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Title:

The Pax Ottomanica from the 19th to the 21st Century

On the (im)possibility of Turkish Regional Hegemony

Summary

Turkey's recent foreign policy initiatives within the former Ottoman lands, aiming at creating a zone of peace and stability with 'zero problems,' have received mixed reviews in the West. Some feel threatened by the alleged increasing Islamisation of the country's (geo)politics. These sceptical voices, not least from within the Kemalist establishment, claim that the so-called 'Neo-Ottomanist' turn gradually corrupts Turkey's traditional transatlanticism and aims at erecting a neo-Caliphate hostile to the West. Others, including many policy makers in the United States, support Turkey's efforts to become a regional peace broker. Reminiscent of British designs for a regional *Pax Ottomanica* in the 19th century, this policy aims at maintaining stability through the geographically, culturally and religiously closer Turkish intermediary. Governed by a moderate Islamic government that nevertheless forcefully implements neo-liberal reforms, Turkey seems to have uncovered the blueprint for constructing the proverbial bridge between 'East' and 'West' and Islam and capitalism making it a model for export.

Intervening in this debate, this paper will explore the potential of expanding and complementing the Pax Americana through the Pax Ottomanica. Comparing the underlying social conditions of 'Ottomanism' in the 19th century with contemporary Turkey, it will be argued that 'Neo-Ottomanism' can be understood as the external extension of the rising social power of a rising Islamic civil society, sometimes referred to as 'Anatolian Tigers'. Broadly associated with the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) which was swept into power in 2002, this conservative Islamic entrepreneurial class not only represents a domestic political contender to Kemalism but also challenges Turkey's traditional geopolitical cornerstones by emphasizing Ottoman commonalities over potential security risks in the region. It will be argued that while this shared Ottoman heritage can indeed support Turkey's own geopolitical opening towards its neighbours, it is the same unique socio-historical origin of Turkey's Anatolian capital that prevents this 'model' from being reproduced elsewhere. Extending American power through the Pax Ottomanica is therefore restricted to supporting Turkey's capacities as a regional mediator. It is argued that the specific amalgamation of Islam and capitalism cannot be exported, however, as it gradually evolved out of a highly specific capitalist transformation that has its origins in the process of Ottoman modernization.

Turkey's Middle East offensive has taken on something of the scale and momentum of an invasion, albeit a peaceful one.[1]

"Turkey is like a lake which is fed by several streams from the Balkans, Central Asia, the Middle East, and the Caucasus."

Yavuz 1998

Introduction: The specificity of Turkey's Special Path

It may have been a surprise to many that the first trip across the pond of the newly elected US President Barack Obama did not lead him to Downing Street in a continuation of the 'special relationship' flourishing in the Bush/Blair years.[2] While this could be understood as a public gesture to renounce any practice associated with the Bush administration, it may have been even more surprising that Obama equally did not visit a place of comparable importance for the US's global architecture like Moscow, Paris, Beijing or Berlin. Instead, Obama's first presidential trip outside of North America led him to a mid-sized town in central Anatolia: Ankara.

What to make of this seemingly odd choice? Is the preferential treatment of Turkey, like his speech at Cairo's Al-Azhar University, part of his administration's efforts to restore confidence in US foreign policy in the Muslim World? Or is there something more specific about Turkey than just having a majority Muslim population? Arguably, there are two ways to understand this selection. On the one hand, it could express the US's unease with Turkey's recent Islamization, given the continuing political success of the moderate Islamist Justice and Development party (AKP) in determining the country's future. A transformation which, to many, presents the danger of Turkey's slipping away from Europe into an Iran-style Islamic Republic (e.g. Oğuzlu 2008; Tibi 2009).

However, this fear of a creeping Islamization of NATO's second largest member measured by size of armed forces is probably more owed to populist sentiments than realistically guiding the US's Turkey policy. As a matter of fact, the latter tends to see Turkey as an asset, rather than a problem. It is the AKP's seemingly unique ability to combine economic liberalisation with conservative Islamic values

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[1] The Economist, October 29th, 2009; http://www.economist.com/world/middleeast-africa/displaystory.cfm?story_id=14753776 (retrieved November 5, 2009)
[2] For the sake of completeness, it should be mentioned that Obama's first official state visit was to Canada.

that not only ensures broad electoral appeal, constitutes an effective challenge to the exclusive access of Kemalists to the discourse of Westernization, but equally makes the Turkish model of development an attractive partner in the current US project of trying to regain credibility in the Muslim world. Hence, similar to the British Empire in the 19th century, the US sees Turkey as the only dependable ally (next to Israel) in the region. It is this Anglo-American reliance on the Ottoman/Turkish influence to maintain peace and stability that can be termed *Pax Ottomanica.*[3]

The Turkish shift towards Neo-Ottomanism has already received wide-spread attention in politics, media and academia. Apart from fears of a neo-Caliphate, some analyses understand Turkey's transformation as a shift towards a new 'Civilian Power' for the Middle East (emulating the German and Japanese post-war roles within their respective environments). Others see the potential for a regional hegemony understood in realist terms (Hickok 2000; Erickson 2004). However, little work has been done that takes the notion of Neo-Ottomanism seriously. To remedy this shortcoming, this paper will attempt to trace the socio-historical origins of the current transformation of Turkish foreign policy within Ottoman history itself. In doing so, this paper will set out the argument chronologically. First it will look at the Ottoman transformations in the 19th century and the emergence of Ottomanism as a political identity of the Tanzimat. This will include the transformation from the Young Ottomans to the Young Turks and towards Turkish nationalism. Doing so will reveal that Turkey's development was characterized by the subordination of social development under a statist/Kemalist regime that left society detached from the state apparatus. This also implied the absence of a civil society outside of the corporatist economy. It will be argued that the contemporary power contestation between Kemalists and Ottomanists has its origin in the latter group trying to fill this space. Thirdly, it will explore the competing understandings of Turkey's geopolitical position in the region before providing a brief overview over Turkey's recent initiatives. Finally, this will show, that rather than being driven by an independent 'logic' of geopolitics dictated by an anarchical realm of the Islamist and Kemalist

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[3] In most conventional historiographic accounts the 'Pax Ottomanica' refers to the reign of Süleyman the Magnificent (1520 to 1566) when Ottoman expansion created an unprecedented era of stability in Southeastern Europe (Turkish: 'the Balkans'). It is used here in a more generic sense though as referring to the establishment of geopolitical order in the entire post-Ottoman world, including the Balkans, the Middle East and the Caucasus by using Ottoman/Turkish influence as stabilising factor.

camps, their respective foreign policy agendas can only be fully comprehended if related to their respective modes of social reproduction. This does not imply, however, the replacement of a unidirectional outside-in logic with an inside-out logic. Rather, it is through the interaction of various Turkish actors with their specific outside that the nature of the international system in the post-Ottoman world is determined. In other words, Kemalist geopolitics was in part responsible for reproducing a 'self-fulfilling' anarchical realm of self-help in the region. Similarly, it remains to be seen whether the neo-Ottomanist approach will be successful in delivering on its promise on 'zero-problems'. This will also show that the revival of Ottomanism in identity as well as foreign policy terms is not a momentous reaction to the exclusion of Turkey from Europe but is best understood as the long-term result of a century of peculiar capitalist development. This also means that Turkey's special path cannot be replicated elsewhere as is sometimes suggested. Even though Turkish influence will almost certainly grow, ambitions for universalising the Pax Ottomanica as part of a program of Americanisation of Islam (Tuğal 2007) are most certainly misguided.

A (very) brief history of the Pax Ottomanica

Before expanding on the transformation of Ottoman rule that led to the development of the Tanzimat reform period, the original British design of a southeastern sub-system to the Pax Britannica will be elaborated. As opposed to conventional wisdom, the British policy in the Middle East in the 19th century did not aim at outright annexation and partition of the Ottoman Empire. Instead, Britain and France repeatedly intervened to maintain Ottoman rule like in the Crimean War. Later Britain continued to defend Ottoman territorial integrity against the Franco-Russian ambitions up until the declaration of war in the First World War. The British saw Turkish rule over southeastern Europe and the Middle East as even preferable over its own direct domination. The Ottoman administration was modernizing, whilst at the same time dependent on British finance. Thus, it lay fully within the logic of British Blue Water policy to preserve the balance of power through the *Pax Ottomanica* as a form of regional 'order' in southeastern Europe and the Middle East. Indeed, the Empire was formally acknowledged as a part of the Concert of European powers in the 1856 Treaty of Paris which ended the Crimean War.

Social transformation in the Ottoman Empire: The long Revolution from Above 1789 – 2009

The traditional household system and the evolution of Ottoman foreign relations

The traditional system of rule in the Ottoman Empire was based on the Şeriat, or the good order guarded by the Sultan who also held the title of the Islamic Caliphate. This inextricably linked Islam to Ottoman statehood, representing the unity of the political and religious spheres similar to the "two bodies of the king" that symbolized the unity of politics and theology in medieval Europe" (Jung 2008). This did not amount to unmediated, arbitrary rule, however, as the Sultan was surrounded by a bureaucracy organized within various households around the palace establishing patrimonial relationships. Şerif Mardin describes this patrimonialism as "the most characteristic aspect of Ottoman polity" (Mardin 1969). In other words, reproduction within this web of semi-autonomous private households depended on personal relationships and the Sultan's influence was in fact restricted to "arranging marriages between members of ruling elites and women from the imperial harem" creating "densely webbed relationships between the dynasty and its servants" (Quataert 2005: 101; Findley 2006: 71). Far away from establishing a rational meritocratic bureaucracy, these practices engendered a system of multiple rivalling palace families, where recruitment was determined primarily by hereditary rights and merit only in second place (Abou-El-Haj 2005: 31-32). The internal mechanisms of social reproduction within the household system in effect curtailed Sultanic power leaving the Grand Vezir as "acting head of state" (Chambers 1964: 313: 259) who "took the most important part of the record keeping and communication work under his own supervision and moved into new quarters separate from the Palace. The entire scribal profession became functionally differentiated" (Mardin 1991: 117).

The further development from the 17th century onwards was characterized by the emergence of these Pasha and Vizier Households which maintained their social power well into the Republican era. During the 18th century, in a bid to raise revenue, this previously closed off household system was gradually opened towards other sections of society and recruitment was increasingly based on office venality. This had the effect of increased levels of surplus extraction by the 'new' bureaucracy to cover the cost of investment into office, which in turn favoured the further spread of

tax farming. Thus, a short-term raise in revenue was achieved at the expense of long-term loss of central control. By way of conclusion it can be observed, therefore, that, as opposed to the provisions of the Şeriat, "[i]t is highly improbable that at any point in Ottoman history sultans had the absolute monopoly of power…" (Abou-El-Haj 2005: 33).

Just as the Sultan could not rule independently from the wider bureaucratic structures, these developments did not occur in isolation from the Ottoman's geopolitical environment. Preceding the concrete institutional 'responses' to Russian and Austrian military superiority in the early 19th century, a shift in the Ottoman concept of International Relations itself took place. Bounded territoriality and physical borders (as opposed to the military frontier) had previously been an alien concept to the Ottoman state. Once the "insufficiency of the Ottoman military arm as an instrument of foreign policy" had been realized (Abou-El-Haj 1967: 489), frontiers were transformed into borders and foreign relations were formalized, developing rules and regulations for co-existence instead of conquest. Thus, "the 1699 treaty of Karlowitz forced a transition in Ottoman diplomatic strategies from dictation to negotiation with equals, and the gradual rationalisation of diplomatic relations on European terms" (Aksan 2006: 107). The closure of the military frontier, thus, imposed the principle of diplomatic reciprocity on the Ottoman Empire, which led to the increasing use of *ahidname*, or 'capitulations', i.e. specific regimes establishing the rights and duties of foreign visitors, like pilgrims or merchants to the Ottoman Empire.[4]

This is when the already existing scribing service within the Ottoman administration started assuming the important duty of meeting and corresponding with foreign diplomats (Findley 1980: 57). The formalization of relations with Europe encompassed an increasing demand for interpretation and translation into European languages, most importantly French. Formulating treaties in a written form constituted

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[4] The historiography of the capitulations has suffered from economistic interpretations as unequal trade agreements cementing Western European commercial penetration. Initially capitulations were not necessarily either limited to trade issues, or prescribing unequal terms, nor were they restricted to the Ottoman Empire. Capitulations entailed a whole set of rules regulating the life of foreigners within the Empire but later also came to include trade issues. The 1838 Anglo-Ottoman Baltalimani Convention, however, matches the above mentioned descriptions as it established British commercial domination over the Ottoman Empire to which the capitulations regime contributed.

a major shift from the Ottoman preference of oral agreements. In the long term, these formalizations not only had an 'external' effect, but also an internal one. Namely, it was this forced opening of formalized foreign relations that led to the increasing staffing of the Porte's offices with professional, multi-lingual civil servants, mostly of Christian denomination. Social change occurred on two levels, therefore. The formalization of foreign relations with the Ottoman's immediate environment initiated the growth of scribal professionals within the structures of the pre-existing patrimonial bureaucracy. The thus induced institutional growth was neither specifically modern nor itself necessarily coincidental with the introduction of a 'rational' administration, but it laid the foundations for the bureaucratic elite that acted as one of the main agents of modernization in the Ottoman Empire during the 19th century.

The other agent was the military. Usually made up of siphai cavalry men and Janissary slave soldiers, Selim III started to undertake a reform of the military in the light of continued military inferiority (Shaw 1965: 291). A 'new model' standing and salaried army, or *Nizam-I Cedid* was supposed to provide a more reliable and efficient form of defense which could re-establish the absolute power of the Sultan. This encompassed an autonomous treasury to fund the new army as well as the direct involvement of French military advisors. As these initial military reforms threatened vested interests in Istanbul and the periphery alike, it was rightly recognized as the initiation of the monopolization of violence in the Ottoman Empire.

Selim's successor Mahmud II's emphasis was on reforming the palace education, implying the reform of the patriomonial bureaucracy. Again, foreign relations played a major part in the transformation. In the 1790s Selim III had already installed permanent diplomatic establishments in London, Vienna, Berlin, and Paris. These intensifying external relations are often understood as the prime channel of Westernization whereby "prolonged exposure to modern ideas and values" leads to an appreciation and understanding of these new values by the bureaucratic agents in question, thus, initiating, social change from above (Chambers 1964: 311). While this might be true to the extent that change was initiated from a bureaucratic class hovering 'above' society, this reading neglects the Sultan's agency and his desire to restore central power rather than endorsing Western values. Thus, instead of understanding bureaucratic reform a targeted step towards realizing 'Western values',

centralization decreased the potential for political contention and established a quasi-Absolutist regime. Comparable to the Absolutist restoration of Kingly powers in France, centralizing social power initially served the purpose of restoring the Sultan's exclusive control over his realm in conjuncture with building geopolitically more competitive military structures. Mahmud's and Selim's efforts are, therefore, best understood as a form of neo-Absolutist restoration of Sultanic glory trying to overcome rivals for power in the periphery and the center alike. The impetus for modernization did not, therefore, emanate from a civil society seeking more efficient and market friendly forms of political administration. Rather, initially modernization was a means of asserting central power.

The Tanzimat

Instead of Mahmud's and Selim's incomplete reform efforts, many accounts of Ottoman modernization start with the Tanzimat (Price 1956: 70 - 81; Weiker 1968). This is accurate to the extent that the 1839 Gülhane Rescript did initiate the most radical reforms. Most importantly, this included the introduction of an Ottoman citizenship law in 1856 and the 1858 *Arazi Kanunnamesi* Land Code which established a form of private property rights commensurate with the Sharia.

One fundamental difference between the earlier modernization attempts by Selim and Mahmud is the central agency of the now matured bureaucracy during the Tanzimat period. While it has been Selim and Mahmud's desire to replace the households with more loyal as well as better-educated elites, one unintended consequence of their reforms was that some of these elites had started shifting their loyalty to an abstract ideal of the state (Findley 2006: 80). Thus, while geopolitical circumstances forced the administration to react to the military weakness of the Empire, once trained in the art of statecraft, bureaucrats equally constituted a considerable force for further-reaching change. Thus politicized, the bureaucracy started assuming not only an 'instrumental', but also a 'substantive' kind of rationality. In other words, it propelled social transformation itself in opposition to the traditional Islamic institutions of the Şeriat it had previously defended (Heper 1976: 511).

The Translation Bureau: The cradle of Ottomanism

One specific administrative organ developed an independent agency within the Ottoman modernization movement, was the *Terciime Odasi or* Translation Bureau. Foreign relations were increasingly conducted by Muslim, professional salaried officials from 1833 onwards, since the Greek Dragoman interpreters who had traditionally staffed the Empire's Foreign Service were suspected of sympathies with the Greek revolt. It was this translation bureau which constituted the social foundation of the 'Young Ottoman' and 'Young Turk' movements. Thus, long before the Turkish state formation was successful, the personalized rule of the Sultan came under attack from within his own bureaucracy.

Ottomanism

It was this bureaucracy that launched a universal citizenship law which was launched as part of the Tanzimat reforms in 1865. This law, whilst frequently described as merely a product of Western diplomatic lobbying and political pressure, was nevertheless implemented by an indigenous, yet Western educated bureaucracy. However, as the sole emphasis in drafting the so-called Hatt-i-Humayun was in a process of 'emulation' and the "formal, mechanical and institutional aspects of transformation" (Mardin 1962: 5; Karpat 1972), it soon faced opposition from disaffected Moslems. More precisely, it fuelled a schism between technocratic reformers and liberal Islamic intellectuals that had already occurred at the beginning of the Tanzimat period when some of the reformers fell out with the Tanzimat's eminent leaders, Ali Pasha and Fuat Pasha. These 'technocrats' focussed on a 'Realpolitik' reaction to geopolitical necessities, the recovery of political and fiscal control, without at the same time implementing any form of popular representation. However, the reform process did not only generate a technocratic bureaucracy under Reşit Paşa and reformist army generals, but also led to the emergence of an Ottoman intelligentsia and ultimately enriched intellectual life in more unique ways than emulating Western concepts. In other words, the Ottoman reform movement cannot just be read as a constant process of more or less passive adaptation, but is also the result of "local Turkish developments which were only indirectly the product of Western influence" (Mardin 1962: 8).

This local agency is, thus, recognizable first and foremost in the schism of a more profound Ottoman reform movement, the Young Ottomans. Not satisfied with the superficial character of the Tanzimat, which remained in essence authoritarian in

political style and served only to strengthen the Sultan's and the Porte's command over taxable resources. They were more concerned with the introduction of further-reaching reforms like a truly representative government, the rule of law and modern citizenship. It was from within this group, who also refused to identify the progressive character of the nationalist movements of the Empire that demands for the transformation of the Ottoman Empire as a non-national modern polity emerged. This demand was applied to the reform of political identity. Rather than passively imposing a Western legal concept, the Young Ottoman's adaptation had in fact generated an interesting synthesis: *Ottomanism.*

The citizenship law had established for the first time formally and legally equal rights for all Ottoman subjects. The concept of Ottomanism, on the other hand, proposed to sustain this new legal institution with the creation of a non-national, cosmopolitan Ottoman political identity. Significantly though, this reformed, universal political identity was not thought of in terms of an ethno-linguistically homogenous population. For the Young Ottomans, it was Ottomanism that appeared to conform most with the ideals of French Republican universalism, rejecting Turkism (Karpat 2000). This identity based on the name of a ruling dynasty, while not in itself necessarily creating strong ties, simply denoted a territorial demarcation of political subjectivity, instead of ethnic identification. It even led to a short-lived constitutional period from 1876 to 1878 and the first Ottoman parliament.

While in principle true to universalism, it was precisely the lack of strong ties that created the need to incorporate Islam into Ottomanism. In other words, it needed to interpret the Şeriat in terms of a liberal and quasi-democratic political philosophy. This attempt to reconcile "twentieth century liberalism with seventh-century Islam (...) no doubt involved some very unorthodox reinterpretation of Islamic concepts, but [had] been accepted (...) by nineteenth and twentieth century intellectuals throughout the world of Islam" (Zurcher 1984: 6).

The catastrophe of 1877/78 and the Hamidian restoration

The end of the Young Ottoman's reformist aspirations came in the form of military defeat during the 1977-78 Russo-Turkish war. The greatest impact on the universalist ambitions of Ottomanism was the end of the Empire in the Balkans. Having suffered military defeat that led to significant territorial losses not only to the rising Christian Balkan states, but also to Britain (Cyprus), the Sultan abandoned constitutionalism

and dissolved Parliament. Surrounded by expanding Christian states and rightly afraid of European colonial aspirations, Abdülhamid II consolidated his absolutist restoration by engaging in a discourse of pan-Islamism in order to preserve the remainder of the now largely Muslim population of the empire into a coherent and capable state. Despite the fact that the Ottoman Empire was – yet again – saved from Russian designs by a decisive British intervention, it was the specific outcome of this geopolitical encounter that led to the restoration of the Caliphate – if merely in rhetoric terms (cf. Karpat 2001: 136-138). The Islamic identity inherent in Ottomanism was itself not necessarily conducive to political unity due to the variety of sectarian understandings of Islam present within the Empire. While Christians were guaranteed minority rights, Muslims were expected to adopt the Sunni mainstream interpretation. This constituted a shift insofar as local government as well as Islam was previously not subject to state control, whereas Ottomanism attempted to homogenize Islam through the same uniform Sunni reading guarded by the Turkish Republic to this day.

While all of these developments dealt a striking blow to the spirit of the Young Ottomans, the newly assertive Sultan had tried to accommodate them by deploying them within the growing system of education. This led to a gradual infiltration of reformist ideology via schools and universities, notably the Galatasaray school now headed by one of the eminent Young Ottomans, Ali Suavi, laying the seeds for future generations of modernizers congregating in the Young Turks.

While it is true that Abdülhamid engaged in a discourse of pan-Islamism aiming to reaffirm identification with the Ottoman state of an increasingly disaffected Muslim majority, it is nevertheless worth noting that his institutional reforms were nevertheless further reaching than the Tanzimat's, which is sometimes obscured by his seemingly atavistic Islamic authoritarian style (Shaw 1976; Shaw and Shaw 1977). Looking at the ethno-religious make-up of the expanding bureaucracy, it is noteworthy that more Christians were employed by the Hamidian administration than at any previous point in Ottoman history (Findley 1982).[5] Initially, it was within the relatively diverse bureaucratic elites that 'Turkish' identity transgressed from a

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[5] Findley argues that even though access to government posts by religious minorities appears to have been guaranteed, there was a clear bias towards the traditional Christian ruling strata based in and around Istanbul, thus usually not representing Christian populations in the periphery. The same can be said, however, about the misrepresentation of the Muslim majority population within the periphery.

derogatory term to a new basis of political subjectivity. This means that at this point, it did not receive an exclusive, ethnic definition as it was endorsed by all members of the bureaucracy regardless of ethnic origin, despite that fact that the majority of staff was Muslim. The inherent error of Ottomanism was, in fact, its application of rationalist statistical categories, which sub-divided Christians along ethno-linguistic lines whereas Muslims were treated as a unitary block. This made the identification of Christians with the majority Ottoman state difficult (Karpat 2000: 10), while at the same time assimilating the rather diverse Muslim population into one category that would later become the foundation of Turkish nationalism. Thus, on the long run, Ottomanism, despite its universalist dimension, served to generate a sense of disaffection among the remaining Christian elites – now looking for Great Power protection from France and Britain – while Muslim elites and regional notables could identify even with a centralising Ottoman state not least through the institution of the Caliphate.

By way of conclusion it can be argued that as ambitious as this intellectual effort might have been, it nevertheless reformulated, rather than solved what was possibly the Empire's most crucial issue: internal multiplicity. Any form of constitutionalism using Islam as a central unifying force would cement the status of Christians as minorities, only tolerated, rather than an integral part of the novel political system. In some ways, this might have implied a deterioration of inter-faith relations. While this was not necessarily the case in everyday life, this over-reliance on Islam to unify the Muslim population as well as the statistical measure of difference led many Christians to look for alternatives, ultimately leading to the failure of Ottomanism in the 19th century.

For the case of 21st century neo-Ottomanism under investigation here, this reading of the Young Ottomans is nevertheless indispensible. Despite the fact that they were not of the same intellectual calibre as other political philosophers but rather "*hommes des lettres*, a euphemism used by the French for the intellectual Jack-of-all-trades" (Mardin 1962: 9, emphasis in the original), their contribution to the development of liberal Islam gaining prominence in contemporary Turkey today is nevertheless crucial.

The Young Turks

Despite some historical and philosophical continuities, the next generation of reformers were quite disparate in character to the Young Ottomans. Regardless of their common intellectual heritage with the previous bureaucracy, the transformation from Young Ottomans to Young Turks is more than in name. They remained, according to Karpat, still "dedicated Ottomanists" keen to preserve internal unity across the Middle East in an age of constant secessions (Karpat 2000: 25).

Initially, their main concern was with organizing resistance s against the Hamidian neo-Absolutism. The first organized opposition group was established in the Military Medical College, when four students founded the *İttihad-i Osmani Cemiyeti* (Ottoman Unity Society). This transformed into the Salonici 'domestic' movement was founded in 1906 as Osmanli Hürriyet Cemiyeti (Ottoman Freedom Society) while an exile movement, the Committee for Union and Progress, formed in Geneva around the same time. The 1908 revolt led to the re-constitution of parliament and the constitution.

Like with the Young Ottomans, it is difficult to delimit the intellectual remit of the Young Turk movement as it went through various transformations. While generally more defensive in character, due to its social origins in an officer class, there was nevertheless an incipient believe in the 'uniformity' of the Empire's subjects as reflected in the organisation's name, while continuing the Young Ottoman's agenda of reconciling Islam and Western statecraft. The term 'union' in its name of course referred to the unity of the (ethnic) elements, upholding the ideals of Ottomanism. As Kayali and others have pointed out, the conventional understanding of the CUP as an agent of Turkish nationalism in reaction to which Arab nationalism developed, is therefore based on a misperception, which underestimates the degree to which the CUP remained loyal to a belief in uniformity of all Ottoman subjects. (Kayali 1997). That the CUP already engaged in a process of 'Turkification' is, according to Kayali, a wide-spread historical myth targeted at the Ottoman government by its internal and external enemies which happened to be invigorated by mainstream Turkish and Middle Eastern historiography (Kayali 1997: 82f) and the eminent authority on the Young Turks, Erik J. Zürcher calls the CUP even "ardent Ottoman nationalists" (Zurcher 1984: 22). Generally though a distinction can be made between the exiled Ottoman intellectuals who understood national unity to include different ethnicities and the officer corps, which had either not problematized the issue at all, or had planned to subordinate it under a wider state-building rationale,

namely through the process of 'Ottomanization' (i.e. homogenisation of some sort) of minorities.

The slow death of Ottomanism

This gradually evolved into a different form of modernization from the Tanzimat's initial plans for a Union of the peoples (ittihadi anasir), since the agents of modernisation themselves were of an ethno-linguistic and religiously more homogenous origin. More important though was their social background. They were no longer the bureaucrats and intellectuals of the Young Ottoman movement, but they were graduates from army schools, which should ultimately become the cradles of the Republic.

The most profound impact was yet again through military defeat on the Balkans. Losing the 1912-13 Balkan War had a profoundly demoralizing effect on the Young Turks, not because, like so many wars before that, it ended in defeat and loss of territory but primarily because the defeat was inflicted on them by the former Ottoman provinces. Their victory was convincing evidence that a kind of nationalism similar to the ones on the Balkans, held the only promise for salvation. Thus, the preservation of independence against the threat of potential colonization was given priority over the inclusion of non-Muslim elements within the modernized state.

While Ottomanism was initially also preserved within the education system which gradually brought previously millet-controlled educational institutions under government control, this was soon met with resistance. Just as Christians saw this seizure of educational power by an emerging state apparatus as an attack of Muslims on their previously guaranteed religious autonomy, so was the Muslim majority deeply concerned with empowering an abstract bureaucracy that had traditionally employed many Christians in powerful positions.

In conclusion it can be argued that despite all efforts, the multi-ethnic, cosmopolitan model of Ottomanism did not survive the army strategists of the CUP. Soon after they had overcome Abdulhamid's Neo-Islamist restoration, they were in danger of losing the support of the deeply religious majority Muslim population of Anatolia. Another way of consolidating the revolutionary effort was, therefore, to emulate the formation of states in the Balkans by appealing to ethnic and linguistic identities, rather than universalism.

The Formation of the Republic 1923

Turkey's geopolitical baptism by fire during the First World War and the War of Independence not only determined the territorial shape of the future Turkish state as the Anatolian rump formation, but also provided for a new, unambiguously national identity. However, since being 'Turkish' had thus far only implied being Muslim and possibly of a rural origin, "the Kemalist doctrine was more interested in fabricating the new Turkish nation out of the Hittite and Sumerians than in deriving the cultural sources of the Turkish "self" from the Ottoman legacy (Yavuz 1998: 25)". This distancing from the Ottoman heritage is complemented by the rejection of Islam as the two imperial legacies incommensurate with the Republican state building project, which are seen as inevitable and necessary as "the political corollary to the abolition of the Caliphate and the monarchy" (Karpat 2000: 2). Notably, prior to the development of Turkish nationalism, the term 'Turk' was used in a pejorative way, implying tribal social origins, a low level of education and rural, kinship ties (Mardin 1969: 271). Tentative moves away from Ottomanism and pan-Islam towards an ethnically more exclusive notion of 'Turkishness' occurred already in the 1850s from within the Tanzimat establishment. As any meaning of 'Turkish,' including linguistics, was (as opposed to Serb, Bulgarian, Greek, etc.) without historical precedent, it lacked clarity even within the group of the most radical advocates of Turkish nationalism.

The 'empty' Republican state

With the 'actual' Turks ill-defined, uneducated rural poor, the expulsion of the Greeks and the mass killings of Armenians, it appears that the early Turkish state was emptied of almost any noteworthy potential contenders for power - let them be of an old regime type or bourgeois elements outside of the bureaucracy, merchant capital, petty urban entrepreneurship, finance as well as the organically grown Ottomanist intelligentsia. 'Emptied' in this way, the state to be formed by Kemal Atatürk, run by the military and the bureaucracy, was both able but also forced to create an ideology, financial system and industry that could generate the cohesion, popular support and tax-base to withstand further military engagements.

Left to themselves, the state's elites, unchallenged by historically grown power-structures, naturally became the first and foremost agent of capitalist development. This state-led and elite driven development also served to aggravate the

detachment of the urban centres from the local, rural population, which had already had a long tradition in the Ottoman Empire. This division between urban, bureaucratic military strata and rural, uneducated peripheral clans, or as Şerif Mardin aptly put it, between the "smooth, Paris-oriented statesmen [and] country bumpkins" (Mardin 1969: 274) so typical of Ottoman rule was neither overcome by the Young Turks nor by Kemalism, but only reformulated at best. Even though the godfather of Turkish nationalism, Ziya Gökalp's explicitly identified the inclusion of all working classes, peasants and traders into the state and the long-term goal of abolishing the historically grown division between elites and rural poor (Parla 1985: 50f), real existing Kemalism deployed Gökalp's nationalism, but failed to penetrate society more deeply. This may have been partly owed to the fact that Gökalp himself was part of the elite stratum and his ideas about social inclusion remained too abstract as they failed to formulate the lower classes' agency. Generally, the bureaucratic and military elites saw themselves as standing outside of society, building a state that had to react to external imperatives and could not react to internal demands. As Hakan Yavuz put it, "the reason behind this failure [to incorporate society into the state] is the belief in the primacy of the state over society that is inherent in Kemalism. In effect, the state became more important than its citizens" (Yavuz 2003: 265).

This process of 'Turkification' also determined the nature of future development, since the majority Muslim population of central Anatolia and Rumelia, had not developed a merchant, industrial, financial or any other kind of entrepreneurial activity comparable to the Armenians, Greeks and Jews,[6] the Ottoman/Turkish transformation is characterized by the distinct lack of civil society actors to promote development. In other words, there was no noteworthy influential entrepreneurial class involved in the process of state formation. Rather, state-formation has generated an entrepreneurial class. This implied the concentration of corporatist industrial conglomerates around Istanbul and Izmir, while at the same time alternative forms of accumulation and the formation of organic capitalist development elsewhere in the periphery were effectively undermined. Under these circumstances it was impossible for a civil society to counter the concerted aggregation of social and economic power by the Kemalist elites and if it did grow, it had to be associated in some ways with Ankara's circles of power.

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[6] According to Zurcher, prior to the formation of the republic over 90 per cent of the industrial establishments with more than ten workers were owned by non-Muslims (Zurcher 1993).

Islam and Turkish nationalism

Arguably though, the nationalist's ultimate fear was neither geopolitical nor economic in nature. It was and still is of the potential of Islam. Since the War of Independence was fuelled, in part, by jihadist rhetoric, the origin of secularism is not as clear cut as it may first seem. With the CUP effectively having run the Empire, it becomes less clear cut how the transformation from a deeply religious society towards a secular state was possible 'overnight' with the abolition of the Caliphate in 1924.

The answer lies in the fact that Turkey is not really a secular state. Rather than leaving questions of religious belief to the private realm, it is regulated by the state through the Religious Affairs Directorate (DIB).[7] Kemalism itself developed into a more radical state religion than Islam ever could have (Anderson 2008). The republic's continued strict control of Sunni Islam shows that the state itself never fully relied on the appeal of Kemalism as a quasi-religion to be strong enough to fully replace Islam. This fear of Islam was also utilized to consolidate Turkish identity defining internal and external Islamic 'others', which included the masses in rural Anatolia, the Kurds as well as, in geopolitical terms, the Arab world and Iran.

After Kemal': The expansion of Islamic capital since the 1980's

The 1980 Coup and its aftermath

Despite this strict regulation by the state, Islam became a growing political force at the very latest from the 1970s onwards. In many ways, this is not surprising though. The separation between state and society in place, this disconnection would always generate attempts to re-connect the state. After one of these attempts, the military intervened in 1980 to restore the secular order. Even though it banned Islamic politicians from practicing and consolidated secularism via a new constitution (1982), it had become abundantly clear that the purely statist Kemalist national identity required a readjustment if it was to avoid constant brute enforcement. Hence, instead of remaining vulnerable to Islamic parties, parts of the Kemalist elites themselves pursued "not only an Islamisation of Turkish nationalism, but also (...) the

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[7] Official Turkish title: *Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı* (Presidency of Religious Affairs); the office also runs a sister organisation in Germany which is concerned with the religious affairs of the large Turkish immigrant community there, the Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs: *Diyanet Işleri Türk-Islam Birliği*, (*DİTİB*)

Turkification of the Islamic tradition" using moderate Islam as a way of consolidating Turkish social cohesion (Yavuz 1998: 30). In this way, the Islamization of the past years is not necessarily a novelty in Turkish politics. As more than ninety per cent of the population is of Islamic faith, the use, rather than mere regulation of Sunni Islam by the state in order to generate social cohesion, notably one that also has the potential to include the broadly conservative Kurdish minority, makes this a somewhat evident option.

Liberal reforms under President Turgut Özal

What was new, however, that this Islamic awakening was combined with liberal economic reforms. The post-1980 economy brought liberal reforms under President Turgut Özal opening unprecedented opportunities for economic activity. Independent entrepreneurship started to develop in the peripheral provinces, notably Konya, Yozgat, Denizli, Corum and Aksa which showed marked differences from the corporatist industrial conglomerates of Istanbul.

Organized within the Association of independent businessmen (MÜSIAD),[8] this group of businessmen expresses moderate Islamic views while promoting further economic liberalisation as a form of socio-economic but ultimately political emancipation from the traditional Kemalist business elites and their core association of Turkish Industrialists' and Businessmen Association (TÜSIAD).[9]

While the political dimensions of this economic competition are difficult to ignore, there are obvious commonalities of interest between these groups as opportunities for regional expansion are always welcome. However, given their more corporatist origin, TÜSIAD's approach towards further market liberalisation, including a potential accession to the European common market, is – regardless of their much more European identity – more cautious than MÜSIAD's. Especially for new entrepreneurs, there is more growth potential in new markets in comparison to the markets where strong competition with statist industries restricts the chances of profitable expansion.

A considerable amount of the literature speaks of the somewhat ad hoc emergence of a new Anatolian middle class and Islamic civil society in the 1980s

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[8] Müstakil Sanayici ve İşadamları Derneği, see: http://www.musiad.org.tr ; another business association with similar objectives is the Anatolian Tigers Business Association (ASKON)
[9] Türk Sanayicileri ve İşadamları Derneği, see: http://www.tusiad.org.tr

through economic liberalization and de-regulation in the aftermath of the 1980s coup d'etat. In contrast, it is argued here that the Anatolian entrepreneurial class seized the vacant space between state and society in Turkey. However, rather than being just fortunate their appearance and success has to be seen as the result of a long-term historical trajectory. I.e. rather than simply representing an opportunistic seizure of an economic opening by previously non-propertied classes (e.g. Demir, Acar et al. 2004: 169), the conditions for the rise of the so-called 'Anatolian Tigers' can be traced back to the foundations of modernization in the Ottoman Empire.

The transformation of post-cold war Turkish identity

This emergence of a non-state 'counter-elite' embracing a different set of values substantiated by the formation of an independent capital base also allowed for the creation of independent actors within the previously majority state owned media sector. This allowed for the formation of a new Islamic modernist intelligentsia which started formulating and disseminating an independent idea about Turkish identity and a less antagonistic understanding of Turkish geopolitics (see below). In the long run this opening of political debates to alternative, non-state related sources widened the public participation in political debates, it led to a diversification of opinions and arguably created more democratic accountability.

These debates included the transformation of Turkish identity. While not necessarily overcoming Turkish nationalism altogether, the traditional notion of Republican Turkish nationalism is currently undergoing a transformation. Prime Minister Erdoğan described the Turkish Republic's past policies of "kicking out" citizens of different ethnic origins as a "fascist approach" declaring his ambitions to create a more cosmopolitan understanding of Turkish citizenship. The emerging broader understanding of Turkish identity which is, at least theoretically, more capable of incorporating diversity, rather than insisting on the continuation of a process of forceful homogenization into an exclusive Turkish identity, provides for an opening towards solving minority questions, such as the Kurdish community. While acknowledging the socially constructed nature of the Turkish ethnie, this new identity shift heavily depends on Islam's role as a source of internal social cohesion.

This more Islamic oriented, but equally more universal political identity is further fostered by the European Union's continued ambiguity towards a full-scale

Turkish membership. The Republican Turkish identity defines itself to a large degree through its Europeanness. With the prospect of accession being less than certain, this identity is compromised and weakened due to the perceivably racist hostility of major European powers like France and Germany towards Turkey and Islam and a whole.

This made the reappraisal of the Ottoman ecumene a promising source of post-EU identity. This reminiscing of the previously failed idea of Ottomanism, thus, attempts to account for diversity by creating a more cosmopolitan society instead of continuing to neurotically homogenize political subjects. While this re-formulation is not solely driven by a logic of capitalist expansion but rather has to be read through the current contestation between Kemalists and 'Islamists' in Turkey, it is nevertheless eminently compatible with it.

The AKP rose eventually, out of a proliferation of Islamic movements and parties as the only one capable of accommodating pro-market IMF and EU dictated liberal reforms still maintaining popular appeal. Through the medium of Islam, it successfully galvanized pro-business politics with a populist agenda that would ensure broad electoral support despite cuts in public welfare spending. Part of the success of the AKP's policies is its ability to appeal to capitalist entrepreneurs as much as to the masses. The Islamic Welfare (Refah) Party under Erbacan was much less successful in the 1990s at creating this consensus, while interpreting the Islamic 'just order' to promote social welfare programs by the state. The AKP's policies follow, by contrast, a neoliberal agenda, leaving social welfare to a variety of private initiatives by entrepreneurs. This is also due to the fact, however, that the sectors of the economy potentially voting for the AKP have grown significantly. Nevertheless this begs more fundamental questions about the AKP's philosophical foundations.

The Gülen Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism
These are frequently associated with the so-called Gülen movement, named after the most prominent representative of a liberal interpretation of Islam, Fetullah Gülen. While his movement is transnational in nature, his ideology was developed in Turkey, where his organisation operates around 150 schools and universities. Influenced by the Sufi order of Said Nursi (1877-1961), Gülen re-appropriated his idea of 'Turkish Islam' of the 1950s. Generally, Sufi tradition can be described as universalist, promoting "a philosophy that all creatures should be loved as God's physical

reflection and objects of the Creator's own love. There is no place for enemies or 'others' in this system" (Aras and Caha 2000).[10] This also naturally leads to the rejection of an East/West world political dichotomy. Apart from its universalism, *Risale-i Nur* also emphasizes rationalism and elaborates on the links between Islam and reason, science, and modernity rejecting arguments about their mutual irreconcilability. Implementing the 'capitalist spirit' of this specific interpretation of Islam, the Gülen movement also initiated entrepreneurial activities mainly targeting the media sector seizing opportunities opened up by the liberalization of the Özal years.

The evolution of Turkish foreign policy

The end of Turkey's Atatürk's security dilemma

Before elaborating how this understanding of Islam expresses itself in geopolitical terms, this section will give a brief overview over the development of Turkish foreign policy in the region. Turkey's military alignment with the West was born out of a geopolitical necessity. The proximity to the Soviet Empire and the specificities of the region's geography, with Turkey guarding access to the Black Sea, Atatürk saw an alliance the West as indispensible. The access to NATO also matched the Republic's European self perception and their 'civilizing mission' of Turkey as an anti-communist bulwark. With these broad international parameters in place until the end of the cold war, the Turkish military and the wider Kemalist elites managed to maintain their social power with reference to their central function in the state's protection. As one Turkish general once aptly put it: "Turkey's geography does not allow for more democracy" (Bilgin 2007). By the end of the cold war, these traditional strategies had been undermined. As a reaction, the military establishment purposely intensified the Kurdish conflict in order to continuously re-affirm their political prerogatives with reference to Turkey's security imperatives.

From Ürümqi to Erbil: Pan-Turanism in the 1990s

The post-cold war environment initially saw a different kind of activism tightly bound to ethnic notions of 'Turkishness'. This resulted in a concerted opening towards states

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[10] This bears obvious relevance for Turkey's changing geopolitical self-understanding which will be discussed below.

or regions considered 'Turkic' in ethnic origin, mostly in the Caucasus and Central Asia (Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan representing the most obvious examples). While this was at best a half-hearted attempt to fill the power vacuum left by the Soviet demise, it did not per se entail a 'security' dimension conducive to the consolidation of Kemalist power. This lacuna was to be filled by the gradual and conscious escalation of the Kurdish conflict during the 1990s. Shifting the argument about 'structural' security necessities away from the now ended Cold War to a 'War on Terror' with guerrilla forces almost serves as a blueprint for similar developments in other western countries post 9/11. Regardless of this emphasis on security, president Turgut Özal's initiative for a Black Sea Economic Cooperation forum[11] in the 1990s can already be seen as the start for the project of developing regional markets, despite the fact that more than 50% of exports were still destined for the EU.

Neo-Ottomanism

The socio-economic changes are equally reflected in Turkey's external relations and geopolitical orientations starts shifting. It is therefore no surprise that the first steps towards Neo-Ottomanism were taken long before the AKP came to power or Davutoğlu became foreign minister. This should not amount to a purely economistic explanation of Neo-Ottomanism, for it cannot purely be seen as serving the expansion of Anatolian capital in the region for two reasons. Firstly, its initiation also has to be seen as part of the internal power struggle with the Kemalist elite. As they have, to a large degree, derived social power from the purportedly competitive environment, a policy of 'zero problems' amounts to an immediate threat of their social power. Secondly, as the following brief overview over the foundations and initiatives will show, Turkey interacts with an external world that is not passive, so whether or not zero problems prevail depends on contingent outcomes of individual interactions.

"Stratejik Derinlik"[12]

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[11] Founded in 1993, Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine are members of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation; see: http://www.bsec-organization.org/

[12] Professor Ahmet Davutoğlu set out his thesis of 'Strategic Depth' for the first time in 2001 (Davutoglu 2001).

'Strategic Depth' is (thus far) Davutoglu's magnus oopus which will be laid out here briefly. It could be argued counter intuitively that this new approach to foreign policy and the corresponding conception of Turkey's international position is by and large commensurate with the previous Kemalist understanding of Turkey's physical geography situated 'between Asia and Europe' providing the core determination of Turkey's external relations.[13] More precisely, as his Kemalist predecessors, Ahmet Davutoğlu starts his elaborations on 'Strategic Depth' by examining Turkey's unchangeable physical reality. This even brought him Realpolitik in Turkey, which even earned him the ill-conceived compliment of being "Turkey's Henry Kissinger" (Seker 2009). Davutoğlu differs from Kemalists though in that he understands this circumstance as a call for external expansion rather than an excuse for internal consolidation.

More precisely, Davutoğlu's concept of 'strategic depth' is composed of four broad denominators. Firstly, *'Geographical depth'* is derived from Turkey's geographical location with equal access to the Balkan peninsula, Europe, Middle East, Central Asia and Russia. Secondly, "*Historical depth*"[14], which relates to the common Ottoman history of the region, which Turkey, as the Ottoman successor state, is in a unique position to employ as a means of diplomacy. "*Geocultural influence*" relates to the present-day commonalities in culture with the post-Ottoman world that arise from this common heritage. And lastly, *"Geoeconomic importance"* relates to Turkey's central position as a transit country for Europe's energy supplies. This geoeconomic importance of Turkey is complemented by the potential of the growing Turkish export market for Europe and the US but also Russia. This "strategic depth" equip Turkey with unique opportunities in the global political economy, which, according to Davutoğlu can be yielded by a more proactive and cooperative approach to foreign policy. These regional foreign policy initiatives aim at the creation of a realm of 'zero problems' around Turkey. These initiatives include the rapprochement with Armenia and the Kurdish leadership in Northern Iraq, sending peace building troops to Lebanon, the mediation between Syria and Israel, initiatives for a Caucasus stability pact and the active involvement in the Balkans to name but a few. This more assertive quest for a regional role means for Davutoğlu that Turkey eventually grows

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[13] For the continuities between Kemalists and post-Kemalist Islamists see Birch (2008)
[14] Apparently Davutoğlu is in the process of writing a second book at the moment dedicated to the notion of 'historical depth'.

out of its self-imposed passive role as NATO's aircraft carrier in the Middle East and ultimately gains in independence as well as world political importance.

The International environment:

Stalling EU-Turkey relations and the post-Iraq power vacuum

However, while 'Strategic Depth' assumes that these opportunities are a timeless feature of Turkey's geographical and geo-economic location, its contemporary realization appears to hinge on more peculiar circumstances. Namely, Turkey's foreign policy activism comes at a time when the post Cold War power vacuum is aggravated by the US's tarnished reputation in the region coinciding with an increasingly assertive Iranian leadership. As mentioned earlier, the Obama administration intends to remedy this problem partly through by re-emphasizing Turkey's strategic importance in the region. The second peculiarity explaining Turkey's regional opening lies in Europe. After having opened official accession negotiations in 2005, the desolate state of the talks, the rise of Islamophobia in Europe and the expressed opposition of French and German conservative governments raise serious doubts over the EU's will and/or ability to pursue open-ended negotiations. The Turkish re-orientation stems partly out of a frustration with the accession talks, and partly out of a more instrumental need to grow elsewhere if access to the European markets is not facilitated as expected.

The Loss of Turkey? EU-Turkey relations

This seeming 'rejection' of Europe, rings alarm bells with many commentators in the 'West', who argue that Turkey's neo-Ottomanist turn could result in a 'loss of Turkey' to the West in the inter-civilisational struggle comparable to the 'loss of China' in the cold war. This view neglects, however, to which degree the European markets remain attractive for Turkish investment. After having declared October the 'month of peace' Davutoğlu has labelled November the 'month of Europe'. As Turkey's Foreign Trade Minister Zafer Çağlayan recently put it, "we do not have the luxury of ignoring the European market. We do, however, have other markets that we can sell to".[15]

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[15] See Daily Zaman, November 6, 2006: *Trade preference program for OIC members on the way*; http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/news-192141-105-trade-preference-program-for-oic-members-on-the-way.html (retrieved November 7, 2009)

The problem appears to arise with Europe then. It is argued here that Turkey-EU relations are stalling due to Europe's fortification against its 'outside' which reproduces historically grown Orientalist mirror images withdrawn from Turkish realities. These practices, it is argued, ultimately prevent a Turkish accession in the foreseeable future. Even though it is only one of many available mirror images embodying a noteworthy degree of 'otherness' for the process of European integration, the successor state of the Ottoman Empire still occupies a unique position among them (Yapp 1992). This historically grown 'Turkish Mirror' in the European self-perception (cf. Cirakman 2002) regained significance after the end of the Cold War. Turkey's 1987 bid for EU membership had its chances of success severely diminished when the classical post-World War 'outside' of the Warsaw Pact disappeared. With the Eastern enlargement of the European Union spelling the definitive end of the Cold War as a catalyst for European integration, falling back to Orientalist practices appeared a readily available surrogate. In 1991 Jan Nederveen Pieterse went so far as to say that "Europe's historic frontier of confrontation with the world of Islam is being reactivated" (Pieterse 1991: 6). Thus, paradoxically, the breakdown of the Soviet bloc, in which the NATO member Turkey played a significant role, has made it more difficult to join a Europe where definitional "boundaries had shifted from congruence with the line tracing the 'iron curtain' to one of civilizational divide – defined as religious difference" (Keyder 2006: 73). So when Western Europe rushed to embrace its long-estranged Eastern brothers after the iron curtain came down, the boundaries of European identity could now be redrawn according to presumed cultural affinity, rather than geopolitical expediency. Or as Müftüler-Bac put it, "the disappearance of the Soviet enemy eroded Turkey's position in Europe. It no longer served a clear function, and thus was shunted to the back of the line of candidates for EU membership in the 1990s" (Müftüler-Bac 2000: 29). The end of the Cold War did not lead to the universalization of the Western European liberal project wherever possible, but to the redefinition of its exclusive realm defined first and foremost through via emphasizing its distinctive outside. J.G.A. Pocock argued that 1989 not so much spelled the opening of European borders but simply their shifting back from Europe's centre to where they had been prior to the Cold War, i.e. along the Greco-Turkish frontier (Pocock 1991). As Perry Anderson has recently put it, this shift of the demarcation between 'progress' and 'retardation' led to

the revival of the "successor danger in Islamism", which, to many "arrière pensées" (Anderson 2008),[16] translated into a policy of rejecting the Turkish EU membership.

Given this delicate danger of 'loosing Turkey', the continental European opposition to the Turkish EU accession appears to contradict both economic rationale, but more importantly the geopolitical order of the day. This contradiction, it is argued here, can be explained by Orientalism. The reservations against Turkish membership are particularly strong in France, Germany and, in an apparent spirit of 1683, Austria. The UK and the US, along with the European Commission meanwhile, endorse membership. Anglo-Saxon liberal states, like Britain and the US view the Ottoman Empire (with the exception of the First World War) in the tradition of the Pax Ottomanica as an institution conducive to hegemonic interests, whereas continental Europe appears to live the collective memory of 1683 with Austrian opposition to the EU accession second to none. Thus, while the Anglo-Saxon states, along with the European bureaucracy in the commission,[17] endorses Turkish membership, the more inward looking continental societies oppose the incorporation of its long-standing 'definitional other', especially at a time of internal crisis. Interestingly though, both appear to endorse Turkey's Neo-Ottomanism, albeit for opposite reasons. The liberal heartland is attracted by Turkey spreading Gülen's understanding of the relationship between Islam and capitalism, while emphasizing the geostrategic necessity of Turkish accession, continental conservatives welcome what they see as an implicit acceptance of Turkey's belonging to a different civilisation or culture.

This is not to say that the turn towards Turkey's regional environment is not a reflection of choosing the 'Eastern' over the 'Western' path of development. While there exist two different capitalist formations within Turkey – one statist, urban and secular, one middle class, rural and Islamic, they both remain firmly committed to further neo-liberal reforms within Turkey as well as the expansion of 'Islamic'

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[16] Anderson's claim about a wide-spread European consensus about Turkish EU accession is problematic as was re-affirmed by the Franco-German rejection of President Obama's endorsement of Turkish EU accession; see Barysch (2009). This position is in contradiction to the UK's and that of the European Commission.

[17] The former EU commissioner for enlargement and vice president of the commission, Günter Verheugen, just recently used the occasion of the publication of Turkey's accession report to re-emphasize this argument in an interview with German radio station Deutschlandfunk (see: http://www.dradio.de/dlf/sendungen/idw_dlf/1052772/; accessed 20/10/2009).

capital. Rather, the regional re-orientation is not so much born out of an emotional dissatisfaction with the West, but with the sober realization that accession to the common market and the potential to grow within that market, are still a long way off. Expansion, thus, naturally has to turn somewhere else, realizing the potential of post-conflict reconstruction, development and growth within the immediate environment. As Hakan Yavuz put it, "pro-Islamic ottoman groups do not necessarily seek a stark choice between East or West bur rather would prefer to balance national interests by keeping a foot in each sphere" (Yavuz 1998: 40).

Armenia

One of the most visible manifestations of Turkey's zero-problems approach is the 'football' rapprochement with Armenia. This opening included the opening of borders, a historian commission which is to establish the events from 1915-1917 as well as the exchange of ambassadors.

Turkey and Russia's 'Near Abroad'

Armenia is not only relevant for Armenia's sake but it also signals the readiness for a broader cooperation within the Caucasus. Russia has attempted to assert its power in the region more visibly not only since the war against Georgia and has come to claim its sphere of influence in the post-Soviet world through the notion of the 'Near Abroad' (e.g. Lepingwell 1994). The question this raises initially is whether this could lead to a potential conflict of interest with Turkey's sphere of influence in the overlapping post-Ottoman world. So far this question has to be answered with a clear no. Turkey has tried to balance Russia carefully within its 'zero problems' approach to the extent that it blocked US warships from entering the Straits during the most recent conflict in the Caucasus. While Turkey deployed a narrow, to the letter, rather than pro-Russian interpretation of the Montreux Convention regulating access to the Black Sea, it is nevertheless significant, that it did so at the expense of its close NATO ally. This taming of the Russian Bear is not necessarily inspired by a fear of military inferiority as during the previous five centuries. More convincing is a Turkish interest in maintaining good relations so it won't endanger the growing economic ties and market opportunities in Russia. As a matter of fact, Russia is Turkey's second-

largest trading partner after Germany, while Turkey is Russia's 14th trade partner. Especially Turkish construction consortiums see Russia as a promising export market. Moreover, Turkey is highly dependent on Russian fuel and energy products (72% of total). While the Baku-Tibilsi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline opened in 2005 by a consortium around British Petroleum was still a project designed with a view to decrease Europe's dependency on Russian controlled supplies, the Samsun–Ceyhan pipeline (SCP, also: Trans-Anatolian Pipeline) and its extension under the Black Sea, the South Stream pipeline, constitute examples of cooperation between the two former arch rivals in energy policy.

The Arab Middle East

Amongst the Arab states, it is especially Syria that received special attention from the Turkish policy makers. This is owed to the fact that it is Turkey's immediate neighbour to the South, but also to the fact that their relations had been at the brink of war in the late 1990s. Here, it was paradoxically Iran and Egypt that mediated between the two potential adversaries. Now, tables have turned and Turkey borkers negotiations Israel and Syria about a peace deal. Turkey has also supplied a large contingent of troops to the UN force in Lebanon, established excellent trade links with Iraq and even started negotiating with the Kurdish leadership in Northern Iraq. While Egypt looks suspiciously at Turkey's Middle East diplomatic initiatives, given its own role as a mediator in the region, economic ties are increasing.

Iran

Iran is one of the issues that demonstrate most clearly the rift between the Kemalist and the proto-Islamic establishment. While many Army generals not only see Iran as a potential geopolitical competitor, but also developed a severe phobia of importing Turkey's own version of an Islamic Revolution (Ilkay and Binnaz 1983), the AKP has shown itself to be extremely forthcoming towards the theocracy ignoring concerns in the West and the Arab world about Iranian aspirations. Erdogan equally neglected, if not outright denied allegations of fraud and the brutal repression of street protests.[18]

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[18] See Erdoğan's interview with the Guardian on October 26, 2009: *'Iran is our friend,' says Turkish PM Recep Tayyip Erdogan;* http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/oct/26/turkey-iran1 (retrieved October 30, 2009)

Unsurprisingly, this new friendship with Iran does not go unchallenged, domestically and internationally. While the US has publicly stated that they were looking unfavourably at the rapprochement between the historic competitors, the Turkish security establishment itself shows an increasing interest in portraying the nuclear issue with Iran as a manifest threat to Turkish integrity, especially if combined with the possibility of the withdrawal of US nuclear warheads from Europe (Yinanç 2009).

Israel

The relations with Israel are deteriorating since the 2008 Gaza war. Personally irritated by the events and feeling personally betrayed after the then Prime Minister Olmert had reassured him that there wasn't going to be an attack, Erdogan appears to be in no mood to change track. In some ways, these problems damage the otherwise rosy picture of Turkey's new role in the region, even though many Israeli and Turkish officials are quick to play down the seriousness of the rift.

Balkans

Since the bloody break-up of the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s, wars Turkish foreign policy in the region was and still is characterized by a pro-Islamic support for Bosnia and Kosovo. This is not to say, however, that Turkey does not employ its universal approach here as well, with Devatoglu demanding 'unity' as a 'key to progress'.[19] While the initiatives are in part motivated by the need to maintain stability for the Nabucco-Pipeline-Project, the Southeast European Cooperation Process, initiated by Bulgaria, is now fuelled with new life as a channel for Turkey's Neo-Ottoman diplomacy on the Balkans.

Even the war-torn relations between Turkey and Serbia have experienced a recent rapprochement as a result of Devatoglu's activism. Abdullah Gül, in the first landmark visit to Serbia by a Turkish President since 23 Years, signed various bilateral agreements on October 26, 2009, putting Serbia firmly on the map of Turkey's opening, despite the historically difficult relations. Whether this will transform into the ambitious goal of a "strategic partnership" as declared by

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[19] Hurryiet Daily News, July 26, 2009; http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=unity-in-balkans-key-to-progress-says-Davutoğlu -2009-07-26 (retrieved August 18, 2009)

Presidents Gül and Tadic remains to be seen, but the emphasis on the Turkish interest to invest in Serbia's infrastructure reveals at least one major incentive in this project.[20]

Lastly even Turkey's most traditional contenders appear to have arrived in Ankara's zone of peace. While an active rapprochement was pursued long before Devatoglu's appearance on the scene, Greece remains committed to the path of cooperation, being one of the most vocal supporters of Turkish EU accession.

Turkey's competing geopolitical visions

As these examples go to show, the domestic social transformation described above is also reflected in geopolitical terms, i.e. a it produces different understanding of Turkey's geopolitical position, seriously undermining the Kemalist's 'security dilemma'. In other words, different reflections on Turkey's geopolitical position are constructed and deployed as part of the wider contestation for social power in Turkey. As the rise to power of this small scale business class, that has its origin in the outside of the Turkish corporatist project, rises to power, their geopolitical outlook is almost naturally more inclined towards 'zero problems' since their social origins are not intricately linked with a specific representation of geopolitical reality in a similar way to the Kemalist military elites.

Conclusion:

Only one year ago, Pinar Bilgin still argued that secularism was not just a matter of consolidating a domestic Republican project but also carried an international dimension in that it functioned to placate Europe's insecurity towards its former constitutive 'other' and placed it more firmly on the ground of European 'civilization' (Bilgin 2008). In the light of this central function, what does the arrival of liberal Islam imply for Turkey's foreign relations? Hence, while While the US and the UK welcome this activism of 'NATO's Islamists' (Tuğal 2007), or rather Islam's capitalists, one potential friction might lie in the continental European perception of neo-Ottomanism as pan-Islamism.

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[20] Hurryiet Daily News, October 27, 2009: http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=gul-turkey-eyes-investment-in-serbia-2009-10-27 (retrieved October 28, 2009)

However, even the US's expectations about a new Pax Ottomanica based on the Anatolian Islamic liberalism spreading its wings in the region, might be disappointed in the end. Precisely because this form of development is unique to the social conditions generated by the Ottoman/Turkish special path into modernity, the dream of US foreign policy to 'export' this organically grown combination between capitalism and conservative Islam into other parts of the region is unlikely to materialize.

Firstly, the socio-economic conditions of the Turkish special path are unique. Because the historically grown Ottoman/Turkish bureaucracy drove modernization detached from society, it left a space between the state and society the moderate Islamists came to fill. Even though the Kemalist state apparatus continuously attempted to challenge Islamic political forces, it was the Islamist movement in form of the AKP itself that has successfully incorporated the state into their political movement.

Secondly, the sources of specific Sufi orders formulating the foundations of liberal Islam are equally unique to the Ottoman heartland. While the influence of individual Islamic sects should not be exaggerated, the Nakşibendi and Nur interpretations and their adaptation to a neo-liberal capitalist order are the result of uniquely Turkish circumstances. Equally, this adaptation was attempted in the Ottoman Empire since the development of 19th century tradition of Ottomanism. This is not to say that other interpretations of Islam are less adaptable to capitalism, but that ideas about Turkey as a textbook Islamic liberal democracy ready for export are problematic. Just like Indonesia and Malaysia have arrived at very different, yet socio-economically just as compatible amalgamations, so is Turkey's particular case the unfinished result of a long-term process of an ongoing, specific Ottoman/Turkish transformation.

This goes to show that, while geopolitical transformations are crucial in explaining the opening in Turkish politics of a path to power for the AKP's conservative Islamism, the end of the cold war and US interventionism cannot be understood as a purely 'external' moments in this transformation, residing outside of the 'domestic' modes of social reproduction. In other words, just as much as these changes were the result of wider international developments, like the rise of neo-

liberal adjustment policies, the new social formations generated by the change are equally reshaping their own understanding of international relations.

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