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WHO MAKES TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY?
THE MAIN ACTORS OF THE AKP ERA

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AKP ERA

TÜRKİYE'DE DIŞ POLİTİKAYI KİM YAPAR? AKP DÖNEMİNİN ANA
AKTÖRLERİ

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AKP: Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi/Justice and Development Party

CHP: Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi/ Republican Peoples Party

DEİK: Dış Ekonomik İlişkiler Kurulu

DYP: Doğru Yol Partisi/True Path Party

DP: Demokrat Parti/Democratic Party

EU: European Union

FPA: Foreign Policy Analysis

MGK: Milli Güvenlik Kurulu / National Security Council

MFA: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

PKK: Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê / Kurdistan Workers' Party

SAM: Siyasi Araştırmalar Merkezi/Center for Strategic Research

SETA: Siyaset, Ekonomi ve Toplum Araştırmaları Vakfı/ Foundation for Political,
Economic and Social Research

SHP: Sosyal Demokrat Halkçı Parti /Social Democratic People Party

TOBB: Türkiye Odalar ve Borsalar Birliği

TÜSİAD: Türk Sanayicileri ve İş İnsanları Derneği / Turkish Association of
Industrialists and Businesspeople

UN: United Nations

US: United States

ABSTRACT

Turkey's foreign policy has always been one of the most crucial topics in academic literature especially since the Justice and Development Party (JDP) gained power, and academic literature related to the subject has proliferated. However, the question as to who Turkey's foreign policy actors have been during the JDP's rule remains underexplored. Four of the most critical foreign political decisions - the March 1st Motion, the Cyprus referendum, the Football Diplomacy with Armenia and the Arab Spring - are studied in this work mainly from actor-specific, bureaucratic, group-thinking and pluralistic theoretical frameworks. The study concluded that the JDP in its first phase of government (2002-2007) made more democratic and incremental decisions, and other actors such as the bureaucracy, the military, and public opinion played a significant role. However, in the second half of its rule (2007-2014), the presence of a strong leader overshadowed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which could be a true actor only if the leader had a foreign policy vision and shared values, or if the Minister of Foreign Affairs by himself/herself were strong enough to enact policy. During this period, the actors' collisions took place in the context of intra-party and personal relationships. This reality and the consolidation of Recep Tayyip Erdogan's power has resulted in a sole dominant actor in foreign policymaking.

Keywords: Turkish Foreign Policy, Decision Making, Justice and Development Party, Actor (Foreign Policy)

ÖZET

Türkiye'nin dış politikası özellikle de Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP) iktidara geldiğinden beri akademik literatürde en önemli konulardan biri olmuştur ve konuyla ilgili akademik literatür artmıştır. Ancak, AKP'nin yönetimi döneminde Türkiye'nin dış politika aktörlerinin kim olduğu sorusu hala yeterince irdelenmemiştir ve bu çalışma mevcut boşluğu doldurmayı amaçlıyor. En kritik dış politik kararlardan dördü - 1 Mart Tezkeresi, Kıbrıs Referandumu, Ermenistan ile Futbol Diplomasisi ve Arap Baharı ışığında, özellikle aktöre özgü, bürokratik, grup düşüncesi ve çoğulcu kuramsal çerçevelerden incelendi. Çalışma, AKP yönetiminin ilk döneminde (2002-2007) daha demokratik ve tedrici kararlar aldığını ve bürokrasi, ordu, kamuoyu gibi diğer aktörlerin önemli bir rol oynadığı sonucuna varmıştır. Ancak, ikinci yarısında (2007-2014) Dışişleri Bakanlığı'nda güçlü liderlerin gölgesi var. Türkiye'de bir aktör olarak Dışişleri Bakanlığı, ancak liderin dış politika vizyonu ve belirli değerlere sahip olması veya Dışişleri Bakanı'nın siyaset üretebilecek kadar güçlü olması durumunda aktör olabilir. İkinci dönemde aktörlerin parti içi ve kişisel ilişkilerin arka planında çarpışmaları meydana geldi. Bu gerçek ve Recep Tayyip Erdoğan'ın gücünün pekiştirilmesi, onu dış politikada tek bir hakim aktör ortaya çıkarmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Türk Dış Politikası, Karar Alma, Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, Aktör (Dış Politika)

INTRODUCTION

When talking about a country's foreign policy-making process, the ministry of foreign affairs is the first actor that automatically comes to mind. This hypothesis comes from Western foreign policy-making practices and theories, because in the West there is a fundamental institutionalization of these practices. But this is a very relative approach and could change depending on global trends or a country's structural position, governmental system and many other factors as well. In foreign policy analysis, actors and structures are very crucial components. In recent years, the literature on Turkey's foreign policy has increased and studied from all possible perspectives, although there is very limited literature specifically focusing on Turkey's foreign policy-makers. Therefore, it is vital to study the question 'Who makes Turkey's Foreign Policy?' Without analyzing the actors of foreign policy, foreign policy analysis could not be considered complete. This research question aims to clarify how foreign policy decisions are crystalized in Turkey and who have been and who are the decisive actors during the AKP era, starting from the very beginning of the party's rule in 2002 until 2014.

The conceptualization of the research subject by itself is very complex. Because usually the term 'actor' seems to refer to individual actors, hence terminological clarification is always required. In this dissertation, to avoid possible misunderstandings, and because foreign policy making process is a relationship between many actors, the research considers two main factors at the same time: actors and structures (Carlsnaes 2012). Because "human decision makers act[...] singly or in groups" (V. M. Hudson 2005), therefore, the state will not be by itself considered as an actor. Instead, the focus will be on elite decision-makers or institutions acting on behalf of the state. Thus, the research question is developed within the *actor-specific* theory as suggested by Valerie Hudson (V. M. Hudson 2005), but the term *actor* is not limited to human beings. It includes ministries, organizations, the bureaucracy, even private opinion makers such as businessmen, political analysts, consultants, etc.

This dissertation mainly uses the method of content analysis, since this is the most fitting way for empirical research. To obtain an effective result, the study makes a stratified selection of materials such as official statements, press, parliamentary minutes, memoirs written by diplomats, etc. A second line of research – in-depth interviews mainly with diplomats and experts – was used to complete the research as supporting empirical material. During the selection of exemplary cases, the main aim was to find the most critical ones in Turkey's foreign policy which could clearly show influential actors and how they became key ones.

The next risky and complicated part of the study was periodization. This study divided the years of the AKP's governance into two main phases: 2002-2007 and 2007-2014. The choice of periodization was not random but rather took into account the foreign political developments and changes in the internal dynamics of Turkey. Until 2005, the AKP authorities took steps which were required to join the EU, and after 2007, they were more active in Middle East politics. The research made periodization until 2014 because it argues that after the election of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan as President of the Republic, the multi-actor period of political life in the country gradually decreased. The obvious example of this was the then-Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu's 'forced' resigning by Erdoğan.

By choosing the most essential and challenging foreign policy cases from each stage, the study has tried to classify and crystalize decision makers. In the first phase of the AKP's governance, perhaps the two most important political events are linked to the pro-Western policy of Turkey. The first important political development was the US-led war on Iraq and the request to use Turkey's territory for the invasion. This case is known in the academic field as the March 1st Motion. For the AKP authorities this was tough decision to take and at the same time was a question of great responsibility because, on the one hand, it was about satisfying the desires of a strategic partner for decades such as the US, which was important for the AKP's legitimacy, but, on the other hand, there was public opinion and the military to consider. The need to be careful with the military comes from past experience of coups d'etat and the fact that the military had a stable role regardless of politics. The public opinion was essential too, because the same people brought

the AKP to power and would keep them in the power. The March 1st Motion is a good example from the point of view of diversity of actors and their influence.

The study attempts through detailed analysis to understand the role of the principal actors, the role and influence of the military and the bureaucracy. The second important political development that was also a challenge to the AKP authorities and had a direct connection to the EU membership process was the Cyprus Referendum in 2004, which was proposed by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. Resolving the Cyprus issue was one of the main foreign policy issues for the AKP, which broke the stereotypes of past approaches in this regard. The literature and press emphasize how the AKP pursued that point while going against the military. This study tries to flesh out what 'going against the military' might mean, how the careful approach toward the military one year prior changed. Did they simply ignore the military or did the military not position itself as expected? By studying the position of all the actors, the research has sought to find out the most influential ones and especially the possible reasons for the mild stance of the military, since in the background of EU accession talks and reforms, the role of the military was weakened. The Ergenekon trials also came to prove that the process of disarming the military of political leverages continued. Later, however, when German Chancellor Merkel and then-French President Sarkozy clearly stated that Turkey could not be a member of the EU but can become a strategic partner,¹ the AKP authorities were directed toward the Middle East (Aydin-Düzgüt & Tocci, 2015). In the second phase of AKP's time in power, Ahmet Davutoğlu, who served as Erdoğan's adviser and later as Foreign Minister, found a good opportunity to realize his doctrine of Turkey being a leader in the Middle East and having 'Zero Problem with Neighbors'. In this framework attempts to normalize relations with Armenia were one of the most important foreign policy initiatives that the AKP authorities successfully started, but failed to achieve the desired positive result. The process is

1 Arian Bernard, 'Quotes from and about, Nicolas Sarkozy', 7 May 2007 (Televised debate with Segolene Royal, May 2, 2007), http://www.nytimes.com/2007/05/07/world/europe/07francequotes.html?_r=0 . Accessed on 25 May 2016.

well-known in academic literature and political discussions as Football Diplomacy. Who were the actors starting the normalization process and who hindered the possible resolution and normalization? The study attempts to find answers to these and similar questions.

Since 2010, in the academic literature concerning Turkish Foreign Policy, the number of studies which discuss Turkey's probable axis shift from the West to the Middle East has increased. The AKP authorities had the goal of becoming a leader in the Middle East and being an alternative to Western civilization. The Arab Spring was an indispensable opportunity for the AKP authorities to realize this aim. The Arab Spring was a new source of excitement not only for the AKP administration but all the Islamists in the country. In the Middle East, the new public energy was Muslim and Turkey wanted to become its master and dominate it. In the background of such vital developments, the fourth case of this dissertation is the Arab Spring. Who were the actors of the Arab Spring in Turkey? Davutoğlu, who was the architect of the doctrine of Turkey being a leader in the Middle East, or Erdoğan, who is prone to be in the forefront of all political developments? What was the role of bureaucracy during this time?

Taking into consideration detailed analyses of all political cases on which this study focuses, in the last part of the dissertation a conclusion is made touching also upon secondary actors, the role of a leader and his/her relation with bureaucracy and other possible actors.

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The dominant theoretical framework in international relations (IR) has long been realism. IR could not be studied without this fundamental school of thought. Realism with its three core assumptions – groupism, egoism and power-centrism – is in the heart of foreign policy analysis (FPA) and actors who make decisions (Wohlforth, 2012). Generally realists consider the principal actors in foreign policies to be the states; non-state actors, “multinational corporations, terrorist groups, and other transnational and international organizations” (Viotti & Kauppi, 1998) play a relatively non-important role in the formulation of foreign policy of states. Contrary to Pluralists, Realists consider the state to be a unitary and rational actor. For Realists power is a key notion. As E.H. Carr states, power is a milestone in politics and it is true that an issue could be political only if it is a power issue. Carr also categorizes power in form of economy and military. According to him economic and military powers are interdependent and one of them could not be used without the other (Carr, 1946). However, today, realism fails to explain many facets of foreign policy development and execution. Hence, using only the realist approach in analyzing foreign policy actors is not enough. This is when, as Hudson suggests, one should not limit FPA to only the three pillars of IR theory, namely realism, liberalism and constructivism. This, according to Hudson, necessitated the development of middle-range theories, which according to Rosenau are “mediated between grand principles and the complexity of reality.” (Smith, Hadfield, & Dunne, 2008) Middle-range theories were developed in response to realism. According to Hudson, International Relations as a field of study is based on “human decision makers acting singly or in groups” (Hudson V. M., 2005). This agent-oriented theory could be considered one of the main attributes in FPA. As a representative of the pluralist school of thought, Hudson also claims that states are not agents. “Only human beings can be true agents, and it is their agency that is the source of all international politics and all change therein”. Hudson goes further and says that FPA theory is also profoundly actor-specific, which means that actors are concrete individuals. Therefore, actors in foreign policy are crucial to be analyzed

because they are the basis of the whole foreign policy analysis field. Hudson mentions actor specificity as an important component of FPA.

In the current literature on foreign policy analysis and the role of actors, the main schools of thought are constructed around pluralistic, bureaucratic, behavioristic and realistic/rational choice approaches. According to Allison, even if the final decision comes out from a leader, bureaucracies such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Economy etc. are very important, because they could make reasonable arguments based on their positions (Allison, 1971). Allison is correct by saying that a foreign policy decision-making process starts with bureaucracies, since they at least are sources of information for decision-makers. Thus, this approach makes clear that there is reciprocity between leaders and bureaucratic actors. However, this linkage should not be exaggerated too much because there is a hierarchy even in bureaucracy. Bendor and Hammond criticize Allison's suggested model and argue that bureaucracies are not the decisive players of foreign policy. According to them Allison disregards "the fact that executive branch policymaking takes place within a hierarchy" (Bendor & H., 1992). Viotti and Kauppi (Viotti & Kauppi, 1998) argue that Allison's assertion of bureaucratic actors' roles in formulating foreign policy actually raises serious questions about the rationality of the whole process. They find that the power struggle within bureaucracies may result in decisions which serve the interests of individuals or a group of individuals hence do not necessarily serve the foreign policy interests of the state as a whole. They further assert that governmental or non-governmental organizations may work in concert with their counterparts in other countries and pursue policies which counter the policies of government officials in their own countries.

Another debate on policy-making actors is raised around behavioralism, which is known as the Decision Making Approach. According to Synder and his associates "State action is the action taken by those acting in the name of the state. Hence, the state is its decision-maker", which means the explanation of foreign policy directly links to individual or group decision-makers (Synder, Bruck, & Sapin, 2002). Although many scholars think that group actions could not be made by an actor,

this research will consider as actors both individuals and groups. 'Groupthink' is another perspective for foreign policy analysis. In this approach, top-level decision-makers are considered as a group. The author of this approach is Irving L. Janis (1971). According to Janis, "the symptoms of groupthink arise when the members of decision-making groups become motivated to avoid being too harsh in their judgment of their leaders' or their colleagues' ideas" (Janis, 1971). But the adoption of a soft line of criticism by them opens a new window to consider groupthink in Turkey's foreign policy. Janis's contribution to the literature will be very useful for FPA when it comes to Turkey.

The next approach which has increased interconnection between a variety of state, sub-state and non-state actors is pluralism. According to Viotti and Kauppi (Viotti & Kauppi, 1998), for pluralists there are four key components of international relations: a) In international relations, non-state actors are vital units; b) The state does not act as a single unit, it is formed of contesting "individuals, interest groups, and bureaucracies"; formulation of foreign policy includes bargaining among these actors; sometimes governmental and non-governmental actors influence foreign policy in ways which are not in conformity with the policies of the central authorities of the state; those central authorities themselves actually are composed of different actors who are considered to be the foreign policy establishment; lobbying by non-state actors, as well as public opinion also influence the policy decisions of the central authorities; furthermore, those policy decisions are influenced by foreign factors and actors; c) Pluralists do not agree with the assumption of realists that the state acts rationally; all the above-mentioned influences and processes do not necessarily end-up with a rational decision; the decision-making processes are also influenced by politicians' preference to adhere to public opinion polls, instead of basing their decisions on principles which according to them would benefit the country; all these are a recipe for sometimes irrational policy decisions; d) Pluralists consider that the agenda of international relations is wide-ranging, not "mainly militaristic," economic and social concerns and goals are often central to foreign policy; the realists' assertion that politics is

high (predominantly important, military and security) and low (less important, social and economic) is not acceptable .

The literature on Turkish foreign policy actors is not abundant and the primary focus is always on underlying structures such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the President, Prime Minister, military, etc. The military for many decades was the main actor mentioned in the literature. Many authors focus on the military and, according to Uzgel, the military's role was legitimized after the establishment of the National Security Council (Milli Güvenlik Kurulu or MGK), which was an efficient mechanism for the military's involvement in foreign policy. "Having strong credentials in domestic politics, the military translated its enhanced autonomy to gain more influence in the area of foreign policy" (Uzgel 2003). But at the same time, William Hale argues that the military could be controlled when there is strong leadership (Hale, p. 261). Thus, it might be possible to claim that the later weakening of the military's role in foreign policy is related to Erdoğan's strong leadership. Uzgel remarks that Turkey's military's influence in the country was encouraged and used by the US. Especially during political instability in the country, maintaining strong ties with the military was necessary because the military had power in foreign policy (Uzgel 2003). Explaining Turkey's foreign policy actors in the pre-AKP era, Philip Robins asserts that after the Cold War and up to the 2000s Turkey's foreign policy had three phases: a) Overriding personal approach, during Turgut Özal's period; b) Collegiate bureaucratic approach, which gained ground when Özal was losing power; c) Weak, fragmented, competitive approach. From Robin's interpretation it can be presumed that in the second phase, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which was led by Hikmet Cetin, was more active because Özal was weak. After Cetin was replaced, the third phase began (Robins 2003). Philip Robins proposes to divide foreign policy actors into two: primary and secondary actors. For him the primary actors are the government, the presidency, the foreign ministry and the security establishment; secondary are the parliament, the media, interest groups, ethnic pressure groups, public opinion. Robins also highlights that members of the bureaucratic elite are very proud to emphasize that in Turkey one has to distinguish between "state policy" and "government policy".

Robins states that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has had an important and respectable role historically. However, in present-day politics, the question once again could be asked: Is the MFA strong when the leader is weak? Uzgel asserts that “since the ’90s the military’s influential position in Turkish politics has begun to be challenged domestically by the rising civil society and externally by the EU and the US” (Uzgel 2003).

Most authors analyzing foreign policy in the AKP era agree that the role of the military and the state bureaucracy in formulating foreign policy continued to diminish. One of the consequences of this has been the change in how national security and threats are perceived. The perception of what tools are used in foreign policy has also undergone a change. During the initial years of the AKP era, the appearance and discussions about possible other actors took place after the military’s decreasing role. There are invisible or non-political actors whose influence sometimes is more efficient in the international policy-making process. For instance, Altay Altı in one of his articles emphasizes the importance of business associations such as DEİK, TUSIAD and TUSKON as leading actors in Turkey’s foreign economic policy. The author highlights the importance of the period when the business community emerged as an actor in Turkey’s foreign policy. That was at a time “when greater economic liberalism coexisted with strong political authoritarianism” (Altı, 2011). Another noteworthy remark by Altı is the fact that with Turgut Özal the business community became an important partner rather than the bureaucracy. It is well known that Turkey started its economy-based foreign policy mainly with Özal. But here a crucial detail should be noted, “Özal was ‘instructing’ the businesses and their interest groups rather than ‘exchanging views’ with them” so their role was kind of limited (Altı, 2011). Altı calls DEİK as a new actor entering the scene of foreign economic policy, especially during the 1990s. “DEİK retained its monopoly as the sole private sector organization actively playing a role in Turkey’s foreign economic policies, and this role was shaped by both international and domestic factors then influencing the Turkish economy.”

According to Altı, the government’s stance on including the business community in issues relating to the country’s foreign economic policy is also based on the

ideology of a given party. Accordingly, after 2002, with the new government of AKP, the Özal model of active state-business partnership in foreign economic relations was again adopted. The author states the efficiency of business participation in state leaders' official visits because this gives an opportunity to create more contacts with the particular country's representatives and provides more considerable acquaintance with the economy of that country. Altı mentions one negative side of the business community's participation in foreign economic policy matters, namely the risk that businessmen's goals could be a divergent from the state's priorities and aims. But, if a business community's approach is similar to the state's approach, then there is no problem. The business community is organized around business associations, which participate in the foreign policy-making process through relations with state bodies and policymakers. They do so by organizing business events, by participating in intergovernmental meetings and in delegations accompanying government leaders' foreign visits. Uzgel too speaks of the business community's role. In İlhan Uzgel's opinion, Turkish businesses have influenced Turkish foreign policy and in comparison to the military, their post-Cold War worldview is different. They do not necessarily share the military's view that Turkey should be a regional military power. (Uzgel 2003)

In contrast to Altı and Uzgel, Kirişçi – in his article analyzing causes which have shaped or transformed Turkish foreign policy – argues that the impact of economy is not sufficiently studied. He suggests two conceptual frameworks based on Richard Rosecrance's notion of the "trading state" and Robert Putman's idea of "two-level diplomatic games" (Kirişçi, 2009). Before explaining economic considerations, Kirişçi briefly looks at the existing literature already focused on factors influencing Turkey's foreign policy transformation: Europeanization, constructivism in international relations (identity-based), impact of domestic political developments, geopolitical factors and soft power. Kirişçi reflects on economic and especially trade concerns as a factor deeply affecting Turkish foreign policy and argues that, in the preceding years, Turkey's foreign policy has increasingly been shaped by economic considerations. "Foreign policy has become a domestic issue, not just for reasons of democratization, identity and civil society

involvement, but also because of employment and wealth generation". The author explains Putman's two-level diplomatic game by saying that that model allows us to envisage that foreign policy making is not limited to traditional actors only and other actors could be involved, including the business community, because economic relations promote mutual benefits and could be useful in resolving conflicts.

Kirsici, as Altı, talks about TOBB, DEİK, TUSIAD and other business associations' importance in foreign policy-making. He gives examples such as the transformation of Turkey's foreign policy on Cyprus. There is a huge role of TUSIAD in that regard. These associations are considered as a kind of soft power by Murat Yetkin (cf. Kirişçi, 2009). In general, Kirişçi claims that behind Turkey's new transformed foreign policy lies the rise of a trading state. Once again, according to Kirişçi, the main reference or starting point of the trading state should be the 1980s and the Özal years. Gencer Özcan too shares the opinion that the role of the economic sector in formulating Turkey's foreign policy has increased. Özcan asserts that the reforms in Turkey which were realized in the process of Turkey's EU accession negotiations gave non-governmental actors the capability to play a greater role in formulating foreign policy and non-state actors did in fact start being more involved, which adversely affected the military's role in this realm. Consequently, the military's priority – national security – started losing its superiority in the national discourse (Özcan 2010). According to Özcan, economic considerations started weighing more in Turkey's foreign and security policy decisions. Turkey's big business organizations, particularly TUSIAD and TOBB, began having more influence in the process of foreign policy-making, giving higher priority to economic rather than geopolitical considerations.

Kilic Bugra Kanat also talks about a greater role being played by civil society, experts/think-tanks and NGOs as new actors "in planning, deliberating and conducting foreign policy" (Kanat, 2010). Many scholars would not agree with Kanat, since the role of NGOs and civic experts has been very limited especially in the last years. Kanat at the same time considers three main actors in the AKP – Erdoğan, Gül and Davutoğlu – as having greatly influenced foreign policy. This in

general is a correct assessment but it depends on the period under discussion. Dogan and Mazlum too refer to the active role played by NGOs in Turkey's foreign policy. According to them the roles played by NGOs take different ways and forms. When they do not agree with the state's policy direction and they try to put forth and implement alternative policies, then their role is one of competition. Their role becomes complementary when they try to advance their opinions on issues which have been overlooked by the state or about which the state does not yet have a policy. Finally, the role of the NGOs is cooperative when they negotiate with the state to bring their opinions to its attention. (Mazlum & Dogan, 2006)

Other authors, in analyzing Turkey's foreign policy actors, give more value to the leadership's background. Altunisik and Martin argue that the fact that the observed changes in Turkish foreign policy towards the Middle East occurred after the coming to power of the AKP understandably raises the issue of the importance of agency in explaining the change. Also, they give importance to the background of leadership in foreign policy-making (Altunisik & Martin, 2011). Erdoğan, Gül and Davutoğlu have been educated and/or worked in an Islamic vocational high school in Turkey, in an Islamic bank in Saudi Arabia and in the Islamic University in Malaysia. This background of the AKP's main actors has naturally had its influence on the worldview of the party, which reveres the country's Ottoman heritage and the historical links with the Arab and Islamic worlds.

As a result of the changes brought about by the AKP in Turkey's foreign policy, the level of the country's independence has increased, without changing the international orientation of the country. In his work entitled "Türkiye Dış Politikası: İlkeler, Aktörler, UyGulamalar" Ali Balcı asserts that no matter how much the military and the government disagree on certain issues (mainly on Cyprus and Iraq), in the AKP's foreign policy the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have been influential actors. According to Balcı, from 2002 on, Abdullah Gül, Erdoğan, Davutoğlu, Ali Babacan and Taner Yıldız should be mentioned as influential and active actors in Turkey's foreign policy. During this same period, foundations like SETA Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (SETA) and the Center for Strategic Research of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of

the Republic of Turkey (SAM) have also had an input in foreign policy, mainly on an academic level. It is interesting to note that Balcı doesn't study the AKP era as a single chapter. He has divided the AKP era into segments and has devoted a separate segment to the Davutoğlu era. (Balci 2017)

Research concerning actors' roles in foreign policy-making is a subject well studied all over the world. But, unfortunately, there is no noteworthy study on Turkey's foreign policy-makers. The existing literature indicates that in each case there are different actors. Hence the question arises on what causes this change. How do some actors come to the front? Is that a result of other actors' weaknesses? Is it because their approach has failed? Or is it because of power and influence they have gained? These are questions to which there are no answers in the current literature. Therefore, my research aims to contribute to reducing this gap. In order to analyze the issue from all perspectives, this study will use the categorization of actors established by Carlsnaes. The author divides actors into two main categories: politically responsible decision-makers such as heads of state, heads of government, foreign ministers, etc., who are acting internationally, and the second category includes those who are domestically-based civil servants and the expert community, functioning in the intelligence services, lobbying firms, think-tanks, research institutes and the media (Carlsnaes 2012). The period covered by this research will focus on three cases in Turkey's foreign policy during the AKP era, when not only the state, state structures and high-ranking political officials, but also non-state organizations, public opinion-makers and non-political figures were involved in the formulation of foreign policy. Hence the pluralistic approach fits well with the main goal of this research and will be largely employed.

2. WHO WAS IN CHARGE OF TURKEY'S FOREIGN POLICY? HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In order to analyze Turkey's current foreign policy players, to find the similarities and differences in policy-making and in execution, a retrospect is crucial, especially given the fact that the Republic is the bearer of Ottoman debts, embassies, institutional establishments and, most of all, the undertakings are based on Ottoman laws and, during the creation of the Republic, the bureaucracy was made up of Ottoman bureaucrats. Therefore, this section aims to have a look at the historical past of Turkey's foreign policy and to understand who the principal actors were in the past.

In the Ottoman era, from the beginning until 1835, there was no foreign ministry at the outset. Occupying new territories by force and collecting taxes were enough for the empire, without the need for foreign policy. With time, external questions were controlled by the Grand Vizier (Turkish: Sadrazam, prime minister) who had many other functions and his assistant Reis-ül Küttab (Chief of the Scribes) supported him in foreign affairs. At this time, foreign policy and diplomatic powers were handed over to Umur-i Hariciye Nezareti (Ministry of Foreign Affairs). This structure also handled the relations with the non-Muslim peoples living in the country. (Hale, 2003)

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs became the most crucial institution in the country. After its creation in 1835, the bureaucracy's influence gained momentum. The periodization suggested by İlber Ortaylı confirms that notion. Ortaylı divides the 19th-century Ottoman policy actors into three periods: the Sublime Porte Bureaucrats (Babi-Ali Pasalar Donemi, 1839-1877) which was the counter-balance to the Sultan, and this was a period when bureaucrats were important; the Era of Sultan Abdulhamid II (Hamidiye Donemi, 1877-1908), which is characterized as a single-handed rule period, when bureaucracy was out of the loop; and the Era of the İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti (The Union and Progress Committee, 1908-1918) when the revolutionary Young Turks established a constitutional monarchy and politicians were important figures. (Ortaylı, 2017)

However, a determined and robust Sultan could take everything in his hand and limit the powers of the foreign minister. Something similar happened in the Abdulhamid era. Whereas the sultans preceding him pursued modernization and westernization, Abdulhamid II was interested only in modernization, considering westernization as “a threat to Ottoman unity and a betrayal of the Empire’s historic character.” He also stressed the country’s Islamic character and his position as Caliph. Abdulhamid’s system of modernization with a traditional direction, its control over the bureaucracy “was startlingly close in some of its methods to the totalitarian regimes of the 20th century.” (Findley, 1980)

Abdulhamid's leadership lasted until the moment when there was mutiny in the military. In 1908, a group of officers from the Third Army invaded Salonica and Abdulhamid was unable to control his own army. In December 1908 the parliament which was suspended by Abdulhamid II in 1878, was allowed to function again and the optimists gathered under the name of “Union and Progress”, which did not last long, as the Young Turks created a new coalition headed by Enver, Talat, and Ahmet Cemal. Internal disagreements between Liberals and Unionists were inevitable. Almost in every decade of the Turkish Republic’s political history, one can observe similar situations, where there are internal disagreements and relations with the military are complicated. (Hale, 2003)

Since the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, Mustafa Kemal leaned towards the West. Consequently, the country’s external and internal policies, system and structures of government should also be consistent with Western standards. Institutions in the West largely follow IR theories, and the Foreign Ministry is crucial for the development and execution of diplomacy. The role and importance of the MFA in the country’s bureaucratic system does not change from country to country, it is always the same. (Hocking, 2013) Thus, it would be natural that Turkey should also have pursued foreign policy by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. But many other actors and institutions also took up the role of decision-making, and those roles underwent possible changes according to the times and conditions. That is the reason that foreign policy has been transformed many times since the establishment of the Republic. These differences were sometimes the

result of changes in the internal structure of Turkey and sometimes caused by the reform of the international system. The leadership, bureaucratic structures, the impact of the press and the public, the role of the military, economy and other groups have been key factors in the development and changes in Turkey's foreign policy-making process. (Uzgel 2017)

Historically, it is possible to observe that during each period a single actor or institution was in the foreground, but this does not mean that others were out of the process. While at times a primary actor would become more influential and in time that could change, depending on the times and the prevailing circumstances, it would not disappear altogether. For instance, during 1960s factors such as public opinion, press, military, business world, and similar other key players, sometimes all together, and sometimes one of them was more influential than the others, and that continues until today.

Taking stock of this history, Uzgel offers a periodization based on actors in this order: the period when the leader is determinant (1919-1950) because of the one party system; the period when MFA's influence increases (1950-1960) was the period when the country went into a multi-party democratic system; the period when public opinion, opposition parties, and intellectuals would be effective (1960-1980); the 12 September coup d'etat period (1980-1983) when the army was the primary actor and decision-maker; the period when the business community came to the forefront (1983-1991) thanks to Özal's policies; and the period when the military's power grew (1990s) because of political instability and failed coalitions in the country. (Uzgel 2017)

When speaking about the main role of leaders, the emphasis is of course on Mustafa Kemal the founder of the Turkish Republic and Ismet Inonu, the first Prime Minister and second President of the Republic, who was also Kemal's comrade-in-arms during the Independence War in 1919-1923. Kemal was the main voice in the development of domestic and foreign policies, and sometimes even the head of diplomacy. For example, he himself negotiated a treaty signed with France on October 21, 1921. Another essential name during his leadership was his close friend Ismet Inonu, who took over the Foreign Minister's portfolio to attend the Lausanne

Conference. Even though Dr. Tevfik Rüşti Aras was the longest-serving foreign minister in the history of the republic, Kemal's opinion in foreign policy was the most influential factor which set foreign policy.

When it comes to the legal basis of foreign policy, the Constitution of 1924 gave responsibility only to the parliament for determining the course of policy, and the president and the cabinet were responsible for its implementation. According to the Constitution (Article 26), the parliament should have been the primary and only actor that decided foreign policy. However, the CHP, Mustafa Kemal's party, was the sole actor and the political system was actually not based on the Constitution, rather on the party's charter. The CHP was the only party in the parliament and the party members were determined by the personal choices of Mustafa Kemal. Thus, the principal actors were Kemal and his close friends in deciding discretionary policy. Moreover, it can be argued that the main element that shaped the policy throughout Kemalism was not a party or a public opinion-based ideology or doctrine, but entirely Kemal's and Inonu's diplomatic preferences and maneuvers. (Soysal, 1964)

If Mustafa Kemal was known by his title Atatürk (Father of Turks), history remembers Ismet Inonu as the National Chief. During his tenure, the parliament and the government simply had legal existence and had no real function. "The National Chief was the only voter and the only foreign policy decision-maker, and the most powerful part of the government was in his hands." (cf Balci 2017: 77)

Inonu's complete rule continued after Kemal's death. Inonu replaced Rüşti by Sukru Saracoglu to ensure and maintain his absolute power. There were several reasons for this change, but the most important of them was that, during the extraordinary period of World War II, he wanted to take foreign policy under his umbrella and it would be difficult to do that with Kemal's thirteen-year appointment, Rüşti. Therefore, Rüşti, who gave importance to relations with the Soviets, was replaced by the pro-English Saraçoglu. During that period the MFA was silent and weak because of the leader of the government. However, it should not be forgotten that the newly formed MFA was the continuation of the Ottoman Hariciye Nezareti, and one-third of the country's ambassadors and consuls were

from the Ottoman Hariciye which meant that they were well-versed in the art of diplomacy. During the leadership of Kemal and Inonu, the role of the military was strictly limited and it was engaged more in technical issues. The press was strictly controlled too and the General Directorate for Press (Matbuat Umum Müdürlüğü), which oversaw the news and comments on foreign policy, decided what was to be written. For example, in 1944, related to an agreement signed with Hungary, the following directive was issued: "Today, the Trade Agreement signed with Hungary is not wanted in the newspapers." (cf Balci 2017, 79)

While in the preceding period the leader was the main actor and decision-maker, during the Adnan Menderes government in the 1950-60s the situation changed and the role of the foreign ministers was noticeable. Menderes and his first Foreign Minister were relying on skilled bureaucracy to complement their lack of experience. Menderes was active in foreign policy development, especially in matters such as membership in NATO, the Baghdad Pact and the Korean War, but he was not a single actor. (Uzgel 2017, 77) Since in the 1950s domestic politics were stable, he paid more attention to foreign policy. The same could not be said about the second half of his administration, as the internal opposition became more active. Also, he now had a Foreign Minister, Fatin Rüştü Zorlu, who had a good command of his profession, was at the right position and who took initiatives. Furthermore, Zorlu's friendship with Menders contributed in fostering their mutual confidence, which in turn reinforced the MFA's traditional role. Particularly, Zorlu's name has been circulated in relation to the Cyprus issue. One can say that he was the right-hand man of Menderes and was in full control in Turkey's foreign policy namely on Cyprus. The discussion of the Cyprus issue at the conferences in Zurich and London in 1959, the same year Turkey became part of the European Economic Platform, and the fact that in the last years of the Menderes administration the contacts took place with the Soviet Union were the foreign policy developments in which Zorlu's initiative was substantial. (Balci 2017, 107)

During this period, though NATO membership and the Baghdad Pact were largely composed of military commissions, the role of the military was in the background of foreign policy, and it was not very influential.

At the same time, while talking about the Menderes administration it is important to highlight his dependence on the US. "Turkey did not have an independent disarmament policy from the United States, and the DP's decades of decline in Turkey did not have a serious discrepancy between Ankara and Washington, and the Menderes government was closely following Washington's dictated policy and providing Turkey with the best service." (Ahmad, 1996)

By the end of the 1950s, with the cooling off of world affairs, Turkey became closer to Russia, and especially in the economic sphere relations began to develop. This angered the US and the rapprochement was far from complete when Menderes's planned official visit to Moscow on July 15 was disrupted by a coup d'état on May 27. The newly formed military government declared its commitment to NATO and the United States. (Tellal, 2012)

In the 1960-80s, there was a great deal of diversity among foreign policy actors: public opinion, political parties, and the military. In addition, other factors became especially noticeable after the 1961 Constitution. First and foremost, the media and the public had the opportunity to discuss and criticize the government's foreign policy through the press. After the Second World War the "national" foreign policy followed the supra-party format. It was remarkable that the views of political parties were different only in domestic politics and a common stance in foreign policy was to be adopted. This approach first of all protected the government against possible criticism. (Uzgel 2017, 79)

But this did not last long because the Turkish Labor Party, which was elected to parliament in 1965, was against NATO and the United States. Especially after the Johnson Letter, the party aggravated its position and the authorities were subjected to severe criticism in their foreign policy. From a political point of view, besides the military and the public, when it came to the formulation and execution process of foreign policy, Ismet Inonu was on the forefront in 1961-1965, and Foreign Minister Ihsan Sabri Çağlayangil took that position during 1965-1971. However, during the crisis after the Johnson Letter, Inonu was at center stage as the main foreign policy actor. The letter was directly addressed to him and he was invited to meet with the US President. Inonu first responded to the letter and then, on June 22,

1964 visited the United States. Inonu was respected because of his former role as a leader of the war. Consequently, his opinion was influential and at times he was able to persuade the military to change its position. For example, in August 1964, he opposed the military's decision to continue the air intervention in Cyprus and was successful in persuading the MGK to cease their interference. (cf Balci, 136)

The establishment of public opinion as one of the key factors in foreign policy opened another door to development. The authorities began to influence public opinion in the steps taken in foreign policy and gained the profits in domestic politics. In addition to all this, although the establishment of the MGK and the Supreme Staff was not linked to the Ministry of Defense, rather to the Prime Minister, this was one of the first steps in raising the role and influence of the army. The rights of the MGK were restricted under Article 111 of the 1961 Constitution: "The main views on national security decision-making and coordination are to be informed to the Council of Ministers." Later, as a result of the military intervention on March 12, 1971, the word "informed" was replaced by "advised". As Uzgel notes, in the mid-'60s and '80s, the military was loyal to the role of an adviser in the development of foreign policy.

As a result of the military coup of September 12, 1980, Turkey's foreign policy returned to the US sphere of influence. The only leader in the decision-making was Army General-turned-President Kenan Evren, the architect of the coup. The most striking example of this was the rapid approval by Evren of the Rogers Plan which allowed the Greek military forces to rejoin NATO. (Türkmen, 2012) The second step taken during the military regime was the reinstatement of relations between Washington and the Turkish military based on US regional policies. Losing the most important ally in the region as a result of the Iranian Revolution in 1979 and after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Cold War reflections in Washington increased and Turkey's importance was once again raised. This meant that, when necessary, if the United States was to intervene in the region it had to use Turkey as best as possible. In this context, Note of Agreement (Mutabakat Muhtiras) was signed on November 29, 1982, which was most beneficial in the 1991 Gulf War. (Balci 2017, 189-190) During this period, the actors who appeared in the '60s were

made to disappear. After the coup d'etat, the number of military servicemen in the MGK increased, thereby expanding the influence of the military in decision-making. Regardless, before the transfer of power to the civilian government, the military regime adopted Law No. 2945 on 9 November 1983 by which the General Secretariat of the MGK was given jurisdiction to follow and observe policies and practices in foreign policy. The primary goal of this law was to strengthen the existing power of the General Secretariat of the MGK. (Uzgel 2017, 81-82)

The period of the military's superpower status approached its demise upon the coming to power of Turgut Özal, and, until the 1990s, the military did not have the same effect as it did before. As soon as Özal came to power, a new actor in the process of foreign policy development emerged, namely the business community, along with public opinion, the press, and the military. But most importantly, during the reign of Özal, the model of leadership of the Kemal and Inonu period returned. However, Özal's leadership was different from the previous two and the most significant reason for this was the support of the international financial environment.

Several radical changes were made in the decision-making process of Turkey's foreign policy during the Özal period. First, the decision-making process was concentrated in his hands. The structures such as the MFA, the military, and the parliament which had been involved in some external policy decision-making, began to be pushed out from the field. Instead, the role of the business community was getting larger and sometimes even many entrepreneurs acted as diplomats. During the years of the Özal administration, the bureaucracy was viewed by Özal as the greatest obstacle, so he did everything to weaken it and leave it out of the process. Thus, the bureaucracy stopped being a player.

Özal's position on the Foreign Ministry was the same as his position on the bureaucracy. Unlike Menderes, Özal did not cooperate with the MFA. Moreover, by founding the Treasury and the Undersecretariat of Foreign Trade (Dis Ticaret Mustesarligi), he pushed out the Foreign Ministry from many procedures. Instead of institutional connections, he preferred personal relationships. Another specially designed tactic was to appoint foreign ministers who were not very knowledgeable

about and did not have any experience in the foreign affairs domain, such as Mesut Yilmaz, Ali Bozer, Ahmet K. Alptemocin. In this way, the foreign policy continued to remain in Özal's hands. One of the most striking examples of leaving the MFA out of the playing field is the unilateral withdrawal of the visa system for Greece and the Baris Suyu project.

When entering foreign markets, businesspeople were seriously interested in foreign policy, and, at the beginning of the '80s, the role of the bourgeoisie was replacing that of the bureaucracy and was getting stronger. More than twenty ministers who had come from the business world were crucial figures in formulating Özal's foreign policy. Özal thought that economic measures should be taken to solve chronic problems in Turkey. (Barlas, 2001) His main goal was to make Turkey part of the international capitalist system. This goal shaped his foreign policy and the way he conducted it. The army was not theoretically opposed to Turkey's joining the global capitalist system, and in fact, September 12 was a good basis for doing so. But as the business community was getting economically stronger, it wanted to be more influential in internal and external politics. The controversy with the military began at this point. Despite all the legal changes made by the military regime, the military was pushed backward due to the active initiatives of Özal and the businessmen. During this period, the military was not thinking about being an active player, but rather was to be satisfied by disrupting Özal's tendency to change the traditional Turkish foreign policy. One of the illustrations of this is Chief of Staff General Necip Torumtay's resignation. He had been appointed in 1987 by Özal. Torumtay was for traditional, Özal for active politics. There was "strong opposition by the Turkish General Staff" (Athanasopoulou, 2014) related to the intervention in the Gulf War, while Özal wanted an active policy. But Turkey's co-operation cannot be properly explained on the basis of Özal's wish to revamp Turkey's strategic value for the US in the post-Cold War environment (Athanasopoulou, 2014). The Army was always present, even if as a shadow, with its role of drawing the main parameters of foreign policy.

In the second part of the 1980s, public opinion, the media, opposition parties and other similar actors again flourished. Özal's domestic and foreign policies began to

be criticized. Since the 1990s, as the structure of the international system was changing, and there were also developments in Turkey's domestic and foreign policies, the decision-making processes were also changing. New actors were added, and some were left out. For instance, after many years of decline the MFA regained its importance after the 1991 election. Under the leadership of Demirel and Erdal Inonu (son of Ismet Inonu), during the DYP-SHP² (True Path Party – Social Democratic People's Party) coalition, the MFA became active and was reinforced by Foreign Minister Hikmet Cetin. However, the picture changed in the second half of the 1990s because of the rapid change of governments. Unstable domestic political life also affected the most sensitive ministry in the country, namely the MFA. In three years, seven foreign ministers were replaced and this coincided with the change in the international system, thus making the situation more destructive. The unhealthy and unstable internal political situation and the external developments gave rise to conditions that gave the military the opportunity to take over the reign of powers of the country. In those days, the PKK's actions in the south-east of the country were an additional reason for the military to initiate, develop and implement more active strategies. Respect for the military grew in a short time. The public highly appreciated the success in the Korean War, Cyprus, and the PKK issue.

But besides all this, there is another significant and fundamental reason that expanded the powers and influences of the military – the Turkish Islamic Synthesis, an alliance of Islamists and ultranationalists, which began in the 1970s, to counter leftist tendencies in politics and foreign cultural influences. The proponents of Turkish Islamic Synthesis supported the 12 September coup, and in turn the 12 September regime supported them. As a result, in the 1980s political Islam was on the rise and in the 1990s it was gaining momentum. However, in the 1990s, the only structure where Islamists had not penetrated was the military, which took upon

² The DYP can be considered as the continuation of Demirel's Justice Party (Adalet Partisi), secular and leaning towards center right; the SHP was the continuation of the CHP party, which was social democratic left-wing party. DYP and SHP were established after the 1980 coup, which had closed the AP and the CHP.

itself to stop the political Islamist momentum. The supporters of the secular republic backed the military in this issue, which in turn empowered the military even more. That was the reason why the February 28, 1997 so-called post-modern coup d'état was complacently accepted by the public. External factors, such as instability and conflicts in the Middle East, the Balkans, and the Caucasus played a role in increasing the military's influence. The fears of Turkey's security increased. First the strengthening of the military was made a priority and then the army played a key role in all matters of security. (Uzgel 2017, 85)

Turkey wanted to be a regional leader and for that purpose it had to have a mighty military. In foreign policy, especially in matters of security, the military displayed an active stance and made statements on foreign policy at the level of senior military officials criticizing neighboring countries.

The most significant distinction related to the role of the military in the 1990s is that the General Staff simply undertook government responsibilities and made announcements, reports, contracts and mutual visits which made it more audible and visible. The unanimity and the particular role of the General Staff during this period is seen in the relations between Turkey and Israel. (Koçer n.d.) For example, the Turkish-Israeli Military Cooperation Agreement, signed in February 1996, was prepared by the military as a whole, after the December 24, 1995, elections, when there was no effective civilian government in Turkey due to coalition discussions. After the signing of the treaty, Defense Minister Oltan Sungurlu said: "I do not know about the degree of confidentiality of the treaty, and I'm not fully aware of the contents." (Balci 2017)

Another example of an undisputable level of the role of the military was the influential and decisive force in the March-April 1995 Operation Steel (Çelik Harekati), the invasion of Northern Iraq with 35,000 soldiers. The military action took place without any discussion with the public or at the parliament, rather just by the decisions of the military structures. (Balci, 2017)

The business world which left the military in a secondary position during the 1980s was put in the same situation by the military in the 1990s. Though the business world continued to gently take initiatives to reinstate its former influence, it was an

essential force against the military and in propagating of alternative domestic and foreign policy. Leading business leaders, like senior military officials, also made important statements about foreign policy. TUSIAD (Turkish Industry and Business Association) and TOBB (Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey) had a significant impact on policy development. The publication entitled “Towards a New Economic and Commercial Diplomatic Strategy in Turkey” published by TUSIAD in 1998 (Ogutcu, 1998) , suggested passing from the “national security state” model to the model of a “trading state.”

“Economic diplomacy” was an acceptable concept in the international system after the Cold War, and the great powers gradually began to apply it. This meant policy-formulating processes and subsequently negotiations on issues of international economic relations, namely “international financial arrangements and coordination, negotiation of trade and investment, development and international environmental policies.”

Economic diplomacy became dominant because globalization made states more independent and a multipolar world economy emerged. Hence security relations gave way to economic relations. (Woolcock & Bayne, 2013) However, Turkey remained within the framework of the national security concept, which was linked to internal, south-eastern clashes, the rise of political Islam, external, regional conflicts and instability. Possible problems with Western countries could bring the 1920 Sevres Treaty onto the agenda again. This was a concern that the West and in general the outside world, in collaboration with elements within the country, were trying to make Turkey weaker and eventually divide it as foreseen by the Treaty of Sevres. This concern for some became a conviction and an existential fear, which has been called the “Sevres Syndrome.” (Terzi, 2010) This fear played a crucial role in keeping with the national security concept as a primary choice.

Also, in the 1990s, new elements, namely energy and gas pipeline competitions were added to the list of foreign policy-making determinants. Although their role was limited, they appeared to be decisive factors. As Turkey’s domestic energy consumption demand grew (Bölük & Koç, 2011), Turkey wanted to be in the position of an energy exporting country, and thus industrial investments were

increased. For the country with a growing economy Caspian oil and natural gas resources were viewed as a source to satisfy that need. Turkey began to take part in the contests for the routes of getting Caspian oil and gas to the West. In this regard, "Turkey has viewed the Baku-Ceyhan route as a valuable strategic and political asset that would highlight its position as an energy bridge between the Caspian region and Western markets." (Sayari, 2004)

2.1. Conclusion

This chapter focused on historical background of Turkey's foreign policy-making process from the perspective of actors. When the phases of Turkish foreign policy formulation and actors are studied in increments of decades, it may be concluded that, over time, alongside the traditional state actors, new ones have emerged, such as the public opinion, the media, the business world. One characteristic seems constant in the tradition of Turkey's foreign policy: when the state's leader is strong, the MFA is weak, and the rest of the actors may be left in the sidelines. Regardless of how much the military's role is in the background, the military is the one drawing the main parameters of foreign policy, because Turkey always takes stock of security policy and this implies an immediate involvement of the military. At the last stage of the Ottoman Empire, the foreign policy lead from the MFA passed to Sultan Abdulhamid II because of his power. However, the uprising of the military neutralized the leadership of Adulhamid. Soon after the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, the leadership, in the persons of Mustafa Kemal and Ismet Inonu continued to dominate foreign policy for almost three decades. This continuity was interrupted during the Menderes administration. Menderes preferred to be active in foreign policy development, but not individually and alone. As a result, the Foreign Ministry gained new life and, thanks to Foreign Minister Zorlu, turned into a more influential institution, taking initiatives. In the first half of the Menderes administration the pro-American posture was prominent, while in the second half attempts to get closer to the Soviet Union predominated. In the 1960-80s, it was possible to speak of multiple actors, which was interrupted by the

September 12 coup d'état, transferring absolute power to leader of the coup, Chief of the General Staff General Kenan Evren, who became president. The supreme leadership role of the military stopped when Turgut Özal came to power. A similar situation had appeared during the Ottoman Empire, which can be a guide to understand the continuity which was passed on to the Republic. In that period, in addition to the military, all bureaucratic institutions were marginalized. Instead, during his leadership, Özal gave the green light to the business world, as his most desirable foreign policy had economic basis. The 1991 elections were the beginning of a new phase in Turkey's foreign policy and, thanks to the Demirel-Inonu coalition, the MFA was re-activated. However, failed coalitions and poor governance have automatically led to the reinvigoration of the military.

3. THE AKP ERA: DIVERGENCE FROM TRADITIONAL TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY

3.1. Introduction

The preceding chapter made it clear that, from the foundation of Republic until the 1990s, the primary players in Turkey's foreign policy have always altered in accordance with the period and global trends. Since the early 2000s, many things have changed in the world and consequently in Turkey. First, in Turkey, a party with Islamic ideology has come to power in a position to rule without coalition partners. This, by itself, raises some questions. For instance, is there continuity in traditional Turkish foreign policy and its parameters? Who makes Turkey's foreign policy since the AKP (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi or Justice and Development Party) came to power? What are the main approaches to foreign policy of this

government? This section will try to answer the above questions by analyzing several key foreign policy cases that Turkey faced. The AKP government policy will be analyzed in two periods, from 2002 to 2007 and from 2007-2014. The first period is considered as a transitional period, and the second period as one of self-affirmation and self-confidence.

In the first half of the 1990s, Neo-Ottomanism came to the agenda thanks to Turgut Özal and became flesh and blood as soon as the AKP came to power in 2002. The concept of Neo-Ottomanism presupposes a comprehensive revision of Turkey's domestic and external policy and redefinition of Kemalism, politics, society and identity. The AKP, which came to power denying its Islamist National Vision (Milli Görüş) past, tried to make changes in sensitive topics in Turkey's domestic and foreign policy. The AKP decided to do what the previous authorities did not dare or did not succeed in doing. Their 2002 election declaration included promises of not suppressing non-Muslim minority groups, of a radical solution to the Cyprus problem, of EU reform packages, of addressing the Kurdish and Alevi issues, and most significantly of abolishing military tutelage. Another significant change was that, unlike previous authorities, the AKP took upon itself a mission to become an active player in the Middle East. However, considering the international crisis emanating from the 9/11 terrorist acts in the US, it would not be an exaggeration to say that the AKP was unfortunate concerning the timing of its coming to power as an actor with a relatively independent foreign policy strategy. In response to the terroristic acts, the US decision to attack northern Iraq was the first serious challenge for official Ankara. The US was pressing Ankara to open a front on its border with Iraq. Thus the AKP would have to make its first major foreign policy decision (Oran, 2013).

The fact that an Islamist party came to power alone caused concern first to the General Staff, and then to President Sezer and the bureaucracy. The AKP was accused of being a focus of political Islamist activities and having a legitimacy problem (Oran, 2013). To mitigate the problem, the AKP was compelled to build close relations with two crucial actors for Turkey – the EU and the United States. Proper foreign policy development was very important because “this would provide

the basis for legitimacy. In particular the EU and US support for the party leadership was presented as an indicator of being transformed.” (Uzgel 2010)

After the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the change in the international system led to apparent changes and transformations in Turkey’s foreign policy. Especially since 2002, Turkey was being led by a very different party and ideology. However, the formulation of the AKP’s foreign policy is very similar to the one during the era of Özal. The fact of continuity is not limited to Neo-Ottomanism. The AKP which gave great importance to the economy and wanted to re-establish Turkey as a “trading state” (Kirişçi, 2009) was also being pragmatic and practical, and was sometimes bypassing bureaucratic structures and developing policies with business advisers, just as Özal had done during his government. For instance, such actors were the Prime Minister’s data coordinator Cüneyt Zapsu, the government’s foreign policy coordinator Egemen Bağış, and the closest political adviser to the Prime Minister, Ömer Çelik. Of course, during this period, Ahmet Davutoğlu, an academic, had a unique place as well. (Uzgel 2010, 357)

For Turkey’s foreign policy actors, the relationship with the United States has always been of primary importance. “Being close to the United States was a means of strengthening positions for any political or bureaucratic actor; at the same time, there was internal competition among actors.” (Uzgel 2010, 367) For example, during the Cold War, the United States was in contact with the Turkish military based on security and strategic considerations. After Özal and neoliberalism came to power, relations with the military took a secondary place. In the 1990s, the defeat of the PKK and the toppling of the Erbakan government brought the military back to the forefront.

The key turning points in the first round of the AKP government’s foreign policy were: a) the decision whether or not to support the US invasion of Iraq, known as the March 1st Motion, b) the Cyprus issue and the Annan Plan to resolve it, and c) the EU accession process.

The next political test for the AKP government after the March 1st Motion was the Cyprus issue, namely the referendum of 24 April 2004. Decades after the problem

of 1974 and negotiations to resolve it, the possible solution was to be proposed by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, and the Cypriots were to vote on it in two referendums in the two parts of Cyprus. During the whole history of the Cyprus negotiations, the Annan plan has been the most comprehensive and the most detailed solution to the issue ever put on the table. (Sozen, 2007) However, the final version of Annan Plan came not at the right time for the AKP – that was on November 11, 2002, only days after the party came to power. In the Cyprus issue, the AKP authorities and party leader Erdoğan behaved in an entirely different and decisive way, in contrast to the issue of the March 1st Motion. What had changed in just one year? Was one year enough for Erdoğan’s power and the power of the party in general to be consolidated to the point that they even risked political clashes with the military? Why the military did not maintain the same position as in the case of Iraq, at least at the level of cooperation with the government? Finding a response to these and many similar questions is a useful way to examine the Cyprus problem to understand the movement and volatility of actors during the first stage of the AKP administration.

3.2. AKP’s First Foreign Policy Test – The 2003 Parliamentary Motion on Iraq

After the 2001 9/11 terrorist attacks, the United States was preparing to go to war with Iraq for a long time and, in order to reach a quick and successful end to the war, it wanted to open a front in the north of Iraq, for which it had to use Turkish territory. In September 2002, when the atmosphere in Turkey was filled with the anticipation of elections, a message was sent to the General Staff through the US Office of Defense Cooperation, according to which the United States expected support from Turkey within the framework of “full and complete cooperation” during the Iraqi military operations. (Yetkin, 2004, p. 45) Prior to the invasion of Iraq, the most prominent actors in Turkey, namely then-Prime Minister Ecevit, the MHP, and General Kıvrıkoğlu, were seen as sources of trouble by the US. (TDK 270)

The meetings of US Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz with the Ecevit government in July 2002 did not yield a positive result. Furthermore, Ecevit always said “we are against military intervention in Iraq.” (Yetkin, 2004, p. 46) Probably for this reason and conscious of the possibility that the Ecevit government was on its way out and the military would remain, the US contacted the military directly, ignoring the fact that in order to send military troops from the country or to accept such troops into the country, Article 92 of the Constitution required the parliament’s permission.

Regardless of the fact that the US desire was negotiated through official correspondence between the MFAs of the two countries, the first and critical meetings were somewhat unusual in their nature. For instance, the Chief of the General Staff Hilmi Özkök voted in the elections on November 3 and left for the United States. This visit took place during the third month of his term in office and was anxiously awaited for by the White House and the Pentagon. When Özkök arrived in Washington it was clear that the AKP had a landslide victory in the elections and was forming the government alone. The United States attached great importance to the meetings with Özkök, given that in Turkey the military played an influential role in security and defense issues, so if the military were to be convinced, it would be easier to reach an agreement with the newly-formed government. (Yetkin, 2004, p. 91) However, this new government was not yet formed two weeks after the elections, and President Ahmet Necdet Sezer instructed Abdullah Gül to do so. Having formed the government, Prime Minister Gül appointed former ambassador, vice-president of the AKP, Yasar Yakis as the foreign minister. Party leader Erdoğan did not have any portfolio or other powers besides those stemming from his position. However, it did not prevent Erdoğan from having high-level meetings with Western leaders, including with US President Bush, to come to an agreement on Iraq and Cyprus.

Particularly regarding the meetings with Bush and others in the United States, it is essential to emphasize the role and importance of Erdoğan’s adviser Cuneyt Zapsu. It was the businessman Zapsu who organized Erdoğan’s meeting with Bush without the Turkish Foreign Ministry’s knowledge. (Yetkin, 2004) The role of non-state

actors was first demonstrated during this period. “The influence of the advisors in foreign policy and the influence of political advisors who have no public position has come under new criteria under the AKP government.” (Bölükbaşı, 2008) One striking example of this was Erdoğan’s meeting with US Deputy Defense Minister Wolfowitz, Assistant Secretary of State Grossman and US Ambassador to Turkey Pearson on December 9, 2002, one day before the meeting with Bush. Turkey was represented by Erdoğan, Foreign Minister Yakis and adviser Zapsu. The Turkish ambassador to Washington Osman Faruk Logoglu was not invited to the meeting. An experienced diplomat was out of the discussion. Back-channel diplomacy, conducted by special advisers like Zapsu, would later be criticized and would even be hindering the resolution process in parliament. In other words, there was not only lack of cooperation between official Ankara and the policy pursued by the special advisers, but there was also lack of information. Prime Minister “Gül did not have full knowledge of what kind of messages the Zapsu channel had been transferring to the US.” (Bölükbaşı, 2008, p. 148) In an interview with the *Milliyet* newspaper in 2006, Ambassador Logoglu, who was out of the formal meetings, confirmed that the United States made big mistakes, especially by providing more importance to information passed on through back channels. (Bölükbaşı, 2008, p. 150) According to the ambassador, unofficial channels should have been silent during such a serious decision which would have a profound impact on Turkey's relations with the United States. The Pentagon’s optimistic approach was based on Erdoğan's advisers who transmitted information through informal back channels. “Instead of listening to Turkish officials, the Pentagon preferred to believe the rosy images painted by Zapsu and other non-competent channels.” (Kapsis)

The fact that such non-formal actors were so active, even disruptive, raises a question: why was the military silent, or why did it ignore it all? The United States which had greatly valued Özkök’s visit to the US and considered the military to be a strategic partner, especially in security and defense issues, suddenly made changes to the list of actors on the Turkish side. On December 20, Bush sent an urgent message to Turkey through Ambassador Pearson, but not to Prime Minister Gül but to Erdoğan, who was still banned from running for a seat in the parliament.

After listening to Bush's message, Erdoğan responded at the airport answers that he has no authority and the message should be transferred to Gül. In his turn, Gül pointed to the parliament. What does this endless pass from one to another mean? Why did Erdoğan try to stay away from this critical issue?

The problematic nature of cooperation with the United States was due primarily to the internal issues of the AKP and its controversial identity. Gül and Erdoğan were each leading founders of the party. Although it never appeared openly, but there were speculations of competition between them. (Kardas, 2006) The two had different styles if not two different policies and their advisers played a significant role in their different approaches. Erdoğan was surrounded by more pragmatic people who had realpolitik attitudes, such as Cuneyt Zapsu, Egemen Bağış and Ömer Çelik. Gül was surrounded by more academic and ideological people. His main adviser was Ahmet Davutoğlu who was well-known for his Islamic thought and civilization approach in international relations. (Kardas, 2006) Developments during the first three months of AKP rule and the result of the March 1 vote proved that AKP did not have a unified foreign policy vision. The party was divided both at the leadership level and within the parliamentary group.

Not only Gül and Erdoğan, but the military too was uncertain, even though it was trying to find a common language with the MFA and to move forward. The military apparently had its calculations and did not fully utilize the power it had gained in the 1990s. "The decision will be made by politicians." (Yetkin, 2004, p. 135) The members of the AKP government, who in their political past had always kept their distance from the military because of its great influence in the MGK, for the first time needed to make a political decision in cooperation with the MGK and other state structures. The MGK was very uncertain in its final recommendation and had put particular emphasis on international affairs and commitments. (Bölükbaşı, 2008)

Neither the military, nor the government made a clear statement and both expected a green light from the other. Erdoğan and Gül, as Yetkin says, knew very well that, if they were to take full charge, then they would have to bear all the responsibility which they wanted to avoid. (Yetkin, 2004) On the other hand, they realized that

they could not fight alone in the negotiations with the United States, so they tried to bring the military with them and to even show that they were moving by the military's decisions. Yetkin also noted that the AKP government masked themselves to show the public that they had made efforts to negotiate with Iraq. And the United States stood by. In this way they avoided to seem guilty and told the party that it was the military that made them take part in the Iraq war. Of course, the leadership of the MGK could bring a resolution to the Iraq issue, but it would be costly in domestic politics. For this reason, over the preceding fifty years, the military for the first time allowed the political administration to take the final decision. "On February 28, the MGK made the most uncertain statement of its entire history saying and advising nothing." (Yetkin, 2004, p. 169) The government did not hear even one sentence of support that it sought from the military. According to some, the Turkish military obviously let the AKP be responsible for the war preparations, demonstrating that, in accordance with the Copenhagen Criteria of joining the EU, the military intentionally adopted "a low profile." (Robins 2003) There existed another explanation that the Turkish Armed Forces took the leadership of the 'protector of secularism in Turkey' and did not wish to support or cooperate with the Islamist government related to solving crucial problems. On the other hand, some AKP leaders considered that the military intentionally let the AKP to lead the movement for the purpose of avoiding an undesirable reputation. (Taydas & Ozdamar, 2013)

The AKP government understood the "potential trouble both domestically and internationally, [and] embarked on a campaign based on a dual language." Domestically, the government stressed that that it is committed "to international legitimacy, and expressed its political and moral discomfort with the possible conflict in a neighboring country" at the same time "resort[ing] to realpolitik arguments, justifying Turkey's support as a last-resort measure in the face of an inevitable war." (Kardas, 2006, p. 313) Internationally, the government wanted to receive "sufficient guarantees to compensate for Turkey's strategic, political, and economic losses from a possible war" and thus began negotiations with the United States. (Kardas, 2006, p. 314)

Erdoğan, who had come to power a few months earlier by gaining the public trust, was cautious and did not want to lose that trust, given the fact that the majority of the public opinion was against the war. Public opinion was one of the most important actors in the motion and decision. Neither the government nor the military wanted to take a decision which was opposed by the public, and for the first time, public opinion made his voice heard in the parliament. But explaining the outcome only by the public opinion factor will be wrong and incomplete. Taking into account the fact that the parliament's foreign policy was designed and given to the prime minister and the cabinet, the parliament played a very small role and approved the decisions taken by the government automatically without proper consideration. Here one has to combine a strong public opinion with the absence of a robust actor. The AKP failed because of the lack of a pivotal actor. "Someone vested with authority, that is, a president, prime minister, or party leader, could have played the role of predominant leader by taking charge and overwhelming all opposition within his party, as President Özal did in the case of the first Gulf War." (Taydas & Ozdamar, 2013, p. 233)

When speaking about the role of public opinion, it is important to emphasize one crucial question which can say a lot. The government did not pursue a policy of continuous and substantial public relations on the issue. The public knew little or nothing about the content of the military, political and economic documents being negotiated with the United States, which would have been in the interest of Turkey if the country decided to support the US. (Bölükbaşı, 2008) Moreover, MFA Undersecretary Ziyal and chief negotiator Bölükbaşı, who had detailed information about the content of the negotiations and the consensus (Memorandum of Understanding/Mutabakat Muhtirasi), were sitting in the wings during the vote on March 1. Meanwhile, if the prime minister had wished, they could have explained to the AKP MPs and to the opposition in detail and give them information, which could have changed the outcome of the vote. "It seems the government did not want to ratify its own resolution." (Yetkin, 2004, p. 172)

Although much can be said about Turkey's foreign policy in comparing Özal and Erdoğan, the power of Erdoğan and the strong leader subsequently emerging were

limited for many reasons. The second important actor in the party, Abdullah Gül, and speaker of parliament Bulent Arinc were against an incursion into Iraq. On the other hand, Erdoğan realized the importance of supporting the United States, but he was pragmatic, and domestic political calculations did not allow him to speak openly. “Strongly supporting the motion and pushing others to do the same would lead to a major split in the AKP and force many ministers and deputies to leave. He was afraid a domestic backlash would cost him his long-awaited office.” (Taydas & Ozdamar, 2013, p. 235)

Erdoğan’s power was not consolidated inside the party. The party in turn had internal disagreements, and lacked discipline and solidarity. “Some fault lines have emerged on the basis of national sensitivities and ethnic considerations.” (Bölükbasi, 2008, p. 135) In a parliamentary system of government, party discipline in parliament is an essential factor based on the cabinet’s position. However, in this case, the cabinet’s “indecisiveness and lack of leadership only helped the MPs to vote as they wished. When the executive does not lead, the traditional ways to enforce party discipline are not operative and MPs become more open to public pressure.” (Kesgin & Juliet, 2010)

The secret ballot and the lack of a moderate faction within the AKP’s parliamentary majority facilitated internal divisions. On this point, the role and importance of speaker Bulent Arinc should be highlighted. The decision to hold a closed ballot and to make results public ten years later allowed a large number of AKP MPs to vote against the motion. Yetkin points out another factor that affected how the AKP MPs voted. The writer of the *Vakit* daily, Abdurrahman Dilipak, who was one of the best orators in Turkey and was considered to be influential in the Islamic circles, by pressing each of the AKP faction members’ hands said: “Do not have blood on your hands.”

Another factor also played a role in the decision of the deputies, namely the silence of the military (Bölükbasi, 2008), which was in favor of the motion but stayed passive. Chief of the General Staff Hilmi Özkök made a late March 5 statement, during which he pointed out that Turkey would be the same victim of war and that voting against the resolution was not the best way to defend national interests.

(Yetkin, 2004) Why did not the military speak before March 1, or, had it spoken out, would the result be different? It is impossible to find the full answers to these questions.

There are many interpretations about the military's low profile and parliament's decisive role, but on the other hand, the government had no solution to the issue, so the parliament became a decision-making authority. Or, as the chief of the General Staff told reporter Fikret Bila, what happened was nothing more than a "fatal constitutional accident." The majority participating in the March 1 vote voted for the motion, but they were three votes short of the 267 votes required by the parliament's internal regulations. These decisive three votes changed the entire course of events.

3.3. The 2004 Referendum on Cyprus – A Green Light for Turkey’s EU Accession

As it was mentioned before, the AKP aimed to change the stereotyped approaches in Turkey’s foreign policy and the settlement of the Cyprus issue was one of them. In the foreign policy section of the AKP’s program, the persistence of pursuing a new foreign policy is clearly stated: “The dynamic circumstances brought about by the post-Cold War period have created a suitable environment for developing a foreign policy with several alternatives. The particularity of military alliances and blocs to become the determinant elements of international relations has been greatly reduced, and cooperation projects have become a common tool of relations between States. In this new environment Turkey must also rearrange and create its relations with centers of power with alternatives, flexibly and with many axes.”³

The AKP program goes on to state the “Party shall follow a realistic foreign policy befitting the history and geographical position of Turkey, free from prejudices and obsessions, based on mutuality of interests.”⁴ Finally, the program concludes that “Against changing regional and global realities, [the AKP] believes that Turkey must redefine its foreign policy priorities and create a balance between these realities and its national interests.”⁵

The new approach of the AKP’s foreign policy emphasizes that only the bureaucracy’s participation is insufficient, and the parliament and various segments of society have to take part in the decision-making process. Innovative approaches to Cyprus become evident in the party’s pre-election declaration of 2002. “Our party believes in the necessity of a solution to the problem of Cyprus.” (Beyanname, 2002) This sentence is proof that radical changes are expected in traditional politics and the government is far from the concept of “deadlock is the solution” (“çözüksüzlük çözümdür”) adopted by Ecevit’s government.

³ AK Party Programme, <http://www.akparti.org.tr/english/akparti/parti-programme#bolum>, accessed on 29 March 2018

⁴ *ibid*

⁵ *ibid*

For the AKP government, the EU Copenhagen Summit and the summit on Cyprus were an excellent opportunity for Turkey's accession to the EU. "The Copenhagen Summit showed clearly that the possibility of Turkey's accession to Europe depends on the resolution of the Cyprus conflict. Both the application of the Copenhagen criteria, which will mean the end of the strong-state tradition in Turkey, and the Cyprus conflict pose a great challenge to the AKP." (Keyman & Onis, 2007, p. 172) On the one hand, the government was trying to resolve the Cyprus issue which was a hindrance on the road to EU membership; on the other hand it was trying to stop the straining of Ankara-Brussels relations which resulted in southern Cyprus becoming an EU member without the resolution of the conflict. (Inat, 2005) However, the government was established only three weeks prior and could not put pressure on Northern Cyprus President Rauf Denktaş. For the first time in history, after the failed EU summit on Cyprus in Copenhagen, the Turkish authorities clearly showed that they are concerned by Denktaş's policies. Erdoğan said on January 1, 2003: "I'm not for the continuation of the policy that lasted for thirty-forty years ... This is not Denktaş's personal matter... You cannot put the people's opinion aside." (Ozersay, 2013) After these words, a tense atmosphere of criticism began. A harsh response first came from Denktaş, then from the military. Chief of the General Staff, Hilmi Özkök, said: "This solution of the Cyprus problem, which endangers the security of Turkey and does not provide security, will complete the process of imprisonment of Turkey in Anatolia." (Firat, 2010) Disagreements on the Cyprus issue were not just between the AKP and the military. There were also different views inside the party. Bülent Arınç said during his visit to Cyprus that opposing Denktaş and cooperating with the Greeks is a betrayal of the homeland. The reason for such tough debate in Ankara was because the Cyprus issue had turned into a domestic political issue. The military, the Foreign Ministry, and the main opposition party, the CHP, formed a strong lobby against the AKP's Cyprus policy. The AKP tried to change the traditional perception that the civil political class in Turkey is weak in resolving basic internal and external problems. (Cizre, 2008) "As for the situation in Turkey, the present government, which has managed to bring about a dramatic shift in Turkey's Cyprus policy to support a

settlement that would reunify the island, is still being blamed by the opposition for selling out Cyprus for the sake of an 'unrealisable dream', namely that of Turkey becoming an EU member. Any complication in Turkey's relations with the EU, which might result from the continuing impasse in Cyprus, may have spill-over effects in Turkish politics, not least in relation to its policy towards Cyprus." (Akgün, et al. 2005)

However, as a result of the December 14, 2003 elections in Northern Cyprus, the right-wing parties of Northern Cyprus admitted that consensus with the left-wing parties were unavoidable, and on January 23, 2004 Turkey's MGK meeting changed the existing picture. There was some softening in the position of the Turkish military. The MGK confirmed in a statement that it had come to a general conclusion that the continuation of the negotiations and taking the necessary steps with the joint efforts of the parties, based on the goodwill of the UN Secretary-General and the Annan Plan are useful. (Firat, 2010) Thus, the Turkish president, the government, the Foreign Ministry and the General Staff met at a common point for the settlement of the Cyprus issue. This development would strengthen Turkey's hand in the resumed negotiations in 2004. With the decision of the MGK, Erdoğan's possibility to maneuver grew and he met Annan on January 24 in Davos. In the course of the meeting, Erdoğan assured Annan that Turkey attaches importance to the promotion of the issue; Annan correctly perceived Erdoğan's message and thus began the "one step ahead" policy of the AKP on the Cyprus issue. (Ozersay, 2013) Of course, the fact that the president and the General Staff did not have a very tough approach to the Annan Plan played a significant role. One of the well-known adages of this process was "Do not be the first to say no." (Ozdal, Dincer, & Mehmet, 2011, p. 36) The role of the Foreign Ministry in the Cyprus case was very big and influential, since the MFA was of the opinion that there would be no progress in the EU accession process without resolving the Cyprus issue, and the EU would be a guarantee of democracy. The role of the Foreign Ministry began with convincing President Sezer, which also mitigated the position of the military, although it should be underscored that the military was not a homogeneous structure. Before departing for New York on February 10, the Prime Minister, the Chief of General Staff, the

Foreign Minister and Denktash met in President Sezer's residence. Sezer said, "As the President of Turkey I say to you, do not be the first to say no." After the meeting, on the way to the airport, Denktash had a telephone conversation with Turkey's Land Forces Commander Aytac Yalman and declared that he was going to say no. The absence of the military's homogeneous structure was confirmed in this way. Official Ankara did not send Denktash alone and Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs Ugur Ziyal went to New York as well. Ziyal was a valuable player by not allowing the negotiations to end before they began.⁶

Even Özkök said before the referendum: "It is not appropriate for me to say yes or no."⁷ (Milliyet, 14.04.2004) This statement can be explained by the fact that the special intelligence services already knew that the Greeks were against the plan and would vote no. Another factor could have been the plan's security considerations, because keeping a Turkish regiment of 650 on the island was one of the points defended by the General Staff over the years. On April 24, 2004, the voters in the Greek Cypriot part voted 75.8% against, in the Turkish side 64.9% voted for Annan's bi-zonal bi-communal federal state with a single citizenship plan. One of the factors that played a major role in the way Turkish Cypriots voted was the determination of the Turkish authorities and the General Staff's assurances not to have any concerns about the security and guarantees. (Ozersay, 2013) "... a solution to the Cyprus conflict necessitates a comprehensive solution covering the Cyprus conflict but also other stakeholder interests and conflicts now so clearly linked to the Cyprus conflict." (Saner & Michalun, 2009, p. 225)

Of course, one of the most crucial issues here was why the AKP's government supported a yes vote. Without doubt the determination to find a resolution to the Cyprus issue was important. But, on the other hand, the information about Greek side's negative vote facilitated the AKP's work in convincing the bureaucracy and

⁶ Author's interview with Murat Yetkin, 28 March 2018

⁷ "Org. Özkök'ün tutumu", Fikret Bila, Milliyet, 14 April 2014, <https://www.ab.gov.tr/34868.html>, Accessed on 24 May 2016.

the military. However, besides the AKP's primary role in the issue, there was a multidimensional and multifactorial situation. The AKP had a passive position from 2002 to 2004, and since 2004, it had become more active and courageous. Serious and important changes were made to Turkey's fifty-year history of the National Issues. Turkey was liberated from the 'non-consensual' label and was considered a proponent of finding solutions. Erdoğan's leadership and persistence played a major role in this issue, but the most important part of his success was the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and especially its Undersecretary Ziyal, as well as the President and the military, who at least did not hinder the AKP policy. The military could have adopted a tougher posture and complicated some processes, but it did not do so, as the results were known even before the referendum.

The fact that the military did not continue its 1990s position and did not create difficulties during the Cyprus Referendum has several explanations. The reason was not the strength of the AKP from the very beginning, as the party's power did not increase in ten months. On the contrary, at least in the early years of its administration, the AKP was cautious with three structures: the military, the bureaucracy and the judicial system. The first question while taking any political decision was "What will the military say?"⁸ The military, in turn, had undergone 'textural' changes. Over the past ten years, there has been a change in the Turkish public's understanding of what military intervention is, which has led to changes in perceptions within the military, as well as has strengthened the government's hand to make improvements. (Gürsoy, 2012)

The military took into consideration the sentiments of society and did not oppose reforms, despite the fact that the reforms would decrease its political influence and were generally considered to be against the military's own interests. If the military was deliberately silent on the March 1st Motion, its mild position of Cyprus could be explained by the attitude of Hilmi Özkök. The military is not a monolithic structure and one could separate progressives and conservatives. (Aydinli, 2009) In this case, Hilmi Özkök was the progressive, who together with his supporters

⁸ Interview by author with AKP's first Minister of Foreign Affairs Yasar Yakis, 21 April 2018

clearly stated that the Turkish military will always support Turkey's EU membership and the necessary reforms to accomplish it. "We do not have preconditions for EU membership"⁹ was Özkök's statement, which implied compromise on the Cyprus issue. Thus, when considering the fact that the AKP chose the referendum by opposing the military, the role and power of the authorities should not be overemphasized, rather the position and role of the Chief of General Staff Hilmi Özkök should be stressed. This fact undeniably made Özkök's predecessor Kıvrıkoğlu feel uncomfortable, who had long been trying to be influential through his subordinates. In 2002, General Aytac Yalman, a conservative who was the Commander of the Gendarmerie, was appointed Commander of the Land Forces by General Kıvrıkoğlu, when the progressive General Özkök had become Chief of Staff overcoming the conservatives' efforts to prevent his appointment. "By doing this, Kıvrıkoğlu hoped that Aytac Yalman would slow down Hilmi Özkök's progressive actions and toughen up his soft approach towards the politicians. General Kıvrıkoğlu's major reservations against Özkök succeeding him as Chief of Staff were based on his conservative perspective that Özkök's positions were 'too close to civilian minds'." (Aydinli, 2009, p. 590) Özkök was not alone in his policies of being opposed to the coup and robust positioning. In the hierarchy, his position found echoes in the lower classes of the military. (Demirel, 2010) But there is also another opinion, according to which the military showed a strong reaction and was against the referendum process. Moreover, they were campaigning for the no vote together with Cypriot nationalists. Denktash trusted the military and was sure that they did not share the state's official position. On the other hand, if the military wanted to intervene or interfere, it would have been a coup d'état, but it could not easily hinder the process because the negotiations had already begun. Also, one should not forget that the party that came to power had reached an absolute victory in power. And then the EU process, the Turks of Cyprus, the pressures from the world did not leave an alternative: the Cyprus issue had to be settled. Gül and Erdoğan were decisive

⁹ "Özkök: AB üyeligi için on şartımız yok", Zaman, October 19, 2003

actors. The Foreign Ministry was for the solution of the issue. However, besides the military, two important names in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were on the opposing side: Ertugrul Apakan and Deniz Bölükbaşı. In fact, they wanted a solution, but they very simply did not believe the Greeks and did not have the confidence that the Greek side wouldn't spoil the proceedings at any moment. They did not think it was right to sacrifice what they had before.¹⁰

3.4. Conclusion

The fact that the Islamist AKP party became to power alone rose concerns within the military, as well as the bureaucracy, and President Sezer. The AKP, recognizing that its legitimacy depended a great deal on the United States and the EU, took steps and foreign policy decisions accordingly. As the government came to power, the greatest challenge was the US demand to use Turkey's territory to enter Iraq. The AKP realized very seriously how important it was not to generate opposition from the United States, on the other hand, it was unable to ignore the military and the public, from which it would still need votes. The resolution on the use of the US territory in Turkey was put to a motion in parliament and did not pass because of a few votes. In this serious political decision, there were different actors, different strategic approaches, from the non-state actors to the silence of the military. The AKP's leader Erdoğan was careful, the military was deliberately silent. Nobody wanted to share the responsibility of the war to begin with the Muslim neighbor Iraq. Thus, the rejection of the March 1st Motion did not have a sole actor. Both the military and the political authorities were playing both sides, but the military was slightly a loser of the game because the United States accused the military of failing to put its weight on the ballot.

The voting process was very critical. Four ministers voted against – in other words, they voted no for a motion prepared by their government. If three of these four ministers had voted in favor of motion the result would be different. Therefore, in

¹⁰ Interview with Mensur Akgun, who was actively engaged in the Cyprus Referendum process

this foreign policy decision case, it is impossible to talk about one main actor whose input is more efficient or influential. The military was one of the actors, but it was not homogeneous. Those whose voice was louder had domestic political concerns, because, had the AKP gained significant prestige and the US supported them, it would be difficult to overturn its growing influence. Strategically and politically, that was a very wrong calculation and had a contrary effect because after the result of the vote the US blamed the military. On the other hand, the AKP was very inexperienced and wary. Both sides were playing both sides, and the ball remained in the mid-field. In addition, the real dynamics of the motion were domestic political ones. In other words, the expression "all politics are local" is a perfect explanation of the situation.

Compering with the March 1st Motion, in the case of Cyprus, the characteristic of the issue is somewhat different. EU membership was of vital importance to the AKP, and the military was always an advocate of Westernization. Thus, one can say that the authorities have seized the most important element of rhetoric – Ataturk's Westernization policies – from the military. However, altering perceptions inside the military, in turn, contributed to the fact that the AKP would move as it wanted. The tough stance of the President of Northern Cyprus led to the fact that Erdoğan did not even try to cooperate with him and, after the defeat of Denktash in the 2003 Cypriot election, the dynamics of the process changed. Erdoğan succeeded in persuading Turkish Cypriots to vote for Annan's Plan. Although the Greek side voted against it and the Annan Plan failed, the Turkish government, Erdoğan and his team-mates emerged victorious as their image was noticeable in the international community. Thus, the consolidation of power of the AKP authorities and Erdoğan in particular began, partly thanks as well to the military's and Hilmi Özkök's attentive attitude.

4. AKP'S POST-EU ERA

4.1 Introduction

When it first came to power, the AKP considered its good relations with the US and the EU as a testament to its legitimacy, but that picture changed after 2007. The rise of right-wing politics in the EU – which meant increased opposition to Turkey's EU accession – and especially the serious gains the AKP made against the Kemalists became an opportunity for the AKP to slow down reforms to meet EU accession requirements. (Balci 2017) In the context of EU-mandated reforms, the AKP had already reached one of its goals, namely loosening the grip of the military on politics. One of the prominent characteristics of AKP's foreign policy was to decrease the influence of the armed forces in state policy-making decisions and gradually taking that process under the control of the civilian government. (Ozcan, *The Changing Role of Turkey's Military in Foreign Policy Making*, 2010) In the second phase of the AKP administration, during 2007-2014, the government was largely guided by Ahmed Davutoğlu's "zero problems with neighbors" principle. In this part of the dissertation, the main focus will be on the relations with neighboring Armenia, with whom Turkey had no interactions during the previous decades. "The only two remaining headaches, one could say, seemed to be the poor human rights record inherited from the 1980 military coup, and the Armenian question." (Oran, 2009, p. xxi) The attempts since 2008 to regulate relations with one of those "headaches" have come up in the literature under the name of "Football Diplomacy," one of the most well-known examples of AKP's foreign policy. The same doctrine of zero problems included also the Middle East. When the AKP began its proactive policies in the Middle East, many commentators referred to an axis shift in Turkey. This study, however, considers this second stage in the AKP's government as an era of a resurgence of self-confidence and ambition. The possibility of turning Turkey into a regional and global power was pushed forward. Indecision and an impasse in negotiations regarding EU accession caused the

government to seek out new venues to display its power and influence. This study takes the Arab Spring and the AKP's policies in that regard in this context.

4.2 Football Diplomacy – Normalization of Armenia-Turkey Relations

As already mentioned, Turkey's accession to the EU was one of the AKP government's foreign policy priorities. To achieve this, soon after the AKP came to power in 2002 and up to 2005, the parliament reformed Turkish legislation to harmonize it with EU standards. The reforms were widespread and they included reform packages related to the military's role in politics and the military's relations with civilian government in general. Although these reforms increased civilian control over politics, in time "it appeared that the AKP's efforts at demilitarization were mainly geared towards strengthening the party's power in politics rather than towards democratization in general." (Kadioğlu, 2009, p. 54) Nevertheless, this change in civil-military relations meant that the government could conduct its relations with Armenia with less influence from the military. However, the AKP government missed several opportunities to normalize relations with Armenia.

Successive Turkish foreign ministers Abdullah Gül and Ali Babacan held several meetings with Armenian Foreign Minister Vartan Oskanian, who found his first meeting with Foreign Minister Gül in May 2003 [to have been] "more productive and practical than all my previous meetings with Turkish foreign ministers – I might even say all those meetings taken together." (Interview with Armenia's Public Television, n.d.) However, three years later Oskanian would say: "We started very well with him but then things backtracked because of the preconditions: Karabakh, genocide and the rest of it." (Interview with Armenia's Public Television, n.d.) In the context of the interconnection between external and internal politics, it is possible to read in Oskanian's words that the interference of other actors did not allow the main actor, who started the political process, to act as it had originally planned.

The exchange of letters between Turkish PM Erdoğan and the Armenian President Kocharyan in 2005 led to several exploratory secret meetings in Vienna between

officials of both ministries of foreign affairs during the same year and in 2006. In September 2007, the Swiss initiated a round of contacts between Turkish and Armenian officials after foreign ministers Babacan and Oskanian agreed that Switzerland was ideally suited for the task of mediating and hosting. This was followed by meetings between high-ranking officials from both foreign ministries in May 2008, when Serzh Sargsyan had become the president of Armenia. (Philips, 2012)

It is true that during the rule of the AKP, Davutoğlu's "zero problems with neighbors" was at the forefront, but in the case of attempts to normalize relations with Armenia, Abdullah Gül's contribution and role were greater. The first manifestation of Gül's role was a congratulatory letter addressed to the newly-elected President Sargsyan. "Of course, we should send a congratulatory message, but let's not have ordinary content. Let's prepare a congratulatory message with special content." (Sever, 2015, p. 89) The congratulatory letter gave the expected result and President Sargsyan invited Gül to watch the World Cup qualifier match between Turkey and Armenia on September 6, 2008. Gül accepted Sargsyan's invitation, believing that "If Turkey is an important country in the region then we must have peaceful, normal relations with all our neighbors including Armenia." (MacLean, 2014, p. 270) He used imaginative steps to personally and directly negotiate with the Armenian President and attained "workable answers to seemingly intractable problems." (MacLean, 2014) Gül enlisted the help and role of Murat Yetkin, at that time writing for the left-liberal paper *Radikal*. On August 26, Murat Yetkin, during his meeting with Armenian President Sargsyan in Yerevan to interview him, delivered a message from President Gül. "On hearing Yetkin's report of his meeting with Sargsyan, Gül announced he would accept the invitation [to visit Yerevan]." (MacLean, 2014) The role of journalist Murat Yetkin played a significant role in the preparations for the Football Diplomacy initiative. According to Gül's advisor Ahmet Sever, even the MFA, which was close to Gül, did not say "it will do good to go." (Sever, 2015) But diplomatic sources involved in the process emphasize other sides of the matter. Taking into consideration that there are two departments in the Turkish Foreign Ministry which deal with

Armenian-Turkish relations – one dealing with political relations with Armenia and another one dealing with the 1915 incidents – the statement that the MFA did not say “it will do good to go” is a bit incomplete. For the department dealing with the 1915 incidents, relations with Armenia were beneficial only if that would help Armenia stop international recognition attempts. Meanwhile, the political department considered that relations were crucial to solving existing problems and rejecting such an invitation from Armenia would work against Turkey in the eyes of the international community. Also, Gül had consulted the Foreign Ministry as soon as he received the invitation. And since he had experience as foreign minister and a foreign political vision, he knew well how complicated Turkey’s national interests were on the international arena.¹¹ Hence, he acted the way the trends dictated.

Prime Minister Erdoğan too, just as the MFA department dealing with the 1915 events, was distancing himself from this visit. Even on August 30, during a reception on Victory Day, he pointed the Chief of the General Staff Ilker Basbug to one of the president’s advisers and said: “Tell the Honorable President that he [Chief of the General Staff] is against the visit too.” (Sever, 2015) Here it is interesting to note that in this case Erdoğan attached importance to the opinion of the military and emphasized it to make his view more influential. Meanwhile, since 2007, the military had almost no voice in foreign affairs, or it had not been heard. Although the Chief of the General Staff could have had an appointment with the president to give his opinion whenever he wanted, there was no such effort by Basbug since the military did not wish to interfere in the Football Diplomacy initiative, considering it a political issue. Therefore, it would not be wrong to assume that Erdoğan wanted to deter Gül, but he did not feel his desire to be sufficient and he preferred to use the military. The military did not intervene nor did it have a proposal.¹²

¹¹ Author’s interview with a high-ranking diplomat involved in the process who wished to remain anonymous

¹² Author’s interview with a high-ranking diplomat involved in the process who wished to remain anonymous

On 8 September 2008 president Gül visited Yerevan to watch the qualifying football match between the national teams of Armenia and Turkey. In a sense, for the first time, we can say that “the state” was more courageous, problem-solving and even friendlier than the government and the military tutelage. He held discussions with his host and, after the game, Gül returned to Turkey, while Foreign Minister Babacan held a long meeting with his counterpart Nalbandian. If Gül was the visionary of the Turkish position on Turkish-Armenian relations, Babacan was the engineer. One of the principal actors in the process was the then vice Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Unal Çeviköz. As Gül’s official spokesman, Çeviköz went to Yerevan and negotiated on the security and other major issues of the visit and advised Gül to accept the Armenian president’s invitation. The opposition parties were opposed to Gül’s visit to Yerevan and preferred that he go to Baku instead. (Sever, 2015) “During this process, diplomats such as Ertuğrul Apakan, Feridun Sinirlioğlu, Çeviköz and Aydın Sezgin played key roles in the Foreign Ministry. Some have played a role in secret meetings, some of them participated in shuttle diplomacy between the capitals, and some played a role by interfering in technical meetings.” (Zengin, 2010, p. 402)

In contradiction to Gül’s efforts towards Armenia, Erdoğan tried to comfort Azerbaijan, for which he went to Baku on May 13, 2010. His speech was not only very emotional, but he also ignored the briefings prepared by the MFA. Erdoğan announced that the border with Armenia was closed due to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and would only be opened when the Armenian armed forces would completely withdraw from Karabakh. Erdoğan once again ignored the MFA and acted with his advisers. “On this and other important issues, a small circle of advisers around the prime minister made recommendations independent of the MFA.” (Philips 2012, 51)

However, the process of normalizing relations with Armenia continued and the documents, which later became known as the Armenia-Turkey Protocols and which aimed at establishing diplomatic relations and developing bilateral relations between the two countries, were initiated on 2 April 2009. (Philips, 2012) When Azerbaijan was immediately informed of this, its President Aliyev canceled a

planned trip a couple of days later to a high-profile Istanbul summit and did not visit Turkey until fourteen months later. (Cornell, 2011) However, Azerbaijan reacted quickly by asking Turkey to negotiate about new energy prices, since the previous agreement on natural gas prices had expired in 2008. (Yılmaz & Kılavuz, 2012)

On 22 April 2009, the foreign ministries of Armenia, Turkey and Switzerland, in a joint announcement confirmed that Armenia and Turkey have adopted a roadmap for normalizing their relations. Half-way through the Football Diplomacy process, on 1 May, 2009, Turkish Foreign Minister Babacan was replaced by Ahmet Davutoğlu. From the Armenian perspective, whereas they had reached the initialed protocols with Babacan, “Davutoğlu wanted to start from zero” (de Waal, 2015, p. 228) and “negotiate an entirely new agreement.” (Philips, 2012, p. 57) But for the Turkish political elite, Davutoğlu's engagement and efforts were focused on bringing the process to a positive end. Davutoğlu was aware of all stages of the process; he was the Prime Minister's adviser. Hence the Prime Minister was also informed about the process. Davutoğlu saw the final version of the protocols' text, and he did not make any objection or offer. Then Minister of Foreign Affairs Davutoğlu also did not expect Erdoğan's Baku statement, and to avoid any tension or adverse effect of the process, that evening he flew from Baku to Stockholm. Mr. Davutoğlu had talks with Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt and Foreign Minister of Switzerland Calmy-Rey. Since Calmy-Rey was a facilitator of the process, it was important that she understood the subject well. Davutoğlu asked Calmy-Rey to help explain to Eduard Nalbandian that Erdoğan's statement will not create a negative momentum, and that Turkey did not change its position about the normalization process.¹³

On 31 August 2009, the agreements were published for a six-week period of “internal political consultations.” Azerbaijan publicly warned that lifting the Turkish land blockade of Armenia before resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict would run counter to its national interests. Azerbaijani President Aliyev condemned

¹³ Author's interview with Unal Çeviköz, on 6 May 2018

the Protocols. Baku retaliated by symbolic gestures (removal of Turkish flags from Martyr's Alley in Baku and other public places, banning of Turkish movies and songs on Azerbaijani TV, and shutting down of Turkish-financed mosques in Baku), lobbying in Turkey, threats and punitive actions (Azerbaijan increased the price of gas it sold to Turkey) (Philips, 2012).

Why did Turkey agree to enter the normalization process with Armenia if, since the beginning, no one except Gül was in favor of starting the process? Or why did they let the process reach to the signing of the protocols? There seem to be several reasons: a) Relations with the European Union and the US, where both emphasized that it is important for Turkey to normalize its relations with Armenia and to open the land border; b) On the eve of 2015, the centennial of the Armenian Genocide, the Turkish government thought that rapprochement efforts with Armenia were a way to handle the international steps of recognizing the genocide; c) The 2008 Five Day War between Russia and Georgia gave Turkey a possibility to play a greater role in the region, through its initiative called Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform, which, however, could not be realized without any relations with Armenia; d) Finally, the rapprochement with Armenia was deemed important for Turkey's "democratization quest, as it creates a space for Turkey to face its past and the many conflicts related to it." (Görgülü, 2009, pp. 283-285) According to, a former Armenian ambassador Ara Papian, "The Turks [...] simply launched the process to prove to the world that they're doing everything they can to improve relations with Armenia." (Grigoryan, 2013) Former Foreign Minister of Armenia Vartan Oskanian too found that for the Turkish side the normalization process itself was the goal. Turkey always aimed at showing to the world that there is a rapprochement process going on with Armenia, but actually the process was not aimed at normalizing the relations and for that Turkey set preconditions, which it knew would not be acceptable for Armenia. With that, Turkey tried to convince the world that it should not interfere and hinder the negotiations, which would bring to the lifting of the blockade and the establishment of diplomatic relations. (Oskanian, 2013) According to Oskanian, since Armenia's independence the Turkish position had been to try to resolve all problems from the past to its satisfaction, and only

then to establish diplomatic relations and then to open borders. This contradicted the Armenian approach which wanted to first establish diplomatic and economic relations, and then to try to resolve the problems from the past. This difference of the approaches was further deepened when Turkey added an issue with which it was not directly involved, namely the settlement of the Karabakh issue. (Oskanian, 2013) (Philips, 2012)

The foreign ministers of Armenia and Turkey signed the protocols in Zurich, on 10 October 2009, in the presence of the top diplomats from the United States, Russia, France, the European Union, and Switzerland. Soon after, it became clear that Turkey was not going to ratify the protocols, when Erdoğan told a meeting of his party officials: “We want all the borders to be opened at the same time ..., but as long as Armenia has not withdrawn from Azerbaijani territory that it is occupying, Turkey cannot have a positive attitude on this subject.” (de Waal, 2015, p. 233) Later, in January 2010, following the ruling of the Constitutional Court of Armenia on the constitutionality of the protocols, Turkey found an excuse to stop the process. According to Turkey, the Armenian Constitutional Court’s “reasoned statement” “contained contradictory elements to the letter and the spirit of the Protocols.” (Relations between Turkey and Armenia, n.d.) After the signing of the protocols, the ratification stage was blocked at the Turkish parliament. There is an opinion that the Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Parliament, Murat Mercan, played a negative role, who did not advance the ratification process and the protocols were not presented to the General Assembly.¹⁴ At this stage, the protocols were completely removed from the control of the main proponent and actor Abdullah Gül and went under the parliament’s control, in particular under the government’s control.

With the ratification process of the Armenia-Turkey Protocols stalled in both countries, the AKP and Erdoğan undertook several PR initiatives, which were not successful in garnering a favorable reaction from Armenia. These initiatives included Foreign Minister Davutoğlu’s visit to Yerevan in December 2013 to

¹⁴ Author’s interview with a high ranking bureaucrat, who wished to remain anonymous

participate in the BSEC Foreign Ministers meeting, Davutoğlu's "just memory" concept and, based on that, Erdoğan's unprecedented apology message on the eve of 24 April 2014 and Erdoğan's invitation to Sargsyan to attend the centenary events of the Battle of Gallipoli on 24 April 2015. One of the evaluations Armenian President Sargsyan has given about Erdoğan is: "[I] can say from my own experience that: 'no, we don't trust Erdoğan'". (Interview with Bild, 2016)

The difference of opinion of both leading actors, namely President Gül and Prime Minister Erdoğan, and the competition between them also played a role in the outcome of Football Diplomacy. The process of rapprochement with Armenia was identified with Gül, whereas Erdoğan was identified with the so-called opening toward the Kurds in Turkey. In Erdoğan's opinion, Turkey-Armenia talks would not result in an agreement. He was also distracted by domestic politics. (Philips 2012) The two major opposition parties in parliament, the CHP and the MHP, were against the protocols. (Severely criticized, 2009) Both parties argued that the protocols did not hold up the preconditions Turkey had set for establishing diplomatic relations and for lifting of the land blockade. This was the first serious and crucial criticism by the opposition of AKP's foreign policy, and the "zero problems with neighbors" approach was at the center of criticism. (Balci 2017) However, on the other hand, the opposition parties were informed of all the stages of the process and during the meetings with the MFA delegates, there was no strong criticism or attempts to oppose it. Everyone emphasized the same point: "do not damage Turkey-Azerbaijan relations and do not ignore Azerbaijan's sensitivity to Karabakh."¹⁵ It is difficult to say clearly whether Erdoğan was really against rapprochement with Armenia or not, but it is undeniable that the mutual dependency of Turkey and Azerbaijan in the field of energy had its impact, even if it was not the main reason for the failure of the process. Also, it is hard to say had Sargsyan's invitation been directed to Erdoğan, whether he would go or not. But most likely had he been invited and had he accepted the invitation the process would not have had a failed ending. On the other hand, recalling Erdoğan's letter to

¹⁵ Author's interview with a high ranking bureaucrat, who wished to remain anonymous

Armenian President Kocharyan in 2005, it can be assumed that he was not theoretically opposed to the normalization of relations with Armenia, especially that his idea of establishing a commission of historians was included in the protocols. The subversion of Football Diplomacy by former footballer Erdoğan also has other personal explanations. In the preceding sections, there has been talk of the invisible tension and competition between Erdoğan and Gül. Looking at the current political life of Turkey, it would not be wrong to conclude that there is a serious competition between these two individuals. When Gül became a presidential candidate, it was a result of some measures to keep balances and discussions held within the AKP. Erdoğan could also be a candidate, but for some reason, he preferred Gül's candidacy.¹⁶ Most probably Erdoğan did not want President Abdullah Gül to be in the forefront of this post and be considered a more important politician, so he decided to take the process in his hand. Another reason for Erdoğan's opposition may be the probability of Gül being nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize had the process resulted in the normalization of relations.¹⁷ Erdoğan probably was not happy by this.

4.3. Arab Uprisings

The proactive foreign policy of the AKP continued in the second phase of the government. Especially when Davutoğlu was appointed foreign minister in 2009, he took on immediate responsibility for external policy decisions. But one should not forget that before that, Davutoğlu was not just an ordinary adviser behind the

¹⁶ For example, journalist Can Ataklı thinks Erdoğan did not take such a step because seven years is a long time and had he not been able to lead the party correctly his political life would have ended. Also, he could not hold the control of the executive in his hand. He preferred to be elected as president by the people after seven years and by reforming the state governing system to make that job permanent. <https://www.birgun.net/haber-detay/Erdoğan-2007-de-cumhurbaskanligini-neden-Gül-e-birakti-155041.html>

¹⁷ Statement by Secretary General of European Friends of Armenia (EuFoA) Michael Kambeck . <http://eufoa.org/breakthrough-or-diplomatic-tactics-armenia-and-turkey-could-solve-first-bilateral-dispute-in-the-region-3/> , also in <https://www.thenational.ae/world/europe/football-diplomacy-between-armenia-and-turkey-1.513824> ; <https://www.csmonitor.com/Commentary/the-monitors-view/2009/1010/p08s01-comv.html> accessed on 8 May 2018

scenes, he was at the core of the AKP's foreign policy. "Prime Minister Erdoğan elevated the office of Ahmet Davutoğlu, the prime minister's chief adviser on foreign policy, from the traditional status of a small bureau, which provides day-to-day counsel to the prime minister, to the source of strategic thinking and ideological support for the new foreign policy based on the Islamist roots of the current government." (Murinson, 2006, p. 947) Although Erdoğan was considered the undisputed leader of Turkey during the first decade of his rule, Davutoğlu was the most important figure in Turkey's foreign policy. (Robins, Turkey's 'double gravity' predicament: the foreign policy of a newly activist power, 2013) In the second phase of governance, Erdoğan focused more on domestic politics, namely the Ergenekon trials which began to weaken the role of the military, resolving the Kurdish issue and constitutional reforms in 2010. However, since 2011, especially after the Arab Spring, Erdoğan closely followed Middle East developments. President Gül did not participate in major foreign policy discussions. Moreover, to reinforce government-led policies he made foreign visits. (Balci 2017) As soon as Davutoğlu became the Minister of Foreign Affairs, his role in the foreign policy domain became more noticeable, because "Davutoğlu's influence [was] mainly due to Abdullah Gül's and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's willingness to implement it in foreign policy." (Aras, 2009, p. 128)

Davutoğlu's "zero problems with neighbors" doctrine had been on the agenda since 2002 and it included establishing good relations with the Middle East. However, Davutoğlu and Erdoğan not only wanted to develop economic ties and solve the problems of the past, but also expected to make new gains. "They aspired to revive the regional supremacy of the once all-powerful Ottoman Empire, striving to become the leaders of a pan-Islamic movement in the Middle East." (Schanzer & Tahiroglu, 2016) For Davutoğlu and Erdoğan, the Arab Spring was an excellent opportunity to bring their desire into reality. The Arab Spring became the means for bringing Islamic sensitivity back to Turkish politics. The Arab Spring gave rise to the possibility that Islamic energy, emerging from the collapse of dictatorships, could create new political formats and the AKP did not miss this opportunity to take advantage of the situation. Davutoğlu's and Erdoğan's goal of creating an

alternative civilization to the West was an attractive option that could not be rejected by a Muslim. Hence, they progressed in that way. In the Middle East, Davutoğlu's doctrine was being practiced and Erdoğan was convinced of its success because their ideological background was alike. However, on the other hand, a search for active, interventionist policies in the Middle East and in Sunni Islam eroded the basis of the traditional ideology of the state. Meanwhile, on the conservative part, self-confidence and a feeling of pride were growing. Thus, during the Arab Spring, new approaches and visions about the main strategic preferences in Turkey were brought onto the agenda. (Bayramoğlu, 2018)

The Arab Spring began in January 2011, in Tunisia, when young people who came out to the streets succeeded in a short time to overthrow the regime of Zeynel Abidin Bin Ali. It was known that the political wing of the Muslim Brotherhood, the Ennahda (El-Nahda, Renaissance) party, with its political leader Seyh Rashid al-Ghannushi was to succeed by Bin Ali. Although Turkey did not have serious economic interests in Tunisia, it was ideologically close to Ennahda and gladly accepted the fact that in an Arab country a step forward was taken toward democracy and succeeded. (Keleşoğlu, 2018) The AKP and Ennahda have some remarkable similarities, the first of which is to shed light on the traditions of the Muslim Brotherhood. Both are the political parties of the two countries in which their people have had relatively secular practices. Also, the use of moderate Islam by the AKP was an example and inspiration for Ghannushi.

During the Arab Spring without doubts decisive actors were Erdoğan and Davutoğlu, but there were also other influential actors who were not at the forefront. For example, in October 2011, Ennahda party won the first democratic elections held in Tunisia and the man who drafted the electoral strategy and campaign, was Erol Olçak, in charge of the AKP's public relations. Olçak was great in his electoral strategy and campaign. What is more, the campaign of the social democratic and secular Progressive Democratic Party, which was Ennahda's rival, was drafted by Selim Oktar (Sabah 2011) who was ideologically close to the CHP. Interestingly, in the political context, Olçak drafted the campaign free of charge and Oktar did it

for remuneration. This is a detail to confirm that the role in policy-making in Tunisia had also other actors with their important, even if limited, influence.

From the AKP's perspective, Tunisia was an ideal starting point for realizing and bringing to life the ideal of being a model in the Arab world. But this desire did not last long and beside many similarities between Ennahda and AKP, the parties have changed places. The AKP, rather than being a model party, ended up needing to take examples from Ennahda. In a very short time, Ghannouchi handed the governance to the Nida Tunis Party, and that was a democratic transition. Meanwhile, the AKP, which came to power in Turkey with the promise of the same democratic transition, sees itself as a power creating and lasting an epoch.

Egypt followed Tunisia, and Cairo's streets were filled with young people who also demanded the removal of Mubarak. From the standpoint of AKP's foreign policy, Egypt was a turning point during the Arab Spring. Davutoğlu and Erdoğan foresaw the process of the revolution in Egypt and developed their policies accordingly. "Turkey's position on Egypt was win-win. Turkey did not have much to lose from the politics it believed to be both principled and realist, but it had much to win." (Fuller, 2016, p. 249) In Egypt, official Ankara had no settled interests and had never had a close relationship with the regime of Mubarak. Instead, it was ideologically close to the Muslim Brotherhood and presidency of Mohammed Morsi on June 30, 2012 was crucial and decisive for AKP – democracy was expected and meanwhile the energy that was shaped was Sunni pluralism. Of course, these are the developments that the AKP had in mind. Morsi's rise to power and fall within the shortest period of time (369 days all in all) after the Egyptian coup d'état of Abdel Fattah el-Sisi on July 3, 2013 were perhaps the most critical in the Egyptian hold-up of the Arab Spring. The coup was backed by the West and Saudi Arabia. As a result, seeing similarities with the events of Gezi, Erdoğan and his entourage's concern about "it's our turn" reached the peak. (Insel 2018) Having in mind the fact that a referendum on constitutional reforms in 2010 resulted in the abolition of military tutelage, the authorities had a concern that the army might have not endured that reality and Gezi became a platform for the coup. These events led to the beginning of Erdoğan's heightened security and threat sensitivity. As a result,

actions aimed at holding on to power at home had their fallout in the relations with the EU, even in the relations with the United States, giving rise to new tensions, which later on continued in Syria. (Bayramođlu, 2018) The ideal of Turkey being a model began to fail with this turn of events. Erdoğan's criticisms in particular had played their role in the West, namely his emphasis that the West's attitude toward Egypt would lead to questioning democracy.¹⁸ Erdoğan criticized the West by saying that concerns that emerged during the days of Gezi had their impact on the toughness of Erdoğan's statements and were reflected in the issue of the Middle East and that of Egypt in particular. Thus, supporting Davutođlu's more constructive, soft power and diplomacy seemed to have pushed him to the background with Erdoğan being at the forefront. Nor was Abdullah Gül's diplomatic approach valued. The tension between Gül and Erdoğan once again found its reflection in the case of Egypt. When Sisi became the president, realizing that the relationship with Egypt was first and foremost important in terms of having control in the southern Mediterranean, Gül decided to send a letter to Sisi. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was informed that Gül had sent a letter having got approval from Davutođlu. (Sever, 2015) The aim of the letter was not to congratulate but rather to maintain the lowest level of diplomatic relations with Egypt. Even Qatar that had a stance similar to Turkey's changed its posture and sent back its ambassador to participate in the inauguration. Erdoğan criticized the letter sent by Gül at the meeting with EU ambassadors in Ankara. Once again Erdoğan-Gül disagreements and Erdoğan's desire for being an absolute leader were confirmed.

The next stop in the Arab Spring was different. The uprising in Libya in February 2011 challenged Turkey to make a serious choice: support large-scale trade links with Libya or support democratic change which would mean regime change in case

¹⁸ "Erdoğan'dan Batı'ya 'Mısır Darbesi' eleştirisi" BBC Türkçe,

https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler/2013/07/130705_misir_cuma_gosteri, or "Erdoğan: Batının Mısır tavrı demokrasinin sorgulanmasına yol açar" Radikal, <http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/Erdoğan-batinin-misir-tavri-demokrasinin-sorgulanmasına-yol-acar-1146244/>, accessed on 18 May 2018

of Libya. While Erdoğan considered Western military actions against Libya absurd, Davutoğlu was trying to organize meetings of forces inside Libya. But, when in March 2011, the UN Security Council, the EU and even the Arab League united against the Gaddafi regime, “Turkey [...] had to awkwardly backtrack from some of its initial positions. Despite its original concerns over the extent of the military intervention into Libya, it eventually signed onto NATO taking over command and control of the no-fly zone. [...] But Turkey [did] not fully cooperate [...] with UN-mandated efforts aimed at freezing Gaddafi’s assets.” (Barkey, 2011) For the AKP authorities, there were several profound differences between Egypt and Libya, which made the position change. Firstly, Libya had no unanimous opposition as it was in Egypt, only Benghazi’s tribes rebelled. Secondly, there was not a traditional and structured army, that is, there was not an army that would hinder the country's internal warfare. Consequently, Turkey had to be very cautious in its approach. Erdoğan was not only against a military intervention but, most likely, Davutoğlu was trying to hinder the possibility of the further consolidation of such countries as France in Libya. The Ottoman tradition of pursuing a double policy was exercised in Libya as well. On the one hand, Davutoğlu and Erdoğan tried to negotiate with Gaddafi's regime, on the other hand – meeting with oppositionists – tried to win their hearts. Even wounded opposition fighters were brought to Turkey under grave conditions. For this purpose, Davutoğlu first met with Abdullah Ubaid and then with the opposition speaker Mohammed Jibril. Perhaps it wouldn't be wrong to say that there was a distribution of roles between Erdoğan and Davutoğlu at the Libyan stage of the Arab Spring – the former undertook an action of criticizing the West and opposing military intervention by making strict statements and the latter undertook an action of holding diplomatic negotiations.¹⁹ Many analysts believe that the turbulence of the AKP's foreign policy started in Libya and settled in Syria. “By closing the Crisis Management Office adjacent to the Government, we follow

¹⁹ For example, on the 28th of February 2011, Erdoğan criticized the intervention by NATO in Libya during his speech at the Cebit Congress Hall in Germany and said “Isn't it absurd? What is NATO doing in Libya?” And Davutoğlu had a conference call on the 24th of March 2011 with the foreign ministers of England, France and the United States.

the developments only through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and cannot manage the crisis.” (Yilmaz 2011) The failures of Davutoğlu and Erdoğan in Libya also point to the fact that they had collided with the dilemma of ethics against personal interests particularly in Libya, which had to be followed by Syria. (Onis 2012)

The terrifying challenge of the Arab Spring for Turkey was the rebellion in Syria. “The crisis in Syria triggered the tactics of Turkish foreign policy and ultimately ruined Ankara’s foreign policy.” (Fuller, 2016, p. 253) Since the AKP came to power, one of its biggest achievements was the establishment of friendly relations with Syria and Turkey was aiming at becoming one of the dominant actors in Syria's economy. (Barkey, 2011) The efforts of Davutoğlu and Erdoğan to persuade Assad to carry out the demands of the protesters who went out on the streets and to realize the necessary reforms did not produce results. Erdoğan sharply changed Turkey’s approach and called for military intervention in Syria if necessary. Similar attempts at convincing were carried out during the March Resolution, when Gül tried convincing Saddam and in the case of Libya when trying to convince Gaddafi. This clearly indicated the continuation of the AKP’s policy. Until a decision is made, the AKP would play the self-appointed role of “big brother”, and when that would fail, it would look to other steps.

After Egypt, Syria was of vital importance for the AKP because whoever wishes to lead in the Middle East should control Syria. “When Obama withdrew his troops from Iraq, a certain vacuum emerged, and Erdoğan made a mistake when calculating how to fill that gap. While everyone was waiting for him to serve as a model, he wanted to become a leader.” (Uzgel 2016) Perhaps it was this desire that caught the AKP in the developments in Syria, no longer being able to get out of the labyrinth. If Erdoğan had not been a part of the program to overthrow Assad, he would have had a very positive role and might have solved many problems in many places. When the United States refused to overthrow Assad, Turkey could have followed the US example. In this case, Erdoğan might have become a leader that would play a constructive role and Davutoğlu’s doctrine would not have failed completely. Syria’s example shows that if Erdoğan did not wish, then the drafted policy would not be implemented. Davutoğlu had most likely prepared an

ideological background and made it come true together with Erdoğan. It wouldn't be right to consider these two actors separately, but it wouldn't be wrong either to say that Davutoğlu was more active because of the office he held, however, never overriding Erdoğan. Meanwhile, he was a political figure who was moving forward on the basis of values and approaching the issues from a more normative ideological point of view. (Keleşoğlu 2018) Erdoğan and Davutoğlu were the main political leaders in Syria, but not forgetting that the security factor in Turkey's foreign policy is very important, the names of the National Intelligence Service, Undersecretary Hakan Fidan, and the names of the ones adjacent to the Government State Planning Organization, Undersecretary Kemal Madenoğlu, should be mentioned in particular. Fidan repeatedly headed for Syria as Erdoğan's "special representative." (Zengin 2013) However, Turkish actors did not achieve the desired result, and Assad was not among the leaders of other Arab countries to step back. Thus, the failure of becoming a model began in Egypt and came to completion in Syria.

The idea of Turkey being an exemplary model was in circulation since the early 2000s, when the AKP as a party with Islamic origins came to power. The Turkish Model was defined by "Islamic liberalism: marriage of formal democracy, free market capitalism and conservative Islam." (Tugal, 2016, p. 4) After the overthrow of the Mubarak regime, Erdoğan was accepted as a hero during his visit to Egypt in September 2011. Davutoğlu's and Erdoğan's open support to those fighting the Middle East dictators gave them opportunities to be glorified. But, the glory of Turkey and the AKP authorities in the region during the Arab Spring did not last long. Nor did the appeal of the "Turkish Model" of governance and democracy last long in the Arab world, namely after the Gezi incidents of summer 2013 which pushed the regime to intensify its authoritarianism and conservatism. (Tugal, 2016) "[A]s the excitement over the region's prospects of transformation from authoritarian to more democratic regimes waned and peaceful revolutions were replaced by civil war, sectarian strife and instability, Turkey increasingly became embroiled in the regional conflicts rather than an arbiter of them." (Kirişçi, 2013) Concurrently, Erdoğan's actions, rhetoric and failure's inside Turkey, as well as his

increasingly authoritarian practices “began to be seen as yet another weakness that engendered views critical of Turkey’s model credentials.” (Kirişçi, 2013)

4.4. Conclusion

In this chapter the research tried to take a deep look and understand the historical opening and possible normalization of relations between two close, but far neighbors Armenia and Turkey and the ambition of becoming a leader in the Middle East. By analyzing the whole process of Football Diplomacy, it is possible to conclude that in the foreign policy pursued by Turkey, there are two types of actors: promoting and obstructing. Abdullah Gül did not manage to finish his task since Erdoğan while in Baku made unplanned announcements promising to do nothing without any solution related to the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. Later his speech forced him to take into account economic and energy crises by which Azerbaijan threatened Turkey. The Football Diplomacy process reached the level of the signing of the protocols because, for the first time, experienced diplomats were engaged in the process and there was no political context. However, Erdoğan’s statement in Baku dramatically changed the tone of the process. On the other hand, Davutoğlu did not want to bear the burden of failing the process that had reached a certain successful phase, so he tried to do everything possible for the continuation of the process. The process initiated by President Gül and the Foreign Ministry bureaucratic and diplomatic team failed because of Erdoğan. Erdoğan used Azerbaijan as the primary reason for his opposition to the process, but it would not be wrong to view this in the context that there was a desire to satisfy his ego and not to share the title of being the influential leader and politician. The picture was same in Turkey’s Middle East policies too. The Arab Spring was a good opportunity to carry out Davutoğlu’s doctrine of hegemony in the region. However, the same Arab Spring disrupted the AKP’s “zero problems with neighbors” diplomacy. In the early days of the Arab Spring, Turkey was revered both by the West and the Arab world as model country for the countries of the region engulfed by revolts. Authorities of the AKP who were the inspiration for the implementation of

democratic transition in Tunisia were unable to provide the same in their country. This is perhaps the most striking difference between Erdoğan and Ghannushi. This fact could be an early sign that the idea of being a model would not work. At the end of the Arab Spring, because of his mistaken calculations, Erdoğan's role was even greater but in the opposite direction, as his aggressiveness and authoritarianism during the 2013 Gezi rebellion deprived Turkey of being a model system of governance and democracy. During the Arab Spring, Davutoğlu was an ideological author of Turkey's policies, which came about as a result of the collective policy pursued by AKP and the Turkish statehood and, when getting out of control, even began to harm Turkey as a result of fear and paranoia within the context of Erdoğan's domestic and foreign policy interconnection. So, it would be wrong to argue that Davutoğlu drafted the policy of Turkey in the Middle East, and Erdoğan applied it. After dismissing Davutoğlu from the post of prime minister, Erdoğan appointed Binali Yıldırım and began to pursue a more balanced and secure policy. This meant getting unscathed out of the failed policy in the Middle East and leaving the blame on Davutoğlu.

CONCLUSION

For Turkey, with a strong political tradition in the history of the Republic, and for the AKP government, foreign policy has vital importance and is part of their identity. Compared to the established republican tradition, the AKP's foreign policy represents a break. Many features have been used to describe the foreign policy pursued by the AKP: "key player", "passive power", "zero problems with neighbors" and more. The primary purpose of this study was to understand who the essential and influential actors are who have directed foreign policy decisions. In order to get the picture correctly, actors were studied from the last stage of the Ottoman Empire to the AKP's rule. During the whole period of the tour, several similarities emerged that could be called the legacy of the Ottoman Empire to the Republic of Turkey. One of the main traditions of the foreign policy inherited by the Turkish Republic from the Ottoman Empire is the multidimensional diplomacy, which was evident during the Özal's ruling period and the AKP administration. There are articles about similarities between Özal and Erdoğan and their comparative interpretations. The most important difference is that Özal was the main actor, the influential actors who followed him were representatives of the business world, and the bureaucracy had no role or influence.

At the first stage of the AKP administration, there was a 'multi-actor' atmosphere, that is, the bureaucracy was active and giving directions. But over time, as a result of the consolidation of power, all significant actors moved to the backstage, and Erdoğan's tendency to be the sole actor was outlined. Thus, Erdoğan's style of government became more like Özal's. However, the AKP is the majority in the parliament, Erdoğan's position and influence within the party, the lack of criticism in the decision-making process, and the fact that he was elected President by the people were much stronger in comparison to Özal. It is difficult to say clearly, for example, that in the period of the AKP government, representatives of the business world were as influential actors and foreign policy-makers as during Özal's time, with a few exceptions. Coming back to the Ottoman legacy, the Ottoman Empire's foreign policy had three main ideologies: Ottomanism, Islamism and Turkism. Each

of these three ideologies was used as a matter of necessity, which indicates the existence of an ongoing pragmatism – something that has also been evidently inherited by the Republic of Turkey, and the AKP uses it most advantageously. Especially the idea of neo-Ottomanism, which Davutoğlu has put forward, tried to find its way into the Middle Eastern political sphere.

In order to answer the question who Turkey's foreign policy-makers are, this dissertation has explored several theories and try to understand which better describes and explains Turkey's foreign policy from the perspective of actors, especially during the rule of the AKP. One of the main findings is that at the first stage of the AKP administration, the foreign policy bureaucracy had its unique place. It was active and decisive. In this regard, the thesis of Allison's bureaucratic approach rang true as long as the tendency to be a leader was not expressed very strongly, and most importantly when the foreign minister was someone with clear vision. The first stage was also confirmed by Janis's groupthink perspective, which is seen in the resolution of the Cyprus referendum and the March 1st Motion. There was a dialogue between all actors, and they tried to find the most beneficial decision. But here a question arises: for whom were the decisions the most beneficial? For the country or for the authorities? According to the pluralistic approach, decision makers do not always make rational decisions for the country's benefit. In the case of the AKP too, especially in the first half of their governance, foreign policy decisions were not necessarily rational for the interests of the country, but they aimed more to ensure the government's legitimacy, which supposed the support of the two most important factors in international relations: the EU and the United States.

Although Allison has been criticized for the theory that bureaucracy is an important part of foreign political decisions, his theory has been confirmed in several ways in this dissertation. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was prominent and influential in the first phase of the AKP administration, namely during the March 1st Motion and the Cyprus referendum. Looking at the starting point of the Armenia-Turkey normalization process, which was President Sargsyan's invitation, President Abdullah Gül's first action was to take into consideration the Foreign Ministry's

opinion. His consultation with the ministry before issuing a response confirms Allison's theory of its relevance to the issue. From here, one could conclude that bureaucracy is vital to the extent that leaders or hierarchical high-ranking individuals value it, and those who appreciate have a vision of foreign relations. This conclusion comes to prove another development in the Football Diplomacy process, when Erdoğan dismissed the MFA briefing during his speech in Baku and spoke of the matter however he wanted. As a result, the first signal was shown that the process of reconciliation between Armenia and Turkey was in great danger. Or, going back a bit and looking at the years of Menderes's rule, in this case the foreign bureaucracy was active because the leader was not proficient in foreign affairs. The gap was filled in cooperation with a trusted foreign minister. Thus, Allison's theory is correct, but with some qualifications and a bureaucratic leadership rating.

This dissertation in the analysis of four foreign policy cases was in all events more fully explained by the pluralistic theory framework. During the March 1st Motion, the organization and implementation of vital meetings with official Washington was due to Erdoğan's adviser businessman Zapsu, which matches the pluralist claim that non-state actors are vital units. In the same case, the role of public opinion is evident as well, which, according to the pluralists, has its influence in decision-making. However, one of the phenomena noticeable during the AKP's rule could be the fact that the roles of the actors often changed.

As a result of the study of some of the most critical foreign policy decisions of the AKP administration from an actor-based perspective, it is thus possible to arrive at a few conclusions. First, during the first phase of the AKP administration, 2002-2007, one can observe the struggle between the AKP, the military, and the opposition in foreign policy decisions. In the second phase, 2007-2014, the clashes inside the AKP and Erdoğan's desire to be the absolute leader become clearer. At the first stage after taking power, the AKP acted as a single actor with a united force, and its counterbalance was mainly the military. This is particularly evident in the examples of the March 1st Motion and the Cyprus referendum. During this period the state mechanism worked in a more integrated manner and incremental decisions were made. There were serious discussions in the MFA, and more

decisions were made democratically within the party. The role of the military in foreign policy decisions is disputable, and sometimes it is possible to encounter exaggerations in the comments. The influence of the military was great especially during the 1990s, and after the 2000s a particular retreat has been observed, which analysts interpret in different ways. This dissertation has come to the conclusion that the relative weakening of the role of the military did not entirely depend on the consolidation of the power of the AKP or the power of Erdoğan, but because of at least some invisible but modest changes within the military. The army is not a monolithic structure and has generals with attitudes that lean toward both NATO and more Eurasian tendencies. The AKP authorities were fortunate to be working together with Hilmi Özkök as the Chief of Staff. Özkök was known for his pro-Western views and in the first phase of the AKP administration, especially in the decisions on Iraq and Cyprus, the military did not show the toughness which would be expected of it. However, the AKP authorities asked the question, "What will the military say?" for each of their decisions. This confirms the fact that, regardless of whether or not the military had been active or passive, the authorities took it into account. Even today, despite the end of military tutelage since 2010, it should be remembered that the military exists and has its place. The limitation of power does not imply a total elimination of force and influence.

If at the first stage of government the AKP was focused on legitimacy, in the second half a new political culture of decision-making was formed based on personal relationships. Perhaps the most remarkable infighting within the AKP was between Erdoğan and Gül. Gül was always more pro-Western, pro-democracy and pro-resolution, Erdoğan has taken on a character focused on self-interest and far from Western values. The first striking example of the invisible, but subsequently obvious struggle between these two actors was the process aimed at the normalization of relations with Armenia, otherwise known as Football Diplomacy. Gül's moves in this regard did not achieve the desired results, as it did not address Erdoğan's interests and would have been Gül's victory, which Erdoğan would not allow. Hudson's actor-specific approach could be confirmed by this example.

If, in the first years of AKP power, Liberal Islam was talked about, after 2010, the picture changed and turned into a more egoistic and authoritarian character, the architect of which was Erdoğan himself. Since 2009, the Foreign Ministry became again active in the foreign policy of the AKP, which was based on Davutoğlu's role as the foreign minister. It is true that Davutoğlu, from the very first day of the AKP administration, was at least in the background as adviser to the prime minister, but when he was appointed foreign minister he became one of the most important figures. At that time the AKP lacked an ideological leader and Davutoğlu filled that void. After 2010, the AKP and namely Erdoğan had an explosion of self-confidence, which turned their attention toward the Middle East, with great hope of becoming the leader of the region. The Arab Spring was a chance firstly for Davutoğlu's doctrine and then Erdoğan's desire to become the leader of the Middle East. Here, Hudson's proposed actor-specific approach, which means the actors are specific individuals, is confirmed.

Intra-party clashes and the leader's increasingly consolidated power led to the fact that all kinds of actors were being pushed to the back. In conclusion, one can say that in foreign policy decisions, whereas according to Western system of values, the most active integrated actor should have been the MFA, in Turkey's case when there is a strong leader, other actors have had almost no right to speak. This can be considered another Ottoman legacy of Turkish politics. In Abdulhamid's time too, the powerful leader led to the enforced passivity of all other actors. The picture was the same during the Özal administration, when the leader was the only one who made key decisions.

One of the attributes of Turkey's foreign policy is its interconnection with domestic politics, as a result of which foreign policy decisions are frequently observed as a means to gain an advantage in local politics. The term "strong leader" in this sense may be relative. For example, the desire to be the leader of the Middle East did not match with the country's ability to be so. The goal was large and the capacity was limited, which was clear in the cases of Egypt and Syria. There are two ways to implement defined national interests: bring international actors closer to your interests or at least minimize the risk to be criticized by them. The AKP authorities

were unable to do both and the hyperactive policy led to the bankruptcy of its foreign policy. So the term of a “strong leader” became questionable and raised yet another issue: is being a strong leader inside the country sufficient to achieve the desired result externally for the country? Or can that force influence other international actors as well?

In all foreign policy cases analyzed in this dissertation, it has been shown that the AKP’s foreign policy has so far been based on the fundamental (and ideal) principles of Turkish foreign policy in the form of Westernism, supporting the status quo and legitimacy. But the increasing power of a sole leader has brought a decrease to any multi-actor decision making process. Hence the efficiency, result and rationality of decisions have changed accordingly. The main findings of this dissertation are important as they can help supplement the gap that exists in the current academic literature from the point of view of external political actors. The fact that the leader's strengths distract the mechanism of the political decision-making process and give way to new questions can become a subject of other studies. For example, how to make a strong leader, army, bureaucracy, and public opinion to make decision incrementally so that the choice will be rational and pursue the interests of all? Thus, the question of this dissertation, ‘who makes Turkey's foreign policy?’ has tried to put a new light on existing literature and understand who the actors are and why they are influential.

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