turn in the Middle East Policy*

As mentioned above, Turkey entered the third decade of the 2000s with a heavy regional agenda. Yet, from 2021 onwards, Turkey gave signals to distance itself from the MB. Starting with the closure of the MB offices and media outlets, the Erdoğan regime showed willingness to enter into dialogue with Cairo. Having called the Sisi regime as illegitimate for the past eight years, that came as a rather surprising development. Later, Ankara turned to mend its relations with the UAE, and even with Saudi Arabia—under the heavy weight of the legacy of the Khashoggi murder. Although it is still a subject of discussion, major reasons to justify the mending of relations are presented through Turkey's domestic political context. Turkey has been suffering under severe economic crisis with foreign currency shortages. Majority of the explanations focus on the need for the Erdoğan regime to fix the country's economy before the looming elections. Trying to quiet some opposition voices in the UAE (like Sedat Peker—a mafia leader revealing secret relations of Turkey's political leadership) also seems to play a role in this development. In the meanwhile, Turkey decided to enter into a close dialogue with Israel, upgrading the diplomatic representation to ambassador level. A more surprising move came when in mid-August 2022 Erdoğan signalled a possible dialogue with Asad. After a meeting with Putin in Sochi, Erdoğan's willingness to open dialogue with Asad without any pre-conditions concluded the full U-turn in Turkey's policy of the past 11 years. Just a few months ago, Turkey had been calling for another military operation into Northern Syria. It is argued that as it could not persuade Russia for a new operation, Turkey had turned to diplomacy and signalled possible dialogue with the Asad regime to first secure a deal with Damascus against the

Kurdish groups then to secure a safe zone (32 km along the border) to transfer a substantial number of Syrian refugees in Turkey before the elections, expected to be held in May 2023, and calm the increasing conflict in the population against the refugees.

CONCLUSION

Turkey's policy towards the Middle East has gone through periods of deep cooperation followed by conflictual ones. After a period of cooperation and amity based on the idea of integration in the first decade of the 2000s, Turkey's relations with the region soared and took a conflictual stance in the second one leading consequently to its isolation. In the second decade of the 2000s, Turkey's policy became ideologically driven, yet at the same time demonstrating hard power tools, and coercive tactics. As the Kurdish issue dominated the foreign policy with the region in the post-2015 period, growing relations with Russia brought about a new dynamic, especially in Syria. Despite the tension with almost all regional countries except with Qatar that dominated the 2010s, it has been interesting to observe Turkey mending ties with each one of these states in the past two years. Most explanations for this change revolve around domestic concerns—need for markets, economic concerns, and foreign currency crisis, 'sending' the Syrians back—and underline how the kudos in these areas could pay back in the elections. Turkey's relations with the Middle East has been shown as a good example of omnibalancing in the first decade of the 2000s—Turkey's successes in the region was seen to be bringing popularity for the government at home. Although it is still questionable at this stage to what extent the new friendships with former adversaries will hold, it seems the policy of linking regional success to domestic politics is once again on the agenda. As the recent news, as of August 2022, underline that Ankara is preparing for mending ties with Asad, the situation in Syria is marred with challenges for Turkey. While the relations with Kurds might open a new period of intense conflict, even more difficult could be the situation in Idlib and solving Turkey's refugee problem. Turkey has no doubt become more confident in using its hard power in regional conflicts during the last decade. After the intense tension of the past decade, whether Turkey will be able to boost its soft power in the region remains to be seen.

NOTES

1. A flotilla of six ships, largest being Mavi Marmara, has sailed from Istanbul to Gaza, in May 2010 carrying humanitarian aid, aiming to breach Israeli blockade on Gaza as a part of Free Gaza Movement. The ship was boarded by Israeli soldiers in international waters, killing nine Turkish citizens and leaving several wounded.

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Cooperation Amid Transformation: Turkey and International Organizations

Özden Selcen Özmelek 

INTRODUCTION

Turkish governments have engaged with multiple inter-governmental institutions since the early years of the state, but the UN and NATO have been the focal points of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Coşkun & Edig, 2012: 336). Yet, the year 2001 marked the beginning of a new era in Turkish politics, which inevitably alternated the country's relations with regional and international institutions. A newborn political party, AKP (AKP—Justice and Development Party), came to power in 2002 following its establishment in 2001 and has been directing the stream of Turkish politics ever since. Under AKP rule, Turkey has undergone various transitions that have confused the outsiders' perceptions of

Ö. S. Özmelek (✉)

Department of Political Science and International
Relations, Çukurova University, Adana, Turkey
e-mail: osozmelek@cu.edu.tr

the country's motivations, drives, and tendencies (Öniş, 2011: 47–50). These transitions have materialized as changes in Turkish foreign politics, notably in its relations with international organizations.

Morgenthau's definition of the typical international policy helps us understand the transformation Turkish policy is undergoing. Domestic and international politics revolve around the power struggle. Both incarnate three basic patterns:

A political policy seeks either to keep power, to increase power, or to demonstrate power. To these three typical patterns of politics, three typical international policies correspond. A nation whose foreign policy tends toward keeping power pursues a policy of the status quo. A nation whose foreign policy aims at acquiring more power than it actually has through a reversal of existing power relations (...) A nation whose foreign policy seeks to demonstrate power has either the purpose of maintaining or increasing it and pursues a policy of prestige. (Morgenthau, 1948: 21)

Turkey's international politics exhibit the patterns and policies of Morgenthau. Until the end of the Cold War, Turkey maintained close relationships with the West despite the occasional inter-allied problems, going through a power-keep phase and defending the status quo. After 1991, Turkey launched a renewed diplomatic initiative, particularly in the Balkans and Caucasus, moving to the power-demonstration phase in search of enhanced diplomacy tools and prestige politics in surrounding regions. With the rise of AKP to power, the government tried to move toward the power-extension phase by initially acclaiming itself as an established, strong power and then plying to a higher standing in the power hierarchy. For instance, Turkey's deeds regarding multilateral organizations have increased considerably after 2002, demonstrating Turkey's rising enthusiasm for adopting roles in international organizations. Turkey made admission applications to non-affiliated platforms, undertook new responsibilities in affiliated organizations, and completed the institutionalization processes of involved establishments. Overall, the number of membership and cooperation activities almost equaled those between 1923 and 2002. To illustrate, Turkey became a member of The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in 1975 and the Asia Cooperation Dialogue in 2013; a member of OECD in 1961 and a dialogue partner of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in 2012. Turkey was an initiator of EUROMED in 1995 and became a member

of its continuation, the Union for the Mediterranean, in 2008; Turkey was a founding member of G20 in 1999 and assumed its Presidency between 2014–2015 (International Organizations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, s.d.k). Particularly in the UN, to whom Turkey became a member in 1945, Turkey's diplomatic visibility and influence grew after 2002 while its contribution to the UN peacekeeping missions outstripped the number of participations in the earlier 57 years (Karadağ, 2019, pp. 464–466).

The last 20 years of Turkey's cooperation with the UN and NATO is best understood through Morgenthau's glasses, with an interest-based, power-optimizing interpretation. The complicated framework that is affected by opportunities and risks at all levels during this power-extension process is explained through a level analysis in this chapter.

SYSTEMIC SHIFT AND ITS IMPLICATIONS ON TURKEY'S POLICIES

As a transformative source, the rise of China and the decline of Western economies, the public reaction toward American interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq accelerated the rise of less hegemonic powers against the USA's unilateral world system and created expectations for a more multipolar one (Zakaria, 2011). As there has been no compatible hegemon to match the American power despite the rise of China, the power diffusion among system members eventually restructured the system (Cox, 2012). In this regard, the UN became a venue for emerging countries to enhance their influence and improve their agenda-setting power. The competition for Security Council non-permanent memberships grew stronger while forming informal coalitions to support each other's policies in the General Assembly became more frequent. Consequently, the UN evolved into a power-demonstrating platform for countries aspiring to benefit from the new power shift (Sever & Oğuz Gök, 2016: 1157).

Meanwhile, Turkey's economic development reinforced AKP's ambitious vision regarding Turkey's place in the power pyramid (Yuvacı & Kaplan, 2013: 215). The convenience of being in majority government enabled the AKP government to reformulate Turkish foreign policy. Consequently, on its way to power optimization, Turkey adopted an activist policy to consolidate its influence in global governance. Turkey enforced this strategy with moves on different platforms: Ekmeleddin İhsanoglu was elected as Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic

Cooperation in 2004; Ambassador Hüseyin Dirioz became NATO's Assistant Secretary-General on Defense Policy in 2010; Turkey obtained observer status in the African Union in 2005; and it became a Strategic Dialogue Partner of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in 2008.

However, the UN, as the principal international platform to exert influence, remained as Turkey's primary focus. Istanbul became a diplomatic hub, hosting numerous conferences on issues of global importance, notably on issues of mediation and peace. Additionally, Turkish discourse concentrated on key areas like economy, humanitarian assistance, and development (Haşimi, 2014). In this regard, the Turkish government bid for United Nations Security Council (UNSC) non-permanent membership twice, for the 2009–2010 and 2015–2016 terms, to gain a leading role capable of shaping the UN's paramount agenda. In the first run, Turkey achieved UNSC membership by obtaining the support of 151 states of the General Council, yet lost the second time. The success of the first bid was thanks to a dynamic lobbying program, including a broad meeting agenda and the opening of new diplomatic missions in traditionally less-connected countries. Moreover, the government followed an ambitious economic aid program reaching out to least-developed states from sub-Saharan Africa, South America, and Central Asia (Aral, 2009: 152–153).

In 2015, Turkey applied for the same assignment for a second time, eager to continue consolidating its rank in international governance mechanisms and to highlight its prestigious position (Aral, 2009: 154). However, against strong candidates like Spain and New Zealand, Turkey failed to win the seat, gaining only 60 votes from the General Assembly members. This loss could be attributed to Turkey's assertive regional policies, especially in the Middle East and notably, the Egyptian government's campaign against Turkey as a reaction to Turkey's heightened support for the Muslim Brothers, severe opposition to the coup against Mohammed Morsi, and the non-recognition of the new military regime in Cairo (Öniş, 2014: 206). With the aid of Saudi Arabia, Egypt prevented Turkey's acquisition of the seat for a second time (Sever & Oğuz Gök, 2016: 1162), illustrating that Turkey's transition to power-extension from the power-demonstration phase started to draw objections. After the failure of the UNSC election, Turkish criticism of the UN system became more severe and visible, especially with the symbolization of the 2013 rhetoric "The world is bigger than five" (Daily Sabah(a), 2021; Erdoğan, 2021; TCBB, 2018).

Turkey's will to expand its international influence should also be studied in its funding strategies. Compared to other BRICS countries, Turkish funding of the UN remains behind its peers, creating a paradox between AKP governments' robust discourse of their country's active and international role in global governance. However, when Turkey contributes to the UN, it prefers the UN agencies, UNDP, FAO, WHO, and UNESCO because of their focus on global health, poverty, and humanitarian relief. 46% of Turkey's voluntary financial contribution goes to the UNDP activities, such as relief and human development for Palestinian refugees, food and agriculture, health and education (science), and culture. Meanwhile, the share of Turkish multilateral funding remains low, compared to 98% of the share in bilateral development assistance. Turkey has been building an autonomous development partnership preferring bilateral funding over multilateral mechanisms. This attitude allows Turkey to enhance its status-elevating policies and visibility in the international system by making its funding choices based on its domestic decision-making processes and supervising the outcome of the assistance outside the multilateral funding instruments.

The power shift in the international system has one last effect on Turkish politics regarding international organizations. America's decline in power enabled Russia and China to pursue more ambitious roles in world politics (Karmazin & Hynek, 2020). Even though Turkey has relatively fewer interactions with China, Russia remains a vital partner operating in the Turkish geopolitical realm. Russia's increasing revisionist policies, notably its military interventions in Georgia, Ukraine, and Syria, compel Turkey to engage in close relations with Russia to balance its Western allies, especially the USA. Turkey's rising discourse about the possibility of considering the Shanghai Organization as a substitute for the EU and NATO (Gaspers, 2017) and its augmenting interest in becoming a part of Asian organizations (MFA, n.d.) derive from this systemic shift and complicate regional balances.

REGIONAL DYNAMICS AND TURKEY'S POSITION

Difficulties in relations with NATO and the Western countries took off after 2003, following the invasion of Iraq (For detailed information, see Chapters 6, 11, and 12). In 2003, the Turkish parliament denied accommodating the American request to use Turkish military facilities and territory during the intervention. A few months later, the

Turkish Special Forces members based in Sulaymaniyah were arrested and detained with hoods over their heads. This reciprocal abrasion generated an anti-American feeling in Turkey, which was later associated with an anti-NATO sentiment (Kirişçi, 2019: 404).

The military intervention in Iraq triggered new security anxieties for Turkey in the following years. The first reaction to the complex security environment created in Iraq was to evoke Article 4 of NATO in 2003, to grant additional border protection in South-Eastern Turkey, which demonstrated an enhanced consultation and cooperation process between Turkey and NATO (Bumgardner, 2019: 80). However, the rise of PKK and ISIS due to the power vacuum created by the occupation in the region propelled Turkey to take further action, resulting in Operation Sun in 2008, Operation Claw in 2019, and Operation Claw Lock in 2022. These campaigns have been received negatively in the West even though Turkey took part in Operation Inherent Resolve against ISIS by opening the Incirlik Base for the operation's logistics (Bozkurt, 2018: 13). The last repercussion of this series of operations was felt in July 2022, when Iraq submitted a complaint to the UNSC, suggesting that the Turkish artillery attack killed nine civilians in the Kurdistan Autonomous Region of Iraq, Zakho. In an urgent session gathered after the complaint, Iraq demanded the withdrawal of Turkish troops from the country, while Turkey denied the accusations, blamed the PKK for undertaking the attack, and announced its resolution to pursue PKK fighters who take sanctuary in Iraq. Even though parties agreed to investigate the affair jointly, Turkish actions and incursions continue to occupy the debates in NATO and the UN.

Second, the Syrian war has been among the most challenging regional issues regarding Turkey's relations with multilateral bodies (For detailed information, see Chapters 6, 9, and 12). In this regard, Turkey became one of the active states within the group Friends of Syria, formed after Russia and China's vetoes in the UNSC against condemning Syria. The second meeting of this initiative, gathering almost 90 states, took place in Istanbul in 2012, where Turkey called for the international community to take action and recognize the right to self-defense of the Syrian people (Daloğlu, 2013; Schoon & Duxbury, 2019). When the alliance could not create real change, Turkey followed two main strategies: First, it invoked Article 4 of NATO four times, twice in 2012, once in 2015, and in 2020. Each occasion was associated with a different aspect of the disruption resulting from the Syrian war, such as stray fires, terrorist

bombings, and aerial incidents. NATO responded with an affirmative attitude and mainly increased Turkish air defense capabilities like deploying Patriot missile batteries to Turkish bases and borders (Snodgrass, 2022) while turning the Incirlik Airbase into an epicenter to support anti-Daesh missions in Syria and Iraq. Second, dissatisfied with NATO's backing regarding border security, Turkey decided to take a more independent course of action (Yuvacı & Kaplan, 2013: 224). Having perceived the Kurdish insurgency as the main threat along borders, Turkey prioritized the battle against *Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat* (PYD—Democratic Union Party) and *Yekîneyên Parastina Gel* (YPG—People's Protection Units) and postponed its mission to stop ISIS (Griffiths, 2016: 3; For detailed information, see Chapters 6 and 11). Hence, Turkey's over-involvement in the Syrian war and adoption of diverse interests with its allies had severe implications on its relations with the USA and NATO, leaving Turkey isolated in its battle against Kurdish militia. This dilemma also caused Turkey to augment the tone of criticism against the UN, while Turkey's power ambitions in creating the preferred outcome within and outside the UN came to nothing (Dal, 2014: 110; Gürsoy & Toygür, 2018: 3; Öniş, 2014: 210–212).

While Turkey's over-activism in conducting the Middle Eastern issues to exert power produced negative perceptions and caused concerns about Turkey's malign imperial intentions employing the concept of neo-Ottomanism (Öniş, 2014: 205), two other issues from the Middle East, unconnected to Arab revolts, impacted Turkey's interactions notably within the UN. The first issue concerns Iran's nuclear power discussions (For detailed information, see Chapter 12), exceeding simply regional issues and relating to the international non-proliferation regime, providing Turkey a subtle case to display a leading role in global governance and enhance its diplomatic initiatives under the UN. In this case, two non-permanent members of the UNSC, Turkey and Brazil, tried to drive the UNSC to cease coercive methods. However, the members of the UNSC, particularly the USA, Britain, and France, found the initiatives insufficient and tactical to underline that Iran had peaceful purposes in its efforts to harness nuclear energy. Hence, the UNSC adopted new sanctions against Iran with 12 affirmative votes, with Turkey and Brazil opposing and Lebanon abstaining (İlgi & Taner, 2014: 189–194). Even though Turkey felt undermined and ineffectual because of the UNSC members' decision, it still kept efforts to influence and mediate the issue, organizing further nuclear negotiations between Iran and the permanent

members of the UNSC in İstanbul in 2012, with Germany included in the process. Nevertheless, the limits of Turkish impact, especially under the auspices of the UN, became evident, causing Turkey to express its increasing displeasure about the methods and structures of the UN, emphasizing the reform demands (Sever & Oğuz Gök, 2016).

The second issue from the Middle East, giving Turkey a chance to assert its power via inter-governmental organizations, stemmed from the Israel-Palestinian issue and the Flotilla attack in 2010. Since its rise to power, with an identity based-approach, the AKP government has been ambitious to become the voice of Palestinian rights. However, after the Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip in 2007 and the 2008–2009 Gaza war, Turkish activism and attempt to become the protector of the Palestinians grew immensely, highlighting the government's desire to increase its power in the Middle East and instrumentalize the multilateral platforms for this aim. Mavi Marmara event quickly became an international crisis with Turkey's efforts to bring the issue to several multilateral organizations' agendas.

First, Turkey requested an emergency meeting of the UNSC, where it condemned Israel's act of aggression and demanded an international inquiry to punish all responsible parties. Turkey also asked for an official apology, the delivery of the cargo to its destination, compensation for the families of harmed people, and the lift of the blockade from Gaza (Ilgit & Taner, 2014: 189–190). Thereafter, The President of the UN Security Council issued a statement calling for an objective investigation and the release of the arrested volunteers. Afterward, the UN Human Rights Council issued a resolution demanding an international inquiry regarding Israel's aggressive actions against the ships (Smith & Thorp, 2010: 7). In addition, Turkey called the NATO Council and Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) for an extraordinary meeting to discuss the civilian element of the flotilla, bringing attention to the illegality of the Israeli attack. As a result, the OIC issued a declaration condemning the Israeli act of terrorism and the violation of international law and human rights, stating gratitude for Turkish support to the Palestinian people. Also, the Arab League invited Turkey, who was not a member of the organization, to its emergency meeting regarding the attack on the ships and referred to Turkey as a partner of the League against the policies of Israel. Consequently, Turkey declared that they were ready to apply to the International Court of Justice concerning the blockade on Gaza with the support of the Arab League and OIC (Dal, 2012). Thus, several

multilateral platforms focused on the subject, becoming vital vehicles for Turkey's global efforts.

Meanwhile, Turkey declined the mediation efforts of the UN to restore relations with Israel and hosted the Palestinian Ambassador's conference in 2011 and Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) in 2012. Finally, after multi-sided pressure, in 2013, Israel officially apologized to Turkey and compensated the families of the deceased and the wounded (İlgiç & Taner, 2014: 190–192). Thus, the Flotilla event became a significant occasion to observe how Turkey reinforced its influence and power by turning a regional issue into a global affair through its activities and policies followed on multilateral platforms.

The final regional event causing turbulence in relations with NATO came with the renewed Russia-Ukraine war in 2022. Turkey facing a highly complex situation in the Black Sea has mainly acted in line with Western states, NATO, and the UN. First, Turkey recognized the invasion of Ukraine by Russia as an official war and evoked Article 19 of the Montreux Convention for the first time since World War II. Thereby, the Turkish straits have been closed for all belligerent countries' naval access to the Black Sea, disabling any Russian ship returning to the Black Sea and engaging in war with Ukraine. Also, Turkey did not refrain from extending military support to Ukraine. Several Bayraktar TB2 drones, known to be successful during the military operations in Syria, Libya, and Nagorno-Karabakh, have been sold to Ukraine to enhance bilateral defense cooperation (Zanotti & Thomas, 2022).

Furthermore, the war in Ukraine caused a global food crisis due to the cessation of grain exports from Ukraine and Russia, two of the world's biggest grain exporters. At the end of July, Turkey and the UN brokered a significant agreement between warring parties, allowing grain exports from Odesa, Pivdennyi, and Chornomorsk ports, by opening safe corridors for ships to relieve the global food crisis. This solution was mainly led by Turkey, who initiated direct talks between warring parties in March and convinced them to sign the deal for humanitarian reasons. The agreement was signed in Istanbul with the participation of UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres (Euronews, 2022).

Despite all these efforts, changing dynamics in the Baltics strained Turkey's relations with NATO. Finland and Sweden, known for their militarily neutral policies, applied for NATO membership in May 2022. Both states were rattled for their security due to aggressive Russian politics and the war in Ukraine, as Finland shares a long land border

and Sweden shares a maritime border with Russia (Bishop & Ellyatt, 2022). However, Turkey affirmed its negative stance on their membership prospects. This objection was linked to a long-time struggle regarding Scandinavian countries' alleged support for Kurdish militants, whom Turkey considers to be the elements of PKK. Turkey's harsh language and opposing approach to the issue were found disruptive by NATO members as the membership process necessitates ratification of all member countries (Tanner & Fraser, 2022). After many bilateral and multilateral talks, a solution was found at the Madrid summit. Both countries agreed to address Turkey's pending deportation or extradition requests of terror suspects according to the European Convention on Extradition and, in return, proceeded with the accession protocols, officially beginning the ratification process (Al-Yafai, 2022). Thus, Turkey still cohered with NATO allies after acquiring concessions despite its earlier protests concerning the NATO about its intentions and axis.

DOMESTIC INCIDENTS CAUSING MULTILATERAL TURMOIL

The AKP government adopted an ideological framework to serve for the power-extension phase, namely Turkey's Islamic identity, which would facilitate Turkey's focus on Middle Eastern affairs to benefit Turkey's power-demonstration and political influence. The AKP was already rooted in political Islam, having supporters coming from Erbakanists-Islamists (Aras, 2022: 75) and Gülenists, ready to embrace Turkish-Islamic identity. Accordingly, this vision was paired with new concepts, such as "Neo-Ottomanism" and "rhythmic" and "proactive diplomacy," to be employed in Turkey's strategies in regional and global affairs (Dal & Kurşun, 2016: 619). Thus, Davutoğlu's grand design, "Strategic Depth," maintained neo-Ottomanist overtones for collecting regional power based on this Islamic identity to ease impact in the Middle East (Öniş, 2014: 207).

Indeed, the AKP's Islamic orientation contributed to Turkey's growing influence in the Middle East, reflecting on Turkey's image in multilateral organizations. Among those are the acquisition of permanent guest status in the Arab League, the OIC secretary-general's expression of gratitude to Turkey for championing the Palestinian case, and a Turkish national becoming the Secretary-General of the OIC for the first time in 2005 (Yuvacı & Kaplan, 2013: 215). Also, considering that bearing a leadership position in the Muslim world would enhance Turkey's power within the

Western coalitions and institutions and bring an extended power-phase like global power status, Turkish endeavors were enriched through projects such as the Dialogue of Civilizations Initiative to connect with a broader world (Öniş & Yılmaz, 2009: 11–12). However, placing itself as the role model of the Middle East drew Turkey into regions' sectarian divisions and conflicts, particularly after the Arab revolts (Tuğal, 2012), as they materialized in Syria, Iraq, Egypt (Öniş, 2014: 213), and Libya. This assertiveness is one of the reasons why the Western alliance had rising anxieties over Turkey, assuming that Turkey had become a central platform of action for Islamist groups in the Middle East (Griffiths, 2016: 3).

Nevertheless, endorsing Sunni Islam in foreign affairs was a natural extension of the AKP's domestic policies, which testified to the gradually blurring line between domestic and foreign politics. In this spirit, foreign affairs turned into the continuation of domestic policy and highlighted the government's need for foreign policy triumphs narrative and supplied for sustaining nationwide populism (Aras, 2022: 76–77). Any criticism toward NATO, any defiance against the UN, or any acceptance from the Middle Eastern and Asian inter-governmental institutions fed Erdoğan's strong leadership image, consolidating voters' support on the domestic front (Öniş, 2014: 214).

Similarly, most of Turkey's actions are derived from the government's domestic or regional goals rather than the developments in the international system, causing the prioritization of domestic gains over global calculations (Aras, 2022: 67). Perceiving the international political developments from a national perspective (Altunışık & Tür, 2006: 246), Erdoğan attached his domestic popularism to his stance on foreign policy, victimizing any alliances for this purpose and complicating its relations with Western partners (Aras, 2017: 5). In this regard, Erdoğan's discourse against the UN and NATO gradually marginalized, raising the antipathetic feeling in Turkey, with more than %65 of the people distrusting NATO in 2022 (Sputnik News, 2022) as an outcome of the intricacy mentioned above.

Therefore, political leaders, starting with Erdoğan, followed by Gül and Davutoğlu, became the main drivers of Turkish foreign policy, while the AKP's agenda became the government's priority. Such a personalized foreign policy, bearing Erdoğan's perceptions as the basis of foreign affairs, eased Erdoğan's monopoly on external relations. He steered the course of Turkish politics as he wished, whether closer to Russia or

away from NATO (Aras, 2022: 71), turning crucial subjects such as refugees and the enlargement of NATO into mere bargaining chips. Under this impact, Turkish politics transformed under the AKP rule, and this changing political identity received expected attention and support from Russia, while it was criticized and sidelined by Western peers. In addition to Putin's personal ties with Erdoğan and their common attitudes on issues like human rights, sovereignty, and interventionism, (Kardaş, 2019: 4), three forthcoming issues defined Turkey's antagonistic alliance mentality and intensifying empathy toward Russia.

First, Turkey's Gezi movement of 2013 and the Turkish government's harsh response to civil disobedience have been highly criticized by Western institutions. Additional pressure and condemnation were exhibited by the European Commission of Human Rights (ECHR) and the European Court of Human Rights on the trial and imprisonment of several intellectuals, who were denounced as terrorists (Onbaşı, 2016). Several European countries, notably Germany, sheltered some of the politically accused names of the Gezi movement, offering them asylum and refusing to extradite them to Turkey as the litigations were perceived as unfair and unfounded (Bianet, 2022).

Second, the coup attempt by the Gülen Movement in 2016 brought immediate support from Russia, while the USA, NATO, and the EU undermined the issue (Griffiths, 2016: 3–4) according to the Turkish government. The USA's refusal to Fethullah Gülen (Yücel, 2018), and the protection of fugitive Gülenist army members by Greece (BBC, 2017), generated a specific rupture between Turkey and NATO members. The Turkish government went on to question the loyalty of several Turkish army members, accusing NATO of having ties with Gülenist putschists and criticizing NATO for intervening in Turkey's internal politics (Aras, 2017: 30).

Finally, the transition into the Presidential system in 2017 via national referendum was not well received by the West, as it resulted in the monopolization of Turkish politics under Erdoğan and the abolishment of the separation of powers in Turkey (Adar & Seufert, 2021). However, as a state with problematic relations with the European Council due to the erosion of human rights situation and increasing numbers of imprisoned journalists and opposition members, Russia had no objections to the developments in Turkish politics. As a leader enjoying the one-person rule in Russia, Putin perceived these transformations neither as threatening nor unfavorable. On the other hand, members of the EU, mainly

consisting of the members of NATO, adhering with the Copenhagen criteria, dreaded the Turkish transformation (Dursun-Özkanca, 2022: 4–5). Members of the alliance, including Belgium, Germany, Austria, and the Netherlands, forestalled AKP's presidential propaganda meetings in their territories before the referendum (AA, 2017) and did not dismiss democratic downfalls afterward.

In response to these developments, Turkey displayed a rough stance against cooperation with the alliance and enkindled the discussions on the Turkish axis shift. The first evidence of fracture emerged in 2017 when Germany decided to leave the Incirlik Air Base as Turkey refused to allow German lawmakers to visit for deployment inspections. Germany was involved in the fight against ISIS, bringing its surveillance planes and refueling jets to Incirlik in 2015. However, as a response to criticism toward Turkey regarding domestic matters, the access of German lawmakers to their troops stationed in Incirlik was severely curtailed. Thus, Germany decided to move their military vehicles and personnel to Jordan (Smale, 2017). Nevertheless, the core issue that cracked Turkish-NATO relations arose in September 2017, when Turkey agreed to buy S-400 missiles from Russia. In 2013, in response to Turkey's appeal to the 4th Article of NATO, the alliance deployed patriot air defenses through Germany, the Netherlands, and the USA in Kahramanmaraş, Adana, and Gaziantep against border attacks from Syria (NATO, 2014). In 2014 and 2015, the systems were reinforced by Dutch, Spanish, and Italian contributions. At the end of 2015, the allies started withdrawing their Patriot systems and promised to send ground forces to defend their member state if desired (Bekdil, 2015).

However, Turkey was dissatisfied with these non-permanent deployments and wanted to buy its own Patriot batteries. In fact, between 2009 and 2018 American Department of Defense and Turkey had multiple negotiations regarding sales packages for technological and industrial transfers. In 2013, when both sides came closer to sealing the deal, Erdoğan stepped in. He wished to lower the prices and enlarge the scope of technological transfers, so he utilized the Chinese FD-2000 system as leverage, allowing nationally authorized production, as an alternative to Patriot missiles. After the coup attempt in 2016, Turkey and Russia drew closer to each other, cooperating on several issues, like the Astana conference for Syria. In this context, in 2017, Russia offered to sell the S-400 air defense system as an alternative to Patriot systems (Townsend & Ellehuus, 2019). As the USA did not want to reveal and transfer technical

details of Patriot missile systems and Turkey found their cost too high, the government decided to buy the S-400 defense system instead of the Patriots (Demirci, 2019).

Despite objections by NATO and the USA, the deal was finalized and the transfer of S-400 systems to Turkey started in 2019, while Turkey also hinted at a possible Sukhoi aircraft purchase in the future. Subsequently, this deal became a highly controversial subject for the allies as it was a new occasion for NATO's missile defense structure from a military perspective. The organization claimed that the S-400 missiles could not be integrated into NATO's military system because the S-400 system could not incorporate NATO's network-based Air Defense Ground Environment, satellite detection, identification capacities, and other aerial assets, resulting in a lack of complete harmony and information flow (Egeli, 2019), troubling Turkey's full participation in NATO military activities. The USA tried to pressure Turkey to cancel the deal by removing it from the F-35 fighter jet program in 2019 (Mehta, 2019). Yet, Turkey responded by threatening the USA to expel American forces from the Incirlik and Kurecik air bases, raising further questions about the commitment to the NATO alliance and the seriousness of military ties with Russia. In exchange, NATO discussed the relocation of the advanced radar system in Kurecik and the continuity of Spanish Patriot missile battery deployment (Pierini, 2020), but both systems remain intact as of today. Ultimately, the contentious sale of Russian S-400 ballistic missiles to Turkey and further rapprochement between the two states upset relations between Turkey, NATO, and the USA.

For all that, developments have altered the conjuncture concerning Turkey's military cooperation with NATO. After the removal of Turkey from the F-35 program, Turkey had affirmed its intention to buy more fighter jets from the USA, but this demand was rejected because of the purchase of the S-400 missiles. Consequently, Erdoğan and Putin discussed the possible sale of SU-35 and SU-57 fighter jets to Turkey (Daily Sabah(b), 2021). However, after the new enlargement discussions toward Finland and Sweden, Turkish rejection due to the non-extradition of certain people associated with PKK was appeased by the USA with a pledge to sell F-16 jets to Turkey if demanded. Initially, American Congress only permitted this arrangement by including a clause stating that the sale could only be realized if it served American interests. In response, a group of congressmen called for the rejection of the sale because of Erdoğan's lack of commitment to NATO and his vast

human rights abuses. Nevertheless, the US State Department answered this notification by stating that the potential sale of F-16 fighter jets to Turkey would conform to the USA's and NATO's security interests (Bisht, 2022), confirming that Turkey is still perceived as a component of NATO's security architecture.

CONCLUSION

After examining all opportunities and risks arising from different analysis levels, it is possible to affirm four main inferences. First, Turkish politics have been under reconstruction. The government's perception produced a power quest with a power-balancing attitude between the East and its traditional Western allies. Short-term interests are prioritized over long-term cooperation, economic resources and cooperation are valued for greater power capacities, and more active roles are adopted to exert power. In this regard, Turkey's reach for global power did not derive entirely from its growing capacity but from a self-perception and determination to become a more significant power. To that aim, Turkey highlighted its Eastern identity to expand its power and acquire more essential roles in various organizations, as materialized in establishing a Strategic Dialogue Mechanism between Turkey and the Gulf Cooperation Council in 2008. Similarly, Turkey emphasized its long-term ties to Western institutions to gain more prestige in regional issues, as exemplified in the Mavi Marmara incident.

Second, Turkey has been instrumentalizing international organizations to demonstrate its power and generate influence for its power-extension strategy. Hence, the desire to achieve more prominent roles in organizations, the urge to create a more extensive organizational repertoire, and the growing criticism targeting the UN and NATO demonstrate the Turkish government's motivations and frustrations toward regional and international organizations. On the one hand, Turkey focuses on inter-governmental institutions and puts tremendous emphasis on its ranking in these organizations. On the other, power scarcities demoralize Turkey and turn into instant arrows of criticism, which has been observed regarding its relations with the UN and NATO.

Third, one opportunity stemming from one level of analysis creates a conflicting effect on another level. Alternatively, a one-level-based problem may merge with other challenges from other levels and become a substantial issue. In this regard, Turkey's relations with Russia render a

great example. Erdoğan and Putin possess a non-institutional personal relationship, which coincides with the systemic shift against American power and encourages further domestic and regional cooperation. That buildup presents several outcomes, like Turkey's ameliorating interaction with the Shanghai Security Cooperation at the regional level or Turkey's deteriorating relationship with NATO due to domestic questions. Thus, Turkey's relationship with multilateral organizations is stimulated at all levels. As an outcome, Turkish officials' verbal and practical exchanges should not be tied to a single event but should be explored with a more complex approach.

Fourth, Turkey's favorable or problematic interactions with its allies are affected by diplex gestures. Domestically, Turkey's transformation is found to be more autocratic and accordingly receives negative responses from European partners, creating political and collaboration fractures. At the same time, Turkey could not tolerate the military consent provided to YPG/PYD to fight ISIS and, disappointedly, started acting unilaterally. Thus, pull and push factors came from both sides of the relationship and turned into a spiral of chain reflex.

Even so, viewed from a larger perspective, there has been no historical rupture in cooperation with multilateral organizations. Despite the shift-of-axis discussions and complexities, relations with regional and international organizations continue to exist. Yet, the reasoning behind the attached value is entirely new, as Turkey has never tried to enter a power-extension phase before.

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