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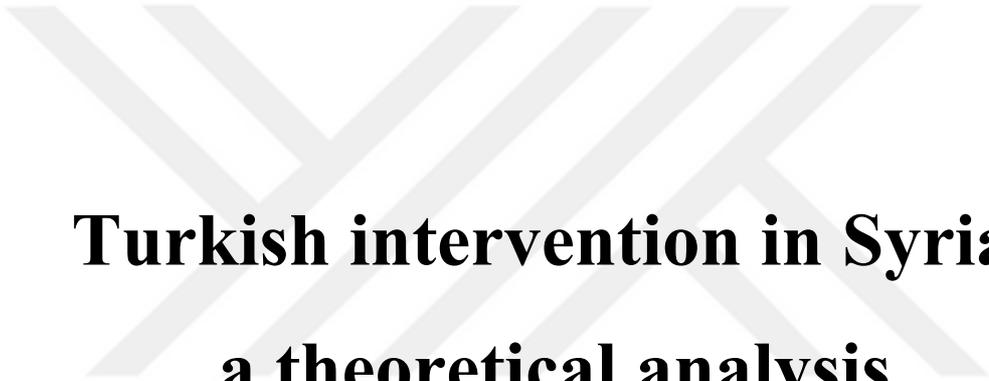
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MA International Relations (Paris)
School of Politics and International Relations
Queen Mary University of London



**Turkish intervention in Syria:
a theoretical analysis**

2020

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1. Information

Because of Covid-19 restrictions, 1/3 of the initial word count was slashed. Consequently, the analysis is less utter and less thoroughgoing than it should be.

The Cite Them Right Online Harvard referencing style is used for citations and the bibliography: <https://www-citethemrightonline-com.ezproxy.library.qmul.ac.uk/Home>



2. Abstract

The foreign policy of Turkey towards Syria witnesses a critical shift since 2016. Turkey's proxy war period aiming to topple al-Assad came to an end after a revision of national priorities which triggered the launching of Operation Euphrates Shield, Operation Olive Branch and Operation Peace Spring. The study scrutinizes the extent to which traditional International Relations (IR) theories such as neorealism, constructivism and neoclassical realism can explain the reasons of the military interventions. The neorealist arguments and, to a lesser extent, the neoclassical realist arguments seem to be more convincing than the constructivist ones despite interesting contributions. The conjunctural terrorism of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and the interconnected structural and secessionist terrorism of the Democratic Union Party (PYD), the People's Protection Units (YPG), the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) within Turkey's borders and over Turkey's southern frontier are major security concerns and the most convincing reasons of operations. The research deduces that the abovementioned shift is the result of a "pragmatic and revisionist realpolitik". Thus, despite its limited internal balancing and regardless of any religious, sectarian and ethnic reasons, Turkey intervenes militarily in northern Syria since 2016 to meet its national vital interests and to change the balance of power on the ground, so as to finally have its word on the table when the time to revisit the regional order comes.

3. Introduction

The Turkish foreign policy witnesses a dramatic shift since 2016 in the Syria war framework. From the outbreak of the civil war in March 2011, Turkey's involvement was confined to an open and ambitious support for the benefit of the opponent Free Syrian Army (FSA), although Turkey tried to be the peacemaker between the two sides "for nine months since the start of the events", and the al-Assad regime "had agreed on a 14-point reform plan" with Turkey (Zaarour, 2019, p.31).

"The rise of ISIS from 2013 to 2015, the military intervention of Russia in September 2015", "the involvement of Hezbollah"¹, "the religious divide [and the] ethnical mosaic", are some of the significant explanations of the complex, "internationalised" and "sectarianized" Syrian conflict (Duclos, 2019, pp.107, 112, 105, 116, 114).

Over time, the FSA has become the main proxy of Turkey on the Syrian soil, while other Western backers of this main opposition group led the latter down for the benefit of the PYD/YPG, then the SDF² (Manhoff, 2017, pp.8-10), hence the conflict's debatable ethnical dimension for Turkey.

The abovementioned shift comprises three major military interventions which ended the proxy war period for Turkey: Operation Euphrates Shield from 24 August 2016 to 29 March 2017, Operation Olive Branch from 20 January 2018 to 18 March 2018; and ultimately, and Operation Peace Spring from 9 October 2019 to 25 November 2019.

¹ Iran's proxy.

² An umbrella organisation created in 2015 and "largely dominated by the YPG" (Kepel, 2018, p.335).

The main question I address in my dissertation is the following: what explains the foreign policy shift of Turkey towards northern Syria since 2016? I obviously cannot provide a single reason, approach, theory, or factor to answer this problematic. This is why numerous sub-questions join the latter. Are Turkey's military operations in northern Syria since 2016 about Turkey's "political influence and regional hegemony" issues (Manhoff, 2017, p.15) in a framework of regional competition amongst geographic and sectarian rivals? Is this shift limited to security concerns alongside the Turkish-Syrian border from which harassment fires and bombings have occurred? Are there ideologic dimensions, like political Islam, and identity problems, like neo-Ottomanism, targeting, respectively, other sects (Shi'a Muslims) and ethnicities (Kurds) in Syria, in the taking of this decision? Can this shift arise from the outcome of domestic challenges, like social and socioeconomic discontents linked to the refugee crisis, and electoral politics?

Like Ibn-Khaldun and Machiavelli, my research fosters arguments free from religious or moral justifications and aims to provide an objective and scientific answer to the problematic. I exploit the combination of diverse IR theories, namely neorealism, constructivism and neoclassical realism to find an explanation. These theories shed light on various aspects of the aforementioned shift by suggesting distinct and debatable arguments. As far as Turkey's foreign policy, if not *realpolitik*, towards Syria since 2016 is concerned, the research shows that these realist theories, and especially neorealism, seem to be more explanatory and more convincing than constructivism.

If my analysis is based on theories, this does not mean I ignore the significance of history and past events which "provide perspectives on the present and help solve current problems" as "some contemporary historians have suggested" (Elman and Elman, 1997, p.9). My reluctance

to make a historical analysis for the benefit of a focus on recent events is not related to a “temporal parochialism” but to an attempt of showcasing “causal linkages [...] and plentiful and reliable data” (ibid., pp.13-14). Additionally, neoclassical realism heeds to an extent history through personalities, perceptions and misperceptions of the elites.

First, I showcase the methodological, theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the dissertation. Second, I explain in a (defensive) neorealist perspective that security and balance of power concerns are the most convincing reasons of Turkish operations in northern Syria. Third, I argue why ideology and identity arguments, in a constructivist framework, are the less convincing ones. Ultimately, I make use of neoclassical realism to understand this foreign policy shift by making ties with domestic challenges and policies in Turkey.

4. Choice of approaches

4.1. Methodology

The dissertation is based on a qualitative research method and secondary sources such as research books, academic articles and papers, memoirs of diplomats, official documents, articles of institutes and think-tanks. However, newspapers, as primary sources, are used a lot for domestic challenges.

The space-time framework is carefully chosen³ without neglecting the consistency of the research. Accordingly, the main focus is to understand Turkey's foreign policy shift at the expense of other external actors' foreign policy analysis in the Syrian theatre. I study Turkey's military interventions in Syria, hence the preference of choosing northern Syria for the spatial framework and August 2016 as the start of the temporal framework⁴. However, the research stops at Operation Peace Spring and excludes Operation Spring Shield⁵.

Even though Turkish officials asserted repeatedly that ISIS and the PYD/YPG were equally terrorist organisations and Turkey attacked both of them in northern Syria, the dissertation will pay a greater attention to the PYD/YPG/SDF because of the “structural” aspect of the PYD/YPG/SDF and the “conjunctural” dimension of ISIS (Kepel, 2019, p.389).

4.2. Theoretical and conceptual frameworks

³ See 1).

⁴ This does not mean that any event prior to this date is ignored in the analysis, otherwise I cannot showcase a shift in foreign policy.

⁵ See 1).

According to Zaarour (2018, p.8), traditional IR theories are insufficient to explain Turkey's foreign policy shift towards Syria. He showcases specific cases where their use⁶ can be contradicted (ibid., pp.26-34). However, combining some traditional IR theories can generate an explanatory analysis to a certain extent. The foreign policy shift of Turkey can be linked to various concepts and IR theories. The 2011-2016 period can be analysed with Mearsheimer's "offensive realism" whereby Turkey would seek to "maximize [its] relative power" (Snyder, pp.150-151), since Turkey openly wanted the removal of al-Assad for the benefit of a friendly Sunni government in Syria. Yet, the significance of Turkey's alleged security concerns, especially along the Turkish-Syrian border, implies Waltz's neorealism, more precisely, defensive realism, which requires a "maximisation of security" in an international anarchical order (1979, pp.91-92). Additionally, the concept of balance of power would be insightful to seize Turkey's shift of foreign policy given that the military interventions shaped a new equilibrium in Syria by (counter)balancing to an extent geopolitical rivalry.

These rival neorealist theories shed light on our study because the foreign policy shift of Turkey since 2016 is depicted to be the fruit of "pragmatism" (Manhoff, 2017, p.14; D'Alema, 2017, p.5). Consequently, D'Alema (2017, pp.12-15) asserts that "Turkey revised its strategic priorities", which appeared to be its PYD-threatened territorial integrity, rather than al-Assad's replacement, which is not even deemed as "a medium-term priority" anymore, hence the relevance of defensive realism.

For its part, Manhoff (2017, p.11) supposes that the shift of Turkey's priorities and the rapprochement with Russia in 2016 are intertwined. He describes the toppling of al-Assad as "a by now hopeless endeavour" (ibid.) while Dalacoura (2017, p.4) showcases fighting against

⁶ Such as liberalism, neorealism, etc.

the YPG along the border as a “primary ‘national’ problem” for Turkey. Besides, Dost (2017, p.369) suggests that “Turkey’s operations [since 2016] are not against Syria’s political independence or territorial integrity” but “terrorist organisations”, so defensive realism seems again insightful in our study.

Yet, in a likely offensive neorealist perspective, some scholars mention terms such as “conquest” (Phillips, 2020, p. 237), “incursion” (Manhoff, 2017, p.5) and “invasion” (Seufert, 2020, p.2) with respect to the operations which would be driven by hegemonic intentions. In this regard, the (international) legality of the operations are strongly questioned and criticised (Schmidt, 2019; Sheikh, 2016; Talmon, 2018).

This shift required from Turkey an alternative partner or ally instead of the YPG-backing USA: Russia. Jabbour (2017, pp.173-174) qualifies this manner as a “split diplomacy” by which “Turkey builds good relations with other antagonist actors of the international system and manages contradictions”.

Turkey’s foreign policy shift is also analysed in a constructivist framework. Alexander Wendt advocates that “identities and interests are [socially] constructed through shared ideas” instead of a provision “by nature” (Lawson, 2015, p.159). Plus, he depicts identities as “constructed within the social environment of international and domestic politics” (Pehlevan, 2019, p.9).

The social construction of an identity and interests as an explanation of Turkish interventions in northern Syria can be observed. An argument whereby a neo-Ottoman identity has been

shaped over decades⁷ is advocated. Pehlevan (2018, p.22) links it to a social, cultural, historical and religious construction as it was acknowledged by the Turkish citizenry after critical events, such as the Ergenekon trials⁸, constitutional referenda⁹ and elections. Pehlevan (2019, p.44) also believes that the social construction of this identity is continual and that with the 2017 referendum, the government had a rapprochement with the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP)¹⁰ and switched to “a new form of nationalism” explaining the advent of military interventions¹¹ in a constructivist way.

However, Cagaptay (2019, pp.49-50) highlights the different kinds of Ottomanism presented by Hakan Yavuz: that of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) versus that of Özal which is rather multicultural, Islamic and pro-European. What is more, Yıldırım (2014, pp.9-12) presents numerous and diverse definitions of Ottomanism, hence the difficulty of mentioning a neo-Ottomanist argument while there is not a consensus about Ottomanism.

If ideology is considered as an outcome of a social construction, the argument whereby the emergence of political Islam, or even a Muslim Brotherhood (MB)-led political Sunni Islam, would have a clout in Turkey’s foreign policy is advocated by numerous media and scholars like Zaarour (2018). The MB vision used to be spread in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya by teaching rebels in Istanbul throughout revolutions (Jabbour, 2017, p.255), so the same would be expected in Syria in this way of thinking. Zaarour (2018, p.16) also makes an analysis of Turkey’s foreign

⁷ According to Davutoğlu’s Strategic Depth Doctrine, the Turkish identity is reinterpreted: Islam and the history of the Ottoman Empire set the cultural closeness with the Middle East up (Pehlevan, 2019, p.23).

⁸ Some Kemalist army officials, journalists, and bureaucrats were jailed.

⁹ 2010 and 2017.

¹⁰ It was approved by the voters since the MHP voters supported the 2017 constitutional amendments and the People’s (AKP-MHP) Alliance won the 2018 presidential and legislative elections.

¹¹ This alliance enabled the rapprochement with Russia and consequently Turkey’s operations, whereas this was inconceivable for Islamist circles as Putin was backing a Muslim and Turkmen killer in Damascus (Pehlevan, 2019, p.45).

policy in a “Role Theory” framework which seems again compatible with a constructivist approach. In these perspectives, Turkey would assume old responsibilities inherited by the Ottoman Empire, such as the defender and the leader of Islam, as the Ottoman Empire comprised the Muslim majority territories of the Middle East and North Africa, while its Sultan used to be the Caliph of Islam since 1517. Consequently, the identity and ideology arguments would lead to an anti-Kurdish, an anti-non-Muslim or an anti-Shi’a Islam foreign policy in northern Syria.

According to Stephanie Lawson (2015, p.63), neoclassical realism heeds an anarchical international structure and the factors coming from the internal dynamics of states, such as personalities, misperceptions, perceptions and ideology of the elites of the state, which determine foreign policy. A neoclassical realist would suggest an influence of the aforementioned ideologies and identities, namely perceptions, on Turkey’s foreign policy shift. Additionally, the childhood and adolescence of President Erdoğan and his sidekick elites would have shaped their personality, and then Turkey’s foreign policy. This approach would stress the impact of misperceptions like the exaggeration of the MB’s power to which Turkey was “over-relied during Arab uprisings” (Cagaptay, 2019, p.183) and the belief whereby Turkey’s soft-power would be enough to dominate and shape the Middle East which underwent upheavals (ibid., p.184). Plus, as domestic-level variables have a role in shaping foreign policy in this approach (Rose, 1998, p.156), the analysis of domestic dynamics and issues with respect to the refugee crisis and elections in Turkey is required.

Ultimately, the elites have perceptions and make calculations of costs and risks while shaping the foreign policy. Nevertheless, this is not a mechanic process due to “particular geostrategic risks and opportunities presented by a given systemic environment” (Lawson, 2015, p.64) to

which statecraft would give simple answers. Lawson (ibid.) underscores “four unit-level factors” about the origins of statecraft, which would form a foreign policy (shift). These are the “elite’s preferences and perceptions of the external”, “which elite’s preferences and perceptions ‘matter’ in the policymaking process”, “the domestic political risks associated with certain foreign policy choices”, and the “variable risk-taking propensities of national elites” (Schweller, 2004, p.169).



5. Security and balance of power concerns as the most convincing but non-exclusive reasons of interventions

5.1. A need of security stemming from terrorism

5.1.1. Three dimensions of the terrorism of ISIS

According to the Turkish Ministry of the Interior (MI) (2017, p.32), ISIS perpetrated 14 attacks in Turkey with a total of 304 deaths and 1,338 wounded. These attacks have three non-hierarchical dimensions which made operations inevitable for Turkey.

Firstly, border towns such as Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa and Kilis were targeted (MI, 2017, p.39-44). ISIS attacked Turkey via mortar shells and rocket launchers from the Syrian side of the border (ibid., p.46).

Secondly, Istanbul and Ankara, as the most populated cities of Turkey, were targeted several times (MI, 2017, p.35-42). Counterterrorism operations within borders remained active¹² but “insufficient” (ibid., pp.57, 65) as the Atatürk Airport and the Reina Night Club attacks in Istanbul, and the Ankara Railway Station attack¹³ were perpetrated by ISIS.

Ultimately, ISIS attacked Turkey abroad. From 11 June 2014 to 20 September 2014, the entire personnel of the Mosul Consulate General of Turkey were detained by ISIS for 102 days, until Turkey managed to make them come back to Turkey, hence Turkey’s late contribution to the anti-ISIS coalition¹⁴ (Cagaptay, 2019, p.126). Plus, “two Turkish soldiers caught in al-Bab were

¹² 22 terror attacks were inhibited in 2016 (MI, 2017, p.60).

¹³ These are the three largest ones.

¹⁴ Created on 8 August 2014.

burnt in a cage and the ordeal¹⁵ was filmed and published on 22 December 2016” (Kepel, 2018, p.328).

5.1.2. A need to react to the terrorism of the PYD/YPG/SDF

5.1.2.1. A local rival against Turkey’s proxy

The outbreak of the civil war allowed several Syrian-Kurdish groups to organise themselves in “areas of northern Syria vacated by the al-Assad regime -with his blessing-” (Cagaptay, 2019, p.122). Following many debates and disputes, the PYD emerged as the main actor of the achievement of the autonomy and independence objective and extended its presence in northern Syria since 2012 (Phillips, 2020, p.111).

The PYD fights against its rivals by means of its military branch called the YPG, namely “the PKK’s extension” (Kepel, 2018, p.311). Accordingly, Operation Euphrates Shield was also critical to prevent the YPG which captured the ISIS-held territories (Cagaptay, 2019, p.218). Besides, the FSA, which was backed by Western countries until 2012, is a rival for the PYD. As Turkey supports the FSA since 2011, the PYD should be a de facto enemy of Turkey.

5.1.2.2. Harassment attacks along the border

Some Turkish attacks against the PYD/YPG/SDF, which preceded its major military interventions, constitute reactions against harassment attacks coming from the Syrian side of the border. To clarify, mortar shell attacks to the Demirişik Border Police Station in Kilis provoked howitzer attacks by the Turkish army on 15 February 2016 towards PYD/YPG/SDF

¹⁵ Can we still plead a co-operation or a “more than a suspicion of tolerance of Turkish authorities towards ISIS” (Duclos, 2019, p.117) in the light of these facts?

targets in Azaz (140journos, 2018). Moreover, the latter opened harassment fires via machine guns from Afrin to the Sergeant Erol Border Police Station on 8 September 2016 (Taş and Mazi, 2018).

5.2. Flexible realist alliances

The formation of an alliance is the output of interaction amongst sovereign political states led by domination concerns or balance of power interests (Dar et al., 2017, p.44). Besides, Morgenthau defines it as a “process for manipulating or ending an equilibrium” (ibid., p.45). while Snyder suggests that “the use or non-use of military force is the essence of alliances as formal associations of states” (ibid.). When these definitions are combined, Turkey’s flexible alliances can be intelligible.

5.2.1. Revising priorities and the balance of power

The territories lost by ISIS remained to the PYD/YPG/SDF and this equilibrium had to be changed for Turkey. The USA kept on sending military equipment to the YPG (Ali, Wroughton and Landay, 2018), since the latter was “seen as [...] the only local proxy capable of beating jihadists” (Duclos, 2019, p.117) despite its attacks against Turkey. In such circumstances with limited internal balancing¹⁶, fighting against the YPG became Turkey’s primordial national interest (Cagaptay, 2019, p.196).

Actually, overthrowing the Russia and Iran backed regime could not be the first objective anymore since Turkey could not “oust al-Assad, contain the ISIS and defeat the YPG at the same time” while “being hated by all [these] three key actors” in 2019 (Cagaptay, 2019, pp.132,

¹⁶ Materially (militarily and economically) speaking.

195). To change the post-2017 equilibrium, Turkey “revised its strategic priorities” (D’Alema, 2017, p.12) but needed another partner than the USA. Consequently, Turkey “got closer to Russia and Iran” to meet its “jeopardised vital¹⁷ interests” (Kepel, 2018, p.326).

5.2.2. *The rapprochement with Russia*

Even though Turkey is a NATO and USA ally, its dependency on Western countries’ preferences was weaker than expected, since following the unsuccessfulness of the Geneva Peace Talks, “the Astana process¹⁸ with Russia and Iran took place” (Duclos, 2019, p.128).

Nonetheless, Turkey assented to some compromises. Operation Euphrates Shield was permitted by Putin who “took no action against Turkish-rebel forces” (Phillips, 2020, p.237) and who got in return a permission for “an assault on rebels-held east Aleppo” (Cagaptay, 2019, p.148). Moreover, in exchange for another assault on east Ghouta (ibid., p.149), Russia, which controls the airspace in Syria, explicitly led Operation Olive Branch¹⁹ be launched (Cengiz, 2020, p.10). Lastly, “Turkey would not have been able to send troops” for Operation Peace Spring without Putin’s consent (Seufert, 2020).

More specifically, Operation Peace Spring was enabled by the announcement of the progressive withdrawal of American troops from Syria by Trump on 6 October 2019²⁰ (French, 2019). Thereafter, the “120-hour ceasefire” agreement between Turkey and the USA, which forced the PYD/YPG/SDF to leave the area from Tel Abyad to Ras al-Ayn, was signed on 17 October 2019 (Phillips, 2020, p. 294). This reconciling move could be a balance equilibrating answer to

¹⁷ See 6) and 7).

¹⁸ As of 2017.

¹⁹ In Afrin, the consent of the USA or at least Russia was mandatory for Turkey to prevent a direct confrontation (Manhoff, 2017, p.15). Manhoff (ibid., p.5) calls this the “neo-Ottoman realpolitik”.

²⁰ Just 3 days before the launching of Operation Peace Spring.

Russia's regime backing but Turkey had a similar and separate "ten-point agreement" with Russia 5 days later (ibid.). With these flexible moves, Turkey carried out an only 16 days-long operation which changed the equilibrium in northern Syria by driving a wedge in the PYD/YPG/SDF corridor.

5.2.3. Unusual alliances

I would define these moves as cooperative relations or unstructured heterodox alliances as Turkey cannot be a formal ally of Russia, namely its "historic archenemy" (Cagaptay, 2019, p.13), and due to its NATO membership. Therefore, a treaty-based alliance which enables a forecasting of state behaviour (Dar et al., 2017, p.46) is not observed in Turkey's Syria policy.

These unusual alliances can be linked to the previously mentioned "split diplomacy" (Jabbour, 2017, p.173) which allows Turkey to maintain relations with rival actors like the USA and Russia, to seek "the maximum of state interests even when they are incompatible with its allies' expectations" (Wei, 2019, p.464) and to prevent any potential direct confrontation with two global antagonist "allies". Accordingly, Turkey's reactionary and pragmatic border security policy through military operations in an anarchical international order can be related to a defensive neorealist perspective.

5.3. Legal justifications of interventions

The legal justifications provided by Turkey are explanatory too. The prohibition of the use of force between states is a fundamental principle in international law according to Article 2/4 of the Charter of the United Nations (UN) (Terzioğlu, 2018, p.620). So, are Turkey's military interventions illegal?

5.3.1. International law

The use of force becomes legal only when it is used in a UN resolution framework or in accordance with the right of self-defence (Terzioğlu, 2018, p.620). Under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, the use of force can be decided by UN resolutions issued by the UN Security Council (UNSC) to preserve international peace and security (ibid., p.621). In this sense, Turkey's interventions were explicitly announced to be based on some critical UN resolutions and the right of self-defence.

5.3.1.1. UN resolutions

The resolutions 1368 (12 September 2001), 1373 (28 September 2001), 2170 (15 August 2014) and 2178 (24 September 2014) provide for a series of individual, collective and cooperative measures regarding anti-terrorism, international peace and security but exclude the use of force (Terzioğlu, 2018, pp.622-623).

The use of force was allowed for the first time at the occasion of the resolution 2249 (20 November 2015) in an implicit way. This resolution stipulates in its 5th paragraph that “countries which have the capacity of preventing and repressing the actions of ISIS [...] and other terrorist groups linked to al-Qaeda or designated as such by the UNSC shall ‘take all the necessary measures’ in compliance with international law, the UN Charter [...] in areas controlled by ISIS in Syria and Iraq” (Terzioğlu, 2018, p.623).

The PKK-led PYD/YPG/SDF²¹ is not included in the UN's list of terrorist organisations, but the PKK's actions correspond to those announced in the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime, which have a lot in common with terrorism (Roth and Sever, 2006, p.903). Consequently, the PKK²² should be recognized as “a terrorist group and a transnational criminal organisation” (ibid., p.913). The “necessary measures” can be taken then.

5.3.1.2. The right of self-defence

The previously analysed UN resolutions do not acknowledge the right of self-defence (Terzioğlu, 2018, p.624). In that sense, the government announced that Operation Euphrates Shield was launched in accordance with related UN resolutions and the Article 51 of the UN Charter, which gives the right of self-defence (ibid., p.620). This article requires the immediate notifying of the use of force to the UNSC. Although the first military operation was not immediately notified, a letter, whereby Turkey announced that the “necessary and proportionate military moves against ISIS would be made”, was sent to the UNSC on 24 July 2015²³ (ibid., p.625). However, the letter did not comprise the PYD/YPG/SDF.

The right of self-defence can be invoked when the victim country is subject to an armed attack. During the use of this right, the respect of the principles of proportionality²⁴, necessity²⁵ as well as emergency²⁶ are compulsory (Terzioğlu, 2018, p.626). Terzioğlu (ibid., pp.624-635)

²¹ See 6).

²² Meanwhile, the PKK perpetrated numerous terror attacks, especially in 2016.

²³ After the 20 July 2015 ISIS attack in Suruç.

²⁴ Reacting to stop and prevent any potential future attack in our case. There is no occupation as “local assemblies take decisions in intervention areas” (Terzioğlu, 2018, p.631).

²⁵ Syria could not contribute to the border security.

²⁶ Operation Euphrates Shield started after the Gaziantep attack on 20 August 2016 where 56 citizens died (140journos).

showcases that these principles related to the right of self-defence can be deemed respected. Besides, this reasoning seems relevant with respect to the two following operations²⁷.

As far as the 2018 and 2019 military interventions are concerned, the PYD/YPG/SDF is the target of Turkey. Alptekin (2017, p.196) explains that Operation Olive Branch was legal under UN resolutions 1624 (from 2005), 2170 and 2178, as well as the right of self-defence. Similar declarations are expressed by Turkey to stress the legality of Operation Peace Spring.

Admittedly, Turkey was not invited on the Syrian soil by the al-Assad regime. Yet, these operations remain legal and are not in violation of the sovereignty of Syria according to Dost (2017, p.369).

5.3.2. The Adana agreement

Actually, Turkey signed the Adana agreement on 20 October 1998 with Syria during Hafez al-Assad's presidency. By means of this agreement, Syria declares the PKK a terrorist organisation and makes a commitment to stop all kinds of support to the PKK (Independent Türkçe, 2019),

Ultimately, under Article 5 of the updated version of the agreement (2010), every different, subordinate, parallel, and potential future forms of the PKK using different names²⁸ are considered as the same, and both countries are committed to a bilateral and coordinated struggle against the PKK (Independent Türkçe, 2019). Thus, Syria have not honoured its commitments. Nevertheless, there is no mentioning of direct use of force or right of self-defence for the benefit of Turkey.

²⁷ Terror attacks of both terrorist groups have not stopped over years.

²⁸ The PYD, the YPG, the SDF, and so on.

6. Ideology and identity: less convincing explanations of interventions

I cannot²⁹ make a constructivist historiography of Turkey regarding ideologies, identities, and its relations with Syria since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, the study encompasses these aspects through a contemporary constructivist analysis.

6.1. Political Islam: a moot ideological explanation

The clout of ideology in the foreign policymaking of Turkey towards Syria is debatable. The (Sunni) MB shares the AKP's vision of a Muslim and democrat governance. In Syria, Turkey's proxy is the Syrian National Army (SNA)³⁰ since 30 May 2017. However, I cannot see (a MB-led) political Islam as a reason of Turkey's military interventions since 2016.

The choice of arming and organising the opposition, and then intervening militarily in Syria cannot be linked to a desire of toppling the Alawite neighbouring regime for the benefit of a Sunni MB government in Syria. Otherwise, there is no sense for Turkey in building good ties with Bashar al-Assad from 2002 to the late summer of 2010, namely their "honeymoon" (Jabbour, 2017, p.126). Nonetheless, Turkey may have preferred a MB leader in Syria instead of al-Assad "to increase its regional influence" (Bajolet, 2018, p.109) as of the uncontrollable degeneration of state violence against the opposition in 2011. Yet, talks³¹ between Davutoğlu and al-Assad were held for months (Cagaptay, 2019, p.58).

²⁹ See 1).

³⁰ It includes Arab, Turkmen, Kurdish and Islamist rebels. The SNA is created by Turkey and is linked to the FSA.

³¹For a reformative compromise which would include some Syrian Muslim Brothers in the government (Cagaptay, 2019, p.116).

As of Sisi's coup against Morsi in 2013, the supposed MB project became materially inconceivable since the Turkey-Egypt MB axis was broken. Moreover, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates "have declared the MB as a terrorist organisation" (Günter, 2020). Consequently, political Islam became a de facto weak motive for Turkey as Turkey does not have the sufficient internal balancing and soft power to spread the MB alone.

I would define political Islam as a practical tool of the AKP's foreign policy rather than a justification. To clarify, Jabbour (2017, p.252) comments Turkey's policy of backing political Islamists by three mainstays. Firstly, she highlights that the AKP sees Arab political Islamists as sharers of its ideology, so it wants to "favour them and consolidate their power" (ibid.). Secondly, she underscores that political Islamists constitute a "short-cut road and a reliable interlocutor in an insecure time" (ibid.). Thirdly, she explains that Turkey tries to strategically shape a regional order which would orbit around Turkey in the long-term (ibid.).

Since Operation Euphrates Shield, a "significant shift in Ankara's priorities" occurred as struggling against the PYD and ISIS meant more than al-Assad's removal or serving insistently an ideology³² (Phillips, 2020, p.236). Turkey preferred to guarantee its security and to stop the spread of the PYD/YPG/SDF's autonomism in northern Syria (Dalacoura, 2017, p.4). Moreover, Cagaptay (2019, p.131) evokes that in 2019, the AKP government prioritised the YPG, then ISIS and then the regime, while Bajolet (2018, p.109) stresses that "fighting against the 'terrorists' of PYD has become Turkey's equally important priority as ISIS". Consequently, political Islam would not be explanatory enough.

³² In a period when "political Islam became infamous" (Pehlevan, 2019, p.45).

6.2. The neo-Ottoman orientation

6.2.1. A natural orientation

I believe that talking about neo-Ottomanism is an orientalist and wrong description of Turkey's foreign policy. To my mind, there is nothing unnatural for Turkey in having interests in building bridges with Arab countries born from the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Otherwise, we should mention neo-colonialism or neo-imperialism as the ideologic tenets of the foreign policy of the UK and France towards their former colonies.

The "AKP's neo-Ottomanism" would compound an emotional reflexion of "responsibility towards Muslims of former Ottoman territories" (Cagaptay, 2019, p.49). Cagaptay (2019, pp.50, 59) asserts that Davutoğlu believed in the possibility of "building bridges across other Muslims" in the world in accordance with his "Ottoman revivalist and Muslim nationalist" paradigms to reach a final goal: "the return of Pax Ottomania". Yet, as noted earlier, there is not an unequivocal consensus on Ottomanism, hence the difficulty of assigning its new version to Turkey's foreign policy shift.

What I would call neo-Ottomanist in Turkey's foreign policy is a nostalgia of the then powerfulness across a large area. Maybe Turkey tries to follow the map of then decision-makers, hence my preference of mentioning a neo-Ottoman orientation, rather than an ideology or an identity.

6.2.2. An identity?

As noted earlier, identity is an assigned meaning to neo-Ottomanism. Supposing that this identity argument is right, the social construction of the so-called neo-Ottoman identity would

have shifted towards a more nationalist stance after the nomination of Yıldırım as Prime Minister on 24 May 2016 and the 15 July 2016 coup attempt. The MHP leader, Bahçeli, would have intended to create another alternative³³ to the YPG-backing USA and to minimise security threats (Pehlevan, 2019, pp.45-46). Therefore, the relations between these parties would have impacted the launching of Turkey's operations.

In my opinion, the government simply needed a political backer in the parliament, rather than a shift of its "identity policy", as its number of deputies was not enough to launch a military operation abroad neither before nor after the 2018 elections. The MHP was the most appropriate candidate for an alliance due to its nationalist and pro-security stance, while roughly all opposition parties were against operations before their launching (Baydar, 2020).

6.3. An anti-Kurdish identity policy?

6.3.1. Failed peace efforts

At first, the expansion of the PYD/YPG, which was enabled by al-Assad's troops' withdrawal from northern Syria to the latter (Phillips, 2020, p.259), was not problematic for Turkey as a peace process and a ceasefire were initiated in 2013 between the Turkish government and the PKK terrorist organisation³⁴ (Manhoff, 2017, p.9). In this context, Turkey even tried to include the PYD in the FSA whereas Turkey had closer ties with other pro-Kurdistan Regional Government³⁵ groups (ibid.), hence Turkey's constructive and pragmatic approach towards Kurds in Syria.

³³ Russia.

³⁴ Recognised as such by the UN, NATO, the EU, the USA and the UK, unlike Russia.

³⁵ Turkey's northern Iraqi ally.

Nonetheless, the Ayn al-Arab siege showed that Turkey would not back the YPG against ISIS but let Peshmergas³⁶ assist the YPG at the price of negatively impacting the peace process (Manhoff, 2017, p.9). However, the assassination by the PKK of two Turkish policemen in their sleep and in their homes in Şanlıurfa on 22 July 2015 (Yıldırım, 2017) is the very reason why the process failed.

6.3.2. Distinguishing Kurds and terrorists

The main reason of Turkey's hostility against the PYD/YPG/SDF is not their ethnicity but their indisputable affiliation to the PKK. Turkey is a country subject to terrorism since the emergence of the PKK in 1984 as around 40,000 citizens have been killed by the latter (International Crisis Group, 2019, p.3). The affiliation of the PYD/YPG to the PKK is stated by scholars such as D'Alema (2017, p.8) and Phillips (2020, p. 262). Kepel (2018, p.336) even highlights that a portrait of Öcalan³⁷ was displayed on 19 October 2017 on the an-Naim Square in al-Raqa when the city was taken from ISIS.

However, there are more blatant evidence of this affiliation. The “ideologic” affiliation between these organisations is eye-catching as the PYD bylaw's Article 2 provides that the PYD “recognises Öcalan as its own leader”, while Article 3/a imposes the “adoption of the leader Öcalan's method in order to be a party member”, and while Article 3/b mentions ““being proud of Öcalan's values, being loyal to him and struggling to liberate the leader from captivity’ as a duty of a party member” (Terzioğlu, 2018, p.604).

³⁶ From the KRG.

³⁷ The detained leader of the PKK in the Isle of İmralı in Turkey (Kepel, 2018, p.336).

Terzioğlu showcases their “functional ties” by “the participation of 8,500 PKK members to the PYD” and by the “sharing of arms, equipment, explosives, intelligence and tactics” (2018, p.604) Hence, the unquestionable terrorist nature of the PYD/YPG/SDF makes the fight against them legitimate for Turkey. This is why ISIS remains a “conjunctural enemy” whereas the “PYD is a structural enemy” of Turkey (Kepel, 2018, p.389).

6.3.3. *Welcome Kurds*

The anti-Kurdish identity policy argument seems controversial because “since 2011, roughly 400,000 Syrian Kurds have taken refuge in Turkey to escape from ISIS, the PYD and the regime” while “citizens of Kurdish origin in Turkey enjoy the same rights and assume the same responsibilities as all other citizens” (Institut Diderot, 2018, p.21). Amongst these 400,000 Kurds, 163,000 had to flee to Turkey during the Ayn al-Arab battle in 72 hours with neither identity nor ethnicity control before hosting them (Sezer, 2019), hence Turkey’s humanitarian approach. Therefore, attacking the PYD/YPG/SDF would not be about oppressing Kurds but about impeding “the rise of an autonomous Kurdistan under the aegis of the PYD” (D’Alema, 2017, p.14) in northern Syria which would very likely “provide logistical support to the PKK’s activities in Turkey” (ibid.). However, Turkey would be against a Syrian Kurdistan, whether friendly or not, because this would encourage the PKK to perpetrate new secessionist terror attacks in Turkey.

Thus, to my mind, there is not an identity policy against Kurds in Syria to worry about in Turkey’s military interventions, unless we compare a state having security concerns and a terrorist organisation willing to obtain a political autonomy in the short term as two conflicting identities. This is rather about “pragmatism” (Manhoff, 2017, p.14) and a reassessment of Turkey’s “strategic priorities” (D’Alema, 2017, p.12), as mentioned earlier. Consequently, the

breadth of security concerns seems to me more convincing than a policy willing to spread Sunni Islam or to make an identity prevail.



7. The impact of domestic politics and challenges on foreign policy

7.1. Unmet commitments of the European Union (EU)

There are “3.6 million registered Syrian refugees as of November 2019” in Turkey, that is “more than any country” (European Asylum Support Office, 2019, p.8). The EU-Davutoğlu agreement of 18th March 2016 sparks this outcome.

Tukey accepted to stop irregular refugee flows to Greece and Bulgaria in return for the sending back of irregular migrants heading to Greek islands³⁸, the acceleration of the visa liberalisation and of the EU admission processes, the payment of €6 billion in two instalments until 2018 and the upgrading of the Customs Union between parties (European Council, 2016).

However, the EU has transferred only €2 billion by the end of 2018 (Institut Diderot, 2018, p.14) and €2.7 billion by March 2020 (Merchet, 2020). Moreover, the main receivers are NGO’s willing to wield humanitarian projects, not the Turkish state³⁹. Neither of the processes have gotten ahead. The Customs Union remains unchanged, and the handling of the refugees has cost \$40 billion for Turkey (Medyaturk, 2020) while the relation between parts degenerated under the effect of electoral campaign periods⁴⁰(Cagaptay, 2019, pp.252, 266-267).

7.2. Socioeconomic discontents

³⁸ They are supposed to be substituted by regular refugees hosted in Turkey.

³⁹ According to the European Commission, €700 million should have been disbursed to Turkey, whereas only €370 million were sent (Fernandez, 2018).

⁴⁰ Notably in the Netherlands, France, Germany and Turkey in 2017 and 2018.

Turkey claims it “cannot stand [the burden] any longer” (Merchet, 2020), considering that its socioeconomic capacity is saturated. Turkish citizens do not want to pay the outcome of the war in Syria anymore. An example of reaction was the discomfort and complaints felt from the crowd of Syrian beggars, especially in Istanbul where half a million of refugees live (Afasanieva and Sezer, 2014). This situation has become a sector for Turkish panhandlers who impersonate Syrian refugees to increase their income (Yaman, 2015).

7.2.1. Unemployment and dropping wages

Following the start of migrations from Syria, 8.4% of the labour force was unemployed in 2012. The trend gradually reached 11% in 2018 before peaking at 13.4% in 2019 (Çakır, 2020). Therefore, the fact that the needy “majority of the Syrian refugees work in mostly low-waged, unregistered jobs [and] without legal status” constitutes a dramatic unfair competition issue for Turkish citizens which complain about refugees which “lowered their standard of living [and] threatened their jobs and wages” (Al Shimale, 2019). In that regard, it would be reckless to blame the refugees as the main reason of the increase of unemployment and of the shortage of sufficiently remunerating jobs, but they probably have an influence on it.

7.2.2. Housing and neighbourhood

Moreover, the presence of migrants generates housing problems to Turkish householders and tenants in cities along the Syrian border. Actually, householders do not want to rent their houses to refugees anymore for numerous reasons: “additional refugees join later the tenant’s [initially] uncrowded family”, “rumours whereby refugee tenants do not pay water bills, electricity bills, and mistreat the house” circulate and householders are afraid of violence since “a refugee tenant killed his householder who wanted him to leave the household” (Çetin, 2016, p.215).

Consequently, the price of rents was raised, and the number of residents was limited by householders at the expense of Turkish citizens (ibid.). Çetin (ibid., pp.206, 214) stresses that the neighbourhood was helpful when the first refugees arrived but later on, they stopped helping the refugees with which they could barely communicate because of a language problem.

7.3. Social discontents

7.3.1. Sedentary guests?

The tolerance of Turkish citizens towards Syrian refugees would have decreased because of the unpredictability of their residence duration. In other words, “Syrian refugees were greeted as guests since their entrance in Turkey in April 2011, whereas they were upgraded to the status of temporary protection in October 2014” (Çetin, 2016, p.217). Consequently, Turkish citizens have started to lose their motivation in the end of refugees’ stay and in further helping them while the latter feel unwelcome and uncertain about their future too (ibid.). Plus, this indefinite “visit” and the decreasing living standards make them the “targets of hate speech and hate crimes in Turkey” (Cagaptay, 2019, p.132).

7.3.2. The military inactivity of refugees

The military losses over the military interventions in northern Syria provoked a dramatic discontent. The number of dead Turkish soldiers is 67 in Operation Euphrates Shield (TRT Haber, 2017), 53 in Operation Olive Branch (Posta, 2018) and 5 in Operation Peace Spring (Takvim, 2019) while the number of total wounded soldiers is 556. A fact that Turkish people could not accept was the inactivity of Syrian male refugees old enough to fight for their country whereas Turkish soldiers fight and die in Syria alongside Syrian rebels. To illustrate, a Turkish citizen reproaches this very situation to two Syrian male and probably adult refugees enjoying

their stay smoking shisha on the seaside (T24, 2018). Nonetheless, forcing Syrian refugees to go to war in their country of origin would generate a violation of the 1951 Refugee Convention.

7.4. The need of transferring refugees to Syria

After having enumerated a non-exhaustive list of domestic issues regarding the refugee crisis, Turkey naturally wanted to “carve out a Turkish buffer zone” in northern Syria through its first operation (Phillips, 2020, p.237). Indeed, Turkey’s “wider plan was to settle Syrian refugees from opposition areas falling to al-Assad elsewhere” in order to “ease pressure on Turkey’s population” (ibid., p.262). Moreover, one month before launching Operation Peace Spring and on the occasion of a speech in the UN General Assembly, Erdoğan suggested the relocation of 2 million refugees in a buffer zone 32 kilometres into northern Syria (ibid., p.293), which in fact turned out to be the abovementioned operation’s area, notably from Tel Abyad to Ras al-Ayn.

Taking into consideration that the USA undermined the establishment of a buffer zone for years⁴¹, these interventions were the last resort for Turkey. Consequently, “300,000 Syrian refugees left Turkey of their own volition to come back home, in [the] liberated areas” of the first two operations (Institut Diderot, 2018, p.21).

7.5. Waging war for political stability?

7.5.1. The drop of living standards and popularity

⁴¹ e.g. Obama rebuffed the creation of a no-fly-zone in Syria and of the deployment of soldiers in northern Syria (Pehlevan, 2019, p.34).

The discontents and the decreasing popularity of the government related to terror attacks, worrisome currency issues, economic inequalities and difficulties, a coup attempt, a harshly managed refugee crisis, repetitive prolongations of the state of emergency⁴² and the AKP's short wins at the 16 April 2017 constitutional referendum (51.41%) and at the 31 March 2019 municipal elections (44.3%) with no approval from major metropolises of Turkey⁴³ are issues of concern for the AKP.

Bearing in mind the 2017 referendum results, the popularity of Erdoğan was not guaranteeing a win for the next presidential and legislative elections⁴⁴. Moreover, Skinner underscores that Erdoğan pays a lot of attention to frequent polls enabled by his “efficient poll machine” in order to take the pulse of the population (AFP, 2018). In these circumstances, the government announced on 18 April 2018⁴⁵ the holding of early presidential and legislative elections on 24 June 2018, although they initially were due in November 2019 (Phillips, 2020, p.260).

7.5.2. Coinciding an operation and snap elections?

Billion believes that Erdoğan wanted to benefit from Operation Olive Branch's national fibres to safeguard his political power and term (AFP, 2018). Phillips (2020, p.261) realises the same causal link between the aforementioned operation and Erdoğan's domestic agenda by highlighting that the opposition could have taken advantage of the government's strict post-coup attempt policies⁴⁶ to make a triumphant campaign.

⁴²Seven times from 20 July 2016 to 18 July 2018 (Sade, 2020).

⁴³ Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, Antalya and Adana. In other words, 40.24% of voters (Sozcu, 2019).

⁴⁴ Both at the same date.

⁴⁵ One month after the end of Operation Olive Branch.

⁴⁶ The use of “emergency laws to arbitrarily arrest opponents, purging academia, the media and the courts of critics” (Phillips, 2020, p.260). Those who were deemed to be supporters and/or accomplices of the 15 July 2016 coup attempt were targeted.

Perhaps, he rationally wanted to make use of the social and emotional consequences of this operation for the success of his campaign. However, the scale of Turkey's economic, monetary⁴⁷, budgetary and financial problems were tremendous. As the AKP's previous projects and successes regarding the economy of Turkey got it elected continuously since 2002, Erdoğan should have felt doubts about his re-election. He likely did not want to wait until the next official election date as a potential and larger economic decline was seemingly anticipated.

Thus, it seems to me overstated to say that the Operation Olive Branch was premeditated to prepare snap elections for the benefit of a troubled government. Taking into consideration the socioeconomic challenges and difficulties in Turkey, Erdoğan would not have taken a risk of this nature⁴⁸ with electoral motivations. The security problem alongside the Syrian border, terror attacks and the refugee crisis would be enough, more convincing and dominating reasons on their own. In that regard, the triggering effect of the 2018 operation was “the establishment [project] of an ‘independent-kingdom’ style Syrian Kurdish security force [...] provided [...] with armaments and training” (Wei, 2019, p.475). More precisely, “the Pentagon’s announcement on 15 January [2018] that it was setting up a 30,000-strong border force in Syria, with half coming from the SDF” was the turning point (Phillips, 2020, p.260).

7.6. A theoretical comment

In a neoclassical realist perspective⁴⁹, the preferences and perceptions of the external of AKP elites, counsellors, Sherpas and Erdoğan would be determinant in the making of foreign policy. The feeling of closeness and “responsibility” towards the region (Cagaptay, 2019, p.49) because

⁴⁷ Dollar and euro exchange rates have increased a lot since the coup attempt (*Para Çevirici, Döviz Hesaplama ve Canlı Döviz Kurları*, 2020).

⁴⁸ What if the USA decided to strengthen its support to the PYD/YPG/SDF?

⁴⁹ See 4).

of “historical, cultural, religious ties” (Pehlevan, 2019, p.22), despite the anarchical international system and the conflicts of interest amongst competing powers, would have impacted the preferences and misperceptions of the AKP elites.

The domestic political risks and issues, namely the socioeconomic and social discontents stemming from the refugee crisis and the debatable election argument, would have pushed the government to assess the risks of a an interventionist policy before fostering “pragmatism” (D’Alema, 2017, p.12) in northern Syria, as diplomacy alone has not been an effective problem-solver and could not be conclusive any longer. Inaction towards northern Syria would have increased the scale of these domestic inconveniences and this would have constituted a risk of ungovernability with time. However, the non-intervention of Turkey until 2016 seems to me more related to a dumping by the Obama administration⁵⁰ rather than a low risk-taking stance of Turkey, despite its limited internal balancing capacity. Turkey was as ambitious as the USA was in toppling al-Assad in 2011. This interventionist scenario would have happened, and the risks would have been taken sooner or later because of the worrisome security and domestic concerns.

⁵⁰ The USA changed its priorities by targeting ISIS rather than the regime (Manhoff, 2017, pp.8-9) although al-Assad crossed “the USA’s red lines” by using chemical weapons (Duclos, 2019, p.113).

8. Conclusion:

To conclude, I tried to explain the interventionist foreign policy shift of Turkey since 2016 towards northern Syria by means of a combination of three traditional IR theories, namely neorealism, constructivism and neoclassical realism. Following my analysis, it turns out that realist, and especially neorealist arguments are more convincing than constructivist ones.

The defensive neorealist theory points out the urging need of maximisation of border security in anarchical regional and world orders (Waltz, 1971), rather than toppling al-Assad. The conjunctural ISIS issue and the structural PKK-led PYD/YPG/SDF threat within the borders and over the southern frontier of Turkey are the main terror concerns cajoling Turkey into launching military operations in northern Syria (Kepel, 2018, p.389). Because of an insufficient internal balancing, Turkey made use of heterodox and flexible alliances between global antagonist powers under its “split diplomacy” in Syria (Jabbour, 2017, p.173). Despite worldwide criticisms, I deem Turkey’s military interventions legal and legitimate when international law (UN resolutions and the right of self-defence) and bilateral law (the Adana agreement) are considered.

Apart from the establishment of the link between the AKP government’s rapprochement with Russia and its alliance with the MHP, the arguments stemming from the constructivist approach, despite some interesting contributions, are less convincing with respect to the reasons of Turkish operations in northern Syria since 2016. The research disapproved the neo-Ottoman and the anti-Kurdish identity arguments as well as an ideologic motivation linked to political (Sunni) Islam and the MB. Security and balance of power concerns related to terrorist organisations, territorial integrity and rival states are outweighing the aforementioned

arguments. A century-long constructivist historiography of the relations between Turkey and Syria would inform a lot but still be less convincing.

Ultimately, I acknowledge the usefulness of neoclassical realism as domestic dynamics and challenges, such as the refugee crisis which encompasses social and socioeconomic discontents as well as burdens, and the need of relocating refugees in Syria, were and still are pressuring and harshly manageable challenges. The argument about personalities, perceptions and misperceptions of the country's elites, which can determine the risk-taking propensities, enlightens the research. However, this approach can sometimes be arguable as the argument whereby a nexus could be formed between the launching of Operation Olive Branch and snap elections has shown. Neoclassical realist arguments seem to be more convincing than constructivist ones but less dominant than neorealist ones in this study.

After considering the contribution of each IR theories to my argumentation, I would explain the aforementioned shift through the implementation of Turkey's "pragmatic and revisionist realpolitik". I see Turkey as a regional power which tries to meet its vital national interest regardless of religious, sectarian and ethnic reasons, by pragmatically changing the equilibrium through military interventions on the ground and beyond its border to finally be able to be on the table when the time to revisit the regional order comes. The outcome of this research would be useful to understand Turkey's recent (2020) military intervention in Libya and its foreign policy towards eastern Mediterranean.

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