# Quo Vadis Turkey?

# Turkey's State Identity Through

# the Ontological Security Perspective

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# ABSTRACT

This thesis looks at the ambivalent relationship between Turkey and the West and its impact on Turkey's state identity. It was written at the time when concerns about the West 'losing Turkey' or alternatively Turkey shifting an axis became widespread. I argue that the process of putting in doubt Turkey's position within the West started at the end of the Cold War and was initiated by the West itself. Therefore, what is now understood as a radical change is an outcome of the strategy of the West to make Turkey continuously pursue belonging without granting it due recognition. The aim of this thesis is to shift the analytical attention from 'what Turkey is for the West' or 'how it can be categorized' to account for the ways in which Turkey has responded to its changing position vis-à-vis the West after the end of bipolarity.

Analytically, I build on the concept of ontological security, which overcomes the emphasis on structure and the conflation of self and identity encountered in some constructivist scholarship. I approach identity as a 'reflexive project' that requires constant attention to maintain a stable sense of self in a changing world. I put forward that stigmatization related to the status of a latecomer to the modern state system and a liminal position related to the existence of mutually exclusive discourses within this system lead to the development of a fragile sense of ontological security. Consequently, such states become extra-sensitive to concerns regarding belonging, recognition, and status, which shapes their identity and foreign policy.

In three case studies, Turkey's pursuit of EU membership, the deteriorating relationship with Israel, and the decision to host Syrian refugees, I study how Turkey's quest for recognition as an equal with its Western counterparts has shaped changes within Turkey's state identity. I show that although Turkey decided to capitalize on its liminal position, which led to a more independent foreign policy and subsequent worries about Turkey's orientation, it still seeks the approval, respect, and recognition of the West.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

# ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS

AIPAC: American Israel Public Affairs Committee

AFAD: Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency

AKP: Justice and Development Party

ANAP: Motherland Party

CEECs: Central and Eastern European Countries

CCP: United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine

CHP: Republican People's Party

CNMS: Concept of National Military Strategy

COMCEC: Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation

CUP: Committee of Union and Progress

DGMM: Directorate General of Migration Management

DSP: Democratic Left Party

DTP: Democratic Society Party

DYP: True Path Party

EC: European Commission

ECHR: European Convention on Human Rights

ECtHR: European Court of Human Rights

EEC: European Economic Community

EU: European Union

FTA: Free Trade Agreement

HDP: Peoples' Democratic Party

HRW: Human Rights Watch

IAEA: International Atomic Energy Agency

IAI: Israel Aircraft Industry

ICG: International Crisis Group

IDF: Israeli Defense Forces

JINSA: Jewish Institute for National Strategic Affairs

KDP: Kurdistan Democratic Party

LFIP: Law on Foreigners and International Protection

MAH: Turkish National Security Service

MIT: National Intelligence Organization

MFA: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

MGK: Turkish National Security Council

MHP: Nationalist Movement Party

MP: Member of Parliament

NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NPAA: National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis

OECD: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

OIC: Organization of Islamic Cooperation

OSCE: Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe

PKK: Kurdistan Workers' Party

PLO: Palestinian Liberation Organization

RP: Welfare Party

RSC: Regional Security Complex

RSCT: Regional Security Complex Theory

RSD: Refugee Status Determination

TGMM: Turkish Grand National Assembly

TPR: Temporary Protection Regulation

UAR: United Arab Republic

UK: United Kingdom

UN: United Nations

UNGA: United Nations General Assembly

UNIFIL: United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

UNHCR: United Nations Refugee Agency

U.S.: United States

# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction

On 15 July 2016 and in the subsequent days, the coup d'état attempt in Turkey was on everyone's lips. In the first few days after the coup, more questions were asked about Turkey around the world than in the preceding year alone. Particularly in the West, there was uncertainty regarding who should be deemed the hero or the villain. At the outset of the failed coup, Western leaders were reluctant to condemn the developments in Turkey and express support for the Justice and Development Party (AKP) government.[1] This is puzzling taking into consideration that Turkey is a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and a candidate country to the European Union (EU), whose government at that time was chosen in five consecutive elections.[2]

Since the consolidation of power by the AKP,[3] both in political and academic circles, there have been voices of concern about Turkey changing its pro-Western orientation or the West 'losing Turkey'.[4] Contrary to this opinion, this thesis advances a more nuanced understanding of the

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[1] Eduard Soler i Lecha, 'The International Impact of the Failed Coup in Turkey', Barcelona Centre for International Affairs, July 2016 <https://www.cidob.org/en/publications/publication_series/opinion/mediterraneo_y_oriente_medio/the_interna tional_impact_of_the_failed_coup_in_turkey> [accessed 5 May 2020]; Ayse Yircali and Sabiha Senyucel, 'The West Fails the "Coup Test" in Turkey', *Al Jazeera*, 25 July 2016 <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2016/07/west-fails-coup-test-turkey-160724120008222.html> [accessed 5 May 2020]; Barbara Tasch, 'The West "Contradicts the Values It Is Defending": Erdogan Blasts the International Response to the Turkey Coup', *Business Insider*, 8 August 2016 <https://www.businessinsider.com/erdogan-blasts-international-response-to-turkey-coup-refugee-crisis-2016-8> [accessed 5 May 2020]; Fadi Hakura, 'Why Turkey's Disapproval of the West's Response to the Coup Has Limited Merit', *The Chatham House*, 10 August 2016 <https://www.chathamhouse.org/expert/comment/why-turkey-s-disapproval-west-s-response-coup-has-limited-merit> [accessed 5 May 2020].

[2] In 2002, the AKP received 34.3% of votes; in 2007 46.58%; in 2011 49.83%; in June 2015 40.87%, and in November 2015 49.50%.

[3] I posit that the AKP winning its first elections in 2002 was not in itself seen as a sign of 'losing Turkey'. This narrative became more pronounced with the AKP consolidating its power and taking more independent decisions in foreign policy.

[4] Owen Matthews, 'Who Lost Turkey?', *Newsweek*, 10 December 2006 <https://www.newsweek.com/who-lost-turkey-105633> [accessed 5 May 2020]; Dominique Moisi, 'Who Lost Turkey?', *Project Syndycate*, 20 February 2009 <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/who-lost-turkey> [accessed 5 May 2020]; Nicholas Danforth, 'How the West Lost Turkey', *Foreign Policy*, 25 November 2009 <https://foreignpolicy.com/2009/11/25/how-the-west-lost-turkey/> [accessed 5 May 2020]; Mark Steyn, 'Who Lost Turkey?', *Washington Times*, 4 June 2010 <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2010/jun/4/who-lost-turkey/> [accessed 5 May 2020]; Joschka Fischer, 'Who "Lost" Turkey?', *Project Syndycate*, 1 July 2010 <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/who--lost--turkey> [accessed 5 May 2020]; Johanna Vuorelma, 'The Ironic Western Self: Radical and Conservative Irony in the "Losing Turkey" Narrative', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 47.2 (2019), 190–209.

relationship between Turkey and the West. It puts forward an alternative argument that after the end of the Cold War, Turkey was put in a liminal position by the West itself. However, as will be shown throughout this thesis, since the Ottoman Empire, the question of Turkey's belonging to the West never ceased to exist; it just became less pronounced at certain times.

Established on 29 October 1923 on the principles of republicanism, nationalism, populism, statism, laicism, and revolutionism, the Republic of Turkey was defined as a modern Western nation-state. This decision was confirmed during the Cold War through its institutional choices – in 1950, Turkey became the thirteenth member state of the Council of Europe, in 1952, it joined NATO, and in 1961, it became one of the founding member states of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). However, with the end of bipolarity, Turkey's position within the West underwent an unexpected turn. David Campbell labelled the end of the Cold War as 'the erasure of the markers of certainty'.[5] This description could not be more appropriate to capture the situation that Turkey found itself in – its Western identity was put in doubt. Since then, there remains no agreement about what Turkey is and where Turkey belongs.

In one of the first attempts to categorize a new world order, Samuel Huntington, in his famous article-turned-book *Clash of Civilizations*, labels Turkey as a torn country. Torn countries are characterized by the division 'over whether their society belongs to one civilization or another', and Turkey is categorized as 'the most obvious and prototypical torn country'.[6] According to Huntington, Turkey is torn between the Western and Islamic civilizations. It was put in this sensitive position by the Kemalist leaders that rejected the country's natural trajectory by establishing a modern, secular, Western nation-state. He further underlines that this decision was doomed to failure from the very beginning because, as an Islamic country, Turkey could never become a part of the Western civilization. For Huntington, the choice is easy: if '[a]t some point, Turkey could be ready to give up its frustrating and humiliating role as a beggar pleading

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[5] David Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity* (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1992), p. 19.
[6] Samuel Huntington, 'The Clash of Civilizations?', *Foreign Affairs*, 1993, 22–49 (p. 42).

for membership in the West', it could 'resume its much more impressive and elevated historical role as the principal Islamic interlocutor and antagonist of the West'.[7]

For Robert Chase, Emily Hill and Paul Kennedy, also in the article-turned-book *Pivotal States and U.S. Strategy*, Turkey is seen as a pivot. Seeking new principles for the U.S. national strategy, the authors propose to select countries that are more important than others because their fate determines the survival and success of the surrounding regions and ultimately affects the stability of the international system. Turkey, along with Mexico, Brazil, Algeria, Egypt, South Africa, India, Pakistan and Indonesia, is considered to be one of such pivotal states because it is '[a]t a multifold crossroads between East and West, North and South, Christendom and Islam, [therefore] Turkey has the potential to influence countries thousands of miles from the Bosporus'.[8]

Similarly, Zbigniew Brzezinski, in his book *The Grand Chessboard*, defines Turkey as a geopolitical pivot, which is a quality of 'states whose importance is derived not from their power and motivation but rather from their sensitive location and from the consequences of their potentially vulnerable condition for the behaviour of geostrategic players'.[9] According to Brzezinski, 'Turkey stabilizes the Black Sea region, controls access from it to the Mediterranean Sea, balances Russia in the Caucasus, still offers an antidote to Muslim fundamentalism, and serves as the southern anchor for NATO'.[10] Brzezinski emphasizes that Turkey's role should not be narrowed down to a passive observer of international affairs in a sensitive geographical location, as Turkey wants and can extend influence beyond its borders, which characterizes the so-called geostrategic players. Nonetheless, in fulfilling this second role, Turkey has limited capabilities compared to France, Germany, Russia, China or India.[11]

In the Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) proposed by Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver in their book *Regions and Powers*, Turkey is categorized as an insulator (alongside *inter alia* Burma and

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[7] Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), p. 178.

[8] Robert S. Chase, Emily B. Hill, and Paul Kennedy, 'Pivotal States and U.S. Strategy', *Foreign Affairs*, 1996, 33–51 (p. 47). See also *The Pivotal States: A New Framework for U. S. Policy in the Developing World*, ed. by Robert S. Chase, Emily B. Hill, and Paul Kennedy (New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company, 1999).

[9] Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives* (New York: Basic Books, 1997), p. 41.

[10] Brzezinski, p. 47.

[11] Brzezinski, p. 40.

Afghanistan). RSCT defines an insulator as 'a location occupied by one or more units where larger regional security dynamics stand back to back'.[12] Consequently, Turkey is located between three established regional security complexes (RSCs) – the European, the Middle Eastern and the ex-Soviet.[13] It has links to each one of them without being a part of any of them. As the function of an insulator is to separate different RSCs, the Regional Security Complex Theory puts forward that such actors are characterized by passive behaviour in the international arena.[14] However, like Brzezinski, Buzan and Wæver acknowledge that Turkey's activism in the international arena goes beyond the traditional definition of an insulator. At the same time, they argue, Turkey is unable to overcome this position because it cannot 'bring the different RSCs together, to make them form one coherent strategic arena, of which it is part'.[15]

More recently, Marc Herzog and Philip Robins, in their edited volume *The Role, Position and Agency of Cusp States in International Relations,* offer to the discussion the concept of Cusp States defined as 'states that lie uneasily on the political and/or normative edge of what is widely believed to be an established region'.[16] Their counter-condition are the so-called milieu states, which 'have decisively more in common with what subjectively is claimed to be the core values of an aspirant or established region than with the ambivalences epitomized by the existence of Cusp States'.[17] Turkey is labelled as a key example of a Cusp State being in-between 'mega-regions like the Middle East and Europe, and sub-regions, like the Balkans, the Caucasus and the Eastern Mediterranean'.[18] Brazil, Iran, Israel, Japan, Mexico, Taiwan and Ukraine are listed as other examples of cuspness in the international arena. Robins observes that such states receive less academic attention because they are difficult to aggregate; therefore, they are treated as

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[12] Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 41.
[13] RSCs are defined as 'subsystems in which most of the security interaction is internal; states fear their neighbours and ally with other regional actors, and most often the borders between regions are – often geographically determined – zones of weak interaction', Buzan and Wæver, p. 41.
[14] Buzan and Wæver, p. 392.
[15] Buzan and Wæver, p. 485.
[16] Philip Robins, 'Introduction: "Cusp States" in International Relations – In Praise of Anomalies against the "Milieu"', in *The Role, Position and Agency of Cusp States in International Relations*, ed. by Marc Herzog and Philip Robins (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2014), pp. 1–24 (p. 1).
[17] Robins, 'Introduction: "Cusp States" in International Relations – In Praise of Anomalies against the "Milieu"', p. 1.
[18] Robins, 'Introduction: "Cusp States" in International Relations – In Praise of Anomalies against the "Milieu"', p. 8.

atypical. In contrast, he puts forward that they deserve more systematic research because they are a global phenomenon of strategic importance, as their well-being has far-reaching consequences for world politics. It is important to underline here that cuspness is defined not only through geographical location but also includes ideational factors. According to Robins, Cusp States have a stronger sense of 'me-feeling' as they are not offered ready-made answers under 'we-feeling'.[19] Consequently, they are conscious of their vulnerabilities in the international arena.

Despite the differences in the abovementioned assessments of Turkey, they all share the doubt of the country's place within the Western community. They propose to look at Turkey through its in-betweenness, which is based on material factors or a mixture of material and ideational factors. Only for Samuel Huntington does Turkey's in-betweenness stem solely from a decision of the Kemalist leaders to abandon Turkey's natural international environment, this being Islamic civilization, in its quest to become a Western state. However, putting in doubt Turkey's place within the West is not the only common denominator of these accounts. They all see the position of in-betweenness as a vulnerable one and difficult for a state to be in.

My interest in the ambivalent relationship between Turkey and the West is a result of more than a decade of following and trying to understand Turkish politics. My curiosity was strengthened, first of all, by the debates on the West losing Turkey.[20] The way this issue has been framed shows the West as a subject of international politics, while Turkey as an object, as something that can be lost. Growing literature explaining this process by the references to the AKP's Islamic background[21] and discussions with my Western colleagues in Ankara were the second factor that influenced both my research questions and the theoretical framework adopted in this thesis. What caught my attention is that these accounts often present a black and white picture of

[19] Robins, 'Introduction: "Cusp States" in International Relations – In Praise of Anomalies against the "Milieu"', p. 6.
[20] See footnote 4.
[21] Soner Cagaptay, 'As Turkey Pulls Away', *Jerusalem Post*, 5 December 2009 <https://www.jpost.com/opinion/as-turkey-pulls-away> [accessed 5 May 2020]; Caroline B. Glick, 'Who Lost Turkey?', *Jerusalem Post*, 20 September 2010 <https://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Columnists/Our-world-Who-lost-Turkey> [accessed 5 May 2020]; Zeyno Baran, *Torn Country: Turkey Between Secularism and Islamism* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press Publication, 2010); Benny Morris, 'Turkey's Islamic Revolution', *The National Interest*, 11 August 2011 <https://nationalinterest.org/commentary/turkeys-islamic-revolution-5685> [accessed 5 May 2020]; Toni Alaranta, 'Turkey under the AKP: A Citical Evaluation from the Perspective of Turkey's EU Negotiations', Working Paper 84 (Finnish Institute of International Affairs, 2015) <https://www.fiia.fi/en/publication/turkey-under-the-akp> [accessed 5 May 2020].

Turkey, whereby the AKP is portrayed as Islamist, authoritarian and anti-Western,[22] while the Kemalist elite[23] is regarded as democratic and pro-Western. On the academic level, it ignores important processes influencing the formulation and reformulation of Turkey's national and state identities, emphasizing easily visible change at the expense of the continuity of conditions that led to this change in the first place. On the policy-making level, such an approach can be dangerous. It leads to an assumption that the moment the AKP loses power, Turkey will once again become a democratic and pro-Western country, which shows an idealized picture of Turkey, distorting an important internal dynamic where nothing is black and white. Consequently, the aim of this thesis is to shift the analytical attention from 'what Turkey is for the West' or 'how can it be categorized', to account for the ways in which Turkey has responded to its changing position vis-à-vis the West after the end of bipolarity. Three interrelated questions guide my research: Why was Turkey's belonging to the West put in doubt after the end of the Cold War? How has this change informed Turkey's state identity? What are the consequences of this change for Turkey's foreign policy?

Before turning to the next section, where I explain the theoretical framework adopted in this thesis, it is important to clarify two points. First of all, while my level of analysis is Turkey, I posit that a state can act only through individuals or the so-called state agents; however, at the same time, a state cannot be reduced to individuals temporarily in power. Therefore, when I say that Turkey 'did something', I refer to the elite in hold of power at this particular point in time, which took decisions in the name of Turkey. In the following chapter, I explain this point more in-depth.

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[22] This was not the case in the early years of the AKP rule. On the contrary, Erdoğan was portrayed as a progressive leader, and Turkey was often called an example of a modern Muslim state. However, with time, the negative attitude toward Erdoğan's Turkey became dominant in the West's discourse on Turkey. The best example of this attitude was reluctance on the part of the Western countries to condemn the 2016 coup d'état.

[23] I agree with Zeynep Gülsah Çapan and Ayşe Zarakol that the definition of Kemalism is a question in itself. Therefore, for the purpose of this work, I adopt their understanding of Kemalism as 'the cluster of modernizing/Westernizing Turkish nationalist narratives associated symbolically with the person of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and wielded (especially prior to 2002) for legitimation by institutions such as the military, the judiciary, the state bureaucracy and the Republican People's Party (CHP)', Zeynep Gülsah Çapan and Ayşe Zarakol, 'Turkey's Ambivalent Self: Ontological Insecurity in "Kemalism" versus "Erdoğanism"', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 32.3 (2019), 263–82 (n. 6 on p. 265).

Secondly, I refer to the West as if it was a unitary actor.[24] In doing so, I follow how the West has been presented within Turkey, dating back to the late Ottoman Empire, continuing throughout the early years of the Republic, and still present today. I argue that the West, as an independent, real and coherent actor, continues to serve as a point of reference for Turkey. As Vincent Pouliot aptly points out, '[u]ltimately, to know whether a social fact is "really real" makes no analytical difference; the whole point is to observe whether agents take it to be real and to draw the social and political implications that follow'.[25]

Bearing this in mind, I posit that the idea of moving toward the West is inscribed as one of the default settings of the Republic of Turkey. For Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of modern Turkey, moving toward the West equalled joining modern civilization. He believed that civilization was the prerequisite of success and that there was just one universal civilization composed of the West.[26] In an interview with a French reporter Maurice Pernot, Atatürk asked: 'Can one name a single nation that has not turned to the West in its quest for civilization?'[27] In this understanding, the success of Western civilization was built on science, technology and progress, and these were the achievements that Atatürk pursued for the Republic of Turkey. According to Andrew Mango, Atatürk 'imported Western practices in order to bring his country into parity with the richest countries of the world, most of which were to be found in the West. But his aim was not imitation but participation in a universal civilization'.[28] From this point of view, being a part of the universal civilization had two tangible consequences. On the one hand, it was a prerequisite for independence and sovereignty in the modern state system;[29] on the

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[24] For a more nuanced understanding of the subject, see Stuart Hall, 'The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power', in *Formations of Modernity*, ed. by Stuart Hall and Bram Gieben (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), pp. 275–331; William H. McNeil, 'What We Mean by the West', *Orbis*, 41.4 (1997), 513–24; Jan Ifversen, 'Who Are the Westerners?', *International Politics*, 45.3 (2008), 236–253; Felix Berenskoetter, 'Do We Still Need "the West"?', The American Institute for Contemporary German Studies, January 2018 <https://eprints.soas.ac.uk/25735/1/index.html> [accessed 5 May 2020].

[25] Vincent Pouliot, '"Sobjectivism": Toward a Constructivist Methodology', *International Studies Quarterly*, 51.2 (2007), 359–84 (p. 364).

[26] Senem Aydın-Düzgit and others, 'Turkish and European Identity Constructions in the 1815-1945 Period', FEUTURE Online Paper No. 4, July 2017, p. 18 <https://feuture.uni-koeln.de/sites/feuture/pdf/D7.3_Online_Paper.pdf> [accessed 5 May 2020].

[27] Quoted in Andrew Mango, *Atatürk* (London: John Murray, 1999), p. 396.

[28] Mango, *Atatürk*, p. xi.

[29] For example, in October 1925 during a speech in Akhisar, Atatürk underlined that '[u]ncivilized people are doomed to be trodden under the feet of civilized people', quoted in Mango, *Atatürk*, p. 438.

other hand, it was the only way to guarantee status in international society.[30] As such, Atatürk's main goal was to situate Turkey among the civilized nations, and moving toward the West was perceived as the only method of achieving it.

2. Theoretical underpinnings

This thesis fits into a larger scholarship that underlines the importance of an identity perspective in IR and is grounded within a social constructivist framework. I follow Nicholas Onuf, who understands constructivism not as a grand theory but rather as a lens to approach the world.[31] Specifically, I am interested in the inner workings of state identity because for Turkey, the state, not the nation, is a referent object of its foreign policy. As Andrew Mango observes, 'experience in statecraft, respect for the state, the importance of the state in Turkish culture, have all been specific steadying factors in the history of the Turkish Republic'.[32]

Since its emergence in the 1980s, constructivism has been a dynamic research program, engaging successive generations of scholars united as much by disagreements with the 'rival paradigms' as by internal discussions.[33] While it highlights the constitutive relationship between structure and agency, it approaches identity mainly through structure, focusing on culture, norms, institutions and socialization.[34] Therefore, to shift attention to agency, I draw from a conceptual toolbox of other social sciences – anthropology, psychology and sociology – because:

> histories of knowledge are shaped by the travels that concepts or ideas make, changing meaning and purpose as they migrate from one discipline to another, and become

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[30] Aydın-Düzgit and others, 'Turkish and European Identity Constructions in the 1815-1945 Period', p. 17.

[31] Nicholas Onuf, 'Constructivism: A User's Manual', in *International Relations in a Constructed World*, ed. by Vendulka Kubálková, Nicholas Onuf, and Paul Kowert (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), pp. 58–78 (p. 58).

[32] Andrew Mango, 'The State of Turkey', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 13.2 (1977), 261–74 (p. 265).

[33] See, for example, Brent J. Steele, 'The Politics of Constructivist International Relations in the US Academy: Introduction', *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 50.1 (2017), 71–74; Nicholas Onuf, 'The Bigger Story', *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 50.1 (2017), 93–96.

[34] See Felix Berenskoetter, 'Reclaiming the Vision Thing: Constructivists as Students of the Future', *International Studies Quarterly*, 55.3 (2011), 647–68 (pp. 649–50); Trine Flockhart, 'The Problem of Change in Constructivist Theory: Ontological Security Seeking and Agent Motivation', *Review of International Studies*, 42.5 (2016), 799–820 (p. 801).

inserted in new discourses, productively going beyond their delimited empirical beginnings while opening up new fields of enquiry and spaces of imagination.[35]

From psychology and sociology, I borrow the concept of ontological security,[36] from sociology the concept of stigma,[37] and from anthropology the concept of liminality.[38] Ontological security focuses on how states see themselves, the surrounding world and their place within it. This will be embedded in the discussion on stigmatization and liminality, which lead to the development of a fragile sense of ontological security.

Building on Ronald Laing's work in psychology and Anthony Gidden's works in sociology, the ontological security perspective emphasizes the need of agents (be it individuals, groups or states) to experience stability and continuity in time and space as well as predictability and order in the surrounding world.[39] In contrast to the well-established notion of 'security as survival' in IR scholarship,[40] ontological security refers to 'security as being'. Jennifer Mitzen defines ontological security as a 'security not of the body but of the self, the subjective sense of who one is, which enables and motivates action and choice'.[41] She puts emphasis on agency that requires a stable cognitive environment to shape preferences, choices and actions. According to Mitzen, '[w]here an actor has no idea what to expect, she cannot systematically relate ends to means, and it becomes unclear how to pursue her ends'.[42] Therefore, while mechanisms of providing ontological security might differ between actors, the need to experience continuity and predictability to realize a sense of agency is commonly shared.

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[35] Bjørn Thomassen, 'The Uses and Meaning of Liminality', *International Political Anthropology*, 2.1 (2009), 5–27 (p. 5).

[36] Ronald David Laing, *The Divided Self: An Existential Study in Sanity and Madness* (London: Penguin Books, 2010), first published in 1960; Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986), first published in 1984; Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2017), first published in 1991.

[37] Erving Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1963).

[38] Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1991), first published in 1969.

[39] Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*.

[40] For example, see Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: Random House, 1979), p. 92; John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001), p. 46.

[41] Jennifer Mitzen, 'Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity and the Security Dilemma', *European Journal of International Relations*, 12.3 (2006), 341–70 (p. 344).

[42] Mitzen, 'Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity and the Security Dilemma', p. 342.

I posit that applying the concept of ontological security to world politics allows us to overcome problems related to the conception of identity encountered in constructivist scholarship. However, this can be done only by distinguishing between self, identity and ontological security.[43] Otherwise, there is a danger that identity and ontological security will be treated as synonyms. Consequently, every actor has a self, and this self is expressed through identity. However, it does not mean that there is just one pre-constituted identity. On the contrary, actors' identities are always in the making. As such, ontological security can be found in an actor's ability to shape and advance a specific identity, which is a process implying adjustment and change.[44] What should be underlined is that self, not identity, is a referent object of ontological security.

The ontological security perspective broadens our reading of states, where not only physical but also ontological security is a basic need. It is important to underline that ontological security is a complementary concept to physical security, not an opposite one. While physical security is about the protection of a state's territory and citizens from damage or harm, ontological security is about the continuity of the self, ability to function, and take decisions. Consequently, it creates a two-layered conception of security, where 'physical and ontological security constitute inextricable, non-interchangeable, and mutually reinforcing dimensions of security'.[45]

To be ontologically secure, Giddens argues, an actor needs 'a feeling of biographical continuity which she is able to grasp reflexively and, to a greater or lesser degree, communicate to others'.[46] Therefore, ontological security is derived from internal self-understandings as well as external interactions; both regarded as crucial in the context of this research project. The ontological security perspective underlines that states as social actors need recognition to feel secure in who they are,[47] and looking at the first question that guides this research – Why was Turkey's

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[43] Flockhart, pp. 804–5; Christopher S. Browning and Pertti Joenniemi, 'Ontological Security, Self-Articulation and the Securitization of Identity', *Cooperation and Conflict*, 52.1 (2017), 31–47 (pp. 33–37).

[44] Charlotte Epstein, 'Who Speaks? Discourse, the Subject and the Study of Identity in International Politics', *European Journal of International Relations*, 17.2 (2011), 327–50 (p. 335).

[45] Bahar Rumelili, 'Ontological Security and Conflict Resolution: An Analytical Framework' (unpublished manuscript) <www2.hhh.umn.edu/uthinkcache/gpa/globalnotes/Rumelili.MIRC.docx> [accessed 24 January 2019]. See also Bahar Rumelili, 'Identity and Desecuritisation: The Pitfalls of Conflating Ontological and Physical Security', *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 18.1 (2015), 52–74.

[46] Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, p. 54.

[47] At the extreme, there are examples of states going to war for recognition, see Erik Ringmar, *Identity, Interest and Action: A Cultural Explanation of Sweden's Intervention in the Thirty Years War* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge

belonging to the West put in doubt after the end of the Cold War? – this project is about recognition (or lack of thereof). Recognition consistent with an actor's self-perception has a positive effect on the sense of ontological security. However, in the opposite case, lack of recognition or misrecognition can have a disruptive effect, in the worst case leading to an identity crisis.[48]

States achieve biographical continuity through a biographical narrative. Giddens refers to a biographical narrative as 'the narrative of the self', which he describes as 'the story or stories by means of which self-identity is reflexively understood, both by the individual concerned and by others'.[49] A biographical narrative is a story with characters, plots and events that actors tell about themselves. It serves as a mechanism connecting the past, present and future into a coherent and meaningful whole. Without a biographical narrative, states exist only spatially; through stories, meaning is given to space and states become situated in time.[50] By defining both spatial and temporal parameters of the everyday, a biographical narrative serves as a cognitive map for current and future behaviour. Therefore, while it needs to be coherent, this does not mean that it is an objective and detailed summary of events. Instead, a biographical narrative is a selective and creative recount of the past, present and future, focusing on events and their interpretation in a way that is meaningful to an actor. Every biographical narrative consists of different elements and layers. At its most general level, the master narrative is sufficiently vague to accommodate more specific narratives. By activating some aspects while deactivating others, an actor can accommodate change without undermining the feeling of ontological security.[51] Consequently, a biographical narrative has two interrelated functions. On the one hand, it provides cognitive stability by bestowing the surrounding world with meaning and predictability.

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University Press, 1996); Erik Ringmar, 'The Recognition Game: Soviet Russia against the West', *Cooperation and Conflict*, 37.2 (2002), 136–156; Richard Ned Lebow, 'The Past and Future of War', *International Relations*, 24.3 (2010), 243–70.

[48] Brent J. Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. 74–75.

[49] Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, p. 243.

[50] Felix Berenskoetter, 'Parameters of a National Biography', *European Journal of International Relations*, 20.1 (2014), 262–88 (p. 269).

[51] Jelena Subotic, 'Narrative, Ontological Security, and Foreign Policy Change', *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 12.4 (2016), 610–27 (p. 611).

On the other hand, it serves as an instrument of 'the transformation of knowledge, meaning and practice'.[52]

While talking about ontological security-seeking practices, Giddens started his theorizing by underlying the importance of the relationship between an infant and a caregiver in the production of basic trust. I posit that for states, an equivalent is an entry into a modern state system, often referred to as the Westphalian system. In this context, the discussion regarding hierarchies and stigmatization between states becomes relevant. According to Ayşe Zarakol, the modern state system is inherently hierarchical and '[t]he lack of attention given to the particular cultural and historical origins of the modern international system may just be the most glaring oversight in mainstream International Relations'.[53] The diffusion of the modern state system has been characterized by the emphasis on science, technology and progress and, as such, its inclusivity. However, inclusivity does not mean equality. The modern state system has a Western origin, Western rules and Western norms. The West serves as a point of reference and sets standards; therefore, states that entered on a later date were and still are not treated on an equal footing.

Zarakol compares the position of latecomers in the Westphalian state system to people carrying stigma. Goffman defines stigma as 'a special discrepancy between virtual and actual social identity'.[54] The same patterns work in the world of states, where latecomers are often accused, for example, of not being Western enough, democratic enough, secular enough, and many more 'not enough'. This can create the feeling of inferiority and auto-Orientalism. At the same time, stigmatization leads to the development of extra-sensitivity, on the border of obsession, with status, recognition and acceptance.[55] What is more peculiar, latecomers seek recognition from the very same states that produced their stigma in the first place. As such, stigmatization has real consequences for states and their behaviour in the international arena. They act differently from

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[52] Felix Ciută, 'The End(s) of NATO: Security, Strategic Action and Narrative Transformation', *Contemporary Security Policy*, 23.1 (2002), 35–62 (pp. 37–38).

[53] Ayşe Zarakol, *After Defeat: How the East Learned to Live with the West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 6.

[54] Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*, p. 3.

[55] Zarakol, *After Defeat: How the East Learned to Live with the West*, p. 7.

states that are not obsessed with status and recognition, and for this reason, certain decisions might not be understandable from an outsider's perspective while making sense from the point of view of an actor carrying stigma. Therefore, looking at a state's biographical narrative enables us to take into account factors that are not visible from the perspective of an outsider.

Besides stigmatization, the foundation of the modern state system has allowed for the spread of mutually exclusive discourses, consequently, has opened a way to the construction of liminal positions within it. According to Victor Turner, who popularized this concept in the field of anthropology, liminals are 'entities that are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arranged by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial'; therefore, their attributes 'are necessarily ambiguous, since this condition and these persons elude or slip through the network of classifications that normally locate states and positions in cultural space'.[56]

The concept of liminality offers an understanding that transcends the self/other dichotomy as known from the constructivist research and can be understood as partly self/partly other.[57] Liminality is not a pre-existing attribute of actors, but it is a subjective position, discursively and socially produced in a particular time and context. Stigmatization and liminality might coexist, but this is not a necessary condition. Nevertheless, both phenomena lead to the development of a fragile sense of ontological security.

3. Development of my argument

(1) Modelling the Republic of Turkey on Western standards after the demise of the Ottoman Empire was a strategy aimed at providing ontological security of the new state.

From today's perspective, Turkey's decision to become a Western state might seem natural. However, this was not the case in the 1920s. The main question that arises is why Turkey decided out of its own free will to join countries that just a few years back tried to dismember and subordinate the territories of the Ottoman Empire. At this point, Turkey's physical security was

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[56] Turner, p. 95.

[57] Bahar Rumelili, 'Liminality and Perpetuation of Conflicts: Turkish-Greek Relations in the Context of Community-Building by the EU', *European Journal of International Relations*, 9.2 (2003), 213–48 (p. 216).

fairly secured – Turkey won the War of Independence (1919-1923) and had its terms accepted in the Lausanne Peace Treaty (1923), ensuring freedom from foreign occupation. As such, Ankara's decision to join the West came as a surprise to many within the Western circles and as a disappointment to its former allies, which supported Turkey financially and morally against the Western powers, namely the Bolsheviks and Muslims of South Asia (especially from present-day India).[58] Even more surprising was the extent of reforms and Turkey's devotion to their implementation.

According to Zarakol, joining the West was perceived by the Republican elites as 'the most status-enhancing strategy'.[59] From the perspective of Atatürk and his companions, Turkey may have won independence, but it did not guarantee its sovereignty.[60] As discussed in section one, at this point in time, it was assumed that the only way to provide sovereignty was to join civilized nations. Consequently, one of the default settings of the Republic of Turkey is an understanding that the primary reason behind the backwardness of the Ottoman Empire, leading to its collapse, was a failure to modernize and adopt the Western standards. By moving toward the West, Turkey could guarantee both its independence and its sovereignty. Moving toward the West was also perceived as the only strategy that would enable Turkey to regain its international status as heir to the Ottoman Empire while leaving behind the stigma of being 'the Sick Man of Europe'. Atatürk underlined this point by saying that '[t]he West has always been prejudiced against the Turks...but we Turks have always and consistently moved towards the West. In order to be a civilized nation, there is no alternative'.[61]

(2) Joining the Western institutional architecture during the Cold War provided Turkey with due recognition, strengthening the feeling of ontological security.

Turkey affirmed its pro-Western stance at the very beginning of the Cold War by taking part in the Korean War. It was the first time that Turkish troops were sent abroad since the

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[58] Zarakol, *After Defeat: How the East Learned to Live with the West*, p. 128.
[59] Zarakol posits that the strategy choices implemented after the great defeats were driven by status concerns, Zarakol, pp. 12, 37.
[60] The difference is important as the Ottoman Empire was independent; however, it became a subject of interference from foreign powers through capitulations. Therefore, its sovereignty was limited.
[61] Quoted in Altemur Kılıç, *Turkey and the World* (Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1959), p. 49.

establishment of the Republic. This ground-breaking decision was seen in the West as a confirmation of Turkey's Western orientation. Ankara was admitted to the Western institutions, including the Council of Europe, NATO and the OECD. Turkey's long relationship with the European Union started in July 1959, when Ankara applied for associate membership in the European Economic Community (EEC). As William Hale underlines, Turkey's motivations behind this decision were more political than economic:

> [i]nternational recognition as a member of the Western community of nations had been an objective of Turkish leaders since the days of the *Tanzimat*, and was seen as a logical extension of Turkey's membership of NATO and other Western organisations.[62]

Close cooperation with the West did not, however, mean that Turkey's policy was always in line with its allies. The divergence became especially visible in the context of the Cyprus issue. Between 1964 and 1980, Turkey's relations with the United States (U.S.), the hegemon in the Western bloc, reached the lowest level in the post-war period. However, even during this time, the bilateral problems were understood as a divergence of strategic interests, not the worldview itself, and did not lead to the narrative of losing Turkey.

(3) Observing that Turkey's belonging to the West was put in doubt after the end of the Cold War upset Turkey's ontological security and forced Turkey to search for a new strategy.

With the end of the Cold War, the capitalist/communist distinction, which demarcated the self from the other for more than four decades, lost its relevance, and the discourse regarding the West, especially Europe, significantly changed. Turkey was caught off guard when an exclusive discourse on Europe emerged, underlining that belonging to Europe is based on common geography and culture. Consequently, with its long history of modernization and Westernization, Turkey found itself in the shadow of the Central and East European countries, which the West rediscovered. President Süleyman Demirel commented on these developments by pointing out

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[62] William Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy, 1774-2000* (London and Portland: Routledge, 2000), p. 175; italics in the original.

that '[w]hen the defense of European civilization [against communism] was at stake, they didn't say we are Turks or Muslims'.[63]

Therefore, when the Cold War ended, Turkey was placed in a liminal position due to incompatible but at the same cross-cutting discourses on European identity. The previous universalistic discourse, underlying that belonging to Europe can be acquired by the compliance with universal, European/Western standards, started to clash with the exclusive discourse that defines Europe in terms of culture and geography.[64] As such, Turkey became too Eastern for the West while being too Western for the East. Turkey's first response was to reject voices that questioned its 'Europeanness' by reproducing its Western identity. However, when this strategy did not receive necessary recognition from the significant other – the West – Turkey started to slowly transform its state identity around liminality perceived as an asset, not a burden.

4. Research design: methodology and methods

Samuel H. Beer, in a 'Letter to a Graduate Student', underlined:

> human behaviour always comes with meaning, with intentions and purposes. That is to say, the way others see and react to what you do is powerfully affected by what they think you mean, what you are trying to do and why. So if the social scientist wants to describe the sequence of the interaction, he cannot omit what it means to the actors. He studies not just behaviour but action.[65]

Therefore, to better understand Turkey's ambivalent relationship with the West, this study employs an interpretivist methodology that draws from the scholarship of Max Weber.[66] Intentional behaviour, meaningful behaviour and subjectively understandable behaviour are synonyms of his *Verstehen*, which calls for a systematic interpretation, allowing us to uncover an

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[63] Stephen Bates and Martin Walker, 'Turkey: Bridge over Troubled Waters', *Guardian*, 2 December 1998 quoted in Meltem Müftüler-Bac, 'Through the Looking Glass: Turkey in Europe', *Turkish Studies*, 1.1 (2000), 21–35 (p. 23).
[64] Bahar Rumelili, 'Liminal Identities and Processes of Domestication and Subversion in International Relations', *Review of International Studies*, 38.2 (2012), 495–508 (p. 505).
[65] Samuel H. Beer, 'Letter to a Graduate Student', in *Perestroika! The Raucous Rebellion in Political Science*, ed. by Kristen Renwick Monroe (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), pp. 53–60 (p. 53).
[66] See *Interpretation and Method: Empirical Research Methods and the Interpretive Turn*, ed. by Dvora Yanow and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea (Armonk and London: M.E. Sharpe, 2006).

actor's point of view.[67] An interpretivist methodology is non-positivist in its orientation because it denies the existence of an objective reality out there that can be impartially theorized and measured. Moreover, it does not seek to present a testable, causal hypothesis that can be validated or refuted by evidence determined in advance. However, this does not mean that an interpretivist methodology lacks rigour and that 'anything goes' as an explanation.

To objectify the meaning uncovered through interpretation, two steps are taken. First, this study is based on a broader theoretical framework discussed in the next chapter. By referring to a theoretical framework, I do not mean theory as understood in positivism, with its emphasis on hypothesis testing.[68] Rather, I perceive theory as a 'lens' through which to approach the world.[69] The theoretical framework works as a guiding mechanism through a complex social reality, and it allows us to link new research to existing scholarship interested in similar questions.

Secondly, I follow the 'sobjectivist' methodology as proposed by Vincent Pouliot. According to Pouliot, '[t]he "sobjectivist" label intends to convey the central idea that constructivist inquiries need to develop not only objectified, but also subjective knowledge about social and international life'.[70] He proposes to include historicization and contextualization as a way to objectify the subjective knowledge gathered through interpretation. Historicization looks at 'where meanings come from and how they came to be', whereas contextualization is understood as 'how meanings relate to others and to patterns of domination'.[71] Contextualization is similar to what philosopher Gilbert Ryle calls thick description, which was later popularized by cultural anthropologist Clifford Geertz.[72] Thick description refers to explaining behaviour by including context that makes behaviour meaningful to outside observers. As such, a twitch is not a wink although both can be described as 'rapidly contracting the eyelids'.[73] Only by including the

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[67] William T. Tucker, 'Max Weber's "Verstehen"', *The Sociological Quarterly*, 6.2 (1965), 157–65 (pp. 157–58).
[68] See Waltz, chap. 1; Andrew Moravcsik, '"Is Something Rotten in the State of Denmark?" Constructivism and European Integration', *Journal of European Public Policy*, 6.4 (1999), 669–81.
[69] Tim Dunne, Lene Hansen, and Colin Wight, 'The End of International Relations Theory?', *European Journal of International Relations*, 19.3 (2013), 405–425 (pp. 411–12).
[70] Pouliot, p. 359.
[71] Pouliot, p. 367.
[72] Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), chap. 1.
[73] Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*, pp. 6–7.

context can we know whether one was an involuntary gesture, while the other was a signal or a hint to another person.

Moreover, as meaning evolves with time, it is essential to understand its historical trajectories – '[h]istoricity, therefore, shows up as part of the contexts that make possible social reality, the path-dependent processes involving structural and agent change, and the mechanisms involved in the explanation of change'.[74] For Bourdieu, historicization 'at least in the order of theory, makes it possible to neutralize the effects of naturalization, and in particular amnesia of the individual and collective genesis of a 'given' that gives itself with all the appearance of nature and asks to be taken at face value, taken for granted'.[75]

Having explained my methodology, I now turn to discuss methods employed in my study. First, I use a case study as a method of data selection. Robert Yin defines a case study as '[a]n empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident',[76] while Gerring states that it is 'an intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a larger class of (similar) units'.[77] Although there is no agreement over the definition of a case study, Yin's and Gerring's accounts share the belief that a case study is a favoured strategy when a complex phenomenon with many variables is being investigated.

In the case of research focused on a single country, a case study allows the researcher to engage in the social and cultural context surrounding questions under study. While searching for an answer to my research questions – Why was Turkey's belonging to the West put in doubt after the end of the Cold War? How has this change informed Turkey's state identity? What are the consequences of this change for Turkey's foreign policy? – I will look at Turkey's motives to continue the accession negotiation with the EU (Chapter 3), the deterioration in the relationship

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[74] Emanuel Adler, 'Constructivism in International Relations', in *Handbook of International Relations*, ed. by Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse, and Beth A. Simmons (Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore, Washington DC: SAGE, 2013), pp. 112–44 (p. 123).
[75] Pierre Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations* (Standford: Stanford University Press, 2000), p. 182.
[76] Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi: Sage, 2002), p. 13.
[77] John Gerring, 'What Is a Case Study and What Is It Good For?', *The American Political Science Review*, 98.2 (2004), 341–54 (p. 342).

with Israel (Chapter 4) as well as the decision to open Turkey's borders for Syrian refugees (Chapter 5).

With the main focus of this research project on Turkey's ambivalent relationship with the West, it is only fitting to select for the first case study Turkey's pursual of EU membership. I posit that Turkey's relationship with the EU is of special importance in its stance vis-à-vis the West after the Cold War. When the Berlin Wall fell, membership in the EU was the only missing link in Turkey's quest to become an integral part of the Western community. If Turkey had been accepted to the organization before the Maastricht Treaty, it would have been more difficult to put in doubt its belonging to the West.

Unlike the first case study, the other two choices – the deteriorating relationship with Israel and the decision to host Syrian refugees – might at first appear unusual and even irrelevant to the main focus of the research. However, as I demonstrate in both case studies, the ambivalent relationship with the West strongly influences Turkey's ontological security, and its impact is not limited to their bilateral encounters. On the contrary, I show how Turkey's obsession with status, recognition and acceptance conditions its foreign policy at large. The particular reason behind focusing on the relationship with Israel is that since Turkey recognized the State of Israel on 28 March 1949, their bilateral relationship has been perceived as proof of Turkey's Western orientation. The choice to include Turkey's acceptance of Syrian refugees is that it was one of the most important and surprising decisions that Turkey took in the last years. Moreover, it became the main area of cooperation between Turkey and the EU, which links it back to my first case study.

Each empirical chapter is organized according to the same pattern – introduction, historicization, contextualization, analysis of Turkey's biographical narrative and conclusions. This thesis approaches Turkey's biographical narrative with three questions addressed in each of the empirical chapters: Why has Turkey decided to follow this particular policy? What kind of information does it reveal about how Turkey perceives itself and its place in the world? Is it in any way related to its position vis-à-vis Europe/the West? This approach is commonly known as George and Bennett's method of structured, focused comparison. It is structured as the same sub-questions are 'asked of each case under study to guide and standardize data collection', and

it is focused because 'it deals only with certain aspects of the historical cases examined'.[78] Although the language George and Bennett use to describe their method brings to mind principles of positivism ('standardize data collection'), their main assumption fits with the interpretivist methodology. By serving as a lens to approach a complex social reality, it allows us to systematize the analysis carried out in each empirical chapter. Metaphorically speaking, each empirical chapter represents one small piece in a jigsaw puzzle of Turkey's state identity. By asking the same questions, I am able not only to understand the motives behind particular policy behaviour but also to answer the primary research questions that guide this thesis – Why was Turkey's belonging to the West put in doubt after the end of the Cold War? How has this change informed Turkey's state identity? What are the consequences of this change for Turkey's foreign policy?

As for the method's choice, a state's biographical narrative can be approached through discourse analysis[79], narrative analysis[80] or the mix of the two.[81] Making this distinction is essential for analytical clarity because discourse analysis and narrative analysis can be based on the same text selection; however, they will look at different constituent parts of these texts. The choice of the method depends on the focus of each particular study.

Discourse analysis is employed in studies that focus on the content of a state's biographical narrative and the creation of meaning through the process of explanation, justification and/or arguing. In other words, discourse analysis will be a preferred method for researchers interested in the production of the so-called 'common sense' or 'taken for granted structures', which are shaped through language, ideas and practice.

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[78] Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, 2005), p. 67.

[79] Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations*; Amir Lupovici, 'Ontological Dissonance, Clashing Identities, and Israel's Unilateral Steps towards the Palestitians', *Review of International Studies*, 38.4 (2012), 809–33; Filip Ejdus, *Crisis and Ontological Insecurity: Serbia's Anxiety over Kosovo's Secession* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020).

[80] Subotic, 'Narrative, Ontological Security, and Foreign Policy Change'; Karl Gustafsson, 'International Reconciliation on the Internet? Ontological Security, Attribution and the Construction of War Memory Narratives in Wikipedia', *International Relations*, 34.1 (2020), 3–24.

[81] Catarina Kinnvall and Paul Nesbitt-Larking, *The Political Psychology of Globalization: Muslims in the West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

In contrast, narrative analysis is a method of choice in studies interested in uncovering sequences, the relationship between the past, present and future. Narrative analysis helps to focus on particular building blocks of stories told, such as plot, settings, characters and temporal ordering. Such analysis can be guided by the following questions: What happened? Where did it happen? When did it happen? Who did it? How he did it? Why he did it?[82]

As the middle ground, Catarina Kinnvall and Paul Nesbitt-Larking decided to connect the two in one analytical framework, which 'emphasizes the capacity of symbolic and semiotic interpretation to elucidate both terms of langue/parole and structure/agency'.[83] Their framework shows that the two – discourse and narrative – are closely related and sometimes overlap. As authors explain, 'discourse, in our use of the term, can at one level overlap with narratives in terms of metadiscourses, but a narrative can also draw upon a number of interrelated discourses that together provide cohesion to the overarching narrative'.[84]

While the above explanations seem straightforward, this is less visible in the empirical studies where sometimes narrative analysis and discourse analysis are used as synonyms. For that reason, I believe that ontological security scholarship would benefit from Donald E. Polkinghorne distinction between narrative analysis and analysis of narratives.

For Polkinghorne, narrative analysis is a way to organize data – a researcher presents his/her data, gathered from different sources, in a narrative form. As Polkinghorne writes, narrative analysis 'relates events and actions to one another by configuring them as contributors to the advancement of a plot'.[85] In contrast, the analysis of narratives refers to the process of data analysis, where texts under study have a form of narratives. Its goal is to 'locate commons themes or conceptual manifestations among the stories collected as data'.[86] Consequently, presenting

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[82] Gustafsson, 'International Reconciliation on the Internet? Ontological Security, Attribution and the Construction of War Memory Narratives in Wikipedia', p. 12.
[83] Kinnvall and Nesbitt-Larking, p. 7.
[84] Kinnvall and Nesbitt-Larking, p. 7.
[85] Donald E. Polkinghorne, 'Narrative Configuration in Qualitative Analysis', *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 8.1 (1995), 5–23 (p. 16).
[86] Polkinghorne, p. 13.

one's finding in a narrative form does not mean that the researcher performed the analysis of narratives.

In the case of this research, Turkey's biographical narrative is approached through discourse analysis because I am interested in 'taken-for-granted structures of shared meaning'.[87] Consequently, focusing on the content of the biographical narrative is more suitable for the task at hand.

In reference to Jennifer Milliken's seminal article on discourse analysis, my analysis has two objectives. First, as mentioned above, it looks at the creation of the structures of significance. I identify main discourse topics as related to Turkey's particular foreign policy decisions as well as related to the bigger picture of how Turkey perceives itself, the West and their relationship. The second objective is to trace 'how foundations and boundaries are drawn - how states are written […] with particular capacities and legitimacies at particular times and places'.[88] This falls within what Milliken describes as discourse productivity, and a state's biographical narrative by its very nature is an example of the hegemonic discourse. Following Milliken, Turkey's biographical narrative makes 'intelligible some way of being in, and acting towards, the worlds, and of operationalizing a particular "regime of truth" while excluding other possible modes of identity and action'.[89] Having explained what my research is focusing on, it is important to underline what falls outside its scope. As such, it does not focus on the issue of how common sense is created and the existence and resistance of alternative discourses. The decision on what to include and exclude stems from my aim to make this project as focused and coherent as possible. However, both excluded issues will be raised in Chapter 6, where I discuss possible avenues of future research.

With the focus on Turkey's state identity, the text selection concentrates on the official statements, speeches and interviews of Turkey's presidents, including their spokesperson, prime

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[87] Senem Aydın-Düzgit and Bahar Rumelili, 'Discourse Analysis: Strengths and Shortcomings', *All Azimuth: A Journal of Foreign Policy and Peace*, 8.2 (2019), 285–305 (p. 286).

[88] Cynthia Weber, *Simulating Sovereignty: Intervention, the State and Symbolic Exchange* (Cambridge, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 29.

[89] Jennifer Milliken, 'The Study of Discourse in International Relations: A Critique of Research and Methods', *European Journal of International Relations*, 5.2 (1999), 225–54 (p. 229).

ministers and foreign ministers, the statements of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) as well as the debates that took place within the Turkish Grand National Assembly. My analysis of Turkey's biographical narrative covers the period from November 2002, when the AKP assumed office for the first time, until July 2018, which represents the change of the governmental system from parliamentary to presidential. The decision to narrow down the analysis of Turkey's biographical narrative to the period under the AKP is based on the reality that it is the government responsible for the current shape of Turkey's state identity for almost two decades. However, by including historicization and contextualization, I place Turkey's biographical narrative in a wider context, and the overall analysis presented in the thesis dates back to the times of the Ottoman Empire.

Sources used in the analysis of Turkey's biographical narrative are available on websites of the previous presidents[90] and the current one,[91] the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,[92] and the Parliament.[93] Additionally, for speeches delivered at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), I referred to the United Nations (UN) website.[94]

Reaching the primary sources related to prime ministers turned out to be more problematic because of the transition to the presidential system in July 2018, whereby the official website of the Prime Ministry ceased to operate. One way of overcoming this inconvenience would be to use press articles. However, most of the time, they contain quotes, not complete statements, and the way they are presented is based on the interpretation of the writer. Instead, I turned to the website of the AKP[95] because it contains statements of its politicians, and since November 2002, all prime ministers came from the AKP. The only drawback is that the archives date back to the beginning of 2014. Consequently, the statements of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in his capacity as Prime Minister are underrepresented. To minimalize this problem, I decided to include complete statements of his speeches occasionally available from different sources. Provided that

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[90] For Ahmet Necet Sezer, see https://tccb.gov.tr/cumhurbaskanlarimiz/ahmet_necdet_sezer/konusma [accessed 20 May 2020]; for Abdullah Gül, see http://www.abdullahgul.gen.tr [accessed 20 May 2020].
[91] See https://www.tccb.gov.tr [accessed 20 May 2020].
[92] See https://www.mfa.gov.tr [accessed 20 May 2020].
[93] See https://www.tbmm.gov.tr [accessed 20 May 2020].
[94] See https://ask.un.org/faq/93819 [accessed 20 May 2020].
[95] See https://www.akparti.org.tr [accessed 20 May 2020].

a biographical narrative is not an outcome of one person and that Erdoğan's statements will be included in his capacity as President, this should not undermine the results of my analysis.

The primary sources were accessible in Turkish, English or both languages. If possible, I chose the English version; however, Turkish turned out to be indispensable in early sources and parliamentary debates. On the websites of presidents and the Parliament, I used a search engine. In Chapter 3, I searched for the phrase European Union and its Turkish equivalent *Avrupa Birliği*, in Chapter 4 for Israel and its Turkish equivalent *Israil*, while in Chapter 5, for Syrians and Syrian refugees, in Turkish *Suriyeliler and Suriyeli mülteciler*, respectively. As for the website of the Foreign Ministry, the search engine did not work. Therefore, I checked one by one speeches and interviews of foreign ministers, press releases, questions and answers as well as press conferences of the spokesperson of the MFA. The UN website offers all speeches delivered by the representatives of Turkey during the UNGA, listed in chronological order. According to Milliken, a discourse analysis 'can be said to be complete when upon adding new texts, the researcher finds the categories she has generated in her analysis of previous texts'.[96] This condition was achieved in each of the empirical chapters.

Four more points should be made regarding the analysis of Turkey's biographical narrative. First, if a person held more than one position within Turkey's political system, I always refer to the position at the time of speaking. Secondly, to strengthen my argument, besides using quotations in the main text, in the footnotes, I include references to other sources where a similar point of view can be observed. The reason behind this is to show that these statements are, in fact, a part of a larger biographical narrative of Turkey and not a one-time statement, which simply fits my way of reasoning. Thirdly, all quotations from Turkish to English are translated by a third person to further objectify my analysis. Fourthly, all quotations in English are left in their original form, including spelling, grammar, and punctuation mistakes. As in the case of translation, the main aim was not to interfere in texts that I am interpreting.

Discourse analysis is just one step in understanding an actor's point of view. Following Pouliot's call for contextualization and Geertz's idea of thick description, I decided to include ethnographic

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[96] Milliken, p. 234.

research, which allows me to develop a greater familiarity with the object under study. It makes it easier to determine the contours of state identity and observe political discourse as an everyday practice. As Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss point out:

> a firsthand immersion in a sphere of life and action - a social world - different from one's own yields important dividends. The field worker who has observed closely in this social world has had, in a profound sense, to live there. He has been sufficiently immersed in this world to know it, and at the same time has retained enough detachment to think theoretically about what he has seen and lived through.[97]

My method is the participant observation. Since the first time that I arrived in Turkey in August 2008, I have spent more than four years in this country over a span of time. First, I lived in Istanbul between August 2008 and January 2009 and during the summer months of 2016. Then, I moved to Ankara, where I currently reside, first during the summer months of 2012, from May 2013 until September 2014 and currently since May 2017. During this time, I have observed critical events, such as the Gezi Park protests, the introduction of the state of emergency after the failed coup, and the transition from the parliamentary to the presidential system, to name a few. For the last three years, I have been working as a diplomat, which gave me the chance to observe the inner workings of Turkey's state structures.

However, in contrast to how the knowledge gained through observation is presented in anthropology[98] or classical works in IR[99], I do not directly refer to real-life events, encounters, and conversations in the empirical chapters of this thesis. I decided to refrain from taking such a step for ethical reasons. The possibility to observe the inner workings of Turkey's state identity has been related to my position as a diplomat. While I was lucky to overcome some of the problems associated with the ethnographic research, namely that of access to elites and

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[97] Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research* (New Brunswick and London: Aldine Transaction, 2006), p. 226.

[98] Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. Particularly noteworthy is Chapter 15 – 'Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight'.

[99] Michael N. Barnett, 'The UN Security Council, Indifference, and Genocide in Rwanda', *Cultural Anthropology*, 12.1 (1997), 551–78; Iver B. Neumann, *At Home with the Diplomats: Inside a European Foreign Ministry* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2012).

diplomats,[100] I had to deal with another type of limitations. Describing situations or conversations I have had while performing my duties would mean breaking one of the main rules related to being a diplomat – confidentiality.

Consequently, I do not treat participant observation as a data-collecting machine.[101] Its main contribution to this thesis has been allowing me to reflexively engage and immerse in the subject under study by observing how meaning is created and reproduced as an everyday practice.[102]

Therefore, instead of recalling particular situations and conversations, I will now discuss the ideas and arguments, which one can find in this thesis, shaped through participant observation. To be precise, without living and working in Turkey and reflexively processing this experience through countless conversations on Turkey's state identity, I would not arrive at these conclusions.

The first one is the esteem that the state as an institution has in Turkish society. It is treated as a separate entity with its objectives and interests, which are not narrowed down to that of the nation or society. As such, I have realized that the opposition never criticizes abroad foreign policy decisions of the government. While internal debates are heated, and the language used is far from political correctness, they are not transferred to an international level. In front of a foreign audience, the opposition stands by the government's foreign policy decisions because they were made in the name of the Turkish state, and the reputation of Turkey is at stake. I have never seen such a strong unanimity in the international arena. On the contrary, in the part of Europe where I grew up, criticizing the government's decisions on the international arena is a very typical mechanism used by the opposition.

Secondly, I realized how deeply enshrined in Turkey's state identity is the ambiguous relationship with the West. While the Sèvres Syndrome has been widely described in the literature,[103] what I

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[100] Merje Kuus, 'Foreign Policy and Ethnography: A Sceptical Intervention', *Geopolitics*, 18.1 (2013), 115–131 (pp. 118–19).

[101] Wanda Vrasti argues that reducing ethnographic research in IR to data-gathering method is responsible for its limited use in the field. Wanda Vrasti, 'The Strange Case of Ethnography and International Relations', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 37.2 (2008), 279–301 (p. 281).

[102] Edward Schatz, 'Ethnographic Immersion and the Study of Politics', in *Political Ethnography -What Immersion Contributes to the Study of Power*, ed. by Edward Schatz (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009), pp. 1–22 (pp. 10–12).

[103] Michelangelo Guida, 'The Sèvres Syndrome and "Komplo" Theories in the Islamist and Secular Press', *Turkish Studies*, 9.1 (2008), 37–52; Dorothée Schmid, 'Turkey: The Sèvres Syndrome, or the Interminable War', *Politique*

realize is that this ambiguity not only influences Turkey's encounters with the West itself but it influences its foreign policy at large. Even now, more independent and ambitious Turkey compares its behaviour in a wide range of areas to that of the West, which serves as a constant point of reference. This observation allows us to throw new light on the discussion on the West losing Turkey or Turkey drifting away from the West.

Thirdly, participant observation also showed me that the attitude toward Israel in Turkey is a complex issue, and the assumption that secularist Turks are pro-Israel, while religious Turks are anti-Israel, is simply not true. I remember how surprised I was when my friend, a typical example of the so-called White Turk,[104] said that even if someone offered her a free trip to Israel, she would refuse it. She admitted that this is irrational, and she cannot explain where this feeling comes from.

Being a participant observer requires reflexivity from the research, especially an understanding of her own biases. As a foreigner, I do not hold the same preconceived ideas regarding Turkey and its place in the world as Turkish citizens might. However, I recognize that my knowledge of Turkey has been intersubjectively created and shaped by my journey in this country and the people I have met along the way.

Before proceeding with my discussion, I would like to make an important point regarding interviews. In research projects similar to mine, interviews are often a method of choice. Taking into consideration that I have been working in Turkey as a diplomat, I took an informed decision to refrain from conducting interviews to avoid ethical problems.

Returning to Pouliot's call for sobjectivism, I provide historicization and further contextualization, in addition to the participant observation, by combining different sources, including primary sources (legal documents, surveys and statistical data) and secondary sources (books, scholarly articles, newspapers). The aim of using the presented methods is to combine two types of

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*Étrangère*, 79.1 (2014), 199–213; Nicholas Danforth, 'Forget Sykes-Picot. It's the Treaty of Sèvres That Explains the Modern Middle East', *Foreign Policy*, 10 August 2015 <https://foreignpolicy.com/2015/08/10/sykes-picot-treaty-of-sevres-modern-turkey-middle-east-borders-turkey/> [accessed 30 March 2020].
[104] This term refers to secular urban population, which supports values introduced by Kemal Atatürk.

experience – 'experience-near' (subjectivism) with 'experience-distant' (objectivism).[105] The combination of both experiences is important because, as Geertz aptly explains, '[c]onfinement to experience-near concepts leaves an ethnographer awash in immediacies as well as entangled in vernacular. Confinement to experience-distant ones leaves him stranded in abstractions and smothered in jargon'.[106]

## 5. Contributions

This thesis makes three broad contributions toward IR scholarship. First, it offers a systematic discussion regarding the ontological security perspective in IR developed for more than a decade through several articles and books. Building on that, I argue that a clear distinction between self, identity and ontological security is necessary in order not to fall into the same trap that some constructivist research does, namely, treating self and identity as synonyms. I put forward that every actor has a self, and this self is expressed through identity. Importantly, actors' identities are not fixed but always in the making. Consequently, self, not identity, is a referent object of ontological security. As such, ontological security understood as the need for cognitive stability is best expressed as actors' ability to cope with a constantly changing world through reflexivity and adaptability rather than by focusing on the preservation of identity. Having this in mind, I propose to broaden our understanding of ontological security, firstly, by treating stability as much as a basic need as an ideal that actors steer toward. Secondly, by treating ontological security not in black and white terms but as a continuum between a maximum level of ontological insecurity and a maximum level of ontological security. This move helps explain why the same actor might feel less or more ontologically secured at different times.

Secondly, my thesis broadens the understanding of how ontological security needs impact states behaviour. Through my research, I uncovered that the same mechanism, in the case of Turkey, its pursuit of EU membership, might at the same time strengthen and undermine the ontological security of an actor, as it differently impacts various components of its identity. In this case, a

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[105] See Pouliot, p. 368.
[106] Clifford Geertz, '"From the Native's Point of View": On the Nature of Anthropological Understanding', *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, 28.1 (1974), 26–45 (p. 29).

cost-benefit analysis of such a mechanism depends on which component of an actor's identity is perceived as more important at a particular time.

Third, by including stigmatization and liminality in my discussion, I broaden our understanding of ontological security on the level of states. Although the literature has accurately identified the negative impact liminality and stigmatization can have on an actor's ontological security,[107] it has failed to delve into the inner workings of this process. First of all, I show that under certain conditions stigmatization and liminality coexist, strengthening the processes related to each one of them. Secondly, I discuss how both conditions lead to the development of a fragile sense of ontological security, and why in turn, such actors act differently than actors having a healthy sense of ontological security. This point has significant consequences for future research in the discipline. As Robins observed, states that lie on the edge of established regions often receive less academic attention because they are difficult to aggregate; therefore, they are treated as atypical.[108] Looking through liminality and/or stigmatization allows us to find similarities between such cases, showing that they are a global phenomenon that needs more systematic research.

The empirical contribution of my work is to show that Turkey's ambivalent relationship with the West not only influences Turkey's encounters with the West itself but conditions Turkey's behaviour in the international arena at large. The ups and downs in its relationship with the West have led modern Turkey to build its identity around inconsistent self-perceptions, which makes achieving ontological security a constant struggle. On the one hand, Turkey is paranoid about its territorial integrity and the intentions of the West, which is popularly referred to as the Sèvres Syndrome.[109] On the other hand, Turkey is obsessed with status, recognition, and acceptance, especially from the West. As these inconsistencies are a building block of Turkey's state identity, it projects related to it fears and needs in different areas of its foreign policy. The abundant references to the West are visible as much in the chapter on Turkey's decision to pursue EU

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[107] See Zarakol, *After Defeat: How the East Learned to Live with the West*, pp. 10, 30, 62, 92, 105, 189–90; Maria-Ruxandra Stoicescu, 'Communitas and Forms without Foundations: Romania's Case of Interlocking Liminalities', *Review of International Studies*, 38.2 (2012), 509–524 (p. 509).

[108] Robins, 'Introduction: "Cusp States" in International Relations – In Praise of Anomalies against the "Milieu"'.

[109] See footnote 103.

membership as they are visible in the chapter on Turkey's relationship with Israel and the decision to host Syrian refugees.

I argue that Turkey sees itself through the looking glass of the West and treats the West as a reference point for its behaviour. I also show that although nowadays the fears of Turkey drifting away from the West are on the rise, this argument is no less true than in the past. As I discuss in this thesis, different strategies of Turkey – from strongly emphasizing its belonging to the West to challenging the West – have been motivated by the same factor – the need to gain due recognition on behalf of the significant other.

As such, the more independent and ambitious foreign policy actually fits within the overall strategy to regain due international position and the recognition of the West. In other words, as the strategy of gaining thick recognition by being obedient failed to bring the promised results, Turkey turned to the strategy of challenging the West. Similarly, at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries, Japan realized that modernization is not enough to be treated as an equal with the West; equal status must be fought for.[110]

Moreover, in relation to current debates on Turkey, I put forward that sensitivity, which develops as a consequence of actors' fragile sense of ontological security, has real consequences for their behaviour. The lack of attention to these issues is one of the main drawbacks of the foreign policy of the Western countries, especially the United States, toward Turkey. This is also the main difference with the approach adopted by Russia, which has allowed the two countries to reach an unprecedented level of cooperation. To highlight one example, while both Russia and the U.S. support the PYD/YPG in Northern Syria, the issue became a bone of contention between Turkey and the United States, having a spillover effect on other areas of cooperation, while not becoming a problem in the relations with Russia. This has been made possible as Russia learned to speak Turkey's language and to cater a message that takes into consideration Turkey's sensitivity, while the U.S. has never tried to. Having this in mind, more focus on Turkey's subjectively understandable behaviour is needed at both academic and policy levels.

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[110] See Niall Ferguson, *Civilization: The West and the Rest* (London: Allen Lane, 2011), pp. 218–27; Pankaj Mishra, *From the Ruins of Empire: The Revolt Against the West and the Remaking of Asia* (New Delhi: Allen Lane, 2012), pp. 1, 245.

6. Overview of chapters

Following this introduction, in Chapter 2, I continue the theoretical discussion, which I briefly outlined in the previous sections. My main departure point is that states are social actors, and as such, they seek belonging and recognition from other actors. Against the backdrop of social constructivism, I discuss three concepts that gained popularity in recent years – ontological security, stigmatization and liminality. I start by presenting these concepts in their original discipline and trace how they have migrated to politics and IR. My main theoretical argument is that ontological security, as much as physical security, is a basic need of states because the continuity of the self is a precondition for action. I include stigmatization and liminality in my analysis to show two conditions that lead to the development of a fragile sense of ontological security. I posit that such states develop extra-sensitivity, on the border of obsession, with belonging, recognition and acceptance, which in turn, influences their behaviour.

Three following empirical chapters are organized according to the same general pattern: introduction, historicization, contextualization, analysis of Turkey's biographical narrative and conclusions. Chapter 3 looks at Turkey's motives behind continuously pursuing EU membership. The first part of the chapter focuses on the role of Europe/the West in the self-perception of the Ottoman Empire and the early Republic of Turkey. Then it follows with the historicization of Turkey's post-Cold War experience vis-à-vis the West, paying attention to the process of putting Turkey in a liminal position and its reaction toward it. The contextualization is done by the discussion of Ahmet Davutoğlu's grand strategy for Turkey, the relationship between Turkey and the EU in the early 2000s as well as an overview of the studies looking at Turkey's motives to continuously pursue the EU's membership. The analysis of Turkey's biographical narrative shows an interesting influence of Turkey's EU membership process on the country's ontological security. On the one hand, Turkey's pursuit of EU membership serves as a mechanism confirming its belonging to the West; therefore, it has had a positive impact on the country's ontological security. On the other hand, it opens Turkey to scrutiny and criticism, bringing back the worst memories from the nineteenth century.

Chapter 4 proceeds to the bilateral relationship between Turkey and Israel. The historicization of this relationship through the Cold War and the golden decade of the 1990s showed that Israel

had been a very apt observer of Turkey and its sensitivity. The contextualization focuses on the overview of the early 2000s, the place of Israel in Ahmet Davutoğlu's strategic depth doctrine and the review of academic discussions on the subject. The analysis shows that for Turkey, the relationship with Israel has been a function of how it sees itself. While during the Cold War and 1990s, Turkey perceived itself primarily as part of the West, the relationship with Israel oscillated between neutral and positive. Since the 2000s, Turkey started to search for a role corresponding to its liminal position and placed emphasis on being a trusted mediator, which led to a neutral relationship between both countries. However, when the success of Turkey's mediation was undermined by Israel's Operation Cast Lead, the relationship transformed into a negative one. With time, Turkey's self-perception has evolved into a protector of the oppressed, with Palestine becoming a national cause, which has had a direct impact on the relationship with Israel.

Chapter 5 looks at Turkey's ontological security in reference to its decision to host Syrian refugees. In the first part, I show how Turkey's restricted immigration policy was closely related to the country's self-perception formed in the early years of the Republic. In this context, I look at Turkey's legislation and past decisions regarding mass influxes from the Middle East. Then, I contextualize the analysis of Turkey's biographical narrative by looking at the transformation within the country's legislation, the securitization of migration in the West, and the existing explanations behind Turkey's decision. Within Turkey's biographical narrative, the decision to host Syrian refugees has been perceived as a natural consequence of the country's self-perception as a humanitarian and responsible actor. In this context, Turkey often compares its behaviour to that of the West, ascribing to itself the positive qualities as derived from the normative standards of the West. However, it seems that Turkey has not realized that the rules of the game are changing, and Europe has started to prioritize its security, understood in both its physical and ontological dimension, over values it has promoted. Therefore, the praises and recognition that Turkey has received from the international community have not been to acknowledge Turkey's superiority but rather became a strategy aimed at preventing refugees from coming to Europe as much as possible.

In Chapter 6, I summarize my main theoretical and empirical insights. I provide an answer to the three questions that guide my research (Why was Turkey's belonging to the West put in doubt

after the end of the Cold War? How has this change informed Turkey's state identity? What are the consequences of this change for Turkey's foreign policy?). While doing that, I present how my findings are relevant to current debates regarding Turkey's foreign policy. I end this chapter and my entire thesis by discussing the originality and contributions of my work to IR scholarship along with examining possible areas for future research.

**CHAPTER 2: THEORY**

1. Introduction

This chapter presents the theoretical framework that was briefly discussed in the introduction. The main departure point is that states are social actors, and as such, they seek belonging and recognition from other actors. The discussion presented in this thesis is grounded within a social constructivism framework and fits into a larger scholarship that underlines the importance of an identity perspective in IR. To broaden the understanding of states' behaviour, this study draws from a conceptual toolbox of other social sciences – anthropology, psychology and sociology. The question of identity will be approached through the notion of ontological security that allows us to shift the analytical attention to the perspective of a state in question – how it sees the world and its place within it.[111] Looking at state identity from the perspective of ontological security enables us to overcome the problems related to the conception of identity encountered in some constructivist scholarship.[112] From this perspective, a state's identity is perceived as a reflexive project that requires constant attention to maintain a stable sense of self in a changing world.[113] This will be embedded in the discussion on stigmatization and liminality in IR. Both are important factors influencing the process of ontological security-seeking at the level of states.

The discussion presented in the following pages does not meet the criteria of a theory according to the positivist understanding because it does not seek to propose and test a falsifiable hypothesis.[114] Instead, I find it useful to use the metaphor of a theory as a lens proposed by Tim Dunne, Lene Hansen and Colin Wight, which is based on the assumption of the inherently complex nature of international relations. Rather than looking for systematic and logical relationships, the role of a theory as a lens lies in investigating:

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[111] For a critique on the use of the concept of identity in constructivist scholarship, see Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, 'Beyond "Identity"', *Theory and Society*, 29.1 (2000), 1–47; Richard Ned Lebow, *National Identities and International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), chap. 7.

[112] See Berenskoetter, 'Reclaiming the Vision Thing: Constructivists as Students of the Future', pp. 649–50; Epstein, pp. 330–31; Flockhart, p. 811.

[113] Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, p. 5.

[114] See footnote 68.

how social actors navigate their way through social events and processes. In order to make sense of this, we need to comprehend what these social processes mean to them and we do this by understanding the various ways in which they make sense of the world. All social actors view the world in particular ways, and these views of the world do not always display as much coherence, or logic, as one might expect of a systematic and well-defined theory.[115]

Following this logic, the primary objective of this chapter is to outline the theoretical framework that will inform the empirical analysis conducted in the three subsequent chapters. The first section discusses social constructivism as a style of reasoning that emphasizes the mutual constitution of knowledge and social reality. My attention then shifts to one of the most important concepts within social constructivism – identity. The discussion focuses on the relationship between the self and the other in the process of identity construction and reconstruction as well as the difference between national and state identities. Although social constructivism assumes the co-constitution of agents and structures,[116] I conclude that the existing scholarship, with its focus on culture, norms, institutions and socialization, prioritizes structure over agency.

In the second section of this chapter, I introduce the concept of ontological security.[117] Using insights from the disciplines of psychology and sociology allows me to shift the attention to the perspective of a state in question, to bring the agency back into the picture. I begin with a discussion of ontological security and its origins in the disciplines of psychology and sociology. Then I share how it migrated to the discipline of politics and IR. My attention then shifts to the ongoing debates, situating my research within them. In what follows, I discuss how the concept of ontological security can be applied at the level of states.

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[115] Dunne, Hansen, and Wight, pp. 411–12.

[116] Emanuel Adler, *Communitarian International Relations: The Epistemic Foundations of International Relations* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), pp. 11–12.

[117] See Laing; Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*; Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations*; Ayşe Zarakol, 'Ontological (In)Security and State Denial of Historical Crimes: Turkey and Japan', *International Relations*, 24.1 (2010), 3–23; Gülsah Çapan and Zarakol.

The third and fourth sections discuss the concepts of stigmatization and liminality in IR, respectively. The discussion on stigmatization proceeds from the assumption that the modern state system is inherently hierarchical, meaning that while the Westphalia state system offers inclusivity to states that joined it later on, it does not offer them equality.[118] Then I present liminality, which is a condition of being between established categories.[119] In section five, I discuss circumstances under which processes related to stigmatization and liminality often coexist in the modern state system.

Section six presents studies that applied concepts guiding this dissertation in empirical investigations focused on Turkey. The studies directly related to the inquiry at hand are briefly mentioned here but will be discussed in-depth in the following empirical chapters. The rest of this section shortly focuses on the application of the concepts in the areas of Turkish foreign and domestic policies that fall outside of the scope of this research project. I believe that having an overall picture of how these phenomena influence Turkey and its behaviour will help better understand the empirical analysis presented in this thesis.

2. Social constructivism as a lens

If we assume that states are social actors, then the traditional theories of International Relations are ill-suited as a guiding mechanism. To be more precise, the social nature of interactions between states is out of the scope of their theorizing. For theories based on rationalist assumptions, be it liberalism, neoliberalism or neorealism, actors' identities and interests are exogenous to interactions, meaning that they are in no way influenced by social relations.[120] In John Ruggie's words, rationalist theories offer:

> no answer to the foundational question: how the constituent actors—that is, territorial states—came to acquire their current identity and the interests that are assumed to go

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[118] See Zarakol, *After Defeat: How the East Learned to Live with the West*.

[119] See Iver B. Neumann, 'Introduction to the Forum on Liminality', *Review of International Studies*, 38.2 (2012), 473–79; Maria Mälksoo, 'The Challenge of Liminality for International Relations Theory', *Review of International Studies*, 38.2 (2012), 481–494; Rumelili, 'Liminal Identities and Processes of Domestication and Subversion in International Relations'.

[120] Frank Schimmelfennig, 'NATO Enlargement: A Constructivist Explanation', *Security Studies*, 8.2–3 (1998), 198–234 (p. 200).

along with it. Similarly, any potential present or future change in this identity and in corresponding interests is beyond the scope of the theory.[121]

In contrast, issues overlooked by rationalist theories of IR became the departure point for constructivism. The most important assumption within the context of this thesis is that states are inherently social. From this perspective, identities and interests are endogenous to social interactions. As Ted Hopf observes:

> [t]he neorealist assumption of self-interest presumes to know, a priori, just what is the self being identified. In other words, the state in international politics, across time and space, is assumed to have a single eternal meaning. Constructivism instead assumes that the selves, or identities, of states are a variable; they likely depend on historical, cultural, political, and social context.[122]

Following Vincent Pouliot, I understand constructivism as a style of reasoning that underlines the mutual constitution between knowledge and social reality. Building on Stefano Guzzini's insights,[123] Pouliot describes the basic assumptions about constructivism as a metatheoretical commitment, underlying 'first, that knowledge is socially constructed (an epistemological claim); second, that social reality is constructed (an ontological claim); and third, that knowledge and reality are mutually constitutive (a reflexive claim)'.[124] As such, it works as a lens to approach the inherently complex nature of international relations.[125]

Despite ongoing debates within constructivism,[126] its strength lies in expanding the meaning of basic concepts used to describe international relations, including agency, identity and interest.

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[121] John G. Ruggie, 'What Makes the World Hang Together? Neo-Utilitarianism and the Social Constructivist Challenge', *International Organization*, 52.4 (1998), 855–85 (p. 863).
[122] Ted Hopf, 'The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory', *International Security*, 23.1 (1998), 171–200 (p. 176).
[123] Stefano Guzzini, 'A Reconstruction of Constructivism in International Relations', *European Journal of International Relations*, 6.2 (2000), 147–82.
[124] Pouliot, p. 361.
[125] For a similar approach in the early constructivist scholarship, see Onuf, 'Constructivism: A User's Manual', p. 58; Ruggie, p. 856.
[126] See Christian Reus-Smit, 'Constructivism', in *Theories of International Relations*, ed. by Scott Burchill and Andrew Linklate (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 188–212 (pp. 201–5); Adler, 'Constructivism in International Relations', pp. 128–34.

In comparison to the rationalist style of reasoning,[127] the constructivist style of reasoning shifts the attention to the importance of meaning and interpretation. As Alexander Wendt observes, 'people act toward objects, including other actors, on the basis of the meanings that the objects have for them'.[128] More than making claims about the future,[129] the constructivism scholarship focuses on understanding why actors behave in the way they do. According to Katzenstein, Keohane and Krasner, '[t]he core of the constructivist project is to explicate variations in preferences, available strategies, and the nature of the players, across space and time'.[130]

The introduction of identity as an empirical question challenged not only rationalist theories but also claims put forward by supporters of primordialism. Social constructivism defies the vision of identity as monolithic and immutable. As discussed in the introduction, Samuel Huntington, one of the most prominent advocates of this point of view, proposed a quick solution to Turkey's identity problems – to give up its quest for equality in the West in order to become not only a key Islamic player but also an adversary of the West. Such a view is oversimplistic in its reading of not only modern Turkey but also its history. On a more general level, it deprives a state of its agency by arguing that decisions taken during the seven decades of statehood are meaningless. This view is similar to a Greek play where one cannot avoid his/her fate. In this context, Alexander Wendt's claim that identity is constructed and not given opened entirely new possibilities for understanding world politics.

a) The power of identity

Identity is one of the main concepts in constructivism because 'we cannot speak of state interest without conceiving, at least implicitly, of a state identity'.[131] In other words, '[i]nterests

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[127] Pouliot, p. 362.

[128] Alexander Wendt, 'Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics', *International Organization*, 46.2 (1992), 391–425 (pp. 396–97).

[129] For a critique on constructivism's lack of attention toward the problem of future uncertainty, see Berenskoetter, 'Reclaiming the Vision Thing: Constructivists as Students of the Future'.

[130] Peter J. Katzenstein, Robert O. Keohane, and Stephen D. Krasner, 'International Organization and the Study of World Politics', *International Organization*, 52.4 (1998), 645–85 (p. 682).

[131] Mlada Bukovansky, 'American Identity and Neutral Rights from Independence to the War of 1812', *International Organization*, 51.2 (1997), 209–43 (p. 211).

presuppose identities because an actor cannot know what it wants until it knows who it is'.[132] Following the disciplines of psychology and sociology, constructivism shares the view that identity formation occurs through interactions with others. Broadly speaking, there are two approaches to the relationship between the self and the other – the first one underlines the importance of negative otherness, while the second one focuses on mutual recognition. This difference is a result of varying perspectives that have influenced debates within constructivism. Scholarly works on negative identification are grounded within poststructuralist theory,[133] while the works on mutual recognition are influenced by symbolic interactionism.[134]

The first approach underlines that the negative identification between the self and the other is crucial in the process of identity formation. The fundamental argument is that in order to understand who one is, the self needs to know what it is not, and this is possible only through the mechanism of negative othering, creating enemies and building opposition. In his work *Identity/Difference*, William Connolly argues that 'identity requires difference in order to be, and it converts difference into otherness in order to secure its own self-certainty'.[135] The self, Connolly argues, is perceived as 'intrinsically good, coherent, complete or rational', whereas the other is described as 'intrinsically evil, irrational, abnormal, mad, sick, primitive, monstrous, dangerous, or anarchical'.[136] While Connolly acknowledges that turning difference into negative otherness is not a psychological disposition, he does not discuss other possibilities.

Connolly's argument was later adapted to IR by David Campbell in his study of US foreign policy. In *Writing Security*, Campbell focuses on the relationship between identity, otherness/difference and foreign policy. For Campbell, as for Connolly, identity is 'constituted in relation to

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[132] Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge, New York, Port Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 231.

[133] Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon, 1972); Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

[134] George Herbert Mead, *The Social Psychology of George Herbert Mead*, ed. by Anselm Strauss (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1956), the first edition of Mead's *Mind, Self and Society* was published posthumously in 1934 by his students; Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Anchor Books, 1959); Herbert Blumer, *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1986), first published in 1969.

[135] William E. Connolly, *Identity/Difference Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), p. 64.

[136] Connolly, p. 65.

difference'.[137] He demonstrates how the identification of a threatening other has formed the United States' identity and has influenced its foreign policy. For Campbell, foreign policy is all about drawing boundaries – defining inside from outside, self from other, and domestic from foreign through difference, danger, and negative otherness. Building on the seminal works of Connolly and Campbell, other scholars have investigated the self-other relationship through negative identification, including Iver Neumann,[138] Bahar Rumelili[139] and Lene Hansen.[140]

In contrast, the second perspective on the self-other relationship does not perceive the difference as an integral part of identity formation. Anchored in the symbolic interactionism tradition, this perspective is based on the premise that the self is constituted and re-constituted through interactions. It builds on George Herbert Mead's distinction between 'I' and 'me' that represents the two sides of the self – 'I' is an internal and reflexive side, whereas 'me' represents the social side.[141] According to Mead,

> [t]he self is something which has a development; it is not initially there, at birth, but arises in the process of social experience and activity, that is, develops in the given individual as a result of his relations to that process as a whole and to other individuals within that process.[142]

During this process, the self comes to see itself through the looking glass of the group that it belongs to; the so-called 'generalized other' is defined as '[t]he organized community or social group that gives to the individual his unity of self'.[143] In this regard, the generalized other does not denote difference, rather the other constitutes the self through the process of 'naming,

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[137] Campbell, p. 8.
[138] Iver B. Neumann, 'Self and Other in International Relations', *European Journal of International Relations*, 2.2 (1996), 139–74; Iver B. Neumann, *Uses of the Other: "The East" in European Identity Formation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998).
[139] Bahar Rumelili, 'Constructing Identity and Relating to Difference: Understanding the EU's Mode of Differentiation', *Review of International Studies*, 30.1 (2004), 27–47; Bahar Rumelili, *Constructing Regional Community and Order in Europe and Southeast Asia* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).
[140] Lene Hansen, *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006).
[141] Mead, p. 243.
[142] Mead, p. 212.
[143] Mead, p. 231.

recognizing and validating'.[144] These insights were transferred to IR scholarship through works focusing on states' socialization and the formation of collective identities.[145]

A growing body of scholarship looks at the importance of the 'significant other' understood as the one whose opinion matters most. It is built on the assumption that certain relationships are valued more than others in the process of identity formation. Here we can situate research on recognition,[146] special relationships,[147] and friendship in IR.[148]

The analysis presented in this dissertation fits within the second approach discussed above. However, this should not be read as an ontological commitment. The focus on mutual recognition, or lack thereof, is dictated by the research interest in the ambivalent relationship between Turkey and the West and its consequences for Turkey's state identity and its foreign policy. This leads me to another question regarding identity – which identity is my point of reference? In the following, I present the difference between national and state identities and give an explanation behind my decision to focus on Turkey's state identity.

   b)  Between national and state identities

The nation-state is the main feature of the modern state system. Due to the coupling of nation and state in one concept, the difference between the two gets blurred at times. While it is certainly true that they are closely bound, a nation might exist without a state, while a state does

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[144] Rumelili, *Constructing Regional Community and Order in Europe and Southeast Asia*, p. 22.

[145] See Martha Finnemore, 'International Organizations as Teachers of Norms: The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cutural Organization and Science Policy', *International Organization*, 47.4 (1993), 565–97; Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, 'International Norm Dynamics and Political Change', *International Organization*, 52.4 (1998), 887–917; Ronald L. Jepperson, Alexander Wendt, and Peter J. Katzenstein, *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996); *Security Communities*, ed. by Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

[146] See Nancy Fraser, 'Rethinking Recognition', *New Left Review*, 2000, 107–120 <https://newleftreview.org/issues/II3/articles/nancy-fraser-rethinking-recognition> [accessed 1 May 2019]; Ringmar, 'The Recognition Game: Soviet Russia against the West'; Jürgenm Haacke, 'The Frankfurt School and International Relations on the Centrality of Recognition', *Review of International Studies*, 31.1 (2005), 181–194.

[147] See Thomas Risse-Kappen, *Cooperation among Democracies: The European Influence on U.S. Foreign Policy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995); Janice Bially Mattern, *Ordering International Politics: Identity, Crisis, and Representational Force* (New York and London: Routledge, 2005); John Dumbrell and Axel R. Schäfer (eds), *America's 'Special Relationships': Foreign and Domestic Aspects of the Politics of Alliance* (London: Routledge, 2009).

[148] See Evgeny Roshchin, 'The Concept of Friendship: From Princes to States', *European Journal of International Relations*, 12.4 (2006), 599–624; Felix Berenskoetter, 'Friends, There Are No Friends? An Intimate Reframing of the International', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 35.3 (2007), 647–76; Simon Koschut and Andrea Oelsner, *Friendship and International Relations* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

not always equal one particular nation. The distinction between the two is essential when talking about identity because while referring to a nation-state as a unit of analysis, the focus can be placed on national identity, state identity or the relationship between them.

Looking at the idea of a nation-state, Anthony Smith observes an overlap between the two concepts because both refer to a historical territory and the sovereignty of people. However, Smith argues, 'their content and focus are quite different'.[149] Smith defines a nation as 'a named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members'.[150] In comparison, a state refers 'exclusively to public institutions, differentiated from, and autonomous of, other social institutions and exercising a monopoly of coercion and extraction within a given territory'.[151] Influenced by Smith's definitions, Shibley Telhami and Michael Barnett describe state identity as 'the corporate and officially demarcated identity linked to the state apparatus'.[152] In contrast, national identity refers to 'a group of people who aspire to or have a historical homeland, share a common myth and historical memories, have legal rights or duties for all members, and have markers to distinguish themselves from others'.[153]

There is a general agreement in IR scholarship that national and state identities overlap to a certain degree – national identity partly constitutes state identity, but state identity cannot be reduced to national identity.[154] To what extent the two overlap differs between nation-states but can also vary within them over time. There is less agreement regarding the relationship between national identity, state identity and foreign policy. Toni Alaranta, for example, proposes a causal view, suggesting that national identity influences state identity, and this, in turn, influences foreign policy.[155] Alternatively, Dov Waxman claims that foreign policy might be derived from

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[149] Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (London: Penguin Books, 1991), p. 15.
[150] Anthony D. Smith, p. 14.
[151] Anthony D. Smith, p. 14.
[152] Shibley Telhami and Michael N. Barnett, *Identity and Foreign Policy in the Middle East* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2002), pp. 8–9.
[153] Telhami and Barnett, pp. 8–9.
[154] A different point of view is represented by Telhami and Barnett, who see national and state identities as separate from each other. Their conclusion is shaped by observing identity politics in the Middle East, Telhami and Barnett, chap. 1.
[155] Toni Alaranta, *National and State Identity in Turkey* (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), pp. 13, 31.

national identity or state identity depending on which one is more salient in the particular case; therefore, national and state identities are two distinct referent objects for foreign policy.[156]

Following Waxman's approach, I adhere to the belief that the questions of identity are too complicated to apply causal mechanisms. Consequently, the question that remains is how we know which identity is more salient. To make this distinction, Baruch Kimmerling's idea of 'state strength' becomes useful. Kimmerling defines state strength, which ranges from weak to strong, as 'the state's ability to impose its own definition of identity on all segments of the society, in addition to its ability to enforce "law and order," to mobilize the population for war, and to manage distributive and extractive fiscal policies'.[157] In line with this definition, Turkey can be considered a strong state.

The Turkish expression *devlet baba*, which can be translated as a father-state, is just one example of the state's importance in Turkey. It shows a deep emotional connection between people and state, where the state is described as a paternal figure, while people as children (Turkish *memleket çocukları*). The father-state is 'not only protecting his children by providing them with material benefits but also instructing them in the principles of and ways to true morality and conduct'.[158] In the case of Turkey, the state is perceived as a separate entity with its own objectives and interests, which are not narrowed down to that of the nation or society. This view was perfectly summarized by General Kenan Evren, who, during the opening speech before the Constituent Assembly in October 1981, stated:

> the state itself has certain rights and obligations as far as its continuity and future is concerned. We do not have the right to put the state into a powerless and inactive position [...]. Citizens should know that freedoms of thought and conscience exist. There

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[156] Dov Waxman, 'Defending The Nation/Defining The Nation: Foreign Policy and the Politics of National Identity in Israel' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Johns Hopkins University, 2002), pp. 379–80.

[157] Baruch Kimmerling, 'State Building, State Autonomy and the Identity of Society: The Case of the Israeli State', *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 6.4 (1993), 396–429 (p. 398).

[158] Levent Köker, 'National Identity and State Legitimacy: Contradictions of Turkish Democratic Experience', in *Civil Society, Democracy and the Muslim World*, ed. by Elisabeth Özdalga and Sune Persson (Istanbul: Swedish Research Institute, 1997), p. 71.

are, however, limits to these freedoms […]. Individual freedom can be protected to the extent that the will and the sovereignty of the state are maintained.[159]

Consequently, in the case of Tukey, state identity is more salient than national identity in foreign policy making.[160]

c) Between self and identiy

Almost 30 years after Wendt introduced identity as an empirical question, the concept still attracts scholars in IR. However, it is not without its problems. One can notice certain disillusionment related to the lack of clear definition, concept vagueness, multiple meanings, and its usage to describe opposite phenomena (such as continuity and change, peace and war, sameness and difference).[161] Consequently, there is an understanding that identity became a concept that explains everything and nothing. Following the famous critique of Brubaker and Cooper, Felix Berenskoetter indicates that '[t]he notion of identity often is reduced to a mere word in the logical chain of an argument which does not offer substantial insight as to what identity is and how it forms, let alone how it informs action'.[162]

In order to alleviate some of the abovementioned problems, I propose to distinguish between self and identity. I believe that collapsing the two concepts into one blurs our understanding of identity. Importantly, by analytically dividing self from identity, we can answer some of the questions directed at the concept of identity: How can it account at the same time for opposite processes such as continuity and change? Does there exist one singular identity, or are there plural identities? Maybe it is better to use the term identification instead of identity?

I put forward that there is one singular self, which is expressed through identity. To use a metaphor, self is like an eggshell, while identity is like a content of an egg. During an actor's lifespan, the content of one's identity transforms, sometimes significantly, because identity

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[159] Quoted in Metin Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey* (Beverly: The Eothen Press, 1985), p. 131.

[160] Heper; Henry J. Barkey, 'The Struggles of "Strong" State', *Journal of International Affairs*, 54.1 (2000), 87–105; F. Stephen Larrabee and Ian O. Lesser, *Turkish Foreign Policy in an Age of Uncertainty* (Santa Monica, Arlington, Pittsburgh: RAND, 2003), pp. 21–27.

[161] Brubaker and Cooper, p. 1; Felix Berenskoetter, 'Identity in International Relations', *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies (Online Edition)*, 2017.

[162] Berenskoetter, 'Reclaiming the Vision Thing: Constructivists as Students of the Future', pp. 649–50; See also Brubaker and Cooper.

formation is a constant process of change, adjustment, and fluctuation. However, most of the time, this change is rather evolutionary than revolutionary, and we can observe a certain level of continuity within this change. What I mean by 'continuity within change' is that old structures of meaning are used to build new structures of meaning, and as such, they often coexist.

My point can be illustrated, first of all, by looking at the level of individuals. Whereas certain scholars argue against applying insights from the individual level to the collective one, I find it useful as the abstract world of states is shaped by interactions among individual actors, and as such, it cannot be wholly defined separately from patterns of behaviour observed at the micro-level.

When one says Anna's identity, Anna is the self, while identity defines who Anna is (what I refer to as identity's content) and what Anna wants. As such, who Anna was in 2005 and who she was in 2020 might change due to internal and external factors. Many people encounter a situation when they perceive someone as a 'totally new person' compared to the last time they saw them. To give an extreme example, in 2005, Anna was an atheist, while in 2020, she was an extremely devoted Catholic. This one difference would influence a significant change of a worldview, behaviour, and in consequence, the answers to the fundamental questions: Who Anna is? What does Anna want? While Anna might become unrecognizable to people who knew her before, the self is constant. The change in identity does not undermine the singularity and immutability of the self. Anna still holds the same Personal Identification Number, the driving licence obtained in the past is valid, and the contracts signed in 2005 continue to be bidding for Anna in 2020.

Now let's look at my home country Poland. The establishment of Polish statehood dates back to 966. Since then, except for 123 years of partitions, the self is Poland, whether its official name is the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Polish People's Republic or the Republic of Poland. However, the content of the self has changed throughout the years due to both internal and external circumstances. The primary debate regarding Poland's identity refers to the times of communism. Many Polish people who disagreed with the changes forcefully introduced in Poland after the Second World War did not identify with the state and even actively opposed it. Until today, there is a debate whether the Polish People's Republic should be recognized as a form of

Polish statehood or should be treated as a different self. The most widespread answer is that it was a Polish state, formally independent, but not sovereign.

Looking at the case of 'continuity within change', the international agreements signed by the Polish People's Republic have been biding for the Republic of Poland, including the most important one – on the borders. If one treated the two as different selves, this would open up the possibility to undermine the border treaties signed in the aftermath of the Second World War. Moreover, civil status records issued by the Polish People's Republic are still valid in the Republic of Poland and abroad. There has been the same anthem during both periods, and the emblem differs only by removing the crown from the eagle's head during the communist times. Moreover, in the 1970s and 1980s, Poland was very successful in sports competitions. Until today, the successes of the Polish football team are remembered as a sign of Poland's strength and greatness, not that of the Polish People's Republic.

Consequently, when one compares in terms of state identity the Polish People's Republic and the Republic of Poland, the difference is paramount, including answers to the fundamental questions: What is Poland? What does Poland want? Therefore, if the referent object would be identity, we should *de facto* talk about two different entities. However, if the referent object is self, which is expressed through identity, we can account for that change. In Poland's case, change was revolutionary; therefore, easily visible even to an outside observer. However, in many countries, it is evolutionary. Hence the dilemmas that social constructivism encounter. Consequently, if we divide self from identity, and use self as a referent object while identity as its expression, we can disentangle some of the abovementioned dilemmas.

Having outlined the centrality of identity in social constructivism, my focus now shifts to ontological security understood as 'the security of the self'.[163] The ontological security perspective allows us to shift attention to states' agency and reflexivity as crucial in the continuous process of identity construction. As such, this thesis fits within the psychological turn in constructivism.[164]

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[163] Mitzen, 'Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity and the Security Dilemma', p. 341.
[164] Jacques E.C. Hymans, 'The Arrival of Psychological Constructivism', *International Theory*, 2.3 (2010), 461–67; Ty Solomon, 'The Turn to Psychology in Constructivism', *International Studies Review*, 14.4 (2012), 637–639; *Psychology*

3. Ontological security perspective

The concept of ontological security was first applied within the field of psychology. It was coined in 1960 by Scottish psychologist Ronald David Laing who in *The Divided Self* contrasts an experience of a person being ontologically secure with a person not having this quality.[165] Laing's scholarship is one of the first attempts to challenge traditional approaches in psychiatry; instead of perceiving mental health as a biological condition, Laing proposes to understand schizoid and schizophrenic persons from a social perspective. He defines an ontologically secure person as having:

> a sense of his presence in the world as a real, alive, whole, and, in a temporal sense, a continuous person. As such, he can live out into the world and meet others: a world and others experienced as equally real, alive, whole, and continuous. Such a basically *ontologically* secure person will encounter all the hazards of life, social, ethical, spiritual, biological, from a centrally firm sense of his own and other people's reality and identity.[166]

In contrast, an ontologically insecure individual questions his/her own identity and autonomy and lacks an experience of continuity in life. Feeling constant anxiety and dread has a paralyzing effect on an individual as 'ordinary circumstances of everyday life constitute a continual and deadly threat'.[167] Laing's discipline-changing scholarship has been a source of inspiration for Anthony Giddens, who transfered and developed the concept of ontological security in sociology.[168] Giddens, similarly to Laing, understands ontological security as a basic need because the continuity of the self in time and space is a precondition for action. In *The Constitution of Society*, he defines ontological security as a 'confidence or trust that the natural and social worlds are as they appear to be, including the basic existential parameter of self and social

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*and Constructivism in International Relations*, ed. by Vaughn P. Shannon and Paul A. Kowert (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2015). For an application of psychoanalysis to IR, see Mira M. Sucharov, *The International Self: Psychoanalysis and the Search for Israeli-Palestinian Peace* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2005).

[165] Laing.

[166] Laing, p. 39; italics in the original.

[167] Laing, p. 42.

[168] Giddens' works were influenced by the scholarship of Erik Erickson, who coined the term identity crisis. See Erik H. Erikson, *Childhood and Society* (New York: Norton, 1963); Erik H. Erikson, 'Identity and the Life Cycle' (New York: International Universities Press, 1967).

identity'.[169] In *Modernity and Self-Identity*, Giddens further discusses the importance of ontological security, describing it as having 'on the level of the unconscious and practical consciousness, answers to basic existential questions which all human life in some way addresses'.[170] These questions concern existence itself, the relationship between the external world and human life, the existence of other persons, and self-identity.[171] Here Gidden's distinction between discursive consciousness, practical consciousness and the unconscious is crucial.[172]

Discursive consciousness is the ability of an actor to explain his/her actions with words. It 'presumes being able to give a coherent account of one's activities and the reasons for them'.[173] In contrast, practical consciousness can be called background knowledge. This kind of knowledge does not require explanation each time when it is put into practice. For this reason, it is crucial in the context of ontological security because it offers stability and continuity – one knows how to function in the world without having to explain it. The line between discursive and practical consciousness is thin, and there is a free flow of information between the two. For example, cooking one's favourite dish does not require an explanation each time one is doing it. However, when asked, an individual can verbally account for it. The last layer – the unconscious – includes the elements of ourselves outside of our control, the so-called inaccessible knowledge.

For Giddens, ontological security is achieved through the creation of habits and routines as well as the feeling of biographical continuity. Habits and routines provide boundaries for everyday activities, while a biographical narrative ensures continuity of an individual's experience and behaviour between the past, present and future. In contrast, when ontological security is missing, a person 'becomes obsessively preoccupied with apprehension of possible risks to his or her existence'.[174] During such times, anxiety, being one of the crucial concepts in the ontological security scholarship, comes to the foreground.

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[169] Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*, p. 375.
[170] Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, p. 47.
[171] Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, pp. 47–55.
[172] Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*, pp. 41–51.
[173] Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*, p. 45.
[174] Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, p. 53.

Anxiety, which is a feeling of worry, nervousness or unease without a specific reason behind it, paralyzes one's sense of agency. Due to the lack of a referent object, an individual does not know how to overcome it in order to regain cognitive stability. In other words, individuals have a need to anticipate present and future actions, and anxiety makes it impossible. In contrast, fear, which is a related concept, always has a definite object that can be analyzed, faced and ultimately overcome. Here Paul Tillich's discussion on the difference between the two becomes useful.[175] The fear of death has a clear object, for example, death by illness or accident. To avoid or minimalize the possibility of its occurrence, preventive measures, such as eating healthy, giving up smoking, avoiding dangerous places, to name just a few, can be taken. While doing so, an individual performs his/her agency. On the other hand, anxiety about death comes from uncertainty, the prospect of non-being and lack of knowledge of what happens afterwards. Consequently, it cannot be managed by taking precautions; in the face of anxiety, an individual cannot perform his/her agency.

a) Ontological security and IR

The concept of ontological security was imported into the field of IR in the 1990s; however, it gained popularity in the 2000s. In 1994, Alexander Wendt named ontological security as one of four basic interests generated by the corporate identity, alongside physical security, recognition and development. He defines ontological security as a 'predictability in relationships to the world, which creates a desire for stable social identities'.[176] Then in *Social Theory of International Politics*, he lists ontological security as one of five material needs that individuals seek.[177] While it is quite puzzling why he would categorize ontological security as a material need, Wendt does not explore this idea further.

The first article to fully engage with this concept is Jef Huysmans' 'Security! What Do You Mean? From Concept to Thick Signifier', where he distinguishes between two notions of security – daily

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[175] Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 36–39. See also Bahar Rumelili, 'Ontological (In)Security and Peace Anxieties: A Framework for Conflict Resolution', in *Conflict Resolution and Ontological Security: Peace Anxieties*, ed. by Bahar Rumelili (London and New York: Routledge, 2015), pp. 10–29 (pp. 11–14).

[176] Alexander Wendt, 'Collective Identity Formation and the International State', *The American Political Science Review*, 88.2 (1994), 384–96 (p. 385).

[177] Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, pp. 131–32.

security and ontological security. Daily security is a 'strategy of survival' with the ultimate goal of postponing 'death by countering objectified threats'.[178] In contrast, ontological security is connected to reflexivity, and its goal is to 'fix social relations into a symbolic and institutional order'.[179] Consequently, the role of a state is to provide order in the name of the community. The 'capacity to provide order—not a particular content of order but the function of ordering, of making life intelligible'[180] is what makes states legitimate. According to Huysmans, one can successfully manage daily security only when ontological security is in place because states need predictability and continuity to tame the chaos.[181]

Similarly, Bill McSweeney in *Security, Identity and Interests* refers to ontological security as a security of everyday life that is common to 'all individuals at every stage of development'.[182] McSweeney rejects traditional assumptions about physical survival as the main and most important part of state security. He underlines that '[i]f we allow that physical survival has a logical priority over other needs, this makes it "primary" only in the uninteresting sense: it is a logical pre-condition of doing anything that we remain physically alive and capable of doing it'.[183] Instead, he proposes reflexive sociology of security where states are motivated by more than just physical security. His reading of ontological security is close to that of Anthony Giddens. He finds the source of ontological security in relationships that create basic security systems. Mirroring Giddens, McSweeney underlines that '[t]rust and ontological security concern the acquisition of confidence in the routines of daily life – the essential predictability of interaction through which we feel confident in knowing what is going on and that we have the practical skill to go on in this context'.[184]

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[178] Jef Huysmans, 'Security! What Do You Mean? From Concept to Thick Signifier', *European Journal of International Relations*, 4.2 (1998), 226–55 (p. 242).
[179] Jef Huysmans, 'Security! What Do You Mean? From Concept to Thick Signifier', *European Journal of International Relations*, 4.2 (1998), 226–55 (p. 242).
[180] Huysmans, 'Security! What Do You Mean? From Concept to Thick Signifier', p. 242.
[181] Huysmans, 'Security! What Do You Mean? From Concept to Thick Signifier', p. 244.
[182] Bill McSweeney, *Security, Identity and Interests: A Sociology of International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 154.
[183] McSweeney, p. 153.
[184] McSweeney, p. 155.

The first generation of scholars, as discussed above, translated the concept of ontological security into IR without applying it empirically. Unlike the first generation, the second generation of scholars that emerged in the 2000s has been more interested in 'testing' the explanatory power behind it. Following insights from Giddens, who relates ontological insecurity to the conditions of high modernity, Catarina Kinnvall highlights that globalization makes people ontologically insecure due to diminishing time and space. To decrease the feeling of uncertainty and anxiety, people look for mechanisms offering security, stability and readymade answers. In today's world, Kinnvall argues, nationalism and religion fulfil this task because both create a narrative that 'the world really is what it appears to be'.[185]

Moving away from treating ontological security as an individual-level concept, Jennifer Mitzen[186] and Brent Steele[187] apply it to the level of states. These two works quickly gained seminal status in the field and remain the most referenced texts within the ontological security studies in IR. In this early scholarship, the focus was on cases where states' behaviour deviated from their material interests, showing that the rationality behind such decisions cannot be comprehended without accounting for the ontological security needs of states. Jennifer Mitzen finds the ontological security perspective a better explanation of the persistence of intractable conflicts than traditional schools of IR when examining security dilemmas.[188] She posits that routinized relations with significant others, be it cooperative or conflictual, are a source of ontological security. Consequently, states get attached to them and seek to reproduce these patterns. From this point of view, in contrast to what realists claim, states might not want to escape a security dilemma because even dangerous routines provide ontological security.[189]

Similarly, Steele challenges the traditional assumption of IR that material capabilities and physical security are the primary motivators for states, arguing that the protection of ontological security is a driving force behind states' behaviour.[190] Looking at states' reasons to pursue social actions,

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[185] Catarina Kinnvall, 'Globalization and Religious Nationalism: Self, Identity, and the Search for Ontological Security', *Political Psychology*, 25.5 (2004), 741–67 (p. 742).

[186] Mitzen, 'Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity and the Security Dilemma'.

[187] Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations*.

[188] Mitzen, 'Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity and the Security Dilemma', p. 341.

[189] Mitzen, 'Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity and the Security Dilemma', p. 342.

[190] Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations*, p. 2.

he focuses on the internal qualities of actors. Steele suggests that states pursue social actions because it satisfies their self-identity needs. In other words, lack of action could lead to an identity crisis, which actors want to avoid at all costs. Therefore, social action should be perceived as rational, self-help behaviour aimed at protecting one's ontological security.

During the last fifteen years, scholarly interest in ontological security has rapidly grown.[191] The concept has been applied to provide alternative explanations behind states' behaviour,[192] inter-state relations,[193] supranational processes, with a special focus on the European Union,[194] and the relationship between gender and power.[195] Looking at domestic politics, the ontological security perspective helps us understand how individuals and society influence and are

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[191] A growing interest in the ontological security perspective led to the publication of three special issues on the subject in renowned academic journals – in 2017, *Cooperation and Conflict* (52.1) collected together works that were inspired by discussions and meeting that took place in the last few years; in 2018, *European Security* (27.3) focused on the growing anxiety faced by the EU, its member state and ordinary citizens; while in 2019, *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* (32.3) analyzed the relationship between ontological security and populism.

[192] See Brent J. Steele, 'Ontological Security and the Power of Self-Identity: British Neutrality and the American Civil War', *Review of International Studies*, 31.3 (2005), 519–40; Zarakol, 'Ontological (In)Security and State Denial of Historical Crimes: Turkey and Japan'; Deepa Prakash and Asli Ilgit, 'More than a Feeling: Emotional Responses to International Criticism in Erdoğan's Turkey', *Review of International Studies*, 43.1 (2017), 130–51; Gülsah Çapan and Zarakol.

[193] See Karl Gustafsson, 'Memory Politics and Ontological Security in Sino-Japanese Relations', *Asian Studies Review*, 38.1 (2014), 71–86; Karl Gustafsson, 'Routinised Recognition and Anxiety: Understanding the Deterioration in Sino-Japanese Relations', *Review of International Studies*, 42.4 (2016), 613–33; Zachary Selden and Stuart Strome, 'Competing Identities and Security Interests in the Indo–US Relationship', *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 2016, 439–59; Kai Oppermann and Mischa Hansel, 'The Ontological Security of Special Relationships: The Case of Germany's Relations with Israel', *European Journal of International Security*, 4.1 (2019), 79–100.

[194] See Jennifer Mitzen, 'Anchoring Europe's Civilizing Identity: Habits, Capabilities and Ontological Security', *Journal of European Public Policy*, 13.2 (2006), 270–85; Jennifer Mitzen, 'Anxious Community: EU as (In)Security Community', *European Security*, 27.3 (2018), 393–413; Bahar Rumelili, 'Breaking with Europe's Pasts: Memory, Reconciliation, and Ontological (In)Security', *European Security*, 27.3 (2018), 280–95; Vincent Della Sala, 'Narrating Europe: The EU's Ontological Security Dilemma', *European Security*, 27.3 (2018), 266–79.

[195] See Will K. Delehanty and Brent J. Steele, 'Engaging the Narrative in Ontological (In)Security Theory: Insights from Feminist IR', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 22.3 (2009), 523–40; Catarina Kinnvall, 'Feeling Ontologically (In)Secure: States, Traumas and the Governing of Gendered Space', *Cooperation and Conflict*, 52.1 (2017), 90–108; Catarina Kinnvall, 'Populism, Ontological Insecurity and Hindutva: Modi and the Masculinization of Indian Politics', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 32.3 (2019), 283–302.

influenced by such issues as religion and nationalism,[196] migration[197] or Brexit.[198] Nevertheless, a bulk of this growing scholarship has focused on the patterns of conflict and violence in world politics.[199] Following Mitzen's line of reasoning,[200] this body of literature underlines that states involved in conflict prefer stability; therefore, they prefer the continuation of a conflict since the securitized other has become inscribed as a constitutive part of an actors' identity. Consequently, without taking into consideration the ontological security needs of individuals and states, a successful and lasting conflict transformation might not be possible.

The works of Mitzen and Steele, along with the application of ontological security to the study of conflict and violence, focus on the preservation of actors' identity. This has three significant consequences. Firstly, when ontological security is defined in terms of identity preservation, it blurs the difference between self, identity and ontological security. Put differently, identity, instead of self, becomes a referent object of ontological security, which might lead to treating the two as synonyms. Secondly, when ontological security is reduced to identity preservation, it falls into the trap of producing an essentialist conception of identity.[201] Thirdly, from this perspective, ontological security is well-equipped to explain identity-related stability. However, it is less open to account for change because it is seen as threatening to one's identity.

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[196] See Kinnvall, 'Globalization and Religious Nationalism: Self, Identity, and the Search for Ontological Security'; Catarina Kinnvall, *Globalization and Religious Nationalism in India: The Search for Ontological Security.* (London: Routledge, 2006); Michael Skey, '"A Sense of Where You Belong in the World": National Belonging, Ontological Security and the Status of the Ethnic Majority in England', *Nations and Nationalism*, 16.4 (2010), 715–33; Stuart Croft, *Securitizing Islam: Identity and the Search for Security* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Stuart Croft, 'Constructing Ontological Insecurity: The Insecuritization of Britain's Muslims', *Contemporary Security Policy*, 33.2 (2012), 219–35.

[197] See Christine Agius, 'Drawing the Discourses of Ontological Security: Immigration and Identity in the Danish and Swedish Cartoon Crises', *Cooperation and Conflict*, 52.1 (2017), 109–25; ML de Raismes Combes, 'Encountering the Stranger: Ontological Security and the Boston Marathon Bombing', *Cooperation and Conflict*, 52.1 (2017), 126–43; Tal Dingott Alkopher, 'Socio-Psychological Reactions in the EU to Immigration: From Regaining Ontological Security to Desecuritisation', *European Security*, 27.3 (2018), 314–35; Mitzen, 'Anxious Community: EU as (In)Security Community'.

[198] See Christopher S. Browning, 'Brexit, Existential Anxiety and Ontological (In)Security', *European Security*, 27.3 (2018), 336–55; Christopher S. Browning, 'Brexit Populism and Fantasies of Fulfilment', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs,* 32.3 (2019), 222–44.

[199] See Lupovici; Sean Kay, 'Ontological Security and Peace-Building in Northern Ireland', *Contemporary Security Policy*, 33.2 (2012), 236–63; *Conflict Resolution and Ontological Security: Peace Anxieties*, ed. by Bahar Rumelili (London and New York: Routledge, 2015); Rumelili, 'Identity and Desecuritisation: The Pitfalls of Conflating Ontological and Physical Security'.

[200] Mitzen, 'Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity and the Security Dilemma'.

[201] See footnote 112.

This is not to say that the above accounts are wrong. Instead, it is to underline that these accounts focus on a particular strategy related to the ontological security-seeking, namely rigid attachment to one's identity, which is actually a sign of ontological insecurity. This, however, is just one reading of how ontological security operates on the level of states. As Bahar Rumelili aptly observes, '[i]t is not change per se, but the inability to adapt to change that generates ontological insecurity'.[202] In other words, the need for cognitive stability does not preclude change; it rather shows that stability is preferred over change.

Following Christopher Browning and Pertti Joenniemi as well as Trine Flockhart, I propose to distinguish between self, identity and ontological security.[203] As previously discussed, every actor has a self, and this self is expressed through identity. However, it does not mean that there is just one pre-constituted identity. On the contrary, actors' identities are always in the making. As such, maintaining identity is a process, which implies adjustment and change.[204] This falls within Gidden's description of identity as the 'the reflexive project of the self'.[205] Consequently, instead of emphasizing the preservation of identity, ontological security is better understood as an actor's ability to cope with a constantly changing world in order to maintain the continuity of the self. This point was aptly summarized by Flockhart, who underlines that 'agency entails "being" and "doing" implying a "self" defined by an identity, articulated through a narrative and performed through practice and action, which is continuously re-grounded as a reflexive project that must be constantly worked at'.[206]

Therefore, while I agree that stability is a basic need of actors, I put forward that it should be perceived as an ideal that actors steer toward. Building on this, I argue that the strength of the ontological security perspective lies in expanding our understanding of how actors cope with the constantly evolving world and the change inscribed in this process.

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[202] Rumelili, 'Ontological Security and Conflict Resolution: An Analytical Framework'.
[203] Flockhart, pp. 804–5; Browning and Joenniemi, pp. 33–37.
[204] Epstein, p. 335.
[205] Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, p. 5.
[206] Flockhart, p. 813. See also Christopher S. Browning, 'Nation Branding, National Self-Esteem, and the Constitution of Subjectivity in Late Modernity', *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 11.2 (2015), 195–214 (pp. 197–98).

Before turning to the next section, I want to make one important point. Laing, who introduced the concept of ontological security to the social sciences, started his theorizing from schizoid and schizophrenic persons, which serves as an extreme example of ontologically insecure individuals. However, rather than looking at ontological security as something that actors have or do not have, I put forward that it should be seen as a continuum between a maximum level of ontological insecurity and a maximum level of ontological security. Consequently, it explains why at different times, the same actor might feel less or more ontologically secure. It is also important to remember that in the constantly evolving world, ontological security is a fragile condition that needs to be continuously worked on and reasserted.[207]

b)  Ongoing debates

Debates within the ontological security perspective in IR closely mirror ongoing discussions within the discipline at large. Two primary and closely related debates concern the unit of analysis and the sources of ontological security. The first one revolves around the question of whose ontological security should we speak about. In the disciplines of psychology and sociology, ontological security is an individual-level concept. However, since its reception by other social sciences, it has been applied to collectives. Mitzen and Steele offer four arguments to support the treatment of a state (and, by extension, other collectives) as a unite of analysis.[208] First of all, both authors suggest that all existing IR theories are built by extrapolating individual-level needs to states, including physical security, rationality and fear. It is the so-called 'everyone is doing it' approach. As Steele aptly observes, some individual-level concepts are ascribed to states while others are not, which suggests more about the agenda of IR theories than about the irrationality of such a move.[209]

Secondly, the need for ontological security at the level of a state is derived from the need of its citizens. Mitzen argues that collectives (society, state) need themselves to be cognitively stable to serve as a source of ontological security for individuals. This is *inter alia* achieved via

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[207] Browning and Joenniemi, p. 40. See also Berenskoetter, 'Parameters of a National Biography'.
[208] Mitzen, 'Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity and the Security Dilemma', pp. 351–53; Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations*, pp. 15–20.
[209] Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations*, p. 16.

routinization of their distinctiveness vis-à-vis other groups. If a state loses its sense of distinctiveness, Mitzen suggests, it 'would threaten the ontological security of its members', and therefore 'states can be seen as motivated to preserve the national group identity and not simply the national "body"'.[210] In other words, a state can be treated as a referent object of ontological security because it functions as a provider of ontological security for its citizens. However, following a critique of Steele, I agree that in this understanding of a state as a unit of analysis, Mitzen ignores a very interesting and powerful process of identity contestation and negotiation at the nexus between state and society.[211]

The third explanation is based on a famous 'as if' approach. States are treated as if they were individuals based on a heuristic value of such a move, whereby assumptions originating at a micro-level help explain macro-level patterns. Bill McSweeney defends this approach stating that:

> [i]t follows from the analysis of social action as purposive, reflexive, monitored, routinized, that collective actors, including states, cannot strictly be agents. It makes sense, however, and for some purposes is essential, to treat the state and other collectivities as unit actors, as if they were agents. Their action is subject to the same logical and sociological analysis as that of individuals or other collectivities. It makes sense to speak of states as if they were agents when the agency of individuals in a representative capacity carries the allocative and authoritative resources of the state with it.[212]

The fourth explanation, proposed and adopted by Steele, focuses on a state's representatives that act 'as if' they were the state. Following insights from Anthony Lang, Steele posits that a state's agency is embodied by its representatives because 'they have the moral burden of making policy choices and the capacity to implement those decisions'.[213] Consequently, in their official

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[210] Mitzen, 'Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity and the Security Dilemma', p. 352.
[211] Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations*, p. 17. See also Paul Roe, 'The "Value" of Positive Security', *Review of International Studies*, 34.4 (2008), 777–94.
[212] McSweeney, p. 151.
[213] Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations*, p. 18; italics in the original. See also Anthony Lang, *Agency and Ethics: The Politics of Military Intervention* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2002), pp. 16–17.

capacity, leaders are committed to state identity and act in the name of the state, regardless of their personal sense of ontological (in)security.

The decision to treat states as a unit of analysis, regardless of the explanation behind it, is not without its critics. Alanna Krolikowski argues that 'resorting to the assumption of state personhood obscures important aspects of how the state, as an evolving institution, affects individuals' sense of ontological security'.[214] Consequently, some scholars have decided to focus on a state as a mechanism providing ontological security rather than seeing it as a security-seeking entity itself.[215]

The second debate revolves around the question of the sources of ontological security – whether endogenous or exogenous factors take priority, and as such, it is derived from a wider discussion on the agency/structure problem in IR. The first perspective focuses on the exogenous factors; interactions and the international environment are perceived as crucial for states' ontological security. This view was adopted *inter alia* by Mitzen, who argues that states' identities are 'constituted and sustained by social relationships rather than being intrinsic properties of the states themselves'.[216] The second perspective focuses on internal processes of ontological-security seeking, and it is explored by Steele, who calls it the 'dialectics of the Self'.[217] In this reading of states, the priority is given to the ontological and methodological importance of narratives. Between these two perspectives, there is the so-called middle-ground approach. As Ayşe Zarakol observes, 'neither a fully intersubjective approach nor one that focuses solely on the reflexive construction of self-identity captures the full picture in either case'.[218] With these debates in mind, my focus now shifts toward outlining how my research fits within them.

In this dissertation, I follow scholars who see heuristic value in extrapolating individual-level concepts to states. My unit of analysis is Turkey, and I approach it by applying concepts such as identity, ontological security, stigmatization and liminality that traditionally were designed to

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[214] Alanna Krolikowski, 'State Personhood in Ontological Security Theories of International Relations and Chinese Nationalism: A Sceptical View', *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, 2.1 (2008), 109–33 (p. 111).

[215] Kinnvall, 'Globalization and Religious Nationalism: Self, Identity, and the Search for Ontological Security'; Krolikowski; Croft, 'Constructing Ontological Insecurity: The Insecuritization of Britain's Muslims'.

[216] Mitzen, 'Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity and the Security Dilemma', p. 354.

[217] Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations*, pp. 32, 60–63.

[218] Zarakol, *After Defeat: How the East Learned to Live with the West*, p. 8.

investigate the behaviour of individuals. The main value of such a move is that it allows us to build on insights from other disciplines, in my case, anthropology, sociology and psychology, in order to broaden the understanding of world politics. As such, I understand a state as a 'set of institutions, dispositions, and territory not reducible to government, civil society, and the nation'.[219] Consequently, my approach is closest to the one adopted by Brent Steele in agreeing that a state can act only through individuals or the so-called state agents while keeping in mind that it cannot be reduced to individuals temporarily in power and their identity or sense of ontological security.

To use an example, individuals in power who sign a legal treaty do it in the name of a state, not in their own name. They might be personally against this decision, as was the case in the 1990s in Turkey when Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan signed agreements with Israel, even though he was staunchly against having a relationship with this country. Moreover, as these individuals act as representatives of a state, the consequences of a treaty will not be personally binding but will be binding for a state. Following this logic, after elections, the next representatives of a state will not be able to change previous decisions easily based on their personal interests. Such a move will involve a long and bureaucratic process. This view does not deny that, as such, a state is a product of human activity, but it rejects the idea that individual decision-makers can influence politics to their liking.

Regarding the second discussion, my research falls within the so-called middle-ground approach as proposed by Zarakol. I look at how the social component of ontological security is reflexively understood and internalized in Turkey's biographical narrative. In doing so, I agree with Kinnvall that 'internalized self-notions can never be separated from self/other representations and are always responsive to new interpersonal relationships'.[220]

c) Ontological security and states

In his book, Steele distinguishes four factors in the process of ontological security-seeking at the level of states: material and reflexive capabilities, crisis assessment, the biographical narrative,

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[219] Alaranta, *National and State Identity in Turkey*, p. 26.
[220] Kinnvall, 'Globalization and Religious Nationalism: Self, Identity, and the Search for Ontological Security', p. 749.

and co-actor discourse strategies.[221] With slight changes in terminology, I adopt his framework. One significant difference is that I add a focus on the material environments, which I argue fits closely with Giddens scholarship. At the same time, I do not discuss reflexive capabilities, as Steele himself did not fully develop this point.[222]

While there is a lot of strength in Steele's categorization, the explanation he offers behind these factors is restricted and closely linked to his research project. Therefore, the following discussion aims to make it more universal and connect it with the scholarship on ontological security in IR, which has exponentially grown since Steele published his book. Having said that, I will look at the biographical narrative, the discourse of other actors, the critical situations, and the material environments and material capabilities. My discussion starts from the factors most important in the context of the questions guiding my research (Why was Turkey's belonging to the West put in doubt after the end of the Cold War? How has this change informed Turkey's state identity? What are the consequences of this change for Turkey's foreign policy?). Although these four factors are interlinked, they are discussed separately for methodological clarity.

i. The biographical narrative

A narrative is a story with characters, plots and events. It serves as a mechanism connecting the past, present and future into a coherent and meaningful story. As such, it is a type of discourse, which is characterized by its sequential form.[223] A biographical narrative is a story that actors tell about themselves. It is essential for ontological security because '[i]n order to have a sense of who we are, we have to have a notion of how we have become, and of where we are going'.[224] Thanks to a biographical narrative, we can make sense of a state's identity as reflexively understood and interpreted by an actor.

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[221] Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations*, pp. 50, 68–75.

[222] Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations*, p. 65.

[223] Felix Ciută, 'Narratives of Security: Strategy and Identity in the European Context', in *Discursive Constructions of Identity in European Politics*, ed. by Richard C. M. Mole (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 190–207 (p. 194).

[224] Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 47.

The importance of narratives is not limited to the ontological security scholarship. Following Erik Ringmar suggestion that 'states are constructed through the stories told about them',[225] a number of scholars developed this avenue of research in their works.[226] Their common denominator is that states can uphold a consistent and coherent story about themselves that other actors recognize. Maria Mälksoo aptly summarizes this point by underlying that 'each state also wishes to secure its being as a certain sort of being; to guarantee its cohesiveness in order to reduce the fundamental unpredictability of the surrounding environment and its own vulnerability vis-a-vis other political actors'.[227]

For Giddens, a stable sense of self is achieved through a biographical narrative and 'presuppose[s] the other elements of ontological security - an acceptance of the reality of things and of others - but it is not directly derivable from them'.[228] Without a biographical narrative, states exist only spatially; through stories, meaning is given to space and states become situated in time.[229] In other words, a biographical narrative provides ontological security because it controls anxiety by defining both spatial and temporal parameters of the everyday, therefore, serving as a cognitive map for current and future behaviour.[230] A narrative functions as a guiding device because:

> it shapes the parameters and scope of the present, defines a menu of choices states can select from, determines a state's understanding of its place and purpose in the international system, and provides cognitive models for decisions that are appropriate and those that are not.[231]

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[225] Erik Ringmar, 'On the Ontological Status of the State', *European Journal of International Relations*, 2.4 (1996), 439–66 (p. 439).

[226] Jutta Weldes, *Constructing National Interests: The United States and the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1999); Ted Hopf, *Social Construction of International Politics: Identities & Foreign Policies: Identities & Foreign Policies, Moscow, 1955 & 1999* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2002); Bially Mattern; Hansen. See also Douglas Ezzy, 'Theorizing Narrative Identity: Symbolic Interactionism and Hermeneutics', *The Sociological Quarterly*, 39.2 (1999), 239–52; Hidemi Suganami, 'Agents, Structures, Narratives', *European Journal of International Relations*, 5.3 (1999), 365–86.

[227] Maria Mälksoo, '"Memory Must Be Defended": Beyond the Politics of Mnemonical Security', *Security Dialogue*, 46.3 (2015), 221–37 (p. 224).

[228] Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, p. 54.

[229] Berenskoetter, 'Parameters of a National Biography', p. 269.

[230] See Berenskoetter, 'Parameters of a National Biography'.

[231] Jelena Subotic, 'Genocide Narratives as Narratives-in-Dialogue', *Journal of Regional Security*, 10.2 (2015), 177–98 (p. 179).

To become socially powerful as a guiding device, a biographical narrative needs to be coherent. It does not mean, however, that it is an objective and detailed summary of events, a record of everything that happened in the past. As Giddens underlines, 'sustaining of coherent, yet continuously revised, biographical narratives, takes place in the context of multiple choice as filtered through abstract systems'.[232] As such, a narrative is a selective and creative recount of the past, present and future, focusing on events and their interpretation in a way that is meaningful to the actor. According to psychologist Mark Freeman, the narrator decides 'out of the possibilities that exist, what sort of story will be told'.[233]

Felix Ciută underlines this double function of narratives in his research.[234] On the one hand, narratives provide a stable cognitive environment, bestowing the surrounding world with meaning and predictability. On the other hand, they serve as an instrument of 'the transformation of knowledge, meaning and practice'.[235] Ciută puts forward that this double function of narratives is fulfilled through a 'narrative shuttle', which allows actors to 'constantly adjust and re-adjust the meaning of experience, retrospections and projected expectations – despite the severe contradictions, failures and serendipities that regularly confront actors'.[236] Put differently, provided ontological security is found in continuity but also adaptability, a biographical narrative becomes a mechanism allowing actors to cope with a constantly evolving social world. Every biographical narrative consists of different elements and layers. At its most general level, a biographical narrative is sufficiently vague to accommodate more specific narratives. I refer to this level as the master narrative. Subsequently, by activating certain elements while deactivating others, actors can accommodate change without undermining the feeling of ontological security.[237] As Felix Berenskoetter observes, '[m]aintaining such a narrative,

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[232] Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, p. 5.

[233] Mark Freeman, *Rewriting the Self: History, Memory, Narrative* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 198.

[234] Ciută, 'The End(s) of NATO: Security, Strategic Action and Narrative Transformation'; Ciută, 'Narratives of Security: Strategy and Identity in the European Context'.

[235] Ciută, 'The End(s) of NATO: Security, Strategic Action and Narrative Transformation', pp. 37–38.

[236] Ciută, 'Narratives of Security: Strategy and Identity in the European Context', p. 193.

[237] Subotic, 'Narrative, Ontological Security, and Foreign Policy Change', p. 611.

or network of narratives, is a form of governance'.[238] However, this process needs to fit within a general framework of the master narrative. That is to say that it cannot be freely manipulated.[239]

Being one of the main elements of ontological security, a biographical narrative is at the same time fragile and robust. It is robust because, in most cases, it is secure enough to accommodate changes, transitions and problems coming from the social environment. At the same time, it is fragile because stories states tell about themselves are just one potential interpretation of events, and there always exist a possibility of contradictory explanations.[240]

### ii. The discourse of other actors

A biographical narrative is expressed through speech, other performative acts and in a dialogue with other actors' narratives.[241] Consequently, the discourse of other actors constitutes a second element in the process of ontological security-seeking. Provided states are inherently social, their biographical narrative needs to be recognized by others to achieve ontological security. A lack of recognition or misrecognition can have a disruptive influence, in the worst case leading to an identity crisis.

From philosophy through psychology to sociology, theories of recognition underline that identity is constituted intersubjectively; therefore, recognition is a 'vital human need'.[242] According to Wendt, 'it is through recognition by the Other that one is constituted as a Self in the first place'.[243] Just as an individual cannot be a teacher without being recognized as such by students, a state cannot be a Western state without being recognized as such by other actors. There are two types of recognition that actors seek – thin and thick. Thin recognition means 'being acknowledged as an independent subject within a community of law'.[244] In the modern state system it refers to

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[238] Berenskoetter, 'Parameters of a National Biography', p. 279.

[239] Ringmar, *Identity, Interest and Action: A Cultural Explanation of Sweden's Intervention in the Thirty Years War*, p. 79; Ciută, 'Narratives of Security: Strategy and Identity in the European Context', pp. 201–2.

[240] Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, p. 55. See also Berenskoetter, 'Parameters of a National Biography', pp. 279–80.

[241] See Subotic, 'Genocide Narratives as Narratives-in-Dialogue'.

[242] Charles Taylor, 'The Politics of Recognition', in *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*, ed. by Amy Gutmann (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 25–74 (p. 26).

[243] Alexander Wendt, 'Why a World State Is Inevitable', *European Journal of International Relations*, 9.4 (2003), 491–542 (p. 511).

[244] Wendt, 'Why a World State Is Inevitable', p. 511.

being legally recognized as an independent state. Thin recognition is a precondition for thick recognition because denial or lack of thin recognition equals non-recognition.

In contrast to thin recognition, thick recognition is about having one's uniqueness acknowledged. This is intricately connected to questions of identity because an actor wants to be seen in the way it perceives itself. As such, incomplete recognition of a state's particular identity leads to misrecognition. Charles Taylor states, 'misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted and reduced mode of being'.[245] This has a negative impact on one's sense of ontological security, in the worst case leading to identity crisis. Alternatively, receiving the recognition one seeks strengthens the feeling of ontological security.

The distinction between thin and thick recognition is essential because non-recognition requires a different set of actions than misrecognition; therefore, having a divergent impact on actors' behaviour in the international arena. Michelle Murray suggests:

> a collective demanding international legal recognition as a sovereign state (thin recognition) will be making a very different claim, and demand a very different response, than a rising power looking to achieve 'its place in the sun' among the system's world powers (thick recognition).[246]

While in the first case, violence might seem like an appropriate response, in the second case, it will fall short.

Karl Gustafsson proposes to divide thick recognition into four types: (a) explicit recognition; (b) explicit denial of recognition; (c) implicit recognition, and (d) implicit denial of recognition.[247] Building on these insights, this research is interested in the impact of implicit misrecognition understood as 'acts, behaviour or statements that are interpreted as denials of recognition'[248] on an actor's sense of ontological security, its subsequent behaviour and strategies adopted.

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[245] Taylor, 'The Politics of Recognition', p. 25.

[246] Michelle Murray, 'Differentiating Recognition in International Politics (Book Review)', *Global Discourse*, 4.4 (2014), 558–60 (p. 559).

[247] Gustafsson, 'Routinised Recognition and Anxiety: Understanding the Deterioration in Sino-Japanese Relations', pp. 259–60.

[248] Gustafsson, 'Routinised Recognition and Anxiety: Understanding the Deterioration in Sino-Japanese Relations', p. 260.

### iii.   The critical situations

The problem with analysing ontological security is that it is similar to oxygen – we need it to function; however, we do not realise we have it until we lose it. The feeling of ontological security becomes disrupted when critical situations arise, otherwise referred to by some scholars as 'the dislocatory events'.[249] Giddens defines critical situations as 'circumstances of a radical disjuncture of an unpredictable kind which affect substantial numbers of individuals, situations that threaten or destroy the certitudes of institutionalized routines'.[250] Critical situations destabilize and challenge established worldviews, everyday routines and trust structures. There is no universal catalogue of critical situations because they are actor-dependent, context-dependent and time-dependent. Therefore, what constitutes a critical situation for one actor at a certain point in time might not be perceived as such in another period or by another actor. However, what they have in common is that we 'begin to feel as if we no longer know who we are'. [251] During such times, four fundamental questions related to ontological security are brought from practical consciousness and the unconscious to the realm of discursive consciousness. These questions concern existence, the relationship between the external world and human life, the existence of other persons and self-identity.[252] Unlike reactions of individuals to critical situations that are often internal and not easily noticeable, Filip Ejdus suggests that in the case of collective actors, it will be visible at the level of public discourse, where answers to fundamental questions will become a part of a discussion.[253]

The magnitude of critical situations varies between cases. In some cases, a critical situation might bring all four existential questions to the forefront, while in others, just one. What all critical situations have in common, however, is that 'anxieties that can no longer be contained by existing social and political processes are unleashed in varying ways and varying degrees'.[254] A critical

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[249] See Flockhart; Browning and Joenniemi.

[250] Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*, p. 61.

[251] Jennifer Mitzen and Kyle Larson, 'Ontological Security and Foreign Policy', *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics (Online Edition)*, 2017.

[252] For a detailed discussion on how these questions function at the level of states, see Filip Ejdus, 'Critical Situations, Fundamental Questions and Ontological Insecurity in World Politics', *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 21.4 (2018), 883–908.

[253] Ejdus, 'Critical Situations, Fundamental Questions and Ontological Insecurity in World Politics', p. 887.

[254] Rumelili, 'Ontological (In)Security and Peace Anxieties: A Framework for Conflict Resolution', p. 12.

situation often strenghtens ontological insecurity, which might lead to an identity crisis. During such times, 'an actor has no idea what to expect, she cannot systematically relate ends to means, and it becomes unclear how to pursue her ends'.[255] However, critical situations also contain positive potential. As Rumelili observes, 'anxiety provides the actor with that critical, yet fleeting, moment of freedom and choice'.[256] Reiterating my previous point, as the critical situations are inscribed in the constantly evolving world, the strength of the ontological security perspective lies in looking at an actor's need to secure the continuity of the self through reflexivity and adaptability.

Moreover, as Flockhart aptly observes, critical situations are just part of changes that actors have to manage on a constant basis. They attract the most academic attention because these are profound, and their impact on actors' identity and/or behaviour is relatively easy to notice. However, actors' reflexivity and adaptability are also crucial in the face of minor events, such as the consequences of one's actions (both intended and unintended) and the behaviour of other actors.[257]

### iv. The material environments and material capabilities

Although most of the existing studies on ontological security in IR focuses on the importance of social environment, material environments and material capabilities are also essential building blocks of state identity and should not be overlooked. As Giddens underlines, ontological security is 'the confidence that most human beings have in the continuity of their self-identity and in the constancy of the surrounding social and *material environments* of action'.[258] In a similar vein, Ringmar emphasizes that in order to exist, actors need to have a sense of not only their presence in time but also their presence in space.[259]

Material environments and material capabilities are incorporated into a biographical narrative – what a state is and what it wants is closely related to what it has and where it is situated. That is

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[255] Mitzen, 'Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity and the Security Dilemma', p. 342.
[256] Rumelili, 'Ontological (In)Security and Peace Anxieties: A Framework for Conflict Resolution', p. 13.
[257] Flockhart, pp. 814–15.
[258] Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), p. 92; emphasis added.
[259] Ringmar, 'On the Ontological Status of the State', p. 77. See also Berenskoetter, 'Parameters of a National Biography', pp. 275–76.

to say, material environments and material capabilities create one layer of the story within a biographical narrative because they influence how a state perceives itself and its agency. This does not mean, however, that material environments and material capabilities are independent and exogenously given; they are defined by the meaning attributed to them.

Material environments can function as a source of ontological security for states. Looking at the importance of the ruined General Staff Headquarter located in the middle of Belgrade for Serbia's identity, Ejdus shows that alongside social relationships, material environments can strengthen (or weaken) the feeling of ontological security. To become a source of ontological security, material environments need to be discursively linked to state identity, included in a biographical narrative. This can happen through the projection of a biographical narrative on material environments or the introjection of material environments into a biographical narrative.[260] Through these two processes material environments transformed into 'ontic spaces' defined by Ejdus as:

> spatial extensions of the collective self that help states "bracket out" the inherently fragmented, contested and contingent nature of their identity narratives and achieve the sense of continuity in the world which is necessary if a state is to have purposeful agency.[261]

Steele, in turn, looks at the role of material capabilities in the process of ontological security-seeking. He argues that high material capabilities might force states to act even when their material interests are not at stake, and their physical security is not threatened.[262] He shows that hegemonic units might feel compelled to intervene in humanitarian crises because, due to their high material capabilities, they can influence outcomes. In such cases, the lack of intervention could undermine their sense of ontological security. However, this willingness goes just as far as an actor feels that it can change outcomes, which explains why hegemonic units are not willing

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[260] Filip Ejdus, '"Not a Heap of Stones": Material Environments and Ontological Security in International Relations', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 30.1 (2017), 23–43 (p. 24).
[261] Ejdus, '"Not a Heap of Stones": Material Environments and Ontological Security in International Relations', p. 27.
[262] Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations*, pp. 69–70.

to intervene in humanitarian crises taking place in other hegemonic countries, for example, why the United States does not feel obliged to intervene in Russia or China.

d) Strategies adopted by states

Having explained how critical situations manifest themselves at the level of states, my attention now shifts to strategies that states adopt to cope with or prevent ontological insecurity. As ontological insecurity is caused by the destabilization of routines and/or biographical narratives, strategies adopted by states during such times can be focused on narratives, routines or both. This largely corresponds to strategies for maximizing ontological security as proposed by Trine Flockhart. She distinguishes between two interrelated and mutually constitutive strategies – the 'strategy of being', which refers to the nexus between identity and narrative, and the 'strategy of doing', which refers to practice and action.[263]

Looking at routines, Mitzen distinguishes between flexible and rigid attachments to them, which depends on an actor's basic trust system.[264] A healthy trust system allows individuals to tolerate disruption based on a conviction that routines will be re-established or new routines will be created to alleviate the impact of changes. For such actors, routines represent a way to achieve the ultimate goal of ontological security. In contrast, rigid attachment to routines is a sign of an unhealthy basic trust system, where routines become a goal in themselves. As Giddens observes, 'a blind commitment to established routines, come what may, is a sign of neurotic compulsion';[265] therefore, it is an evidence of a low level of ontological security. Consequently, when faced with critical situations, states might decide to change their routines or rigidly adhere to the old ones depending on their ability to adapt.

Steele shows that to avoid ontological insecurity, states might take an action that undermines their physical security or refrains from an action that otherwise would be materially beneficial. Although this strategy manifests itself at the level of behaviour, Steele maintains that it is inseparably connected with an actor's biographical narrative and self-reflexivity. For him, states take decisions against their material interests to avoid shame, which is a feeling of ontological

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[263] Flockhart, pp. 815–19.
[264] Mitzen, 'Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity and the Security Dilemma'.
[265] Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, p. 40.

insecurity caused by the inadequacy of a biographical narrative. In such situations, actors' behaviour might be motivated either by retrospective shame, a form of remorse for past actions, or prospective shame, which is realized through counternarratives.[266]

While Steele shows that states might decide to alter their behaviour to avoid shame, other scholars suggest that states might choose to accommodate change through their biographical narrative. According to Felix Berenskoetter:

> because biographical narratives evolve as the world is disclosed and new experiences are made, a coherent narrative may, and often does, include moments of change. Significant experiences do not necessarily leave a lasting rupture in the narrative if the storyteller is able to make good sense of them and adjust the story accordingly.[267]

This argument was further developed by Jelena Subotic, who shows that narratives can accommodate policy change, even when this change endangers the very conception of the self. As already discussed, in order to provide ontological security, a biographical narrative needs to be coherent. However, this does not mean that it is the only possible version of events connecting the past, present and future. Every narrative consists of different layers, leaving space for different interpretations. At any given time, certain elements of a narrative are activated, while others are deactivated. Building on this insight, Subotic posits that '[w]hile the policy change proposed has to fit within the overall narrative schematic template to make sense to the public, it can be crafted in a way that emphasizes some parts of the story and conveniently forgets others'.[268] Therefore, when faced with ontological insecurity, states may decide to adjust their biographical narratives, not their behaviour.

However, when a state faces a threat to a number of its identities, which function side by side, adjustments to a biographical narrative might not be successful in taming ontological insecurity. Amir Lupovici calls it an ontological dissonance, understood as a situation when threats to a state's various identities call for contradictory measures to gain the security of the self. During such times, a state is forced to move questions about its self-identity to discursive consciousness

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[266] Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations*, pp. 54–55.
[267] Berenskoetter, 'Parameters of a National Biography', p. 279.
[268] Subotic, 'Narrative, Ontological Security, and Foreign Policy Change', p. 611.

– reflect on who it is and who it wants to be – and choose which of its co-existing identities is worth prioritizing. However, prioritizing one co-existing identity over another will open up space for anxiety. Lupovici conveys:

> ontological dissonance is not simply a discord resulting from a collective actor's perception that it is unable to maintain its identities, nor is it merely the perception that there is a clash between an actor's identities. Rather, it is a combination of these things: the clash stems from the perception that the measures required to placate the ontological insecurity of each of the threatened identities are themselves in conflict.[269]

To regain ontological security, he suggests, states might decide on a strategy of avoidance. Avoidance is aimed at the neutralization of an anxiety-producing situation. This can be done in several ways: by avoiding dissonant information or new information altogether, by focusing on consistent information, by re-interpreting information or by creating ambiguity through increasing the amount of information, all leading to the dilution of the feeling of anxiety. As Lupovici observes, avoidance is not a perfect mechanism because it does not resolve the ontological dissonance, but rather it makes it more tolerable in the short term.

Therefore, in the process of ontological security-seeking, states might decide to change their behaviour, update their narratives or resort to avoidance. Ayşe Zarakol shows that states might also opt for the denial of past behaviour.[270] This is especially peculiar in the cases when apologizing for past misdeeds does not involve material costs, but instead, high costs are attached to not apologizing. Zarakol argues that this strategy is more likely to be chosen by states that entered late into the modern state system. They might interpret apologizing for a past misdeed as a confirmation of negative historical stereotypes, which would undermine their self-perception. Therefore, although it may appear irrational from an outsider's perspective, denial allows a state to tame anxiety.

The aim of this section has been to introduce the concept of ontological security, which fits within the overall assumptions of social constructivism. The following two sections focus on the

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[269] Lupovici, p. 810.
[270] Zarakol, 'Ontological (In)Security and State Denial of Historical Crimes: Turkey and Japan'.

conditions that influence the process of ontological security-seeking at the level of states, in most cases leading to the development of a fragile sense of ontological security, namely stigmatization and liminality.

4. Hierarchy and stigmatization in the modern state system

While talking about ontological security, Giddens starts his theorizing by underlying the importance of the relationship between an infant and a caregiver in the production of a basic trust that is like a protective cocoon that brackets 'on the level of practice, of possible events which could threaten the bodily or psychological integrity of the agent'.[271] The early experience of having one's agency recognized is of paramount importance for the development of a strong sense of ontological security. In the opposite situation, the negative experience leads to the development of a fragile sense of ontological security because an individual lacks a durable mechanism that firmly anchors its continuous presence in the world. I posit that for states, an equivalent of an early relationship between an infant and a caregiver is joining the modern state system, understood as the Westphalian system. In what follows, I build my argument on Ayşe Zarakol's work on hierarchy and stigmatization in the modern state system.

Zarakol finds that '[t]he lack of attention given to the particular cultural and historical origins of the modern international system may just be the most glaring oversight in mainstream International Relations'.[272] While there are core European nation-states that created the standards and norms of the system, there are also latecomers that had to accept these standards and norms to become a part of the group. Zarakol compares the situation of latecomers to the dynamics observed in Norbert Elias' study *The Established and the Outsiders*.[273]

Elias studied social dynamics in Leicester's neighbourhood of Winston Parva that was organized into three districts – Zones 1, 2, and 3. Zone 1 was inhabited by the middle-class, while the working-class was living in Zones 2 and 3. Based on the existing theories, nothing was puzzling about the fact that Zone 1 was considered as the best place to live, whose inhabitants felt

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[271] Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, p. 40.
[272] Zarakol, *After Defeat: How the East Learned to Live with the West*, p. 6.
[273] Norbert Elias and John L. Scotson, *The Established and the Outsiders: A Sociological Enquiry Into Community Problems* (London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi: SAGE Publications, 1994), first published in 1965.

superior. What drew Elias' attention was similar power dynamics taking place between the inhabitants of Zones 2 and 3, despite there being no objective differences between them.[274] According to Elias:

> [a] preliminary survey suggested that not only the middle-class inhabitants of Zone 1, but also the working-class inhabitants of Zone 2 regarded themselves and their neighbourhood as superior in social status to those of Zone 3 and that the social barriers dividing the two working-class neighbourhoods from each other were at least as great, if not greater than the barriers to social relations and communications between working-class neighbourhoods and the middle-class neighbourhood in the area.[275]

The only difference between the inhabitants of Zone 2 and Zone 3 was the duration of their residence in Winston Parva, and as a consequence, their organizational cohesiveness. Higher social cohesion allowed the residents of Zone 2 to reserve important positions in the community. Moreover, they attributed negative qualities to the newcomers while ascribing to themselves the positive ones. What was even more puzzling was that this view became reciprocated by the inhabitants of Zone 3. In Elias' words:

> [t]hese newcomers themselves, after a while, seemed to accept with a kind of puzzled resignation that they belonged to a group of lesser virtue and respectability, which in terms of their actual conduct was found to be justified only in the case of a small minority.[276]

Elias' study shows that hierarchy and power relations do not have to be a derivative of material conditions but can be socially constructed. One of Elias' conclusions was that the dynamic visible in the Winston Parva study is not limited to small communities but is a permanent element of power and status relationships. Therefore, it can be used for a macro-social inquiry. He underlines:

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[274] They had the same nationality, ethnic background, education level, occupation, and income, see Elias and Scotson, p. xvii.
[275] Elias and Scotson, pp. 1–2.
[276] Elias and Scotson, p. xvi.

> [i]n all these cases the more powerful group look upon themselves as the "better people", as endowed with a kind of group charisma, with a specific virtue shared by all its members and lacked by others. What is more, in all these cases the "superior" people may make the less powerful people themselves feel that they lack virtue – that they are inferior in human terms.[277]

Zarakol claims that a similar mechanism to that of Winston Parva is at play in the modern state system. Since its inception in the seventeenth century, the system's rules, standards, and norms have been developed by the established group of European/Western states. Latecomers to the system are judged based on these standards, which are described in a universal language as something objective and natural, although they clearly have a Western origin. Consequently, when the behaviour of latecomers falls out of 'the ordinary', it is interpreted as a sign of objective shortcomings on their part.

Before the nineteenth century, there were two parallel trajectories of states' development – the European territorial states that constituted the core of the modern state system and the agrarian empires that were governed according to their own rules, standards, and norms.[278] No power relations existed between the two worlds because they functioned side by side. In the nineteenth century, Europeans adopted the Standard of Civilization that propagated the idea that everything can be objectively measured and compared, showing what is normal and what is not.[279] From this perspective, non-Europeans stopped being treated as simply different; the difference became interpreted as inferiority. Like the process observed in the Winston Parva study, with time, latecomers internalized this view. The elites of these empires started to see their own country through the eyes of Europeans, and '[t]he secular, universal, totalizing claims of modernity gradually washed over alternative visions of socio-political order'.[280]

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[277] Elias and Scotson, p. xvi.
[278] The first group consisted of England, France, Netherlands, Sweden and Prussia, while the second one of the Ottoman Empire, India, Russia, China, and Japan, Zarakol, *After Defeat: How the East Learned to Live with the West*, pp. 44–45.
[279] See Gerrit W. Gong, *The Standard of 'Civilization' in International Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984).
[280] Zarakol, *After Defeat: How the East Learned to Live with the West*, p. 61.

With the diffusion of the modern worldview in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, modernization and Westernization started to be perceived as one and the same. The emphasis on linear progress, science, and the potential of transformation opened the modern state system for states outside of its core to join. However, what was not openly said was that inclusivity does not mean equality. Zarakol aptly observes:

> the notion of sovereign equality makes it very difficult to speak of social hierarchies in the international system as power relations, let alone combat them. Such depoliticization is not accidental, at either the domestic or the international level: it legitimates the hold on power certain groups have, and allows them to simulate self-sovereignty by comparison to others in what is supposed to be a framework of equal recognition.[281]

With this in mind, we can see that latecomers did not enter the modern state system on an equal footing – they had to accept its Western origins and inscribed in it the status difference. Following the abandonment of the Standard of Civilization in the twentieth century, the established-outsider figuration continues to persist in one form or another today.[282] Zarakol finds:

> [t]the normative frameworks always represent values that are abstracted from the existing attributes of "the established," but at the same time represents an idealization of those qualities. In other words, by holding the outsiders to an ideal standard and thereby guaranteeing that they will fall short, the established feel secure in their approximation of the desirable attributes.[283]

Consequently, latecomers have been labelled as not being Western enough, not being modern enough, not being developed enough. They became stigmatized as 'not being enough', which is the main consequence of the invisible hierarchies of the modern state system. In his seminal book on stigmatization, Erving Goffman describes stigma as 'the situation of the individual who is disqualified from full social acceptance'[284] by having 'a special discrepancy between virtual and

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[281] Zarakol, *After Defeat: How the East Learned to Live with the West*, p. 73.
[282] Zarakol, *After Defeat: How the East Learned to Live with the West*, pp. 82–95.
[283] Zarakol, *After Defeat: How the East Learned to Live with the West*, p. 94.
[284] Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*, preface.

actual social identity'.[285] From the perspective of the so-called 'normals', an individual with stigma is 'reduced […] from a whole and usual person to a tainted, discounted one'.[286] Due to his/her stigma, such an individual faces discrimination.

Building on Goffman, Rebecca Adler-Nissen emphasizes that the process of stigmatization is an inseparable part of the construction of social order because it helps to define the boundaries of what is seen as acceptable behaviour.[287] Put differently, what is perceived as normal is always related to a particular normative order, which in turn is legitimized by practices of stigmatization. Consequently, what means to be normal is not an objective criterion but is established in a particular context. As Goffman explains, 'not all undesirable attributes are at issue, but only those which are incongruous with our stereotype of what a given type of individual should be'.[288] Therefore, depending on the context, potentially everyone can become stigmatized.

Goffman distinguishes between two types of stigmatized individuals – the discredited and the discreditable. In the first case, the stigma is visible and obvious. In the second, the stigma is not immediately noticeable, and an individual can aspire to be treated as a person without stigma; however, there is always a danger of becoming the discredited.[289] The fear of being exposed becomes inscribed in one's identity. The situation of latecomers to the modern state system is similar to that of a person being discreditable. Their stigma is not immediately obvious; however, the established can at any moment put it discursively to the foreground. Each time latecomers behave irrationally from the point of view of the established, this irrationality is linked to their developmental lag and being not enough.

The main consequence of being stigmatized is the feeling that one needs to prove itself, 'having to be self-conscious and calculating about the impression he is making, to a degree and in areas of conduct which he assumes others are not'.[290] As such, the central need for people living with

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[285] Virtual social identity is based on the assumptions about an individual, while actual social identity refers to the attributes that one actually possesses, Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*, p. 3.

[286] Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*, p. 3.

[287] Rebecca Adler-Nissen, 'Stigma Management in International Relations: Transgressive Identities, Norms, and Order in International Society', *International Organization*, 68.1 (2014), 143–76 (p. 147).

[288] Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*, p. 3.

[289] Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*, pp. 41–42.

[290] Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*, p. 14.

stigma is acceptance. The lack of acceptance on the part of the established/normals leads latecomers as the outsiders/stigmatized to develop extra-sensitivity, on the border of obsession, with status and recognition.[291] Consequently, the behaviour of latecomers to the modern state system is guided by similar mechanisms to those explored by Goffman. These states internalize the stigma of not being enough, which leads to the development of a fragile sense of ontological security. As Zarakol aptly finds, '[a] stigmatized state, much like the stigmatized individual, faces additional social constraints, such as a decrease in social stature and an uncertain ontological environment. Its subsequent strategies are, therefore, best understood as mechanisms for coping with such social constraints'.[292] What is worth underlying is that latecomers seek acceptance from the same states that produced their stigma in the first place.

Building on Giddens, Zarakol shows that there are two main mechanisms that stigmatized actors can employ to deal with their stigma – aim for normalcy or embrace the stigma.[293] Within each one of them, there are two further possibilities.[294] First, normalcy can be approached by fixing one's characteristics. The second possibility is 'passing'. Which of the options is chosen depends on the stigma one possesses. Passing is possible when stigma is not visible to the outside world, while correction will be a preferred option if it is easily noticeable. Goffman, however, suggests that even when this strategy is successful, 'what often results is not the acquisition of fully normal status, but a transformation of self from someone with a particular blemish into someone with a record of having corrected a particular blemish'.[295]

When attempting normalcy is not possible, an actor can embrace his/her stigma by using it as an advantage or by withdrawing from wider society to function just within his/her stigmatized group. In the first case, stigma will be perceived 'as a blessing in disguise'.[296] Such individuals will claim that their stigma makes them special. The second possibility is connected to a 'break with

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[291] Zarakol, *After Defeat: How the East Learned to Live with the West*, p. 7.
[292] Zarakol, *After Defeat: How the East Learned to Live with the West*, p. 96.
[293] Adler-Nissen discusses three stigma management strategies – stigma recognition, stigma rejection and counter-stigmatization, see Adler-Nissen, 'Stigma Management in International Relations: Transgressive Identities, Norms, and Order in International Society', p. 155.
[294] Zarakol, *After Defeat: How the East Learned to Live with the West*, pp. 96–99.
[295] Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*, p. 9.
[296] Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*, p. 11.

what is called reality, and obstinately attempts to employ an unconventional interpretation of the character of their social identity'.[297] In general, this leads to a withdrawal from maintaining day-to-day social relations.

Accordingly, stigmatized states are prone to develop extra-sensitivity, on the border of obsession, with status, recognition and acceptance. As a consequence, when their behaviour deviates from the expectations of the established/normals, it is often labelled as irrational, which only strengthens the feeling of inauthenticity. However, while such behaviour might not be understandable from an outsider's perspective, it makes sense from the point of view of an actor carrying stigma. Therefore, I posit that it is essential to account for stigmatization and a fragile sense of ontological security to understand why such states behave the way they do in the international arena.

5.  Liminals as partly self/partly other

Besides hierarchy and stigmatization, the foundation of the modern state system opened a way to the construction of liminal positions in world politics through the spread of the mutually exclusive social categories. The concept of liminality offers an understanding that transcends the self/other dichotomy as known from the constructivist scholarship. At its most basic level, it can be understood as a position of partly self/partly other.[298] While stigmatization and liminality might coexist, it is not a necessary condition. However, both phenomena lead to the development of a fragile sense of ontological security.

The idea of liminality was first developed in social anthropology. Arnold Van Gennep in *Rites de Passage* identifies a pattern guiding ritual passages that he believes is universal for all societies.[299] Accordingly, between two stages of human life, there is always a transformation stage that Van Gennep names liminal. This idea was further developed by Victor Turner, who defines liminals as 'entities that are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arranged by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial'; therefore, their attributes 'are

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[297] Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*, p. 10.
[298] Rumelili, 'Liminality and Perpetuation of Conflicts: Turkish-Greek Relations in the Context of Community-Building by the EU', p. 216.
[299] Arnold Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1960).

necessarily ambiguous, since this condition and these persons elude or slip through the network of classifications that normally locates states and positions in cultural space'.[300] In the modern state system, the position of being 'betwixt and between' is manifested in contested and ambiguous categories of belonging – an actor is neither unequivocally accepted nor unequivocally rejected by a community.

Although the concept of liminality is relatively new to IR, similar concepts, such as hybridity, margins and borderlines, were introduced to the discipline by post-structuralist[301] and post-colonial[302] approaches. The reading of international relations offered by post-structuralism is similar to the idea of liminality because it questions the binary oppositions as a fundament of world politics while emphasizing the importance of discourse and the instability of meaning. The main difference between the two lies in the position of agency. While post-structuralism sees agency as largely passive or non-existent, liminality is interested in how actors practice their agency, showing that they are subjects, not object of international politics.[303]

Similarly to liminality and post-structuralism, in the post-colonial studies, the colonized is not seen as the other of the colonizing self but as a hybrid, 'discriminating between the mother culture and its bastards, the self and its doubles'.[304] Here the difference with liminality lies in the scope of both concepts. Hybridity is focused on a particular discourse, the one related to the experience of colonialism, while liminality offers insights into the inner workings of social structures at large.[305]

Liminality as the position of partly self/partly other has been undertheorized in the IR literature because it slips easy categorization and generalization, shifting the analytical attention to the peculiar and exceptional. However, as the studies on liminality show, liminal entities are more

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[300] Turner, p. 95.

[301] *International/Intertextual Relations: Postmodern Readings of World Politics*, ed. by James Der Derian and Michael J. Shapiro (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1989); Hansen.

[302] Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1968); Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994).

[303] Rumelili, 'Liminal Identities and Processes of Domestication and Subversion in International Relations', p. 500.

[304] Homi K. Bhabha, 'Signs Taken for Wonders : Questions of Ambivalence and Authority under a Tree Outside Delhi, May 1817', *Critical Inquiry*, 12.1 (1985), 144–65 (p. 153).

[305] Turner, pp. 166–67.

widespread in world politics than assumed; they are a constitutive part of the social structure of international politics. As Maria Mälksoo observes:

> [l]iminality creates fundamental uneasiness for traditional IR theory as it disrupts, by definition, essentialisations and foundational claims. Defying set-in categories, liminality disturbs the ingrained "level of analysis" thinking in IR by emphasising the fundamental ontological interconnection between the "high" and the "low", the "centre" and the "periphery", the domestic and the international.[306]

Liminal spaces in the modern state system are created through two interconnected processes.[307] The first one is related to the prevalence of universalistic identity discourses enshrined in modernity. In contrast to traditional discourses built on binary categories, such as modern/unmodern, democratic/undemocratic, developed/undeveloped, universalistic discourses emphasize linear progress and the possibility of becoming. They blur the boundaries between the self and the other by emphasizing the power of transition, as in the discourses on modernization, development or Europeanization. Consequently, instead of being the other, one becomes 'less than self' or an 'aspiring self'. Universalistic discourses not only open liminal spaces, but at the same time, they reproduce existing normative hierarchies. In line with Zarakol's insights on hierarchies and stigmatization in IR, Rumelili posits:

> [b]eing on a trajectory of becoming, they [these states] validate the universalistic and transformative pretensions of Western, liberal, and developed countries, yet at the same time, they reproduce their superiority, by always falling short of a complete transformation, remaining second-best, incomplete, and deformed replicas.[308]

The second process is connected to the existence of mutually exclusive social categories. The multitude of overlapping discourses on identity created the possibility of being illiberal but democratic, modern but undemocratic, or civilized but undeveloped. The mutually exclusive designations cut through well-defined and well-established categories, creating spaces that are

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[306] Mälksoo, 'The Challenge of Liminality for International Relations Theory', p. 482.
[307] Rumelili, 'Liminal Identities and Processes of Domestication and Subversion in International Relations', pp. 502–3.
[308] Rumelili, 'Liminal Identities and Processes of Domestication and Subversion in International Relations', p. 502.

betwixt and between. This is especially visible when particularistic identity discourses, based on geography and culture, meet with universalistic identity discourses that put to the foreground the possibility of becoming.

Like Rumelili, I find liminality not to be an objective condition or a pre-existing quality of an actor.[309] On the contrary, it is a subjective position, discursively and socially produced in a specific time and context. One can become liminal from a previously safe place – whether that of the self or the other. It is also possible to sift from the position of liminality into one of the two clearly demarcated categories. Moreover, at any given time, multiple and overlapping discourses co-exist, and an actor might be in a liminal position within one of them while not the other. For example, one can be liminal within the discourse on the West while being in a secure position within the discourse on sovereignty.[310]

Having established how liminal spaces are created in the modern state system, I now discuss how actors practice their liminality. One strategy is to reinforce and reproduce the preferred identity – that of the self or the other. If such a strategy is successful, it will become a source of ontological security. However, if the opposite is true, then the feeling of ontological insecurity attached to the liminal position will be strengthened. The success of this strategy is heavily dependent on the reactions of others – whether they discursively accept this new identity or question it. In the second strategy, an actor uses its liminal position as an asset and starts to reproduce it. While the first choice leads to the reproduction of social structures, the second one has a subversive effect on them.[311]

Moreover, the transformation of ambiguity into an asset opens up a possibility of liminality becoming a permanent feature of the social structure. This reading of liminality distances itself from the traditional usage of the concept in anthropology. For Van Gennep, a liminal phase (rites of transition) was always between a preliminal phase (rites of separation) and a postliminal phase (rites of incorporation).[312] However, growing studies on liminality in world politics show that it is

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[309] Rumelili, 'Liminal Identities and Processes of Domestication and Subversion in International Relations', p. 502.
[310] Rumelili, 'Liminal Identities and Processes of Domestication and Subversion in International Relations', p. 497.
[311] For more on this point, see Rumelili, 'Liminal Identities and Processes of Domestication and Subversion in International Relations'.
[312] Van Gennep, pp. 10–11. See also Turner, pp. 94–95.

a condition rather than a phase. As Arpad Szakolczai observes, 'permanent liminality is a paradoxical condition; yet, as the history of the 20th century has demonstrated, human beings can be used to everything, even living in a Gulag, thus any lasting condition can become taken for granted'.[313]

The possibility of permanent liminality challenges the idea of linear progress and shows that the modern world is too complex to be understood in binary categories. It also adds additional depth to the concept of liminality itself, opening a new avenue of research focusing on how states interpret such a condition through their biographical narrative. In this vein, Mälksoo shows:

> [i]n the course of a prolonged liminal experience, the liminal ordeal is likely to become incorporated into and reproduced in the "permanent structure" of a society. Hence the idea of "perpetual liminality" emerges as a condition characteristic to societies that have long lived "on the limit" and thus proven to be quite unable to conclusively surpass the experience, in spite of the apparent entrance into the phase of societal reaggregation.[314]

Regardless of the strategy chosen by liminal actors to deal with their condition, one of the consequences of the inherent ambiguity enshrined in the liminal position is a sense of vulnerability. Liminality puts ontological security in jeopardy because the position of partly self/partly other distorts one's need for the continuity of the self.

The second consequence is that such actors are perceived as threatening because, by their very definition, they challenge the clear-cut categories and hierarchies.[315] Turner notes, 'for those concerned with the maintenance of structure, all sustained manifestations of [liminal] communitas must appear as dangerous, anarchical, and have to be hedged around with prescriptions, prohibitions, and conditions'.[316] As such, the reaction to liminal entities can be twofold. One is to define them in terms of the self or the other. In other words, to place them in one of the pre-existing categories. However, this might not always be possible. Therefore, the

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[313] Arpad Szakolczai, 'Living Permanent Liminality: The Recent Transition Experience in Ireland', *Irish Journal of Sociology*, 22.1 (2014), 28–50 (p. 34).

[314] Mälksoo, 'The Challenge of Liminality for International Relations Theory', p. 487.

[315] Maria Mälksoo, *The Politics of Becoming European: A Study of Polish and Baltic Post-Cold War Security Imaginaries* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), p. 40.

[316] Turner, p. 109.

second rection is to create new social categories to make the labelling of liminals easier. Here the discourse of the EU is a good example. The EU describes countries not only by referring to their membership status (member/non-member) but also created categories of candidate countries, associated countries and neighbourhood countries.[317]

With the above discussion in mind, the added value of liminality is that it shifts attention to actors that are in an ambiguous position within social structures and their agency in the process of negotiation and contestation of the clear-cut categories and hierarchies that social structures rely on. Although seen as threatening, such actors are riddled with anxieties related to their liminal position, which influences how they see themselves and approach the surrounding world. Moreover, liminality shows different, sometimes conflicting, parts that make up an actor's identity.

6. Stigmatization meets liminality

In the discussion above, I introduced two concepts – stigmatization and liminality – showing that their diffusion is closely related to the development of the modern state system, with its emphasis on linear progress, science, and the potential of transformation. As such, it has offered inclusivity and an illusion of equality.

While in empirical studies the two concepts have been used separately, I argue that under certain conditions they coexist, strengthening the processes related to each one of them. Looking at two studies focusing on Poland – one through the lens of liminality written by Maria Mälksoo[318], and the second one through the lens of stigmatization written by Molly Krasnodębska[319] – allows us to observe how similar are processes described by both authors and their conclusions regarding the identity of Poland.

Consequently, I put forward that an actor's struggle for recognition as an equal by its significant other is a condition under which processes related to stigmatization and liminality often coexist.

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[317] Rumelili, 'Liminal Identities and Processes of Domestication and Subversion in International Relations', pp. 498, 502.

[318] Mälksoo.

[319] Molly Krasnodębska, *Politics of Stigmatization: Poland as a 'Latecomer' in the European Union* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021).

It is especially visible in the case of encounters with and within the West, as the process of stigmatization is closely related to the domination of the Western-centric worldview.

The growing literature on stigmatization shows that the modern state system is not an objective, value-free, universal set of ideas, principles, and rules. On the contrary, it is a Western-centric scheme disguise as universal. The West decides what is normal, ordinary, and natural and what is a deviant practice. The states that fall short of these normative expectations are labelled as 'less desirable kind'.[320] It is accompanied by an unwritten consent to criticize them, point out their shortcoming, or even scrutinize their domestic politics, which is done in the name of the possibility of becoming 'one of us'. Therefore, although the modern state system is now a global phenomenon based on the principle of the sovereign equality of states, it is built on invisible hierarchies maintained by practices of exclusion and discrimination.[321]

How are these insights relevant to the struggle for recognition on behalf of the significant other? Actors struggling for recognition are especially tempted by the promises based on ideas of progress, becoming, and belonging. However, when they start to adapt to the so-called universal standards, they open up to the process of being scrutinized and judged, which maintains these invisible hierarchies. By making the outsiders pursue belonging without granting full recognition, the established safeguard their superiority.

This is also the condition where stigmatization meets liminality. To make the outsiders continuously pursue belonging, the established must give them some sort of recognition to show that these efforts are worthwhile. As such, the outsiders find themselves in contested and ambiguous categories of belonging – there are neither unequivocally accepted nor unequivocally rejected by a community – in other words, they become situated betwixt and between.

I believe that the EU's Eastern enlargement shows in a microscale the processes that function in the modern state system at large. Although the Central and Eastern European countries (CEECs)

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[320] Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*, p. 3.
[321] These observations opened a new avenue in IR regarding the 'glue' of the modern state system, showing that stigmatization plays at least as important role as socialization does. See Zarakol, *After Defeat: How the East Learned to Live with the West*; Adler-Nissen, 'Stigma Management in International Relations: Transgressive Identities, Norms, and Order in International Society'.

entered the European Union in 2003 and 2008, they continue to be treated as 'in transition' or 'students'. Their behaviour is often judged on the scale between progress and backsliding, while the same standards are not used toward the old EU members. As such, the status of the CEECs as the 'real' European countries is dependent on their performance. This shows that the lengthy process of adapting the internal regulations to the acquis communautaire is not treated as enough to complete the process of transition. However, after decades of limited agency and secondary status in the international arena, the CEECs want not only the official membership in the organization but also the real impact on the decision-making process.

One emblematic domain is foreign policy. The first visible clash came just before the signing of the 2003 Treaty of Accession. The CEECs were criticized for supporting the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq. The criticism, mainly of France and Germany, was framed with references to an incomplete transition toward Europeanness. Simultaneously, the old EU member states, such as the United Kingdom or Spain, did not become a target of criticism for their support of the United States.[322] It shows that there are different standards, and in the case of the outsiders, their disobedience is framed as a transgression of common norms and values and is related to their backwardness. Consequently, this is used as proof that their transitions in not finished.

Similarly, in the Eastern policy, the CEECs were pushed aside by the old EU members, regardless of their real security interests and direct insight into the region. For example, in the case of Poland, this move was justified by references to Poland's negative attitude toward Russia, which according to Germany and France is anchored in the past, provocative or even 'emotionally driven'.[323]

The processes of stigmatization are also seen within the institutional setup of the EU. There is an unwritten rule that the highest positions within the European External Action Service are reserved for the old member states. Moreover, the overrepresentation of nationals from the EU15 is also visible among the nominations for the post of the EU's ambassadors.

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[322] Krasnodębska, chap. 5.
[323] Krasnodębska, pp. 147, 159–60, 174, 202–3.

Therefore, formally CEEs should be perceived as self; however, in practice, they are in a position of partly self/partly other because they are treated as 'less European' than the old member states. This approach is embodied in discussions regarding multi-speed Europe or two-speed Europe.

Consequently, the processes that I described above, on the one hand, keep in place the invisible hierarchy between the established and the outsiders; on the other hand, create liminal spaces in the discourse on Europeanness. Under such condition, the strategies used to deal with stigmatization and liminality overlap. In general, they take one of two forms – actors pursue belonging by fulfilling the norms and standards imposed by the established (aim for normalcy/reproduce the identity of the self) or challenge these norms and standards demanding recognition based on their differences (embrace the stigma/use liminality as an asset). In the context of the European Union, the first strategy is preferred by Romania, while Poland favours the second one.

7. Ontological security, stigmatization, liminality, and Turkey

The following section of this chapter looks at the empirical studies that apply the theoretical concepts guiding this dissertation – ontological security, stigmatization and liminality – to Turkey. These studies enhance the understanding of both Turkey's domestic (the Kurdish issue, citizen practices of the early Republic) and foreign policy (denial to apology for the Armenian genocide, relationship with Israel, relationship with Greece). First, I will shortly discuss studies that look at similar issues to the ones raised in this dissertation, pointing to similarities and differences with my work. I will also indicate which of these studies constitute a building block of the empirical analysis presented in the three subsequent chapters. Secondly, I will briefly discuss studies that fall outside of the scope of this research project as I believe that having an overall picture of how ontological security, stigmatization, and liminality influence Turkey and its behaviour will help to illuminate the empirical analysis presented in this thesis.

Zeynep Gülsah Çapan and Ayşe Zarakol's article 'Turkey's Ambivalent Self: Ontological Insecurity in "Kemalism" versus "Erdoğanism"' presents the argument closest to the reading of Turkey's fragile sense of ontological security presented in this thesis. Çapan and Zarakol argue that

Turkey's condition of ontological insecurity originates from two interrelated aspects of modernity: structural insecurity and temporal insecurity. Structural insecurity refers to Turkey's liminality, while temporal insecurity is related to falling behind the West in the process of modernization. Similarly to the argument developed in this thesis, Çapan and Zarakol theorize that while the abovementioned sources of ontological insecurity have remained relatively stable since Turkey entered the modern state system, the responses have changed. They identify Kemalism and 'Erdoğanism' as two broad strategies aimed at providing a sense of ontological security.

My research differs in two aspects from the argument proposed by Çapan and Zarakol. First, it takes a wider approach to what they call temporal insecurity. Çapan and Zarakol focus on the perception of Turkey as lagging behind the West. In contrast, this thesis focuses on a wider process of stigmatization that produced the narrative of not being enough in the first place. Secondly, by looking at Turkey's biographical narrative in the period between 2002 and 2018, I shift the analytical attention to the meaning of Turkey's relationship with its significant other – the West – in not only creating but also re-creating Turkey's insecurities.

Furthermore, I believe that framing the entire discussion by using Turkey as an example of 'the various ontological insecurities of the non-Western self'[324] undermines one of the main arguments presented by Çapan and Zarakol, namely that structural insecurity is caused by Turkey's in-betweenness. The position of liminality that Turkey has found itself in during the last decades is a position of being betwixt and between. Consequently, a country cannot be at the same time an example of a 'non-Western self' and in a liminal position between the West and the East.

Focusing on the relationship between ontological security and stigmatization, Ayşe Zarakol looks at Turkey's refusal to apologize for the Armenian genocide.[325] As was already discussed, denial of past misdeeds is often chosen by states facing stigmatization. Despite the Armenian genocide happening under the rule of the Ottoman Empire, Zarakol argues that Turkey is unwilling to

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[324] Gülsah Çapan and Zarakol, p. 277.
[325] Zarakol, 'Ontological (In)Security and State Denial of Historical Crimes: Turkey and Japan'.

apologize, although it does not involve material cost,[326] out of fear that it would confirm historical stereotypes. This position is maintained irrespective of the government in power. For Turkey, '[t]he pressures to apologize for past crimes, instead of inducing shame about the acts in question, recall this earlier, greater shame associated with being "Eastern", "Asian", "barbaric" and "uncivilized"'.[327] Therefore, Turkey's 'irrational' position cannot be fully understood without reference to how Turkey perceives itself and how it wants to be perceived by others.

Zarakol further raises the question of hierarchies and stigmatization in the modern state system in her book *After Defeat*. As the latecomers to the modern state system, she maintains, the former empires (the present-day Russia, Japan and Turkey) were stigmatized, which had an impact on their subsequent behaviour. After their respective defeats,[328] each country chose a strategy perceived by its elite as the most status-enhancing vis-à-vis the West. For Turkey, it was modernization and nation-building, for Japan economic development, while for Russia a 'triple-transition'.[329] I will refer to this work more thoroughly in the next chapter when looking at Turkey's early experiences in the modern state system.

Looking at more recent developments, Deepa Prakash and Asli Ilgit analyse how Turkey's reaction to international criticism is related to its sense of ontological security, using as an example the Turkish-Israeli relationship. Prakash and Ilgit apply the framework of cultural intimacy as proposed by Subotic and Zarakol,[330] who in turn drew from Herzfeld's insights from anthropology. Subotic and Zarakol suggest that depending on states' structural position, international criticism will lead to shame, embarrassment or guilt. In contrast to this argument, Prakash and Ilgit demonstrate that there is one more possibility – that states, even with a weak structural position, might reject international criticism, and this decision will not lead to

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[326] Zarakol acknowledges that Turkey's reservations might also be based on the possibility of lawsuits following the apology. At the same time, she dismisses the importance of this factor by saying that 'the viability of any potential legal case against Turkey would not hinge on parliamentary resolutions', see Zarakol, 'Ontological (In)Security and State Denial of Historical Crimes: Turkey and Japan', p. 5.

[327] Zarakol, 'Ontological (In)Security and State Denial of Historical Crimes: Turkey and Japan', p. 20.

[328] Here Zarakol refers to the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in the First World War, Japan in the Second World War and the Soviet Union in the Cold War, see Zarakol, *After Defeat: How the East Learned to Live with the West*, p. 11.

[329] Zarakol, *After Defeat: How the East Learned to Live with the West*, p. 13.

[330] See Jelena Subotic and Ayşe Zarakol, 'Cultural Intimacy in International Relations', *European Journal of International Relations*, 19.4 (2013), 915–38.

ontological insecurity. On the contrary, international criticism might provide an opportunity to consolidate one's state identity. Prakash and Ilgit claim that during two highly discussed crises with Israel – the 2009 Davos Forum 'one minute' incident and the 2010 Mavi Marmara incident – Turkey rejected international criticism, which, in turn, strengthened Turkey's identity instead of causing ontological insecurity. Their argument runs as follows: in the case of Turkey, international criticism did not lead to shame, embarrassment or guilt but triggered such emotions as scorn, indignation, and pride.[331] Authors link the domestic success of this policy to the personality of president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his mastery in reading a culturally intimate understanding of Turkish identity.

Moving to the concept of liminality, the understanding of Turkey's foreign policy in relation to its liminal position has been enhanced by Bahar Rumelili in a series of articles published during the last two decades.[332] This was followed by an article by Lerna K. Yanık on 'Constructing Turkish "Exceptionalism": Discourses of Liminality and Hybridity in post-Cold War Turkish Foreign Policy'[333] and Çapan and Zarakol's article discussed above. Their common argument is that Turkey (then the Ottoman Empire) has been in a liminal position since the nineteenth century; however, the salience of its liminality has varied throughout the decades and became particularly visible after the end of the Cold War. It is the argument supported in this dissertation; therefore, I will focus on these studies in the next chapter when looking at Turkey's ambivalent relationship with Europe. In the following, I present the impact of Turkey's liminality on the areas of its foreign policy that fall outside the scope of this thesis.

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[331] Prakash and Ilgit, p. 131.

[332] Rumelili, 'Liminality and Perpetuation of Conflicts: Turkish-Greek Relations in the Context of Community-Building by the EU'; Bahar Rumelili, 'Turkey: Identity, Foreign Policy, and Socialization in a Post-Enlargement Europe', *Journal of European Integration*, 33.2 (2011), 235–49; Rumelili, 'Liminal Identities and Processes of Domestication and Subversion in International Relations'; Bahar Rumelili, 'Modeling Democracy: Western Hegemony, Turkey and the Middle East', in *Decentering the West: The Idea of Democracy and the Struggle for Hegemony*, ed. by Viatcheslav Morozov (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 65–84; Bahar Rumelili and Rahime Suleymanoglu-Kurum, 'Brand Turkey: Liminal Identity and Its Limits', *Geopolitics*, 22.3 (2017), 549–70.

[333] Lerna K. Yanık, 'Constructing Turkish "Exceptionalism": Discourses of Liminality and Hybridity in Post-Cold War Turkish Foreign Policy', *Political Geography*, 30 (2011), 80–89.

Looking at the community-building practices of the European Union, Rumelili finds that they contributed to the perpetuation of the Turkish-Greek conflict.[334] In contrast to existing studies on the subject, which underline that community-building leads to the creation of collective identities, she shows that these practices are always interlinked with the production of difference by separation of insiders from outsiders. Rumelili further underlines that the production of difference is most pronounced in the case of states in a liminal position with respect to the community because as partly insiders/partly outsiders, they are the most threatening to the self.[335]

Analysing a series of events between 1995 and 1999 (the Customs Union negotiations, the Cyprus' EU membership, the Imia Crisis, the Luxemburg European Council, and the S-300 missiles crisis), Rumelili reports that during this period, the EU's discourse presented both Greece and Turkey as not entirely European. This led to the strengthening of negative stereotypes in both countries because each one tried to validate its European identity at the expense of its neighbour. For example, Turkey described membership of Greece in the organization as an accident because they perceived Greece as inadequately European. Consequently, instead of leading to de-escalation, hostilities between Turkey and Greece intensified when Turkey's EU membership process started to advance.

In 'Modelling Democracy: Western Hegemony, Turkey and the Middle East', Rumelili shows how during the Arab Spring, Turkey was presented by the West as a model of democracy for the countries of the Middle East while at the same time in the context of the EU accession talks, Ankara was criticized for the deficiencies of its democracy. In other words, in the context of the Middle East, Turkish democracy was seen as a success story; however, this was not the case in the context of Europe. Rumelili poses some critical questions, serving as a powerful indicator of Turkey's liminal position:

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[334] Rumelili, 'Liminality and Perpetuation of Conflicts: Turkish-Greek Relations in the Context of Community-Building by the EU'; Rumelili, *Constructing Regional Community and Order in Europe and Southeast Asia*, chap. 5.

[335] Rumelili, 'Liminality and Perpetuation of Conflicts: Turkish-Greek Relations in the Context of Community-Building by the EU', p. 216.

How is it possible for Turkey to be touted as a model for democratic transformation in the Middle East when its own democratic shortcomings generate divisive debate at home and are subjected to criticism in Europe? How is it possible for Arab democrats to seek and obtain legitimacy both at home and in the West by claiming to follow the Turkish model of democracy instead of a more established Western model, say that of Britain? How is it possible for Europe to criticize Turkey's democratic practices while presenting the latter as a model for transformation in the Middle East?[336]

Consequently, Rumelili shows that the discourse on democracy is riddled with tensions between universalism and particularism. In theory, democracy can be achieved by everyone; however, it is still closely related to the realities of the West. In other words, 'discourses on the West remain particularistic despite the fact that values of the West have become universal'.[337] Therefore, Turkey was chosen as a model not because of its experience with democracy but due to its position as partly Western/partly non-Western, convincing both the West and the Middle East that the Turkish model, with its obvious flaws, is the best option. At the same time, the Western hegemony was safe, as it showed that 'the societies of the Middle East can only aspire to become like Turkey, but not like the established democracies of the West'.[338]

The internal dimension of Turkey's ontological security has been discussed in reference to the Kurdish issue, which fits into a growing literature on the nexus between conflict studies and ontological security perspective. Ayşe Betül Çelik analyses how the physical and ontological security of both groups (Turks and Kurds) changed during the different stages of the conflict since its outburst in 1984 until the last peace initiative that started in 2013.[339] She concludes that to find a lasting resolution, the ontological security of the Turkish side needs to be non-violently challenged and re-built around the recognition and legitimization of Kurds as an integral part of the country. Çelik underlines that this has to be done on a macro-level because, in contrast to a popular belief that the Kurdish issue concerns only the relationship between the Turkish state

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[336] Rumelili, 'Modeling Democracy: Western Hegemony, Turkey and the Middle East', p. 68.
[337] Rumelili, 'Modeling Democracy: Western Hegemony, Turkey and the Middle East', p. 70.
[338] Rumelili, 'Modeling Democracy: Western Hegemony, Turkey and the Middle East', p. 77.
[339] Ayşe Betül Çelik, 'The Kurdish Issue and Levels of Ontological Security', in *Conflict Resolution and Ontological Security: Peace Anxieties*, ed. by Bahar Rumelili (London and New York: Routledge, 2015), pp. 52–70.

and the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party), it actually involves multiple actors and different levels besides the state.[340]

Building on these insights, Çelik and Rumelili propose that a lasting solution should be based on an agonistic peace. Looking specifically at the 2009-2015 peace process, the authors conclude that the lack of attention to ontological insecurity of both groups was a reason for its failure. Çelik and Rumelili argue that in asymmetric conflicts, the peace process is relatively easy to initiate but hard to conclude because it might not be possible to create a new narrative shared by both parties. Extending insights from Chantal Mouffe's conception of agonistic democracy to conflict studies, the authors suggest that reaching agonistic peace offers a possibility of overcoming the current impasse. Instead of creating a new unified narrative, which is not acceptable to either of the conflicted parties, agonistic peace envisions coexisting, multiple, and contesting narratives where us/them dichotomy is transformed from enmity to rivalry. In this way, both conflict parties maintain a feeling of continuity between the old and new narratives. Accordingly, 'the aim should be to foster the construction of plural, separate, but mutually respectful narratives that entail an understanding of each other's distinct positions and needs, but which coexist without requiring the validation of the other'.[341]

From a historical perspective, Pınar Bilgin and Başak Ince discuss the citizenship practices in early Republican Turkey (1923-1946) that indirectly led to the emergence of the Kurdish issue.[342] In line with the practices of that time, Turkish leaders decided to create a cohesive nation-state that was supposed to be less conflict-prone than multi-ethnic empires. Consequently, people in Turkey were divided into three categories: the 'excluded' that were not a part of the citizenship regime and were forced to leave Turkey as part of the population exchange; the 'included' that were fully integrated or assimilated and were considered the so-called model citizens of the new

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[340] See also Ayşe Betül Çelik and Andrew Blum, 'Track II Interventions and the Kurdısh Question in Turkey: An Analysis Using A Theories of Change Approach', *International Journal of Peace Studies*, 12.2 (2007), 51–81.

[341] Bahar Rumelili and Ayşe Betül Çelik, 'Ontological Insecurity in Asymmetric Conflicts: Reflections on Agonistic Peace in Turkey's Kurdish Issue', *Security Dialogue*, 48.4 (2017), 279–96 (p. 285).

[342] Pınar Bilgin and Başak Ince, 'Ontological (In)Security of "Included" Citizens: The Case of Early Republican Turkey', in *Conflict Resolution and Ontologicial Security: Peace Anxieties*, ed. by Bahar Rumelili (London and New York: Routledge, 2015), pp. 117–33.

country; and the 'included/excluded' that were granted citizenship, however, without all the rights.

While there is a growing literature on the ontological insecurity of the included/excluded as discussed above in the context of the Kurdish issue, Bilgin and Ince propose a novel reading of the situation of the included. Against the widespread belief that this group was ontologically secure, as they were granted citizenship of an independent and sovereign nation-state, the authors show that the practices of the citizenship regime of the early Republic, which were based on limited respect for difference, were actually a source of ontological insecurity. In other words, model citizens 'had to check their differences at the door as the price for entry into the public realm to exercise their citizenship rights'.[343]

8. Conclusions

The primary aim of this chapter has been to present the theoretical framework guiding the empirical analysis presented in the three following chapters. While at its broadest, this thesis fits within social constructivism, I decided to draw from a conceptual toolbox of other social sciences – anthropology, psychology and sociology – to overcome the emphasis on structure found in much constructivist scholarship. This move allows me to shift the analytical attention to a state in question and its agency.

I posit that ontological security, stigmatization and liminality are not simply new concepts used in place of more traditional ones but are a productive lens for looking at the relationship between identity, social relations and important outcomes in world politics. All three concepts emphasize states' agency and reflexivity as crucial in the continuous process of identity construction.

Ontological security shows that the continuity of the self in time and space is a precondition for action, and as such, it is a basic need for all actors. What might seem like an irrational behaviour cannot be fully comprehended without reference to one's biographical narrative. This led me to the importance of the discussion on the hierarchies of the modern state system. What constitutes rational and irrational behaviour is a normative claim put forward by the established states. The

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[343] Bilgin and Başak Ince, p. 130.

aim of this thesis, however, is not to deconstruct discourses around the hierarchies of the modern state system but rather to shift the attention to the perspective of the outsiders, namely states that became stigmatized as a consequence of their late entry into the modern state system.

Consequently, I show that such states have a fragile sense of ontological security. The lack of recognition as equals on the part of the established has resulted in the development of extra-sensitivity, on the border of obsession, with status and recognition on the part of states who are considered as outsiders. Similarly, states in a liminal position have a fragile sense of ontological security. As partly self/partly other, they lack cognitive stability and are predominantely focused on the questions of belonging and recognition. It is important to underline that while the two conditions can be interrelated, as in the case of Turkey, one can be stigmatized without being in the position of liminality and the other way around. However, both phenomena have a negative impact on one's sense of ontological security.

With reference to the metaphor of a theory as a lens, mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, it is important to underline that the theoretical framework chosen by a researcher informs the kind of knowledge that will be generated, but it does not suggest that this is the only possible interpretation and explanation of events. Therefore, '[i]f we use one lens, we will see the world in one particular way, perhaps with certain elements highlighted and others hidden from view, or placed on the margins. Change the lens and the world may look very different'.[344]

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[344] Dunne, Hansen, and Wight, p. 412.

# CHAPTER 3: TURKEY – IN EUROPE BUT NOT OF EUROPE?

1. Introduction

The Republic of Turkey was established as a modern Western nation-state. What was often labelled as a radical break with the Ottoman past was actually a result of the processes and interactions that started as early as the eighteenth century. The strategic decision of the new state to move toward the West was confirmed during the Cold War through its institutional choices, namely membership in the most important Western organizations. During the four decades of the Cold War, Turkey's belonging to the West was fairly secured.[345] However, within a very short time, between the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, Turkey's Western identity was put in doubt by the West itself. Nevertheless, there was less agreement about what Turkey is and where Turkey belongs. In this context, Turkey's relationship with the European Union became emblematic. When the Berlin Wall fell, membership in the EU was the only missing link in Turkey's quest to gain unquestionable membership in the Western community. If Turkey, as Greece did, had been accepted to the organization before the end of the Cold War, it would have been more difficult, if not impossible, to put in doubt its place within the West. As this did not happen, since the 1990s, we can observe a new period of an ambivalent relationship between Turkey and the EU.

The main question guiding this chapter is why Turkey continues pursuing EU membership despite facing so many obstacles and constant criticism on the way? As stated in the previous chapter, my main goal is to look at Turkey's state identity as the reflexive project of the self.[346] In this context, I find it puzzling that questions relating to the EU's motives to continue negotiations, or lack thereof, have been present both in political and academic discussions,[347] but the motives of

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[345] The question of Turkey's belonging never ceased to exist, it just became less pronounced, see Senem Aydın-Düzgit and others, 'Turkish and European Identity Constructions in the 1946-1999 Period', FEUTURE Online Paper No. 15, March 2018, pp. 19–20 <https://feuture.uni-koeln.de/sites/feuture/pdf/Online_Paper_No_15_final.pdf> [accessed 5 May 2020].

[346] Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, p. 5.

[347] Recently, it has been visible in discussions regarding the possibility of termination of the accession negotiations between Turkey and the EU. The prevailing view is that if this happens, it will be solely the EU's decision. In other words, the possibility of Turkey terminating the accession negotiations is not really taken into consideration. See, for example, Steven Blockmans and Sinem Yilmaz, 'Why the EU Should Terminate Accession Negotiations with Turkey', Centre for European Policy Studies, April 2017 <https://www.ceps.eu/ceps-publications/why-eu-should-

Turkey have not received similar attention. It gives an impression that Turkey's agency is not equally important in this process and that the EU's membership has had only positive effects on the candidate countries. However, the lens of ontological security shows how costly the accession negotiations can be for a country. Each rejection and constant criticism are detrimental to how such a country sees itself and its place in the world; consequently, the continuation of this policy requires reflexivity and adaptability.

This chapter starts with the historicization of the relationship between the Ottoman Empire and Europe, showing how from being treated as the other, the Ottoman Empire became the early latecomer to the modern state system (section two). This is followed by a discussion on why the newly established Republic of Turkey decided to move towards the West, even though just a few years back, its members wanted to dismember the country's territory (section three). Sections four and five are devoted to the historicization of Turkey's post-Cold War experience vis-à-vis Europe/the West. Section four shows that with the end of the Cold War, Turkey's belonging to the West was put in doubt, while section five focuses on Turkey's reaction to this process. The historicization of the relationship between Turkey and Europe/the West is followed by the contextualization conducted on three levels. Section six looks at Ahmet Davutoğlu's grand strategy for Turkey, known as the strategic depth doctrine, section seven discusses the relationship between Turkey and the EU in the early 2000s, while section eight presents academic discussions focusing on why Turkey continues to pursue EU membership. In section nine, I search for the answer to the same question within Turkey's biographical narrative. Section ten is devoted to conclusions drawn from the discussions taking place throughout this chapter.

2. The Ottoman Empire – from Europe's other to the early latecomer

Although the Ottoman Empire controlled between one-fourth and one-third of the European continent from the fourteen to the nineteenth century,[348] it became officially recognized as part

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terminate-accession-negotiations-turkey/> [accessed 5 May 2020]; Markus Becker, 'It's Time to Break Off EU Membership Talks with Turkey', *Der Spiegel*, 18 April 2017 <https://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/opinion-it-is-time-to-stop-eu-membership-talks-with-turkey-a-1143698.html> [accessed 5 May 2020]; Barbara Wesel, 'EU Must React to Pressure from Turkey', *Deutsche Welle*, 15 September 2019 <https://www.dw.com/en/opinion-eu-must-react-to-pressure-from-turkey/a-50440355> [accessed 5 May 2020].
[348] Thomas Naff, 'The Ottoman Empire and the European States System', in *The Expansion of International Society*, ed. by Hedley Bull and Adam Watson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), pp. 143–69 (p. 143).

of Europe as late as 1856. Article VII of the Treaty of Paris, ending the Crimean War, stated that the Ottoman Empire could 'participate in the advantages of the Public Law and System (Concert) of Europe', while the European powers promised to 'respect the Independence and Territorial Integrity of the Ottoman Empire, Guarantee in common the strict observance of that engagement' and 'consider any act tending to its violation as a question of general interest'.[349] Put differently, with the Treaty of Paris, the Ottoman Empire became the subject of international law, which until the nineteenth century was often referred to as the European International Law.[350]

The Treaty of Paris was a culmination of processes that had been ongoing for centuries. In order to become a part of the Concert of Europe, the Ottoman Empire had to incorporate European normative standards and patterns of behaviour. Therefore, the recognition of the Ottoman Empire as part of Europe by European powers ran in parallel with the transformation of the Empire's self-perception that began to see itself through the looking glass of Europeans. As in the case of the Winston Parva study, the Ottoman Empire became a part of the established-outsider dynamics. The Western European states formed a core of the modern state system, being the one dictating its normative standards, while the Ottoman Empire became an early latecomer, having to accept the standards that were already in place.

The history of the Ottoman Empire can be divided into five phases: Foundation (1299–1453), Rise (1453–1566), Stagnation (1566–1699), Decline (1699–1774), Collapse (1774–1922).[351] The process of synthesis between the Ottoman Empire and Europe is mostly identified with the last two stages. In the previous stages, both functioned side by side. The existing contacts did not lead to the development of a feeling that one side should adjust to the other one. On the contrary, both sides perceived themselves and their normative standards as superior. During this time, the Ottoman Empire functioned as Europe's other, influencing the identity construction of

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[349] Edward Hertslet, 'The Map of Europe by Treaty: Showing the Various Political and Territorial Changes Which Have Taken Place since the General Peace of 1814, Volume 2', 1875, pp. 1250–65 <https://archive.org/details/MapOfEuropeByTreatyV2/page/n4/mode/2up> [accessed 15 February 2020]

[350] Hugh McKinnon Wood, 'The Treaty of Paris and Turkey's Status in International Law', *The American Journal of International Law*, 37.2 (1943), 262–74 (p. 262).

[351] Zarakol, *After Defeat: How the East Learned to Live with the West*, p. 121.

the latter.[352] While maintaining a relationship with Europe, the Ottoman Empire did not follow such rules as equal sovereignty or diplomatic reciprocity.[353] Moreover, despite borrowing certain practices from Europeans before the nineteenth century, it did not lead the Ottomans to believe in the superiority of the European way of living.[354] Stated differently, while there were military and commercial interactions between Europe and the Ottoman Empire:

> it was specifically denied on both sides that the European powers and Turkey possessed any common interests or values, it was held on both sides that agreements entered into with each other were not binding, and there were no common institutions, such as united the European powers, in whose working they co-operated.[355]

The introduction of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent in his letter from 1526 to King of France Francis I epitomizes the feeling of superiority felt by the Ottomans:

> I, who am the sultan of sultans, the sovereign of sovereigns, the dispenser of crowns to the monarchs on the face of the earth, shadow of God on earth, the sultan and sovereign lord of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, of Rumelia and Anatolia, of Karamania and the land of Rum, of Zulkadria, Diyarbakir, of Kurdistan, of Azerbaijan, Persia, Damascus, Cairo, Aleppo, of the Mecca and Medina, of Jerusalem, of all Arabia, of the Yemen and many other lands, which my noble forefathers and my glorious ancestors – may God light up their tombs – conquered by the force of their arms and which my august majesty has made subject to my flaming sword and victorious blade, I, Sultan Süleyman Han, to thee, who art Francis, king of the land of France.[356]

Ten years later, both countries signed the first French-Ottoman agreement that clearly showed the differing worldviews and normative standards between both parties. For France, the 1536

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[352] See Iver B. Neumann and Jennifer M. Welsh, 'The Other in European Self-Definition: An Addendum to the Literature on International Society', *Review of International Studies*, 17.4 (1991), 327–48; Viatcheslav Morozov and Bahar Rumelili, 'The External Constitution of European Identity: Russia and Turkey as Europe-Makers', *Cooperation and Conflict*, 47.1 (2012), 28–48.

[353] Naff, p. 148.

[354] For example, the Ottoman Empire borrowed the technique of impaling prisoners after the encounter with Prince Vlad III of Romania, Zarakol, *After Defeat: How the East Learned to Live with the West*, p. 61.

[355] Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave, 2002), pp. 13–14.

[356] Quoted in Zarakol, *After Defeat: How the East Learned to Live with the West*, p. 115.

agreement established an official alliance between both countries. In contrast, for the Ottoman Empire, it was a contract granted unilaterally by the sultan, valid as long as the sultan considered it appropriate and automatically cancelled after the sultan's death unless confirmed by his successor.[357] From the perspective of the Ottomans, Thomas Naff underlines, the unilateral character of the agreement testified to the sultan's superior status over Europeans.[358]

The importance of the 1536 French-Ottoman agreement lies in the fact that it established a precedent where capitulations were granted to European powers to win over political allies, introducing the principle of extraterritoriality, which later became the legal rule for the presence of Europeans in Istanbul.[359] The capitulations became more widespread in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, becoming the main instrument of European influence in the Ottoman Empire, slowly leading to the incorporation of the European worldview by the Ottoman elite.[360]

This process became accelerated with the loss of the Empire's military advantage and its economic decline. The Treaty of Zsitvatorok signed in 1606 denoted the first time that Europeans, not Ottomans, dictated the terms of the agreement, in this case the Habsburg monarchy. Then the 1699 Treaty of Karlowitz signified the beginning of the Empire's retreat from Europe and Europe's permanent superiority over the Empire. Although Ottoman rulers might have still believed in their supremacy over Europeans, Naff asserts, they started the process of integration into the European state system.[361] The weaker the Ottoman Empire became, the more it adhered to the rules of European diplomacy. For example, in the past, sultans assumed that maintaining permanent representations was unnecessary because of the Ottoman Empire's strength and superiority. Unlike his predecessors, Sultan Selim III established in 1793 permanent representations of the Ottoman Empire in Paris, London, Vienna and Berlin.[362]

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[357] Naff, pp. 147–48.
[358] Naff, pp. 147–48.
[359] Taking into consideration that Süleyman the Magnificent did not confirm the written text of the 1536 agreement, the 1569 capitulations granted to France by Selim II are considered to be the first official capitulations, see Arthur Leon Horniker and Niels Steensgaard, 'The First French Capitulations: 1536 or 1569?', *Scandinavian Economic History Review*, 16.2 (1968), 168–70 (p. 169).
[360] Naff, pp. 146–47.
[361] Naff, p. 153.
[362] Naff, p. 162.

However, it was not until Tanzimat that the Ottoman Empire devoted itself to Western-style reforms. This process was initiated with the declaration of the Imperial Edict of Gülhane in 1839. At the height of the Mohammad Ali crisis in Egypt, the Ottoman Empire introduced measures guaranteeing the right to life and property for all subjects, regardless of their religion. Then the Imperial Reform Edict of 1856, which was adopted just weeks before the Congress of Paris, introduced the principle of legal equality for all Ottoman citizens while confirming privileges and immunities of the non-Muslims.[363] This process was concluded with the First Constitutional Era, which lasted from 1876 until 1878.

The changing dynamics between the Ottoman Empire and Europe negatively impacted the Ottoman's ontological security. Following the Treaty of Karlowitz, maintaining a consistent perception of the self as superior to Europeans became increasingly difficult in the face of military and economic shortcomings. Introducing Western-style reforms aimed to reduce the developmental lag between the Ottoman Empire and Europe to guarantee the former an equal status with the European powers. However, the inclusion of the Ottoman Empire to the Concert of Europe did not equate to equality. For example, during the Hague Conference in 1907, the Ottoman Empire was treated as a second-class participant, not given a right to nominate a permanent member to the Court of Arbitration. This was due to the continued presence of capitulations, placing the Ottoman Empire in an inferior position to the established states of Europe.[364] Just two years earlier, in his seminal book on International Law, Lassa Oppenheim observed:

> [t]here is no doubt that Turkey, in spite of having been received into the Family of Nations, has nevertheless hitherto been in an anomalous position as a member of that family, owing to the fact that her civilisation has not yet reached the level of that of the Western States. It is for this reason that the so-called Capitulations are still in force and that other anomalies still prevail, but their disappearance is only a question of time.[365]

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[363] For a perception of these changes in relation to questions of identity in Turkey and in Europe, see Aydın-Düzgit and others, 'Turkish and European Identity Constructions in the 1815-1945 Period', pp. 2–5.

[364] Neumann and Welsh, p. 345.

[365] Lassa Oppenheim, *International Law, A Treatise, Volume I Peace* (London, New York, Bombay, and Calcutta: Longmans, Green And Co., 1912), n. 30 on p. 33.

Consequently, after the official inclusion of the Ottoman Empire to the Concert of Europe, the Standard of Civilization was introduced to 'demarcated countries which were full members of the "civilized" international society from those which were merely part of the European international system'.[366] The Ottoman Empire was categorized as the latter; therefore, it did not enjoy equality with Western European states. According to nineteenth-century lawyer James Lorimer:

> [i]n the case of the Turks we have had bitter experience of the consequences of extending the rights of civilisation to barbarians who have proved to be incapable of performing its duties, and who possibly do not even belong to the progressive races of mankind.[367]

Therefore, in the nineteenth century, the relationship between the Ottoman Empire and Europe began to resemble the established-outsider dynamics. Although the Ottoman Empire was welcomed to the Concert of Europe as an early latecomer, it was not treated as an equal member of this group. The established states ascribed to themselves positive qualities at the expense of the Ottoman Empire, which led to its stigmatization. In this process, the Ottoman Empire started to incorporate the normative standards of the West, and in doing so, accepted its inferiority. As Zarakol aptly observes, '[f]or one to feel inferiority before another, one must have first accepted and internalized the normative standards that the other is using for evaluation'.[368] Therefore,

> [t]he more the Ottoman Empire aspired to meet European standards, the weaker it became. Indeed, the more the Ottoman Empire participated in the international system, the more she internalized the norms of modernity, the more "ashamed" the leaders became of their own people and institutions, dedicating limited resources to emulation efforts which were doomed to fail.[369]

These standards were used against the Ottoman Empire not only by the Western countries but also by another early latecomer – Russia. In 1917, Russian liberal politician Pavel Milyoukov (published as Paul Milyoukov) in his article 'The War and Balkan Politics' described Turkey with a

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[366] Gong, p. 10.
[367] James Lorimer, *The Institutes of the Law of Nations*, vol. I, 1883, pp. 101-3 quoted in Martin Wight, *System of States* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1977), p. 117.
[368] Zarakol, *After Defeat: How the East Learned to Live with the West*, p. 60.
[369] Zarakol, *After Defeat: How the East Learned to Live with the West*, p. 119.

lengthy quotation from Edward Freeman's book on the Ottoman Empire published in 1878, where the British writer underlined *inter alia*:

> [t]he presence of the Turk in Europe is incidental. They remain at the end of 500 years as much strangers as they were at the beginning. European ideas and words, like "nation," "government," "law," "sovereign," "subject," do not apply to them. How can they form a "nation" when the Mahommedan part of the population has always been a ruling race and the Christian or other non-Mahommedan part has always been a subject race? [...] The utmost that the best Mahommedan ruler can do is to save his subjects of other religions from actual persecution; he cannot save them from degradation; he cannot, without forsaking the principles of his own religion, put them on the same level as Mussulmans.[370]

This is an outstanding example of how, on the one hand, the early latecomers strongly internalized the normative standards of the West; on the other hand, they used stigmatization inscribed in these standards to boost their self-perception of being more European than others in a similar situation.

Consequently, although moving toward the West was supposed to alleviate the ontological insecurity of the Ottoman Empire, participating in the modern state system and incorporating its worldview led to a visible change in the self-perception of the Ottomans from feeling superior to feeling inferior. As Zarakol argues, '[t]he Ottoman Empire had failed miserably in her quest to regain equal footing with Europe'.[371] After the Armistice of Mudros was signed at the end of October 1918, most of the Empire's territories were under occupation, showing how ontological insecurity led to physical destruction.

3. Becoming Western as the status-enhancing strategy of the Republic of Turkey

When assessing Turkey's decision to move toward the West, at first, it might seem like it was the only natural and viable option for the new state. However, this was not the case in the 1920s.

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[370] Paul Milyoukov, 'The War and Balkan Politics', in *Russian Realities & Problems.*, ed. by J. D. Duff (London and Edinburgh: Cambridge University Press, 1917), pp. 1–24 (pp. 12–13).
[371] Zarakol, *After Defeat: How the East Learned to Live with the West*, p. 125.

After the War of Independence (1919-1923) and the Treaty of Lausanne (1923), the country was free from foreign occupation and its physical security was fairly secured. This success was won not only on the battlefield but also at the negotiating table. Regardless of its military victory, the attitude toward Turkey during the negotiations in Lausanne showed that the new state still was not being treated as an equal. This way of thinking was exemplified in the strong pressure to maintain capitulations because Turkey was not perceived as civilized enough to have sovereignty over European citizens living in its territory. İsmet İnönü, who represented Turkey during the negotiations, captures this feeling in a speech he gave:

> [w]e came to this conference because it was guaranteed we would be treated as equals. However, we are constantly faced with demands that would impugn our independence. No sovereign nation, *not even Greece*, has faced these sorts of demands! The Turkish nation, before anybody, is entitled and has the right to be treated as other sovereign nations.[372]

İnönü's statement represents two important points regarding the established-outsider dynamics between Turkey and the West. First, Turkey not only wanted inclusivity but, foremost, equality with its Western counterparts. Secondly, the stigmatized actor often builds its quest for normalcy by comparison with the ones it believes are lower in the stigma hierarchy, which was already discussed with the attitude of Russia toward the Ottoman Empire in the previous section. According to Goffman, '[t]he stigmatized individual exhibits a tendency to stratify his 'own' according to the degree to which their stigma is apparent and obtrusive. He can then take up in regard to those who are more stigmatized than himself the attitudes normals take to him'.[373] That is to say, a stigmatized actor often builds its quest for normalcy by comparing itself with those it believes are lower in the stigma hierarchy. During the Lausanne negotiations, Turkey stratified Greece, as visible in the above statement of İnönü, while it was being stratified by Japan. During the discussion regarding capitulations, the Japanese delegation opposed Turkey's

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[372] Ali Naci Karacan, *Lozan [Lausanne]* (Istanbul: Nokta Kitap, 2006), pp. 133–134; emphasis added.
[373] Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*, p. 107.

demand most vehemently, saying that while they understand the burden of capitulations, not even in the case of Japan were they lifted before all necessary reforms were concluded.[374]

At this point, the question arises why the Republic of Turkey, out of its own free will, decided to join the group of states that previously tried to dismember and subordinate it and who for centuries stigmatized the new state's predecessor? This question becomes even more puzzling when considering that Turkey had other options. Turkey's struggles during the War of Independence were supported by Soviet Russia and the Muslims of Asia. Consequently, after gaining independence, the new state could have decided to build its identity by aligning itself with Soviet Russia or by capitalizing on the institution of the caliphate. However, bitter lessons learned from the last decades of the Ottoman Empire taught the new Republic that independence does not guarantee sovereignty and equality, both of which were its main goals.

From this perspective, the only viable option was to become a part of the civilized world, namely the West. Atatürk himself underlined this point while saying that '[c]ountries vary, but civilization is one, and for a nation to progress it must take part in this single civilization'.[375] Consequently, neither close alignment with Soviet Russia, which was isolated from the international society, nor the maintenance of the caliphate, which was a relic of the past, were regarded as adequate strategies to regain international status and to leave behind the stigma attributed to the Ottoman Empire as the Sick Man of Europe. On the contrary, either choice would further distance Turkey from the civilized world. As Zarakol points out, joining the West was perceived by the Republican elites as 'the most status-enhancing strategy'.[376]

While wanting to break with the Ottoman past, Turkey's self-perception, as an heir to the empire, was strongly shaped by its glorious past. Taken together with the memory of the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, which was still fresh, it led to the formation of two strong narratives within Turkey's biographical narrative. On the one hand, Turkey is paranoid about its territorial integrity and the intentions of the West, the so-called Sèvres Syndrome. On the other hand, Turkey is

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[374] Karacan, p. 131.

[375] Mustafa Baydar, Atatürk Diyor ki [So Says Atatürk], 1957, p. 49 quoted in Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (London, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 292.

[376] Zarakol, *After Defeat: How the East Learned to Live with the West*, p. 37.

obsessed with status, recognition and acceptance, especially from the West. Therefore, since the very beginning, Turkey's identity has been built around inconsistent self-perceptions, which makes achieving ontological security a constant struggle.

The strategy adopted in the early years of the Republic falls within the correction of one's stigma as described by Goffman.[377] The Republican elites traced the collapse of the Ottoman Empire to the failure of its modernization efforts. Therefore, they understood that more radical and widespread measures had to be taken to achieve sovereignty and equality. This idea was based within a normative framework of the twentieth century, where the Standard of Civilization was replaced with the emphasis on progress, rationality, and science. Therefore, with modernization and Westernization, Turkey wanted to receive the recognition that it was not able to achieve through military means and the alignment with Soviet Russia or by capitalizing on the institution of the caliphate. Ziya Gökalp, the father of Turkish nationalism, aptly expressed this point of view in one of his poems:

> We were defeated because we were so backward,
>
> To take revenge, we shall adopt the enemy's science.
>
> We shall learn his skills, steal his methods.
>
> On progress we set our heart.
>
> We shall skip five hundred years
>
> And not stand still. Little time is left.[378]

Turkey's decision to move toward the West came as a surprise to many within the Western circles and as a disappointment to its former allies.[379] Even more surprising was the extent of reforms and the devotion to their implementation. According to Zarakol, 'the domestic reform package that accompanied this switch displayed such a commitment to Western norms that even the

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[377] Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*, p. 9; Zarakol, *After Defeat: How the East Learned to Live with the West*, pp. 96–99.

[378] Uriel Heyd, *Foundations of Turkish Nationalism: The Life and Teachings of Ziya Gokalp* (London: Luzac and the Harvill Press, 1950), p. 79.

[379] Zarakol, *After Defeat: How the East Learned to Live with the West*, p. 128.

most dyed-in-the-wool colonialist could not have dreamed of implementing it'.[380] The main difference between modernization and Westernization under the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey was that the former aimed at creating new institutions while at the same time maintaining the old ones, the latter aimed at creating a totally new institutional framework. In other words, the Kemalist elite aimed at creating a new state, a new society and a new individual in line with the normative standards of the West. Reforms conducted during this time included the abolition of Sultanate (1922), the Hat Law banning fez (1925), the adoption of the Gregorian calendar (1925), the introduction of the Latin alphabet (1928), the Surname Law introducing a mandatory last name (1934), and giving woman voting rights (1935). The influence of religion was perceived as the main obstacle in the process of modernization. Therefore, the Caliphate was abolished (1924), the religious lodges were banned (1925), the Islamic law was replaced with a civil code based on French and Swiss ones (1926), and Islam was not included as a state religion in the constitution (1928).

In the process of moving toward the West, joining the League of Nations became a breakthrough moment. Initially, the Kemalist elite perceived the League of Nations as a tool of European powers' intrigues, which was based on the unfavourable rulings on Turkey during the 1920s, including the infamous Treaty of Sèvres and the Mosul question.[381] Turkey's stance started to change with the acceptance of the invitation to the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference in 1928, later followed by participation in the Advisory Committee on Traffic in Opium and Other Dangerous Drugs and the ratification of the Briand–Kellogg Pact. In the early 1930s, Turkey expressed its willingness to join the organization, however, on the condition that it could be a member of the Council of the League of Nations. Turkey understood that only in such position did inclusivity mean equality. Consequently, Turkey joined the League in July 1932, and in 1934 it was elected a non-permanent member of the Council.

Membership in the League of Nations represented the first step in Turkey's path to be recognized as an equal part of the Western community. After the Second World War, Turkey joined the OECD

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[380] Zarakol, *After Defeat: How the East Learned to Live with the West*, p. 32.
[381] Yücel Güçlü, 'Turkey's Entrance into the League of Nations', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 39.1 (2003), 186–206 (pp. 189–90).

(1948) and the Council of Europe (1949). However, membership in NATO (1952) was perceived as a key step in this process.[382] While Atatürk's idea of moving toward the West was an important factor in this process, the Soviet threat was crucial. In the past, Turkey tried to maintain a policy of active neutrality while still moving toward the West. However, the Soviet revisionist agenda, dating back to 1945, made Turkey recognize that the institutionalization of its relations with the West remained in its best interest.[383]

a. The European Economic Community as a natural next step

For Turkey, membership in the newly established European Economic Community served as a logical extension of its previous foreign-policy choices. In July 1959, just nineteen months after the establishment of the organization, Ankara applied for the associate status. Although Turkey's decision to apply was met with a heated debate in the EEC, repeating the pattern seen during NATO's enlargement,[384] the Ankara Agreement was signed in September 1963.[385] The goal was to set up a customs union between Turkey and the EEC in three stages (preparation, transition and establishment). Turkey perceived the agreement as a recognition of its status within Europe, as apparent in the following statement by State Minister Turhan Feyzioğlu:

> [t]he efforts Turkey had been making for a long time to be a European State reached a new victory by the Agreement. Turkey's desire to participate in the European Economic Community as an associate member was not based only on short term and simple foreign trade calculations. It confirms that Turkey shares the same destiny with the free West and that European borders are drawn through Eastern and Southern Turkey.[386]

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[382] Nevertheless, Turkey's membership triggered discussions in the Western capitals. Turkey's initial bid for membership from May 1950 was rejected on the understanding that Turkey did not belong to Western Europe nor to the North Atlantic. Instead, as will be discussed more in depth in the next chapter, Britain saw Turkey as a cornerstone of a defence arrangement in the Middle East, which was met with Ankara's disillusionment. It was the participation in the Korean War that tipped the scales in Turkey's favour.
For more on the subject, see E. Athanassopoulou, 'Western Defence Developments and Turkey's Search for Security in 1948', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 32.2 (1996), 77–108.

[383] Kemal Kirişci, *Turkey and the West: Fault Lines in a Troubled Alliance* (Washington: Brookings Institute Press, 2018), pp. 28–30.

[384] See footnote 382.

[385] Due to the 1960 coup d'état in Turkey, negotiations were frozen, which prolonged the signing of the Agreement by four years. Greece, which applied just weeks before Turkey, signed the Association Agreement in June 1961.

[386] Quoted in *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası: 1919–1995 [Turkish Foreign Policy with Events: 1919-1995]*, ed. by Mehmet Gönlübol (Ankara: Cem Ofset, 1996), pp. 481–482.

That is to say, although the Ankara Agreement was mainly related to the questions of economy, Turkey perceived it as part of a larger political project, namely that of being European.[387] Therefore, it decided to sign the agreement without making comprehensive studies regarding its impact on the economy. Most probably, Turkey would have waited longer had Greece not applied to the EEC just a few weeks earlier.[388] Turkey perceived its former territories such as Greece as less European than the modern Republic of Turkey. Consequently, Greece's advancement toward Europe before Turkey disturbed its sense of ontological security, in turn, influencing Ankara's decision.

While the preparatory stage during the 1960s ran without major problems, at the beginning of the 1970s, it became apparent that Turkey had problems fulfilling the obligations of the agreement. Nevertheless, Turkish leaders decided to sign in 1970 the Additional Protocol, which initiated the second stage of transition, placing an even greater burden on the Turkish economy. As Turkey was not able to entirely subordinate the economic issues to the political will, in 1978, it decided to freeze the Ankara Agreement. At the same time, Greece was already negotiating full membership after it submitted the application in July 1975.

With the 1980 military coup, Turkey once again lost its EEC momentum. This time, the Community decided to suspend relations with Turkey, which were not renewed until September 1986. Turkey submitted the official request for full membership in April 1989. According to Foreign Minister Vahit Halefoğlu, this decision was a 'result of our foreign policy goal to integrate Turkey with Western civilization since the establishment of the Republic'.[389] The application was preceded by far-reaching reforms, both in the economic and political domains, conducted under the Turgut Özal's government that came to power in 1983 in the first free elections after the coup.

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[387] See Roswitha Bourguignon, 'The History of the Association Agreement between Turkey and the European Community', in *Turkey and the European Community*, ed. by Ahmet Evin and Geoffrey Denton (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 1990), pp. 51–63.

[388] Greece applied on 9 June 1959, while Turkey applied on 31 July the same year.

[389] Quoted in Esra Cayhan, *Dünden Bugüne Türkiye Avrupa Birliği İlişkileri ve Siyasal Partilerin Konuya Bakışı [From Yesterday to Today, Turkey-European Union Relations and the View of Political Parties on the Subject]* (Istanbul: Boyut Kitaplari, 1997), p. 294.

To Turkey's disappointment, the EEC underwent a transition, paying as much attention to the political issues as it did to the economic ones. One of the first examples of this change came in July 1987 when the European Parliament (EP) passed a resolution on a political solution to the Armenian question, stating that 'the recognition of the Armenian genocide by Turkey must therefore be viewed as a profoundly humane act of moral rehabilitation towards the Armenians, which can only bring honour to the Turkish Government'.[390] The resolution also criticized Turkey's stance on Greece, Cyprus and the Kurdish issue as well as the lack of democracy and respect of individual and collective freedoms. The timing of the resolution, just three months after Turkey applied for membership, and its visible anti-Turkish tone[391] spoke directly at the heart of Turkey's insecurities – that of being stigmatized and excluded from the established group.

This feeling was further strengthened by the rejection of Turkey's application to the EEC in December 1989. Although acknowledging the organization's need to focus on its development, namely establishing the single market, the EEC also underlined that major gaps between Turkey and its members states still existed, despite Turkey's visible progress in economic and political domains since 1980.[392] As a result, this rejection undermined everything that Turkey had worked for and believed in during the Cold War, namely that through modernization and Westernization, it would fix its stigma and gain equal status with Europeans.

Therefore, Turkey entered the post-Cold War world once again feeling inferior and stigmatized. While it is true that Turkey's relationship with the West had a strong security component, it was just one part of a wider political project – that of being recognized as a Western state. For most of the Cold War, Turkey's efforts were acknowledged, and the country was seen as part of the

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[390] European Parliament, 'Resolution on a Political Solution to the Armenian Question', 18 June 1987, para. G <https://www.cvce.eu/content/publication/2005/10/26/91fbffca-0721-49d5-9e53-f95393d470b2/publishable_en.pdf> [accessed 15 February 2020].

[391] While the resolution condemned attacks by 'Armenian groups' against 'innocent victims' between 1973 and 1986, it did not refer to Turkey as a victim of these attacks, nor were they labelled as terrorism. Moreover, the resolution found Turkey partially responsible for these events by underlying that 'the obdurate stance of every Turkish Government towards the Armenian question has in no way helped to reduce the tension', see European Parliament, 'Resolution on a Political Solution to the Armenian Question', para. I.

[392] Commission of the European Communities, 'Opinion on Turkey's Request for Accession to the Community', 20 December 1989 <https://www.cvce.eu/content/publication/2005/2/4/4cc1acf8-06b2-40c5-bb1e-bb3d4860e7c1/publishable_en.pdf> [accessed 15 February 2020].

Euro-Atlantic community. In this context, membership in the EEC was perceived by Turkey as the last step in the process of moving toward the West, which would make it irreversible. However, instead of cementing Turkey's European identity, the ECC's rejection of Turkey's membership led the country to understand that Europe was 'reverting to nineteenth-century Euro-Christian discriminatory practices against the Muslim Turks'.[393]

4.  The end of the Cold War as the 'erasure of the markers of certainty'[394]

While it is true that the entire world went through dramatic changes following the end of the Cold War, for Turkey, it meant a far-reaching transformation in its relationship with the significant other – the West – which constituted the foundation of Turkey's state identity since the establishment of the modern Republic. In other words, transformation in the West's perception of Turkey came as a surprise to Ankara and went beyond the changes forced by the geopolitical transformation associated with the end of the Cold War. In the following section, I look at how the relationship between Turkey and the West changed in the early post-Cold War years and whether the claim that Turkey's belonging to the West was put in doubt holds.

In 1997 Deputy Chief of General Staff Çevik Bir claimed:

> Turkey, by concluding the Ankara Treaty of 1963, committed itself long ago to joining the western community and the West has likewise engaged itself in this process. […] The same West which once described Turkey as a "staunch ally" and a "bastion" is now following a policy of excluding Turkey from the new map of Europe.[395]

Bir called the attitude of Turkey's Western allies as 'Central Europe-oriented', pointing out that it might lead to the emergence of the 'Western Curtain' in place of the 'Iron Curtain'. He put forward that '[b]y ignoring the important role a secular, democratic and modern Turkey can play in contributing to security and stability in a wider context, the West is denying Turkey an opportunity to fully integrate with Europe'.[396] The same view was expressed by Deputy Foreign

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[393] Meltem Müftüler-Bac, *Turkey's Relations with a Changing Europe* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1997), p. 61.
[394] Campbell, p. 19.
[395] Çevik Bir, 'Turkey's Role in the New World Order: New Challenges', Strategic Forum No. 135 (Institute for National Strategic Studies, 1998), p. 4.
[396] Bir, p. 5.

Minister Onur Öymen, who underlined that Turkey feels as if it is 'being judged by different criteria than other countries'.[397] He further pointed out that after the Cold War, Europe started to exclude Turkey by prioritizing the Central European states that just a few years back were on the other side of the conflict between the West and the East. Agreeing with Bir, Öymen underlined that it could lead to the formation of a 'cultural/religious iron curtain'. He explained that Tukey was not looking for special treatment, but as a loyal NATO ally does not want 'to be "discriminated against" or "excluded from Europe after so many years of common destiny"'.[398]

In addition to being denied full membership in the EU, Turkey felt excluded and stigmatized in regard to less tangible developments, including Europe's criticism of its human rights violations in South East Turkey. As retired General Şadi Ergüvenç noted, 'while Turkey expects its allies to give the support that it deserves from them in its fight against the PKK terror, it receives an unwarranted embargo on associated weapons sales'.[399] This led to an understanding that Turkey cannot count on Europe, even when its security is directly under threat. The feeling of exclusion and stigmatization was strengthened by the European Community (EC) decision to link Turkey's membership prospect with the Cyprus issue.[400]

The feeling of disappointment was also related to the behaviour of the United States where human rights groups started to exert a growing influence on foreign-policy making, worsening Turkey's already fragile position in the Congress where it had to fight powerful Armenian and Greek lobbies in the absence of a strong pro-Turkish one. Ofra Bengio lists two situations that strongly shook Turkey's feeling of ontological security. In April 1990, President George Bush issued a message of sympathy with Armenians on the Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day, while in June 1990, the United States signed a Defence Cooperation Agreement with Greece.[401]

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[397] Onur Öymen, 'Turkish Foreign Policy: Current Challenges', *The Washington Institute*, 27 February 1997 <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/turkish-foreign-policy-current-challenges> [accessed 15 February 2020].

[398] Öymen.

[399] Şadi Ergüvenç, 'Turkey's Security Perceptions', *Perceptions: Journal of International Affairs*, 3.2 (1998), n/a <http://www.sam.gov.tr/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/+%DEAD%A6--ERG+%A3VEN+%E7.pdf> [accessed 15 February 2020].

[400] Ofra Bengio, *The Turkish-Israeli Relationship: Changing Ties of Middle Eastern Outsiders* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 22.

[401] Bengio, *The Turkish-Israeli Relationship: Changing Ties of Middle Eastern Outsiders*, pp. 21–22.

With the end of bipolarity, Turkey felt abandoned by its Western allies that moved to the foreground the fears and insecurities it had tried to hide for the past seven decades. Although Turkey's strategic importance was re-confirmed due to the outbreak of the Gulf War,[402] this had only a limited effect on Turkey's state identity and its feeling of ontological security. While the Gulf War indeed confirmed that the West needs Turkey, it also reinforced the perception, especially among the European countries, that Turkey is part of the Middle East. In other words, it exposed Turkey's stigma. As Bruce Kuniholm asserts, 'with the Soviet threat sharply diminished and Ankara having assumed an important role in the allied coalition against Iraq, Turkey's strategic significance is once again assessed chiefly in its Middle Eastern context'.[403] The feeling of disappointment was strengthened by discussions in European capitals 'about the necessity, wisdom and merits of getting involved in protecting Turkey'.[404] As such, the Gulf War showed the reluctance of European allies to come to Turkey's help in case of the aggression on Turkey by one of its neighbours.[405]

The above-mentioned discussion confirms that Turkey's belonging to the West was put in doubt by the West beginning in the 1990s. It also highlights a disagreement concerning what Turkey is and where Turkey belongs, leading to the formation of cognitive dissonance between how Turkey saw itself and how it was seen by the West. As a result, Turkey experienced an identity crisis. While Turkey perceived itself as part of Europe, it was told that it is a Mediterranean country or a Middle Eastern one. The next section will focus on how Turkey reacted to these developments.

5. Turkey discovering its liminality

While Turkey's belonging to the West was put in doubt, there was less agreement about where it belongs. Consequently, in the 1990s, Turkey was placed in a position of being partly Western/partly non-Western, meaning a liminal space. In this context, Turkey's relationship with

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[402] Bengio, *The Turkish-Israeli Relationship: Changing Ties of Middle Eastern Outsiders*, p. 23; Amikam Nachmani, *Turkey: Facing a New Millennium* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2003), pp. 1–4.

[403] Bruce R. Kuniholm, 'Turkey and the West', *Foreign Affairs*, 70.2 (1991), 34–48 (p. 34).

[404] Duygu Bazoğlu Sezer, 'Turkey's Grand Strategy Facing a Dilemma', *The International Spectator*, 27.1 (1992), 17–32 (p. 29).

[405] In the context of recent debates regarding Turkey's purchase of the S-400 missile system, it is worth underlying that both in the 1991 and 2003 crises in Iraq, some NATO member states vetoed the deployment of the defence missile system to Turkey, see Kirişci, *Turkey and the West: Fault Lines in a Troubled Alliance*, p. 75.

the EU played a key role because it was the only major Western institution that did not grant membership to Turkey.

In Chapter 2, I discussed how liminal spaces in the modern state system are a consequence of the existence of mutually exclusive social categories. This is especially visible when a particularistic identity discourse, based on geography and culture, meets a universalistic identity discourse, which puts to the foreground the possibility of becoming. During the Cold War, the universalistic discourse of becoming was coupled with the particularistic discourse of ideological geopolitics, dividing the world into capitalist versus communist.[406] In this context, Turkey decided that it wanted to belong to the West and was recognized as such through accession to regional institutions. This was made possible since during this time the scope of the West *de facto* coincided with NATO's membership. However, by the end of the Cold War, Europe started to focus on cultural and political factors instead of ideological ones. In other words, ideological geopolitics, which was the identity marker during the Cold War, lost its relevance in the post-Cold War world. Consequently, within just a few years, Turkey's place within the West underwent a massive transition against Turkey's will.

Following Bahar Rumelili, I posit that after the Cold War, Turkey was constructed as liminal due to incompatible but at the same time cross-cutting discourses on European identity. On the one hand, there is the particularistic discourse that defines Europe in terms of culture and geography; on the other hand, there is the universalistic discourse that underlines that belonging to Europe can be acquired by compliance with universal, European/Western norms.[407] Within the former discourse, Turkey always was and always will be inherently different from Europe because it is a country with a Muslim majority with 97% of its territory situated in Asia. However, within the latter discourse, due to its long history of cooperation with Europe and more than seven decades of modernization and Westernization, Turkey can be seen as a European country. Looking at EU membership practices, Turkey is not like the Central and Eastern European countries that are perceived as the self,[408] demonstrated in their quick accession to the organization after the fall

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[406] See Pınar Bilgin, 'A Return to "Civilisational Geopolitics" in the Mediterranean? Changing Geopolitical Images of the European Union and Turkey in the Post-Cold War Era', *Geopolitics*, 9.2 (2004), 269–91.

[407] Rumelili, 'Liminal Identities and Processes of Domestication and Subversion in International Relations', p. 505.

[408] For a more nuanced understanding of this issue, see pp. 91-93.

of the Berlin Wall. Nor is it like Morocco that is perceived as the other, which led to a prompt rejection of its application to the EU on the grounds that it is not part of Europe. Instead, Turkey is betwixt and between established categories. It is in a liminal position vis-à-vis Europe.

As discussed in Chapter 2, actors that are partly self/partly other can practice their liminality by reinforcing and reproducing the preferred identity or by using the liminal position as an asset and capitalizing on it. Turkey's first choice was to reject voices that questioned its Europeanness by reproducing its Western identity. Within this strategy, EU membership was perceived as crucial. Signing the Customs Union in March 1995 was considered a first positive step in this process. Just like the Ankara Agreement in 1963, the Customs Union agreement showed the subordination of the economic issues to the political vision. Being a part of the customs union without full membership in the EU means that important decisions relating to the country's economy are taken by a supranational institution which one is not a member of. Turkey, nevertheless, perceived the customs union as the first step toward full membership in the organization, although this was never directly promised by the EU.

a. The Luxemburg Summit as a turning point

After the successful establishment of the customs union, Turkey looked forward to the 1997 Luxemburg Summit, which launched the enlargement process in the post-Cold War era. Three months before the summit, during a visit to Hungary, President Süleyman Demirel stated that Turkey's EU process was motivated by 'a desire to attain the level of contemporary civilization',[409] resembling the civilizational discourse of Atatürk. Therefore, the Council's decision not to mention Turkey among the candidate countries but only confirm its 'eligibility for accession to the European Union'[410] was received with disappointment. Less than a decade after the fall of the Berlin Wall, previous enemies (the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia, and Slovakia) as well as Cyprus and Malta were placed further along the path towards EU membership than Turkey, who started this process in 1959. This decision led to the

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[409] Hürriyet, 5 September 1997 quoted in Yücel Bozdağlıoğlu, *Turkish Foreign Policy And Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach* (New York and London: Routledge, 2005), p. 83.
[410] European Council, 'Presidency Conclusions', 12-13 December 1997, para. 31 <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/lux1_en.htm> [accessed 15 February 2020].

intensification of the sense of exclusion and the feeling of being discreditable. Consequently, it aggravated an identity crisis already underway since the end of the Cold War. Turkey understood that it was being discriminated against by Christian Europe due to its Muslim character, regardless of the decades of staunch secularism.

Therefore, the Luxemburg Summit's decision served as a turning point in how Turkey perceived itself and its place in the world. Turkey slowly switched strategies – from reinforcing its identity as the Western self to seeing liminality as an asset, not a burden. For this reason, Turkey started to embrace different components of its identity instead of framing them in opposition to each other. In this spirit, Turkey began to promote its identity as both European/Western and Asian/Middle Eastern. In response to the Council's decision, Foreign Minister Ismail Cem rhetorically asked whether 'Europe's future going to be based on ethnic, racial, and religious discrimination and exclusion or will Europe open itself up with a pluralist and unifying approach?'.[411] Three years later, he underlined:

> [a]s a country and people, we are at the crossroads of civilisations, religions and trade. […] Turkey's specific historical development – its cosmopolitan characteristics, its civilisation melding Western and Eastern values, a multitude of beliefs and ethnicities – bestowed on Turkey a unique identity. We consider ourselves both European (which we have been for seven centuries) and Asian and view this plurality as an asset.[412]

At the same time, the Luxemburg Summit's decision uncovered deep-seated insecurities of Turkey. Prime Minister Mesut Yılmaz accused the EU of being a Christian club under the leadership of Germany, which rejected Turkey due to its religion. He went as far as underlying that 'in order to admit [Turkey to the EU], they want us to change our religion'[413] and that 'Germany is trying hard for Eastern Europeans' membership because they are still pursuing Hitler's policy of "Lebensraum"'.[414] Later on, Deputy Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit clarified that

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[411] Milliyet, 10 December 1997 quoted in Rumelili, *Constructing Regional Community and Order in Europe and Southeast Asia*, p. 92.
[412] Ismail Cem, 'Turkey and Europe: Looking to the Future from a Historical Perspective', p. 1 <http://sam.gov.tr/tr/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Ismail-Cem.pdf> [accessed 15 February 2020].
[413] Zaman, 17 February 1998 quoted in Bozdağlıoğlu, p. 83.
[414] Zaman, 7 March 1998 quoted in Bozdağlıoğlu, p. 83.

this was a personal opinion of the Prime Minister, not the official stance of the Turkish government. However, Yilmaz's statements accurately summarized the insecurities connected to stigmatization inscribed in Turkey's state identity since the establishment of the Republic. In this context, being rejected by the EU served as a self-fulfilling prophecy because it undermined the success of the Westernization project and strengthened alternative perspectives within Turkey, especially the Islamic component in the society.

6. *Strategic Depth* as an expression of Turkey's liminality

With time, Turkey's liminality became strongly internalized within its state identity. As such, it led to the development of a narrative underlying Turkey's exceptionalism based on the country's unique geography and history. Although this argument is mainly associated with Ahmet Davutoğlu's idea of strategic depth, most scholars attribute its beginning to Turgut Özal.[415] As mentioned in the previous section, it became more pronounced in the late 1990s. Already in 1994, President Süleyman Demirel noted:

[i]t is impossible to separate Turkish foreign policy from Turkey's past. Napoleon once said that it is geography that dictated foreign policy. I am going to add two more factors: history and the conjuncture. Indeed for a country like Turkey that has liquidated an empire, geography and history hold many advantages and disadvantages as well as many opportunities and challenges and responsibilities.[416]

A decade later, former Prime Minister Ismail Cem criticized traditional Turkish foreign policy for forcing the country to choose between East and West or Europe and Asia instead of looking for a synthesis between the two.[417]

However, the idea of seeing Turkey's liminality as an asset, not a burden, was thoroughly developed by former Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu's in his book *Strategic Depth*: *Turkey's International Position*.[418] *Strategic Depth* is a grand strategic vision for Turkey that Davutoğlu

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[415] Yanık, pp. 81–85.
[416] Quoted in Yanık, p. 80.
[417] Ismail Cem, *Türkiye Avrupa Avrasya [Turkey, Europe, Eurasia]* (Istanbul: Istanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2004), p. 30.
[418] Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu* [Strategic Depth: Turkey's International Position] (Istanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2014).

wrote and published before the AKP came to power and before he became a leading architect of Turkey's foreign policy. He further popularized his vision in numerous articles and interviews.[419] Davutoğlu puts forward that strategic depth is established on geographical and historical depth. Historical depth is derived from being at the epicentre of important world events, while geographical depth is a result of historical depth and refers to a country's geostrategic location at the epicentre of different regions and interests. Building on that, Turkey is a country having strategic depth due to its Ottoman past and central location or in Davutoğlu's words:

> [o]ur long history provides us with a unique set of relations with countries and communities all around us. Our geostrategic location in the midst of a vast geography, on the other hand, places us in a position to relate to and influence the developments that are key to the future of the world.[420]

Alongside the Ottoman Empire, Davutoğlu identifies eight former empires in Eurasia that share this quality – England, Russia, Austria-Hungary, France, Germany, China and Japan.[421] Accordingly to Davutoğlu:

> Turkey is not just any old Mediterranean country. One important characteristic that distinguishes Turkey from say Romania or Greece is that Turkey is at the same time a Middle Eastern and a Caucasian country. Unlike Germany, Turkey is as much a European country as it is an Asian country. Indeed, Turkey is as much a Black Sea country as it is a Mediterranean one. This geographical depth places Turkey right at the centre of many geopolitical influences.[422]

Therefore, instead of seeing Turkey's Western self in opposition to its Middle Eastern, Asian or Islamic alternatives, Davutoğlu puts forward that the country's biggest strength is its multi-

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[419] Ahmet Davutoğlu, 'The "Strategic Depth" That Turkey Needs, an Interview', *The Turkish Daily News*, 15 September 2001; Ahmet Davutoğlu, 'Turkey's Foreign Policy Vision: An Assessment of 2007', *Insight Turkey*, 10.1 (2008), 77–96; Ahmet Davutoğlu, 'Turkish Foreign Policy and the EU in 2010', *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, 8.3 (2009), 11–17.

[420] Ahmet Davutoğlu, 'Interview Published in AUC Cairo Review (Egypt)', 12 March 2012 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/interview-by-mr_-ahmet-davutoğlu-published-in-auc-cairo-review-_egypt_-on-12-march-2012.en.mfa> [accessed 15 February 2020].

[421] Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu [Strategic Depth: Turkey's International Position]*, p. 7.

[422] Davutoğlu, 'The "Strategic Depth" That Turkey Needs, an Interview'.

layered identity. Therefore, he suggests that Turkey should capitalize on its past and the position of partly self/partly other, which comes with a special responsibility – conducting an active and multidimensional foreign policy.

a. Modern Turkey as the 'divided self'

Arguing that Turkey has been experiencing an identity crisis for years, Davutoğlu finds its cause in the decision of the Kemalist establishment to alienate Turkey from its past. He compares the situation of modern Turkey to the person being ontologically insecure. For Davutoğlu, a society that is alienated from its historical and geographical consciousness exists as an 'unembodied self' that is detached from its body, which is a reference to the scholarship of Ronald David Laing. In such cases, 'the body is felt more as one object among other objects in the world than as the core of the individuals own being',[423] and such people exist through a 'false self', meaning they are living inauthentically. In comparison, an 'embodied self' has a 'sense of being flesh and blood and bones, of being biologically alive and real'.[424] Just as the discipline of psychology considers major problems as a consequence of the rupture of the bond between a person's body and self, Davutoğlu suggests a nation-state alienated from its past is designed to fall into a crisis. Consequently, the Republic of Turkey under Kemalist became a 'divided self' because:

> [i]n order to be able to cover the gap between the inner self and the embodied self we are caught up in the same dream with the drunkenness of cheap victories and the serenity of cheap defeats. While we link our victory against Germany in a football match to the ecstasy of the "Tenth Year March", we reduce the loss against Finland to the bias of the referee. Thus, we never correlate our achievements with continuous work or take lessons from our failures.[425]

In this context, Davutoğlu also refers to the so-called Sèvres Syndrome, criticizing building Turkey's identity around it. He argues that Sèvres Treaty was a short event in the transition from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic of Turkey that was experienced and overcome.

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[423] Laing, p. 69.
[424] Laing, p. 67.
[425] Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu [Strategic Depth: Turkey's International Position]*, p. 59.

Consequently, it should serve as a lesson learned to analyse the weaknesses that led to it instead of becoming a fundament of a modern nation-state. He compares Turkey's attitude to that of France, where neither Napoleon's victories nor the embarrassment of the Vienna Congress is invoked in the centre of France's strategic discourse. Davutoğlu concludes that 'strategic awareness must be based on history; strategic planning must be based on current reality'.[426]

### b. The EU as a choice, not a necessity

In Davutoğlu's grand strategic vision for Turkey, the country's European identity is an essential part of its multi-layered identity. He emphasizes that 'Turkey cannot detach itself neither geographically nor historically from Europe'.[427] His account of the relationship between Turkey and the European Union focuses to a great extent on the psychological and cultural difficulties that Turkey has encountered:

> For example, why is it that membership process of Slovakia, Estonia, Romania, Bulgaria does not initiate a civilizational debate between the European elites and policy-makers but membership process of Turkey, which during the Cold War was united in a common cause with the core states of the EU, brings the problem of civilization?[428]

Regardless of this unfair treatment, full membership in the EU is seen as Turkey's goal. However, for Davutoğlu, Turkey must enter the European Union with its cultural and historical baggage, capitalizing on the position of partly self/partly other. Moreover, he perceives membership in the EU as a choice, not a necessity; therefore, he underlines that Turkey will not wait forever at the EU's doorstep.[429]

### 7. Turkey and the EU in the early 2000s

In contrast to the 1990s, the start of the new millennium was kinder to Turkey's ontological security needs. The 1999 Helsinki European Council's decision to grant Turkey candidacy status

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[426] Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu [Strategic Depth: Turkey's International Position]*, p. 61.

[427] Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu [Strategic Depth: Turkey's International Position]*, p. 550.

[428] Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu [Strategic Depth: Turkey's International Position]*, p. 542.

[429] Davutoğlu, 'Turkey's Foreign Policy Vision: An Assessment of 2007', p. 95.

brought a new wave of optimism. However, this enthusiasm was short-lived, and in subsequent years Turkey-EU relations followed a well-known pattern of highs and lows. In 2002, the positive atmosphere disappeared when the Copenhagen European Council decided to postpone negotiations with Turkey while going ahead with negotiations of the Central and Eastern European countries, Cyprus and Malta. This feeling was reversed two years later when the Brussels European Council decided to start the negotiation process regarding Turkey's accession into the EU. Once again, however, Turkey's hopes were dashed in 2006 when the EC decided to block negotiations in eight chapters due to Turkey's refusal to accept the Additional Protocol to the Customs Union with regard to Cyprus.

Initially, the start of the negotiations in October 2005 had a positive impact on Turkey's sense of ontological security. However, the EU's decision to introduce a new, open-ended framework for the accession negotiations opened up old wounds, fitting into the feelings of stigmatization felt by Turkey. The EU decided that from then on, the accession negotiations 'are an open-ended process, the outcome of which cannot be guaranteed beforehand'.[430] Moreover, it was stated the negotiations might include 'long transitional periods, derogations, specific arrangements or permanent safeguard clauses'.[431] As such, different standards were applied to Turkey in comparison to the 2003 enlargement. Therefore, while Turkey achieved its long-term objective of opening the negotiations, full membership stopped being a guaranteed outcome due to the changes in the accession framework.

8. Why does Turkey want to join the EU?

Before moving to the analysis of Turkey's biographical narrative, I will present how the existing academic studies on the subject approached the above question, which constitutes an additional layer in the process of the contextualization. While Turkey's relationship with the European Union is one of the most researched subjects in the context of Turkish foreign policy, there is only a handful of studies focused on the motives behind Turkey's decision to continuously pursue EU

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[430] European Commission, 'Negotiating Framework, Luxembourg', 3 October 2005, para. 2 <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/turkey/st20002_05_tr_framedoc_en.pdf> [accessed 15 February 2020].
[431] European Commission, 'Negotiating Framework, Luxembourg', para. 12.

membership. Out of the existing studies, the prevalent approach underlines ideational factors as a driving force behind Turkey's decision.[432] Their common argument is that Turkey's self-perception as a European country influences its decision to continue on the path of EU membership.

From a different perspective, Isa Camyar and Halit Mustafa, in the study 'Why Does Turkey Seek European Union Membership? A Historical Institutional Approach', contend that Turkey's drive toward the EU is best explained by a historical institutional approach. The authors argue that path dependence related to Turkey's historical and institutional decisions to pursue Westernization led to a situation whereby 'EU membership has become less of an option for Turkey than an end result of a set of foreign and domestic policy choices that have formed the crux of its modernization project in the last two centuries'.[433] Then, the authors list two possible scenarios for the reversal of this pattern. First, when the frustration with the EU reaches a breaking point, being stronger than structural factors supporting EU membership. The second option includes 'a major, substantial change in Turkish social and political life or Turkey's geopolitical status that leads to a decline in the centrality of integrating with Europe as a foreign policy goal'.[434]

This approach is strongly deterministic and does not take into consideration the agency of Turkey. Considering two scenarios proposed by Camyar and Tagma, I would argue that the second one, regarding substantial changes in political, social, and geopolitical dimensions of Turkey, has been ongoing for at least two decades. Therefore, the question follows: Why it did not lead to the materialization of their first scenario? In other words, the historical institutional approach presented by Camyar and Tagma does not answer why, regardless of the widespread changes, the Turkish elite persists in its bid for EU membership.

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[432] Leda-Agapi Glyptis, 'Which Side of the Fence? Turkey's Uncertain Place in the EU', *Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relations*, 4.3 (2005), 108–39 (p. 108). See also Leda-Agapi Glyptis, 'EU Accession or Why Is Turkey "Paying" for Europe's Identity Crisis?', *Insight Turkey*, 7.2 (2005), 39–47; Müftüler-Bac, *Turkey's Relations with a Changing Europe*.

[433] Isa Camyar and Halit Mustafa Tagma, 'Why Does Turkey Seek European Union Membership? A Historical Institutional Approach', *Turkish Studies*, 11.3 (2010), 371–86 (p. 382).

[434] Camyar and Tagma, p. 384.

As such, the research presented in this thesis falls within a general understanding of the importance of identity-related factors in Turkey's EU membership bid. It complements these explanations in two important ways. First, by focusing on Turkey's biographical narrative, it opens up Turkey's identity box and looks at different layers within it. As such, Turkey's European vocation is perceived as a master narrative consisting of different stories. Secondly, it includes a discussion regarding the cost of Turkey pursuing EU membership. For a country that has tried to hide its stigma since the beginning of its modern statehood, agreeing to endure public scrutiny has been extremely costly in terms of ontological security.

These costs were raised in public debates provoked by Turkey's EU membership process. To illustrate this point, in 1997, Wilfred Martens from the German Christian Democrat party openly said that 'the EU is in the process of building a civilization in which Turkey has no place'.[435] In 2002, the German conservative party Christian-Social Union of Bavaria stressed that 'the accession of a country that does not share the same religious or dominant values as the EU is "unimaginable"'.[436] The same year former French President and the President of the European Convention Valéry Giscard d'Estaing stated that 'Turkey's capital is not in Europe, 95% of its population lives outside of Europe and it is not a European country', calling Turkey's membership 'the end of Europe'.[437] Then in 2006, during a debate over Turkey's progress report, MEP from Poland Bogusław Rogalski asserted he:

> do[es] not agree that Turkey can play the role of a bridge between Europe and the Muslim world. On the contrary, I think that Turkey could become a gateway for terrorism. Turkey is part of a world that is alien to us in terms of its culture and traditions [...] Accepting Turkey into the European Union will set a dangerous precedent that will spell the end of Europe as we know it today.[438]

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[435] 'Turkey and Europe: Just Not Our Sort', *The Economist*, 13 March 1997 <https://www.economist.com/europe/1997/03/13/just-not-our-sort> [accessed 15 February 2020].
[436] Nicola Smith, 'France and Germany Unify over Turkey', *EUobserver*, 5 December 2002 <https://euobserver.com/enlargement/8639> [accessed 15 February 2020].
[437] 'Turkey Entry "Would Destroy EU"', *BBC News*, 8 November 2002 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/2420697.stm> [accessed 15 February 2020].
[438] Bogusław Rogalski, 'Turkey's Progress towards Accession Debate', 26 September 2006 <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+CRE+20060926+ITEM-012+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=GA&query=INTERV&detail=2-216> [accessed 15 February 2020].

These are just a few examples of the discourse on Turkey triggered by its EU membership process, which closely resembles the nineteenth-century Standard of Civilization. Put differently, Turkey's accession negotiations uncover what Turkey was the most afraid of when it decided to move towards the West – that it is discreditable.

It is possible to argue that Turkey continues to pursue EU membership for material gains, which in such a case would outweigh the non-material costs that Turkey has to bear. Between 2014 and 2020, for example, Turkey was entitled to 4.5 billion euro of pre-accession assistance.[439] This represents the substantial added value of Turkey's membership negotiations. However, when considering that Turkey is part of the G-20, one might assume that money has had less impact on Ankara's decision than it had for the Central and Eastern European countries. Therefore, we are left with the same question we began with – Why does Turkey continuously pursue EU membership?

9.  EU membership in Turkey's biographical narrative

In the following section, I look at how EU membership was portrayed within Turkey's biographical narrative. This analysis is based on primary sources that contain information about the motives of Turkey's continued pursual of its place within the ranks of the organization. At the same time, they show how Turkey sees itself, its place in the world and how ontologically secure it feels within it. For clarity's sake, I divided my analysis into three periods: 2002–2008, 2009–2013, and 2014–2018.

a.  November 2002–December 2008

Membership in the European Union was perceived as a missing link in Turkey's more than a century-long quest to become an equal part of Europe. According to President Abdullah Gül 'membership in the EU is the natural next stage in a historical process. Our vocation is real and justified. Our desire and efforts for membership are consistent'.[440] In this context, he underlined

[439] European Commission, 'Turkey - Financial Assistance under IPA II' <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/instruments/funding-by-country/turkey_en> [accessed 15 February 2020].

[440] Abdullah Gül, 'Speech at the Martti Ahtisaari Conference', 9 October 2008 <http://www.abdullahgul.gen.tr/speeches-statements/344/56397/speech-by-he-abdullah-gul-president-of-the-republic-of-turkey-at-the-martti-ahtisaari-conference.html,> [accessed 10 February 2020]. See also Ahmet Necdet Sezer, 'Address at the Opening Session of the 22nd Term, 4th Legislative Year of the Turkish Grand National

that Turkey was already a member of the majority of Western organizations, including the Council of Europe, the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and NATO.[441] Foreign Minister Ali Babacan further added that it 'attest[s] to Turkey's inherent affiliation with the Western world' and shows that '[t]he accession process to the European Union, once completed, will consolidate Turkey's place and role within all the Western structures'.[442] This point was strengthened by presenting Turkey's relationship with Europe and the EU as a deep-rooted and durable process. According to Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, '[t]he Ottoman Empire has been a part of European history for centuries and played an important role in the formation of present-day Europe. Ever since the Republican reforms under the guidance of Atatürk our people have identified as Europeans'.[443] For this reason, Turkey's efforts to join the EU date back as far as the early years of the organization. As President Gül emphasized:

> the point that has been reached in Turkish - EU relations today is not the result of a coincidence, coercion or one sided preference. The point that has been reached is the result of an understanding that stems from shared values based on a mass of historic experience and mutual interests.[444]

As such, EU membership was understood as a national cause that unites above party lines. The Member of Parliament (MP) from the Republican People's Party (CHP) Onur Öymen reaffirmed this by stating:

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Assembly', 1 October 2005 <https://tccb.gov.tr/konusmalari-ahmet-necdet-sezer/1721/7759/address-by-h-e-ahmet-necdet-sezer-president-of-the-republic-of-turkey-at-the-opening-session-of-the-22nd-term-4th-legislative-year-of-the-turkish-grand-national-assembly> [accessed 10 February 2020].

[441] Ali Babacan, 'Speech at the Atlantic Council, Global Leadership Speaker Series', 3 June 2008 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/speech-delivered-by-h_e_-ali-babacan_-foreign-minister-of-turkey_-the-atlantic-council_global-leadership-speaker-series_-3-june-2008.en.mfa> [accessed 10 February 2020]. See also Abdullah Gül, 'Speech "Common Values and Vision for Co-Existence in Europe" at the College of Europe in Natolin, 10 February 2004', in *Horizons of Turkish Foreign Policy in the New Century* (T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı [Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs], 2007), pp. 260–63 (p. 262); Eyüp Fatsa [AKP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 22nd Term, 1st Legislative Year, 87th Session', 29 May 2003 <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanak/donem22/yil1/bas/b087m.htm> [accessed 10 February 2020].

[442] Ali Babacan, 'Remarks at the Breakfast Meeting with the ATS', 1 October 2007 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/remarks-by-h_e_-mr_-ali-babacan_-minister-of-foreign-affairs-of-turkey_-at-the-breakfast-meeting-with-the-ats_-october-1_-2007_.en.mfa> [accessed 10 February 2020].

[443] Recep Tayyip Erdoğan [AKP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 22nd Term, 1st Legislative Year, 87th Session'. See also Gül, 'Speech "Common Values and Vision for Co-Existence in Europe" at the College of Europe in Natolin, 10 February 2004', p. 262.

[444] Gül, 'Speech at the Martti Ahtisaari Conference'.

[w]e must work together without discriminating between the government and the opposition, and we must treat this issue as a national cause. It should be our aim to make our country a member of the European Union in the best possible circumstances and in the shortest possible time.[445]

During this period, there were abundant references to Atatürk's civilizational discourse. As President Ahmet Necdet Sezer asserted, '[f]or Turkey membership in the European Union is not just an aim but a mean of achieving the level of contemporary civilization as set by Atatürk, the founder of the Republic of Turkey'.[446] In a similar vein, according to the AKP's MP, Eyüp Fatsa:

[o]ur membership in the European Union is the most comprehensive political project in the history of the Republic. This process brings along a very important economic and social transformation. In this process, not only our foreign trade legislation or criminal law are changed, but also an important transformation occurs in every issue that concerns the daily life of our citizens.[447]

Consequently, it was often proclaimed that EU membership would allow Turkey to attain the 'level of contemporary civilization'. However, to improve itself and reach the standards of Europe, Turkey needs to continue with the reform process. In this context, the journey was portrayed as being as important as the goal itself because 'it helps us to continuously upgrade our system, to continuously improve the quality of life for our people, to upgrade our

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[445] Onur Öymen [CHP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 22nd Term, 1st Legislative Year, 87th Session'. See also Eyüp Fatsa [AKP] and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan [AKP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 22nd Term, 1st Legislative Year, 87th Session'.

[446] Ahmet Necdet Sezer, 'Speech at the Dinner Hosted in Honor of the President of Slovakia Rudolf Şuster', 16 December 2003 <https://tccb.gov.tr/konusmalari-ahmet-necdet-sezer/1721/7683/slovakya-cumhurbaskani-rudolf-suster-onuruna-verdigi-aksam-yemeginde-yaptiklari-konusma> [accessed 10 February 2003]. See also Ali Babacan, 'Speech Delivered at the European Parliament Committee on Foreign Affairs', 28 May 2008 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/speech-delivered-by-h_e_-ali-babacan_-foreign-minister-of-turkey-at-the-european-parliament-committee-on-foreign-affairs_-28-may.en.mfa> [accessed 10 February 2020].

[447] Eyüp Fatsa [AKP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 22nd Term, 1st Legislative Year, 87th Session'. See also Şükrü Mustafa Elekdağ [CHP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 22nd Term, 1st Legislative Year, 87th Session'; Abdullah Gül, 'Speech Delivered at the Turkish Grand National Assembly', 1 October 2007 <http://www.abdullahgul.gen.tr/speeches-statements/344/56529/speech-delivered-by-the-president-at-the-turkish-grand-national-abembly.html> [accessed 10 February 2020].

democracy'.[448] Interestingly, one example of Turkey succeeding in its mission of levelling up with Europe was the fact that there were 400 television and 1100 radio channels broadcasting in different languages in the country.[449]

The narrative on the need for further reforms run in parallel with the narrative underlying that due to the long historical process, Turkey is not only institutionally integrated with Europe, but more importantly, it also shared common values. Prime Minister Erdoğan expressed this idea as follows: '[w]hat makes Turkey European is the fact that it embraces European values such as participatory democracy, pluralism, the rule of law, human rights, secularism, freedom of thought and conscience'.[450] This led to contradictory reasoning that while EU membership will confirm Turkey's European credentials, lack of it will not mean that Turkey is not part of Europe.

Although the journey was considered as important as the goal itself, the only result of the accession negotiations that Turkey would find acceptable was full membership. As emphasized by Foreign Minister Babacan, '[m]embership to the EU is a strategic goal of Turkish foreign policy. No other alternative than membership can be an option which is targeted by Turkey'.[451] Therefore, within Turkey's biographical narrative, France and Germany's idea of a privileged partnership was met with an unconditional rejection. Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül summed up this point by saying:

> we cannot make a claim that we will necessarily become a full member. This is known. However, certain alternatives to full membership can be put forward by some political

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[448] Babacan, 'Speech at the Atlantic Council, Global Leadership Speaker Series'. See also Ali Babacan, 'Speech at the Boğaziçi Conference', 11 October 2008 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/bogazici-conference_-istanbul_-october-11_-2008.en.mfa> [accessed 10 February 2020].

[449] Gül, 'Speech at the Martti Ahtisaari Conference'. See also Ali Babacan, 'Speech Delivered at the Royal United Services Institute', 14 April 2008 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/speech-delivered-by-h_e_-ali-babacan_-foreign-minister-of-turkey-at-the-royal-united-services-institute_-rusi_-14-april-2008.en.mfa> [accessed 10 February 2020].

[450] Recep Tayyip Erdoğan [AKP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 22nd Term, 1st Legislative Year, 87th Session'. See also Gül, 'Speech at the Martti Ahtisaari Conference'.

[451] Babacan, 'Speech Delivered at the European Parliament Committee on Foreign Affairs'. See also Ahmet Necdet Sezer, 'Speech During the Conference of the Military Academies', 12 April 2006 <https://tccb.gov.tr/konusmalari-ahmet-necdet-sezer/1721/7776/harp-akademileri-konferansinda-yaptiklari-konusma> [accessed 10 February 2020]; Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Press Release No: 160', 6 November 2007 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/_p_no_160--_6-november-2007_-press-statement-regarding-the-publication-of-regular-reports-on-turkey-by-the-european-union-commission_-_unofficial-translation_-__p_.en.mfa> [accessed 10 February 2020].

groups, European Union politicians and even statesmen, such as special status, special membership or strengthened special status. None of these is acceptable to us. No Turkish government, whether it is our own or another, could ever agree to them. I must emphasize this.[452]

Despite the continuity of Atatürk's civilizational discourse, there was one crucial difference. Unlike Atatürk, who assumed Europe was the only choice to advance and secure Turkey's state identity, in the analyzed period, Turkish leaders considered it just one building block of the country's identity understood through the notion of liminality. According to Foreign Minister Gül:

> Turkey's foundations are in Europe and we have always been part of Europe. But, Turkey is more than Europe! We are part of the Muslim world and we also belong to the revered traditions of the East. This unique position is our most important asset, because it allows us to serve both worlds. Let no one doubt that we will fulfil this historic role and advance our common aspirations.[453]

By taking Turkey into its ranks, it was suggested, the EU would become a global actor. The main idea was that Turkey's membership in the EU would strengthen the stability and security of the adjacent regions, namely Central Asia, the Middle East and North Africa. Thanks to Turkey, the EU would also prove that the idea of the clash of civilizations was wrong. From this point of view, Turkey's negotiations with the EU were seen as a 'historical development'.[454] According to the MP from the CHP, Şükrü Mustafa Elekdağ, '[a]fter the September 11 attacks Western statesmen and academics emphasized that Turkey had an important function and mission in ensuring reconciliation and harmony between the Islamic world and the Western world due to its historical development, location, and present-day identity'.[455]

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[452] Abdullah Gül [AKP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 22nd Term, 3rd Legislative Year, 32nd Session', 14 December 2004 <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanak/donem22/yil3/bas/b032m.htm> [accessed 10 February 2020]. See also Eyüp Fatsa [AKP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 22nd Term, 1st Legislative Year, 87th Session'.

[453] Abdullah Gül, 'Speech "Islam in the Twenty-First Century" at the King Abdulaziz University, 12 February 2006', in *Horizons of Turkish Foreign Policy in the New Century* (T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı [Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs], 2007), pp. 573–77 (p. 577). See also Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Press Release No: 160'.

[454] Gül, 'Speech "Islam in the Twenty-First Century" at the King Abdulaziz University, 12 February 2006', p. 577.

[455] Şükrü Mustafa Elekdağ [CHP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 22nd Term, 1st Legislative Year, 87th Session'.

In this context, Turkey's unique role within the EU was often portrayed by references to the Alliance of Civilizations that Turkey co-chaired with Spain. On more than one occasion, Foreign Minister Babacan stressed that 'Turkey embraces a culture that considers diversity as richness and tolerance as a way of life. The unique features of Turkey can contribute to enriching the current level of understanding among different civilizations'.[456] Consequently, Turkey's EU membership was seen as a project bigger than just a bilateral relationship. In line with this argument, it was often underlined within Turkey's biographical narrative that the negotiation process between Turkey and the EU was closely followed by countries worldwide, especially in the regions of special importance for Turkey, such as North Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia.[457] Foreign Minister Babacan went as far as saying that Turkey's case encourages intellectuals in the abovementioned regions because 'showing them one good example is maybe better than giving them hundreds of different advices'.[458]

In parallel with the narrative emphasizing Turkey's liminality, there was an understanding that 'Islam and modernity are not conflicting concepts'.[459] According to President Gül, Turkey is 'proving that a Muslim society can attain contemporary standards of democracy, human rights, rule of law, transparency, accountability and good governance'[460] and that 'a Muslim society can be democratic, open, transparent, pluralistic and modern, while preserving its identity'.[461] The above quotes show that Turkey internalized the stigmatization built around its entry into the modern state system where its religious background was seen as a weakness. Consequently,

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[456] Babacan, 'Speech Delivered at the European Parliament Committee on Foreign Affairs'; Babacan, 'Remarks at the Breakfast Meeting with the ATS'. See also Namık Tan, 'Meeting with the Press', 28 September 2005 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/28-eylul-2005_-disisleri-bakanligi-sozcusu-namik-tan_in-haftalik-olagan-basin-toplantisi.tr.mfa> [accessed 10 February 2020].

[457] Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Press Release No: 160'; Ali Babacan, 'Speech Delivered to the Ambassadors of EU Member States and Candidate Countries on the Occasion of May 9 Europe Day', 9 May 2008 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/sm_8may2008_ambassadors-of-eu-member-states-and-candidate-countries-on-the-occasion-of-may-9-europe-day.en.mfa> [accessed 10 February 2020].

[458] Ali Babacan, 'Speech Delivered at the Council on Foreign Relations', 22 September 2008 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/speech-delivered-by-h_e_-ali-babacan-at--the-council-on-foreign-relations_-new-york_-september-22_-2008.en.mfa> [accessed 10 February 2020].

[459] Babacan, 'Speech Delivered at the Council on Foreign Relations'.

[460] Gül, 'Speech "Common Values and Vision for Co-Existence in Europe" at the College of Europe in Natolin, 10 February 2004', p. 263.

[461] Abdullah Gül, 'Speech to the Participants of the Atlantic Partnership Program of the Council on Foreign Relations, 9 June 2003', in *Horizons of Turkish Foreign Policy in the New Century* (T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı [Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs], 2007), pp. 533–38 (p. 534).

although expressed in a relatively neutral language, Gül indirectly testifies to the notion that Turkey is an example of a country that can overcome the 'backwardness' associated with being Muslim.

Alongside showing the EU as a missing link in Turkey's quest to attain the level of contemporary civilization, another narrative accused the EU of double standards and unfairly treating Turkey. This perception was compatible with the Sèvres Syndrome. Especially after the beginning of the accession negotiations in 2005, the idea emerged that due to the long-standing prejudice, the EU might not want to accept Turkey as a full member regardless of its progress. This understanding was strengthened by the idea of privileged partnership mentioned by Germany and France. In 2005 President Sezer sent a message to the European countries, stating:

> [t]he Turkish Nation will not accept in any way the imposition of additional conditions and discrimination against our country in the way toward EU membership. We want to see the unfounded hesitations and negative attitudes based on domestic political concerns in some countries to come to an end.[462]

Three years later, a similar message was repeated by Foreign Minister Babacan, who insisted that 'Turkey cannot be expected to keep swimming upstream indefinitely. […] The more the final outcome of the accession negotiations we are conducting is second guessed, the more difficult it is for us to pursue a pro-reform agenda'.[463] Likewise, Öymen from the CHP accused the European countries of being unfavourable to Turkey because they describe the country as Asian and hold it against Turkey's EU membership. Yet, he continued, they did not have similar objections when Turkey entered the Council of Europe, the OECD, and NATO. He further pointed out that while Turkey's place in Europe was being questioned, Cyprus was admitted to the organization despite geographically not belonging to the European continent. As such, European leaders were accused of misrepresenting geography and having double standards. In the words of Öymen, 'one

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[462] Sezer, 'Address at the Opening Session of the 22nd Term, 4th Legislative Year of the Turkish Grand National Assembly'.

[463] Ali Babacan, 'Lecture Given at the 11th Wdr Europa Forum', 8 May 2008 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/text-of-lecture-given-by-h_e_-ali-babacan_-8-may-2008.en.mfa> [accessed 10 February 2020]. See also Abdullah Gül, 'Speech at the Meeting Organized by the German Marshall Fund, 8 February 2007', in *Horizons of Turkish Foreign Policy in the New Century* (T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı [Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs], 2007), pp. 216–20 (p. 218).

remembers geography when it comes to Turkey, one isn't aware of geography when it comes to Cyprus'.[464] On more than one occasion, Turkey called upon the European Union to keep its promises, indirectly referring to the values that the EU itself promoted.[465] It shows that through the long interaction with Europe, Turkey became well accustomed to the normative standards dominating the EU discourse. By showing that the EU acts against the values it promotes, Turkey wanted to force the organization into taking a more positive approach toward the country's membership.

Turkey's ambivalent relationship with Europe became clearly visible during a parliamentary debate regarding an EU-driven amendment to Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code. Article 301 referred to the public denigration of Turkishness, the Republic, the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, the Government, and the judicial, military, and security institutions. It became a subject of a discussion in the European Union only after several cases against well-known novelists and journalists were filed in reference to it.[466] According to the recommendation of the 2006 European Commission's (EC) Progress Report, Turkey was encouraged to clarify the meaning of Article 301 in line with the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).[467]

As the discussion in the Parliament showed, the amendment was interpreted as a foreign threat against Turkey. Mehmet Şandir from the MHP (Nationalist Movement Party) argued that Article 301 was put into place 'after the national struggle and the Empire's demise to form the identity of a unitary state and to protect its values'.[468] Amending Article 301, Süleyman Nevzat Korkmaz,

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[464] Onur Öymen [CHP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 22nd Term, 5th Legislative Year, 113th Session', 26 May 2007 <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanak/donem22/yil5/bas/b113m.htm> [accessed 10 February 2020]. See also Deniz Baykal [CHP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 22nd Term, 3rd Legislative Year, 32nd Session'.

[465] Babacan, 'Lecture Given at the 11th Wdr Europa Forum'. See also Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Press Release No: 160'.

[466] These included Orhan Pamuk, Hrant Dink, and Elif Şafak. See Amnesty International, 'Turkey: Article 301: How the Law on "Denigrating Turkishness" Is an Insult to Free Expression', 1 March 2006 <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur44/003/2006/en/> [accessed 15 February 2020].

[467] European Commission, 'Turkey 2006 Progress Report', 8 November 2006, pp. 15–16 <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/key_documents/2006/nov/tr_sec_1390_en.pdf> [accessed 10 February 2020].

[468] Mehmet Şandir [MHP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 23rd Term, 3rd Legislative Year, 9th Session', 29 April 2008 <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanak/donem23/yil2/bas/b096m.htm> [accessed 10 February 2020].

also from the MHP, argued, would be as if Turkey was 'kneeling before the European Union and Western imperialism'.[469] The discussion once again highlighted that Turkey feels like it is evaluated according to double standards. The argument was that most European countries have in their law an article that protects their regime and common values, but only Turkey is asked to amend it.[470] Ali Riza Öztürk from the CHP summed up this discussion by quoting the words of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who states on 6 March 1922 in the Turkish Parliament that:

> there have emerged certain mindsets that think it is necessary to conduct all business according to Europe's wishes and follow Europe's advice on how to remedy the situation. Yet, how can one truly develop one's independence following the counsel and plans of foreigners. No such incidence exists in recorded history. One ought to take precautions before the disaster strikes and think of a way to protect oneself from it. Regret after the fact is to no avail.[471]

The discussion on Article 301 epitomized the ambivalent relationship between Turkey and the EU. While firmly asserting that EU membership was the country's strategic goal, Turkey kept questioning the EU's conditionality as a threat to its sovereignty stemming from dubious intentions of the Western powers.

### b. January 2009–December 2013

In the following period between January 2009 and December 2013, there was a visible continuation of Turkey's EU membership narratives. Membership in the EU was still presented as a strategic goal, which is 'a result of our long historical affinity with the European culture, the values that our public order is based upon, and our membership in many European organizations'.[472] As in the previous period, it was framed within Atatürk's civilizational discourse,

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[469] Süleyman Nevzat Korkmaz [MHP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 23rd Term, 3rd Legislative Year, 9th Session'.

[470] Faruk Bal [MHP], Metin Çobanoğlu [MHP] and Ali İhsan Köktürk [CHP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 23rd Term, 3rd Legislative Year, 9th Session'. They referred to France, Italy, Germany, Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark and Bulgaria.

[471] Ali Riza Öztürk [CHP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 23rd Term, 3rd Legislative Year, 9th Session'.

[472] Abdullah Gül, 'Message on the Occasion of Europe Day', 9 May 2009 <http://www.abdullahgul.gen.tr/speeches-statements/344/56272/europe-day-9-may-mebage-ibued-by-h-e-mr-abdullah-gul-president-of-the-republic-of-turkey.html,> [accessed 10 February 2020]. See also Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Press Release

where EU membership was perceived as a missing link in Turkey's quest to become an equal part of Europe. According to Foreign Minister Babacan, Turkey does not:

> look at the EU criteria as the requirements that we have to follow but we look at those criteria as a good framework for ourselves to improve the standards in Turkey, to improve the quality of life for our people, to improve our democracy, to enhance our practices of fundamental rights and freedoms.[473]

In contrast to the previous period, where Turkey was portrayed as the one responsible for coping with the requirements of the EU, in the second period, the accession negotiations were perceived as a joint effort of both Turkey and the EU. In other words, it became increasingly emphasized that not only Turkey must fulfil its obligations, but also the European Union must keep its promises. President Gül aptly expressed this sentiment by underlying:

> [o]nly when they decide to have a global vision like the founding leaders of the E.U. will they be able to discover the synergy that could be created by the construction of a mutual future by Turkey and E.U. […] Our accession to the E.U. is not an issue relying merely on Turkey's responsibility. Hence, we expect the E.U. to be loyal to its promises and to continue its constructive stance and to show its decisiveness in regard to our participation in the union.[474]

Consequently, any idea of a privileged partnership was repeatedly rejected.[475] In this context, Turkey invoked one of the basic principles of the international law – pacta sunt servanda –

No: 90', 29 March 2012 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-90_-29-march-2012_-press-release-regarding-the-european-parliament-_ep_-2011-report-on-turkey.en.mfa> [accessed 20 February 2020]; Abdullah Çalışkan [AKP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 23rd Term, 4th Legislative Year, 33rd Session', 16 December 2009 <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanak/donem23/yil4/bas/b033m.htm> [accessed 10 February 2020].

[473] Ali Babacan, 'Speech Delivered at Vienna Diplomatic Academy', 15 April 2009 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/speech-delivered-by-h_e_-mr_-ali-babacan_-minister-of-foreign-affairs-of-the-republic-of-turkey_-at-vienna-diplomatic-academy-15.en.mfa> [accessed 10 February 2020]. See also Abdullah Çalışkan [AKP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 23rd Term, 4th Legislative Year, 33rd Session'.

[474] Gül, 'Message on the Occasion of Europe Day'. See also Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Press Release No: 250', 9 November 2010 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-250_-9-november-2010_-press-release-regarding-the-european-commission-progress-report-and-enlargement-strategy-document.en.mfa> [accessed 10 February 2020].

[475] Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Press Release No: 87', 5 June 2009 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_87_-05-june-2009_-press-release-regarding-the-statements-concerning-the-

arguing that since the very beginning, the negotiations were about full membership; therefore, the EU cannot change the rules in the middle of the game. [476] Minister for the European Union Egemen Bağiş commented on the alternative proposals as follows:

> [t]here are no membership categories in the European Union; there is only one type of membership, which is full membership. To those who propose alternatives to full membership of Turkey, I give an example: "you are either pregnant or not". I do not know any intermediate state in medical science between being pregnant and not being pregnant. You might accept other alternatives to EU membership, but we cannot. It is beneath us and our country. [477]

This is yet another example that Turkey understood well the normative standards of Europe, trying to create cognitive dissonance within the EU to push for membership. Referring to the fact that Turkey was the only candidate country that had finalized the customs union with the EU before accession, President Gül maintained that Turkey already had a special partnership with the organization, and the only possible next step is full membership. [478] Bitterness and disappointment became clearly visible when membership path of Turkey and Croatia started to diverge in favour of the latter. [479] The fact that Croatia is a Christian country was interpreted within Turkey's biographical narrative as proof that Turkey is being stigmatized due to cultural reasons or, more specifically, religious reasons. Therefore, Turkey accused the EU on many occasions of being a Christian club. [480] Moreover, in line with the Sèvres Syndrome, there was an

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accession-process-of-turkey-to-the-eu-in-the-context-of-the-elections-of-the-european-parliament.en.mfa> [accessed 10 February 2020].

[476] Abdullah Gül, 'We Are Determined to Complete Negotiation Process for Full Membership', 2 November 2009 <http://www.abdullahgul.gen.tr/news/397/48382/we-are-determined-to-complete-negotiation-proceb-for-full-membership.html> [accessed 10 February 2020].

[477] Egemen Bağiş [AKP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 24th Term, 3rd Legislative Year, 41st Session', 15 December 2012 <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanak/donem24/yil3/bas/b041m.htm> [accessed 10 February 2020].

[478] Abdullah Gül, 'Interview to Austrian Press (Kurier, Die Presse, Der Standard)', 30 April 2011 <http://www.abdullahgul.gen.tr/haberler/170/79681/cumhurbaskani-gul-avusturya-basinina-konustu-turk-halki-belki-de-norvec-halki-gibi-ab-uyeligine-hayi.html> [accessed 10 February 2020].

[479] Osman Çakir [MHP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 23rd Term, 4th Legislative Year, 33rd Session'.

[480] See Abdullah Gül, 'Speech at the Xi'an North Western University', 27 June 2009 <http://www.abdullahgul.gen.tr/speeches-statements/344/56282/speech-by-he-abdullah-gul-president-of-the-republic-of-turkey-at-the-xian-north-western-university.html> [accessed 10 February 2020]; Hasip Kaplan [DTP] in

understanding that '[t]he European Union aims to keep Turkey away from the full membership by relegating it to a second-class position and keeping it under its control and influence'.[481]

While continuing to confirm that full membership in the EU was Turkey's strategic goal and that any intermediate status vis-à-vis the EU was out of the question, a new narrative of accepting unsuccessful negotiations started to emerge. In reaction to information that the admission of Turkey to the EU might be subjected to a referendum in some member states, it was emphasized that a similar referendum might also be held in Turkey. However, the acceptance of rejection was narrowed down only to a situation when Turkey actually finishes the accession negotiations with the EU.[482] In other words, there was no agreement to terminate the accession negotiations at this point.

To counter the voices of doubt concerning Turkey's membership in the organization, Turkey continued to reaffirm within the biographical narrative its long, shared history with Europe. During a visit to Sweden, President Gül underlined that '[w]e can see how much a part of Europe Turkey is. In many historical buildings located in member states we see pictures of contemporaneous Turks. Europe without Turkey as well as European history written without Turks would be incomplete'.[483] References to Turkey's centuries-long relationship with Europe ran in parallel with references to Turkey's liminality, which makes it a unique country that should be percived as an asset for the European Union. As Foreign Minister Babacan recalled:

> [s]o sometimes I am asked a question, they said that "are you dealing now more and more
> with the Middle East and Africa because that mean that you are getting away from

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Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 23rd Term, 3rd Legislative Term, 109th Session', 24 June 2009 <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanak/donem23/yil3/bas/b109m.htm> [accessed 10 February 2020].

[481] Ahmet Deniz Bölükbaşi [MHP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 23rd Term, 3rd Legislative Term, 109th Session'. See also Osman Çakir [MHP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 23rd Term, 4th Legislative Year, 33rd Session'.

[482] Abdullah Gül, 'Interview to BBC (Hard Talk)', 9 November 2010 <http://www.abdullahgul.gen.tr/interviews/379/78019/bbc-hard-talk.html> [accessed 10 February 2020].

[483] Abdullah Gül, 'Turkey's Democracy, Human Rights Law and Standards Are Constantly on a Rise', 13 March 2013 <http://www.abdullahgul.gen.tr/haberler/170/85365/turkiyenin-demokrasi-hukuk-ve-insan-haklari-standartlarini-surekli-yukseltiyoruz.html> [accessed 10 February 2020]. See also Mehmet Galip Ensarioğlu [AKP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 24th Term, 2nd Legislative Year, 35th Session', 12 December 2011 <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanak/donem24/yil2/bas/b035m.htm> [accessed 10 February 2020]; Suat Kiniklioğlu [AKP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 23rd Term, 3rd Legislative Term, 109th Session'.

Europe?". Sometimes I am also asked in other regions in more East and South, "well you are now becoming the European Union member, does it mean that you are walking more and more away from us?" Actually both thesis are not true. The fact that we are more and more engaged with the Middle East, Central Asia, with the North Africa the more of a value that Turkey is attached by many European countries.[484]

Seeing liminality as an asset, not a burden, led to a more assertive approach toward the EU. President Gül aptly expressed this point by underlying:

[w]e entered the 21st century as a country that struggled with problems and did not know what to do. There were many who called us 'the sick man of Europe'. Yet, today we are a country which is trusted by its citizens, a strong country that can contribute to the changing global order.[485]

Turkey saw its role within the European Union on two levels. First, to test whether the EU was a community based on universal values or confined to a specific culture, religion or geography. Secondly, to determine whether the EU would transform from a regional to a global actor. The answers were contingent on whether the EU made Turkey a member or not. Foreign Minister Davutoğlu reaffirmed that the decision to make Turkey a member of the organization 'will shape the European Union more than us'.[486] In other words, the EU with Turkey as its member would represent an economically competitive actor that extends a considerable political power around the world and promotes cultural pluralism. In the opposite case, the EU would limit its influence to the European continent.[487]

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[484] Ali Babacan, 'Speech Delivered at the Vilnius University for International Relations and Political Science', 20 February 2009 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/speech-delivered-by-h_e_-mr_-ali-babacan-at-the-vilnius-university-for-international-relations-and-political-science_-20-february-2009.en.mfa> [accessed 10 February 2020]. See also Gül, 'Speech at the Xi'an North Western University'; Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Press Release No: 250'.

[485] Abdullah Gül, 'Speech at the Opening Ceremony of the 4th Term, 23rd Legislative Year of the TBMM', 1 October 2012 <http://www.abdullahgul.gen.tr/konusmalar/371/84028/tbmmnin-24-donem-3-yasama-yilinin-acilisinda-yaptiklari-konusma.html> [accessed 10 February 2020].

[486] Ahmet Davutoğlu, 'Speech at the Conference "Turkish Foreign Policy and the Future Horizon in 2012" Organized by the Strategic Thinking Research Foundation', 27 December 2012 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/disisleri-bakani-sayin-ahmet-davutoglu_nun-stratejik-dusunce-arastirma-vakfi_nin-_2012_de-turk-dis-politikasi-ve-gelecek-ufku_-k.tr.mfa> [accessed 20 February 2020].

[487] Ahmet Davutoğlu, 'Speech Delivered at the University of London School of Economics and Political Science', 7 March 2013 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/speech-delivered-by-h_e_-ahmet-davutoglu_-minister-of-foreign-affairs-of-

As the second period under analysis saw slowing progress on Turkey's road to the EU, this development was explained with references to the unfair treatment and double standards on the part of the EU, which was already prevalent in the previous period. According to the spokesperson of the MFA, Selçuk Ünal, '[w]e think that among the fundamental reasons causing this situation is the EU following different policies from the acquis or the promises given to us in the past'.[488] In this context, two examples of unfair treatment were often presented within Turkey's biographical narrative – the Cyprus conflict and the visa liberalisation.

First, Turkey was portrayed as an actor having a constructive stance toward resolving the Cyprus conflict. It was often invoked that Turkish Cypriots supported the Annan Plan, while the Greek Cypriots rejected it. Consequently, Turkey accused the EU of taking sides in the conflict instead of contributing to a fair solution. In a press release, the MFA highlighted that 'while stating that the negotiations reached a deadlock, it is a serious deficiency that the EU Commission does not mention the responsibility of the Greek Cypriot side on this negative outcome', followed by a call to the EC to change 'its discriminatory and biased attitude'.[489]

The second issue concerned visa liberalisation. The fact that Turkey was the only candidate country to the EU that still had a visa regime in place was interpreted as the most striking example of the EU's double standards. The feeling of being stigmatized was strengthened by the fact that in the case of Turkey, visa liberalisation was linked to the management of illegal migration, while in the case of other candidate countries, it was part of a normal process.[490] Öymen from the CHP commented on this situation by underlying that 'they are pressing us with unfair demands and

turkey_-in-the-university-of-london-school-of-economics.en.mfa> [accessed 10 February 2020]. See also Abdullah Çalışkan [AKP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 23rd Term, 4th Legislative Year, 33rd Session'.

[488] Selçuk Ünal, 'Meeting with the Press', 9 February 2011 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/sozcu-unal_in-olagan-basin-toplantisi_-09-subat-2011.tr.mfa> [accessed 10 February 2020]. See also Abdullah Gül, 'Interview to Press TV', 17 February 2011 <http://www.abdullahgul.gen.tr/mulakatlar/360/79019/preb-tv-iran.html> [accessed 10 February 2020]; Abdullah Çalışkan [AKP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 23rd Term, 5th Legislative Year, 32nd Session', 14 December 2010 <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanak/donem23/yil5/bas/b032m.htm> [accessed 10 February 2020].

[489] Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Press Release No: 234', 10 October 2012 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-234_-10-october-2012_-press-release-regarding-the-turkey-2012-progress-report-and-enlargement-strategy-of-the-eu-commission.en.mfa> [accessed 10 February 2020].

[490] Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Press Release No: 286', 12 December 2012 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-286_-12-december-2012_-press-release-regarding-the-conclusions-of-the-eu-general-affairs-council.en.mfa> [accessed 10 February 2020].

consequently not providing Turkish citizens the right granted to citizens of all other candidate countries'.[491]

The Armenian issue and the status of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople represented other contentious issues that Turkey interpreted as an example of unfair treatment.[492] Raising these problems in the accession negotiations by the EU was interpreted as a plot of foreign powers aiming at undermining one of the most important provisions of the Lausanne Treaty around which Turkey's state identity was constructed, namely the unitary structure of the country. According to Osman Çakır from the MHP, 'the European Union is besotted with the idea of creating national minorities within Turkey. Creating ethnically based segregation and goading individualistic differences through its policies has become the fundamental mission of the European Union'.[493] This led to the development of a new story within Turkey's biographical narrative, centred around undermining the EU's opinions and recommendations as not valid due to the organization's double standards toward Turkey. It was increasingly emphasized that '[t]he documents and reports that are published by the EP will have a meaning for Turkey only if they are constructive and unbiased'.[494] In this context, the EU's reports were interpreted as unbalanced because they focused on the negative developments in the country instead of stressing the positive ones.[495] This attitude became visibly strengthened in the aftermath of the Gezi Park protests. It also showed a dissonance between Turkey's perception of itself and how the EU perceived it.

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[491] Onur Öymen [CHP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 23rd Term, 5th Legislative Year, 32nd Session'.

[492] Ahmet Deniz Bölükbaşi [MHP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 23rd Term, 3rd Legislative Term, 109th Session'.

[493] Osman Çakir [MHP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 23rd Term, 4th Legislative Year, 33rd Session'. See also Ahmet Deniz Bölükbaşi [MHP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 23rd Term, 3rd Legislative Term, 109th Session'.

[494] Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Press Release No: 32', 11 February 2010 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-32_-11-february-2010_-press-release-regarding-the-european-parliament-report-on-turkey.en.mfa> [accessed 10 February 2020]. See also Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Press Release No: 65', 9 March 2011 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-65_-09-march-2011_-press-release-on-the-european-parliament_s-_ep_-2011-report-on-turkey-adopted-at-the-plenary-session-on-9-march-2011.en.mfa> [accessed 10 February 2020].

[495] Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Press Release No: 234'.

Responding to the resolution of the EP on the situation in Turkey adopted during the Gezi Park protests, Turkey described itself as a country that 'surpasses many countries that define themselves as advanced democracies in terms of adhering to and implementing documents and is, especially in its region, an exemplary country regarding the goal of achieving stability on the basis of democracy'.[496] Consequently, the EP resolution was found 'detached from reality', therefore, 'null and void'.[497] It also showed a new narrative, which will become more visible in the next period, that focused on comparing developments in Turkey with those in other European countries with a conclusion that while Turkey is being criticized, the others are not:

> [r]ecent developments in Turkey are not different than those social incidents that have occurred in many European cities especially in recent years. Conversely, while these incidents were not debated to this extent and were not reacted to in a similar fashion, the dimension of the debate on the situation in Turkey is yet another example of the double standard applied to Turkey.[498]

c.    January 2014–July 2018

In the period between January 2014 and July 2018, EU membership remained a strategic goal of Turkey.[499] Voices accusing Turkey of distancing itself from the West, especially in the context of the rapprochement with Russia, were rejected through arguments underlying Turkey's liminality.[500] In this vein, Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu put forward that '[i]t is not

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[496] Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Press Release No: 168', 13 June 2013 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-168_-13-june-2013_-press-release-on-the-resolutıon-adopted-by-the-european-parliament-on-the-situation-in-turkey.en.mfa> [accessed 10 February 2020].

[497] Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Press Release No: 168'.

[498] Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Press Release No: 168'.

[499] See Ayşe Eser Danişoğlu [CHP] and Volkan Bozkır [AKP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 26th Term, 5th Legislative Year, 28th Session', 13 December 2014 <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanak/donem24/yil5/ham/b02801h.htm> [accessed 10 February 2020]. Şaban Dişli [AKP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 26th Term, 1st Legislative Year, 48th Session', 29 February 2016 <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanak/donem26/yil1/ham/b04801h.htm> [accessed 10 February 2020]; Ömer Çelik [AKP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 26th Term, 3rd Legislative Year, 41st Session', 18 December 2017 <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanak/donem26/yil3/ham/b04101h.htm> [accessed 10 February 2020].

[500] Binali Yıldırım, 'Interview to CNN Türk', 21 June 2018 <https://www.akparti.org.tr/haberler/basbakan-yildirim-in-cnn-turk-secime-dogru-ozel-programininda-yaptigi-konusmanin-tam-metni/> [accessed 10 February 2020].

constructive to think in terms of "binary choices" like either Europe or Asia'.[501] As Turkey's Western vocation was further put in doubt, more emphasis was placed on Turkey's Europeanness. Minister for the European Union Volkan Bozkır argued as follows:

> [t]o us the European Union process represents a common past, common principles and common values. It has become a partnership in which we share joint interests in the face of regional and global challenges. Turkish membership in the EU is a requirement of history and geography.[502]

At the same time, new stories appeared within Turkey's biographical narrative regarding EU membership. The most pronounced within them was a narrative underlying the growing xenophobia and Islamophobia in Europe. According to Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu:

> in recent years we have unfortunately observed that the EU has been moving away from the ideals and basic values of which it has been a strong defender, in a way that would be contrary to the wishes of its founders. Extremist trends such as discrimination, xenophobia and Islamophobia erode the culture of co-existence and lead to questioning of the EU's effectiveness and credibility in the international arena. This situation also causes disappointment and concerns in a wider European geography sharing common values with the European Union.[503]

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[501] Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, 'Interview to Ottawa Life Magazine', 1 February 2018 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/interview-of-h_e_-mr_-mevlut-cavusoglu-to-ottawa-life-magazine_-1-february-2018.en.mfa> [accessed 10 February 2020].

[502] Volkan Bozkır [AKP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 26th Term, 5th Legislative Year, 28th Session'. See also Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, 'We Are the Host in Europe, Not the Guest', 1 December 2016 <https://www.tccb.gov.tr/en/news/542/62191/avrupada-misafir-degil-ev-sahibiyiz> [accessed 10 February 2020]; Levent Gümrükçü, 'Virtual Press Meeting Organized by Twitter', 15 January 2014 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/disisleri-bakanligi-sozcusu-levent-gumrukcu_nun-twitter-uzerinden-duzenledigi-sanal-basin-toplantisi_-15-ocak-2014.tr.mfa> [accessed 10 February 2020].

[503] Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, 'Message on the Occasion of Europe Day', 9 May 2017 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/message-by-h_e_-mevlüt-çavuşoğlu_-minister-of-foreign-affairs-of-turkey_-on-the-occasion-of-europe-day_-9-may-2017.en.mfa> [accessed 10 February 2020]. See also Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Press Release No: 174', 28 May 2014 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-174_-28-may-2014_-press-release-regarding-european-parliament-elections.en.mfa> [accessed 10 February 2020]; Ömer Çelik [AKP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 26th Term, 2nd Legislative Year, 38th Session', 12 December 2016 <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanak/donem26/yil2/ham/b03801h.htm> [accessed 10 February 2020].

Turkey interpreted the growing xenophobia and Islamophobia in Europe as yet more evidence of the EU's unwillingness to admit Turkey as a full member.[504] Consequently, within Turkey's biographical narrative, the EU was portrayed as the most visionary and successful idea in establishing peace and security in the European continent. However, this was only possible through the spread of common values, which were now under threat due to forces coming from within the EU.[505] This narrative followed a previously discussed strategy where Turkey tried to cause a cognitive dissonance within the EU.

Consequently, Turkey argued that enlargement was the best strategy for the EU to regain its ontological security because enlargement has always played a key role in the organization's success.[506] By referring to the EU motto 'Unity in Diversity', Turkey put forward the idea that only a multicultural EU had a chance of surviving as a strong and effective actor.[507] According to Prime Minister Davutoğlu:

> [e]nlargement is one of the main sources of motivation for strengthening the principles and values in Europe, such as respect for human rights, democratization, pluralism and the free market economy as well as the legal and administrative mechanisms that guarantee them. It is important to continue the enlargement policy, which is the most important basis for the EU to become a centre of attraction.[508]

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[504] Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, 'Interview to Al-Monitor', 18 September 2017 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/interview-of-h_e_-mr_-mevlut-cavusoglu-to-al-monitor_-18-september-2017_-new-york.en.mfa> [accessed 10 February 2020].

[505] Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, 'Message on the Occasion of Europe Day', 9 May 2015 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/message-by-h_e_-mevlüt-çavuşoğlu_-minister-of-foreign-affairs-of-turkey_-on-the-occasion-of-europe-day_-9-may-2015.en.mfa> [accessed 10 February 2020]. See also Volkan Bozkır [AKP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 26th Term, 5th Legislative Year, 28th Session'.

[506] Abdullah Gül, 'Message on the Occasion of Europe Day', 9 May 2014 <http://www.abdullahgul.gen.tr/aciklamalar/252/89451/9-mayis-avrupa-gunu.html> [accessed 10 February 2020].

[507] Gül, 'Message on the Occasion of Europe Day'.

[508] Ahmet Davutoğlu, 'Message on the Occasion of Europe Day', 9 May 2015 <https://www.akparti.org.tr/haberler/basbakan-davutoglu-nun-9-mayis-avrupa-gunu-mesaji/> [accessed 10 February 2020].

From this perspective, Turkey's accession would play a unique role – by admitting a majority-Muslim country, the EU could prove that its values are universal. In the words of President Erdoğan, '[i]f they oppose Islamophobia, then they must admit Turkey into the EU'.[509]

The issue of the growing xenophobia and Islamophobia was not the only context in which Turkey criticized the EU for moving away from its value. Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu accused the EU of 'looking down on non-EU countries',[510] which directly played into the established-outsider dynamic. According to Çavuşoğlu, 'they should see us as equals; we will never accept any inferior or substandard position'.[511] This led to a narrative accusing the EU of excluding any type of cultural and religious differences. Replying to the EP Resolution on the Armenian issue, the MFA underlined that 'this resolution cannot merely be explained away by either lack of knowledge or ignorance. Unfortunately, what lays behind is religious and cultural fanaticism and indifference towards others regarded as different'.[512] Allow me to quote at length the spokesperson of President Erdoğan, Ibrahim Kalın, who aptly outlined this attitude:

> [w]e keep our position unchanged and it is rather some EU members that are actually taking strides away from this position with their statements and attitudes. The EU itself is moving away from European values. How can you reconcile the rising racism, hostility towards refugees, xenophobia, Islamophobia and aiding terrorist organizations with the European values? They are irreconcilable with Europe's values. I wonder which European values, which they boast of so much, do their double standards and attitude towards Turkey reconcile with? Europe's situation is evident. We don't accept this kind of attitude which views the EU as the sole criterion of absolute truth and goodness and which

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[509] Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, 'Turkey's Accession to the EU: "Turkey Is a Strong Country Now; It Will Not Come to Your Door Begging for Accession', 24 January 2015 <https://www.tccb.gov.tr/en/news/542/3389/turkeys-accession-to-the-eu-turkey-is-a-strong-country-now-it-will-not-come-to-your-door-begging-for-accession> [accessed 10 February 2020].

[510] Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, 'Interview to Daily Sabah', 4 December 2016 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/interview-of-h_e_-mr_-mevlut-cavusoglu-to-daily-sabah_-4-december-2016.en.mfa> [accessed 10 February 2020]. See also Binali Yıldırım, 'Interview to NTV and Star TV', 30 March 2017 <https://www.akparti.org.tr/haberler/basbakan-yildirim-in-ntv-ve-star-tv-ortak-yayininda-yaptigi-konusmanin-tam-metni/> [accessed 10 February 2020].

[511] Çavuşoğlu, 'Interview to Daily Sabah'.

[512] Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Press Release No: 117', 15 April 2015 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-117_-15-april-2015_-press-release-regarding-the-press-release-regarding-the-resolution-by-the-european-parliament-on-the-1915-events.en.mfa> [accessed 10 February 2020].

constantly decries and accuses Turkey. These are the orientalist and euro-centralist attitudes of the past. The Europeans should first look at the mirror. They should make an extensive analysis of their current situation. Mr. President's warnings to the EU leaders are actually nothing but reminding them of their own values and history.[513]

Consequently, in this period, the responsibility for the success of accession negotiation was assigned to the European Union. The argument presented within Turkey's biographical narrative was that Turkey was doing everything necessary to achieve full membership – it treats the EU as a strategic goal, and it continues with the reform process; however, it is still faced with unfair obstacles. Therefore, the responsibility for making the final decision whether or not Turkey will be admitted to the organization rests on the EU itself. The spokesperson of the MFA, Hami Aksoy, stressed this point by saying that 'Turkey's EU membership is beneficial to everyone. However, the speed of the steps towards membership is not under our control but that of the EU'.[514] It was further elaborated by Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu, who stated:

> EU membership remains a priority for us. […] Turkey has a clear conscience. For 60 years, we have worked hard on the road to accession. However, double standards on the EU side erode dialogue and aggravate disappointment towards the EU in Turkish public opinion. […] We expect the EU to uphold its commitments and take positive concrete measures to overcome the confidence crisis.[515]

Against this background, the obstacles on Turkey's EU path were interpreted as having a political, not technical nature.[516] Minister Çavuşoğlu asserted:

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[513] Ibrahim Kalın, 'Statement by Presidential Spokesperson', 14 September 2017 <https://www.tccb.gov.tr/en/spokesperson/1696/83484/statement-by-presidential-spokesperson-ambassador-ibrahim-kalin> [accessed 10 February 2020].

[514] Hami Aksoy, 'Meeting with the Press', 6 March 2018 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/disisleri-bakanligi-sozcusu-hami-aksoyun-basin-bilgilendirme-toplantisi_-6_03_2018.tr.mfa> [accessed 10 February 2020].

[515] Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, 'Interview to Phileleftheros', 21 May 2017 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/interview-of-h_e_-mr_-mevlüt-çavuşoğlu-to-phileleftheros_-21-may-2017.en.> [accessed 30 March 2020]. See also Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, 'A New Beginning for Greater Goals', 21 May 2017 <https://www.tccb.gov.tr/en/news/542/75294/bugun-bir-kez-daha-fatihamizi-okuyor-daha-buyuk-hedefler-icin-yeni-bir-baslangic-yapiyoruz> [accessed 10 February 2020].

[516] Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Press Release No: 109', 17 April 2018 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-109_-ab-komisyonunun-2018-turkiye-ulke-raporu-hk_en.en.mfa> [accessed 10 February 2020]. See also Hüseyin Müftüoğlu, 'Question and Answer No: 35', 6 July 2017 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/sc_-35_-disisleri-bakanligi-sozcusunun-AP-Genel-Kurulunda-Kabul-Edilen-Turkiye-Karari-

[t]he problem is political, not technical. Why is Germany opposing [Turkish accession] now? Because they have their elections. Why is Austria opposing Turkey's full membership? Because there is a rise of Islamophobia, xenophobia and racism in Austria, and it's a big internal issue.[517]

As such, the final decision on Turkey's EU membership was linked with a need for a new strategical vision for the EU. Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım expressed it as follows:

[f]rom here I call on my European friends once again: Turkey has fulfilled all of its obligations to the European Union and supports this process. We uphold our full membership perspective. The question which one should be asking here is what the European Union's decision regarding Turkey is. Will Europe continue on its path with a new vision, a vision of enlargement, a vision that is all embracing, or will it continue by isolating itself? All we ask of some European countries, which have made statements not befitting of allies, is sincerity.[518]

Within Turkey's biographical narrative, it was understood that as long as Turkey's membership prospects do not advance, it means that European leaders are narrow-minded.[519] In this context, two main arguments were presented. First, as discussed above, there was the so-called cultural-religious argument referring to the EU's universalistic identity discourse based on common values. Only by admitting a majority-Muslim country to the organization was the EU able to oppose the xenophobic and Islamophobic tendencies and prove that it still is a community based

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Hk-Bir-Soruya-Cevabi_en.en.mfa> [accessed 10 February 2020]; Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, 'Interview to Estonian Public Broadcasting (ERR)', 26 October 2016 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/interview-of-h_e_-mr_-mevlut-cavusoglu-to-estonian-public-broadcasting-_err_.en.mfa> [accessed 10 February 2020].

[517] Çavuşoğlu, 'Interview to Al-Monitor'. See also Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Press Release No: 109'; Hüseyin Müftüoğlu.

[518] Binali Yıldırım, 'Speech at the Grand National Assembly of Turkey', 27 March 2018 <https://www.akparti.org.tr/haberler/basbakan-yildirim-in-tbmm-grup-toplantisi-nda-yaptigi-konusmanin-metni-2/> [accessed 10 February 2020].

[519] Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, 'Speech at the High-Level Seminar Entitled "Together for Enhanced and More Stable Europe" as Part of the Year-Long Activities Commemorating 90th Anniversary of the Turkey-Finland Friendship Agreement', 18 November 2014 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/speech-by-h_e_-mr_-mevlüt-çavuşoğlu-at-the-high_level-seminar-entitled.en.mfa> [accessed 10 February 2020]. See also Gül, 'Message on the Occasion of Europe Day'; Ahmet Berat Çonkar [AKP] and Volkan Bozkır [AKP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 26th Term, 1st Legislative Year, 48th Session'.

on shared values. Secondly, there was a strategic argument that was primarily made in reference to Turkey's liminal position. According to President Erdoğan,

> [i]n addition to many other benefits, Turkey has the added advantage of being able to understand and analyse what's happening in its region, and that alone should be a very important reason -- justification as to why Turkey should become a member of the European Union.[520]

This was followed by an argument that by not including Turkey within the organization's ranks, the EU will lose more than Turkey.[521]

In the last period under analysis, the strategy of challenging the EU's judgement was strengthened by the argument underlying that the EU lacks empathy toward Turkey. This trend became more pronounced after the failed coup d'état from July 2016. Turkey was disappointed by the EU's lukewarm reaction to the coup. The strategy of wait-and-see adopted by the EU and its member states, when a democratically elected government was threatened, was once again interpreted as being against the EU's own values.[522] Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu outlined this way of thinking by sayin that:

> [t]he EU should try to understand the feelings of Turks and the trauma in Turkey. This is the main problem of the EU. It has never tried to understand others. They believe that they are the lords, they give the conditions, they threaten everyone, they always say take it or leave it.[523]

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[520] Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, 'Address at the Council on Foreign Relations', 23 September 2014 <https://www.tccb.gov.tr/en/news/542/3249/president-erdogan-addresses-cfr> [accessed 10 February 2020]. See also Volkan Bozkır [AKP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 26th Term, 5th Legislative Year, 28th Session'.

[521] Yıldırım, 'Interview to NTV and Star TV'.

[522] Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Press Release No: 283', 8 November 2016 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-283_-8-november-2016_-press-release-regarding-the-statement-of-federica-mogherini_-high-representative-of-the-european-union-for-foreign-affairs-and-security-policy_-about-the-latest-developments-in-turkey.en.mfa> [accessed 10 February 2020]. See also Binali Yıldırım, 'Speech at the 9th Ambassador's Conference', 10 January 2017 <https://www.akparti.org.tr/haberler/basbakan-yildirim-in-9-buyukelciler-konferasi-nda-yaptigi-konusmanin-tam-metni/> [accessed 10 February 2020]; Ömer Çelik [AKP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 26th Term, 3rd Legislative Year, 41st Session'.

[523] Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, 'Interview to News Agency of the Slovak Republic TASR', 29 May 2017 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/interview-of-h_e_-mr_-mevlüt-çavuşoğlu-to-news-agency-of-the-slovak-republic-tasr_-29-may-2017.en.mfa> [accessed 10 February 2020].

As such, by the end of the analyzed period Minister Çavuşoğlu aptly summarized how Turkey sees itself vis-à-vis the EU, which might not necessarily resonate with how the EU sees it:

> [f]or many centuries, Turkey has been an indispensable part of Europe. We are an inseparable part of Euro-Atlantic and European institutions. EU membership is our strategic goal, and we call for a non-politicized process of accession negotiations. I have full confidence that Europe will leave the myopic vision adopted since the global financial crisis and see Turkey as a lasting bulwark for European peace, security, and prosperity.[524]

## 10. Conclusions

In Chapter 1, I indicated that in each empirical chapter Turkey's biographical narrative is approached with three questions: Why has Turkey decided to follow this particular policy? What kind of information does it reveal about how Turkey perceives itself and its place in the world? Is it in any way related to its position vis-à-vis Europe/the West? Regarding the first question, membership in the European Union was perceived as a strategic goal of Turkey due to the country's long-standing relationship with Europe, or simply because Turkey is perceived as a European country. It should be noted that similarly to the discussion presented in Chapter 1, the meaning of belonging to Europe/the West still follows the understanding it was endowed with by Atatürk. As such, the main value of Europe/the West is that it is perceived as the embodiment of civilization, and what Turkey wants foremost is 'to be accepted as an equal by the Western civilisation complex'.[525] Therefore, EU membership is as much an aim in itself as it is a means to an end, this being reaching the level of contemporary civilization. As such, this explanation fits closely with the scholarship underlying ideational factors as discussed in section eight. Consequently, I posit that this works as a master narrative. However, while the master narrative stays constant, the stories built around it change, which fits into the scope of my second and third questions.

First, after attempts to place Turkey in the category of the Western self during the 1990s failed, Turkey switched to the strategy of capitalizing on its liminal position. Turkey's EU membership

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[524] Çavuşoğlu, 'Interview to Ottawa Life Magazine'.

[525] Glyptis, 'Which Side of the Fence? Turkey's Uncertain Place in the EU', p. 108. See also Glyptis, 'EU Accession or Why Is Turkey "Paying" for Europe's Identity Crisis?'; Müftüler-Baç, *Turkey's Relations with a Changing Europe*.

has not lost its value within this process as the European/Western identity is a constituting block of Turkey's liminal position. However, Turkey's approach toward the EU became more assertive. The more unique Turkey perceived itself within the narrative underlying its liminality, the more resistant it became vis-à-vis the European Union. The clearest example is that while during the first analyzed period, the responsibility for the success of the accession negotiations was placed on Turkey, in the second period, it was seen as a shared endeavour of Turkey and the EU, in the last period, the responsibility was entirely transferred to the EU.

Secondly, what became visible is that Turkey was well-accustomed to the normative standards dominating the EU discourse. Therefore, it often framed its narrative in a way that took the EU's discourse as a point of reference.[526] In this context, Turkey employed a range of interrelated narratives, including describing the EU as a Christian club, accusing it of xenophobia, racism, and Islamophobia as well as of having double standards, which fit into a broader picture of showing that the EU does not adhere to the values it promotes. This falls within the point underlined by Jelena Subotic that narratives enter into interaction and dialogue with one another.[527]

Turkey's goal was to cause a cognitive dissonance within the community to force the EU into a more favourable treatment of Turkey. In such a case, the change of the EU's stance toward Turkey would have been based on the organization's need to restore its ontological security rather than reforms undertaken by Turkey. In other words, the burden of proof that the exclusion of Turkey is not motivated by the abovementioned reasons was transferred to the EU. Consequently, the questions of Turkey's belonging resonated with the internal debates about European identity and the EU as an organization. Turkey's strategy fell on fertile ground with the advocates of seeing the EU through the universalistic discourse, which underlines that there is no inherent obstacle in Turkey's EU membership. However, the universalistic discourse was balanced by the particularistic discourse, which sees Europe from a cultural-religious perspective. Therefore, in the end, Turkey's strategy did not bring the expected results.

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[526] For a similar point, see Bahar Rumelili, 'Negotiating Europe: EU-Turkey Relations from an Identity Perspective', *Insight Turkey*, 10.1 (2008), 97–110 (pp. 104–6); Morozov and Rumelili, p. 41.
[527] Subotic, 'Genocide Narratives as Narratives-in-Dialogue'; Subotic, 'Narrative, Ontological Security, and Foreign Policy Change'.

With time, the inaccuracies between the EU normative standards and its behaviour led Turkey to question the EU's conditionality. In contrast, this attitude was not visible during the negotiation process of the Central and Eastern European countries, which perceived the EU in its totality as a model to imitate. This ambivalent relationship toward the EU was consistent with the Sèvres Syndrome. On the one hand, Turkey wanted to belong to Europe, which was manifested in its continuous pursuit of EU membership. On the other hand, Turkey often perceived the European countries as hostile, being distrustful of their real motives and accusing them of striving to weaken Turkey. Moreover, Turkey's biographical narrative regarding the EU was built around two other conflicting assumptions – the EU was perceived as the missing link in Turkey's quest to become a European country while at the same time it was emphasized that no one could put into question Turkey's Europeanness.

Third, looking at Turkey's biographical narrative broadened our understanding of the impact that the accession negotiations have on Turkey by including in the picture the costs that Turkey bears by the continuous pursual of EU membership. While the ontological security scholarship suggests that, at times, strategies aimed at providing ontological security might undermine a country's physical security, the relationship between Turkey and the EU shows that the same mechanism might simultaneously strengthen and weaken an actor's ontological security. While the routinization of the relationship with the EU is seen as a mechanism enhancing Turkey's ontological security by confirming the country's identity as part of the West, at the same time, it undermines the feeling of ontological security by exposing Turkey to scrutiny and criticism. Therefore, the conflicting assumptions regarding the relationship between Turkey and the EU, which are visible in Turkey's biographical narrative, help explain Turkey's inconsistent behaviour vis-à-vis the EU.

Having this in mind leads me to two important questions: Is Turkey ready and willing to partially give up on its sovereignty to enter the European Union? And if so, how a change within one of the foundational blocks of Turkey's state identity will, in turn, influence its sense of ontological security? The EU's impact on the sovereignty of its member states and candidate countries has

been a subject of many debates.[528] While this question applies equally to all current and future EU member states, the degree to which they perceive it as a major issue differs and is closely related to their sense of ontological security. In this context, it is worth emphasizing that the question of sovereignty is one of the main differences between the costs imposed by membership in NATO and the EU. While NATO is based around common interests, the EU is a self-perceived community of values, which affects the overall functioning of its member states.

The question of sovereignty in regard to the EU constitutes a Catch 22 for Turkey. The decision to move toward the West was motivated by the idea that only participation in the contemporary civilization will provide Turkey equality with other European states. This, in turn, guarantees not only independence but also sovereignty. Joining the European Union was often labelled as the last step in this process. However, the internal transformation of the EU from the economic to the political community *de facto* means diluting Turkey's sovereignty by exposing it to scrutiny and regulations imposed from above. While it is true that this process already started, due to the largely non-functioning negotiations, Turkey never had to really face the question of whether it is ready to partially give up its sovereignty to join the EU. Consequently, concerning the second question, Leda-Agapi Glyptis aptly observes that for Turkey to join the EU 'legal and institutional reforms have to be coupled with a fundamental normative transformation that may affect the core of the very ideological position that sought Western acceptance in the first place'.[529]

Therefore, from an ontological security perspective, the current status between Turkey and the EU might be sufficient for Turkey (in the end, the 1999 Helsinki Summit formally confirmed Turkey's Europeanness); however, any kind of alternative to full membership is not acceptable. Even though the idea of a privileged partnership can be seen as a response of some European countries to Turkey's liminality, Turkey needs the European component of its identity because it is an important building block of its liminal position, and this is better guaranteed by the accession

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[528] Ole Wæver, 'Identity, Integration and Security: Solving the Sovereignty Puzzle in E.U. Studies', *Journal of International Affairs*, 48.2 (1995), 389–431; *Sovereignty in Transition*, ed. by Neil Walker (Oxford and Portland: Hart Publishing, 2003); Rebecca Adler-Nissen, 'Opting Out of an Ever Closer Union: The Integration Doxa and the Management of Sovereignty', *West European Politics*, 34.5 (2011), 1092–1113; Nathalie Brack, Ramona Coman, and Amandine Crespy, 'Unpacking Old and New Conflicts of Sovereignty in the European Polity', *Journal of European Integration*, 41.7 (2019), 817–32.
[529] Glyptis, 'Which Side of the Fence? Turkey's Uncertain Place in the EU', pp. 108–9.

negotiations, even if non-functioning, than by the privileged partnership.[530] Turkey's strong rejection of alternative possibilities cannot be fully grasped without understanding Turkey's peculiar sense of ontological security. A possibility of a privileged partnership being accorded to Turkey moves to the foreground the insecurities and anxieties that Atatürk's decision to move towards the West was supposed to appease. It would also serve as the most tangible example that Turkey is discreditable regardless of almost a century-long process aimed at stigma correction. In the long run, such an option could be more beneficial to Turkey both in terms of material gains and identity-related benefits. However, at this stage, it lies entirely outside of the scope of Turkey's self-perception, and it would require its total re-evaluation.

I will finish the discussion presented in this chapter by showing that Turkey's EU membership process led to the institutionalization of changes ongoing within Turkey's state identity for more than a decade. The EU-guided reforms opened a political space in Turkey by weakening the influence of the Kemalist elite on state institutions, which in turn, was capitalized by the governing AKP. In this context, two types of reforms were crucial – concerning civil-military relations and the law on political parties.

As of 2001, the role and constitution of the National Security Council (MGK), which according to Article 118 of the 1982 Constitution submitted to the Council of Ministers decisions on the identification, formulation, and implementation of the national security policy, was modified. Most importantly, the 2001 constitutional amendments gave civilian members numerical superiority over military members and underlined its advisory, not deciding role. This transformation was important from the perspective of the ongoing changes within Turkey's state identity because in 1997, the MGK was crucial in toppling Erbakan's government, which will be discussed more in-depth in the following chapter. This scenario could be easily repeated in the case of the AKP if the previous institutional set up was still in place.

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[530] In the past, Turkey objected to the idea of using the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership as a mechanism confining Turkey's role to one of the EU's neighbouring countries and treating it as an alternative to Turkey's full membership.

The second type of reforms carried out under the aegis of the European Union focused on the functioning of the political parties. Most importantly, changes introduced to the Constitution, the Law on Political Parties, and the Law on the Election of Members of Parliament made closing political parties accused of violating the Constitution harder and the criteria for it more transparent. After the 2001 constitutional amendments, a two-thirds majority of the Constitutional Court became required to close a political party, and a gradual punishment system was introduced. Although the AKP distanced itself from the Islamic background, it was perceived in this way by the Kemalist elite. In 2008, the AKP was accused of violating the principle of separation between religion and state, and the party avoided closure by just one vote.[531]

The transformation in Turkey's institutional setting was possible because the official start of the accession negotiation, which confirmed Turkey's Europeanness in the post-Cold War world,[532] was perceived as a common goal uniting above the party lines. Therefore, the necessary reforms were not seen as a threat to Turkey's state identity. Importantly, without previous changes, the AKP would most probably have disappeared from Turkey's political landscape through military intervention or a decision of the Constitutional Court. While Turkey's self-perception as a liminal actor would continue, as this process started before the AKP assumed power, the changes within Turkey's state identity would be probably slower.

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[531] Six out of eleven judges ruled in favor of closing the AKP.
[532] Turkey became a member of the most important Western organizations before the end of the Cold War.

# CHAPTER 4: ISRAEL AS A CONNECTION TO THE WEST?

1. Introduction

Having outlined in the previous chapter forces driving Turkey's continuous engagement with the European Union through the lens of Turkey's ontological security needs, this chapter proceeds with an examination of the bilateral relationship between Turkey and Israel. At first glance, it might seem puzzling why Turkey's relationship with Israel is chosen as a case study in a research project looking at Turkey's ambivalent relationship with the West. Therefore, it is necessary to explain two points. First, although I look at how the ambivalent relationship between Turkey and the West influences the ontological security of the former, I posit that its impact is not limited to their bilateral encounters. On the contrary, I argue that Turkey's obsession with status, recognition, and acceptance conditions its behaviour at large. Secondly, since Turkey recognized the State of Israel on 28 March 1949, their bilateral relationship has been perceived as proof of Turkey's Western orientation. Five decades later, when the AKP came to power, the sincerity of Turkey's intentions toward Israel was put into question, and each instance of trouble has been interpreted as proof of Ankara drifting from the West. The current state of the bilateral relations seems to prove this assumption – in December 2017, the Israeli Ambassador to Ankara Eitan Naeh was asked to leave Turkey 'for a while'. Since then, Turkish-Israeli relations are *de facto* downgraded. Considering the above, I treat Israel as an 'acid test' toward changes ongoing in Turkey's state identity since the end of the Cold War.

This chapter starts with the historicization of the Turkish-Israeli relationship through a discussion of the Cold War years (section two) and the golden decade of the 1990s (section three). This analysis uncovers that Turkey's sensitivity, derived from its ambivalent relationship with the West, was a constant factor in Turkey's self-perception, influencing its relationships with the outside world. The discussion then turns to the contextualization that is done on three levels. Section four focuses on a short period between the end of the 1990s and the November 2002 elections, just before the AKP assumed power. Section five looks at the place of Israel in Davutoğlu's grand strategy for Turkey, while section six proceeds to the overview of the existing explanations regarding the deterioration in the Turkish-Israeli relationship. The central part of

the analysis, which is presented in section seven, looks at how the relationship with Israel was articulated through Turkey's biographical narrative since the AKP came to power. Section eight is devoted to conclusions.

2.  The 'mistress syndrome' during the Cold War

The founder of the State of Israel and the country's first Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion, compared Turkey's treatment of Israel as a man treating his mistress – warm behind the closed door, however, distant in public.[533] This is an apt description of how the Cold War relationship between both countries proceeded. Turkey was the first Muslim country to recognize the State of Israel. However, Turkey's first reaction to Israel's independence aspirations was negative. In November 1947, Turkey voted against the UN Resolution 181 on the partition of Palestine. Turkey's decision stood in contrast to that taken by the Western countries.[534] During the heated debate on the resolution, the representative of Turkey abstained from taking the floor; therefore, there is no first-hand explanation behind Ankara's decision. Taking into consideration Turkey's foreign policy at this time, the regional and religious loyalties cannot be ignored. In all previous discussions on the Palestinian question at the UN, Turkey stood firmly by the Arab position.[535] However, considering that the Arab states' attitude toward Israel did not change during the Cold War, while Turkey's stance did, it is important to explore other factors that may explain Turkey's reluctant attitude.

First, since the establishment of the Republic, the support for the status quo crystallized as one of the main principles of Turkish foreign policy. As such, Turkey preferred a continued British presence in Palestine. In February 1948, Foreign Minister Necmettin Sadak said that although Turkey's position is interpreted as pro-Arab due to the country's Muslim character and the UN voting pattern, it was actually dictated by the willingness to preserve stability because in the

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[533] Amikam Nachmani, *Israel, Turkey and Greece: Uneasy Relations in the East Mediterranean* (London: Frank Cass, 1987), p. 76.

[534] Only the United Kingdom abstained.

[535] George Emanuel Gruen, 'Turkey, Israel and the Palestine Question, 1948-1960: A Study in the Diplomacy of Ambivalence' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Columbia, 1970), p. 21. Gruen analyzed thirteen available rollcall votes on the question of Palestine where Arab states were united in their position. As non-Arab countries, only Turkey and Afghanistan also supported all of them.

Middle East change always led to violence.[536] Secondly, Turkish foreign policy was also guided by an extreme fear of communism. Turkish leaders were afraid that Israel might turn into a bridgehead of the Soviet Union in the region. According to Amikam Nachmani, during the early years of the Turkish-Israeli relationship, 'convincing the Turks that Israel was not "red" almost assumed the status of a top national priority'.[537]

The first sign of change in Turkey's attitude toward Israel came during the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. In contrast to the Arab states, Ankara decided to remain neutral.[538] Turkey continued with this position during the vote over Israel's admission to the UN. Then in December 1948, Turkey, together with France and the United States, was chosen as a member of the UN Conciliation Commission for Palestine (CCP). It was the first time when Turkey voted in opposition to its Middle Eastern neighbours that were against the establishment of the commission in the first place.[539]

Within less than two years, between November 1947 and March 1949, Turkey changed its attitude toward Israel from negative to positive because it started to perceive the existence of Israel as a new status quo in the region. Already in February 1948, Sadak called Israel a reality that is recognized by more than thirty countries, arguing that Arab states themselves engaged in bilateral contacts with Israel during the secret talks in Rhodes.[540] Moreover, the overwhelming support that Israel received from the West eased Turkey's fears regarding its communist orientation. Turkey officially recognized the State of Israel on 28 March 1949. The exchange of diplomats in the rank of chargé d'affaires in January 1950 and the upgrade of the bilateral relationship to the ambassador level in 1952 shows that Ankara's decision was not mere lip service to its allies but a commitment to Turkey's Western orientation.

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[536] Gruen, 37-38

[537] Nachmani, *Israel, Turkey and Greece: Uneasy Relations in the East Mediterranean*, p. 50.

[538] For example, Turkey prohibited its citizens from joining either side under the threat of losing citizenship and rejected Arab requests for arms, see Gruen, pp. 46–47.

[539] Gruen, pp. 78–80.

[540] Jacob Abadi, *Israel's Quest for Recognition and Acceptance in Asia: Garrison State Diplomacy* (London and Portland: Frank Cass, 2004), p. 5; Michael B. Bishku, 'How Has Turkey Viewed Israel?', *Israel Affairs*, 12.1 (2007), 177–94 (p. 181).

a. Israel as the connection to the West

The relationship with Israel offered Turkey an additional connection to the West, supporting Turkey's effort to be perceived as an equal part of the community. In this context, Turkey counted not only on the support of the State of Israel but also on the pro-Israel lobby.[541] As both George E. Gruen and Amikam Nachmani[542] observe, Turkish policymakers believed in the power of the international Jewish community, especially in the United States. They believed that the Jewish lobby could project a liberal image of Turkey abroad and at the same time promote the country's interests. Rather than deny Turkey's assumption, Israel sought to strengthen it, recognizing its strategic importance in developing a positive relationship between both countries.[543] Similarly, the United States was aware of Turkey's need for recognition and appreciation from the West. Therefore, it encouraged Israelis to develop closer ties to Americans in Turkey to improve their relationship with the host country. This is shown in the following statement from the American intelligence:

> [The Israelis should] seek the proximity of the Americans in Turkey... Ties with the Americans...will exert considerable influence upon the Turks. It would be a good thing if the Turks think that [Israel] has influence with the Americans...(Wartime Nazi propaganda about 'the Jews ruling the United States' has left its mark on numerous Turks who believe in it. This factor too should be put to advantage...).[544]

With the improved Turkish-Israeli relations, Turkey sought to use it to its advantage. According to Gruen, Turkey asked for Israel's help in securing NATO's membership,[545] while according to Nachmani, it turned to Israel in the mid-1950s when faced with critical international press due to Turkey's policy on Cyprus and its relationship with Greece.[546] Israel reacted positively to Turkey's requests. In the case of NATO membership, there is no information regarding the role Israel

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[541] For more on inner workings of the Israel lobby, see John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007).

[542] Their works give us invaluable insights into the first decades of the Turkish-Israeli relationship, see Gruen; Nachmani, *Israel, Turkey and Greece: Uneasy Relations in the East Mediterranean*.

[543] Nachmani, *Israel, Turkey and Greece: Uneasy Relations in the East Mediterranean*, p. 54.

[544] Israel Consulate in Istanbul, Tuvia Arazi, ISA 2568/12, 11 March 1950 quoted in Nachmani, *Israel, Turkey and Greece: Uneasy Relations in the East Mediterranean*, pp. 53–54.

[545] Gruen, p. 170; Nachmani, *Israel, Turkey and Greece: Uneasy Relations in the East Mediterranean*, p. 55.

[546] Nachmani, *Turkey: Facing a New Millennium*, p. 56.

actually played in convincing the reluctant countries. On the Cyprus front, Israel achieved rather limited success.[547]

b. Turkey as a liminal actor

While Israel's connection had a positive effect on Turkey's ontological security by testifying to the country's Western vocation as well as by repairing or strengthening its image abroad, it led to massive criticism from the Arab states. This, however, was not as damaging for Turkey's self-perception as the one originating in the West because Ankara did not seek acceptance and belonging from its Middle Eastern neighbours. By constantly criticizing Turkey's behaviour, however, the Arab states discursively undermined Turkey's belonging to the Western community, hinting that Turkey with its stigma is discreditable.

In the 1950s, Turkey's belonging to the West appeared secured, especially after being accepted to NATO. Nevertheless, from the perspective of the Arab states, Turkey was not seen as a genuinely Western country but rather as a country betwixt and between the West and the Muslim world. While the Arab states did not perceive Turkey as one of them, they did expect Ankara to behave in a certain way derived from intergroup solidarity based on historical, cultural, and religious ties. For this reason, Turkey's Muslim neighbours felt that they were in a position to criticize Turkey on its foreign policy choices. The following excerpt from an Egyptian newspaper aptly illustrates that Turkey was seen as a liminal actor from the Arab perspective:

> [i]f you happened to hear a Turkish singer, you would think for the first moment that you are listening to familiar Arabic music - but after a few seconds you discover that actually you don't understand what you hear. Turkish politics looks to us the same: in the first moment we think we understand it and believe it is close to us, but then we discover that it is full of riddles, impossible to understand and difficult to explain.[548]

In this context, Turkey's recognition of Israel was perceived as a betrayal:

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[547] Nachmani, *Israel, Turkey and Greece: Uneasy Relations in the East Mediterranean*, pp. 56–57.

[548] Quoted in Ofra Bengio and Gencer Özcan, 'Old Grievances, New Fear: Arab Perceptions of Turkey and Its Alignment with Israel', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 37.2 (2001), 50–92 (p. 51).

[n]ot only did Turkey not content itself with the passive crime of alienating itself from the problem of Palestinian Arabs but it took one active step further by recognizing Israel. It then took another active step in helping it survive and consolidate itself and another hostile one [against the Arabs] by attempting to break the economic embargo that the Arabs had imposed on Israel. Thus, it was the only state which had interfered in a war which was still going on between the Arabs and Israel, by taking the Israeli side.[549]

The last sentence where Turkey is described as the only country to support Israel, which is far from the truth, is particularly telling. Following this line of argument, Turkey's betrayal of intergroup solidarity by recognizing Israel became a leitmotiv in anti-Turkish propaganda spread by some countries in the region, especially by Egypt and Syria.[550]

On its part, Turkey was not wholly indifferent to this criticism and subordinated relations with Israel to the resentment of the Arab states by keeping them low profile. Turkey opened its diplomatic mission in Israel in January 1950 on the level of a chargé d'affaires, not an ambassador, to head its mission. Turkey's representative to Israel, Seyfullah Esin, was an experienced diplomat with a personal rank of minister who would have been nominated for an ambassadorial post in any other country.[551] It took Ankara two years to upgrade the status of its diplomatic mission to the ambassador level. However, after the Suez Crisis, it was downgraded to the previous one. It was not restored even during the times of the closest bilateral cooperation, discussed in the following part of this section. At the same time, Ankara continued with a practice of appointing high ranking diplomats to Israel, which created a smokescreen – officially, the relations between Turkey and Israel were on a lower level than with its Muslim neighbours; however, looking at the choice of diplomats that were sent to Israel it can be concluded that Turkey attached great importance to its mission in Tel Aviv.

The difficult position that Turkey was put in was strengthened due to the complicated relationship between Turkey, the West and the Arab countries. As was discussed in the previous section, an important factor in Turkey's recognition of Israel was its quest to be perceived as an

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[549] Quoted in Bengio and Özcan, p. 57.
[550] Gruen, p. 95.
[551] Gruen, p. 119.

equal part of the West. Therefore, one can assume that the West always supported close cooperation between two of its allies in the region. However, this was not as straightforward as it might seem, and at times, Turkey's Western connection was detrimental to the relationship with Israel. From the perspective of the West, the value of Turkey lay in its Middle Eastern connection and the possibility of establishing a pro-Western alliance in the region. Especially the United States pushed Turkey to court the Arab states. During such times, secrecy in the relationship with Israel was a condition *sine qua non* of the success of Turkey's efforts.

The abovementioned situation materialized for the first time at the beginning of the 1950s when the United Kingdom (UK) decided to create the Allied Middle East Command, an idea which was never realized.[552] Although, in the opinion of Turkish policymakers, the timing was not suitable for such a move, Turkey was tasked with convincing Egypt to join. As foreseen by Turkish policymakers, the proposal was met with a strong reaction not only in Egypt but also in Syria and led to the anti-Turkish outburst in both countries.[553] What should be underlined is that Ankara agreed to fulfil its role, against its better judgement, only after being promised full membership in NATO.[554]

Similar factors were at play when the Middle Eastern security pact materialized in the form of the Baghdad Pact. Following the United States and the United Kingdom, Turkey assured Israel that in the long run, the Middle East defence pact would be beneficial to Israel's interests because it gave an opportunity to moderate the views of its Arab members. However, as Kemal Karpat observed:

> [t]here is hardly any other alliance in the recent history of foreign affairs as unnecessary, ineffectual and harmful to all parties as the Baghdad Pact. Indeed, it cause immense harm to the Western interests in the area, it precipitated the Arab countries' alignment with

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[552] See Behçet K. Yeşilbursa, 'Turkey's Participation in the Middle East Command and Its Admission to NATO, 1950-52', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 35.4 (1999), 70–102.

[553] A popular magazine in Cairo portrayed Turkey as a dog licking shoes of the representatives of the United States, Great Britain and France. After an official protest from Ankara, the newspaper printed a corrected version of the cartoon – the dog was proudly marching in front of the representatives of the three West countries, and the American was holding it on a leash. See Gruen, p. 182.

[554] Yeşilbursa, p. 70.

the Soviet Union, it stimulated the rise of radical ideologies, and cast Turks in the image of docile tool of Western powers.[555]

Considering the above discussion, one can conclude that Turkey's foreign policy in the Middle East was planned according to its actual or potential consequences for the relationship with the West, showing the importance that Ankara attached to its belonging to the community. However, the Western perception of Turkey as a valuable member of the alliance due to its role in the Middle East shows that even when Turkey's Western identity was most secured, it never entirely ceased its status as an outsider. Looking at the inconsistency in Turkey's behaviour that this situation produced, Gruen aptly notes that 'there is no doubt that Ankara's task would have been simpler and the ambivalence in its policy less if the Western powers themselves had followed a unified and consistent policy toward Israel and toward the Middle East as a whole'.[556]

c. From a secret honeymoon to deterioration

When the Baghdad Pact was formed in 1955, the prospects of improvement in the relationship between Turkey and Israel seemed like wishful thinking on the part of the Israeli elite. However, the developments of 1957 and 1958 (presented in the order of significance): the transformation in the Arab world,[557] the rapprochement between Israel and Iran,[558] and a changed attitude in the United States,[559] led to the creation of the so-called 'peripheral alliance' or 'Phantom Pact', which marked the highest level of Turkish-Israeli cooperation during the Cold War.

The peripheral alliance consisted of a series of bilateral agreements between Israel and non-Arab countries in the region – Ethiopia, Iran and Turkey. [560] Due to its secret nature, the exact scope

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[555] Kemal H. Karpat, 'Turkish and Arab-Israeli Relations', in *Turkey's Foreign Policy in Transition: 1950-1974*, ed. by Kemal H. Karpat (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1975), pp. 108–34 (p. 116).

[556] Gruen, p. 192.

[557] The establishment of the United Arab Republic (UAR) between Egypt and Syria in February 1958 and the fall of the monarchy in Iraq in July 1958 led to the dissolution of the Baghdad Pact and the creation of the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO).

[558] Iran was Turkey's partner in the Baghdad Pact, and most probably, it played an instrumental role in convincing Turkey to join the pact with Israel, see Bengio, *The Turkish-Israeli Relationship: Changing Ties of Middle Eastern Outsiders*, p. 37.

[559] The United States started to once again support closer cooperation between its two allies in the region after its Middle East policy based on a pro-Western security pact did not bring the expected results.

[560] The idea of forging an alliance with non-Arab countries and minorities of the Middle East preceded Israel's independence. It was based on the understanding that their sheer numbers equalled or exceeded that of the Arabs. Consequently, such an alliance would positively contribute to the stability of the region.

of cooperation between Turkey and Israel is unknown. According to Ofra Bengio, it had economic, diplomatic and military dimensions.[561] The military component seemed the central one, and it included trilateral cooperation between Israel, Iran, and Turkey called the Trident. Its aim was the exchange of intelligence between Israel's Mossad, Turkey's National Security Service (MAH),[562] and Iran's Savak. According to the documents found at the American Embassy in Teheran after the 1979 Revolution, the heads of these three organizations met twice a year. The peripheral pact survived the 1960 military coup d'état in Turkey, and Israel was the third country to recognize the new regime. The relationship continued until April 1966 when the head of Turkish intelligence, Sezai Orkunt, informed the Israeli military attaché in Ankara that cooperation was frozen.[563]

The following decades saw a deterioration in the Turkish-Israeli relationship that was an unintended result of the developments in Cyprus. Although the Cyprus crisis did not have any direct link to cooperation between Turkey and Israel, it led to a significant change in how Ankara perceived and evaluated its relations with the outside world. The Cyprus crisis became a source of ontological insecurity for Turkey, and a fight for the well-being of Turkish Cypriots became incorporated in Turkey's national biography as a national cause (Turkish *milli dava*) defined as 'a cause that everyone discusses, accepts, and agrees on'.[564]

The inclusion of Cyprus as a national cause into Turkey's biographical narrative shows the importance of the ontological security perspective in IR. It is a prime example of how the struggle for ontological security became a priority, leading to a change in foreign policy.[565] From a rational point of view, military intervention on the island brought only negative consequences for Turkey.

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[561] Bengio, *The Turkish-Israeli Relationship: Changing Ties of Middle Eastern Outsiders*, pp. 44–45.

[562] Later renamed to National Intelligence Organization (MIT).

[563] A draft letter from Rabin to Tural, ISA 4075/26, early June 1966; Military attaché to the Head of Military Intelligence, ISA, 4075/26, 10 June 1966 cited in Bengio, *The Turkish-Israeli Relationship: Changing Ties of Middle Eastern Outsiders*, p. 64.

[564] Hasan Hastürer, 'Milli Dava Değil, Kavga Dava [Not a National Cause, A Cause for the Sake of Fighting]', Kıbrıs Postası, 23 July 2008 quoted in Rebecca Bryant and Mete Hatay, 'Turkish Perceptions of Cyprus: 1948 to the Present', PCC Report 1/2015 (PRIO Cyprus Center, 2015), pp. 7–8 <https://www.prio.org/Publications/Publication/?x=9248> [accessed 15 September 2019].

[565] More on the ontological security dimension of the Cyprus conflict, see Neophytos Loizides, 'Ontological Security and Ethnic Adaptation in Cyprus', in *Conflict Resolution and Ontological Security: Peace Anxieties*, ed. by Bahar Rumelili (London and New York: Routledge, 2015), pp. 71–94.

First, Turkey's Cyprus policy was publicly condemned, especially by Turkey's significant other – the West. This played into Turkey's insecurities related to the established-outsider dynamics. On a financial level, this was a costly adventure, which came at a time when Turkey's economy struggled.[566] For Ankara, none of these drawbacks mattered because it already decided to protect Turkish Cypriots at any cost. Interestingly, during the first three decades after the establishment of the Republic, Ankara's stance on Cyprus was a distant one.

The island was not mentioned in the founding documents of the Republic, such as the National Pact and the Treaty of Lausanne.[567] Therefore, the Turkish-speaking community on the island became a part of the so-called outside Turks (Turkish *Dış Türkler*) that had a cultural, historical, and religious connection with Turkey; however, they were outside of the protective umbrella of the new state, which strongly emphasized the principle of non-intervention. This changed was possible due to the efforts of Turkish Cypriot leaders, especially Fazıl Küçük and Rauf Denktaş. Cyprus became re-created in Turkish national biography as an exception to the principle of non-intervention. This was done through the metaphor of Motherland and Babyland (Turkish *anavatan* and *yavruvata*) that underlined the physical and emotional bond between Turkey and Cyprus.[568] Turkish Cypriots were presented as brothers, while the island as an integral part of Anatolia that separated from the landmass. This allowed for the inclusion of Cyprus within the imaginary boundaries of Turkey, enabling the usage of extraordinary measures to protect Turkish Cypriots. Interestingly, public sentiment on Cyprus preceded the government's decision to get involved – through songs, novels, poems, comics, and films, the stories about Turkish Cypriots reached all parts of Turkish society.[569]

Although there was no conflict of interests between Turkey and Israel regarding Cyprus, it led to a period of cooling off in their bilateral relationship. On its part, Israel tried to stop this from happening. Israel's diplomats were very skilful at understating Turkey's sensitivity, and they

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[566]Turkey not only had to cover the costs of the military intervention and the presence of its army on the island but also had to take on itself the responsibility of economically subsidizing the northern part of the island.

[567] Umut Uzer, *Identity And Turkish Foreign Policy: The Kemalist Influence in Cyprus and the Caucasus* (London and New York: I.B.Tauris, 2011), p. 109.

[568] Bryant and Hatay, p. 9.

[569] Bryant and Hatay, p. 11.

concluded that neutrality is not an option and would be interpreted as an anti-Turkish stance.[570] Moreover, as was discussed before, in the mid-1950s, Israel even agreed to lobby on behalf of Turkey to counterbalance negative attitudes of international media regarding Turkey's Cyprus policy. Israel's main drawback, however, was its isolation - it had only one vote at the UN. Furthermore, its support for Turkey's position could easily push Muslim countries, which had power in numbers, to support Greece.

Indirectly, Turkey's disillusionment with the West also worked against Israel. As was mentioned before, the relationship with Israel during the Cold War was an extension of Turkey's pro-Western policy. When the Cyprus conflict grew in intensity, Turkey became painfully disappointed with the reaction of its allies. The most traumatic being the letter of the U.S. President Lyndon Johnson to Prime Minister Ismet İnönü from 5 June 1964, where the American leader informed Turkey that it could not count on NATO's support:

> I hope you will understand that your NATO Allies have not had a chance to consider whether they have an obligation to protect Turkey against the Soviet Union if Turkey takes a step which results in Soviet intervention without the full consent and understanding of its NATO Allies.[571]

The letter came just a year after the U.S. unilaterally decided to remove the Jupiter missiles from Turkey due to the agreement with the Soviet Union following the Cuban Missile Crisis from 1962. These two events combined with the Western criticism of Turkey for its Cyprus policy undermined Ankara's trust in the established routines, forcing the change of policy to re-establish the feeling of ontological security. Not being able to count on its traditional partners and in need of broad support, Turkey decided to open up to other possibilities. As part of this new policy, Turkey started to court the Arab countries, which led to the weakening of Turkey's relations with Israel. This change is best illustrated by Turkish policy towards the Palestinian problem. Until the 1960s, Turkey's position on the Arab-Israeli conflict was based on the support for Palestinian self-

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[570] Nachmani, *Israel, Turkey and Greece: Uneasy Relations in the East Mediterranean*, pp. 70–72.

[571] United States Department of State, '54. Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in Turkey, Washington, 5 June 1964' <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v16/d54> [accessed 15 September 2019].

determination while maintaining diplomatic relations with Israel. This support, however, was mostly verbal – Ankara repeated that a just solution should be reached within the framework of the UN resolutions. During the 1960s, a slow shift in Turkish policy toward Palestine could be observed, which became clearly visible in the 1970s.[572] This was strengthened by the international oil crisis; thus, factors that promoted closer cooperation between Turkey and the Arab countries had the opposite effect on the relationship with Israel.

During the Six-Day War of 1967, Ankara did not allow the United States to use its bases to provide logistical support for Israel. Despite this move, Ankara refrained from labelling Israel as an aggressor, although it did support the UN Resolution 242.[573] During the 1973 War, Ankara went a step further – while not allowing Americans to use Turkish bases, it permitted the Soviet aircrafts to fly over its airspace to assist the Arabs. These developments coincided with the growing tensions in Cyprus and Turkey's more active engagement in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). The organization became the only international forum where Turkey's position fell on fertile ground, especially after the July 1974 military intervention. While the U.S. decided to impose an arms embargo on Turkey for using American weapons during the operation, the OIC invited the leader of the Turkish Muslim Community, Rauf Denktaş, to the Foreign Ministers' meeting in 1975. Turkey's increased engagement on the forum of the OIC ran in parallel with its support for the Palestinian cause. In November 1975, Turkey voted alongside the Muslim countries on the UN resolution defining Zionism as a form of racism. The same year Turkey recognized the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) as the only legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. The following year, during the OIC Foreign Ministers' meeting in Istanbul, Turkey declared that the PLO could open its diplomatic mission in Turkey. During the same meeting, the OIC adopted its first resolution on the Cyprus issue, recognizing

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[572] See Mahmut Bali Aykan, 'Palestinian Question in Turkish Foreign Policy from the 1950s to the 1990s', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 25.1 (1993), 91–110.
[573] Bishku, 'How Has Turkey Viewed Israel?', pp. 184–85.

the rights of both communities on the island.[574] In 1979, the promise given to the PLO was realized.[575] The same year Turkish Cypriots were granted observer status at the OIC.

The biggest crisis in Turkish-Israeli relations came in 1980 after the Knesset declared united Jerusalem as its capital. Following the practice from the past, Turkey decided to downgrade their bilateral relations, this time to the level of a second secretary.[576] Moreover, Turkey closed its Consulate General in Jerusalem; however, even at this point, it did not give in to the pressure from the Arab capitals to break off diplomatic relations with Israel. From this point onward, Turkish-Israeli relations started to slowly regain momentum. As a sign of this change, in 1982, Turkey abstained from the vote on the UN Resolution ES/9-1, which in a strong language criticized Israel for the annexation of the Golan Heights.[577] In 1985, Yehuda Millo was appointed Israel's representative to Ankara in the rank of chargé d'affaires while senior Turkish diplomat Ekrem Güvendiren was appointed to Tel Aviv. By the end of the decade, Turkey returned to its balanced policy toward the Arab-Israeli conflict. On the one hand, in 1988, Turkey voted against the resolution calling for Israel's withdrawal from the UN; on the other hand, the same year, Ankara recognized the new Palestinian state, being the only NATO member to do so.[578]

The slow rapprochement in the Turkish-Israeli relationship was influenced by the transformation of the Cyprus issue into a protracted, low-intensity conflict. At the same time, new developments started to challenge Turkey's sense of ontological security, including the Armenian and Greek lobbies in Washington. Moreover, Israel's isolation became less problematic due to the Camp David Accords from 1978 and the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty from 1979. As such, while the need to maintain an actor's preferred self-perception is constant, the importance of different stories within one's biographical narrative changes according to internal and external developments. The significance of the Cyprus crisis was pushed to the background, while regaining a positive image within the West was moved to the foreground. By the end of the

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[574] M. Hakan Yavuz and Mujeeb R. Khan, 'Turkish Foreign Policy toward the Arab-Israeli Conflict: Duality and the Development (1950-1991)', *Arab Studies Quarterly*, 14.4 (1992), 69–94 (p. 80).

[575] Ankara did not agree for the head of the delegation to be in the rank of ambassador, but equally to the level of representation of the Israeli mission, it was in the rank of chargé d'affaires.

[576] Aykan, p. 101.

[577] Aykan, p. 102.

[578] Aykan, p. 103.

1980s, as was discussed in the previous chapter, Turkey's efforts were focused on acquiring EU membership.

### d. Turkey's sensitivity through the Israeli eyes

As was discussed in details in Chapter 2, states that entered the modern state system on a later date seek inclusion and equality, but receive only the former, often developing extra-sensitivity, on the border of obsession, with status, recognition, and belonging. The account of early relations between Turkey and Israel, reconstructed by Amikam Nachmani from the Israeli State Archives, shows the role played by Turkey's sensitivity in the conduct of day to day affairs. Importantly, Israeli diplomats demonstrated outstanding observation skills. Their main conclusion was that the rules of conduct applied in relations with every other country could not automatically be used in the case of Turkey because '[t]he merest slight to Turkish diplomats, or an unintentional want of sensitivity to their country's self-image, was liable to produce an immediate deterioration in relations'.[579]

Turkey's sensitivity manifested itself in various ways, constituting an impediment in different fields of their bilateral cooperation. As close relations with Turkey were in Israel's best interests, Israeli diplomats tried to overcome this situation by flattering their partners while doing their best not to offend them in any way. One Israeli diplomat advised his capital:

> [w]e should bear in mind Turkey's particular touchiness with regard to matters of national pride. The numerous points of contact existing nowadays between...the two countries are liable to turn into conflagration points if constant care is not taken. An unconsidered word in an Israeli paper, a disparaging remark by an Israeli sailor in a Turkish port, indecorous behaviour on the part of a tourist or trader—any of these are liable to set us back. Turkey is unlike other countries in its national sensitivity, and certain incidents which would be trivial in another country are capable of being blown all out of proportion in this country.[580]

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[579] Nachmani, *Israel, Turkey and Greece: Uneasy Relations in the East Mediterranean*, p. 51.
[580] Yohanan Meroz to Foreign Ministry, Ankara,ISA 2412/1/A, 30 June 1954 quoted in Nachmani, *Israel, Turkey and Greece: Uneasy Relations in the East Mediterranean*, p. 63.

As a confirmation of the above description, news in the Israeli press, regardless of their relation to the truth, seen as putting Turkey in an unfavourable light were met with a firm reaction from the Turkish side. An article in the Jerusalem Post that described the state of the Turkish economy as weak was perceived 'a stab in the back'.[581] In response to this situation, an Israeli diplomat concluded as follows:

> even if the facts are correct, do we have to write about them, thereby giving the Turks unfriendly signals?... What could have induced an Israeli reporter to write [such a thing]... As far as I know, the Jerusalem Post is not an opposition newspaper. Can't the paper be persuaded to make its editorials more in keeping with the interests of our foreign delegations?[582]

Consequently, the Israeli press was asked to balance news about Turkey – not by distorting the reality, but by always including positive information on Turkey. For example, media relations about the early Republic's negative stance toward Zionism were balanced by information on the help extended by the Ottoman Empire to Jews expelled from the Iberian Peninsula.[583]

Israeli accounts claim that Turkey's sensitivity was an impediment in a range of different fields where both countries could have developed close cooperation because each one had different things to offer. For example, in the economic field, Israel offered know-how and high technology, while Turkey's strength was raw material and a sizeable working population.[584] However, from the Turkish perspective, this balance was unfavourable because it testified to Turkey's inferiority. Due to Israel's small size and young age, the development gap was especially disturbing to Ankara. This led to situations where offers to sell goods to Turkey were carefully checked, not only on their merit but also in terms of the language used to convince the Turkish counterparts. The main criterion was not to offend Turkish national pride. This was particularly visible in the

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[581] Nachmani, *Israel, Turkey and Greece: Uneasy Relations in the East Mediterranean*, p. 62.
[582] Israel Consulate in Istanbul to Foreign Ministry, ISA 2547/4, 7 March 1954; Israeli Minister to Turkey to Head of West European Department, ISA 2412/1/A, 30 December 1954 quoted in Nachmani, *Israel, Turkey and Greece: Uneasy Relations in the East Mediterranean*, p. 62.
[583] Nachmani, *Israel, Turkey and Greece: Uneasy Relations in the East Mediterranean*, pp. 62–63.
[584] Nachmani, *Israel, Turkey and Greece: Uneasy Relations in the East Mediterranean*, pp. 63–66.

military and trade; however, in a potentially less sensitive field such as culture, Israel also had to be careful. An anonymous Israeli diplomat pointed out:

> [t]he extreme touchiness of the general public in this country, and the pronounced inferiority complex so deep-rooted in its intellectual circles, do not qualify Turkey [to serve] as a convenient vessel for imbibing the spiritual and cultural treasures of another country. An instructive, if primitive, illustration is the response of local spectators when a foreign sports team is gaining the upper hand. A setback on the sports field is perceived as a national calamity of enormous dimensions. Even the considerable admiration for the might (in the full sense of the term) of the state of Israel...is likewise compounded with no small measure of fierce jealousy. The prevalent sense of inferiority will prevent the Turks from benefitting in any manner from Israel's spiritual bounty, if they are not permitted simultaneously to share with us their own cultural treasures.[585]

As such, the first four decades of the relationship between Turkey and Israel illustrate the issues raised in this dissertation. First, Turkey's Western orientation was a driving force behind its foreign policy. Turkey perceived itself as a Western country and wanted to be perceived as such by others. However, the attitude of the Western countries, which saw Turkey's value through the prism of its Middle Eastern connection, showed that even when Turkey was most secured in its identity as the Western self, the possibility of uncovering its stigma was always present. Israel's empathy toward Turkey's sensitivity stood in sharp contrast with the behaviour of Turkey's Western allies that became particularly visible since the beginning of the Cyprus issue. Nevertheless, although Turkey was being held at arm's length by the West, it never abandoned its aspirations to be recognized as an equal part of the community. The relationship with Israel during the 1990s, which is the focus of a discussion in the next section, is an apt example of how Turkey sought belonging and acceptance from the West, regardless of being repeatedly disappointed with it.

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[585] Yohanan Meroz to Foreign Ministry, Ankara, ISA 2536/12/A, 17 July 1952 quoted in Nachmani, *Israel, Turkey and Greece: Uneasy Relations in the East Mediterranean*, p. 60.

3. The golden age of the 1990s

Despite the highs and lows of the Cold War, the Turkish-Israeli relationship progressed into its golden era in the 1990s. The cornerstone of this relationship was the military agreement signed on 23 February 1996. However, the partnership had been in the making since the end of the 1980s. Politicians and scholars described Turkish-Israeli cooperation during the 1990s as an alliance,[586] entente,[587] axis,[588] strategic partnership,[589] strategic alignment,[590] strategic relationship,[591] and security relationship.[592] Turkey and Israel were seen as like-minded states – two democratic, secular, Western countries surrounded by totalitarian or authoritarian regimes.[593] In other words, they shared a common sense of otherness.[594]

Compared to the previous period, there were two important changes in the relationship between Ankara and Tel Aviv. First, this time Turkey was the leading actor behind establishing closer cooperation.[595] Already on 19 December 1991, Turkey decided to raise the representation of both Israel and Palestine to the ambassador level. Although Israel sought such a move for a decade, it came as a surprise.[596] As existing sources show, not only was Turkey the one to approach Israel seeking rapprochement, but it also leaked the information about the February 1996 agreement that was concluded in secrecy.[597] This leads me to the second change, the transformation from covert to overt relations. To paraphrase the words of David Ben Gurion –

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[586] Gökhan Bacik, 'The Limits of an Alliance: Turkish-Israeli Relations Revisited', *Arab Studies Quarterly*, 23.3 (2001), 49–63.

[587] Alexander Murinson, *Turkey's Entente with Israel and Azerbaijan: State Identity and Security in the Middle East and Caucasus* (London and New York: Routledge, 2009).

[588] Dietrich Jung and Wolfango Piccoli, *Turkey at the Crossroads: Ottoman Legacies and a Greater Middle East* (London and New York: Zed Books, 2001).

[589] Efraim Inbar, 'Regional Implications of the Israeli-Turkish Strategic Partnership', *Turkish Studies*, 3.2 (2002), 21–43.

[590] Bengio, *The Turkish-Israeli Relationship: Changing Ties of Middle Eastern Outsiders*.

[591] Alan Makovsky, Cengiz Candar, and Efraim Inbar, 'The Turkish-Israeli-Syrian Triangle', *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, 15 March 2000 <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/the-turkish-israeli-syrian-triangle> [accessed 20 November 2019].

[592] Philip Robins, *Suits and Uniforms: Turkish Foreign Policy Since the Cold War* (London: Hurst and Company, 2003).

[593] Robins, *Suits and Uniforms: Turkish Foreign Policy Since the Cold War*, p. 215.

[594] Alan Makovsky, 'Israeli-Turkish Relations: A Turkish "Periphery Strategy"?', in *Reluctant Neighbor: Turkey's Role in the Middle East*, ed. by Henri J. Barkey (Washington: US Institute of Peace, 1996), pp. 147–70 (p. 169).

[595] Alain Gresh, 'Turkish-Israeli-Syrian Relations and Their Impact on the Middle East', *Middle East Journal*, 52.2 (1998), 188–203 (p. 190).

[596] Efraim Inbar, *Israeli-Turkish Entente* (London: King's College London, 2001), pp. 16–17.

[597] Bengio, *The Turkish-Israeli Relationship: Changing Ties of Middle Eastern Outsiders*, p. 108.

the days when Turkey treats Israel as a man treats his mistress were gone. As such, the driving force behind these changes was a transformation within Turkey's self-perception.

As was discussed in the previous chapter, the end of the Cold War had a paramount impact on Turkey's ontological security. While it is true that the strategic changes of this period influenced most, if not all, countries around the world, for Turkey, they led to the questioning of its position within the West, which was an anchor of its state identity for more than half a century. In other words, Turkey's sense of ontological security was not undermined by the strategic changes brought by the end of the Cold War *per se*, but by the transformation from being the self to being partly self/partly other within the discourse on the West. Facing such a challenge, Turkey had two choices – to reinforce a preferred identity or to capitalize on the liminal position. At this point, the only viable option for Turkish policymakers was to reinforce Turkey's state identity as the Western self, and Israel became a perfect way out when taking into consideration the half-hearted position of the United States and the European countries. For decades, Israel had been perceived as an invisible member of the Western community. Unlike Turkey's traditional Western allies, however, Israel was eager to cooperate with no strings attached to Turkey's domestic situation.

For Turkey, the relationship with Israel became the best substitute to a closer relationship with the West and a mechanism to prove its Western orientation, resembling the reasons behind Turkey's recognition of the State of Israel some four decades earlier. This is not to say that Turkey did not have strategic reasons behind approaching Israel. According to general Çevik Bir, who was one of the architects of this rapprochement, both countries shared 'concerns about Syria, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the danger of Islamic radicalism, potential threats from Iran or Iraq, and the geopolitical destiny of Central Asia'.[598] However, threat perception is inseparably connected to one's identity. In other words, if Turkey had not perceived itself as a Western country in the first place, it would not have perceived the abovementioned issues as threatening. Therefore, while the strategic component of Turkey's rapprochement with Israel, which had been underlined as the glue of the relationship by most scholars working on the

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[598] Çevik Bir and Martin Sherman, 'Formula for Stability: Turkey Plus Israel', *Middle East Quarterly*, 1997 <https://www.meforum.org/511/formula-for-stability-turkey-plus-israel> [accessed 29 November 2019].

subject, should not be ignored, our understanding of the processes at play during the 1990s is incomplete if we do not take into account Turkey's ontological security. The possibility of becoming a liminal actor within the discourse on the West was the biggest threat to Turkey's state identity, and closer ties with Israel were seen as a possible remedy. Israel did not doubt Turkey's place within the community and paid careful attention to its sensitivity developed over the years due to the established-outsider dynamics.

a. The Palestinian cause in Turkey's biographical narrative

As much as Turkey needed Israel to reinforce its identity as the Western self, such a quick rapprochement was made possible due to the positive developments in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. As was mentioned in the previous section, Turkey started to pay more attention to the struggle of Palestinians since the 1960s. This process continued after the Cold War and became separated from the need to obtain support on the Cyprus issue. As Ofra Bengio points out, Palestinians 'attracted Turkey's genuine domestic affinity, solidarity, and identification with their cause',[599] being an exception in Turkey's relations with the Arab countries that were riddled with mistrust and the superiority/inferiority complex. As such, the sensitivities of Turkish people toward the issue of Palestine became inscribed in the Turkey's biographical narrative that led to a cognitive dissonance each time Israel used force against Palestinians.

Consequently, one can observe a correlation between developments in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and Turkey's relationship with Israel. During the 1990s, a positive correlation existed. Turkish Foreign Minister Hikmet Çetin came to Israel in November 1993, two months after the Oslo Agreement was signed, becoming the first Turkish Foreign Minister to visit Israel. His previous visit planned for July of the same year was postponed at the last minute in response to Israel's Operation Accountability.[600] Similarly, the November 1994 visit of Prime Minister Tansu Çiller to Israel happened just nine days after the peace treaty between Israel and Jordan was signed. During her stay, Çiller visited the headquarters of the Palestinian delegation in east Jerusalem, popularly known as the Orient House.

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[599] Bengio, *The Turkish-Israeli Relationship: Changing Ties of Middle Eastern Outsiders*, p. 156.
[600] Robins, *Suits and Uniforms: Turkish Foreign Policy Since the Cold War*, p. 250.

In comparison, Turkey did not share the same kind of sensitivity to the Syrian leg of the peace process. On the contrary, Ankara was afraid that a final agreement between these two countries would harm its national security, as it would allow Damascus to move its troops from the Golan Heights to the border with Turkey, altering the military balance in Syria's favour. As such, the signing of the Turkish-Israeli military agreement in February 1996 and leaking information about it coincided with what seemed like progress in Israel's peace negotiations with Syria.[601]

  b. Bilateral cooperation

As the previous section discussed, in the 1990s, Turkey and Israel achieved unprecedented levels of cooperation. In this section, I demonstrate why this was the case. The rapprochement started with heavy diplomatic traffic between both countries initiated with a visit of Turkish Tourism Minister Abdulkadir Ateş to Israel in July 1992. This was the first visit on the level of a cabinet member in about two decades. The same year Israeli President Chaim Herzog came to Turkey to take part in the celebrations commemorating the 500th anniversary of the arrival of Jews from the Iberian Peninsula to the Ottoman Empire. The celebrations were attended by President Turgut Özal, Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel and the members of the Turkish Parliament.[602] Although Herzog's visit did not have the status of an official state visit, it received high media attention. This was followed by Turkish Foreign Minister Hikmet Çetin's visit to Israel in November 1993, Israeli President Ezer Weizman's visit to Turkey in January 1994, Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres's visit to Turkey in April 1994, and Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Çiller's visit to Israel in November 1994. The first-ever visits were concluded with the visit of Turkish President Süleyman Demirel to Israel in March 1996.

These visits contributed to a rapid development of cooperation between both countries, which can be divided into two main areas – military and non-military, the latter including political, economic, and cultural relations. While it is true that cooperation between the two countries became multidimensional, especially compared to the Cold War period, the military dimension was the strongest and most successful one. For Turkey, it became the most extensive military

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[601] Bengio, *The Turkish-Israeli Relationship: Changing Ties of Middle Eastern Outsiders*, p. 80.
[602] Makovsky, p. 161.

cooperation it had ever had with a non-NATO country. In the early 1990s, Ankara decided to modernize its army, but its Western allies refused to take part in it due to the country's domestic policies. In this circumstance, Israel became the best viable option – it had an advanced military industry, which, similarly to the Turkish one, was primarily based on American equipment. Therefore, cooperation with Israel allowed Turkey to circumvent the American and European restrictions on Turkey's military procurement and modernization. The agreement from February 1996 became the cornerstone of Turkish-Israeli military cooperation. It institutionalized and structured their partnership by initiating military personnel exchanges, joint training and exercise, sharing information, and granting access to training areas.[603] It was followed by the defence industry cooperation agreement signed in August the same year, which led the way to the modernization of Turkish F-4s and F-5s by the Israel Aircraft Industry (IAI) worth 900 million U.S. dollars.[604] This was also the most publicized deal between both industries.

Parallel to the military dimension, the 1990s observed rapid development of economic cooperation between the two countries. The trade volume raised from 91.4 million U.S. dollars in 1989 to 620.7 million U.S. dollars in 1997,[605] reaching almost a billion U.S. dollars in 1999 and growing steadily ever since.[606] Until 1994, the trade balance was in favour of Israel, but Turkey took the lead soon after.[607] The Free Trade Agreement (FTA), signed in March 1996 and ratified in April 1997, became the cornerstone of Turkish-Israeli economic cooperation. Turkish business circles perceived this agreement as a possibility to reach not only the Israeli market but also the American, Palestinian, and Jordanian ones.

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[603] Bengio, *The Turkish-Israeli Relationship: Changing Ties of Middle Eastern Outsiders*, p. 108.

[604] Nachmani, *Turkey: Facing a New Millennium*, p. 222. See also Michael Eisenstadt, 'Turkish-Israeli Military Cooperation: An Assessment', *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, 24 July 1997 <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/turkish-israeli-military-cooperation-an-assessment> [accessed 1 December 2019].

[605] Undersecretariat for Foreign Trade, Ankara cited in Meliha Altunışık, 'The Turkish-Israeli Rapprochement in the Post-Cold War Era', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 30.2 (2000), 172–91 (p. 176).

[606] Bir and Sherman.

[607] Güzin Erlat and Haluk Erlat, 'Türkiye'nin Orta Doğu Ülkeleri İle Olan Ticareti, 1990-2002 [Trade of Turkey with the Middle Eastern Countries, 1990-2002]', *Türkiye Ekonomi Kurumu*, 2012, fig. 5 <http://www.tek.org.tr/dosyalar/gap2.pdf> [accessed 29 November 2019].

Moreover, Israeli tourism to Turkey flourished, which additionally boosted the Turkish economy because Israeli tourists spent on average 1000 U.S. dollars on holidays.[608] Since 1994, Nachmani estimates, between 300,000 and 350,000 Israelis visited Turkey annually, which comprised around 15% of all Israelis travelling abroad. In comparison, in 1986, only 7000 Israelis came to Turkey.[609] In tourism, there was no reciprocity because Israel was too expensive for the Turkish people. However, people to people contacts expanded also through academic and cultural cooperation. In 1999, the Süleyman Demirel program was established at the Moshe Dayan Center of Tel Aviv University, of which the Turkish Council of Higher Education sponsored half and Tel Aviv University the other half.

Taking into consideration Turkey's sensitivity, two Israeli gestures should be mentioned. First, in July 1997, a fire broke out in an ammunition factory in the central Anatolian town of Kırıkkale, threatening Turkey's main ammunition storage. Turkey asked Israel for its special military helicopters that, at first, it was reluctant to send because, in the case of an emergency, Israel would have been left without support. However, Minister of Defence Yitzhak Mordechai gave his consent, which contrasted with the reaction of other countries that Ankara asked for help.[610] Secondly, a year later, a severe earthquake hit the north-western town of Izmit, leaving more than 17,000 dead and up to 45,000 injured. Israel sent the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) to support the rescue operation and built the so-called 'Israel–Turkey Village' in Adapazarı, which consisted of more than 300 houses able to accommodate around 2500 people. Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak took part in the inauguration of the village, during which Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit welcomed him by saying, '[y]ou give us an outstanding human lesson. The Turkish people will never forget your deeds'.[611]

### c. Turkey's state identity in crisis

While in 1949, Turkey recognized the State of Israel to show its commitment to the West, during the 1990s, the relationship with Israel became inseparably connected to the struggle over

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[608] Nachmani, *Turkey: Facing a New Millennium*, p. 228.
[609] Nachmani, *Turkey: Facing a New Millennium*, p. 228.
[610] Bengio, *The Turkish-Israeli Relationship: Changing Ties of Middle Eastern Outsiders*, pp. 122–23.
[611] Hürriyet, 18 November 1999 quoted in Bengio, *The Turkish-Israeli Relationship: Changing Ties of Middle Eastern Outsiders*, p. 123.

Turkey's state identity, which I now turn to. Since the 1980s, the Kemalist hold over Turkey's state identity became visibly weaker, while competing interpretations became more pronounced. The main battle took place between the secular and pro-Western oriented elites, and the pro-Islamic forces gathered around the Welfare Party (RP) of Necmettin Erbakan. In the 1994 municipal elections, the RP became the third political force in the country, receiving 19% of votes and taking over such cities as Ankara, Istanbul, Diyarbakir, Erzurum, and Kayseri. A year later, the party won parliamentary elections by getting 21% of votes, which transferred to 158 seats in the Parliament. In June 1996, Erbakan became the Prime Minister in a coalition government with Tansu Çiller's True Path Party (DYP). According to Philip Robins, '[t]he critical months between December 1995 and February 1997 proved to be a period when the competing ideological visions of Kemalism and Islamism wrestled and at times battled with each other in the domain of foreign affairs'.[612]

Turkey's relationship with Israel became the biggest bone of contention in the nexus between domestic and foreign policy. The Welfare Party not only promoted closer cooperation with Muslim countries and the creation of an Islamic equivalent to NATO, but most of all, it built its narrative around the hatred towards Israel and a promise to break off diplomatic relations with it. Therefore, the victory of Erbakan was received as a massive disappointment to Turkey's secular elite. This feeling was strengthened by his choice to host the Muslim Brotherhood leader as his first foreign visitor while choosing Iran and Libya for the first official trips abroad.[613] Taking the above into consideration, the Turkish military decided to fulfil its role as the guardian of the Turkish state, which was one of the foundational elements of Turkey's state identity.[614] While in other countries such a move would have been interpreted as breaking the law, in Turkey, the military was actually expected to protect the Republic, not only from the external but also from the internal threats.

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[612] Robins, *Suits and Uniforms: Turkish Foreign Policy Since the Cold War*, p. 160.

[613] M. Hakan Yavuz, 'Turkish-Israeli Relations Through the Lens of the Turkish Identity Debate', *Journal of Palestinian Studies*, 27.1 (1997), 22–37 (p. 29).

[614] Ümit Cizre Sakallioğlu, 'The Anatomy of the Turkish Military's Political Autonomy', 29.2 (2018), 151–66; Nilüfer Narli, 'Civil-Military Relations in Turkey', *Turkish Studies*, 1.1 (2000), 107–27.

Consequently, the Turkish military *de facto* took over strategic decision-making in the foreign policy domain. In this context, continuing close cooperation with Israel became the best way to demonstrate the country's commitment to Western values at the time when Turkey was facing internal challenges to its state identity. Put differently, rapprochement with Israel served to prevent anxiety in the face of an identity crisis.

The best example showing the internal battle over the direction of Turkey's foreign policy and upper hand of Kemalists was the fact that the February 1996 military agreement was signed by the Deputy Chief of General Staff, Çevik Bir, not a representative of the government. In contrast, on the Israeli side, it was Director General at the Defense Ministry, David Ivri, who signed the document. Moreover, in accordance with Turkish law, the agreement should have been discussed in the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Relations. However, the lack of this step was justified by references to the state's security.[615] Actually, Prime Minister Erbakan got to know about the agreement only after the Turkish military leaked information about it.

The commemoration of the so-called Jerusalem Day on 5 February 1997 became a turning point in the battle over Turkey's state identity. The rally was organized in a small town called Sincan, located twenty-seven kilometres from Ankara. According to Hakan Yavuz, similar meetings condemning Israel's occupation of East Jerusalem had been organized since 1987 in central Turkey, especially in south and east Anatolia.[616] The commemoration in Sincan received widespread attention due to its proximity to Ankara and the participation of the Iranian Ambassador to Turkey, Raza Bageri. The army was quick to react. The following day it sent tanks to Sincan, justifying this move as part of planned manoeuvres. Between 24 and 28 February, the Chief of the Turkish General Staff, General Ismail Karadayı, went for a visit to Israel without informing the government. At the same time, his deputy, General Bir, was in the United States, where he addressed the Jewish Institute for National Strategic Affairs (JINSA). Finally, on 28

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[615] Bengio, *The Turkish-Israeli Relationship: Changing Ties of Middle Eastern Outsiders*, p. 110.
[616] These meetings followed a similar pattern – they start with a recitation of the Quran, then the importance of Jerusalem for Muslims was underlined, followed by the criticism of the government and ending with anti-Israeli statements and the Ottoman military march, see Yavuz, n. 1 on p. 34.

February, during the National Security Council meeting, the military submitted recommendations to be adopted by Erbakan's government.[617]

In the middle of the power struggle over Turkey's state identity, at the beginning of April 1997, the Turkish military hosted Israeli Foreign Minister, David Levy. During this visit, Erbakan signed the Free Trade Agreement with Israel, which he was vehemently opposed to.[618] At the end of April, the Turkish General Staff released a new Concept of National Military Strategy (CNMS), which listed the Islamic movement as the main enemy of the Turkish state, followed by Kurdish separatism.[619] Taken together, decisions of the Turkish army led to the dissolution of Erbakan's government in June 1997. This shows that in the case of conflict over Turkey's state identity, the military served as the final arbiter. This point of view was aptly summarized by General Bir, who emphasized that '[t]he governments are like hats, they would come and go. What is permanent is the state'.[620]

d. Israel vis-à-vis Turkey's sensitivity

Although it was Turkey that approached Israel seeking rapprochement, Tel Aviv remained very careful about Turkey's sensitivity as it had during the Cold War, which did not work the other way around. First, Turkey rejected any comparison between the situation of Kurds in Turkey and Palestinians in Israel and their respective struggles for autonomy as much as it rejected the comparison between the situation in Northern Cyprus with that of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Secondly, the same held true to any attempts trying to link the Holocaust and the Armenian issue. However, in this case, Turkey and Israel shared the same perspective, which was best expressed by President Shimon Peres, who said that the Holocaust and the Armenian issue could not be compared because the latter was a 'tragedy, not genocide'.[621]

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[617] See more on the subject, Niyazi Guna, 'Implementing the "February 28" Recommendations: A Scorecard', *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, May 2001 <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/implementing-the-february-28-recommendations-a-scorecard> [accessed 20 November 2019].

[618] Yavuz, p. 30.

[619] Yavuz, pp. 30–31.

[620] IATV Television, Evening News, 5 May 1997 quoted in Altunışık, p. 183.

[621] Nachmani, *Israel, Turkey and Greece: Uneasy Relations in the East Mediterranean*, p. 212. According to Israeli historian Tom Segev, the reason behind the Israeli stance on the Armenian issue is that recognizing it as a genocide 'might pose a competition before the Jewish genocide. The Israeli culture of commemoration does not accept that genocide could be a universal phenomenon. It presents the Jewish extermination as a unique phenomenon', see

Turkey's sensitivity to the Armenian issue became pronounced in 1997 when it refused the nomination of Ehud Toledano for the position of the Israeli ambassador to Turkey. The reason behind Turkey's decision was a rumour, apparently not true, that in 1981 during a radio program, Toledano referred to the events from 1915 as a genocide.[622] In another incident in April 2000, Israeli Minister for Education, Yossi Sarid, said that the struggle of Armenians would be included in the high school curriculum. In response, Turkey boycotted the Israel Independence Day reception in Ankara, while the Turkish Ambassador to Israel, Ahmet Üzümcü, went a step further and hinted that in a reciprocal move, Turkey could include the issue of the Holocaust denial in its school curriculum.[623]

Turkey's sensitivity on the Kurdish issue was tested when an Israeli NGO invited Yaşar Kaya, a chairman of the closed-down pro-Kurdish Democracy Party and the head of the Kurdish Parliament in Exile, to visit Israel. Due to Turkey's quick reaction, the invitation was withdrawn.[624] While on the Armenian issue, Israel actively supported Turkey via its lobbying activities, when it came to the Kurdish issue, its stance was more balanced. Already in 1993, during his visit to Israel, Foreign Minister Çetin tried to convince his counterpart to cooperate in this regard, arguing that terrorist groups protected and sponsored by Syria equally threaten both countries. However, it did not bring about the expected outcome as Israel did not want to turn the PKK against it, arguing that Israel had enough enemies on its own. One should also not forget that Kurds were a part of Ben Gurion's peripheral doctrine,[625] and historically Israel supported their struggle, especially when it comes to the Iraqi Kurds.[626]

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Tom Segev, Haaretz, 28 April 2000 quoted in Nachmani, *Israel, Turkey and Greece: Uneasy Relations in the East Mediterranean*, p. 212.

[622] Nachmani, *Turkey: Facing a New Millennium*, p. 210.

[623] Nachmani, *Turkey: Facing a New Millennium*, p. 212.

[624] Bengio, *The Turkish-Israeli Relationship: Changing Ties of Middle Eastern Outsiders*, p. 125.

[625] See footnote 560.

[626] See Mustafa Kibaroglu, 'Clash of Interest over Northern Iraq Drives Turkish-Israeli Alliance to a Crossroads', *The Middle East Journal*, 59.2 (2005), 246–64; Ofra Bengio, 'Surprising Ties between Israel and the Kurds', *Middle East Quarterly*, 21.3 (2014), 1–12; Michael B. Bishku, 'Israel and the Kurds: A Pragmatic Relationship in Middle Eastern Politics', *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, 41.2 (2018), 52–72.

e. The triangle between Turkey, Israel, and the West

As was mentioned in the introduction, the strength of Israel for Turkey was its good relationship with the West. Turkey wanted to be seen as an equal part of the Western community and strengthen its influence there, especially in the United States. In this context, the role of the Jewish lobby became an essential issue in the Turkish-Israeli relationship, as Ankara needed to counterbalance the influence of the anti-Turkish lobbies, which included Armenian, Kurdish, Greek and human rights organizations. In 1994, Turkey's long-term Ambassador to the United States (1980-89), Şükrü Elekdağ, stated:

> the Israel lobby in the US is far superior to all other ethnic lobbies put together. Whenever this lobby has worked for us [the Turks], Turkey's interests have been perfectly protected against the fools in the US. The development of relations between Turkey and Israel and the formalization of their de-facto alliance will place this lobby permanently on our side.[627]

Similarly, Israel's Ambassador to Turkey, Zvi Elpeleg, concluded that it works in Israel's favour that Turkey believes in *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*,[628] and consequently, Israel's power abroad.[629] Turkey's trust in the Israel lobby was strengthened by its past experiences. For example, in 1989, the Israeli lobby played a key role in stopping pro-Armenian resolutions in the U.S. Congress.[630] Besides the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), which played a crucial role in the previous case, Turkey could also count on the support of B'nai B'rith, which was involved in lobbying on Turkey's behalf in the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the European Union. The leadership of the organization regularly met with high-level Turkish representatives, starting with the meeting with President Turgut Özal during his 1992 visit to the United States.[631]

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[627] Milliyet, 14 December 1994 quoted in Dietrich Jung and Wolfango Piccoli, 'The Turkish—Israeli Alignment: Paranoia or Pragmatism?', *Security Dialogue*, 31.1 (2000), 91–104 (pp. 99–100).

[628] It is a fabricated text that describes a Jewish plot to run the world. It was disseminated at the beginning of the twentieth century.

[629] Haaretz, 30 September 1997 quoted in Nachmani, *Turkey: Facing a New Millennium*, p. 216.

[630] Murinson, p. 76.

[631] Murinson, p. 79.

This dimension of the Turkish-Israeli relationship was perfectly summarized by a French geopolitical expert Frederic Encel, who stated:

> [i]n this highly geo-political conflict the true interest of Ankara to get allied with Jerusalem is overlaid with other issues, outside of the scope of [military] training and fields of battle. On that side there is a continent and an ocean, which is really in Washington, or even though it may be more than 10.000 km away from the battle field, where the game is played; in its fight against the Kurd separatism - and in particular against the PKK - Ankara needs friends in the House of Representatives as much as it needs armoured vehicles in the South-East of Anatolia. Or in the Department of State and mainly in the [U.S.] Congress, which becomes an active partner of the Jewish State. It gains the support of a more active and powerful pro-Israeli lobby, which is widely embodied by the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC).[632]

Although during the 1990s ties between Ankara and Tel Aviv were marked by an unprecedented dynamic, for Turkey, its relationship with Israel was not a goal in itself but was perceived as compensation for its weakening ties with the Western allies. Zvi Barel from Haaretz aptly observed that '[t]he strategic alliance [Turkey] really wants, then, is not with a regional power, even if its name is Israel, but with the US'.[633] Looking from the perspective of Turkey's ontological security, the rapprochement with Israel became a fairly successful remedy for looming anxiety. First, Israel confirmed Turkey's Western self by underlying common traits of both countries and their uniqueness in the region. Moreover, Israel actively tried to anchor Turkey within the West – it lobbied in European capitals for Turkey's EU membership and acted on behalf of Ankara in Washington. Secondly, Israel showed a high level of empathy toward Turkey's sensitivity, offering Turkey thick recognition. Israel acknowledged Turkey's uniqueness as far as it gets, thus differing greatly from the stance taken by Ankara's traditional Western allies. However, the processes that started in the 1990s – uncovering Turkey's liminal position within the discourses on Europe and

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[632] Frederic Encel, "New Geo-Strategic Structure in the Middle East," Geostrategics, May 2001 (4) quoted in Murinson, p. 68.

[633] Zvi Barel, "A Turkish Love Story", Haaretz, 14 December 1997 quoted in Jung and Piccoli, *Turkey at the Crossroads: Ottoman Legacies and a Greater Middle East*, p. 169.

the domestic struggle over Turkey's state identity – could not be stopped and will be the focus of the next section.

4. 'A drama over a drama'

Following the methodological choice to objectify the meaning uncovered through interpretation, two previous sections focused on the historicization of the Turkish-Israeli relationship. Now I will focus on the contextualization of this relationship. After the golden age of the 1990s, the Turkish-Israeli relationship entered a new phase, which can be described as 'a drama over a drama', which is how the Israeli Chargé d'Affaires in Ankara, Alon Liel, defined the relationship between both countries in the early 1980s.[634]

In contrast to the positive attitude of the 1990s regarding the developments in the Middle East, the start of the new decade was overshadowed by the outburst of the Second Intifada. In October 2000, Turkey became a sponsor of the UN Human Rights Council resolution on the grave and massive violations of the human rights of the Palestinian people by Israel.[635] Then during an opening speech of the sixteenth meeting of the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC) held in Istanbul, Turkey's secular President Ahmet Necdet Sezer referred to the events in question as follows:

> [t]he violent actions aimed at our Palestinian brothers after the September 28th Friday prayer, following certain irresponsible provocations at Kharem el-Shariff, a most sacred location for Islam, have inflicted a very profound sorrow on the Islamic world. It is not possible to tolerate violence or use of weapons in sacred sanctuaries, no matter what the claimed reasons might be. After this sad event the reactions had a ripple effect, while over-use of force at the Israeli side caused considerable casualties. For those who have lost their lives during these sad occurrences, I pray God's mercy be on to them. It is our hope that such events will never repeat themselves, that common sense will the resorted

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[634] Nachmani, *Turkey: Facing a New Millennium*, p. 239.
[635] UN Commission on Human Rights, 'Report of the Fifth Special Session (17-19 October 2000)', October 2000, para. 32 <https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/0/16EC5D0CFAB45921852569AE00502C5E> [accessed 12 January 2020].

to, and that the legitimate rights of our Palestinian brothers, including their right to have their own state, is safeguarded in a fair and just Agreement as soon as possible.[636]

In November 2001, during the visit of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to Turkey, a divergence over Palestine became once again visible. During a press conference, Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit publicly rejected Sharon's remarks that Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat supports terror.[637] The following year, Ecevit raised concerns about whether it was a good time to sign a military agreement with Israel for the modernization of Turkey's M-60A1 tanks.[638] The same position was shared by Deputy Prime Minister Mesut Yılmaz from the Motherland Party (ANAP).[639] A few days after the military agreement was signed in early April 2002, Ecevit went as far as saying that '[a] genocide is being carried out against the Palestinians before the eyes of the whole world',[640] for which he later apologized. The Second Intifada highlighted that regardless of the close relationship between Turkey and Israel, there are strong pro-Palestinian feelings in Turkey.

5. Israel in Davutoğlu's *Strategic Depth*

As was discussed in the previous chapter, Ahmet Davutoğlu's *Strategic Depth* is one of the most prominent examples of seeing Turkey's liminality as an asset, not a burden. As it had an impact on Turkey's foreign policymaking, in this section, I will look at the place of Israel within it.

Davutoğlu takes a relatively restrained position toward Israel. He perceives close cooperation with Israel as a factor alienating Turkey in the region due to 'Turkey's image of dependence, despite her five hundred years of hegemony record, to Israel's strategies, which has only fifty years of history in the region'.[641] He explains that their bilateral relationship during the Cold War should be perceived within the parameters of global developments – due to the Soviet threat,

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[636] Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation, 'Report and Resolutions of the Sixteenth Session of the COMCEC, Istanbul (23-26 October 2000)', p. 71 <http://www.comcec.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/COMCEC16_00E.pdf> [accessed 12 January 2020].

[637] Kılıç Buğra Kanat, 'Continuity of Change in Turkish Foreign Policy under the JDP Government : The Cases of Bilateral Relations with Israel and Syria', *Arab Studies Quarterly*, 34.4 (2012), 230–49 (pp. 240–41).

[638] Bengio, *The Turkish-Israeli Relationship: Changing Ties of Middle Eastern Outsiders*, pp. 115–16.

[639] Ali Balcı and Tuncay Kardaş, 'The Changing Dynamics of Turkey's Relations with Israel: An Analysis of "Securitization"', *Insight Turkey*, 14.2 (2012), 99–120 (p. 111).

[640] Metehan Demir, 'Israil Ile "Soykırım" Krizi [The "Genocide" Crisis with Israel]', *Hürriyet Daily News*, 6 April 2002 <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/israil-ile-soykirim-krizi-64051> [accessed 12 January 2020].

[641] Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu [Strategic Depth: Turkey's International Position]*, p. 57.

Turkey decided to join the Western axis and consequently established diplomatic relations with Israel. A similar line of argument was extended to Turkey's post-Cold War cooperation with Israel. Davutoğlu points out that it should be understood in the wider context of Turkey's relationship with the West, especially in the triangle of Turkey-Israel-United States. On the regional level, the Middle East Peace Process created a positive atmosphere for the rapprochement with Israel, and common interest in the Central Asian republics made both countries natural partners. However, the direction which at first seemed appropriate for both sides started to create alternative costs in terms of Turkey's relations with global actors (the EU, China, the U.S.) and the Middle Eastern and African countries. This became especially visible in the OIC's lack of support for Turkish interests. Davutoğlu went as far as saying:

> this relationship caused a situation where the most powerful country possessing historical and geographical depth such as Turkey not only failed to take an active role in the Middle East Peace Process but is also seen as a passive factor in this process.[642]

He concludes that Turkey should reevaluate its relationship with Israel in the framework of a comprehensive strategy for the entire region. In this context, Turkey could use its liminality as an asset by engaging in international peace efforts. According to Davutoğlu:

> Turkey enjoys multiple regional identities and thus has the capability as well as the responsibility to follow an integrated and multidimensional foreign policy. The unique combination of our history and geography brings with it a sense of responsibility. To contribute actively towards conflict resolution and international peace and security in all these areas is a call of duty arising from the depths of a multidimensional history for Turkey.[643]

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[642] Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu [Strategic Depth: Turkey's International Position]*, p. 422.
[643] Davutoğlu, 'Turkish Foreign Policy and the EU in 2010', p. 12.

Therefore, although Davutoğlu takes a restrained position toward Israel, he does not advocate a 180-degree change of the bilateral relationship. Instead, maintaining relations with Israel is seen in the context of Turkey's broader role in the region, including that of a mediator.[644]

6. Why did the Turkish-Israeli relationship deteriorate?

Before discussing how Israel and the Turkish-Israeli relationship was portrayed within Turkey's biographical narrative, I will present the existing academic studies on the subject. On a general level, the literature is divided into two types of explanation – underlying importance of ideological or strategic factors. The ideological line of argument focuses on the influence of religion on the AKP's foreign policy making. It underlines that as an Islamic party, the AKP holds anti-Israeli views. According to Efraim Inbar, the deterioration in the relationship between Ankara and Tel Aviv is a consequence of Turkey 'moving away from the West and toward Muslim states and non-state groups, including such radical actors as Iran, Hamas and Hizballah'.[645] While Inbar acknowledges that strategic factors cannot be wholly dismissed, he emphasizes the Islamic roots of the AKP as a dominant factor, including 'genuine dislike by the AKP leadership of Israel and Jews'.[646] This line of argument was also followed by Banu Eligür, who posits that the AKP's Islamic worldview is the main factor influencing Turkey's foreign policy.[647] According to her analysis, on the international level, this led to a more active engagement with the Middle East, especially closer cooperation with the region's radical forces. On the domestic level, a growing anti-Semitism became visible.

The second line of argument looks at strategic changes at the domestic, regional, and international levels, pointing out that the transformation within the external circumstances that brought both countries together after the end of the Cold War naturally led to a changing

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[644] See Ahmet Davutoğlu, 'Turkey's Mediation: Critical Reflections From the Field', *Middle East Policy*, 20.1 (2013), 83–90; Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Resolution of Conflicts and Mediation' <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/resolution-of-conflicts-and-mediation.en.mfa> [accessed 12 January 2020].

[645] Efraim Inbar, 'Israeli-Turkish Tensions and Their International Ramification', *Orbis*, 55.1 (2011), 132–46 (p. 132).

[646] Efraim Inbar, 'Israeli-Turkish Tensions and Beyond', *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs*, 4.1 (2010), 27–35 (p. 32).

[647] Banu Eligür, 'Crisis in Turkish–Israeli Relations (December 2008–June 2011): From Partnership to Enmity', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 48.3 (2012), 429–459. See also Şevket Ovalı and Yücel Bozdağlıoğlu, 'Role Theory and Securitization: An Agency Based Framework for Decoding Turkey's Diplomatic Offensive against Israel', *The Turkish Yearbook of International Relations*, 43 (2012), 1–28.

dynamic of their bilateral relationship.[648] With the beginning of the new millennium, Turkey's threat perception (Syria, Iran, Iraq, and Greece) changed almost 180-degree, while Israel's continued. Moreover, on the domestic level, the decreasing role of the military coincided with the increasing influence of public opinion. This happened in a context where, on the one hand, the Middle Eastern Peace Process failed; on the other hand, the 2003 Iraqi War led to the estrangement in Turkey's relations with the United States. Taha Özhan sums up this point by underlying that 'ignoring the fundamental change in the global order while treating Turkey's every attempt to adapt to the new conditions as a form of "axis shift" are efforts to analyse Turkish foreign policy with parameters of a bygone time'.[649] Ilker Aytürk adds additional depth to this expalanation by pointing out that the deterioration in the Turkish-Israeli relationship since 2009 is a result of miscalculation and mismanagement on both sides and that 'too many things went wrong at all critical junctures'.[650]

Within these studies, an often repeated argument focuses on the sensitivity of the Turkish-Israeli relationship to the Palestinian issue. Gökhan Bacik posits that the behaviour of Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in Davos 'was no more than the rhetorical summary of the mood in Turkey'.[651] The Palestinian issue is described as being above party politics, uniting a highly divided society. He criticizes a simplistic view of Turkish politics where the Islamic/conservative groups are seen as anti-Israeli, while the secular groups as pro-Israeli.[652] In a similar vein, Umut Uzer underlines that '[p]olitical contingency seems to be more important than ideology in the JDP's foreign policy'[653] and that any government in power would have a problem with continuing close cooperation with Israel in the face of a strong reaction of the Turkish society to the developments in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

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[648] See Tarık Oğuzlu, 'The Changing Dynamics of Turkey–Israel Relations: A Structural Realist Account', *Mediterranean Politics,* 15.2 (2010), 273–88; Hasan Kosebalaban, 'The Crisis in Turkish-Israeli Relations: What Is Its Strategic Significance', *Middle East Policy*, 17.3 (2010), 36–50; Özlem Tür, 'Turkey and Israel in the 2000s— From Cooperation to Conflict', *Israel Studies*, 17.3 (2012), 45–66; Balcı and Kardaş.

[649] Taha Özhan, 'Turkey, Israel and the US in the Wake of the Gaza Flotilla Crisis', 12.3 (2010), 7–18 (p. 7).

[650] Ilker Aytürk, 'The Coming of an Ice Age? Turkish– Israeli Relations Since 2002', *Turkish Studies*, 12.4 (2011), 675–687 (p. 679).

[651] Gökhan Bacik, 'Turkish-Israeli Relations after Davos: A View from Turkey', *Insight Turkey*, 11.2 (2009), 31–41 (p. 31).

[652] Bacik, 'Turkish-Israeli Relations after Davos: A View from Turkey', p. 35.

[653] Umut Uzer, 'Turkish-Israeli Relations: Their Rise and Fall', *Middle East Policy*, 20.1 (2013), 97–110 (p. 97).

7. Israel in Turkey's biographical narrative

In this section, I will focus on how the Turkish-Israeli relationship was portrayed within Turkey's biographical narrative. As a general observation, it should be emphasized that Israel did not appear frequently within Turkey's biographical narrative. Debates on the subject were mostly triggered by specific events, such as the rise of violence against Palestinians, the Mavi Marmara incident, or the normalization talks. For clarity's sake, as in the previous chapter, I divided my analysis into three periods: 2002–2008, 2009–2013, 2014–2018.

a. November 2002–December 2008

During the first period, Turkey's relationship with Israel was mostly perceived in the context of the Middle East Peace Process, while references to bilateral cooperation were rare. The way that Israel was presented within Turkey's biographical narrative provided valuable information on how Turkey perceived itself and its place in the world. During the discussion in the Parliament on whether or not Turkey should contribute troops to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), the AKP's MP, Egemen Bağiş, future Minister of European Union Affairs, underlined:

> [t]his Lebanon issue once again puts forward Turkey's new, prestigious and powerful international profile. Is there any other country like Turkey that can have direct and healthy communication with the USA, Russia, UK, France, China, in other words, all the UN Security Council members and all the global powers, with all of the regional powers, such as Israel, Lebanon, Iran, Syrian, and even different parties such as Hezbollah and Hamas?! I ask you my friends: isn't it a sign of reputation and strength?[654]

Describing Turkey as 'a European, Balkan, Middle Eastern, Mediterranean and Caucasian country',[655] Bağiş testified to Turkey's liminality. In contrast to the previous decade when Turkey decided to reinforce its identity as a Western country but failed, during the 2000s, we can observe

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[654] Egemen Bağiş [AKP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 22nd Term, 4th Legislative Term, 124th Session', 5 September 2006 <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanak/donem22/yil4/bas/b124m.htm> [accessed 2 January 2020]. See also Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, 'Speech at the 62nd UN General Assembly', 28 September 2007, pp. 4–5 <https://undocs.org/en/A/62/PV.11> [accessed 2 January 2020].

[655] Egemen Bağiş [AKP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 22nd Term, 4th Legislative Term, 124th Session'. See also Abdullah Gül, 'Speech at the 59th UN General Assembly', 23 September 2004, p. 25 <https://undocs.org/en/A/59/PV.8> [accessed 10 January 2020]; Abdullah Gül, 'Speech at the 60th UN General Assembly', 21 September 2005, p. 2 <https://undocs.org/en/A/60/PV.18> [accessed 5 January 2020].

a reorientation toward treating Turkey's liminality as an asset, not a burden. Building on the understanding that due to its multi-layered identity, Turkey is 'the only one' being able to talk to different actors, perceptions of Turkey as being destined to fulfil a role of a mediator comes to the foreground within the country's biographical narrative. Becoming a mediator was perceived as the best way to capitalize on Turkey's liminal position and a mechanism to secure the country's ontological security. According to Bağiş,

> [w]hen Israel and Pakistan wanted to establish their diplomatic relationship for the first time, they came together not in Tel Aviv or Karachi but in Istanbul. Sunni leaders from Iraq could not meet with the American Ambassador to Iraq in Bagdad, but they met in Istanbul. Our Sunni brothers from Iraq took in Istanbul a decision, with the help of then foreign minister and today our president [Abdullah Gül], to become a part of the Iraqi politics and nowadays a part of the government. Similarly, presidents of Afghanistan and Pakistan got together in our country and initiated a dialogue for the first time.[656]

Having this in mind, maintaining a good relationship with Israel became a function of how Turkey sees itself – as a just, trusted and impartial arbiter, being able to speak to all conflicted parties. Consequently, on more than one occasion, it was underlined that Ankara enjoys a good relationship with Israel. Bağiş highlighted this by stating, '[w]e came to the point that when 2 Israeli soldiers were kidnapped, it is the Republic of Turkey which Israel asks for help'.[657] Presenting Turkey's relations with Israel in terms of closeness and trust was conducted in an atmosphere of strong social support for Palestinians, leading at times to cognitive dissonance. The CHP's MP, Onur Öymen, who was the civilian architect of the rapprochement with Israel

[656] Egemen Bağiş [AKP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 23rd Term, 2nd Legislative Year, 127th Session', 8 July 2008 <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanak/donem23/yil2/bas/b127m.htm> [accessed 5 January 2020]. See also Abdullah Gül, 'Speech "Turkish Perspectives Towards a New Environment in the European Union and the Middle East" at the Royal Institute for International Affairs, 3 July 2003', in *Horizons of Turkish Foreign Policy in the New Century* (T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı [Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs], 2007), pp. 28–34 (p. 32).
[657] Egemen Bağiş [AKP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 23rd Term, 2nd Legislative Year, 127th Session'. See also Abdullah Gül, 'Speech at the Meeting Organized by the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 23 July 2003', in *Horizons of Turkish Foreign Policy in the New Century* (T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı [Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs], 2007), pp. 35–42 (p. 40).

during the 1990s in his capacity as the Deputy Foreign Minister,[658] criticized the government for not supporting Palestinians enough in their struggle:

> [i]n Palestine a lot of people, thousands of people, lost their lives, houses were destroyed, hospitals were damaged. Palestinian leader Arafat is right now under siege and no longer has freedom, he cannot go out to the world, he cannot travel. Turkey has to react to such a situation. We would have expected that Mr Minister [Abdullah Gül] would not only mention the letter to Arafat but also would say, "we are going to visit Arafat. Me, as a Foreign Minister, I personally will go and visit Arafat at his office and convey the reaction, support, solidarity, feelings of Turkish people against the persecution of Palestinian people".[659]

In a long discussion concerning the contribution of Turkish troops to the UNIFIL mission, Erkan Mumcu from the ANAP stated that '[p]ersonally I have no intention to sacrifice Turkey's historical role for the sake of Israel's security, also this nation has no intention to do so and this nation has no sons to sacrifice for Israel's security'.[660]

In this regard, Turkey's bilateral relationship with Israel was mainly portrayed by references to its historical dimension. This allowed Turkey to maintain two incompatible stories in its biographical narrative – support for Palestine and close cooperation with Israel. On more than one occasion, Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül reiterated that 'the friendship between the Turkish and Jewish peoples, dating back half a millennium, has served as a sound basis upon which Turkey and Israel have developed close relations'.[661] Historical references also dominated President

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[658] Murinson, p. 54.

[659] Onur Öymen [CHP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 22nd Term, 2nd Legislative Year, 92nd Session', 25 May 2004 <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanak/donem22/yil2/bas/b092m.htm> [accessed 2 January 2020]. See also Hüseyin Tanrıverdi [AKP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 22nd Term, 2nd Legislative Year, 92nd Session'.

[660] Erkan Mumcu [ANAVATAN] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 22nd Term, 4th Legislative Term, 124th Session'. See also Bayram Ali Meral [CHP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 22nd Term, 4th Legislative Term, 124th Session'.

[661] Abdullah Gül, 'Speech at the Meeting Organized by the American Turkish Society and National Committee For American Foreign Policy, 18 September 2006', in *Horizons of Turkish Foreign Policy in the New Century* (T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı [Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs], 2007), pp. 426–30.

Gül's speech at the dinner hosted in honour of President of Israel Shimon Peres during his 2007 visit to Turkey:

> [t]he Turkish nation has been of help to the Jews in their most difficult times throughout history and the Jews have made important contributions to our country in all fields. […] Today, almost a hundred thousand Israeli citizens of Turkish origin in Israel and almost 30 thousand of our citizens of Jewish origin constitute the two pillars of the bridge of friendship between our countries.[662]

Since 27 January was designed as the International Holocaust Remembrance Day by the UNGA in 2005, the Turkish Foreign Ministry publishes an official statement every year. In the first statement from January 2006, the MFA referred to the decision of Sultan Beyazid II, who welcomed Jews after they were expelled from the Iberian Peninsula. Moreover, it recalled Turkish diplomats, such as Sebahattin Ülkümen, Necdet Kent and Namık Kemal Yolga, who during the Second World War, prevented the occupation authorities in Rhodes, Marseille and Paris, respectively, from sending Jewish citizens to death camps.[663] The following year, a Turkish statement emphasized that '[t]hroughout history there have been strong links between Turkish and Jewish people based on solidarity and cooperation. These strong relations still continue'.[664]

As such, in Turkey's biographical narrative, the bilateral relationship between Turkey and Israel was seen in a wider context of historical bonds between people of both countries as well as cooperation with Jewish communities around the world, especially in the United States. In contrast, references to the current relationship were rather laconic and focused on common traits of both countries, such as parliamentary democracy, free market economy, and the rule of law, which make them 'natural partners'. This was visible in the speech of President Gül during the dinner hosted in honour of President Peres, where he described bilateral cooperation

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[662] Abdullah Gül, 'Speech at the Dinner to Be Hosted in Honor of President of Israel Mr. Shimon Peres', 12 November 2007 <http://www.abdullahgul.gen.tr/speeches-statements/344/56513/the-speech-of-the-president-of-the-republic-of-turkey-mr-abdullah-gul-at-the-dinner-to-be-hosted-in-.html> [accessed 5 January 2020].
[663] Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Press Release No: 12', 27 January 2006 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_12---27-ocak-2006_-_yahudi-soykirimi-kurbanlarini-anma-gunu_-hk_.tr.mfa> [accessed 5 January 2020].
[664] Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Press Release No: 16', 27 January 2007 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_16---27-ocak-2007_-27-ocak-yahudi-soykirimini-anma-gunu-hk_.tr.mfa> [accessed 5 January 2020].

between both countries as 'being conducted in a pleasing way, based upon mutual trust and respect within an institutionalized framework'.[665]

As indicated at the beginning of this section, in most cases, Turkish-Israeli cooperation was mentioned in the context of the Middle East Peace Process. According to the spokesperson of Turkish MFA, Namik Tan, '[t]he Turkish-Israeli relationship will serve the interests of the two countries as well as will continue to benefit the regional peace'.[666] In other words, Israel was portrayed as a country that allows Ankara to fulfil its mission of being a mediator and makes Turkey 'the only one', 'the special one' that can talk to all sides of the conflict. According to Foreign Minister Gül, '[i]n the Middle East, Turkey is the only country in which both the Israelis and the Palestinians place their trust',[667] therefore, '[w]e believe that we have more to offer to the service of the peace process. To that end, we are eager to consult and cooperate with the United States and others to help achieve a lasting peace and stability in the region'.[668]

In the context of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, Ankara's most significant achievement was the 2007 concurrent visit of President of Israel, Shimon Peres, and President of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), Mahmoud Abbas, to Turkey. On 13 November 2007, both leaders addressed the Turkish Parliament, which according to Foreign Minister Ali Babacan, 'once again proves the special position of Turkey, having the trust of both sides, and highlights

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[665] Gül, 'Speech at the Dinner to Be Hosted in Honor of President of Israel Mr. Shimon Peres'.

[666] Namık Tan, 'Question and Answer No. 5', 17 May 2004 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/sc_5--_17-mayis-2004_-disisleri-bakanlici-sozcusu-namik-tan_in_-son-gunlerde-lubnan-basininda-turkiye_nin-israil-ile-iliskilerini-gozden-gecirdici-ve-bu-cercevede_-israil-ile-imzalamis-olducu-savunma-sanayii-projelerini-iptal-etme-ka> [accessed 5 January 2020]. See also Ali Babacan, 'Presentation of the 2008 Fiscal Year Budget Draft of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Secretariat General for EU Affairs to the TBMM Plan and Budget Commission', 14 November 2007 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/disisleri-bakanligi-ve-avrupa-birligi-genel-sekreterligi_nin-2008-mali-yili-butce-tasarilarinin-tbmm-plan-ve-butce-komisyonu.tr.mfa> [accessed 5 January 2020]; Abdullah Gül, 'Speech During a Symposium Organized by Maastricht School of Management and Koç University, 4 April 2004', in *Horizons of Turkish Foreign Policy in the New Century* (T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı [Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs], 2007), pp. 276–81 (p. 417).

[667] Gül, 'Speech During a Symposium Organized by Maastricht School of Management and Koç University, 4 April 2004', p. 280. See also Babacan, 'Presentation of the 2008 Fiscal Year Budget Draft of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Secretariat General for EU Affairs to the TBMM Plan and Budget Commission'.

[668] Gül, 'Speech at the Meeting Organized by the American Turkish Society and National Committee For American Foreign Policy, 18 September 2006'. See also Hüseyin Tanrıverdi [AKP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 22nd Term, 2nd Legislative Year, 92nd Session'.

its role as a mediator',[669] and in the words of President Gül, 'was a historic event for both our peoples and the world'.[670]

More successful was Turkey's engagement in the Syrian track of the Middle East Peace Process, where both sides asked Ankara to become a mediator in the indirect talks. According to President Gül, '[t]he Middle East Peace Process is bound to be incomplete without positive developments on other tracks. We, therefore, attribute special importance to the Israeli-Syrian indirect peace talks which have started under Turkey's auspices in İstanbul in May 2008'.[671] The AKP's MP, Bağiş, underlined that while many important countries expressed their willingness to mediate '[b]oth sides preferred the mediation of Turkey and the Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey [Recep Tayyip Erdoğan]', which 'is the most important indicator of the position our country arrived to'.[672]

Being engaged in the peace process, however, did not stop Turkey from publicly condemning the behaviour of Israel and Palestinians when it found it necessary. In a similar language, Ankara criticized Palestinian attacks against Israel and Israel's disproportionate use of force against Palestinians.[673] In this context, Turkey once again portrayed itself as an objective and fair actor that is staunchly against terrorism, regardless of who perpetrates it. This was an additional layer in the story supporting its self-perception as destined to fulfil the role of a mediator. In the words of Foreign Minister Gül, '[w]e as the government act extremely open and trustworthy. Whoever

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[669] Babacan, 'Presentation of the 2008 Fiscal Year Budget Draft of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Secretariat General for EU Affairs to the TBMM Plan and Budget Commission'.

[670] Abdullah Gül, 'Speech at the World Leadership Forum "Turkey's Contributions to Peace in the Middle East"', 24 September 2008 <http://www.abdullahgul.gen.tr/speeches-statements/344/56404/speech-delivered-by-he-abdullah-gul-president-of-the-republic-of-turkey-at-the-world-leadership-foru.html> [accessed 5 January 2020].

[671] Gül, 'Speech at the World Leadership Forum "Turkey's Contributions to Peace in the Middle East"'. See also Ali Babacan, '2009 Budget Draft Speech', 21 November 2008 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/disisleri-bakani-sayin-ali-babacan_in-2009-mali-yili-butce-tasarisi-konusmasi_-21-kasim-2009.tr.mfa> [accessed 4 January 2020].

[672] Egemen Bağiş [AKP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 23rd Term, 2nd Legislative Year, 127th Session'. See also Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Press Release No: 81', 21 May 2008 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no-81---21-mayis-2008_-israil-ile-suriye-arasinda-aracili-baris-gorusmeleri-hk_.tr.mfa> [accessed 5 January 2020].

[673] See Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Press Release No: 2', 7 January 2003 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_2--_7-ocak-2003_-.tr.mfa> [accessed 5 January 2020]; Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Press Release No: 10', 27 January 2003 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_10--_27-ocak-2003.tr.mfa> [accessed 5 January 2020]; Gül, 'Speech at the 59th UN General Assembly', p. 26.

makes a mistake, we give a warning without hesitation, and we condemn such moves heavily'.[674] Similarly, the balanced attitude toward Israel and Palestine was visible during President Gül's speech at the International Conference on Lebanon in 2006:

> [u]ndeniably, in Lebanon it was the Hezbollah attack in the Israeli territory that triggered the ongoing hostilities. As such, we recognize Israel's right to defend itself. In Turkey, we know what terror means. It cannot be justified under any circumstances. However, by all accounts, the Israeli reaction has been disproportionate and indiscriminate.[675]

b. January 2009–December 2013

During the second period, there was a visible change within Turkey's biographical narrative regarding Israel – from the assurance of cooperation to criticism. Turkey's reaction to Operation Cast Lead (27 December 2008 – 18 January 2009) was substantially stronger in comparison to the previous cases when Israel used disproportionate force in the region, including the 2006 operation in Lebanon. Therefore, the question emerges: Why was Operation Cast Lead met with such a strong reaction in Turkey? In this context, the statement of State Minister Mehmet Aydın from the AKP is telling – he underscored that the operation not only led to human suffering but also 'had a negative impact on regional stability. Unfortunately, the Syrian-Israeli indirect peace talks and the positive atmosphere regarding the peace in Lebanon, which were a result of Turkey's simultaneously intense efforts during last May, have been seriously wounded'.[676] The timing of the operation was especially harmful to Turkey's ontological security for two reasons. First, just a few days before it started, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert visited Turkey. Secondly, on 1 January 2009, Turkey assumed a non-permanent seat in the UN Security Council.

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[674] Abdullah Gül [AKP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 22nd Term, 5th Legislative Year, 17th Session', 9 November 2006 <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanak/donem22/yil5/bas/b017m.htm> [accessed 5 January 2020].

[675] Abdullah Gül, 'Speech at the International Conference on Lebanon, 27 July 2006', in *Horizons of Turkish Foreign Policy in the New Century* (T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı [Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs], 2007), pp. 491–93 (p. 492).

[676] Mehmet Aydın [AKP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 23rd Term, 3rd Legislative Year, 40th Session', 6 January 2009 <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanak/donem23/yil3/bas/b040m.htm> [accessed 1 January 2020].

On 22 December 2008, Israel's Prime Minister visited Turkey to discuss peace negotiations with Syria. For most of the four and half hours, it was a tête-à-tête between Prime Minister Erdoğan and Prime Minister Olmer; therefore, the content of the meeting became a subject of speculations. The main question was whether Erdoğan was informed about Israel's plans.[677] However, looking through the prism of Turkey's ontological security, the visit itself was a Catch 22. If, as Erdoğan himself claimed, he was not informed about the planned operation, it would mean that Olmert did not confine in him and his role as a mediator. However, if he were informed, as the Israeli Ambassador to Ankara Gaby Levy claimed, that would give an impression that Erdoğan did not take steps to stop the humanitarian tragedy in Gaza or that he was not able to persuade Olmert to refrain from taking such steps. This was a lose-lose situation for Ankara. This feeling was strenghten by the fact that it coincided with Turkey assuming a non-permanent seat in the UN Security Council, which Ankara framed as an accomplishment related to its mediation and peace efforts. According to the AKP's MP, Bağış:

> [a]ll of these initiatives were an indicator of Turkey's determination in establishing stability in the world in line with its national interests. As a result of our initiatives, after 47 years' time gap with 151 votes out of 192 countries voting, Turkey was elected in the first round as a member of the United Nations Security Council. In other words, every 8 out of 10 countries that voted expressed that they have confidence in Turkey and care about the leadership of Turkey in solving the world's problems.[678]

Due to Operation Cast Lead, indirect talks between Israel and Syria under Turkey's auspices were suspended. Although Syria later expressed a readiness to reassume them, Israel did not share this point of view.[679] As such, Israel's decision to start the operation was not only perceived within the overall context of the peace negotiations but also as a sign of disrespect toward Turkey. Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu described Turkey' stance as follows:

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[677] See Ahmet Deniz Bölükbaşı [MHP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 23rd Term, 3rd Legislative Year, 40th Session'.

[678] Egemen Bağış in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 23rd Term, 3rd Legislative Year, 40th Session'.

[679] See Burak Özügergin, 'Meeting with the Press', 5 August 2009 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/disisleri-bakanligi-sozcusu-sayin-burak-ozugergin_in-olagan-basin-toplantisi_-5-agustos-2009_.tr.mfa> [accessed 20 January 2020].

[w]ith two years of secret diplomacy, we initiated mediation between Syria and Israel. With the efforts of our Prime Minister [Recep Tayyip Erdoğan] Turkey did what no other country was able to do. Turkey mediated between the two leaders for almost a year. As both sides openly expressed, the breath that was reached during six months under Turkey's mediation was not achieved in seven years during the 1990s, from the Oslo process until the year 2000. We are right now in possession of certain documents papers accepted by both sides. […] Why no results were reached? Because the Israeli government attacked Gaza using phosphorus bombs. […] mediation in itself is oriented toward a goal. It expresses a value, a norm; when one of the parties undermines this goal, honourable states and people like Turkey react.[680]

Since Operation Cast Lead, a new way of portraying Israel as well as the Turkish-Israeli relationship in Turkey's biographical narrative became visible. Building on an existing narrative of having traditionally a good relationship with Israel, both in terms of the treatment of Jews and the fact that Turkey was the first and for a very long time the only Muslim country to recognize the new state,[681] Turkey was portrayed as being in a unique position to criticize Israel for its actions. Therefore, Turkey's criticism should be perceived on moral grounds and in no way should it be interpreted as anti-Israeli or anti-Semitic. In a statement from January 2010, the Foreign Ministry pointed out:

[t]he deep-rooted relations between Turks and Jews that date further back before the establishment of the State of Israel and the general fabric of Turkish-Israeli relations bestows Turkey with the responsibility to make these warnings and criticisms. […] Throughout history, Turks have extended a hand to the Jewish people whenever they were in dire conditions. The long history of coexistence between Turks and Jews is one of

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[680] Ahmet Davutoğlu in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 23rd Term, 4th Legislation Year, 130th Session', 7 July 2010 <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanak/donem23/yil4/bas/b130m.htm> [accessed 1 January 2020]. See also Egemen Bağış [AKP] and Onur Öymen [CHP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 23rd Term, 3rd Legislative Year, 40th Session'.

[681] See Onur Öymen [CHP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 23rd Term, 3rd Legislative Year, 40th Session'; Ekmeleddin Mehmet İhsanoğlu [MHP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 26th Term, 3rd Legislative Year, 40th Session', 17 December 2017 <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanak/donem26/yil3/ham/b04001h.htm> [accessed 2 January 2020].

mutual respect and tolerance. Therefore, we reject the allegation that "Turkey is the last country that will preach morality to Israel" which does not conform, above all, with the collective memory of the Jewish people. This expression, which distorts facts, constitutes an injustice to history.[682]

After the Mavi Marmara incident (31 May 2010), this position became strengthened by distinguishing between the Israeli government and Jewish people, emphasizing that the criticism is directed toward the former and not the latter. In the words of Bağış:

[o]ur reaction is to the Israeli government, which carries out these brutal attacks. Our Jewish, Armenian, Syrian and Greek citizens, who have been living together in our country for centuries, with whom we shared our bread, water and land, are also extremely uncomfortable with Israel's use of disproportionate force, targeting children, women and civilians. As a matter of fact, many Jews living in different countries around the world, including Israel, expressed that they do not approve of these events and demonstrated against them.[683]

The understanding put forward within Turkey's biographical narrative was that Israel's behaviour is against its own interests. President Gül commented that '[t]hey don't have many friends in the region. […] Now it seems they want to get rid of the relationship with Turkey […] My own impression is that they don't have the ability to act rationally'.[684] With time, the problems in the Turkish-Israeli relationship became more directly linked to the personality of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. In an interview with CNN, President Gül explained the situation:

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[682] Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Press Release No: 6', 12 January 2010 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-6_-12-january-2010_-press-release-regarding-the-statement-of-the-israeli-foreign-ministry.en.mfa> [accessed 1 January 2020]. See also Abdullah Gül, 'Interview to Al Jazeera TV', 28 November 2009 <http://www.abdullahgul.gen.tr/interviews/379/56179/al-jazeera-tv.html> [accessed 1 January 2020]; Ahmet Davutoğlu, 'Meeting with the Press', 30 September 2009 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/sayin-bakanimizin-basini-bilgilendirme-toplantisi_-30-eylul-2009.tr.mfa> [accessed 1 January 2020]; Onur Öymen [CHP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 23rd Term, 3rd Legislative Year, 40th Session'.
[683] Egemen Bağış [AKP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 23rd Term, 3rd Legislative Year, 40th Session'. Abdullah Gül, 'Interview to Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung', 16 September 2011 <http://www.abdullahgul.gen.tr/interviews/379/80732/frankfurter-allgemeine-zeitung.html> [accessed 29 December 2019].
[684] Abdullah Gül, 'Interview to CNN International', 26 September 2010 <http://www.abdullahgul.gen.tr/interviews/379/77419/cnn-int.html> [accessed 10 January 2020].

ABDULLAH GÜL: So, we are very much helpful to Israel and not only previous governments, but the current government. Many times, I went to Israel and many times the Prime Minister Erdoğan went there and many times they came to us and we worked very good you see and we…

CNN: With the Netenyahu Government?

ABDULLAH GÜL: Till the Netenyahu Government, yes.

CNN: Until then; so, it's this government that you've had problems?

ABDULLAH GÜL: Yes, yes.[685]

For Turkey, the Mavi Marmara incident signified the first time since the First World War when a foreign army killed Turkish citizens. It, therefore, had important consequences in terms of Turkey's ontological security. Although it happened far away from the territory of Turkey, and the physical existence of the country was not in any danger, the death of Turkish citizens was perceived as an attack on the entire country, even for people that did not support the flotilla itself and did not share the ideological background of its organizers.[686] Speaking in the name of the MHP, Mehmet Şandir summarized this attitude, arguing, 'this is an attack on our sovereignty, an attack on our nation. Beyond being an insult or a crime, it has been an attack on the Republic of Turkey'.[687] The Mavi Marmara incident represented the first case when deterioration in the Turkish-Israeli relationship was related to their bilateral problems, although indirectly caused by the Israeli-Palestinian issue.

Subsequently, Turkey strongly supported the position that Israel is fully responsible for the current crisis and that the future of the Turkish-Israeli relationship depended on Israel's actions.[688] As President Gül underlined, 'the current situation between Turkey and Israel is the

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[685] Gül, 'Interview to CNN International'.

[686] Humanitarian Relief Foundation (IHH) is a humanitarian organization known for its Islamic background.

[687] Mehmet Şandir [MHP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 23rd Term, 4th Legislative Year, 109th Session', 1 June 2010 <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanak/donem23/yil4/bas/b109m.htm> [accessed 1 January 2020]. See also Ömer Çelik [AKP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 23rd Term, 4th Legislative Year, 109th Session'.

[688] Turkey set up three conditions for normalization: official apology, compensation, and lifting of the naval blockade of the Gaza Strip.

outcome of the Israelis own preferences and the mistakes they have made. The whole world knows this. Even the allies of Israel, who cannot express it directly to the Israelis, clearly say it to us'.[689]

It should be stressed that the government was not pushed by the opposition to normalize the relationship with Israel, but in line with the view that Turkey is acting out of moral principles, it was criticized for not taking a tougher stance against Israel.[690] Moreover, although Turkey's relationship with Israel became visibly worse during this period, the government was accused of working in favour of Israel. Two types of arguments were used as proof. First, permission to install NATO's early-warning radar system at the Kürecik Radar Station was interpreted as Turkey deciding to protect Israel against Iran.[691] Secondly, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was criticized for not returning the Courage Award received from the American Jewish Congress,[692] which once again showed that the bilateral relationship with Israel was perceived in a wider context of the historical and present-day cooperation with Jews and Jewish organizations around the world.[693]

### c. January 2014–July 2018

In contrast to the previous two periods, in the last period, the relationship followed a pattern from deterioration to normalization to once again deterioration. However, a short period of normalization did not influence how Israel was portrayed in Turkey's biographical narrative. On the contrary, patterns visible in the second period became stronger in the following months. With the continuation of disproportionate force being directed against the Gaza Strip, condemnation of Israel and references to Israel as a terrorist state became commonplace in Turkey's

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[689]Abdullah Gül, 'Interview to Foreign Affairs', 2 January 2013 <http://www.abdullahgul.gen.tr/news/397/84848/gul-gives-interview-to-foreign-affairs-magazine.html> [accessed 28 December 2019]. See also Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Question and Answer No: 31', 13 December 2011 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/sc_-34-13-aralik-2011_-disisleri-bakanligi-sozcusu_nun-bir-soruya-cevabi.tr.mfa> [accessed 2 January 2020].

[690] Onur Öymen [CHP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 23rd Term, 4th Legislative Year, 109th Session'.

[691] The base was established in February 2012.

[692] In 2004, the American Jewish Congress presented the Profile of Courage award to Prime Minister Erdoğan. In 2014, Erdoğan was asked to return the award.

[693] Kamer Genç [CHP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 23rd Term, 3rd Legislative Year, 40th Session'.

biographical narrative. In July 2014, Tanju Özcan from the CHP underlined that 'as the Republican People's Party, don't we clearly condemn Israel everywhere, from our Chairman to our deputies? I spoke here yesterday, didn't I say, "I openly condemn Israel. Israel is a terrorist state."'[694] Özcan continued by accusing the government of inconsistency and being responsible for the suffering of people in Gaza because while the Turkish government calls Israel a terrorist state, it still maintains relations with it. He went as far as calling on the government to break the relations with Israel, which was not an isolated incident:

> Dear friends, you, as the AKP administration, are also responsible for the killing of the Muslim Gaza people. I say sincerely, you are responsible too. Put an end to your strange relationship with these terrorists and the states you call "terrorists", make a decision.[695]

Within the context of strong criticism against Israel, the distinction between state and people continued. An additional layer to this story was added by underlying that Turkey is not isolated in its criticism of Israel's policies, but even Jewish communities are against it. In the words of Ahmet Aydin from the AKP,

> [w]e criticize the wrong policies of the Israeli government, the terror practices of the Israeli government and those brutal acts of the Israeli government that led to genocide. Not Israeli people or Jewish citizens. In fact, many Jewish communities criticize the Israeli government and criticize these policies of the Israeli state. Therefore, it is necessary to separate the wheat from the chaff; it is necessary to express the right things, it is necessary to show the right things and to produce ideas based on those.[696]

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[694] Tanju Özcan [CHP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 24th Term, 4th Legislative Year, 120th Session', 19 July 2014 <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanak/donem24/yil4/ham/b12001h.htm> [accessed 1 January 2020]. See also Yusuf Halaçoğlu [MHP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 24th Term, 4th Legislative Year, 120th Session'.

[695] Tanju Özcan [CHP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 24th Term, 4th Legislative Year, 120th Session'. See also Ahmet Aydin [AKP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 24th Term, 4th Legislative Year, 120th Session'; Veli Ağbaba [CHP] Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 26th Term, 2nd Legislative Year, 117th Session', 24 July 2017 <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanak/donem26/yil2/ham/b11701h.htm> [accessed 2 January 2020]; Ahmet Yildirim [HDP] and Mahmut Tanal [CHP] Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 26th Term, 3rd Legislative Year, 40th Session'.

[696] Ahmet Aydın [AKP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 26th Term, 2nd Legislative Year, 117th Session'. See also Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, 'Interview to CNN Türk', 12 December 2014 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/disisleri-

Building on the understanding that Turkey's criticism is justified and that Turkey is in a special position to criticize Israel due to its past humanitarian behaviour, accusations of anti-Semitism were strongly rejected. Allow me to quote at length President Erdoğan on this issue:

> I am very sad to see that my country, myself, and my colleagues, sometimes, are labeled as being anti-Semitic. But Turkey, in no part of its history, has ever been racist. It has never been anti-Semitic in any time in its history at all. I am one of the first prime ministers in the world to have declared anti-Semitism to be a crime against humanity. Turkey, its people and its state, have always stood by the oppressed. When the Jews were under pressure or oppressed, Turkey extended a helping hand to them. When the Jews were expelled from Spain in the 15th century, they sought refuge in the Ottoman territory, and they lived peacefully in this land for centuries. Similarly, our country embraced the Jews fleeing Hitler's persecution. There are times when I personally am labeled as an anti-Semitic person. Criticizing Israel's massacres that defy international law, trample on human rights and life is not anti-Semitism. Holding a state responsible that massacres 10 people by stopping an international Gaza-bound aid flotilla isn't anti-Semitism. It isn't anti-Semitism either to criticize an administration that massacres innocent babies and children in their homes, mosques, hospitals, schools, beaches and parks without any discrimination. Our criticism is not directed at the Jews at all. It is only and solely directed at the Israeli administration and its policies, and let no one distort this.[697]

In contrast to Israel, Turkey served as an example of a country that cares about its citizens and condemns people trying to punish Turkish Jews for Israel's actions. Ahmet Yildirim from the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) emphasized that 'an attack on the Neve Shalom Synagogue [in Istanbul], which has been a place of worship for the citizens of this country of Jewish faith for centuries cannot be an answer to Israel's terrorist policies'.[698]

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bakani-sayin-mevlut-cavusoglu-cnn-turk_te-yayinlanan-_bastan-sona_-programina-konuk-oldu_-12-aralik-2014.tr.mfa> [accessed 12 January 2020].

[697] Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, 'Speech at the the Council on Foreign Relations', 23 September 2014 <https://www.tccb.gov.tr/en/news/542/3249/president-erdogan-addresses-cfr> [accessed 12 January 2020].

[698] Ahmet Yıldırım [HDP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 26th Term, 2nd Legislative Year, 117th Session'. See also Muharrem Ince [CHP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 24th Term, 4th Legislative

Referring to the conversation with Israeli representatives that followed the normalization of bilateral relations (June 2016), Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu admitted that he was asked if Turkey intends to criticize Israel in the future, which was met with an affirmative answer. Çavuşoğlu stated as follow:

> [t]he level of our criticism and attitude is proportional to the level of Israel's aggression. So, if they go to extremes, of course, we will evaluate every step, including reviewing relationship. This is essentially something that depends on Israel, something that depends on Israel's attitude.[699]

Within a larger context of the Israeli-Palestinian issue, it was emphasized that normalization in the Turkish-Israeli relationship does not mean that Turkey will change its attitude toward Palestine. According to Çavuşoğlu, '[n]ow if we change our attitude about this, if we change our principle, beyond everything we will not have any respect to ourselves'.[700] Consequently, it is visible that Palestine became portrayed within Turkey's biographical narrative as a national cause; a process that has been ongoing for more than a decade. This view was well depicted by the AKP's MP, Hasan Turan, who stated:

> [t]oday, our country carries out the most honourable, most dignified and strongest advocacy of the Palestinian people in the world. […] Therefore, even if we have different political and ideological views, we have to stand together and stay strong for the policies within this country, just as we have a common feeling about the Jerusalem issue and the Palestinian issue.[701]

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Year, 120th Session'; Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, 'I Curse in the Name of Humanity', 19 July 2014 <https://www.akparti.org.tr/haberler/insanlik-adina-lanet-ediyorum/> [accessed 20 January 2020].

[699] Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, 'Interview to NTV News', 12 December 2017 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/disisleri-bakani-sayin-mevlut-cavusoglu_nun-ntv-kanalina-verdigi-roportaj.tr.mfa> [accessed 12 January 2020].

[700] Çavuşoğlu, 'Interview to CNN Türk'. See also Ibrahim Kalın, 'Terror Attacks, Financial Assaults and Perception Operations Should Be Fought Against in a Spirit of National Mobilization', 26 December 2016 <https://www.tccb.gov.tr/en/news/542/69557/cumhurbaskanligi-sozcusu-kalin-teror-saldirilarina-finans-ve-algi-operasyonlarina-karsi-mill-seferberlik-ruhuyla-mucadele-edilmeli> [accessed 12 January 2020].

[701] Hasan Turan [AKP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 26th, Term, 3rd Legislative Year, 100th Session', 16 May 2018 <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanak/donem26/yil3/ham/b10001h.htm> [accessed 1 January 2020].

While the Turkish-Israeli reconciliation agreement was positively received internationally, the same level of optimism was not shared within Turkey. The agreement was criticized for *de facto* not fulfilling any of the preconditions set up by Turkey. The argument was as follows: there was no proper apology to Turkey and the Turkish people. A phone call from Netanyahu to Erdoğan was perceived as not fulfilling the condition of an official apology[702] and neither was the document published afterwards. Consequently, it was questioned whether Israel regrets its behaviour.[703] This attitude influenced how the 20 million U.S. dollars compensation was perceived. Due to the lack of a real apology and cancellation of the legal proceedings against Israeli soldiers, it was seen as taking away justice from the victims.[704] The feeling of injustice was strengthened by the lack of real progress on the subject of the Gaza blockade.[705] According to Öztürk Yilmaz, who spoke on behalf of the CHP, '[t]his agreement essentially means that two groups have been sold. 1) Families of the victims. 2) Hamas is also sold with this agreement'.[706] The agreement was perceived as detrimental to Turkey's prestige and reputation, regardless of its positive international reception. Yılmaz further underlined that 'Turkey always needs to have superiority, attractiveness and a high moral ground',[707] and this agreement contradicts this vision.

The normalization that was officially announced in June 2016 was quickly subjected to a test. The decision of the United States to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, followed by the decision to move the embassy to Jerusalem, became a prime example showing how volatile the

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[702] Netanyahu called Erdoğan on 22 March 2013 under the influence of the U.S. President Barack Obama, who was visiting Israel at that time.

[703] Celal Adan [MHP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 24nd Term, 3rd Legislative Year, 84th Session', 28 March 2013 <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanak/donem24/yil3/bas/b084m.htm> [accessed 10 January 2020]. See also Muharrem Ince [CHP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 24th Term, 4th Legislative Year, 120th Session'; Hişyar Özsoy [HDP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 26th Term, 1st Legislative Year, 128th Session', 19 August 2016 <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanak/donem26/yil1/ham/b12801h.htm> [accessed 2 January 2020].

[704] See Cemal Okan Yüksel [CHP], Mehmet Günal [MHP] and Hişyar Özsoy [HDP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 26th Term, 1st Legislative Year, 128th Session'.

[705] Ahmet Akin [CHP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 26th Term, 1st Legislative Year, 128th Session'. See also Mehmet Günal [MHP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 26th Term, 1st Legislative Year, 128th Session'.

[706] Öztürk Yılmaz [CHP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 26th Term, 1st Legislative Year, 128th Session'.

[707] Öztürk Yılmaz [CHP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 26th Term, 1st Legislative Year, 128th Session'.

Turkish-Israeli relationship was due to external shocks and how closely it was related to the developments on the Palestinian issue. Although the decision to move the embassy was taken by the U.S., Israel was seen as an accomplice to growing tensions in the region. According to Minister Çavuşoğlu,

> [i]n other words, the decision taken by the United States is of no use to Israel. Therefore, it was extremely wrong for this administration to jump on this decision and make such statements and it caused tension in the region, it was a provocative step, of course we cannot accept it.[708]

On the day of the U.S. decision, all political parties represented in the Turkish Parliament signed a joint declaration, stating:

> [i]n the face of these unacceptable developments, we as the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, would like to express and declare the will of the Republic of Turkey and each member of its 80 million nation to reject absolutely and undisputedly the adventurous initiatives aimed at changing Jerusalem's historical status which is against resolutions of the United Nations.[709]

This is a telling development as it might be the only political issue on which all political parties, including the pro-Kurdish HDP, were able to set aside their prejudices toward each other to stand together. In line with how Turkey sees itself and its place in the world, Turkey's strong reaction to these developments was seen as necessary, justified, and based on moral principles. As Bekir Bozdağ from the AKP underlined, '[if] we keep silent in the face of deaths, cruelties and injustices,

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[708] Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Press Release No: 379', 9 December 2017 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-379_-isgal-altindaki-filistin-topraklarinda-kuduse-iliskin-aciklamayi-protesto-eden-filistinlilere-karsi-asiri-guc-kullanimi-hk_en.en.mfa> [accessed 12 January 2020]. See also Çavuşoğlu, 'Interview to NTV News'; Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Press Release No: 157', 2 June 2018 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-157_-abd-nin-filistinlilerle-ilgili-bm-guvenlik-konseyine-sunulan-karar-tasarisini-vetosu_en.en.mfa> [accessed 12 January 2020].

[709] Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 26th Term, 3rd Legislative Year, 33rd Session', 6 December 2017 <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanak/donem26/yil3/ham/b03301h.htm> [accessed 15 January 2020].

those who commit these deaths, cruelties, injustices will make greater injustices, greater persecutions, greater massacres'.[710]

It also unveiled a new layer in Turkey's biographical narrative in the context of the Palestinian-Israeli issue – the significance of Jerusalem for Turkey, which was explained on two levels. It was underlined that Jerusalem has particular importance for Muslims, along with presenting it as an issue that belongs to all of humanity. In the joint declaration of the political parties, it was noted that 'Jerusalem is a city that has gained its historical, cultural, and religious identity as the holy place of three heavenly religions with Al-Haram al-Sharif being our first qibla, therefore, it is the apple of world's eye'.[711]

On top of the previously built narrative distinguishing between Jewish people and the Israeli government and situating Turkey in a unique position to criticize Israel, a new narrative became visible during the last period. Turkey supported its claim to moral high ground by references to international law. This narrative was already used during the Mavi Marmara incident, but with no success. Since the beginning of the Jerusalem crisis, it became more pronounced. In a statement published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it was proclaimed that the decision of the U.S. 'is against international law and relevant UN Resolutions, as the annexation of Jerusalem by Israel has been rejected by international community and the UN'.[712] With Turkey's role as a mediator left in the past, Turkey's efforts were transformed into advocating on behalf of Palestinians as '[a]ttainment of independence by Palestine is a historical, conscientious and humanitarian obligation'.[713] Turkey became very active in the international arena. As the Summit

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[710] Bekir Bozdag [AKP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 26th, Term, 3rd Legislative Year, 100th Session'. See also Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, 'Interview to TRT News', 16 August 2017 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/disisleri-bakani-sayin-mevlut-cavusoglu_nun-trt-haber-kanalina-verdigi-ozel-roportaj_-16-agustos-2017.tr.mfa> [accessed 12 January 2020].
[711] Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 26th Term, 3rd Legislative Year, 33rd Session'.
[712] Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Press Release No: 378'. See also Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Press Release No: 137'.
[713] Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Press Release No: 378'.

Chair of the OIC, Turkey organized an extraordinary meeting in Istanbul, followed by a call to organize an Emergency Special Session within the UN.[714]

Despite the visible deterioration in the relationship with Israel, the opposition criticized the government for not being tough enough vis-à-vis Israel. The most comprehensive criticism came from Muharrem Ince from the CHP, who provided examples of Turkey supporting Israel. These included lifting the veto on Israel's participation in NATO exercises,[715] opening the Kürecik Radar Station to NATO forces,[716] not vetoing Israel's accession to the OECD,[717] abstaining during the vote within the United Nations International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) regarding Israel's possession of a nuclear weapon,[718] Erdoğan being the only Muslim leader that received a prize from the American Jewish Lobby,[719] explaining the one minute incident in Davos as not directed at President of Israel but toward the moderator,[720] explaining that Erdoğan's remarks about Zionism were misunderstood,[721] accepting Israel's apology through a phone call without any official document,[722] not reacting appropriately in the lower chair incident when Turkey's honour was damaged[723] as well as signing secret agreements with Israel.[724] Interestingly, the same line

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[714] Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Press Release No: 378'; Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Press Release No: 394', 21 December 2017 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-394_-bm-genel-kuruluna-kudus-konusunda-sunulan-karar-tasarisinin-kabulu_en.en.mfa> [accessed 12 January 2020].

[715] In December 2012, Turkey partially lifted veto on Israel's participation in NATO activities, agreeing to non-military engagements, such as meetings and workshops.

[716] See footnote 691.

[717] The decision to invite Israel was taken by the OECD Council on 10 May 2010.

[718] The vote was taken in September 2010 during the IAEA annual conference.

[719] See footnote 692.

[720] 'Turkish PM and WEF President's Joint Presser', *Hürriyet Daily News*, 30 January 2009 <https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/turkish-pm-and-wef-presidents-joint-presser-10887292> [accessed 12 January 2020].

[721] During the March 2013 visit to Denmark, Erdoğan clarified his remarks from the UN conference in Vienna that took place on 27 February 2013.

[722] See footnote 702.

[723] Ince referred to the January 2010 treatment of the Turkish Ambassador to Israel Ahmet Oğuz Çelikkol by the Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon.

[724] Ince did not precise which agreements does he refer to, Muharrem Ince [CHP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 24th Term, 4th Legislative Year, 120th Session'. See also Yusuf Halaçoğlu [MHP] and Erkan Akçay [MHP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 24th Term, 4th Legislative Year, 120th Session'; Mehmet Bekaroğlu [CHP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 26th Term, 1st Legislative Year, 128th Session'; Mehmet Ali Aslan [HDP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 26th Term, 3rd Legislative Year, 40th Session'; Öztürk Yilmaz [CHP] and Yusuf Halaçoğlu [IYI] Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 26th, Term, 3rd Legislative Year, 100th Session'.

of criticism was directed the other way around, with President Erdoğan accusing the CHP of 'being on the side of Israel throughout history and supporting Israel's policies'.[725]

8. Conclusions

Although Israel did not appear frequently within Turkey's biographical narrative, stories built around the Turkish-Israeli relationship became a rich source of information regarding how Turkey sees itself, its place in the world and how ontologically secure it feels within it. In what follows, I will approach the questions guiding the analysis of Turkey's biographical narrative in each of the empirical chapters in reverse order (Is Turkey's policy in any way related to its position vis-à-vis Europe/the West? What kind of information does it reveal about how Turkey perceives itself and its place in the world? Why has Turkey decided to follow this particular policy?).

Looking at how the Turkish-Israeli relationship was portrayed within Turkey's biographical narrative did not produce any direct insights regarding Turkey's position vis-à-vis the West. However, it did confirm a similar self-perception to the one seen in the previous chapter, which I argue developed as the consequence of Turkey's ambivalent relationship with the West.

In regard to the second question Turkey consequently emphasized its liminality seen as an asset, not a burden. Based on this, it built a narrative of uniqueness. While in the context of the EU, Turkey's uniqueness would allow the organization to transform into a global player, in the context of Israel, it predestined Turkey to become a mediator. Due to its multi-layered identity, Turkey saw itself as a country that can easily establish a dialogue with different conflicted parties. To strengthen the positive feelings about itself, Turkey portrayed its ability to be a mediator in terms of its exceptionalism – 'being the only one' and 'being the special one'.

Assuming the role of a mediator allowed Turkey to strengthen its ontological security because being a mediator is associated with such qualities as justice, impartiality, and trust, consequently, comes with due respect and recognition. Therefore, it fulfilled Turkey's need for a positive evaluation. Hence, when Turkey's success story became seriously undermined by Israel's Operation Cast Lead, Ankara interpreted the failure of negotiations between Israel and Syria not

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[725] Erdoğan, 'I Curse in the Name of Humanity'.

only as a missed opportunity for peace but mainly as directed against Turkey, an expression of disrespect. It led to a cognitive dissonance between Turkey's self-perception as a gifted mediator and its ability to achieve results. Although failure is inscribed in the role of a mediator, and it was not met with criticism from the West against Turkey, it failed to bring respect and recognition that Turkey was counting on. This forced Turkey to re-evaluate mechanisms aimed at securing the continuity of how it saw itself and its place in the world, which triggered a transformation from emphasis on the role of a mediator to that of a protector of the oppressed. What was important is the coherence of the master narrative, preserving in this transition the idea of Turkey being just, impartial, and trusted. This self-perception will be further visible in the next chapter on the Syrian refugees.

The transformation from a mediator to a protector pushed to the foreground the importance of the Palestinian issue within Turkey's biographical narrative. As discussed previously, the Palestinian cause 'attracted Turkey's genuine domestic affinity, solidarity, and identification'[726] for decades. However, since the mid-2010, it grew into a national cause. This became especially visible during the Turkish-Israeli negotiations in the aftermath of the Mavi Marmara incident, where the lifting of the naval blockade of the Gaza Strip was included as Turkey's precondition, alongside issues directly related to Turkey's well-being such as an apology and compensation. Consequently, Turkey's ontological security became closely entwined with the developments in the Palestinian issue. In other words, since the mid-2010 abandoning the Palestinian cause became very costly for Turkey in terms of how it sees itself, while continuous support became profitable for Turkey's ontological well-being as it ensures the continuity of the master narrative.

The support extended to Palestinians became closely intertwined with Turkey trying to carve a niche for itself as the protector of the persecuted Muslims worldwide that is at the forefront of the fight against Islamophobia.[727] It became part of Turkey's mission of strengthening the inter-

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[726] Bengio, *The Turkish-Israeli Relationship: Changing Ties of Middle Eastern Outsiders*, p. 156.

[727] As an example, see Turkey's statements on the Rohingya issue, Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Relations between Turkey and Myanmar' <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/relations-between-turkey-and-myanmar.en.mfa> [accessed 20 January 2020]; 'First Lady Distributes Aid to Rohingya Muslims in Bangladesh', 7 September 2017 <https://www.tccb.gov.tr/en/news/542/83351/first-lady-distributes-aid-to-rohingya-muslims-in-bangladesh> [accessed 20 January 2020]. On Islamophobia, see Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, 'Turkey's Struggle Is for All the Oppressed and Otherized', 13 May 2018 <https://www.tccb.gov.tr/en/news/542/93965/-turkey-s-struggle-is-

civilizational and interreligious dialogue.[728] In this context, frequent references to the help extended by Turkey to Jews throughout history played an important role in supporting Turkey's claim to being just, impartial, and trusted. It was underlined that Turkey showed empathy, compassion, and humanity when Europeans failed to do so. Moreover, it confirmed a positive image of the country, which was not narrowed down to a specific event in history or one decision-maker. Instead, it was perceived as an inherent trait of Turkey and the Turkish people. This was reinforced by a narrative underlying that Turkey takes a high moral ground regardless of the situation – when Jews needed help, Turkey was there, and now Palestinians need help; therefore, it was Turkey's duty to support them.

Regarding the last question, looking at Turkey's biographical narrative shows that cooperation with Israel was a function of how Turkey sees itself. While during the Cold War and the 1990s, it was as part of the West, since the 2000s, it was as an important regional actor and a trusted mediator, later on transformed into a protector of the oppressed. As such, at the beginning of the 2000s, maintaining a good relationship with Israel became a function of Turkey's role as the mediator. Turkey was vocal on the Palestinian track of the peace process, engaging in small-size mediation, as in the case of two Israeli soldiers who were kidnapped in June 2006, which in comparison to the overall peace talks, was relatively quick to bring positive results. On the Syrian track, Turkey's role became internationally pronounced. After May 2008, four rounds of indirect talks took place, and at times, it seemed that the agreement between Israel and Syria was within reach.[729]

Presenting Turkey's relations with Israel in terms of closeness and trust was conducted in an atmosphere of strong societal support for Palestinians. As such, constant references to the help Turkey extended to Jews throughout history could be seen as a mechanism allowing it to decrease cognitive dissonance caused by a need to have a close relationship with Israel, which

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for-all-the-oppressed-and-otherized-> [accessed 20 January 2020]; Fahrettin Altun, 'We Will Establish a Strong Media Center against Islamophobia', 4 October 2019 <https://www.iletisim.gov.tr/english/haberler/detay/we-will-establish-a-strong-media-center-against-islamophobia> [accessed 20 January 2020].

[728] See Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'The Alliance of Civilizations Initiative' <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/the-alliance-of-civilizations-initiative.en.mfa> [accessed 20 January 2020].

[729] See Ahmet Davutoğlu, 'Hate Language Should Not Be Used', 6 March 2015 <https://www.akparti.org.tr/haberler/nefret-dili-kullanilmamali/> [accessed 20 January 2020].

strengthened Turkey's position as a mediator but clashed with the advocacy for the Palestinian cause. As was mentioned above, until the end of 2008, Turkey was fairly successful in securing its ontological security through mediation; however, Israel's Operation Cast Lead seriously undermined these efforts. This led to a transformation from emphasis on Turkey's role as a mediator to its role as a protector of the oppressed. In terms of the Turkish-Israeli relationship, Turkey started to be highly critical of Israel's behaviour. Turkey's criticism was framed on two levels. On one level, Turkey appealed to what I call common principles of humanity. As such, Turkey perceived itself as having moral high ground because Israel's treatment of Palestinians was unjust, cruel, and against the moral values of the international community, which indirectly refers to the values set up by the West. On the other level, Turkey's quest for justice and peace was framed within a larger context of international law.[730] Consequently, Turkey transferred the blame for the cooling of their bilateral relationship as well as the responsibility for normalization on Israel, just as it had on the EU concerning the success of the accession negotiations.

The *modus vivendi* between Turkey and Israel underwent an important change also due to the developments within Israel that were directly related to Turkey's sense of ontological security. As was discussed in the previous sections of this chapter, an important factor in the Turkish-Israeli relationship was Israel's empathy toward Turkey's sensitivity – in the face of problems or diverging views, it was Israel that embraced the point of view of Turkey, often without expecting the same level of empathy toward its own sensitivity. However, since the second Netanyahu government, the approach of Israel visibly changed. Therefore, it completely changed the dynamics of the Turkish-Israeli relationship, rupturing the well-known routines established between both countries. Using the example of the Mavi Marmara incident, under the old dynamics, the incident itself would most probably not have happened. If it did, Israel would be the first one to reduce tension as it did many times before. For example, after the visit of Hamas leader Khaled Mashal to Ankara in February 2006, which showed that empathy demanded by

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[730] For example, see Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Press Release No: 29', 23 January 2011 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-29_-23-january-2011_-press-statement-by-the-national-inquiry-and-investigation-commission-instituted-upon-israel_s-attack-on-the-international-humanitarian-aid-convoy.en.mfa> [accessed 20 January 2020]. Erdoğan's speech after the Mavi Marmara incident combines both approaches, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, 'Speech at the AKP Group Meeting in Parliament', 1 June 2010 <http://www.akpartipendik.com/haberyazdir.aspx?ID=3103> [accessed 20 January 2020].

Turkey was not reciprocally extended to Israel, it was Israel that decided for the de-escalation of tension. Six days later, the Israeli Ambassador to Ankara, Pinchas Avivi, visited the AKP's headquarter with a message that 'the past should remain in the past; one should look [to] the future'.[731]

Importantly, looking at Turkey's biographical narrative uncovered that antipathy toward Israel is largely shared above the party lines, similarly to the sympathy toward the Palestinian cause. Consequently, the argument that the Turkish-Israeli relationship had deteriorated due to the Islamic proclivities of the AKP does not hold true. Instead, I posit that the interrelation between the issue of Palestine and the relationship with Israel acts as a double-edged sword. As long as disproportionate violence continues, one can expect a tough and uncompromising stance of Turkey. However, the opposite might be a contributing factor for Turkey's re-engagement with Israel because the criticism levelled against Israel, although formulated in an uncompromising, harsh, and offensive language, has been focused on Israel's treatment of Palestinians.

Moreover, despite the harsh language, there has been a good deal of pragmatism in Turkey's stance toward Israel, which has been visible in their economic cooperation. While, during the analyzed period, the bilateral relationship spectacularly deteriorated and mutual accusations between Erdoğan and Netanyahu became fodder for the media, the trade volume between both countries slowly increased. In 2002, the year that the AKP assumed power, the trade volume between Turkey and Israel stood at 1.4 billion U.S. dollars.[732] Since then, it steadily increased, reaching 2 billion in 2004, 3 billion in 2008, 4 billion in 2011, 5 billion in 2013, decreasing to 4 billion between 2015 and 2017 to arrive at 5.6 billion in 2018.[733] Moreover, Turkish Airlines, with around 10 flight per day from Istanbul to Tel Aviv, became the second most popular carrier at Ben Gurion's airport after Israel's El Al.

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[731] Tür, p. 55.

[732] Emre Deveci, 'Roaring Trade with the "Occupation State"', *Cumhuriyet*, 16 December 2017 <http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/roaring-trade-with-the-occupation-state-887548> [accessed 20 March 2020].

[733] Republic of Turkey Ministry of Trade, 'Türkiye Ile Ticaret [Trade with Turkey]' <https://ticaret.gov.tr/yurtdisi-teskilati/orta-dogu-ve-korfez/israil/ulke-profili/turkiye-ile-ticaret> [accessed 20 March 2020].

Regardless of the hostile rhetoric on both sides, the leaders refrained from amending or cancelling existing trade agreements. As such, while the official state to state business was halted, the private sector could still enjoy the benefits of the 1996 Free Trade Agreement. The steady growth is in part related to the complementary structures of the two economies – Turkey's strength is its industry and human resources and Israel's is advancements in technologies.[734] However, while it is true that the political crisis did not lead to the deterioration of economic cooperation, at the same time, it prevented it from reaching the full potential, which cannot be achieved without political support or at least a political blessing. In March 2017, during a short period of reconciliation, the Israeli Ambassador to Ankara, Eitan Naeh, said that the goal is to increase trade volume to 8 billion U.S. dollars,[735] which is only a wishful thinking under current circumstances. The political crisis translates into a lack of trust, which already influenced Israel's direct investments in Turkey,[736] and led to a search for alternative possibilities. The most visible example of the latter is Israel's cooperation with Greece and Cyprus regarding the delivery of Israeli natural gas to Europe. The idea of building a pipeline bringing Israeli gas to Europe was a part of Turkish-Israeli discussions for more than a decade, way before the Leviathan gas field reserves were confirmed. Therefore, while the pragmatism on both parts allows trade to continue, prolonged political tensions show that there is always an alternative.

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[734] Turkey exports to Israel, for example, passenger cars, iron and steel products, insulated cables and wires, while it imports from Israel petroleum oils, ethylene and propylene polymers, and cyclic hydrocarbons.

[735] Merve Aydoğan, 'Turkey-Israel Determined to Double Trade Volume to $8B in next Few Years', *Daily Sabah*, 2 March 2017 <https://www.dailysabah.com/economy/2017/03/02/turkey-israel-determined-to-double-trade-volume-to-8b-in-next-few-years> [accessed 20 March 2020].

[736] Amberin Zaman, 'Will Rancor or Realism Prevail in Turkish-Israeli Ties?', *Al-Monitor*, 29 August 2019 <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2019/08/israel-turkey-ties-erdogan-netanyahu.html#ixzz6IS41eHqI> [accessed 20 March 2020].

# CHAPTER 5: OPEN BORDERS: BREAK WITH THE PAST OR EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES?

1. Introduction

As the previous chapter argued, the way in which Turkey's ambivalent relationship with the West influences the country's ontological security conditions Turkey's behaviour beyond its bilateral relationships. This chapter focuses on Turkey's decision to willingly host Syrian refugees, which is one of the most important but at the same time most surprising decisions that Turkey has taken in the last few years. Discussions on hosting refugees generally suggest that there are more drawbacks than benefits of such decision. Jackson and Atkinson found that between 1960 and 2006, only in 5% of refugee flows states decided to host refugees in their countries.[737] Since 2014, however, Turkey is the world's largest refugee-hosting country, surpassing Pakistan after more than a decade.[738] As of June 2019, Turkey was hosting 14% of the world's refugee population.[739] Therefore, the question follows: Why did Turkey agree out of its own free will to open the borders?

Within the context of this research project, the interests in Syrian refugees is three-fold. First, this decision stands in stark contrast to Turkey's previous behaviour regarding mass migration that was always closely connected to Turkey's self-perception as a country for the Turkish people, where national security stands above all else. Consequently, to make this decision possible in the first place, there had to be a transformation within Turkey's self-perception. This understanding follows the argument developed by Jelena Subotic, who points out that a biographical narrative can accommodate policy change, even a radical one. Secondly, looking at the case study of Syrian refugees plays an important function in broadening the understanding of Turkey's ontological security. Unlike the previous two case studies, whereby the relationship between ontological

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[737] Joshua L. Jackson and Douglas B. Atkinson, 'The Refugee of My Enemy Is My Friend: Rivalry Type and Refugee Admission', *Political Research Quarterly*, 72.1 (2019), 63–74 (p. 67).

[738] UN Refugee Agency, 'Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2014', 2015, pp. 2–3 <https://www.unhcr.org/statistics/country/556725e69/unhcr-global-trends-2014.html> [accessed 28 February 2019].

[739] There were 25,9 million refugees around the world, and Turkey was hosting 3,7 million, see UN Refugee Agency, 'Figures at a Glance' <https://www.unhcr.org/tr/en/figures-at-a-glance> [accessed 20 February 2020].

security and physical security was between neutral and positive, the decision to host Syrian refugees is an example of a situation where providing ontological security undermines physical security. Thirdly, when the civil war in Syria broke out, the harmonization of the Turkish legislation with the EU acquis was underway. Since then, the situation of Syrian refugees became the main subject of a discussion between Turkey and the EU, significantly changing the dynamics between the two partners. Therefore, it became an important dimension of the relationship between Turkey and the EU.

Following the framework adopted in the two previous chapters, I start the discussion by providing the historicization of current developments. This is done on two levels – one includes the overview of the legislation adopted in the field of migration, the second one focuses on Turkey's past decisions regarding mass influxes. Consequently, section two presents the legislation adopted during the Cold War, while section three presents Turkey's stance vis-à-vis four mass influxes from the neighbouring countries that it faced during the 1980s and early 1990s. This, in turn, leads me in section four to the discussion on how the experience of mass migration influenced changes within Turkey's legislation. The following three sections proceed to the contextualization of Turkey's decision to host Syrian refugees. In section five, I look at the changes introduced to the Turkish legislation at the time that Syrians started to flee to Turkey. This is followed by an overview of the responses toward mass migration in the West, looking at both the level of discourse and practice. The last step toward the contextualization is the presentation of existing explanations regarding Turkey's decision in section eight. In section nine, I look at how the refugee issue was constructed within Turkey's biographical narrative. As the influxes of Syrian refugees is a relatively new development, the analysis of Turkey's biographical narrative starts at the end of April 2011 when the first group of Syrian refugees arrived in Hatay. Section ten is devoted to conclusions drawn from the discussion taking place throughout this chapter.

## 2. 'Fortress Turkey'

In contrast to the multi-ethnic and multi-religious Ottoman Empire, the idea of homogeneity was a guiding principle of the Republic of Turkey.[740] The idea that cohesive nation-states will be less

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[740] See more on the subject, Bilgin and Başak Ince.

conflict-prone dominated the modern state system at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. Following the normative standards of this period, Turkey was established around the idea of Turkishness. This was best illustrated by Atatürk's phrase that became a motto of the new state – How happy is the one who says I am a Turk (Turkish *Ne mutlu Türküm diyene*).[741] In other words, Turkey became a state for the Turkish people, which was achieved through forced migration and assimilation. Social cohesion became one of the most important mechanisms of providing both physical and ontological security of the new state. The self-perception of what Turkey is and who Turkish people are had a direct impact on the legislation governing migration issues, which welcomed people of Turkish descent and Sunni Muslim faith while discouraging the settlement of people outside of this group. It also directly impacted Turkey's stance on forced migration, which was best exemplified in Ankara's attitude toward the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, popularly referred to as the 1951 Geneva Convention.

a. The 1951 Geneva Convention

Turkey's self-perception as a state for Turkish people was visible in Ankara's approach toward the questions of refugees, which became a pressing issue in the aftermath of the Second World War. Turkey is a signatory of the 1951 Geneva Convention, which it ratified more than a decade later in 1962. In this process, Ankara decided to adopt a narrow definition, limiting the Convention's scope to 'persons who have become refugees as a result of events occurring in Europe'.[742] Even with the adoption of the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees,[743] which removed the geographical limitations, thereby broadening the applicability of the Convention to people in need of international protection from different parts of the world, the Turkish government, alongside representatives of the Congo, Madagascar and Monaco, chose to maintain the geographical reservation. This decision had a far-reaching impact on the country's

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[741] Between 1972 and 2013, the phrase was included in the Student Oath.

[742] UN General Assembly, 'Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees', 1951 <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3be01b964.html> [accessed 5 March 2019] art. 1.B(1)(a). In its subsequent legislation, Turkey defined Europe as the member states of the Council of Europe, with a possibility of including other states by the decision of the Council of Ministers.

[743] Turkey ratified the Protocol in 1968. UN General Assembly, 'Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees', 1967 <https://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain?docid=3ae6b3ae4> [accessed 5 March 2019].

asylum system. It led to the creation of *de facto* three types of refugees within Turkey's legal system – convention refugees, national refugees, and non-convention refugees.[744] Each of these categories is governed by a different set of rules, which exposes the anxieties and insecurities inscribed in state identity of the Republic of Turkey at the time of its establishment.

### i. Terminological chaos

Before following with the discussion regarding the three types of refugees within Turkey's legal system, a short discussion on terminology is necessary. The terminological chaos of Turkey's refugee law is a result of steps taken by Turkey to protect its social cohesion. Consequently, the way it applies international law differs from standard practice.

As was mentioned above, Turkey kept the geographical limitation to the 1951 Geneva Convention. This means that Turkey only recognizes as *de jure* refugees people coming from Europe. Accordingly, in the Turkish legal system, terms 'asylum seeker' and 'refugee' are understood and applied differently from international law. According to international standards, a refugee is a person that meets the criteria defined by the 1951 Geneva Convention and the 1967 Additional Protocol,[745] while an asylum seeker is a person seeking international protection, which means that s/he applied for refugee status, but there is no final decision yet.[746] After a positive Refugee Status Determination (RSD) s/he will become a refugee. Therefore, not every asylum seeker is a refugee, but every refugee initially was an asylum seeker. In Turkish law, the term refugee is only applied to Europeans after a positive RSD. In contrast, non-Europeans, even after the positive RSD procedure, are still referred to as asylum seekers. With this in mind, I use the terms asylum seeker and refugee in their conventional meaning. In doing that, I follow the practice adopted by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), which in its reports on Turkey refers to non-Europeans seeking international protection as refugees.

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[744] Kemal Kirişci, 'The Legal Status of Asylum Seekers in Turkey: Problems and Prospects', *International Journal of Refugee Law*, 3.3 (1991), 510–28 (pp. 513–15).
[745] These criteria include well-founded fears of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion while being unable or unwilling to go back to the country of origin, UN General Assembly, 'Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees', 1951 <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3be01b964.html> [accessed 5 March 2019] art. 1.A(2).
[746] UN Refugee Agency, 'Master Glossary of Terms Rev. 1', 2006, pp. 4, 17 <https://www.refworld.org/docid/42ce7d444.html> [accessed 5 March 2019].

b. Three-tiered refugee system

The so-called national refugees are ethnic Turks from the European parts of the Ottoman Empire, which in the process of state- and nation-building were encouraged to come to Turkey. As such, they were not seen as a threat to the social cohesion of the Republic, and consequently, were treated more like immigrants than refugees. Therefore, they enjoyed greater administrative, economic and political benefits than under the protection of the 1951 Convention. The most important of them being the right to settle down in Turkey and real prospects of obtaining citizenship. Since the proclamation of the Republic of Turkey, estimates suggest, more than 1,6 million people of Turkish origin settled within its borders.[747]

People that are accepted under the 1951 Geneva Convention are referred to as convention refugees. The provisions of the Convention were mainly enacted in relation to people from the Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union that were fleeing from the communist regimes during the Cold War. These people were also not seen as a threat to the social cohesion of the Republic, as they always came in small numbers, and there was a clear understanding that they would be resettled to third countries within a reasonable time. As such, the question of integration was never an issue. There is no precise data regarding their numbers, but according to Ahmet Içduygu, who used the UNHCR statistics, there were fewer than 8000 asylum seekers from Europe between 1945 and 1991.[748] Using the data coming from the Ministry of Interior, however, Kemal Kirişc found that between 1970 and 1996, 13,552 people from Europe sought asylum in Turkey.[749]

The last category – the non-convention refugees – refers to asylum seekers and refugees coming from outside of Europe, and it is the most problematic category from the point of view of the Turkish authorities. Until the mid-1990s, there were no primary regulations governing their flow to and stay in Turkey. Therefore, Turkey's policy in this area was based on the general provisions

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[747] Directorate General for Migration Management, 'History of Migration' <http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik/history-of-migration_915_1026> [accessed 6 March 2019].

[748] Ahmet Içduygu, 'The Politics of International Migratory Regimes: Transit Migration Flows in Turkey', *International Social Science Journal*, 52.3 (2000), 357–67 (p. 360).

[749] Kemal Kirişci, 'Is Turkey Lifting the "Geographical Limitation"? - The November 1994 Regulation on Asylum in Turkey', *International Journal of Refugee Law*, 8.3 (1996), 293–318 (p. 296).

applicable to foreigners and ad hoc decision-making.[750] Since the 1980s, non-convention refugees became a serious issue for Turkey. First, they were coming in large numbers; secondly, there were no international guarantees regarding their resettlement, and even if they were, their numbers exceeded the willingness of refugee-accepting countries and the capacity of the international organizations. Until the early 1990s, Turkey had to face four mass migrations from the neighbouring countries, which is the subject of the next section.

3. Turkey vis-à-vis mass migration

For the first time, Turkey had to face a mass influx from a neighbouring country due to the 1979 Iranian Revolution. However, compared to a typical mass influx, which involves receiving a large group of people in a short time, the mass influx from Iran was spread out over an entire decade. Turkey adopted a flexible but also unofficial policy allowing Iranians fleeing the Khomeini regime to stay temporarily as tourists. People holding valid passports could enter Turkey without a visa and stay for three months.[751] As obtaining a residence permit was almost impossible, they travelled abroad by the end of the three months to prolong their stay, which was tolerated by the Turkish authorities.[752] Turkey expected Iranians to register with the authorities, which opened a possibility of applying to the UNHCR. However, as much as possible, Turkey tried to discourage them from formally seeking asylum in order not to offend the Iranian government. Importantly, the inflow of Iranians was not perceived as a threat to Turkey's physical and ontological security because the issues of prolonged stay or integration were absent. Turkey saw its role as a transit country, while Iranians had to find the means to sustain themselves and arrange the way to resettle in the West. Considering the flexibility of Turkish policy, there is no

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[750] The Law on Settlement (No. 2510); The Passport Law (Law 5682); The Penal Code (Law 765); The Labour Law (Law 1475); The Law Concerning the Fight against Global Criminal Organizations (Law 4422); The Law Regulating the Sojourn and Movement of Aliens (Law 5683); The Law Regulating the Employment Position of Turkish Citizens in Turkey (Law 2007); The Social Security Law (Law 506); The Regulations Concerning International Road Transport of People and Goods; The Regulation on the Inter-City Transportation of People; The Law Regulating the Movement, Parking, Control, Safety and Customs Procedures of International Transport Vehicles, see Ahmet Içduygu, *Irregular Migration in Turkey*, International Organisation for Migration, Migration Research Series No. 12, 2003, pp. 59–61.

[751] More problematic were cases of people that entered Turkey without a valid passport or illegally – they were sent to court and sentenced to symbolic fines, see Kirişci, 'The Legal Status of Asylum Seekers in Turkey: Problems and Prospects', pp. 522–23.

[752] Dagmar Luuk, 'Report on Iranian and Iraqi Refugees and Asylum-Seekers in Turkey (Doc. 5995)' (Council of Europe, 1989), pp. 6–7.

precise data, but it is estimated that during the 1980s between 500,000 and 1,5 million Iranians fled to Turkey.[753]

By the end of the 1980s, Turkey became a country of asylum for Iraqis. The first wave came in August 1988, after a ceasefire in the Iran-Iraq War was reached. The first response of the Turkish government was to close the borders, which stood in contrast to the treatment granted to Iranians. The Iraqi refugees were seen as a threat to Turkey's security both in its physical and ontological dimensions. On the one hand, Ankara was worried that there would be problems with their resettlement to the Western countries, and therefore, Turkey would become a buffer zone between the West and the refugee-producing countries. On the level of ontological security, the influx of an indefinite number of Iraqis would undermine the self-perception of Turkey as a country for the Turkish people.

On the other hand, Ankara was worried about the PKK infiltration, as the refugee wave comprised mostly of Iraqi Kurds from the north of the country. Besides its physical security dimension, the Kurdish issue was also seen as a threat to the idea of a cohesive nation-state, as Kurds challenge the prevailing notion of Turkishness.[754] Consequently, Turkish officials believed that under international law, Turkey is not obliged to become a host country for non-European asylum seekers. However, due to the domestic and international pressure, Prime Minister Turgut Özal ordered to open the borders. One of the factors that could have influenced Turkish policymakers to change the decision was the timing. As discussed in Chapter 3, the European Economic Community at that time was considering Turkey's application for membership, and Ankara wanted to project a positive image.

The Directorate General for Migration Management (DGMM) estimates that in total 51,542 Iraqi Kurds arrived in Turkey in 1988.[755] By mid-September, approximately 20,000 decided to go to Iran due to an unfavourable climate on the mountainous Turkish-Iraqi border. However, some

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[753] Kirişci, 'Is Turkey Lifting the "Geographical Limitation"? - The November 1994 Regulation on Asylum in Turkey', pp. 297–98; Içduygu, *Irregular Migration in Turkey*, p. 21; Directorate General for Migration Management.
[754] On the issue, see Çelik; Rumelili and Çelik.
[755] Directorate General for Migration Management.

sources also indicated that this decision was a result of pressure from the Turkish government.[756] After Bagdad declared the amnesty, another 13,193 Iraqi Kurds left to their country; however, the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) leader, Masoud Barzani, accused the Turkish authorities of forcing these people to leave.[757] At the time of the third influx of Iraqi refugees to Turkey in 1991, there were still 27,000 Iraqis from the 1988 wave.[758]

Turkey's worries that it would be left alone with the problem turned out to be true. The scale of resettlement was a drop in the ocean – France accepted 355 Iraqi Kurds and aimed to resettle another 600, while the United States was willing to accept 300 families, altogether 2000 people, but then the Persian Gulf War broke out.[759] Moreover, Turkey became a target of Western criticism due to the conditions that the refugees were living in. For a country extra-sensitive about its status and recognition, this was especially painful, as Turkey was once again put in a Catch 22 situation. In the first place, Turkey was criticized for not wanting to open its borders; then, it was criticized for the conditions that it provided. Considering the unwillingness of the West to host these refugees, the discourse of the West gave an impression that Turkey is being judged according to different standards, resembling the nineteenth century Standard of Civilization according to which Turkey was always not enough.

Although the refugees were a financial burden for Turkey,[760] it was reluctant to accept international help, as Ankara was afraid that this would mean a *de facto* acceptance of their legal status in Turkey, especially taking into consideration that the UNHCR defined them as refugees. On top of that, the Turkish authorities were very sensitive about the language they used. They referred to Iraqis as 'temporary guests' or 'peshmergas' out of fear that calling them refugees might imply legal obligations for Turkey. This shows how complicated and layered one's

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[756] Human Rights Watch, 'Whatever Happened to the Iraqi Kurds?', March 1991 <https://www.hrw.org/legacy/reports/1991/IRAQ913.htm> [accessed 5 March 2019].
[757] Suna Gülfer Ihlamur-Öner, 'Turkey's Refugee Regime Stretched to the Limit? The Case of Iraqi and Syrian Refugee Flows', *Perceptions*, XVIII.3 (2013), 191–228 (p. 196).
[758] Human Rights Watch.
[759] Human Rights Watch.
[760] According to numbers provided by Kemal Kirişci, Turkey spent 63 billion Turkish lira, which at that time was around 21 million U.S. dollars. Only 1.7 million U.S. dollars was provided by the international community, see Kirişci, 'The Legal Status of Asylum Seekers in Turkey: Problems and Prospects', n. 28 on p. 518.

ontological security is. Accepting international help could potentially improve the living conditions of the refugees, therefore, alleviating Western criticism. However, there were concerns that it might lead to a change of Turkey's obligations under the international law, which would become a threat to the social cohesion of the country and would involve Turkey even more in Middle Eastern affairs, thereby undermining its Western credentials and transforming the country into a buffer zone between the West and the East. For this reason, the Turkish authorities not only refused most of the international help but also discouraged the integration of Iraqi refugees, which was in striking contrast to the situation of the Bulgarian population that arrived just a year later.[761] As such, Iraqis were placed in camps next to the border, their movement was restricted, and they were closely monitored.[762]

Two years after the first influx from Iraq, the second one started. Between August 1990 and April 1991, almost 60,000 foreign workers with families fled to Turkey after Iraq invaded Kuwait. They were sheltered along the border and soon left to their countries thanks to the efforts of their governments and international agencies. This influx was not seen as a threat to Turkey's physical nor its ontological security. It was known from the beginning that foreign workers would leave Turkey soon thereafter, while the decision to extend help was well received internationally.

The third and the biggest wave from Iraq started in April 1991, when Iraqi Kurds gathered on the mountains between Turkey and Iraq after an unsuccessful uprising in the north of the country. Being the fourth mass influx within just twelve years, the response of the Turkish government was more determined. The Turkish National Security Council decided to close the border and deploy its troops to keep the potential refugees out of Turkey's territory.[763] The prevailing way of thinking is best illustrated in the following statement from Minister of State Kamran Inan: 'The world did nothing then to help us house and feed refugees. At the outset of the 1991 crisis, the Turkish government decided not to repeat what they saw as their mistake in 1988'.[764] However,

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[761] See Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, 'Recommendation 1151: Reception and Settlement of Refugees in Turkey', 24 April 1991 <http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=15185&lang=en> [accessed 2 March 2019].
[762] Luuk, p. 15.
[763] Kemal Kirişci and Gareth M. Winrow, *The Kurdish Question and Turkey: An Example of a Trans-State Ethnic Conflict* (London and Portland: Frank Cass, 1997), p. 158.
[764] Milliyet, 4 April 1991 quoted in Kirişci and Winrow, p. 158.

similarly to the 1988 situation, the international pressure coupled with family and ethnic ties on both sides of the border softened Turkey's stance.

At the political level, Turkey tried to persuade the Western governments that the best solution to the problem was to create a safe haven inside Iraq. After Resolution 688 was adopted, Turkey decided to open its borders and agreed to only a temporary stay of Iraqis. 467,489 Iraqi Kurds found refuge in Turkey's border region, but by mid-June, most of them returned to the north of Iraq. By September 1991, 5000 Iraqi Kurdish refugees left Turkey.[765] In comparison to the first wave of the Iraqi Kurds from 1988, Turkey coordinated its response with the international community. Still, the decision to open the borders became a financial burden. According to a study prepared by the Turkish government, the refugee influx had a negative impact on the livelihood of the local population – fields were destroyed during the journey, cattle were slaughtered for food, while trees were cut down for fire. The damages amounted to 40 million U.S. dollars, while an additional 107 million U.S. dollars were needed to rehabilitate this region.[766]

4. Securitization through legislation

The lessons learned from becoming a destination of four mass influxes in just over a decade influenced the adaptation of the first comprehensive legislation regulating issues related to asylum seekers and refugees – 'The regulation on the procedures and the principles related to mass influx and the foreigners arriving in Turkey either as individuals or in groups wishing to seek asylum either from Turkey or requesting residence permits with the intention of seeking asylum from a third country', commonly called the 1994 Regulation. As stated in Article 1, the purpose of the Regulation was to introduce the principles and procedures as well as institutions in charge of (i) people individually seeking refuge, (ii) people seeking temporary residence in Turkey to seek refuge outside, (iii) groups arriving at the Turkish border to seek refuge or asylum, (iv) possible population movements.[767]

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[765] UN Refugee Agency, 'Chronology: 1991 Gulf War Crisis', 2003 <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/subsites/iraqcrisis/3e798c2d4/chronology-1991-gulf-war-crisis.html> [accessed 6 March 2019].

[766] Kirişci, 'The Legal Status of Asylum Seekers in Turkey: Problems and Prospects', pp. 525–6, see n. 45 on p. 525 and n. 47 on p. 526.

[767] 'The Regulation No. 94/6169' (Resmi Gazete No. 22172, 30 November 1994), pp. 7–11.

The Regulation represented a state-centric and security-driven approach toward asylum seekers and refugees, one in which national security is prioritized over their rights. The Turkish authorities perceived the previous practices and ad-hoc decision making as too liberal and threatening to Turkish security. Therefore, by introducing a set of very rigid rules under the 1994 Regulation, the Turkish government took control over the asylum system. This approach was strengthened by the escalation of fighting with the PKK and increasing concerns that Europe saw Turkey as a buffer zone for the refugee-producing countries. The security-driven approach was already visible in the preparation process. The Regulation was drafted by the Ministry of Interior in consultations with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. There were very limited external consultations in the decision-making process – no legal experts or organizations working with refugees were consulted, even the UNHCR with which Turkey had had a long-standing relationship was excluded from the process.[768]

A choice of the institution responsible for refugees and asylum seekers serves as an important indicator of how a host country perceives these issues. If a state decides to allocate the responsibility to a specialized refugee agency, refugees and asylum seekers are seen as part of the so-called low policy.[769] However, when the refugee issue falls within the Ministry of Interior or the Ministry of Defence, it is an indication that refugees are seen in the context of the state's security and survival. The institution responsible for refugees and asylum seekers under the 1994 Regulation became the Ministry of Interior, more specifically the Foreigners, Borders and Asylum Division of the General Directorate of Security under the Ministry of Interior, which shows that for Turkey, the issue of refugees and asylum seekers was directly related to its wider perception of security.

Part Three of the Regulation referred to mass influx and was entitled 'The precautions to be taken against a possible mass influx and foreigners arriving in Turkey in groups wishing to seek asylum'. The wording of the title indicates that mass influx was seen as something dangerous that has to be dealt with. Taking into consideration Turkey's territorial integrity, the main recommendation

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[768] Kirişci, 'Is Turkey Lifting the "Geographical Limitation"? - The November 1994 Regulation on Asylum in Turkey', p. 301.
[769] This is the case in Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland.

was to stop such movements at the border '[a]s long as there are no political decisions taken to the contrary, and provided that Turkey's obligations under international law are maintained'.[770]

The security-driven approach became visible in the composition of the authorities in charge of asylum seekers coming to Turkey *en masse*. The Ministry of Interior or State Minister was to be assigned as the principal institution, supported by the representatives of (in this order) the Turkish General Staff, the Ministry of National Defence, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Communications, the Ministry of Agriculture along with the National Intelligence Services and the Turkish Red Crescent Society.[771]

Part Three of the 1994 Regulation was used in practice for the first time during the 2003 Operation Iraqi Freedom. Ankara, which was expecting a potential mass migration, decided to seal the border with Iraq.[772] This led to a situation that the number of asylum applications from Iraqi nationals decreased compared to the pre-2003 level.[773] During this time, most of the Iraqis found shelter in Syria and Jordan.

5. Syrian refugees as the fifth mass influx in Turkey's history

The first group of 252 Syrians arrived in Turkey on 29 April 2011 through the Yayladağı border gate in Hatay,[774] while the first big wave arrived in June 2011 when at least 10,000 people decided to escape Syria after violence erupted in Idlib's province. On 20 August 2012, Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu announced that hosting 100,000 refugees is a 'psychological threshold' for Turkey.[775] At this point, there were already 70,000 Syrians residing in Turkey. Less than two months later, the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD) reported

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[770] 'The Regulation No. 94/6169', art. 8.

[771] 'The Regulation No. 94/6169', art. 24.

[772] Jonny Dymond, 'Turkey Prepares for Iraq Refugees', *BBC News*, 15 January 2003 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/2662161.stm> [accessed 6 March 2019].

[773] Ibrahim Kaya, 'The Iraqi Refugee Crisis and Turkey: A Legal Outlook', CARIM Analytic and Synthetic Notes 2009/20 (European University Institute, 2009), p. 2.

[774] Mehmet Güçer, Sema Karaca, and O. Bahadır Dinçer, 'The Struggle for Life Between Borders: Syrian Refugees', USAK Report 13-04 (International Strategic Research Organization, 2013), p. 7.

[775] Serkan Demirtaş, 'Turkey Sets 100,000 Limit for Syrian Refugee Influx', *Hürriyet Daily News*, 21 August 2012 <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-sets-100000-limit-for-syrian-refugee-influx-28225> [accessed 15 March 2019].

that the threshold was exceeded – as of 15 October 2012, 100,363 Syrian refugees were residing in 14 camps.[776] By early 2013, camps reached their capacity, and from this time on, the growing number of non-camp Syrians made it harder to provide precise data. According to the International Crisis Group (ICG), at the beginning of the crisis, the Turkish authorities preferred to underestimate the number of Syrians living in Turkey not to cause panic in the society.[777] The number of Syrians reached a million in September 2014, 2 million in September the following year, and 3 million in May 2017. As of 30 April 2020, there were 3,580,263 Syrian refugees in Turkey.[778]

At the beginning of the crisis, the Turkish authorities opened the borders for Syrians without adopting any legal framework regarding their stay. They were called 'guests' and were not granted any official status. As Turkey and Syria lifted the visa requirement in August 2009, Syrians with a valid passport could easily cross the border. At this point, the lack of legal status did not impede refugee management because the number of arrivals was relatively low. However, the Turkish authorities quickly reacted to the changing circumstances. Already in October 2011, the Ministry of Interior announced that it established a temporary protection regime for Syrians seeking international protection in Turkey. This policy was formalized in a secret regulation issued on 30 March 2012 by the Ministry of Interior.[779] At the same time, work was underway for a comprehensive law on international protection.

    a.  New times, new laws

In April 2013, a comprehensive document covering the entirety of the Turkish immigration policy was adopted. The Law on Foreigners and International Protection (LFIP)[780] entered into force a year afterwards, becoming the first document on the level of binding domestic law that regulated

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[776] Joe Parkinson and Ayla Albayrak, 'Turkey Hits "Limit" of Syrian Refugees', *Wall Street Journal*, 15 October 2012 <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10000872396390443675404578058103242571138> [accessed 14 March 2019].

[777] International Crisis Group, *Blurring the Borders: Syrian Spillover Risks for Turkey*, Report No. 225, 30 April 2013, n. 18 on p. 5.

[778] UN Refugee Agency, 'Syria Regional Refugee Response: Turkey' <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria/location/113> [accessed 30 April 2020].

[779] Kemal Kirişci, 'Syrian Refugees and Turkey's Challenges: Beyond the Limits of Hospitality', The Brookings Institute, May 2014, p. 15 <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Syrian-Refugees-and-Turkeys-Challenges-May-14-2014.pdf> [accessed 5 March 2019].

[780] 'Law on Foreigners and International Protection No. 6458' (Resmi Gazete No. 28615, 11 April 2013).

international protection. The process leading to the adoption of the LFIP was a long one and at the same time unusually transparent. As such, it stood in stark contrast with the preparation of the 1994 Regulation. The drafting process started in early 2011 and included academicians, specialists in the field, NGOs, the Council of Europe and the European Union, as well as other ministries, public institutions and organizations.[781] Many observers underlined the leading role of the EU in the adoption of the new law.

The first push for reforms from the EU came with the National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis (NAAP) from 2001, later versions adopted in 2003 and 2008, strengthened by the possibility of opening Chapter 24 (Justice, Freedom, and Security). On a practical level, the EU's High Level Working Group on Migration and Asylum provided both funds and experts for specialized training, which helped develop a common understanding and language between both sides. Subsequently, on 25 March 2005, the Turkish government adopted the Action Plan on Asylum and Migration that identified steps to take and a timetable to follow.[782] The slow transformation within Turkey's perception of asylum seekers and refugees, from threatening its vision of the self toward being a shared responsibility, came when Turkey perceived the success of the accession negotiations with the EU as depending solely on its behaviour.

Besides a direct push from the EU, Kemal Kirişci puts forward that the adoption of the LFIP should be seen as a result of a longer and wider process of acculturation of the Turkish authorities to the international human rights regime rather than solely as a product of Europeanization. For this reason, the influence of the UNHCR and the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) should also be mentioned. The long-standing working relationship with the UNHCR enabled Turkey's administration and civil society representatives to adapt slowly to the international refugee regime. This process started way before the accession negotiation with the EU. At the same time,

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[781] Meral Açıkgöz and Hakki Onur Ariner, 'Turkey's New Law on Foreigners and International Protection: An Introduction', Briefing Paper 2 (Turkish Migration Studies Group at Oxford, 2014), n. 3 on p. 6; Cavidan Soykan, 'The New Draft Law on Foreigners and International Protection in Turkey', *Oxford Monitor of Forced Migration*, 2.2 (2012), 38–47 (p. 38).

[782] Republic of Turkey Ministry of Interior, 'İltica ve Göç Alanındaki Avrupa Birliği Müktesebatının Üstlenilmesine İlişkin Türkiye Ulusal Eylem Planı [Turkish National Action Plan for the Adoption of the EU Acquis in the Field of Asylum and Migration]', 2005 <http://www.goc.gov.tr/files/files/turkiye_ulusal_eylem_plani(2).pdf> [accessed 14 March 2019].

the ECtHR court verdicts against Turkey constantly highlighted the need for urgent reforms. Turkey was criticized for non-compliance with the principle of non-refoulement and its asylum procedures. [783] What distinguished the influence of the UNHCR and the ECtHR from that of the EU was its less formalized character.[784]

Compared to the 1994 Regulation, the LFIP provided more space for the rights of those in need of international protection. However, this was a relatively slow process. A newly established institution responsible for these issues – the Directorate General of Migration Management – was not a specialized refugee agency but was established within the Ministry of Interior, demonstrating that refugees were still seen as part of the security-related policy.

The LFIP mentions three categories of international protection (refugees, conditional refugees, subsidiary protection) as well as temporary protection, which it defines as a separate category. Like in the 1994 Regulation, the definition of a refugee is derived from the 1951 Geneva Convention and the 1967 Additional Protocol and applies only to people coming from Europe. The term conditional refugee is used for individuals coming from outside of Europe. Conditional refugees can only stay in Turkey temporarily until their resettlement to a third country. Besides that, there are no significant differences between rights given to refugees and conditional refugees. The third category – subsidiary protection – is granted to people that do not qualify for the status of a refugee or a conditional refugee but at the same time cannot be sent back to the country of origin or former residence due to a danger of death, torture, ill-treatment or indiscriminate violence caused by an armed conflict. The fourth category, temporary protection, refers only to mass influx. The LFIP leaves further regulations in this domain to a directive to be issued by the Council of Ministers.

The main criticism towards the new law stems from not removing the geographical limitation to the 1951 Geneva Convention, which was one of the main conditions of the EU. There were two

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[783] European Court of Human Rights, 'Jabari v. Turkey, Application No. 40035/98', 11 July 2000 <https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/fre#%7B%22itemid%22:[%22001-58900%22]%7D> [accessed 5 March 2019]; European Court of Human Rights, 'Abdolkhani and Karimnia v. Turkey, Application No. 30471/08', 22 September 2009 <https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#%7B%22itemid%22:[%22001-94127%22]%7D> [accessed 5 March 2019].

[784] Kemal Kirişci, 'Turkey's New Draft Law on Asylum: What to Make of It?', in *Turkey, Migration and the EU: Potentials, Challenges and Opportunities*, ed. by Seçil Paçacı Elitok and Thomas Straubhaar (Hamburg: Hamburg University Press, 2012), pp. 63–83 (p. 63).

reasons why Turkey refrained from taking such a decision. First, at the early stages of the preparation of the LFIP, there was optimism regarding Turkey's EU membership prospects. However, the feeling since then decreased. The Turkish authorities started to doubt the EU's seriousness about its imminent full membership. Consequently, lifting the geographical limitation without full membership in the EU was considered the worst-case scenario. Turkey would become legally obliged to care for these people without getting institutional support from the EU. This is closely related to the second point. Turkey did not see the existing burden-sharing mechanisms as working in its favour. Turkey feared that it would become a buffer zone between the immigration-producing countries and the EU, which played into the old dynamics where inclusivity does not mean equality.

i.    The Temporary Protection Regulation (TPR)

Further regulations on mass influx, as foreseen by Article 91 of the LFIP, were introduced in October 2014 by the Temporary Protection Regulation that determines the procedures and principles regarding the management of mass groups of people (reception, stay and exit) as well as the rights and obligations during their stay. [785] This is also the primary document that regulates the status of Syrians in Turkey, whose number already exceeded one million at the time of its entry into force. The idea behind temporary protection is to put in place exceptional measures in the event of a mass influx, when the normal asylum system would not be able to accommodate the number of cases, leading to a decreasing level of assistance provided to asylum seekers.[786]

The TPR stipulates that decisions to grant temporary protection will be taken by the Council of Ministers at the request of the Ministry of Interior. Furthermore, the document lists circumstances that allow Turkey to restrict or suspend (temporary or indefinite) the protection, which includes 'a threat to national security, public order, public security, or public health'.[787] It further states that Turkey can apply relevant measures both inside and outside of its borders in

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[785] Turkish law was largely modeled on the EU directive from 2001, see Council of the European Union, 'Council Directive 2001/55/ECof', 20 July 2001 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2001:212:0012:0023:EN:PDF> [accessed 15 April 2019].

[786] European Commission, 'Temporary Protection' <https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/asylum/temporary-protection_en> [accessed 15 April 2019].

[787] 'Council of Ministers Decision No: 2014/6883' (Resmi Gazete No. 29153, 22 October 2014), art. 24 (1).

such situations. As for the rights of beneficiaries of temporary protection, the TPR confirms the non-punishment of illegal entry, the non-refoulment principle as well as access to health services, education, labour market, and social assistance. Compared to the 1994 Regulation, the language of the TPR is less security-oriented, and more rights are given to asylum seekers.

When the TPR was introduced, a temporary protection regime was already in place in Turkey based on the March 2012 secret regulation, which was confirmed by Provisional Article 1 of the TPR. The temporary protection was granted to citizens of the Syrian Arab Republic, stateless persons and refugees coming to Turkey from Syria due to events that have taken place since 28 April 2011. The phrase stateless persons referres to the Palestinian population residing in Syria before the outburst of the conflict, while the interpretation regarding the refugees originating from Syria became more complicated due to the particular understanding of the term refugee in Turkish national law. In practice, the nationals of third countries that were granted refugee status in Syria in its common understanding are not covered by the temporary protection regime in Turkey. However, they are also not recognized as refugees under the 1951 Convention. Instead, they can apply for international protection under the LFIP as conventional refugees. This distinguishes them from the temporary protection beneficiaries, which cannot make a separate application for the international protection within the scope of the LFIP, meaning Syrians cannot apply for refugee status with the UNHCR.

As such, the decision to open Turkey's border to Syrian refugees preceded the changes within Turkey's legislation; however, the process of transformation was initiated a decade earlier. While both the LFIP and the TPR were criticized for their shortcomings,[788] overall, they were recognized as steps in the right direction.

6.   Securitization of migration in the West

Turkey's decision to host Syrian refugees stands in stark contrast to the negative attitude of the Western countries, especially visible in the case of Europe, which due to its geographical proximity has been more affected than the United States or Australia. However, scepticism

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[788] Soykan, pp. 42–44; AIDA (Asylum Information Database), 'Country Report: Turkey', 2017, pp. 125–26 <https://www.asylumineurope.org/sites/default/files/report-download/aida_tr_2017update.pdf> [accessed 5 March 2020].

toward refugees and asylum seekers is not a new phenomenon. With many changes brought by the end of bipolarity, the shift in the perception of migration was one of them. While previously it was primarily understood in humanitarian terms,[789] after the end of the Cold War, migration started to be linked with security. As Philippe Bourbeau describes it, '[i]nternational migration has become a key security issue and is perceived, in some eyes, as an existential security threat'.[790]

In the discussion presented here, I refer to the securitization of migration in general, not to the securitization of forced migration, which would be more suitable to the task at hand. However, as Bourbeau aptly observes, 'the state's security apparatus purposively provokes an elision and confusion of migration categories. Overdrawing an analytical distinction between several categories of migration would indeed miss the "flexibility" quality that politicians have been particularly eager to exploit'.[791]

In his article 'The European Union and the Securitization of Migration', Jef Huysmans looks at how migration became a security issue in the EU. Already at the beginning of the 2000s, Huysmans observed that 'migration has been increasingly presented as a danger to public order, cultural identity, and domestic and labour market stability; it has been securitized'.[792] He posits that this process took place due to the spillover – an economic project of the internal market became an internal security project. Due to the eradication of internal borders, a necessity to strengthen the external ones was created, contributing to the creation of the so-called Fortress Europe. In this process, migrants stopped being perceived through social and economic rights; instead, they were put in the same basket as terrorism, drugs, and crime. Besides being increasingly linked to criminal activities, migrants were seen as a challenge to national identity and the welfare state. This dynamic was reinforced after the September 11 attacks, and a direct

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[789] For a discussion challenging this view, see Natasha Saunders, 'Paradigm Shift or Business as Usual? An Historical Reappraisal of the "Shift" to Securitisation of Refugee Protection', *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 33.3 (2014), 69–92.

[790] Philippe Bourbeau, *The Securitization of Migration: A Study of Movement and Order* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), p. 6.

[791] Bourbeau, p. 2.

[792] Jef Huysmans, 'The European Union and the Securitization of Migration', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 38.5 (2000), 751–77 (p. 760).

link between migration and terrorism was established.[793] While migration, in general, is seen as a threat, the recent influx of migrants from the Middle East became a target of securitization to a much higher degree than in the past.

The recent influx has been securitized by the European countries both at the level of discourse and practice. The developments that started in Europe in 2014 are popularly referred to as the 'migrant crisis'. The representation of migration as a crisis already evaluates it as something exceptional and dangerous. Looking at the practices of European politicians, Martin Beck points out that one of the reasons behind the successful securitization of the recent influx is the fact that this kind of discourse is not limited to the populist and right-wing parties and movements, but 'securitizing lines of argument are widespread in the entire spectrum of political camps and ideologies in Europe and span political groupings of conservatives, social democrats, and the left and liberals, including feminists'.[794] As such, three lines of argument are most widespread: linking migration to terrorism, portraying migrants as a threat to cultural identity as well as a threat to the welfare state.[795]

On the level of practice, while maintaining a neutral language, the EU *de facto* securitized migrants through policies aimed at strengthening its external borders and keeping them out of its territory as much as possible. This includes re-introducing border patrols in the Schengen arena, policing the Mediterranean through the EUNAVFOR MED operation Sophia, and signing readmission agreements. To these collective decisions of the EU, one needs to add building fences by particular EU member states – Hungary on the border with Serbia and Bulgaria on the border with Turkey. Taken together, in recent years, the image of Fortress Europe has been strengthened.

This does not mean that the European countries speak with one voice on the subject. Tal Dingott Alkopher links the difference in adopted strategies to the self-perception of particular member

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[793] Contrary to this common understanding, most of the terrorist that perpetrated the 9/11 attacks arrived in the U.S. on a tourist visa, while none came as an asylum seeker, see Georgios Karyotis, 'European Migration Policy in the Aftermath of September 11', *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research*, 20.1 (2007), 1–17 (pp. 6–8).

[794] Martin Beck, 'Securitization of Refugees in Europe', *E-International Relations*, September 2017 <https://www.e-ir.info/2017/09/18/securitization-of-refugees-in-europe/> [accessed 27 February 2019].

[795] For quotes from European politicians supporting this argument, see Beck; Alkopher, pp. 319–22.

states, showing that what these reactions have in common is the aim of maintaining ontological security in times of uncertainty. As such, responses have varied between 'the securitization of the collective self', 'the desecuritisation of the collective self', and 'the management of the securitization of the collective self'.[796] The first strategy has been most visible in the reaction of the Visegrad Four (the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, and Poland). These states have adopted defensive steps, including restrictive immigration policies, which are closely related to how they see themselves and the surrounding world. Taking into consideration their level of development, each of them has been in a position to host a reasonable number of Syrian refugees. However, for the Central European countries, even a potential influx of migrants from the Middle East has been perceived as a vital threat to the exclusive notion of national identity.

The second strategy has been visible in Germany's (and to a certain extent Sweden's) initial and temporary open-door policy. According to Alkopher, this reaction is embedded in Germany's inclusive national identity, adopted after the Second World War. It underlines the importance of liberal values and human rights and freedoms, which is further strengthened by an emphasis on civilian power. As a result, Germany has achieved a state of physical asecurity and ontological security.[797] In this context, the influx of migrants has been perceived as pertaining to normal politics.

The last strategy can be observed in the response of the European Commission, which wants to preserve two clashing narratives within its biographical narrative. On the one hand, with its inclusive discourse on human rights and refugee-related issues, it presents itself as a humanitarian actor. On the other hand, as the order-providing institution of the EU, it is responsible *inter alia* for the management of the external borders. As such, on the level of discourse, the EC has responded to the crisis by underlining its attachment to human rights and the importance of solidarity and multilateralism. However, on the practical level, the EC has

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[796] Alkopher, pp. 317–19.
[797] Alkopher, p. 327. See also Rumelili, 'Identity and Desecuritisation: The Pitfalls of Conflating Ontological and Physical Security'.

managed migration by trying to keep it outside of the EU's territory; the readmission agreements being a prime example of this approach.[798]

7. Open borders and physical insecurity

While the previous sections mainly focused on the ontological dimension of mass influxes, the historicization presented at the beginning of this chapter showed that in the case of migration, both sides of the security equation are closely related. As such, Turkey's decision to open its borders had tangible effects on the country's physical security. The mass influx of Syrians undermined the ability of the Turkish authorities to control their borders effectively. According to the International Crisis Group, in the first two years since Turkey opened its borders, more than seventy-five Turkish citizens were killed due to the spillover from the conflict in Syria.[799] Besides being attacked by stray shells from fights taking place on the other side of the border, which would happen regardless of Turkey's decision to host refugees, the open borders were exploited to the detriment of Turkey's physical security. In February 2013, a car bomb was detonated on the Turkish side of the Cilvegözü/Bab al-Hawa crossing in Hatay. Although no one took responsibility for the attack, it was linked to a general in the Syrian Army during the investigation.[800] The attack claimed the lives of thirteen people, including Turkish civilians, more than twenty people were wounded, and nineteen vehicles were damaged.

The most emblematic exploitation of Turkey's open-door policy was a suicide attack perpetrated by a Daesh supporter who entered the country as a refugee. In January 2016, Nabil Fadli killed twelve German tourists and injured sixteen people in Istanbul's most touristic district – Sultanahmet. He entered Turkey just eleven days earlier and was registered as a refugee.[801] Then in February 2016, Turkish citizen Abdulbaki Sömer, who entered the country with fake Syrian

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[798] Alkopher, p. 315.

[799] International Crisis Group, *The Rising Costs of Turkey's Syrian Quagmire*, Report No. 230, 30 April 2014, p. 34.

[800] 'Prosecutors Demand 42 Aggravated Life Sentences for Cilvegözü Border Gate Bombers', *Hürriyet Daily News*, 6 August 2013 <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/prosecutors-demand-42-aggravated-life-sentences-for-cilvegozu-border-gate-bombers-52129> [accessed 15 April 2019].

[801] 'Sultanahmet Suicide Bomber Identified as Saudi "Asylum Seeker"', *Hürriyet Daily News*, 13 January 2016 <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/sultanahmet-suicide-bomber-identified-as-saudi-asylum-seeker-93800> [accessed 14 April 2019].

documents, carried out a bomb attack in Ankara.[802] This attack targeted the Turkish military personnel, thirty people died, and more than sixty were injured.

Besides the direct involvement of perpetrators who entered Turkey as refugees, the main consequence of Turkey's open-door policy was making the free flow of fighters and weapons through the Turkish-Syrian border easier.[803] Reports revealed that the perpetrators of other suicide attacks on Turkey's territory, both Turkish and foreign nationals, travelled between both countries. Additionally, in many cases, the explosives came from Syria. This was the case in the Reyhanlı explosion, which was, at that time, the worst terrorist attack in the history of Turkey, claiming the lives of more than fifty people.[804] Other examples include the terrorist attacks in Diyarbakir and Suruç in June and July 2015, respectively, the suicide attack in Ankara in October 2015, which until today is the most deadly attack in the history of Turkey, where more than 100 people were killed and 400 injured as well as the attack on the Atatürk Airport in Istanbul in June 2016, which had a massive psychological impact both domestically and internationally because airports have always seemed like a safe place in Turkey.

The other negative consequence of Turkey's open-door policy was rising tension between the local populations and Syrians. The growing resentment among Turkish people led to protests and violence. Although less frequent than one might expect with such a high number of refugees, these incidents took place regularly. According to the ICG, between 1 January and 30 November 2017, there were 181 refugee-related cases of social tension and criminal incidents, in which thirty-five people died, twenty-four of them of Syrian nationality.[805] The rise in incidents was noticed during the spring and summer months, which might be linked to crowds gathering in

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[802] Mesut Hasan Benli, 'Ankara Bomber Infiltrated Turkey with Fake ID: Report', *Hürriyet Daily News*, 23 February 2016 <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/ankara-bomber-infiltrated-turkey-with-fake-id-report-95557> [accessed 15 April 1BC].

[803] International Crisis Group, *Turkey's Refugee Crisis: The Politics of Permanence*, Report No. 241, 30 November 2016, p. 14; 'Syria Conflict: Foreign Jihadists "Use Turkey Safe Houses"', *BBC News*, 7 December 2013 <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-25274886> [accessed 24 August 2018].

[804] Ahmet Salih Alacacı, 'Turkey Arrests Suspect of 2013 Reyhanli Bombing Case', *Anadolu Agency*, 12 October 2018 <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/turkey/turkey-arrests-suspect-of-2013-reyhanli-bombing-case/1280221> [accessed 5 March 2019]; 'Turkish Prosecutor Seeks Multiple Life Terms for Reyhanlı Bombing Plotter', *Daily Sabah*, 26 November 2018 <https://www.dailysabah.com/investigations/2018/11/26/turkish-prosecutor-seeks-multiple-life-terms-for-reyhanli-bombing-plotter> [accessed 5 March 2019].

[805] International Crisis Group, *Turkey's Syrian Refugees: Defusing Metropolitan Tensions*, Report No. 248, 29 January 2018, n. 9 on p. 3.

open areas, such as parks and beaches. The ICG bases its data on media monitoring; however, one should keep in mind that many cases were not reported.[806]

The rising tensions have two dimensions: ethnosectarian and socioeconomic. There is a fragile ethnic balance in the provinces bordering Syria, as it is home to Turkish Alevis and Kurds. Sensitivities of these minority communities are based on collective memories of persecution, recent political marginalization, and mistrust of the authorities. As most of the Syrian refugees are Sunni Arabs, their mass influx unearthed old grievances. This has been particularly visible within the Turkish Alevi community. Turkey's Alevi population is heterogeneous, including Turkish Alevis, Kurdish Alevis, Turkmen Alevis, and Arab Alevis. Arab Alevis from Hatay are the closest to Syrian Alawites. They became citizens of the Republic of Turkey in 1939 when Hatay was included within its borders. Naturally, they have close ties with the people living on the other side of the border. With the lack of official data, it is estimated that out of 1,5 million inhabitants of Hatay between 400,000 to 700,000 are Arab Alevis.[807]

Being members of the Shiite sect, living in a predominantly Sunni country, they feel like second-class citizens. The memory of past wrongdoings is still fresh and was further strengthened with the recent decision of the Turkish authorities to name the third bridge in Istanbul after Yavuz Sultan Selim I, who was responsible for the massacre of Alevis in the sixteenth century.[808] The Syrian civil war brought a new dimension to this problem. The Turkish authorities describe the regime in Damascus as 'an Alawite-majority regime', underlying the sectarian dimension of the conflict. This influenced Alevis in two ways. First, there were fears of potential hostility from Syrian Sunni refugees, which escaped an Alawite regime. Secondly, the growing number of refugees inside Turkey made Alevis worried about the Sunnification of the country. This fear has been strengthened by Turkey's government portraying itself as a Sunni power. On top of that, minorities feel that Syrians are granted more rights in Turkey than they do.

The second dimension of tensions between the local populations and Syrians are socioeconomic issues. According to ex-UNHCR spokesperson, Metin Çorabatır,

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[806] See International Crisis Group, *Turkey's Syrian Refugees: Defusing Metropolitan Tensions*, p. 11.
[807] International Crisis Group, *Blurring the Borders: Syrian Spillover Risks for Turkey*, p. 19.
[808] During his reign around 40,000 Alevis were killed.

[t]he host community says they [Syrian refugees] can't speak the same language, and do not fit in; Turkish citizens say the hospital lines have grown too much, the labour market has become harder to penetrate, they can't find jobs, university seats are taken away.[809]

The main area of competition is related to employment. First, wages, especially in unskilled professions, have lowered as Syrian refugee agree to work for less than their Turkish counterparts.[810] It creates a zero-sum game because an informal economy has been an important source of income for unqualified Turkish workers. Around 34% or roughly 9 million people work informally. The lack of social security makes them vulnerable to any type of competition.[811]

In some cases, both socioeconomic and ethnosectarian cleavages overlap. This is visible especially in the case of Kurds that moved from the southeast to the big cities in the Western part of Turkey. In Istanbul's Sultangazi district, there have been reports of local youth attacking refugees around payday.[812] In Izmir's Bornova district, Syrian refugees have replaced Kurdish workers in shoe/leather production. As a result of the disappointment of local workers, minor clashes became regular, and in 2013 and 2014, two big protests were organized. Syrians also started to take over seasonal jobs in agriculture from Kurds. The situation from Izmir's Torbalı district shows a high potential for tensions. In April 2017, after rumours spread that Syrians had beaten a local child, locals, mainly Kurds and Roma, attacked tents belonging to refugees, forcing around 500 people to flee.[813]

In line with the lowering wages, the prices of accommodation have increased. Syrians prefer to locate in the provinces near Syria's border to be able to travel home easily. For example, entire neighbourhoods and villages from Aleppo relocated to Gaziantep.[814] The extreme demand for

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[809] International Crisis Group, *Turkey's Refugee Crisis: The Politics of Permanence*, n. 40 on p. 11.

[810] International Crisis Group, *Turkey's Refugee Crisis: The Politics of Permanence*, p. 12; World Bank, 'Turkey's Response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis and the Road Ahead', December 2015, p. 7 <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/583841468185391586/pdf/102184-WP-P151079-Box394822B-PUBLIC-FINAL-TurkeysResponseToSyrianRefugees-eng-12-17-15.pdf> [accessed 15 March 2019].

[811] International Crisis Group, *Turkey's Syrian Refugees: Defusing Metropolitan Tensions*, n. 26 on p. 5.

[812] International Crisis Group, *Turkey's Syrian Refugees: Defusing Metropolitan Tensions*, p. 6.

[813] 'İzmir'de Tehlikeli Gerginlik! 30 Kişi Yaralandı, 500 Suriyeli Mahalleyi Terk Etti [Dangerous Tensions in Izmir! 30 People Were Injured, 500 Syrian Quarters Abandoned]', *Hürriyet*, 8 April 2017 <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/izmirde-tehlikeli-gerginlik-30-kisi-yaralandi-500-suriyeli-mahalleyi-terk-etti-40421158> [accessed 22 August 2018].

[814] International Crisis Group, *The Rising Costs of Turkey's Syrian Quagmire*, n. 63 on p. 10.

accommodation in the provinces bordering Syria made prices almost double.[815] The lower-income outskirts of big cities, where they have friends and family, are the other choice of Syrian refugees. The fact that refugees tend to move to neighbourhoods where there are other Syrians results in ghetto-like segregation. For example, in Ankara's Siteler district and Istanbul's Sultangazi district there are around 40,000 Syrians.

While the wages are lower and rents are higher, the queues for social help are longer. The government distributes financial aid to provinces based only on the number of Turkish citizens living in them. However, Syrians also qualify to use this help, which became a problem in provinces with very numbers of Syrian refugees.[816] Therefore, not only minorities feel marginalized, but also poor Turks feel that Syrian refugees get more help than they do. This situation became more visible after the 2016 coup attempt that removed more than 100,000 civil servants from their jobs, which has had adverse effects on the provision of public services, especially when it comes to education and health care.

The myths and misperceptions regarding help received by Syrian refugees quickly spread in Turkish society, leading to situations where even a rumour is enough to start a public display of anger against their presence in the country.[817] In July 2016, in Ankara's Siteler district, clashes erupted after the news appeared on Facebook describing a fight between the host and guest population, claiming that a Turkish citizen was wounded with a knife and hospitalized.[818] This led

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[815] *The Socioeconomic Impact of Syrian Urban Refugees in Gaziantep : An Initial Assessment*, Syria Research and Evaluation Organization, 2013 <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/39779> [accessed 5 March 2019]; International Crisis Group, *The Rising Costs of Turkey's Syrian Quagmire*; Osman Bahadır Dinçer and others, 'Turkey and Syrian Refugees: The Limits of Hospitality', *Brookings Institution and International Strategic Research Organization*, 2013 <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Turkey-and-Syrian-Refugees_The-Limits-of-Hospitality-2014.pdf> [accessed 15 March 2019].

[816] Hazal Ateş, 'Suriyeli Barındıran Şehre Hazine Teşviki [Treasury Incentives for Cities Housing Refugees]', *Sabah*, 11 September 2017 <https://www.sabah.com.tr/ekonomi/2017/09/11/suriyeli-barindiran-sehre-hazine-tesviki> [accessed 30 March 2020].

[817] Semih Idiz, 'Attacks on Syrians in Turkey Increasing', *Al-Monitor*, 20 May 2015 <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/sites/almonitor/contents/articles/originals/2015/05/turkey-attack-on-syrians-in-country-on-the-rise.html> [accessed 5 March 2019]; International Crisis Group, *Turkey's Syrian Refugees: Defusing Metropolitan Tensions*.

[818] Mazlumder Ankara Branch (The Association for Human Rights and Solidarity for the Oppressed), '16 Temmuz 2016 Tarihinde Siteler Bölgesinde Yaşayan Suriyeli Sığınmacıların Maruz Kaldıkları Toplu Şiddet Olayları [Collective Violence Faced by Syrian Refugees in the Siteler District on 16 July 2016]', 2016, p. 7 <https://ankara.mazlumder.org/fotograf/yayinresimleri/dokuman/rapor.pdf> [accessed 15 March 2019].

to semi-organized attacks against Syrians – their shops were vandalized, windows in houses were broken, and some Syrians were beaten on the streets. According to the Ankara Bar Association, even though the NGOs reported the event to the authorities, no steps were taken.[819]

This was not an isolated case. Protests against the presence of Syrian refugees are organized regularly. In July 2014, a protest was organized in Kahramanmaraş,[820] and later in August of the same year in Istanbul.[821] There were also cases of sporadic violence against Syrians in Şanlıurfa and Gaziantep in June 2016.[822] Tensions started to rise once again in summer 2016 after President Erdoğan mentioned the prospects of Syrian refugees being granted citizenship and the intensification of the nationalist discourse in the aftermath of the coup attempt.[823] These protests were organized due to the rising number of Syrian refugees without being triggered by a particular incident. However, other protests were triggered by specific events, such as the stabbing of a landlord by a Syrian tenant in August 2014 in Gaziantep,[824] the fight over the treatment of stray dogs in July 2016 in Konya,[825] or the money dispute as in April 2017 in Mersin.[826]

Taking into condieration Turkey's past stance on mass influxes, the negative consequences of the prolonged stay of Syrian refugees in terms of the country's physical security, and the securitization of migration in the West, the decision to open Turkey's borders to Syrians is surprising. As such, this puzzle will be raised in the following two sections. Firstly, in section eight,

[819] Ankara Bar Association, 'Basina ve Kamuoyuna [To Press and Public]' <http://www.ankarabarosu.org.tr/HaberDuyuru.aspx?DUYURU&=928> [accessed 22 August 2018].

[820] 'Hundreds March against Syrian Refugees', *Hürriyet Daily News*, 14 August 2014 <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/hundreds-march-against-syrian-refugees-69122> [accessed 22 August 2018].

[821] 'Turkey Protest in Istanbul over Syrian Refugees', *BBC News*, 25 August 2014 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-28926956> [accessed 22 August 2018].

[822] International Crisis Group, 'Turkey's Refugee Crisis: The Politics of Permanence', n. 41 on pp. 11-12.

[823] 'AKP'liler Konya'da Saldırdı: 5 Suriyeli Yaralı [AKP Members Attack in Konya: 5 Syrian Wounded]', *SoL*, 17 July 2017 <https://haber.sol.org.tr/toplum/akpliler-konyada-saldirdi-5-suriyeli-yarali-162365> [accessed 20 March 2019].

[824] 'Murder Triggers Anti-Syrian Protest in Gaziantep', *Daily Sabah*, 14 August 2014 <https://www.dailysabah.com/turkey/2014/08/14/murder-triggers-antisyrian-protest-in-gaziantep> [accessed 22 August 2018].

[825] 'Anger against Syrians Grows after Deadly Fight in Central Turkey', *Hürriyet Daily News*, 12 July 2016 <https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/anger-against-syrians-grows-after-deadly-fight-in-central-turkey-101520> [accessed 15 March 2019].

[826] 'Mersin'de Mahalleli ve Suriyeliler Birbirine Girdi [Locals and Syrians Intermingle in Mersin]', *CNN Turk*, 18 April 2017 <https://www.cnnturk.com/turkiye/mersinde-mahalleli-ve-suriyeliler-birbirine-girdi> [accessed 22 August 2018].

I will present the existing discussions regarding the motives behind Turkey's decision to open its borders. In section nine, I will show how this issue was presented within Turkey's biographical narrative.

8. Why did Turkey decide to open its borders?

With the rising number of Syrians in Turkey, a growing literature on the subject started to emerge. It covers four broad thematic issues: Turkey's legislation,[827] Turkey-EU 2016 migration deal,[828] living conditions of Syrian refugees,[829] and their future in Turkey.[830] This vast literature, however, has one surprising gap – it lacks any discussion regarding Turkey's motives behind the country's open-door policy. The only exception that I have found is Samantha Gardner's comment for the Yale Review of International Studies.[831] Based on the conversations Gardner had during her study trip to Turkey, she points the reader to the following motives: the miscalculation of the duration and intensity of the Syrian civil war, compassion, shared Ottoman kinship between Turks and Syrians, attracting the attention of the EU, strengthening Turkey's positive global image, and economic development. The discussion about the abovementioned motives is a useful last step to contextualize the analysis of Turkey's biographical narrative that will follow in the next section.

As the first motive behind Turkey's open-door policy, Gardner mentions the miscalculation of the duration and intensity of the Syrian civil war. In other words, the understanding is that Turkey wanted to host some refugees but not as many as it did. While it is true that Turkey, as much as the rest of the international community, expected the Syrian civil war to be over within few

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[827] Soykan; Kirişci, 'Turkey's New Draft Law on Asylum: What to Make of It?'

[828] Kim Rygiel, Feyzi Baban, and Suzan Ilcan, 'The Syrian Refugee Crisis: The EU-Turkey "Deal" and Temporary Protection', *Global Social Policy*, 16.3 (2016), 315–20; Jenny Poon, 'EU-Turkey Deal: Violation of, or Consistency with, International Law?', *European Papers*, 1.3 (2016), 1195–1203.

[829] International Crisis Group, *Turkey's Refugee Crisis: The Politics of Permanence*; International Crisis Group, *Turkey's Syrian Refugees: Defusing Metropolitan Tensions*.

[830] Kılıç Buğra Kanat and Kadir Üstün, 'Turkey's Syrian Refugees: Toward Integration' (SETA, 2015) <http://file.setav.org/Files/Pdf/20150428153844_turkey's-syrian-refugees-pdf.pdf> [accessed 15 March 2019]; Ahmet Içduygu and Doğuş Şimşek, 'Syrian Refugees in Turkey: Towards Integration Policies', *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, 15.3 (2016), 59–69.

[831] Samantha Gardner, 'Why the Open Doors? How Turkey May Benefit from Accepting Syrian Refugees', *The Yale Review of International Studies*, 2016 <http://yris.yira.org/comments/1763> [accessed 17 February 2019].

months,[832] assuming that the conflict would be short-lived does not seem to be a sufficient factor behind voluntarily agreeing to host refugees. In the past, Turkey's stance toward mass influxes was negative, and Ankara only agreed to let them in after domestic and/or international pressure. Moreover, the lesson learned from the 1988 Iraqi refugee wave showed that even when the conflict ends quickly, some refugees tend to stay in the host country for a longer period.

Secondly, economic interpretations of Turkey's decision have been evoked. This creates an interesting situation. On the one hand, there is a commonly shared view that hosting refugees puts strains on the economic resources of a country. On the other hand, when a country decides to host refugees, there appear voices accusing it of seeking material gains in the form of international assistance. At the beginning of the crisis, Turkey did not ask the international community for economic support. This indeed changed with the prolonging duration and the increasing number of refugees, but the contributions were lower than Turkey expected. During the sixth Ministerial Conference of the Budapest Process on Migration that took place in February 2019 in Istanbul, President Erdoğan said that so far, Turkey spent 37,5 billion U.S. dollars on refugees (he also included Iraqi refugees), while the financial assistance from the EU and the UN was around 2,25 billion U.S. dollars, therefore, less than 10% of what Turkey spent.[833]

The economic motivation behind Turkey's decision to host Syrian refugees became more pronounced after the March 2016 deal between Turkey and the EU, which is also connected to the third explanation offered behind Turkey's open-door policy, namely attracting the attention of the EU. Taking into consideration the sequence of events, this argument can be quickly challenged. The deal was signed in March 2016, almost five years after Turkey decided to open its borders to Syrian refugees. At this point, there were more than 2,5 million registered Syrian refugees in Turkey. Therefore, the decision to open the borders could not be motivated by the dynamics of the Turkey-EU relationship. Coming back to the financial gains, the 6 billion euro (two tranches of 3 billion to be correct) reached in the March 2016 deal was not intended as remuneration for Turkey for hosting refugees, but rather for covering the needs of Syrians

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[832] Kirişci, 'Syrian Refugees and Turkey's Challenges: Beyond the Limits of Hospitality', p. 1.
[833] Markar Esayan, 'Turkey Bears Burden of Struggle against Regional Terror', *Daily Sabah*, 21 February 2019 <https://www.dailysabah.com/op-ed/2019/02/28/turkey-bears-burden-of-struggle-against-regional-terror> [accessed 15 April 2019].

residing in Turkey. So while the relationship with the EU does not seem like a driving factor behind Turkey's decision to open its border, the intensification of contact between Ankara and Brussels, which was a result of the mass influx, might have positively influenced Turkey's subsequent policies, including the continuation of its initial policy.

The argument underlying compassion refers to a normative stance; therefore, it is hard to confirm or disprove it. However, looking at past decisions shows that previously Turkey's security was put above compassion. In the same vein, the idea of a special bond between Turkey and Syria based on a shared history, culture, and religion could be easily questioned. In the past, Turkey was not willing to let in mass influxes coming from the Middle Eastern parts of the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, for decades Turkey has perceived Arabs as traitors due to the 1916 Arab Revolt against the Ottoman Empire. In the context of Turkish-Syrian relations, there has been an additional layer of prejudice – a border dispute. Syria has never recognized the annexation of Hatay through the 1939 referendum, while in October 1998, Turkey was about to invade its southern neighbour for the support it extended to the PKK. It was not until very recently that relations between both countries started to improve.

Likewise, claims about close cultural ties are exaggerated. One of the essential components of culture is language. Both countries not only speak different languages, but they also use a different alphabet. While both countries share the same religion, a second important component of culture, Islam in Turkey differs from Islam in Syria. Moreover, for more than eight decades, Turkey was a staunchly secular country. Therefore, the integration of Syrian refugees in Turkey is not as easy as some people portray it. Similarly to Europe, most Syrians in big cities live in districts called 'Little Syria' with very limited and sometimes non-existent relations with their Turkish host. The same is true for Syrians residing in the camps.

The last argument links the decision to host Syrian refugees with a strategy to boost Turkey's global image. As international prestige is often linked with a high position in the international system, this would mean that powerful states are among the ones most willing to host refugees. According to the UNHCR 'Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2017', by the end of 2017, the following countries accepted the highest number of refugees (in descending order): Turkey, Pakistan, Uganda, Lebanon, Islamic Republic of Iran, Germany, Bangladesh, Sudan, Ethiopia, and

Jordan.[834] If we look at the aggregated data between 2000 and 2014, the list presents as follows (in descending order): Turkey, Lebanon, USA, Jordan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Chad, Sudan, Canada.[835] Excluding Turkey from the discussion, only three belong to the West and are perceived as having a high international position – the U.S., Germany, and Canada. In contrast, most of the major refugee-hosting countries are relatively weak.

Consequently, Turkey's decision to willingly open its borders to Syrian refugees still remains puzzling. Therefore, in what follows, I will look at how it was constructed and motivated within Turkey's biographical narrative.

9. Syrian refugees in Turkey's biographical narrative

Following Turkey's biographical narrative in relation to the country's open door policy since the first Syrians arrived in Hatay at the end of April 2011 is a rich source of information on how Turkey sees itself and its place in the world. As the period analyzed in this chapter is shorter than in the two previous chapters, I decided not to divide it. Therefore, the discussion that follows applies to the entire period between April 2011 and July 2018. However, due to the nature of the question asked – why Turkey decided to open its borders – early sources seem to be more informative than more recent ones. This is the case as early sources refer to Turkey's decision to open its borders. Later on, discussions shifted to living conditions and future expectations of Syrian refugees in Turkey.

The main narrative around opening Turkey's border to Syrians was built with references to moral obligation, humanitarian duty, and the sense of responsibility. In September 2012, during the United Nations General Assembly, Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu said that '[t]he responsibility to protect the people of Syria is our fundamental duty. No political differences, no balance of power politics and no geopolitical considerations should prevail over our conscience

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[834] UN Refugee Agency, 'Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2017', 2018, p. 17 <https://www.unhcr.org/5b27be547.pdf> [accessed 15 April 2019].

[835] UN Refugee Agency, 'Statistical Yearbook 2014', 2015 <https://www.unhcr.org/56655f4d8.html> [accessed 15 April 2019].

and our concern for the destiny of the Syrian people'.[836] He further developed this point the following year in London:

> [h]ow to help those who do not have even the basic needs for their daily life? People were asking us, why? Even in Turkey. We spent 6 hundred million U.S. dollars to Syrian refugees. We were criticized in Parliament, why we spend such a money, we are not oil rich country. We are spending this money from the pocket of our people. Yes, but this is a test, an ethical test for all of us. If one day we will be living with Syrian brothers and sisters next to each other, it is right today to help them, to share our wealth, to share our destiny. […] I am not here to praise Turkish efforts but we have responsibility to all humanity. National interest and human responsibility to respective regions and global issues should be balanced.[837]

While it was often underlined within Turkey's biographical narrative that this decision was taken selflessly, Turkey was paying a lot of attention to how its behaviour was received internationally. As President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan noted:

> [e]veryone agrees that Turkey saved the honor of humanity in the face of this humanitarian tragedy. Do you know what they say at international meetings, like the Nuclear Security Summit in the US? They say 'No other country could do what you do. You are housing 3 million people without any support'.[838]

As such, although praises coming from the international community do not bring material gains, they can be seen as an important mechanism of strengthening one's ontological security.

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[836] Ahmet Davutoğlu, 'Speech at the UN General Assembly', 2 October 2012, p. 49 <https://undocs.org/en/A/67/PV.15> [accessed 30 March 2019]. See Erkan Kandemir [AKP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 26th Term, 2nd Legislative Year, 38th Session'; İshak Gazel [AKP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 26th Term, 3rd Legislative Year, 35th Session', 12 December 2017 <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanak/donem26/yil3/ham/b03501h.htm> [accessed 20 February 2020].

[837] Davutoğlu, 'Speech Delivered at the University of London School of Economics and Political Science'.

[838] Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, 'We Can Never Pay Our Debt of Gratitude to Our Police Officers Who Risk Their Lives for the Safety of Our Country and Our Nation', 7 April 2016 <https://www.tccb.gov.tr/en/news/542/42456/we-can-never-pay-our-debt-of-gratitude-to-our-police-officers-who-risk-their-lives-for-the-safety-of-our-country-and-our-nation> [accessed 30 March 2019]. See also Abdullah Gül, 'Address on the Occasion of the Commencement of the New Legislative Year of the TBMM', 1 October 2013 <http://www.abdullahgul.gen.tr/speeches-statements/344/87262/he-president-abdullah-guls-addreb-on-the-occasion-of-the-commencement-of-the-new-legislative-year-of.html> [accessed 30 March 2019].

Consequently, hosting Syrian refugees became one of the most visible examples of Turkey receiving the recognition it has been seeking for decades. For example, the spokesperson of Turkish MFA, Tanju Bilgiç, stressed:

> PACE [Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe] president [Anne] Brasseur said that they were impressed by the assistance Turkey provided to the Syrians. She stated that they were impressed by our hospitality. She also said that the number of guests in Kilis was higher than the local population and thus Turkey's burden should be shared. I think this is actually one of the most important messages we want to share with the international community.[839]

The story of Turkey's humanitarian stance in front of human suffering did not change with a rising number of Syrian refugees in Turkey. In an interview in February 2016, Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu was asked whether a new wave of refugees caused by the bombing of Aleppo will be allowed to cross the border. He replied that '[w]e cannot close our doors to these people when they are trying to flee from death. […] Nor are we doing all this to be applauded for it, we are doing so out of shared humanity'.[840]

References to moral obligation, humanitarian duty, and the sense of responsibility not only strengthen Turkey's self-perception as a good and selfless actor but also reinforce its self-perception as a unique country. President Erdoğan expressed this view by underlining that '[w]e do what no other country in the world does or can do. We have been accommodating and hosting 3 million Syrian and Iraqi guests on our lands for years'.[841] The self-perception of Turkey as a unique country was framed within a wider context of its history, underlying that the Turkish

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[839] Tanju Bilgiç, 'Meeting with the Press', 18 June 2015 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/disisleri-bakanligi-sozcusu-tanju-bilgic_in-basin-bilgilendirme-toplantisi_-18-haziran-2015_-ankara.tr.mfa> [accessed 20 February 2020]. See also Efkan Ala [AKP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 26th Term, 1st Legislative Year, 111th Session', 12 July 2016 <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanak/donem26/yil1/ham/b11101h.htm> [accessed 20 February 2020].
[840] Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, 'Interview to NRC Handelsblad', 6 February 2016 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/interview-of-h_e_-mr_-mevlüt-çavuşoğlu-to-nrc-handelsblad_-6-february-2016_-amsterdam.en.mfa> [accessed 30 March 2019]. See also Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, 'We Have Stood with Our Syrian Brothers since the First Day', 15 May 2016 <https://www.tccb.gov.tr/en/news/542/43945/we-have-stood-with-our-syrian-brothers-since-the-first-day> [accessed 15 February 2020].
[841] Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, 'Turkey Will Never Give Consent to a Fait Accompli in Syria', 24 August 2016 <https://www.tccb.gov.tr/en/news/542/51060/turkiye-suriyede-sahneye-konulmaya-calisilan-oyuna-asla-riza-gostermeyecek> [accessed 30 March 2019].

people have a long-standing tradition of providing shelter and protection to those in need, which resembles the narrative visible in regard to the Turkish-Israeli relationship. President Erdoğan, quoting Turkish writer Fethi Gemuhluoğlu, described Turkey as 'the friend who wipe away tears without being noticed',[842] while on a previous occasion he underlined that '[s]taying silent and not reacting against the developments in Lebanon, Palestine, Egypt, Somalia, Myanmar, Afghanistan, Ukraine, Yemen, Iraq, and Syria would be a denial of history and our ancestors as well as of our own existence'.[843] This narrative was also visible in the press release of the Turkish MFA:

> [t]he policies of the State of the Republic of Turkey in the humanitarian field, and in this respect towards refugees are shaped by traditions inherited from its deep-rooted history and are in full compliance with international law. In this line, Turkey has not made any discrimination based on ethnic, linguistic, religious, sectarian or any other denomination during any humanitarian crisis in the World and has taken part in and contributed to international endeavours with humanitarian and conscientious considerations only.[844]

Most of the time, Turkey's long-standing tradition of extending help to those in need was presented without references to specific examples, framing it as a generally known fact.[845] In rare cases when specific historical developments served as a point of reference, the previous mass influxes from the Middle East were not mentioned. Instead, the focus was placed on the help offered to Jews fleeing Europe since the fifteenth century or more recent examples of help

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[842] Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, 'Foreword by the President of the Republic of Turkey', *Special Report on Syrians in Turkey* (Ombudsman Institution of the Republic of Turkey, 2018), pp. 6–7 (p. 7) <https://www.ombudsman.gov.tr/syrians/report.html#p=1> [accessed 15 March 2019].

[843] Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, 'Opening Remarks on the Occasion of the 24th Term of the 5th Legislative Year of the Turkish Grand National Assembly', 1 October 2014 <https://www.tccb.gov.tr/en/speeches-statements/558/3192/opening-remarks-on-the-occasion-of-the-24th-term-of-the-5th-legislative-year-of-the-turkish-grand-national-assembly> [accessed 30 March 2019].

[844] Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Press Release No: 64', 10 March 2013 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-64_-10-march-2013_-press-release-regarding-an-allegation-about-the-stance-of-turkey-towards-syrians-under-protection-in-turkey_.en.mfa> [accessed 30 March 2019].

[845] Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Press Release No: 137', 19 June 2016 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-137_-19-june-2016_-press-release-regarding-the-world-refugee-day.en.mfa> [accessed 20 February 2020]. See also Ahmet Davutoğlu, 'Speech Delivered at the Syrian Opposition Conference', 2 July 2012 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/speech-delivered-by-mr_-ahmet-davutoğlu_-minister-of-foreign-affairs-of-the-republic-of-turkey-at-the-syrian-opposition-conference_-2-july-2012_-cairo.en.mfa> [accessed 20 February 2020].

extended to Muslims from the Balkans and Caucasus as well as Turkmens from Iraq.[846] Within the narrative highlighting Turkey's humanitarian behaviour, there was a frequent emphasis that it stands above sectarian lines. President Erdoğan expressed it as follows:

> I would like to underline this: Turkey is a country which opens its doors for all persons in need of help; it provides food and clothes and shelters people instead of questioning their ethnic origins, beliefs or sects. Turkey is a country which helps all, seeing everybody as a human being, regardless of whether they are Arab, Kurdish, Turkmen, Yezidi, Shi'ite, Sunni, Nusayri, Christian or Jewish, and without any discrimination.[847]

The universalistic narrative framing Turkey's stance in historical and non-sectarian terms ran in parallel with a more particularistic narrative underlying the special relationship shared between Turkey and Syria. This was apparent in Foreign Minister Davutoğlu's speech:

> [g]iven our deep-rooted historical and cultural bonds as well as kinship ties, the Syrian people have never been an ordinary neighbor to us. On our part, as we have resolutely done up until today, we will continue our strong support for the realization of the legitimate aspirations of our Syrian brothers and sisters for a free and democratic Syria.[848]

Considering a rather tense historical relationship between both countries, it would be interesting to see what constituted this special bond. However, this layer of the story was not included in Turkey's biographical narrative.

As a practical expression of this special relationship, the Syrian refugees were referred to as sisters and brothers and perceived more like guests than people in need of international

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[846] Haci Bayram Türkoğlu [AKP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 24th Term, 4th Legislative Year, 118th Session', 17 July 2014 <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanak/donem24/yil4/ham/b11801h.htm> [accessed 20 February 2020].

[847] Erdoğan, 'Opening Remarks on the Occasion of the 24th Term of the 5th Legislative Year of the Turkish Grand National Assembly'. See also Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Press Release No: 64'; Çavuşoğlu, 'Interview to Ottawa Life Magazine'.

[848] Ahmet Davutoğlu, 'Speech Delivered at Group of Friends of Syrian People Meeting', 24 February 2012 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/speech-delivered-by-mr_-ahmet-davutoğlu_-minister-of-foreign-affairs-of-the-republic-of-turkey-at-group-of-friends-of-syrian-people-meeting_-24-february-2012_-tunis.en.mfa> [accessed 30 March 2020].

protection.[849] Addressing Syrian refugees residing in Kilis, President Erdoğan underlined that in Turkey, '[w]e see you as our brothers and sisters. You are not away from your homeland if you also see us as your sisters and brothers. You are only away from your houses'.[850] Notably, the narrative emphasizing closeness between both people had real consequences for their legal stay in Turkey. Referring to Syrian refugees as brothers, sisters, and guests was supposed to frame their stay in Turkey as an act of Turkey's goodwill rather than giving it an international legal dimension. This narrative was prevalent at the beginning of the crisis. However, with the rising number of Syrians and their prolonged stay, a legal framework was implemented.

Turkey's principled stance served as a reference point in comparison with the behaviour of the international community. In this respect, the West became the main target of Turkey's criticism. The argument was simple – Turkey fulfils the humanitarian obligations commonly shared by the entire international community, while the West fails to do so. The spokesperson of the president, Ibrahim Kalın, promised:

> [w]e will continue our open door policy, as expressed by Mr. President during his term as the PM, because it is a humanitarian and conscientious duty. It is a duty, given by the international law. You cannot deliberately leave people in the middle of a war to die. Other countries may act so but Turkey, as a responsible state that has historical ties to the people in the region, cannot allow such a thing.[851]

President Erdoğan was more direct, underlying that '[w]hile Europe and those so called renowned countries of the region closed their doors to refugees, only Turkey and a couple of

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[849] Davutoğlu, 'Speech Delivered at the Syrian Opposition Conference'. See also Erdoğan, 'Turkey Will Never Give Consent to a Fait Accompli in Syria'.

[850] Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, 'Fast-Breaking Dinner with Refugees in Kilis', 2 July 2016 <https://www.tccb.gov.tr/en/news/542/45576/suriyeli-kardeslerimize-vatandaslik-imkni-verecegiz> [accessed 20 February 2020].

[851] Ibrahim Kalın, 'The Statement of Presidential Spokesperson', 4 November 2015 <https://www.tccb.gov.tr/en/spokesperson/1696/35844/the-statement-of-presidential-spokesperson-ambassador-ibrahim-kalin> [accessed 30 March 2019].

other countries welcomed the oppressed',[852] while Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu went as far as saying that 'when we compare the West with Turkey, we always act more humanely'.[853]

Within the general understanding of the West, it was the European Union and its member states that became the main target of Turkey's criticism. They were criticized for inaction and a low number of refugees accepted. President Erdoğan commented on this as follows:

> How many Syrian refugees are there in Europe, which always talks about human rights? Only 130 thousand. Their doors are closed. You have the money, you are rich. Why do not you open your doors to Syrian refugees? Why? What about human rights? What about the Universal Declaration of Human Rights? When they come to visit us, they say 'We congratulate you, you are taking good care of 1.7 million people'. That is it. The difference is we are concerned but they are not. We say 'consenting to oppression is oppression itself'.[854]

On top of that, Turkey accused EU member state of adopting a strategy of pick and choose when it comes to the resettlement of refugees, framing it as contrary to the normative values promoted by the West. This point was underlined by Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu, who stressed:

> [t]he number of immigrants European countries accepted is very limited. They accepted about 130 thousand and they are selective about it. I should say that this is against human rights. I mean, they are trying to pick educated ones as if they are picking animals at a market. We are against this. It is not humane. You accept people. You say I will take 50 families, 100 families. No one is pressuring you on how many you should take in. This can sound like criticism, but it's your own policy. You either take them or you do not.[855]

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[852] Erdoğan, 'Turkey Will Never Give Consent to a Fait Accompli in Syria'.

[853] Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu [AKP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 24th Term, 4th Legislative Year, 108th Session', 25 June 2014 <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanak/donem24/yil4/ham/b10801h.htm> [accessed 20 February 2020].

[854] Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, 'The 400-Years-Old Shared History Between Turkey and Djibouti Is the Most Solid Foundation of Our Brotherhood and Friendship', 24 January 2015 <https://www.tccb.gov.tr/en/news/542/3394/the-400-years-old-shared-history-between-turkey-and-djibouti-is-the-most-solid-foundation-of-our-brotherhood-and-friendship> [accessed 30 March 2019].

[855] Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, 'Interview to A Haber', 12 March 2015 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/disisleri-bakani-sayin-mevlut-cavusoglu_nun-a-haber_e-verdikleri-ozel-roportaj_-12-mart-2015.tr.mfa> [accessed 20 February 2020].

Another layer of criticism focused on the treatment that refugees received in Europe. While Turkey opened its borders for people from Syria, the EU decided to secure its borders, transforming into a Fortress Europe. The mechanisms used in this process were against human dignity. In this context, not only normative but also material arguments were used against the EU, showing that it is in a better financial position to host those in need than Turkey. In the words of President Erdoğan:

> many countries with an income per capita many times higher than ours remain indifferent to this massacre and tragedy just to prevent any possible disruption to their comforts. I have no doubt that just like us you are also watching with embarrassment these inhuman scenes at border gates, makeshift shelters and in seas.[856]

According to Prime Minister Davutoğlu, these developments will be remembered in the history of Europe as black pages because:

> [t]hese administrations are responsible for the abuse and hate crimes which our brothers and sisters are subjected to. We are receiving news about harassment of refugees in the heart of Europe. There are images of our Syrian brothers and sisters staying in nylon tents in unsanitary conditions, suffering from hunger and disease. Europe is being tested. We have endured these tests every day for 5 years. […] They're failing from day one.[857]

As in the case of the relationship with Israel, Turkey's humanitarian behaviour was used as a shield protecting it against criticism. Prime Minister Davutoğlu underlined that '[t]hey have no right to criticize us whatsoever. No one has the right to lecture us'.[858] For Turkey, help extended to Syrian refugees became proof of the country's moral high ground that actually put Turkey in a position to criticize the West, which resembles Turkey's narrative about Israel and their bilateral

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[856] Erdoğan, 'We Have Stood with Our Syrian Brothers since the First Day'.

[857] Ahmet Davutoğlu, 'Speech at the TBMM Group Meeting', 23 February 2016 <https://www.akparti.org.tr/haberler/basbakan-davutoglu-nun-23-subat-2016-tarihli-tbmm-grup-toplantisi-konusmasinin-tam-metni/> [accessed 20 February 2020].

[858] Ahmet Davutoğlu, 'Speech at the TBMM Group Meeting', 14 October 2014 <https://www.akparti.org.tr/haberler/basbakan-davutoglu-nun-14-ekim-tarihli-tbmm-grup-toplantisi-konusmasinin-tam-metni/> [accessed 20 February 2020]. See also Erdoğan, 'Turkey Will Never Give Consent to a Fait Accompli in Syria'.

relationship. At the same time, any criticism directed toward Turkey was seen as invalid as the sources of this criticism failed to stand up to the task of protecting those in need.

With the growing fear in the West regarding the Islamization of Turkey, a question follows whether at any point religion was invoked as a reason to open Turkey's doors to Syrian refugees. Indeed, this was the case, although it was less frequent than the explanations discussed above. In this context, Turkey's humanitarian behaviour was linked to the values promoted by Islam. For example, President Erdoğan underlined that the Turkish people 'regard standing by the oppressed as a humanitarian, conscientious and Islamic duty. We perform our duty and will continue to do so'.[859] Against this background, the most popular reference was to the Koranic story of Ansar (Arabic for helpers) and Muhajirun (Arabic for emigrants). The Ansar were inhabitants of Medina who hosted Prophet Muhammad and his followers after they emigrated from Mecca, whereas the Muhajirun were the early converts to Islam that followed Prophet Muhammad. In Islam, the Ansar and Muhajirun are an example of brotherhood based on the principle of respect and support. In an address to Syrian refugees during an iftar, President Abdullah Gül proclaimed:

> [w]e witness a similar fraternity between Turkish and Syrian people to that seen between the Ansar and Muhajireen during the Prophet Muhammed's time in Medina. A Muslim is supposed to help and embrace others in need. We are trying to perform our duties in this regard.[860]

While at the level of presidents, prime ministers, and the Foreign Ministry, Turkey's biographical narrative regarding the stay of Syrian refugees in Turkey was almost completely separated from a discussion of its negative consequences, with one visible exception being the financial burden that Turkey had to face, this was not the case within the parliamentary debates. Cemil Çiçek from the AKP, in his capacity as the Speaker of the Parliament, admitted that '[t]he mass migration

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[859] Erdoğan, 'The 400-Years-Old Shared History Between Turkey and Djibouti Is the Most Solid Foundation of Our Brotherhood and Friendship'.

[860] Abdullah Gül, 'Iftar with Syrian Refugees in the Province of Malatya', 22 July 2014 <http://www.abdullahgul.gen.tr/news/397/90615/president-gul-has-iftar-with-syrian-refugees-in-the-province-of-malatya.html> [accessed 30 March 2020]. See also Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, 'Bursa Is the Land Where a World-Empire Was Born', 6 February 2015 <https://www.tccb.gov.tr/en/news/542/3426/bursa-is-the-land-where-a-world-empire-was-born> [accessed 30 March 2019].

movement from Syria also poses an indirect threat to our country in terms of its possible consequences'.[861] This point of view was shared by Osman Faruk Loğoğlu from the CHP, who also confirmed that the decision to host Syrian refugees was based on the assumption that Assad would leave the office soon:

> [t]he biggest problem created by the ongoing civil war in Syria on a regional scale are the Syrian refugees. [...] The international community has failed to provide sufficient financial support to the countries where refugees are located. This increases the burden on countries that accept refugees. [...] Based on the assumption that Assad will be overthrown in two or three weeks, Syrian policy left our country alone with a terrible human drama and security problem.[862]

A common motion issued by twenty-seven MPs from the CHP to launch an investigation into problems faced by asylum seekers coming to Turkey showed that threats to the security of Turkey were perceived as a multi-layered problem: '[t]he instability experienced by countries in this region have caused mass migrations into our country. Our border security and internal security are threatened by the health, economic and social dimension of these mass movements'.[863]

As such, concerns raised by Turkish lawmakers overlapped with the issues discussed in section four, including the free flow of militants,[864] rising tensions leading to violence,[865] undermining a thin sectarian balance,[866] and unfair economic competition.[867] Additionally, the lawmakers

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[861] Cemil Çiçek [CHP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 24th Term, 3rd Legislative Year, 29th Session', 27 November 2012 <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanak/donem24/yil3/bas/b029m.htm> [accessed 20 February 2020].

[862] Osman Faruk Loğoğlu [CHP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 24th Term, 3rd Legislative Year, 29th Session'.

[863] Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 26th Term, 2nd Legislative Year, 72nd Session', 21 February 2017 <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanak/donem26/yil2/ham/b07201h.htm> [accessed 20 February 2020].

[864] Murat Özçelik [CHP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 25th Term, 1st Legislative Year, 5th Session', 8 July 2015 <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanak/donem25/yil1/ham/b00501h.htm> [accessed 20 February 2020]; Özkan Yalim [CHP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 26th Term, 1st Legislative Year, 111th Session'.

[865] Mehmet Şandir [MHP] and Abdullah Levent Tüzel [HDP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 24th Term, 4th Legislative Year, 118th Session'.

[866] Müslüm Doğan [HDP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 24th Term, 4th Legislative Year, 118th Session'.

[867] Vahap Seçer [CHP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 24th Term, 4th Legislative Year, 118th Session'.

mentioned increasing strains on the health and school system[868] and the precarity of the most vulnerable groups among refugees, such as women and children.[869] Interestingly, the strength and resonance of a master narrative picturing the decision to host Syrian refugees as a humanitarian duty pushed to the background voices that would openly advocate sending them back to Syria. Instead, the opposition transferred to the government the responsibility to create conditions where the security and well-being of the Turkish people, which should always come first, would not get undermined by the prolonged stay of Syrians.[870]

## 10. Conclusions

As was indicated in Chapter 1, I approach Turkey's biographical narrative with three questions: Why has Turkey decided to follow this particular policy? What kind of information does it reveal about how Turkey perceives itself and its place in the world? Is it in any way related to its position vis-à-vis Europe/the West? Regarding the first question, Turkey's decision to open its border to Syrian refugees was motivated by a self-perception of being a humanitarian and responsible actor. This master narrative was supported by three interrelated stories – Turkey's humanitarianism as based in the country's tradition, as derived from the values of Islam, and as a non-discriminatory attitude toward human beings. As such, the answers to the first two of my questions are closely interrelated.

Turkey's decision to host Syrian refugees quickly became praised internationally,[871] providing the recognition of Turkey's self-perception as a humanitarian and responsible actor, which positively influenced its sense of ontological security. This could also explain why Turkey decided to continue with its open-door policy as long as it did despite the number of Syrian refugees

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[868] Vahap Seçer [CHP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 24th Term, 4th Legislative Year, 118th Session'.

[869] Abdullah Levent Tüzel [HDP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 24th Term, 4th Legislative Year, 118th Session'.

[870] Necmettin Ahrazoğlu [MHP] in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 'Minutes of 26th Term, 3rd Legislative Year, 23rd Session', 15 November 2017 <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanak/donem26/yil3/ham/b02301h.htm> [accessed 20 February 2020].

[871] See, for example, Mac McClelland, 'How to Build a Perfect Refugee Camp', *New York Times*, 13 February 2014 <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/16/magazine/how-to-build-a-perfect-refugee-camp.html> [accessed 20 February 2020].

exponentially rising and the end of the civil war in Syria nowhere in sight.[872] At this point, the gains in terms of ontological security were seen as more important than drawbacks related to the country's physical security. However, as the example of the discussions within Turkey's Parliament showed, every biographical narrative is opened to contestation from within. While the opposition was less welcoming toward the stay of Syrian refugees than the government, situating the decision to open the borders within a vision of Turkey as a humanitarian, responsible and unique actor made it harder to demand the removal of Syrians. The reason was that it would not only undermine the policy of the government but also the positive self-perception of Turkey, which resonated with lawmakers above the party lines.

Here I would like to refer to the instrumentalization of Syrian refugees by Turkey that became more pronounced when Turkey decided to open its borders with Greece in February 2020.[873] Within the context of my research, I consider the two issues as separate. The first question is why did Turkey decide to open its borders in the first place. The second question is why did Turkey choose to continue with its open-door policy when the numbers of refugees started to rise. As such, I do not deny that the instrumentalization of refugees might have been a contributing factor to continue with the policy adopted. However, I posit that the possibility of the instrumental use of Syrian refugees was not a motivating factor in 2011 because no one could foresee the direction that the developments in Syria would take in the upcoming years. Moreover, I also do not deny that the instrumental use of refugees would undermine Turkey's self-perception of being a humanitarian and responsible actor presented in Turkey's biographical narrative. However, the aim of my research is to look at how Turkey sees itself, not the analyze the divergence between narrative and behaviour, which is a topic for separate research.

Turning to the third question, whether within Turkey's biographical narrative the decision to host Syrian refugees was in any way related to Turkey's position vis-à-vis Europe/the West, the answer is affirmative. The comparison between Turkey and Europe was a strong component of Turkey's

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[872] Since 2018, Turkey moved from the open-door policy toward migration management. However, it continues with its master narrative of extending help to those in need, underlying that now it supports Syrian people within the borders of Syria, especially in the areas under Turkey's control.

[873] For more on the instrumental use of refugees, see Kelly M. Greenhill, *Weapons of Mass Migration: Forced Displacement, Coercion, and Foreign Policy* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2010).

biographical narrative. Although Turkey often accused the international community at large of inaction, the European Union and its member states became the main target of this criticism, which is in line with the argument that for Turkey, the West is the significant other. Although Turkey capitalizes on its identity as partly self/partly other, it still sees itself through the looking glass of the West. Therefore, it treats the West as a reference point for its behaviour. To illustrate this point, Turkey did not criticize the oil-rich Gulf countries, which regardless of their financial means, geographical proximity, and shared religion (Turkey often underlined the role of hospitability in Islam), did even less to help Syrians than the European countries.

Turkey's criticism of Europe saw a reversal of the established-outsider dynamics. Typically, the established group attributes negative qualities to the outsiders, ascribing to itself the positive ones. This time it was the outsider that, by comparison with the established, attributed to itself the positive qualities. This was done in reference to the normative standards of the West, therefore, playing into the discursive frame of the established.[874] What Turkey did not seem to realize, however, is that the praises and recognition it received from the international community, especially Europe, for its decision to open the borders to Syrian refugees was not a form of admitting Turkey's superiority, but a strategy aimed at preventing refugees from coming to Europe as much as possible. The events that happened in February and March 2020 along the Greek borders also confirmed that Europe as a community of values underwent a serious transformation. The best example was a change within the *modus operandi* of FRONTEX – from saving refugees to preventing them from reaching the Greek territorial waters. As such, Europe prioritized its security, understood in both its physical and ontological dimension, over values it has promoted. Therefore, while Turkey took the normative standards of the West as its point of reference, it did not realize that the rules of the game are changing.

As a matter of conclusion, I raise one more issue. While extending help to Syrian refugees was motivated by the self-perception of being a humanitarian and responsible actor, the same treatment was not granted to refugees and asylum seekers from other neighbouring countries.

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[874] See the latest article on the subject by Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, 'EU Inaction on Syrian Refugees Is a Stain on Human Conscience', *Financial Times*, 22 March 2020 <https://www.ft.com/content/43bcdc3c-694b-11ea-a6ac-9122541af204> [accessed 30 March 2020].

Besides Syrians, there is also a substantial number of Afghani and Iraqi people searching for international protection in Turkey. According to the UNHCR, as of 10 September 2018, 172,000 Afghan refugees and 142,000 Iraqi refugees were in Turkey.[875] In comparison to Syrians, they do not enjoy group-based temporary protection. Both groups are legally entitled to apply for international protection in Turkey; however, their treatment also varies. While Iraqi refugees are encouraged to apply for a short-term residence permit and some parts of the Turkish government's funds are directed toward their well-being,[876] the same cannot be said about Afghan refugees, which face obstacles to register for international protection.[877] Moreover, Amnesty International reported in April 2018 that the Turkish authorities forcefully deported Afghan asylum seekers, which violates the non-refoulement principle.[878]

Consequently, there is both historical and contextual deviation in Turkey's policy toward Syrians compared with other groups in need of help. Therefore, the question follows: How can this discrepancy be explained? According to Steele, states are willing to pursue moral actions, including the ones that put their physical security in jeopardy, if taking these actions is necessary to fulfil their self-identity needs.[879] In my analysis, I focused on the primary sources directly related to the issue of Syrian refugees. As such, I realized that within Turkey's biographical narrative, these were carefully separated from a wider dimension of the Syrian civil war. A rare exception was President Abdullah Gül's statement that '[i]t is necessary for Syria to become governable and habitable as soon as possible in order for the hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees in our country to maintain their ties to their country'.[880] Missing in Turkey's narrative

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[875] UN Refugee Agency, 'Turkey Fact Sheet', 2018 <https://www.unhcr.org/tr/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2018/11/01.-UNHCR-Turkey-Fact-Sheet-September-2018.pdf> [accessed 15 April 2019].

[876] AIDA (Asylum Information Database), 'Differential Treatment of Specific Nationalities in the Procedure: Turkey' <https://www.asylumineurope.org/reports/country/turkey/differential-treatment-specific-nationalities-procedure> [accessed 15 April 2019].

[877] Izza Leghtas and Jessica Thea, '"You Cannot Exist in This Place:" Lack of Registration Denies Afghan Refugees Protection in Turkey' (Refugees International, 13 December 2018), pp. 9–10 <https://www.refugeesinternational.org/reports/2018/12/13/you-cannot-exist-in-this-place-lack-of-registration-denies-afghan-refugees-protection-in-turkey> [accessed 5 March 2020].

[878] Amnesty International, 'Turkey: Thousands of Afghans Swept Up in Ruthless Deportation Drive', 24 April 2018 <https://www.amnestyusa.org/press-releases/turkey-thousands-of-afghans-swept-up-in-ruthless-deportation-drive> [accessed 10 February 2020].

[879] Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations*, p. 2.

[880] Gül, 'Address on the Occasion of the Commencement of the New Legislative Year of the TBMM'.

on Syrian refugees, however, was an acknowledgement of Turkey's active involvement in the Syrian conflict.

When the civil war broke out in Syria, Turkey was in the process of adopting a more active foreign policy. This corresponded to Turkey's liminal position seen as an asset. Until this point, Turkey was praised for its transformation and portrayed as an example to follow by the countries in the Middle East. Therefore, when the anti-government demonstrations in Syria gained momentum, Turkey, considering its close relationship with the Syrian regime, portrayed itself as the only actor that was able to convince President Bashar al-Assad to change his policy.[881] This point resonated well with the international community. According to Turkey correspondent Piotr Zalewski, a senior Western diplomat posted in Damascus told *The Times* that Turkey might be the last option to influence Assad as '[t]he Turkish approach allows Syrians to listen to the outside world's concerns without feeling as if they are being lectured', which 'allows them to make changes without giving the impression that someone is forcing their hand'.[882] Therefore, the outburst of the Syrian civil war provided Turkey with an opportunity to confirm its international position and gain additional recognition. However, Turkey's diplomatic effort failed. What is worse, they failed in front of the entire world.

To maintain a consistent view of the self and its role in the world, Turkey changed its policy toward Syria 180 degrees,[883] becoming a staunch advocate of the opposition and repeating like a mantra that it stands beside the people, not beside the regime.[884] As a strategy of reducing cognitive dissonance, Turkey explained this radical change in terms of impossible to reconcile differences between Turkey and the Assad regime when it cames to the relationship between

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[881]In the past, Turkey served as a bridge between Syria and the Western world. In 2005, when the Syrian government was accused of the assassination of Lebanese President Rafiq Hariri, and the international community called for its isolation, Turkey stood by Bashar al-Assad, gaining Syria's trust. This kind of trust allowed Turkey to mediate between Syria and Israel in 2008.

[882] Piotr Zalewski, 'Why Syria and Turkey Are Suddenly Far Apart on Arab Spring Protests', *The Times*, 26 May 2011 <http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2074165,00.html> [accessed 14 March 2019].

[883] In November 2011, Turkey introduced far-reaching sanctions against the Syrian regime, and in March 2012, it closed its Embassy in Damascus. Although Turkey was one of the last NATO countries to introduce sanctions, they were much harsher than any of its previous ones, including against Iraq in the 1990s. See 'Türkiye'den Suriye'ye Yeni Yaptırımlar [New Sanctions on Syria from Turkey]', *Hürriyet*, 30 November 2011 <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/turkiyeden-suriyeye-yeni-yaptirimlar-19358356> [accessed 20 April 2019].

[884] Güçer, Karaca, and Dinçer, p. 15.

state and society. Assad was portrayed as standing against the values that Turkey has always cherished. As part of the readjustment of Turkey's biographical narrative, in December 2012, Prime Minister Erdoğan referred to his previous friendship with Assad by saying: '[w]e were friends, we were meeting in families. But even if it was my own father, and he turned cruel, I would not walk the same path with him because consenting to cruelty is cruelty itself'.[885]

As such, Turkey's decision to host Syrian refugees is consistent with a recent study looking at adversary relationships as a factor conducive to accepting refugees. Joshua L. Jackson and Douglas B. Atkinson put forward that it is not rivalry in general but ideological rivalry in particular that influences a positive decision to host refugees.[886] In this type of rivalry, states compete over ideological and moral superiority. This contrasts with two other types of rivalry that Jackson and Atkinson studied – spatial rivalry, which is focused on territorial disputes, and positional rivalry, which concerns gaining prestige in the regional or international arena. The authors argue that neither of the two leads states to host refugees willingly.

In contrast, in ideological rivalry hosting refugees allows a state to sustain the claim of its superiority while discrediting an adversarial regime. Furthermore, states that decide to host refugees gain legitimacy to publicly shame their opponent's behaviour as it failed to protect its own citizens, which is one of the main functions of the state. Jackson and Atkinson observe that '[b]y taking in refugees from an ideological rival, a host sends a signal to its own population, as well as the international community, that its system of government or cultural climate is indeed superior, supporting its claim in the ideological dispute'.[887]

Turkey's standing vis-à-vis the Assad regime is the most visible difference with other neighbouring countries from which Turkey received refugees. This is the first example in Turkey's modern history that it engaged in a campaign aimed at toppling a foreign leader. Therefore, not accepting Syrian refugees would contradict Turkey's efforts to re-establish its ontological security during the critical situation brought about not as much by the eruption of the Syrian civil war but

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[885] 'Turkish PM Greets Syrian Refugees in Arab Outfits', *Hürriyet Daily News*, 31 December 2012 <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-pm-greets-syrian-refugees-in-arab-outfits-38016> [accessed 20 April 2019].
[886] Jackson and Atkinson, p. 70.
[887] Jackson and Atkinson, p. 64.

by Assad's lack of obedience. Similarly to the failure of negotiations between Israel and Syria discussed in the previous chapter, Turkey blamed the other side for the failure of its mediation efforts, which was interpreted not only as a missed opportunity for peace but also as a being directed against Turkey. In both cases, we saw a transformation of Turkey's narrative from being a mediator to a protector of the oppressed – Palestinians in the case of Israel and Syrian people in the case of Syria. What was important in this transition was the coherence and preservation of the master narrative of Turkey being a humanitarian actor.

# CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS

This thesis is the outcome of more than ten years of following Turkish politics. I treat each empirical chapter as a small piece in a jigsaw puzzle of Turkey's state identity. Looking holistically at what they say about how Turkey sees itself, its place in the surrounding world and how ontologically secure it feels within it, I structure this conclusion around the three questions that I put forward in the introduction. The last section discusses the contribution of my research to IR scholarship and the possible avenues of future research.

1. Why was Turkey's belonging to the West put in doubt after the end of the Cold War?

The transformation within the discourse on Europe that took place after the end of the Cold War put Turkey in a liminal position. As discussed in this thesis, Turkey was not outright rejected as part of the West since it was still institutionally linked to it. Nevertheless, the transformation in the particularistic discourse on Europe from underlying the ideological geopolitics dividing the world into capitalist versus communist to defining it in terms of culture and geography created an obstacle in seeing Turkey as an equal part of the community. In this context, EU membership became the central area of contestation over Turkey's European/Western vocation.

From Turkey's perspective, this change meant that the Iron Curtain was being replaced by a Western/cultural/religious curtain. To Turkey's dismay, it found itself in the middle of it. In 2010 the United States Secretary of Defence Robert Gates, in a similar vein, stated the following:

> I personally think that if there is anything to the notion that Turkey is, if you will, moving eastward, it is, in my view, in no small part because it was pushed, and pushed by some in Europe refusing to give Turkey the kind of organic link to the West that Turkey sought.[888]

From the ontological security perspective, the transformation within the discourse on Europe constituted a critical situation for Turkey, leading to an identity crisis since Turkey was perceived as too Eastern for the West while being too Western for the East. As noted in this thesis, critical

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[888] 'US Defence Secretary Gates Blames EU for Turkey "Drift"', *BBC News*, 9 June 2010 <https://www.bbc.com/news/10275379> [accessed 10 March 2020].

situations destabilize and challenge established worldviews, everyday routines and trust structures. In the case of Turkey, it upset the very foundations on which its identity as a modern nation-state was constructed. When the Republic of Turkey emerged from the ashes of the Ottoman Empire, belonging to the West was chosen as the main mechanism allowing it to guarantee the ontological security of the new state, leaving behind the stigma of the Sick Man of Europe.

Typically, when thinking of critical situations, we think of a radical break with the past, for example a declaration of war, which forces an actor to rebuild the feeling of ontological security around new worldviews, routines and trust structures. For Turkey, putting in doubt its Western identity became a process. It was stretched in time, low-profile, and consisted of hints rather than an official pronunciation that Turkey does not belong to the West anymore. Even now, the process continues. In reference to Karl Gustafsson typology of thick recognition presented in Chapter 2, Turkey encountered an implicit denial of recognition.

I posit that such a situation is especially challenging for one's feeling of ontological security. Actors need cognitive stability to realize a sense of agency. The prolonged nature of Turkey's critical situation makes it harder to rebuild its identity around new worldviews, routines, and trust structures, which would secure the feeling of ontological security. To illustrate this, I use the metaphor of divorce. Imagine a wife informing her husband that she wants a divorce, which is a typical critical situation. It undermines the established worldviews, everyday routines and trust structures, but at the same time, it allows the couple to move on and to rebuild life around new worldviews, routines and trust structures. However, Turkey's situation resembles more a case when a wife informs her husband that she does not love him anymore, without, however, bringing a divorce or any other long-term solution to the table.

2. How has it informed Turkey's state identity?

Putting in doubt Turkey's belonging to the West moved to the foreground the insecurities that Turkey tried to overcome since the formative years of the Republic. Regardless of the decades of modernization and staunch secularism, Turkey was still discreditable due to its Muslim character,

bringing back the memory of the established-outsider dynamics and the nineteenth century Standard of Civilization.

Turkey's first response to the critical situation was to confirm its identity as the Western self, following the strategy that the country adopted at the beginning of the century. In general, such a choice is preferred by the outsiders as it offers what they seek the most – an end to ambivalence and the establishment of unquestionable recognition. During the 1990s, this strategy was visible in Turkey's relationship with Israel, which was perceived as the invisible member of the West, and in the country's approach toward the EU. The 1997 Luxemburg Summit, however, can be seen as a turning point, when Turkey was left with an intensified feeling of exclusion and of being discreditable. Since then, Turkey started to slowly switch from the strategy of reinforcing its identity as the Western self to the strategy of capitalizing on its liminal position, recognized as an asset rather than a burden. This strategy has continued after Turkey was granted candidate status by the EU.

The new strategy manifestes itself in underlying Turkey's various identities, no longer framed as standing in opposition to each other but rather perceived as compatible, constituting a source of Turkey's strength and uniqueness. In this spirit, Turkey started to promote its identity as both European/Western and Asian/Middle Eastern.[889] This process gained momentum under the leadership of the AKP; however, its foundations were already laid down in the 1980s and 1990s. Nevertheless, in this process, Turkey did not give up on its self-perception as part of the West. Instead, the emphasis shifted from being confined only to the West to being Western and Eastern at the same time.

The transformation within Turkey's state identity was initially well-received internationally. In 2004, *The Economist* published an article titled 'The importance of backing Erdogan' where it emphasized that '[a]lthough the Turkish prime minister and his Justice and Development Party have Islamist roots, they are proving in office to be of the liberal variety that believes in free

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[889] See Rumelili and Suleymanoglu-Kurum.

markets and secular democracy'.[890] This view epitomizes the universalist discourse where one can be at the same time Muslim and Western. During the early years of the AKP, the emphasis on Turkey's liminality was coupled with initiatives aimed at addressing some of the sources of the country's insecurities, for example, the position of ethnic and religious minorities within Turkey, including the opening toward the Kurdish and Armenian questions. However, this led to the decrease in the AKP's popular support during the June 2015 elections and a reversal toward the old pattern of containing instead of addressing factors that negatively influence the country's ontological security.

The containment strategy under the AKP government was based on questioning the higher moral ground of the West each time Turkey was criticized for its behaviour. It was framed within an understanding of Turkey as a unique actor that should not feel insecure vis-à-vis the West. This was, however, accompanied by comparing and validating Turkey's behaviour to that of the West. As such, it showed that Turkey still seeks the approval, respect, and recognition of the West. Put differently, regardless of the strategy employed to deal with Turkey's fragile sense of ontological security, Turkey saw itself through the looking glass of the West, which did not change since becoming inscribed in Turkey's state identity with the creation of the Republic.

Within the scope of this thesis, this attitude was particularly visible in the chapter analyzing Turkey's decision to host Syrian refugees. This was, however, not an isolated case. Three other recent examples include the Gezi Park protests (2013), the introduction of the state of emergency (July 2016 – July 2018) as well as the pandemic of COVID-19 (since March 2020).[891] Using the West as a reference point had three layers to it: underlying that Turkey's behaviour falls within the boundaries of what is a 'normal' response in the European countries, accusing the West of holding double standards, and seeking status enhancement at the expense of those in a less privileged position in the international system. During the Gezi Park protests, Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu put forward:

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[890] 'The Importance of Backing Erdogan', *The Economist*, 29 January 2004 <https://www.economist.com/leaders/2004/01/29/the-importance-of-backing-erdogan> [accessed 20 March 2020].
[891] This crisis began unfolding while I was completing this dissertation.

[n]obody can compare Turkey to those countries where there is no freedom of the press, freedom of thought, freedom of association, and free and fair elections. We are proud that these demonstrations, such as Gezi, are similar to demonstrations in Europe ... You can compare the right to demonstrate in Turkey, and the events in Gezi Park, for example, only with European countries.[892]

This understanding of Turkey's place in the surrounding world was strengthened by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who at the same time emphasized the double standards on the part of Europe:

Turkey is much freer than almost all of the EU member countries. Now you're talking about the Gezi Park incidents ... Why do you ignore the incidents that took place in Frankfurt, Germany? Just recently, incidents took place in Hamburg. Why don't you see the incidents in Hamburg? You have seen what the police have done there.[893]

However, it was not enough for Turkey to show that the Gezi Park protests fall within a boundary of normal European behaviour. It also used this opportunity to distance itself from its Eastern neighbours. According to President Abdullah Gül, 'what happens in Turkey is completely different compared with what happens in the Middle East. These are countries where there are no free elections, where the peoples will is not reflected, and the courts are not up to Western standards'.[894]

The same set of arguments was used when Turkey defended the measures introduced under the state of emergency announced after the failed coup d'état from July 2016. One of the most controversial decisions was the suspension of the European Convention on Human Rights. In this context, Turkey's point of reference became France, which introduced the state of emergency in

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[892] 'Turkish FM Davutoğlu Denies Praising Gezi Park Protests', *Hürriyet Daily News*, 19 November 2013 <https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-fm-davutoglu-denies-praising-gezi-park-protests-58170> [accessed 20 March 2020].
[893] 'Erdogan: Turkey's Role in the Middle East', *Al Jazeera*, 12 February 2014 <https://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/talktojazeera/2014/02/erdogan-turkey-role-middle-east-201421282950445312.html> [accessed 20 March 2020].
[894] 'Gezi Park Protests Similar to Occupy Movement, Not Middle East Uprisings: President Gül', *Hürriyet Daily News*, 4 June 2013 <https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/gezi-park-protests-similar-to-occupy-movement-not-middle-east-uprisings-president-gul-48230> [accessed 20 March 2020].

November 2015 after the terrorist attacks on its territory.[895] Interestingly, during the same time, Ukraine also introduced the state of emergency and derogated from its obligations under the ECHR. However, it was not used as an example in order to compare and validate Turkey's behaviour. Likewise, when Turkey was criticized for organizing the constitutional referendum in April 2017 and then parliamentary and presidential elections in June 2018 under the state of emergency, president Erdoğan used the French elections to undermine the validity of Western criticism.[896] In line with what falls within the Sèvres Syndrome mentality, Erdoğan framed this criticism in the following way: '[t]he West has a plot on Turkey, and this plot failed. This is something that they are having difficulty in digesting'.[897] The narrative of Turkey's behaviour falling within the scope of normal behaviour was strengthened by underlying that it adheres more to the West's normative standards than France does. The main argument was that while Turkey declared the state of emergency for three months, France did it for nine months, and while France extended the state of emergency by a year and a half, Turkey extended its state emergency each time by only three months.[898]

The most recent example of Turkey comparing and validating its behaviour by using the West as a reference point was the outbreak of coronavirus. In one of his early speeches on the subject, President Erdoğan compared Turkey to the Western countries, showing that Turkey is better

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[895] 'Turkey to Temporarily Suspend European Convention on Human Rights after Coup Attempt', *Hürriyet Daily News*, 21 July 2016 <https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-to-temporarily-suspend-european-convention-on-human-rights-after-coup-attempt-101910> [accessed 20 March 2020]; See also Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, 'State of Emergency: Proportionality Issues Concerning Derogations under Article 15 of the European Convention on Human Rights', 24 April 2018 <https://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-EN.asp?fileid=24680&lang=en> [accessed 20 March 2020].

[896] Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, 'Countries Not Concerned about Our Nation's Right to Life Are Not Our Friend', 29 July 2016 <https://www.tccb.gov.tr/en/news/542/49835/237-sehidimizin-her-birinin-adini-anitlastiracagiz> [accessed 20 March 2020]; Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, 'PACE Decision Is Entirely Political, We Don't Recognize It', 21 April 2017 <https://www.tccb.gov.tr/en/news/542/74929/akpmnin-karari-siyasidir-bunu-tanimiyoruz> [accessed 20 March 2020]; Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, 'Live Broadcast on NTV-Star TV', 21 April 2018 <https://www.tccb.gov.tr/en/news/542/92506/president-erdogan-on-ntv-star-tv-joint-live-broadcast> [accessed 20 March 2020].

[897] Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, 'All Must Respect the National Will', 19 April 2017 <https://www.tccb.gov.tr/en/news/542/74835/mill-iradeye-herkesin-saygi-duymasi-lazim> [accessed 20 March 2020].

[898] Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, 'We Will Protect Our Freedoms and State of Law until the End', 16 August 2016 <https://www.tccb.gov.tr/en/news/542/50986/we-will-protect-our-freedoms-and-state-of-law-until-the-end> [accessed 20 March 2020]; Erdoğan, 'All Must Respect the National Will'.

prepared for this situation, while the West left its citizens on their own due to liberal ideology.[899] A week later, when the spread of coronavirus had already rapidly increased in Turkey, he repeated this argument by saying that 'Turkey is one of the countries closest to overcome the spread of the disease compared to Europe and America'.[900] This is an important example because the pandemic of coronavirus is a global phenomenon with its source in China. However, for Turkey, the only valid point of reference toward its struggle with the disease remained the West.

Although strategies used to strengthen Turkey's ontological security changed over the decades, Turkey largely reproduced the central role of the West within its state identity. Regardless of perceiving its liminal position as an asset, in the analyzed period, the West continued to serve as a looking glass through which Turkey evaluated its own behaviour. What became a relatively new narrative within this process was that Turkey became well accustomed to the normative standards of the West. Therefore, it often used the deficiencies in the Western countries as a shield against any criticism directed toward Turkey, trying to create an equivalent between developments in the West and in Turkey, or arguing that the West does not have a higher moral ground to question Turkey's behaviour. Nevertheless, by using the West as the only point of reference, Turkey *de facto* reproduced one of the main causes of its fragile sense of ontological security – its position as an early latecomer, the outsider that is discreditable.

The reproduction of what can be called the default settings of the Turkish Republic led to the permanence of the Sèvres Syndrome within Turkey's state identity. The ambivalent relationship with the West was well epitomized in the relationship with the EU, as discussed within the scope of this thesis. On the one hand, Europe is idealized and serves as a point of reference and comparison; on the other hand, it is perceived as a source of Turkey's insecurity, actively working to undermine the country's unity. This perception was as present at the time of writing this dissertation as it was when the Turkish anthem was composed, where 'the civilization' was

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[899] Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, 'Speech After the Coordination Meeting Regarding Coronavirus', 18 March 2020 <https://www.tccb.gov.tr/konusmalar/353/118038/koronavirusle-mucadele-esgudum-toplantisi-sonrasi-yaptiklari-konusma> [accessed 31 March 2020].

[900] Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, 'Address to the Nation', 30 March 2020 <https://www.tccb.gov.tr/konusmalar/353/118080/ulusa-seslenis-konusmasi> [accessed 31 March 2020].

described as 'the monster left single-fanged', which was a reference to the West.[901] Without understanding the inner workings of Turkey's state identity, one would also not be able to grasp why the famous label of the Ottoman Empire as the Sick Man of Europe is not perceived by Turkish people as derogative. On the contrary, it can actually be a source of pride. Regardless of its pejorative tinge, it is a confirmation of Turkey's claims to Europeanness. Therefore, the Ottoman Empire might have been sick, but at least it was European. This being the best example of how important recognition is for states.

3. What are the consequences of this change for Turkey's foreign policy?

While the answers to the two preceding questions require an in-depth analysis of discourses and processes, the change within Turkey's foreign policy was visible even to an outside observer. The traditional Turkish foreign policy was relatively passive and, most of the time, in line with the West's interests. In recent years, the change within Turkey's state identity was translated into a more independent and high-profile foreign policy. One example was Turkey's engagement in the 2005-2006 cartoon crisis after the Danish daily *Jyllands-Posten* published twelve cartoons of the prophet Mohammed. Capitalizing on its liminal position, Turkey issued a joint statement with Spain within a framework of the Alliance of Civilizations and planned to organize a special meeting between the EU and the OIC on the subject. However, the meeting was blocked by Denmark. Moreover, Turkey was invited to participate in the EU Troika's meeting on the subject in March 2006. Turkey's efforts to decrease tensions were positively received. The European Affairs Minister of Austria Hans Winkler (at that time Austria was holding the EU rotating presidency) put forward that '[o]ur involvement of Turkey in the endeavours to calm the situation has been a conscious decision, as that country is particularly well-placed to play a very active, constructive role in promoting dialogue between Europe and the Islamic world'.[902] Therefore, in this context, Turkey received the recognition of the West as its liminality was used for a good cause from the perspective of the West.

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[901] Pınar Bilgin and Başak Ince, 'Security and Citizenship in the Global South: In/Securing Citizens in Early Republican Turkey (1923-1946)', *International Relations*, 29.4 (2015), 500–520 (pp. 502–3).

[902] European Parliament, 'Debate: Right to Freedom of Expression and Respect for Religious Beliefs', 15 February 2006 <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+CRE+20060215+ITEM-002+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN> [accessed 31 March 2020].

Three years later, when Turkey opposed the nomination of Danish Prime Minister Anders Rasmussen, whose attitude led to the intensification of tensions during the cartoon crisis, for the post of NATO's Secretary General, it was criticized. The EU Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn stated that Turkey's behaviour 'will surely raise question amongst EU member states and citizens on how well Turkey has internalized such European values as freedom of expression'.[903] Therefore, in this context, Turkey's behaviour was perceived as a deviation from the Western norms and values and possible proof of Turkey's axis shift. This case exemplifies the thin line between what was seen by the West as the new activism of Turkey's foreign policy and what was seen as controversial foreign policy decisions. As long as Turkey's engagement conformed to Western interests, Turkey's behaviour was recognized as an example of the successful coexistence between the West and the East. However, when it diverged from what the West perceived as the best choice of action, Turkey was considered to be shifting its axis. While the mediations between Israel and Syria discussed in this dissertation fall within the former category, the vote against the imposition of new sanctions on Iran, after Turkey and Brazil had reached a deal on uranium exchange,[904] fall within the latter.

In hindsight, the abovementioned cases are water under the bridge compared to Turkey's rapprochement with Russia that we have observed in the last few years. Turkey's decision to buy the S-400 long-range air defence system was by far the most controversial of all Turkey's controversial decisions.[905] To understand what led Turkey to take such a decision, it should be put in a larger context of Turkey's relationship with the West because the S-400 was never Turkey's first choice. First, for more than a decade, Turkey had been negotiating the purchase of the U.S. Patriot system. Having no luck in this regard, it announced a public tender. In 2013, the China Precision Machinery Import-Export Corporation won over offers from the United States,

[903] Valentina Pop, 'NATO Talks on Rasmussen Impact EU-Turkey Relations', *EUobserver*, 4 April 2009 <https://euobserver.com/news/27915> [accessed 30 March 2020].

[904] Stephen Kinzer, 'Iran's Nuclear Deal', *The Guardian*, 17 May 2010 <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2010/may/17/iran-nuclear-brazil-turkey-deal> [accessed 30 March 2020].

[905] According to Washington, the S-400s are not compatible with NATO's defence network and can be used by Russia to gather information about U.S.-made weaponry.

the French-Italian corporation, and Russia. After being pressured by its Western allies over the dangers of such a move for NATO, the tender was cancelled. This decision, however, did not lead to a better deal regarding Patriots, which was always Turkey's first choice.

Secondly, Turkey's rapprochement with Russia, which led to the purchase of the S-400, happened within the context of the developments in Syria, where the United States largely disregarded Turkey's national security concerns regarding the possible Kurdish autonomy.[906] As such, the partnership offered by Russia became a tempting way of strengthening Turkey's position vis-à-vis the West, which fits within Turkey's more independent foreign policy. Since the very beginning, Turkey underlined that its relationship with Russia does not come at the expense of the relationship with the West and that it should not be perceived as a threat to NATO. The main argument was that due to its uniqueness, Turkey does not have to choose between different options and should follow a multidimensional foreign policy that corresponds to its international position.

The main difference between Turkey and Russia, however, is that while Turkey sometimes violates the socially accepted patterns of behaviour as defined by the normative standards of the West, in the end, it frames its narrative using these very standards as a point of reference. In other words, it operates within the normative standards of the West, which it sometimes decided to break. However, Russia operates by different standards, trying to subvert the authority and hegemony of the West.

Turkey already learned the hard way that when the first signs of bilateral problems emerge, the idea of equal partnership with Russia diminishes. During the March 2020 visit of President Erdoğan to Moscow, he had to wait for a meeting with President Putin in a small room full of portraits of Tsars who defeated the Ottoman Empire, which was later on aired by the Russian national TV with a very sharp commentary. The footing seemed to come from a security camera, which leads to the conclusion that the Turkish delegation was not aware of being filmed. The

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[906] See Kadir Ustun, 'US Alliance with Syrian PYD Alienates Turkey', 2 June 2016 <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2016/6/2/us-alliance-with-syrian-pyd-alienates-turkey> [accessed 30 March 2020]. On Turkey's sensitivity toward Kurdish autonomy, see Danforth, 'Forget Sykes-Picot. It's the Treaty of Sèvres That Explains the Modern Middle East'.

talks themselves took place in a room with a huge sculpture of Catherine the Great, who won Crimea from the Ottoman Empire. The statue was dominating over the Turkish delegation, which was captured in a photo. Although these were only gestures, they alluded to the times of weakness of the Ottoman Empire, which in the long run led to its collapse. For a country obsessed with status, reputation and national pride, this was a humiliating experience. Moreover, regardless of the bilateral disagreements, Turkey would not encounter this type of treatment from its Western counterparts.

While the rapprochement with Russia largely falls within Turkey's more ambitious and independent foreign policy, which should allow Turkey to regain due international position and the recognition of the West, the consequences of this decision might go beyond the mere disappointment and criticism of the West, which was the case with other controversial Turkey's foreign policy decisions. Consequently, it might lead to a structural deterioration in the relationship between Turkey and the West, and the price will be paid as much by Turkey as it will be by the West because Turkey is highly interconnected with the West, with NATO membership being just one such example. In other words, the decision to forge a friendship with Russia was solely taken by Turkey. Still, the process that led to it included years, if not decades, of disappointment and lack of recognition, or worse, misrecognition of Turkey on the part of the West. The strategy that the West adopted toward Turkey to make it continuously pursue belonging without granting the due recognition became a double-edged sword. The future of the relationship between Turkey and the West is still open, and it is not too late to revert the negative trend observed during the last few years. However, this can only be done by more attention being paid by Turkey's Western allies to Turkey's sensitivity and the country's fragile sense of ontological security, which was developed through the decades of an ambivalent relationship with the West. While doing that, one should keep in mind that in the end, Turkey is too interconnected with the West to let it fail.

4. Contributions and possible avenues of future research

As was mentioned in the introduction, my thesis makes three general contributions toward IR scholarship. First, by offering a systematic discussion regarding the ontological security perspective in IR, developed during more than a decade through a number of articles and books,

I was able to notice that it falls into the same trap as constructivist research. Building on that, I distinguish between self, identity and ontological security, emphasizing that the role of ontological security should not be reduced to another synonym for identity. Instead, I put forward that every actor has a self, which is expressed through identity. Importantly, actors' identities are not fixed but always in the making. As such, ontological security understood as the need for cognitive stability is expressed in an actor's ability to cope with a constantly changing world through reflexivity and adaptability rather than by focusing on the preservation of identity. Building on that, I propose to broaden our understanding of ontological security. Firstly, by treating stability as much as a basic need as an ideal that actors steer toward. Secondly, by not treating ontological security in black and white terms, but as a continuum between a maximum level of ontological insecurity and a maximum level of ontological security. This reminds us that ontological security is a fragile condition that needs to be continuously worked on and reasserted in the constantly evolving world. This also explains why at different times, the same actor might feel less or more ontologically secured. Consequently, emphasizing states' agency and reflexivity in the process of ontological security-seeking addresses the criticism levelled against the ontological security research program by Ned Lebow, who found its weakness in attributing unitary identities to states.[908] On the contrary, my research showed that even states with a fragile sense of ontological security such as Turkey are not just passive observers of international politics but possess reflexive awareness, which allows them to adapt their strategies of 'being' and 'doing' to constantly evolving world.

Secondly, my research broadened the understanding of how ontological security needs impact states' behaviour by uncovering that the same mechanism, in the case of Turkey its pursual of EU membership, might at the same time strengthen and undermine the ontological security of an actor, as it differently impacts various components of its identity. In this case, a cost-benefit analysis of such a mechanism depends on which part of an actor's identity is perceived as more important at a particular time.

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[908] Richard Ned Lebow, *National Identities and International Relations*, p. 22.

Thirdly, by including liminality and stigmatization in my discussion, I presented conditions that impact the ontological security of states. I argued that states dealing with stigmatization and/or liminality develop a fragile sense of ontological security, and their behaviour is often guided by a different set of issues than in the case of actors having a healthy sense of ontological security. In such cases, questions of belonging and recognition as well as the obsession with status and respect take on a different meaning, becoming inscribed in an actor's perception of the self. I also showed that an actor's struggle for recognition as an equal by its significant other is a condition under which processes related to stigmatization and liminality often coexist.

Therefore, looking at the possible avenues of future research, the theoretical framework proposed in this thesis could strengthen our understanding of the outsiders in the modern state system, whose sheer numbers are inversely proportional to the academic attention that they received. In other words, IR as a discipline has been primarily focused on the inner workings of the established. These observations informed the so-called general patterns of how states should act and the boundaries of rational behaviour. However, states that do not 'have the luxury of seeing the world as natural, to take it for granted, and to not have to worry about the "construction" of one's own identity, of society, or of international relations'[909] are also an essential part of the modern state system. Therefore, when patterns fitting the established are extrapolated to the outsiders, it distorts our understanding of why these states behave the way they do, often leading to the conclusion that they are simply irrational. What many atypical states have in common is a fragile sense of ontological security, which is a result of their encounters with the West. My framework offers to take into consideration two conditions, stigmatization and liminality, that help us better understand why the irrational behaviour has its own rationality behind it.

As was mentioned in the introduction, this research project was interested in the creation of the structure of significance as it relates to state identity. Therefore, it was focused on the official discourse of Turkey's state institutions. However, looking at state identity is just a first step toward a better understanding of the changes ongoing in Turkey since the end of the Cold War.

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[909] Zarakol, *After Defeat: How the East Learned to Live with the West*, p. 242.

Two possible further avenues of research include the creation of common sense and the existence and resistance of alternative discourses. Looking at the creation of common sense would extend the scope of the research conducted in this thesis to include the meaning created in mass media, popular culture, and education. Instead of focusing on the official discourse, it would focus on columns in the newspapers, discussions in social media, songs, movies or series, and students' books with a particular focus on history, geography, and social studies. This would allow us to see whether Turkey's biographical narrative is reproduced or challenged at the societal level.

Research focusing on alternative discourses would be another step to further our understanding of processes influencing the transformation of Turkey. On the one hand, it could concentrate on the transformation and resistance within the Kemalist discourse, which had been the hegemonic discourse within Turkey for almost eight decades. On the other hand, there exists a variety of discourse of the excluded, the second-category citizens, such as ethnic and religious minorities, with the struggle of Kurds receiving the most international attention. Other groups include Alevis, Armenians or Jews. As Çapan and Zarakol aptly observe, Turkey projected the insecurities it had experienced by the ambivalent relationship with the West within its borders, where Turkey's self was stabilized at the expense of other groups, which the state stigmatized.[910]

As such, both the framework presented in this thesis and the possible avenues of future research proposed above can be applied to other states with a fragile sense of ontological security, one example being my own country Poland.

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[910] Gülsah Çapan and Zarakol, pp. 9–10.

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