EGYPTIAN-TURKISH RELATIONS BETWEEN 2013 AND 2024: A MULTI-LEVEL ANALYSIS OF FOREIGN POLICY CHANGE

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ABSTRACT

EGYPTIAN-TURKISH RELATIONS BETWEEN 2013 AND 2024: A MULTI-LEVEL ANALYSIS OF FOREIGN POLICY CHANGE

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This thesis provides a multi-level analysis of Egyptian-Turkish relations between mid-2013 and early 2024 within the conceptual framework of Foreign Policy Change (FPC), focusing on bilateral relations' political and economic dimensions. By integrating unit-level, system-level factors, leadership, individual dynamics, and ideational and material dimensions, the study aims to contribute significantly to the existing body of literature on Egypt-Turkey relations by arguing that the transformations that led to the thaw in relations started before 2021. Unlike most of the literature that dealt with the period between 2013 and 2020 as a monolithic phase dominated by a specific conflictual pattern, this study argues that bilateral relations within the period in question have evolved through three distinct phases—bilateral confrontation, regional rivalry and normalisation, respectively. Moreover, the study attempts to better address the Egyptian perspective regarding bilateral relations. Finally, the study contends that while unit-level factors' influence, to some extent, overshadowed the system-level factors during the first phase, the opposite was true for the second and third phases.

Keywords: Egyptian-Turkish Relations, Foreign Policy Change, Economic Relations

ÖZ

2013-2024 YILLARI ARASINDA MISIR-TÜRKİYE İLİŞKİLERİ: BİRDEN ÇOK DÜZEYLİ DIŞ POLİTİKA DEĞİŞİKLİĞİ ANALİZİ

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Bu tezde, siyasi ve ekonomik boyutlarıyla 2013-2024 yılları arasında Mısır-Türkiye ikili ilişkileri Dış Politika Değişikliği kavramsal çerçevesinde birden çok analiz düzeyi kullanılarak olarak analiz edilmektedir. Birim düzeyi, sistem düzeyi faktörleri, lider/bireysel dinamikleri, düşünsel ve maddi boyutları bir araya getiren bu çalışma, Mısır-Türkiye ilişkilerine ilişkin mevcut literatüre önemli katkı sağlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Çalışma, 2013-2020 arası dönemi yekpare olarak ele alan ilgili literatürden farklı olarak, incelenen dönemde ikili ilişkilerin, sırasıyla ikili çatışma, bölgesel rekabet ve normalleşme olmak üzere üç farklı aşamadan geçtiğini ortaya koymaktadır. Bu bağlamda, tez, 2021 sonrasında ikili ilişkilerde yaşanan iyileşmelere yol açan değişimlerin çok daha erken bir dönemde başladığını göstermektedir. Son olarak, çalışma, birinci dönemde birim düzeyi faktörlerin etkisin sistem düzeyi faktörlerinkini gölgelerken, ikinci ve üçüncü dönem için ise bunun tersinin geçerli olduğunu ileri sürmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimler: Mısır-Türkiye İlişkileri, Dış Politika Değişikliği, Ekonomik İlişkiler

To my esteemed parents, Mona and Khaled, and my dear brothers, Omar, Mahmoud, and Ahmed.

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As I wrap up this adventure at Middle East Technical University, this thesis holds a special significance for me as an Egyptian student who spent a quarter of his life in Turkey.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

> For centuries, we [Arabs and Turks] collaborated in combat upon the shared battleground for the sake of our common cherished ideals […]; our common enemy orchestrates [imperialist] plots […] our fates have been interwoven in the past, typically as it is in the present and as it will be the future.
>
> Egypt's then-Prime Minster Gamal Abdel Nasser in (Shaker 1954).
>
> Egyptians and Turks coexisted for years, seemingly drawn together by destiny towards a shared fate. They breathed in the same religious and intellectual environment, embraced the values of a common civilisation, and struggled for the sake of shared humanist ideals […].
>
> Turkey's then-Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in (İhsanoğlu, 2011).

Egypt and Turkey are important regional powers in the Middle East and the Mediterranean, situated in strategic bicontinental locations at the intersection of Africa, Asia and Europe. Together, they constitute a pivotal share of the Middle East's economy and population, and both are birthplaces of important civilisations. Nonetheless, academic attention given to the history of their bilateral relations remained limited for decades. Bilateral relations witnessed an unprecedented crisis between 2013 and 2020, followed by a normalisation process that started officially in 2021 and successfully concluded by mid-2023. Even though the crisis between the two nations from 2013 onward triggered scholarly attention, this remained overconcentrated on specific elements in relations. Considering both countries' perspectives and interests, this study provides a comprehensive, critical, multilevel, and multifaceted overview of Egypt-Turkey relations from mid-2013 to early 2024. In this context, this study attempts to answer the following question: What factors contributed to the change in Egyptian-Turkish relations between 2013 and 2024?

In addition, the thesis attempts to answer the following subquestions:

To what extent did unit-level factors in Egypt and Turkey contribute to the change in relations? To what extent did system-level factors contribute to the change in relations? To what extent did the political rift between Egypt and Turkey influence their economic ties, and how? How did ideational and material factors interact in the relevant period to shape both countries' policies toward each other?

1.1 Methodology

To answer the abovementioned questions, the thesis applies qualitative research methods, including documentary analysis and content analyses. Subject-related official speeches and statements of the two countries' Presidents, Prime ministers, and Foreign Ministers are collected from the websites of leading Arabic, Turkish, and English newspapers and official institutions. Moreover, economic statistics regarding the domestic economic situation, bilateral trade volumes, foreign direct investments, and tourism statistics are collected mainly from both countries' statistical institutions and central banks. This data is categorised and archived in Excel files. In this context, related speeches of PM/President Erdoğan and President El-Sisi, in addition to the successive Foreign Ministers Nabil Fahmy and Sameh Shoukry, respectively in Egypt and Ahmet Davutoğlu, Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, and Hakan Fidan respectively in Turkey, are qualitatively analysed. In addition, to better understand the dynamics of bilateral economic ties between Egypt and Turkey, the study applies quantitative research methods, including the Pearson Correlation Coefficient, to examine the correlation between exchange rates and export volumes. The study also applies the Grubel-Lloyd Index to investigate the composition of bilateral trade and provide a brief insight into its implications on the political economy of bilateral ties.

1.2 Literature Review

The evolution of Turkey-Egypt relations into conflict and rivalry has been studied in the literature. On the side of understanding Turkey’s foreign policy towards Egypt after the ouster of Morsi, the literature mainly focuses on the unit-level factors,

including the AKP's domestic concerns and its concerns about regional strategic loss as it invested heavily in the Morsi presidency. Ayata (2015) attaches significant importance to domestic factors in explaining Turkey's uncompromising response to Morsi's ouster, pointing to the domestic pressures the AKP faced after the 2013 Gezi Protests and concerns of a possible military coup. Yegin (2016) also attributes Turkey's reaction to Morsi's ouster to the former's strategic losses and the Turkish ruling elite's concerns regarding the event's repercussions on civil-military relations in Turkey. Similarly, Yeşilyurt (2020) attributes Turkey's reaction to the domestic change in Egypt to the collapse of the former's regional leadership vision, domestic experiences exemplified in past military interventions in politics, and the Gezi protests. In the case of Egypt, he also argues that Egypt's response to Turkey's fierce criticism stemmed mainly from its polarised domestic context. Yeşilyurt contends that both countries' governments capitalised on the crisis to consolidate their legitimacies while demonising their domestic opponents. In line with this focus on unit-level factors, Yeşilyurt and Magued (2022) explain the two nations' reconciliation efforts from 2021 onwards as a transformation from seeking [domestic] legitimacy through hostility toward seeking it through boosting economic cooperation, indicating the economic crisis in Egypt and Turkey. Altunışık (2019) argues that AKP's perception of Morsi's ouster as a blow to its regional aspirations is grounded on the expectations of a Cairo-Ankara axis. In addition, she argues that Turkish leadership's ideological notions and internal challenges of the Gezi Protests explain Turkey's staunchly critical policy toward Egypt after 2013. El-Labbad (2014) ascribes Turkey's reaction to the shift in Egypt to the collapse of its vision to assume regional leadership [over]relying upon cooperation with a Muslim Brotherhood[1]-ruled Egypt. Salaheldin (2019; 2020) argues that Erdoğan failed to interpret the changes in international and regional environments by mid-2013, did not consent the Egyptian Brotherhood's retreat, kept embracing "neo-Ottoman" dreams and intervening in Egyptian domestic affairs. In contrast, according to him, Egypt abstained from any move that could restrain the normalisation of relations with Turkey. Telci (2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023) provided informative yet extremely descriptive yearly coverage of

[1] Egypt has classified the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organisation since December 2013.

Turkey's policy toward Egypt. He embraced Turkey's perspective while addressing bilateral relations.[2]

Some scholars adopted a Constructivist approach to analysing longer-term trends in Turkey-Egypt relations. Magued (2016) argues that Egypt-Turkey relations remained unaffected by the "Elitist Duality" dominating the latter's relations with Arab neighbours. Instead, Egyptian-Turkish relations were influenced more by a rivalry between the two countries over "contrasting national roles". Accordingly, the conflictual path of relations since 2013 aligns, according to Magued, with the mentioned general paradigm. Tetik (2021) addresses the ideational and discursive dimensions of the subject and argues that a transition in Turkey's domestic "national self-perception" from "Secular Republicanism" to "Conservative Majoritarianism" influenced its relations with Egypt. According to Tetik, this transition led to extreme fluctuations in relations from an alliance with conservative kin under Morsi's presidency to hostility under El-Sisi's presidency.

Few scholarly attention has been given to the normalisation process. Mason (2016) examined the GCC's role in mending fences between Egypt and Turkey. Fayed (2021) suggests that the contradiction between Cairo's status quo-seeking, anti-Islamist foreign policy since 2014 and Ankara's pro-Islamist, pro-uprising foreign policy in tandem with geopolitical rivalry on overlapping spheres made the clash between them inevitable. He argues that Egypt feared missing out on the regional normalisation trend and being marginalised. Altunışık (2023) argues that the unsustainability of previous Turkish foreign policy, economically and politically, the decline in AKP's approval rates, and the economic crisis in Egypt and Turkey were the main reasons for the shift in relations. Moreover, on a bilateral level, both countries perceived this normalisation as an opportunity to attain gains in issues like collaboration in the East Mediterranean and Libya and the limiting activities of political dissidents. Suleiman (2024) explains the recent rapprochement by shedding light on the deterioration of the regional environment, the growing multipolarity of the global order and both nations' will to

[2] For instance, Telci argues that Turkey has pursued a principled foreign policy toward Egypt by standing alongside "pro-democracy groups" [i.e., the Muslim Brotherhood].

collaborate on joint opportunities (foremost economic relations, strategic and defence cooperation, East Mediterranean) and challenges (including Gaza War, Libya and Arab issues).

Therefore, the literature on Egypt-Turkey relations has overconcentrated on the conflictual pattern that dominated bilateral relations between 2013 and 2016. Few studies focus on the normalisation period, which started in earnest in late 2020. This thesis argues that the conflictual relations had already waned from 2016 onwards due to the radical transformations in [mainly Turkey's] unit-level and system-level factors. Thus, the first contribution of this thesis is to argue that the shift in Egypt-Turkey relations was already occurring before 2021. The second contribution of the thesis is to present extensively the Egyptian state's perspective on the topic. Although few studies aim to incorporate Egypt's policies and discourses, the literature largely ignores the Egyptian perspective and fails to analyse Egypt's foreign policy towards Turkey for the entirety of the period under examination.

The next chapter discusses the conceptual and historical frameworks of this thesis. The study divides the history of bilateral relations (1925-2010) into five periods: state formation (1925-50), the emergence of the Cold War (1950-66), rapprochement (1966-80), intensification of relations (1980-2003) and relations between cooperation and competition, all within the framework of Foreign Policy Change.

Then, the third chapter starts with a brief overview of relations in the post-Arab Uprising period and then delves into the bilateral confrontation between Turkey and Egypt from 2013 to 2016, which was a significant change in both countries' policies toward each other.

Subsequently, the fourth chapter deals with bilateral relations in the shadow of intensified regional rivalries from 2016 to 2020. It starts with a programme change in Turkey's policy toward Egypt, a short-lived détente and then addresses the rivalry between the two nations in the East Mediterranean, Libya.

The fifth chapter focuses on the Egyptian-Turkish normalisation process within two patterns: institutionalisation, addressing unsettled issues, and examines unit-level and system-level factors contributing to this normalisation. The sixth chapter concludes with this study's main findings, contributions, and limitations. Each chapter includes a

section on bilateral economic ties within three distinct periods: limited sanctions, compartmentalisation modus vivendi, and normalisation. These sections analyse economic ties, considering three economic variables: trade, direct investments, and tourism.

CHAPTER 2

CONCEPTUAL AND HISTORICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Conceptual Framework: Foreign Policy Change

This thesis addresses the changes that Egyptian-Turkish relations witnessed between 2013 and 2024 by applying an analytically eclectic conceptual framework based mainly on Foreign Policy Change (FPC) literature. Hermann (1990) provides a four-level typology of FPC ranging from adjustments, program change, and problem/goal change to the fundamental shifts in the international orientation of a country. The first type is Adjustment Change, which indicates minor quantitative (whether greater or lesser) changes in a government's effort regarding a specific policy while the policy's goal remains unchanged. The second type is Program Change, which indicates qualitative changes in the tools a decision-maker uses to address a specific policy while the initial goal remains unchanged. The third type, Goal/Problem Change, is the replacement or forfeiting of the initial problem or the goal of the policy addressed. The fourth type, International Orientation Change, refers to a wholesale redirection of a state's orientation toward international relations. This study only focuses on the first three levels, which are more relevant in our case, where the changes happened under the rule of the same two presidents (except for a change in Egypt's policy toward Turkey in 2013). To identify these changes, the study traces the trajectory of developments on two interplaying sets of unit-level and system-level variables. The study specifies the unit-level variables as power distributions among institutions, coalitions, domestic support or opposition, economic indexes and leadership/individual dynamics. As for the power distribution, the literature suggests that FPC in centrist states with less bureaucratic incrementalism is easier (Haesebrouck and Joly 2021). In addition, Goldmann (2014) defines three domestic dimensions on which the likelihood and extent of a foreign policy change depend. The first dimension

is the degree of the ruling elite's commitment to an existing policy area. The second dimension is the degree of popular domestic support, indifference or opposition to the policy. The third dimension is the degree of centrality or significance of the issue the policy addresses on the domestic agenda. Economic factors encompass inflation rates, the value of national currencies, the volume of exports, and the public debt-to-GDP ratio.

As to individual/leadership dynamics, the study identifies two essential dynamics. First, Failure-Induced Learning, whether on an individual or organisational level, could trigger a foreign policy change. Decision-makers tend to restructure the goal of a specific policy or the tools they previously employed to achieve it once it proves inadequate, inefficient or counterproductive (Hermann 1990). Second, as to leadership's ideological notions, this study draws inspiration from Altunışık's (2023a) account of AKP's Procedural Pragmatism as a domestic source of its foreign policy. The procedural form of pragmatism enables a leader or a ruling elite to engage with all and any ideas that could be justifiable and politically practical to garner public support, all without overall jeopardising their ideological framework. Due to differences between Egyptian and Turkish political structures, this feature was more evident in the Turkish case yet not absent in the Egyptian one.

As to system-level variables (regional or international), the study pays attention to the structure of the global order (bipolar, multipolar, etc). The FPC literature suggests that multipolarity enhances states' flexibility to change their policies, depending on their position, i.e. status quo-seeking or revisionist (Haesebrouck and Joly 2021). The study also employs the concept of "External Shock", as defined by Hermann as "large events in terms of visibility and immediate impact on the recipient". By applying such a conceptual framework, the study will pay equal attention to system-level and unit-level elements and avoid overemphasising the influence of structure while ignoring the agency effect or vice versa.

2.2 Historical Framework (1925-2011)

Due to limited academic studies on the history of Turkish-Egyptian relations, this section partially relies on Turkish MFA's open-access archives, annual reports starting

from the 1960s onwards to examine the bilateral engagements, central areas of common interests and trace trajectory of ties in the light of international and regional developments. The history of Egyptian-Turkish relations could be divided into five periods as follows:

2.2.1 The Period of State Formation and Consolidation: 1925-1950

The rivalry between European Great Powers and the multipolarity of world order during this period gave Turkey significant room for manoeuvre that yielded what Oran (2009) defines as "Relative Autonomy" in foreign policy. In contrast, the four reservations made by Britain when it granted nominal independence to Egypt in 1922 greatly restricted Egyptian foreign policy (Marsot 2007). Nevertheless, the Egyptian elites still had little room for manoeuvre to pursue a foreign policy agenda in some cases, as in the foundation of the Arab League and participation in the 1948 Palestine War (Shama 2021). Turkey and Egypt established diplomatic relations at a request of the latter in 1925; Egypt appointed Muhammed Heddaya Pasha as an ambassador in Ankara, and Turkey, in return, appointed Muhittin Akyüz Pasha as an ambassador in Cairo (Özgiray 1996). This period witnessed the emergence of early signs of mutual threat perceptions between Egyptian and Turkish ruling elites. Turkey was concerned about King Fuad's attempt to claim the Caliph position (Baş 2015). Conversely, Egypt fiercely rejected a Turkish proposal to crown Egypt's former Khedive Abbas Hilmi II, who aspired to restore his throne as king of Syria in 1932 (Shama 2021). In addition, Egypt was concerned about Turkey's production of opium, given its widespread consumption in Egypt at that time. Conversely, Turkey was concerned about Egypt's harbouring of Turkish opposition activities. Under British occupation, Cairo provided a haven for several critics of the Kemalist regime. From 1927 to 1930, Turkish opponent writers like İzmirli Hafız İsmail and Mustafa Sabri published a newspaper called "Müsavat" to criticise the reforms Atatürk conducted in Turkey. Interestingly, pro-Kemalist writers published another newspaper in Egypt called "Muhadenet" to praise the new reforms (İhsanoğlu 2011). Egypt also refused to grant Turkish citizens the same legal privileges enjoyed by Europeans within the Egyptian capitulation system, which created tension in relations (Baş 2015). Less importantly, tensions persisted in bilateral relations due to two diplomatic crises; the first happened in 1930

when King Fouad refused to meet the Turkish envoy, pushing the latter to behave nondiplomatic (Aslan 2013). The second crisis occurred in 1932 when President Mustafa Kemal Atatürk asked the Egyptian envoy to take off his fez during the Republic Day celebrations (Şimşir 2022). However, these crises were solved without ruptures in diplomatic relations. Moreover, Atatürk's Western-oriented political and social reforms, including the abolition of the Sultanate regime and the Caliphate, respectively, sparked both criticism and admiration in Egyptian public opinion (Sezer 2001). However, system-level changes exemplified by the growing Italian expansionism in the Mediterranean and the invasion of Abyssinia led to a British-backed Friendship Treaty between Egypt and Turkey in 1936, paving the way for a rapprochement (Bulut 2010).

2.2.2 The Emergence of the Cold War: 1950-1966

In the 1950s, Egypt and Turkey pursued conflicting foreign policies, aligning with regionally and internationally contesting camps. On the one hand, under the rule of the Democrat Party (DP), Turkey continued the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) membership process and joined the U.S. Marshal Plan. It enjoyed good relations with Western allies in the Middle East, including Hashemite Iraq and Pahlavi Iran, and founded the Baghdad Pact with them in 1955 (Sinkaya 2016). On the other hand, Egypt's Gamal Abdul Nasser outlined three interplaying circles of Egyptian foreign policy: Africa, the Arab World, and the Islamic World (Abdul Nasser 1954). Under his charismatic leadership, Egypt demonstrated the capacity to assume regional hegemony in the Arab Middle East (Beck 2014). He transferred Egypt into a regional base of Arabism and anti-imperialism, emphasised the Arab content of Egyptian identity through educational institutions, media and the country's single party, the Arab Socialist Union (*El-Ettihad El-Eshtraki*) (Hinnebusch and Shama 2014). Accordingly, Turkey's and Egypt's contesting international and regional alignments clashed on numerous occasions during the 1950s and the first half of the 1960s. Firstly, Turkey's promotion of the Baghdad Pact antagonised Egypt, which embraced a "positive neutralist" doctrine and portrayed the pact as an attempt to preserve Western imperialism's interests in the region and split the Arab World (Stein 2021a). Secondly, at the 1955 Bandung Conference, the Turkish Foreign Minister acted as a

spokesperson of the Western bloc and called the newly independent African and Asian countries to align with Western interests (Öterbülbül 2015). Conversely, Egypt's Nasser played a leading role in establishing the non-aligned movement, staunchly defending neutralism with anti-imperialist and Third-Worldist rhetoric. Thirdly, Turkey adopted the U.S. Dulles Plan for the 1956 Suez War, held Nasser's "impatient unilateral actions" responsible for the escalation, and even rejected Nasser's request to mediate in the crisis (Aslan 2013). Turkey also welcomed Eisenhower's doctrine in 1957, which led to a military escalation along Turkey-Syria borders, with Egypt siding with the latter (Duman 2005). During this period, diplomatic relations experienced two ruptures; one was in 1954, when Hulusi Fuat Tugay, Turkey's ambassador to Cairo, who was married to a member of Mehmet Ali Pasha's dynasty, criticised the policies of the new Egyptian regime, including land reforms and broad confiscations of the dynasty's assets. Reciprocally, Egypt sent a diplomatic note to Turkey, declaring Tugay as *persona non grata* (Aydın 2019). The second rupture was when Turkey hurried to recognise the new Syrian government after the latter's separation from the United Arab Republic in 1961 (T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı n.d.-c)

2.2.3 The Period of Rapproachement: 1966-1980

U.S. President Johnson's harsh letter to the Turkish government on the Cypriot issue -then the main topic on Turkey's agenda- in 1964 catalysed a significant change in Turkish foreign policy. Johnson firmly rejected any Turkish intervention in Cyprus, intimidating that the U.S. would not back Turkey in case of any possible Soviet invasion. Conversely, Turkey utilised the de-escalation between the East and the West during the détente era and revised its policy toward the Middle East in search of new partners within a new "multidimensional foreign policy" orientation (Sinkaya 2016). During this period, Egypt, whose resources were exhausted in regional and Arab conflicts, also has been heading to de-escalate disputes with Arab states and other regional actors since the Arab League's Cairo and Alexandria Summits in 1964 (Dessouki and Mattar 1986). Within this context, in March 1966, a Turkish-Egyptian reconciliation process was launched with a visit by the Secretary-General of the Turkish MFA, Haluk Bayülken, to Cairo, where he met President Nasser and other officials. Egypt's deputy FM, Hasan El-Feqi, reciprocated by visiting Ankara, where

he met FM İhsan Sabri Çağlayangil and discussed bilateral relations, the Cypriot issue and the crisis in the Middle East. Egypt also began softening its policy toward the Cypriot issue; in April 1966, Egypt declared it would not back "Enosis" (annexing Cyprus to Greece). The two countries signed a Trade Agreement worth $6 million and accelerated cultural exchange programmes (T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı 1967a). In January 1967, Turkish Foreign Minister İhsan Sabri Çağlayangil visited Cairo, met President Nasser and asserted the two countries' willingness to develop bilateral relations. In an interview with Egypt's El-Gumhuriyya newspaper, Turkish PM Süleyman Demirel declared clear support for Arab states:

> There would be no obstacle to establishing Positive relations with the United Arab Republic. [..]We have consistently supported the Palestinian cause and will continue to do so. Turkey could not be held responsible for establishing the State of Israel. Turkey voted against the establishment of a Jewish state in 1948 in the United Nations. Before the idea of a Jewish state emerged, Palestine remained a part of the Ottoman Empire for four centuries (T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı 1967b).

Amid the escalation of Arab-Israeli tensions in May 1967, Turkey expressed apprehensions about the developments and appreciated "the political and strategic reasons that pushed Egypt to take the recent decisions". The new orientation in Turkish policy was more evident when Turkey rejected a U.S. request to use U.S. military bases in its territories to provide military support to Israel during the War (T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı 1967). After the Arab defeat in the war, PM Demirel sent a message of solidarity to President Nasser, and Turkey embarked on supporting Arabs on international platforms based on the UNSC Resolution 242 (Özcan 2005). Following the death of Nasser in 1970, Vice President Anwar El-Sadat assumed office with the priority of reclaiming the occupied territories of the Sinai Peninsula. In September 1973, weeks before the October War, Turkey's Foreign Minister Bayülken visited Egypt and met his Egyptian counterpart El-Zayyat and President El-Sadat. Bayülken expressed his country's support for Egypt's peace-building efforts and appreciated Egypt's positive approach toward the Cypriot issue. El-Sadat awarded the Turkish ambassador with the Republic Medal (*wesam el-gumhuriyya*) (T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı 1973). During the war, Turkey was preoccupied with the first general elections after

the 1971 military memorandum but asserted its neutrality and repeated its call for an Israeli withdrawal from Arabs' occupied territories, a just and lasting peaceful solution to the conflict. Turkey also rejected the U.S. request to use the Incirlik military base to provide military aid to Israel and the Soviet request to use Turkish airspace to send military aid to Egypt and Syria (T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı 1973). Under the short-lived rule of the heterogeneous coalition of the centre-left secular CHP (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*) Islamist MSP (*Milli Selamet Partisi*) from 1973 to 1975, Turkish foreign policy discourse became more pro-Arab. Turkey voted for a United Nations General Assembly Resolution 3379 that "determines Zionism as a form of racism and racial discrimination"(Özcan 2005). The 1973 Oil Crisis further pushed already economically suffering Turkey to more rapprochement with the Arab States, first to get oil on credit from oil-rich Gulf states and second to find new alternative markets to the declining European Economies in the Middle East (Sinkaya, 2016). Under Anwar Sadat's rule, specifically after the October 6th 1973 War, Egypt restructured its international orientation from the alliance with the Soviets to alignment with the U.S. and a peace agreement with Israel in 1979, thereby severing Cairo's relations with Arab states. Sadat also conducted radical domestic changes, including transitioning to a multiple-party system and open-door economic policy (*infitah*), a severe rupture from Nasser's legacy (Hinnebusch & Shama, 2014; Shama, 2021). On July 13, 1979, an armed group called "Eagles of the Palestinian Revolution" raided the Egyptian Embassy building in Ankara, killed three people, and held 20 diplomats, including the Egyptian ambassador, hostages for two days in reaction to the Egyptian-Israeli peace agreement and Turkey's support for this agreement. Palestinian militants asked for the release of Palestinians arrested by Egyptian authorities and for Turkey to cut its diplomatic relations with both Israel and the U.S. (Munir 1979). Palestinian armed groups would conduct similar operations against foreign diplomats in Turkey and cooperate with Greece and the Republic of Cyprus (RoC) in the following years (Özcan 2005), which would naturally bring the two countries' threat perceptions closer.

In summary, during this period, system-level factors (the détente era in the Cold War, intra-Arab de-escalation, the Cypriot Issue, and the 1967 War) interaction with [mainly economic] unit-level factors led to a significant change in both countries' policies

toward each other. It is important also to observe the radical fluctuations in both countries' discourses during and after bilateral crises. To illustrate, in 1967, the Egyptian ambassador to Ankara published a congratulatory message on behalf of the Egyptian nation, “most of whose members carry Turkish blood in their veins”, to the Turkish nation on the occasion of Eid al-Fitr (T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı 1967b).

2.2.4 Intensification of Relations: 1980-2002

The 1980s witnessed complex transitions both in regional and international environments. In 1981, Ronald Reagan assumed presidential office in the United States, laying the foundation for a more assertive, anti-Soviet, anti-communist doctrine that marked the end of the détente era. In Egypt, Hosni Mubarak assumed power following the assassination of President El-Sadat. Under his rule, Egypt prioritised ending its isolation in Arab politics without jeopardising the Camp David Accords, promoted itself as a peace broker in the Arab-Israeli conflict, and a “committed defender of Arab causes” (Hinnebusch & Shama, 2014; Shama, 2021). In light of this tendency, Egypt continuously condemned Turkey’s military operations in Northern Iraq, which it viewed as a threat to Iraq’s territorial integrity. In addition, Egypt supported Syria and Iraq in their hydropolitical disputes with Turkey over the water resources of the Tigris and Euphrates (Magued 2016). Turgut Özal’s ANAP (Anavatan Partisi) secured a landslide victory in Turkey's first post-1980 Coup parliamentary elections. Özal pursued an export-led Middle East Policy that also instrumentalised Turkey's shared Islamic identity with the region, all without jeopardising the secular nature of the state. He aimed to demonstrate Turkey’s role as a bridge between the East and the West (Altunışık 2009). Nevertheless, the emergence of the secessionist PKK (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê[3]) in Turkey’s Southeast and Syria’s generous support for it, alongside the Iraq-Iran War, triggered the securitisation of the Turkish perspective on the region (Sinkaya 2016) All in all, thanks to the convergence of both countries’ international alignments with the U.S. politically and, to some extent,

[3] PKK is classified by Turkey as a terrorist organisation.

economically, bilateral engagement increased with frequent mutual high-level visits and political and economic cooperation momentum.

The two nations had common views regarding international and regional issues; Both called for an Israeli withdrawal from Arab territories occupied in 1967 and incited the PLO to join peace efforts. Both condemned the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan. There were inconclusive negotiations about Egypt's provision of F-4 Fighters to Turkey (T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı 1983, 1984). In 1984, Turkey strongly supported Egypt's readmission to the OIC Casablanca summit (T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı 1985). In a show of appreciation, Mubarak was the first Egyptian president to visit Turkey, where he met his counterpart, President Kenan Evren and PM Özal. During the visit, Evren presented Mubarak with a map from the Ottoman archive that depicts former Egyptian-Ottoman borders to support Egypt's claims on the Taba region in its dispute with Israel at the International Court (T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı n.d.-b). Evren reciprocated Mubarak's visit in the following year (T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı 1986). Upon an Egyptian proposal, the two countries established a bilateral consultation mechanism to coordinate all aspects of relations. In addition, bilateral coordination on regional issues, namely the Arab-Israeli peace process, intensified; Mubarak visited Turkey in 1988 within the framework of a European tour regarding that issue (T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı 1989, n.d.-a). Cooperation in the military field and defence industry significantly grew with several mutual visits between Turkish and Egyptian defence ministers and a permanent committee of military cooperation (T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı, n.d.-a). With the end of the Cold War and the outbreak of the Second Gulf War, Turkey and Egypt have acted in coordination with the U.S. However, the war's security and economic costs on Turkey and Egypt were unequal.

On the one hand, Egypt joined the international coalition against Iraq and successfully waived 50% of its external debts. (Altunışık 2021; Shama 2014). On the other hand, Özal's active moves during the Second Gulf War did not bear the desired fruit as Iraqi Kurds established an autonomous region in northern Iraq, PKK attacks intensified, and Turkey received thousands of Iraqi Kurdish refugees (Sinkaya 2016).

In parallel to these developments, a notable increase in bilateral diplomatic engagement occurred; President Mubarak visited Turkey four times in 1991, 1994, and

1998, and President Özal visited Egypt in 1990 and 1992. President Demirel visited Egypt four times in 1994, 1996, and 1997. Additionally, mutual visits on prime ministerial and ministerial levels intensified parallel to increased political, economic, and military cooperation. In 1997, Egypt joined the D-8 Organisation for Economic Cooperation, which Turkey's PM Necmettin Erbakan proposed in 1996. (T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı 1991, 1992, 1994a, 1994b, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2000). In this period, Turkey accelerated political, military and security cooperation with Israel to counterbalance Syria's support to the PKK (Özcan 2005). This Turkish-Israeli rapprochement and its repercussions on the regional balance of power increasingly concerned Egypt. In 1998, the Turkish-Syrian tensions further escalated as Turkey resorted to brinkmanship and massed troops on the Syrian borders. Mubarak feared a joint Turkish Israeli military action against Syria but perceived the crisis as an "opportunity" to play a mediatory role, which he succeeded in (Mousa 2017). Consequently, Turkey and Syria reached an Egyptian-mediated agreement known as the Adana Agreement, according to which PKK's leader Öcalan was forced to leave Syria. Turkey, in turn, awarded Mubarak with the State Medal (*Devlet Nişanı*) for his efforts to end the crisis (T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı 1999).

2.2.5 Between Competition and Cooperation: 2002-2011

In 2002, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan-led Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP) came to power in Turkey. The AKP's first cabinet initially continued the de-securitization and Europeanization processes, enhanced engagement with the United States, and was involved in numerous regional endeavours (Altunişik and Martin 2011). Ahmet Davutoğlu, the primary architect of AKP's foreign policy, first as senior foreign policy advisor and Foreign Minister and then as Prime Minister, criticised Turkey's traditional Middle East policy. He suggested a new Turkish "vision" stemming from the history and culture, capitalising on commonalities with the region that he describes as Turkey's strategic depth, where Turkey should play a pivotal role. These ideas constituted the basis of Turkey's policy of "Zero Problems with Neighbours."(Altunışık 2009). Davutoglu attached great importance to Egypt as a part of the Middle East's "outer triangle" together with Turkey and Iran that, in case of policy convergence, would prevent external interventions in the region (Davutoğlu

2001). Mubarak was concerned about Turkey's attempts to cash in on Egypt's declining regional power and take over its traditional peace broker role in the Arab-Israeli conflict, as happened in five rounds of Syrian-Israeli negotiations and mediation between Palestinian political factions (El-Labbad 2014) . Notwithstanding, Turkey asserted that it is not in a rivalry with Egypt but is complementing the latter's role (Altunisik and Cuhadar 2010). In addition, Egypt had to tolerate Turkey's increasing regional activism to counterbalance Iran, but Turkey showed less interest in engaging in a Saudi-led camp Altunışık 2019). Despite all these tensions, bilateral relations developed significantly during this period, with frequent mutual visits on presidential and ministerial levels. In 2007, Egypt and Turkey signed a Framework Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish an Egyptian-Turkish strategic dialogue to enhance political and economic cooperation (Mason 2016). In 2003, Egypt and the RoC signed a maritime demarcation agreement that Turkey officially objected to, calling for a multilateral demarcation process that includes all coastal states (T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı 2007). It should be noted here that there are no disputes between Egypt and Turkey over maritime boundaries or exclusive economic zones in the East Mediterranean. However, Turkey is not a party to the United Nations Convention on the Law of Sea (UNCLOS); its approach to the maritime boundaries' delimitation process differs from that of Egypt, a party to the abovementioned convention. Nevertheless, this does not constitute an obstacle to a Turkish-Egyptian maritime delimitation deal, as affirmed by former Egyptian Foreign Affairs Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit:

> Egypt and Turkey were both wary of an issue that could complicate the development of an important economic and political relationship. The Turks asked us to jointly delimit the maritime boundaries and exclusive economic zones between us. We agreed, although we were careful not to approach the maritime tripoint between Egypt, Greece, and Turkey so as not to allow the disagreements between Greece and Turkey to affect our interests with either nation (Aboul Gheit 2020).

The most significant change in this period was the increasing influence of unit-level factors on bilateral relations. In 2004, the U.S. administration launched the Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative (BMENA) to promote democracy as a strategy

for confronting radical Islamism, in which Turkey was actively engaged. (Buhari Gulmez 2020). In 2005, within the framework of this democratisation agenda, Mubarak was exposed to U.S. pressures to head for democratic reform (Lafi Youmans 2016). Mubarak's concerns increased when Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated candidates attained around 20% of the parliament seats in the 2005 People's Assembly elections. Hamas won the Palestinian Legislative polls the following year and formed a government. Therefore, given the increasing relations between Turkey's AKP and the Brotherhood as Istanbul became a significant destination for Brotherhood activism and conferences from 2006 to 2010 (Merley 2011), Mubarak did not show much eagerness to form a strategic partnership with the AKP.

The issue of the Gaza Strip also sparked further diplomatic tensions in bilateral relations during this period. PM Erdoğan's criticism of Egypt during the 2008/2009 Israeli War on Gaza deepened Mubarak's concerns. Henceforth, he began counterbalancing Erdoğan with President Gül by inviting the latter to international conferences in Egypt instead of Erdoğan (Aboul Gheit 2020). Moreover, in 2010, a humanitarian relief convoy from the Turkish Islamist IHH Foundation clashed with Egyptian security forces who refused to allow humanitarian materials into Gaza without inspections (İHH 2010; Salaheldin 2019).

2.3 Economic Relations

Throughout their modern history, Egypt and Turkey have followed similar paths in terms of economic development models. Both countries pursued protectionist Import Substitution Industrialisation policies from the early 1950s to the late 1970s. In the 1980s and more intensively in the Washington Consensus-guided 1990s, both countries shifted toward a more open economy, focusing on industrialisation, trade liberalisation and privatisation. In doing so, Turkey's more robust private sector, more significant land resources, and proximity to the EU gave it apparent leverage on Egypt regarding industrialisation and export growth (Karakoç, Pamuk, and Panza 2017).

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, economic engagement with the Middle East was a pillar of Turkish PM Özal's export-oriented economic model and foreign policy in the 1980s. Economic transformations, both countries' joining the World Trade

Organisation in 1995, and growing bilateral relations since the 1980s onward were translated into tangible steps toward increasing economic relations through institutional bodies like the Joint Turkish-Egyptian Economic Commission and the Association of Egyptian and Turkish Businessmen (T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı n.d.-b). Moreover, bilateral trade volume grew eighteenfold between 1980 and 1998, with Turkey preserving an upper hand regarding trade balance. Economic cooperation between the two nations extended to new areas, prompting them to negotiate a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) by the end of the 1990s (T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı 2000). The FTA negotiations were concluded in 2005 and came into force in 2007, triggering a fourfold growth in bilateral trade volume (see **Figure 1**).

In addition, Turkish investments started to flow into the Egyptian market in 2006, concentrating on sectors like textiles (see **Figure 7**). In 2008, Turkish President Abdullah Gül participated in an opening ceremony for a Turkish industrial zone in Egypt's 6th October city (Gül 2008).

Figure 1 Egypt-Turkey Bilateral Trade 1980-2012 (in $million).

Source: Turkish Statistical Institution (TÜİK)

CHAPTER 3

BILATERAL CONFRONTATION (2013-2016)

This chapter addresses bilateral relations between mid-2013 and mid-2016. It begins with a brief overview of relations after President Hosni Mubarak's resignation in early 2011 to Morsi's ouster by mid-2013. Then, it delves into the goal/problem changes in Egypt and Turkey's policies toward each other. Due to the limited bilateral engagement during this period, the chapter discusses each country's policy toward the other separately considering both unit-level and system-level factors. Each section provides an analysis of the tools Turkey and Egypt implemented to achieve the goals of their policies. The last section deals with economic relations in the respective period.

3.1 Relations in the Post-Uprising Era (2011-2013): A Brief Overview

What is vital in this period for the purpose of this thesis is two dimensions; first is that an essential aspect of Turkey's engagement with Egypt in this period was based on the former's claim of possessing a normative power commonly known as the "Turkish Model" (Futák-Campbell and De Sauvage Nolting 2022). The second dimension is the pragmatist character of the relationship between Turkey and the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. In the post-uprising era, international, regional and domestic conjunctures in both Turkey and Egypt were propitious for Turkey to further its influence in Egypt. Internationally, the Obama administration was explicitly committed to terminating previous unilateral military commitments in the Middle East through a multilateral foreign policy doctrine based on a broader engagement of several regional actors to whom the U.S. will partially or wholly externalise its burdens (Echagüe 2015; Krieg 2016). Turkey emerged as a reliable U.S. ally possessing the capacity to guide a smooth power transition and the moral capital, exemplified by

Erdoğan's overwhelming popularity in the Arab World and Egypt[4], as a "model" for the emerging Islamist governments across the "Arab Spring" countries (Altunışık 2013). Moreover, the belief in Washington back then was that "[Islamists'] engagement [in politics] leads to moderation" (Fabbrini and Yossef 2015). The Turkish ruling elite, in turn, was enthusiastic to project its capacity and self-confidence[5] to prove Turkey's reliability to the U.S. and further Turkey's regional position (Altunışık 2013; Gerges 2013). Indeed, the Arab Uprisings presented a positive external shock for the AKP elite, depicted by Altunişik and Martin (2023) as a "window of opportunity", to put their ideas into force. Then-PM Erdoğan was among the first world leaders to openly call President Mubarak to "listen to the voice of people" and resign (Yeni Şafak 2011). He later enjoyed the rewards during his visit to Cairo, where the masses welcomed him as a hero. He felt confident enough to call on Egyptians to embrace secularism, which sparked criticism from the Muslim Brotherhood leaders(Köroğlu 2011). Foreign Minister Davutoğlu also was enthusiastic about the long-awaited opportunity the Egyptian Uprising created:

> I was invited to deliver a talk on the unfolding revolution in Egypt, [..], at an event in Doha entitled 'Has the Future Arrived?' When I delivered that talk, I put the events into context by arguing, 'It not only has arrived but also delayed.' (Davutoğlu 2013).

In Egypt, most of the emerging post-revolutionary powers, except for the then-ruling Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), be they Islamist or secular, widely discussed the "Turkish Model" and its political dimensions and even competed to demonstrate their capacity and will to implement it (Aydın-Düzgit and Dandashly 2022). Despite being initially welcomed by all in the political spectrum, the AKP government was exclusively interested in cooperating with the Muslim Brotherhood. Taş (2022a) contends that Turkey's AKP employed the Brotherhood in a pragmatist

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[4] A public opinion poll conducted in 2011 showed that Egyptians perceived Turkey as a model country to draw lessons from its experience, while PM Erdoğan appeared as the most popular world leader (Telhami 2011).

[5] The landslide victory the AKP achieved in the 2011 elections with almost 50% of the popular vote and its leverage over the military with the 2010 constitutional amendments boosted its self-confidence and enlarged its room for manoeuvre.

power maximising strategy. According to this view, in a cost-benefit equation, the Brotherhood, with a vast transnational network across the Arab world, obtained the capacity to maximise Turkey's benefits at the lowest cost, i.e. it poses no threat to the AKP's regime security given their ideological kinship and deep-rooted relations. Turkey's attitude reflects a broader trend in regional and international affairs where several actors became more visible in regional rivalries, employing similar tools and embracing common behaviours (Kardaş 2013). Overall, Turkey's main expectation from Egypt was to establish a regional axis and collaborate on regional issues, as stated by then-FM Davutoğlu:

> Egypt and Turkey are rapidly heading towards creating the most crucial bilateral axis in the region. The Turkish-Egyptian axis is fundamental in maintaining order and stability in the Middle East (Davutoğlu 2013).

The Brotherhood, in turn, badly needed Turkey's support firstly to capitalise on the claim of the emulation of the Turkish Model in Egypt and market itself domestically and internationally as a conservative, democratic, moderate force (El-Labbad 2014). The Partnership between Turkey and the Brotherhood gained momentum during the 2011 parliamentary elections in Egypt. The AKP concluded a "Twining Agreement" with the Brotherhood's political arm, the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP), providing it with expertise in political campaigning (Al-Ahram 2011). With Morsi's electoral victory in 2012, Turkey's enthusiasm and optimism regarding Egyptian-Turkish cooperation peaked and was reflected in the writings of AKP-linked media outlets. For instance, a prominent AKP-affiliated journalist portrayed the Brotherhood's electoral victory in Egypt as the beginning of establishing the "Muslim Brotherhood Belt" in the whole Arab world (Karagül 2012). Another columnist appeared more optimistic about the Cairo-Ankara axis, using a caricature showing Turkey holding binoculars through which Morsi was viewing the world (Özhan 2012). Indeed, this view was somewhat accurate; the AKP provided the Brotherhood with political advice, persuaded them to run a presidential candidate, and guided them during Morsi's term (T24 2014c). More significantly, Turkey began directing economic and political aid to Egypt, including a $2 billion loan. Ironically, Turkey provided training to young Egyptian activists about the process of writing a constitution, a task that Turkey itself failed to achieve since the 1980 coup (Altunişik 2014). Finally, on June 30th, 2013,

millions of Morsi's opponents took to the streets on the first anniversary of his presidential inauguration, demanding an early presidential election. Morsi and the Brotherhood allegedly rejected any compromise, including a Turkish initiative backed by Davutoğlu, to hold a referendum on Morsi's presidency (Salaheldin 2019) and portrayed the demonstrations as a conspiracy organised by the ancien regime (*fulul*). In return, the Egyptian Army proposed a national dialogue within 48 hours. By the end of this duration, the Minister of Defence, General Abdelfattah El-Sisi, issued a roadmap that included suspending the constitution and holding early presidential elections (BBC News Arabic 2013b).

3.2 Turkey: Goal/Problem Change

Morsi's removal constituted a negative "external political shock" for Turkey and the ruling AKP. FPC Literature on external shocks suggests that they produce domestic and external security uncertainties that incite decision-makers to change the course of foreign policy and engage in rivalries (Gordell and Volgy 2022). Following an urgent meeting with senior government officials regarding the situation in Egypt, Erdoğan defined Morsi's ouster as an illegitimate "Coup d'etat" (BBC News Türkçe 2013b; Cumhuriyet 2013).

3.2.1 System-Level Factors

There is a consensus in the literature that Morsi's removal paved the way for the collapse of Turkey's regional leadership aspiration through an Ankara-Cairo axis (Ayata 2015; Benli Altunışık 2019; El-Labbad 2014; Tür 2019; Yeşilyurt 2020). Then-FM Davutoğlu outspokenly explained this collapse with a notable connection between Egypt and Syria:

> There are three forces in the international community. First, some [..] support democratic groups: Turkey and several moderate democratic forces. Second are those political actors who fear democracy [..] Saudi Arabia, UAE, and the Gulf Countries, except for Qatar. The third group is sectarian countries such as Iran. Before [2013], the first two were united against Iranian influence, so they

> worked together against Assad. However, after Sisi, that coalition collapsed because a new option emerged. 2013 was the year of counterrevolutions against these waves: in Egypt, there was a coup d'état, which Assad loved […]" (Open Democracy 2014).

In alignment with this view, Turkey lost Egypt as an essential partner of its regional project and an irreplaceable ally it desperately needed in Syria, which has occupied a central position in Turkish foreign policy since 2012 (Tür 2019). Balta (2016, 2018) contends that Turkey's Syria policy also collapsed in parallel with the Brotherhood's ouster in Egypt. Accordingly, by toppling the Brotherhood in Egypt, General El-Sisi weakened Turkey's rising regional aspirations and co-dependencies on the Brotherhood network, paving the way for the rise of other actors in Syria. It appears that this view has relevance, given that Morsi was dismissed from office only days after calling on Egyptian youth to fight against Al-Assad's regime in Syria at a mass gathering of Salafist jihadists (Saleh 2013). In addition, the Obama Administration's tendency from late 2012 onward toward a more security-centric approach following the rapid rise of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (henceforth ISIS) enhanced Turkey's concerns (Echagüe 2015), which realised as the U.S. embarked on supporting the PKK-affiliated PYD militias as a boots-on-ground in confronting ISIS in Syria (Kınacıoğlu and Gürzel Aka 2018; Krieg 2016). The Brotherhood's collapse was also more or less a collapse of the model Turkey promoted after the Uprising. Secondly, the Brotherhood's removal was a test of Turkey's reliability and credibility as a regional ally to Qatar, as stated by Pala and Aras (2015) :

> [Morsi's removal] was to become the most profound setback for Ankara's geopolitical goals [..] Although Ankara and Doha experienced an unprecedented political alignment around converging geopolitical interests in the Arab Spring, the Egyptian setback seems to have tested the limits of such an alignment beyond expectations.

A possible explanation is the importance of the Brotherhood as a "cementing component" that established a strong tie between Turkey's regional power and Qatar's financial capacity (Khayrullin and Korotayev 2024). Erdoğan's continuous statements about Egypt were more or less messages to Turkey's allies across the region and attempts to preserve this axis, which was exposed to significant blows after 2013 (El-

Labbad 2014). Thirdly, Turkish leadership believed in the vulnerability of the new Egyptian government due to the deterioration of the Egyptian economy. Thus, it was persuaded that the Brotherhood could play a role in Egypt's future once that "fragile regime" collapsed. This perspective was reflected in a remark from FM Çavuşoğlu:

> "Egypt, unfortunately, is facing a tremendous economic crisis; once Egypt's donors cut aid, the Egyptian economy would collapse within a mere week." (T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı 2016a).

Moreover, Egypt had no economic leverage, unlike Saudi Arabia, e.g., direct investments that Ankara could have been concerned about. The trade balance was in Ankara's favour, with a surplus of around $ 2 billion. In addition, Egyptian exports to Turkey constituted around %6.5 of the total Egyptian exports, a high portion Cairo could not afford to lose. Therefore, this deepened Erdoğan's belief that he "had nothing to lose" by attacking the Egyptian government (Mason 2016).

3.2.2 Unit-Level Factors

3.2.2.1 Domestic Opposition, Coalitions

The massive nationwide Gezi Protests that Turkey witnessed in May 2013, the collapse of AKP's domestic coalition with the Liberals, and the escalation of the dispute with the Gülenist movement (classified by Turkey as a terrorist organisation since May 2016) by the end of 2013 (T24 2013a; Taş 2018) all further complicated Turkey's response to the events in Egypt. Within such a chaotic domestic context, the AKP laid the foundations of a narrative -in which Egypt was integrated- of internal and external conspiratory endeavours to undermine the state (Taş 2022a). Ayata (2015) ascribes Turkey's uncompromising response to Morsi's ouster to the ideational dimension of Turkish foreign policy under AKP, epitomised in "the shared history of struggling against the military role in politics" and domestic pressure posed on AKP by the Gezi protests and perceived threats of a similar Turkish military intervention. Çağaptay (2019) agrees with this view on the ideational division between the Egyptian and Turkish leaders: "Erdoğan is the political Islamist leader who has imprisoned secular generals, while El-Sisi is the secular general who has locked up political Islamists."

This threat perception of a similar move in Turkey was evident in Erdoğan's discourse regarding the events:

> Squares do not reflect the collective will of the populace as they could be misleading [..] the will of people all over the world manifests only in the ballot box [..] If some people are willing to Egyptize us, should we thank them? [..] We suffered a lot from coups in Turkey, and we do not want our brothers to suffer (T24 2013b).

Indeed, this was evident in the PM's discourse as he initially asserted that Turkey, a democratic Muslim majority nation, constitutes a "reference" to Egypt, calling on Egyptians to read Turkey's modern history carefully (BBC News Türkçe 2013b). Most probably, he feared that Egypt could be a "reference" to Turkey; the Turkish Parliament amended the Armed Forces internal service law's 35th article, which enabled the Army to conduct coups in the past, only days after Morsi's ouster (Anadolu Ajansı 2013c; Yeşilyurt 2020). A possible interpretation of Erdoğan's insistence on employing Egypt in domestic affairs is -in Saideman's (2002) terms- that he feared that committing an "identity violation" (acquiescing to military intervention in Egypt) might not have been tolerated by his constituencies or even encourage his opponents.

3.2.2.2 Leadership

The relationship crisis between Egypt and Turkey occurred amid disagreements between President Gül and PM Erdoğan over issues like the Gezi Park demonstrations and the 17-25 December investigations (Köker 2018). These differences between Gül and Erdoğan were reflected in their respective positions towards relations with Egypt. Contrary to Erdoğan's uncompromising discourse, Gül used quitter diplomatic terms, perhaps hoping to mediate between the Brotherhood and the new regime while refraining from wholesale loss of Turkey's influence in Egypt. Gül voiced apprehensions about the "interruption of the democratic path" in Egypt, calling for political dialogue and holding prompt elections (Gül 2013c). He repeatedly called for national reconciliation among all political actors and de-escalation (Gül 2013d, 2013b, 2013e, 2013a). He accepted a meeting request from Amr Mousa, the former Arab League General Secretary and the Egyptian ambassador (Gül 2013b). In July 2014,

Gül congratulated the interim President, Adly Mansour, on Egypt's national day (Hürriyet Daily News 2013). He avoided personalising the issue by targeting specific Egyptian officials in his criticism of the violence during this period (Gül 2013e, 2014). On the contrary, Erdoğan relentlessly personally targeted El-Sisi, then-Vice president El-Baradei, and even the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Ahmed El-Tayeb (En Son Haber 2013; Habertürk 2013; TRT Haber 2013a). This disagreement appeared more evident when Egypt declared Turkey's ambassador a persona non granta; Gül asserted that this situation was a temporary one, Egypt and Turkey are tied with brotherly bonds, while Erdoğan argued that he has never respected the "putschists" (Anadolu Ajansı 2013b; CNN Türk 2013). As Turkey's presidential elections were approaching with discussions over who would succeed Erdoğan as a PM and chairman of the AKP, Gül conveyed facilitations to President El-Sisi after being elected president, aiming to reopen dialogue channels (Ünlü Ozan 2014). In his turn, Erdoğan implicitly criticised Gül, asserting that this step does not represent him (T24 2014b). Gül was upset about the radical rupture in bilateral relations and cautious about the impact of that on Turkey's interests in the East Mediterranean (Sever 2015). In 2014, Erdoğan was elected President with a pledge not to be a "protocol president" -like Gül- but an active one who could be held accountable only to the voters, not the parliament (TRT Haber 2014). Only one day before the end of Gül's term in the presidency, AKP held its first Extraordinary General Congress to elect a successor to Erdoğan, who had to resign according to the constitution. Erdoğan was unwilling to share power with a figure like Gül, whom he indirectly ousted from the party and closed his way to the premiership (Demirtaş 2014).

3.2.3 Instruments

Turkey employed three interconnected strategies to undermine the legitimacy of the new Egyptian government and capitalise on this domestically. Firstly, it acted as a normative power to delegitimise the government on international platforms and criticised its international backers' double standards. Secondly, it provided a platform for the Egyptian Brotherhood to undermine the El-Sisi government domestically. Finally, Turkey internalised events in Egypt to garner domestic support. The following sections address these tools.

3.2.3.1 Acting As a Normative Power

In criticising the new Egyptian government, Turkey positioned itself as a normative power relying on a minimal/electoral definition of democracy (Tetik 2021). Aydın-Düzgit (2020) argues that Turkey, as a non [liberal] democracy, promoted democracy abroad when it favoured its interests. Within this context, Turkey's MFA continuously condemned all human rights violations and death sentences given to the Brotherhood members in Egypt (T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı 2013d, 2013c, 2013f, 2013b, 2013a, 2014, 2015e, 2015d, 2015c, 2015b, 2015a, 2016b). Reacting to the Egyptian security forces' crackdown on pro-Morsi sit-ins, Erdoğan called the UNSC to convene and impose sanctions on the Egyptian government (Dünya Gazetesi 2013). In the 2013 UN General Assembly meeting, FM Davutoğlu attempted to lobby against Egypt in coordination with some African countries (Fahmy 2020). However, all these calls fell on deaf ears, which pushed Erdoğan to fiercely criticised international organisations for their passiveness toward the events in Egypt (BBC News Türkçe 2013a). Turkey also insisted on releasing political prisoners as a condition for normalising relations with Egypt, showcasing its pursuit of a value-based foreign policy and its desire to establish itself as a normative power (Anadolu Ajansı 2016).

After El-Sisi was elected president and the constitution's approval in Egypt by mid-2014, Erdoğan intensified his efforts to challenge El-Sisi's legitimacy on national and international platforms. During his speech at the UN General Assembly, he strongly criticised the Egyptian president. Thirdly, during a speech to the World Economic Forum in Istanbul, he again challenged El-Sisi's legitimacy and asserted that he would never stand beside him:

> Unfortunately, in a country where the national will manifested [..], the defence minister carried out a coup and gained legitimacy [..]. Interestingly, he appeared at the United Nations and gave a speech there. Is the United Nations now a place where coup plotters give speeches? As Tayyip Erdoğan, I believe in democracy; I cannot be with them [..] Because then I could not explain myself to my people. (Anadolu Ajansı 2014).

Firstly, during the 2014 Israeli military campaign on Gaza, Erdoğan accused El-Sisi of besieging and starving Gaza:

> They say that El-Sisi is a Muslim; what kind of Muslim are you? If you are a Muslim, how could you close the Rafah Crossing for humanitarian aid to your Muslim brothers? [..] (Haberler.com 2014).

3.2.3.2 Hosting The Brotherhood

In September 2014, following a Qatari-Egyptian reconciliation, Qatar deported several Brotherhood members in response to Egyptian and Saudi pressures (Mourad 2014). Turkey, in turn, embraced an open-door policy for thousands of the Brotherhood members to settle in Turkey (Tür 2019). Once in Turkey, they challenged the new regime's legitimacy and established a "parallel parliament" to topple the new Egyptian government (Yeni Şafak 2014). In this context, Erdoğan was highly committed to challenging El-Sisi's legitimacy through the Brotherhood, even inviting its leaders to his Presidential Inauguration Ceremony as "representatives of Egypt" (Al-Watan 2014).

However, this relationship between Turkey and the Egyptian Brotherhood came to a crossroads in 2015. In January, the Brotherhood issued a statement that openly incited its members to initiate a new "Jihadi/militant wave" against the government (Ikhwan Online 2015). Calls for violence gained momentum after death sentences were issued against Morsi, and a transnational group of religious scholars provided explanations justifying the use of violence against the Egyptian government (Hassan 2015). In this context, mainly young members of the Brotherhood established numerous terrorist organisations like "Hasm" and "Lewa El-Thawra", which conducted tens of terrorist attacks in 2015 and 2016 (Goma'a 2019).

One of the most important of these attacks was the assassination of the Egyptian Prosecutor General in June 2015, which, according to the Egyptian authorities, was masterminded by a Brotherhood member residing in Istanbul (Hamama 2017). This escalating militant trend, along with other factors, sparked an internal conflict between the Brotherhood's factions, namely the old guardians and the pro-violence young generation, which became overt by mid-2015 (Fahmy 2015). To make matters worse for Turkey, the Istanbul-based Brotherhood media platforms utilised highly extremist rhetoric against the Egyptian government (Magued 2018). For instance, Muhammed

Nasser, an Istanbul-based Brotherhood mouthpiece, overtly called on "revolutionaries" to assassinate Egyptian police officers (DocumentOne 2015). Wagdy Ghonim, a former member of the Brotherhood who had to leave Qatar for Turkey in 2014, kept labelling all President El-Sisi supporters as "infidels". He allegedly provided funds for the establishment of "Ajnad Masr", a terrorist organisation in 2014 (Gamil and Zhao 2023). Finally, the same period witnessed the collapse of the Brotherhood's mass mobilisation capacities in Egypt as its calls for mass demonstrations on the fifth anniversary of the Egyptian Uprising fell on deaf ears in Egypt (Hassan 2016). To sum up, the Brotherhood could not even preserve its organisational integrity, let alone overthrow the government or provide Turkey with strategic gains. Moreover, the new government proved resilient to all pressures and decisive in abolishing the Brotherhood from the political landscape, intensifying the crackdown on its members. Therefore, the transformations alarmed Turkey to reconsider its support for it and its policy towards Egypt in general. In other words, when conducting a benefit-cost calculation, the brotherhood provides Turkey with a minimal benefit at a high cost.

3.2.3.3 Internalisation

Hermann (1990) contends that a government could change or formulate discourse on foreign policy issues to distinguish themselves from their opponents. In the Turkish context, Saraçoğlu and Demirkol (2015) argue that AKP utilised Thatcher's "two-nation" strategy to exclude and stigmatise opponent societal sections that do not fit into its definition of the "nation" or embrace national values (*Milli Değerler*). Within this framework, since the beginning of the crisis, the AKP has employed events in Egypt to consolidate its constituencies and criticise the opposition. Moreover, Islamist NGOs organised several mass demonstrations to protest Morsi's removal and death sentences given to Brotherhood members (Tür 2019). Erdoğan adopted the Brotherhood's "Rabia" (four-finger[6]) Hand Gesture in a local rally (TRT Haber

[6] In fact, the Rabia hand gesture was first designed and marketed by Turkish activists and journalists (Öztürk 2017).

2013b).Erdoğan and Davutoğlu instrumentalised death sentences given to former President Morsi in April 2015, aiming at mass consolidation amid the critical electoral campaign by mid-2015. PM Davutoglu forged a new victimhood narrative based on the juxtaposition of heterogeneous binaries.

Davutoğlu juxtaposed CHP's leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu MHP's (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*) leader Devlet Bahçeli, and the Egyptian president in the same *darbeci* (Putschist) camp".

> They carried out Gezi provocations in Turkey a month before the coup in Egypt. When that failed in Turkey, there was a coup in Egypt a month later. They wanted to do the same in Turkey. I asked the opposition leaders, 'What is your stance on Yassıada [Trials]?[7]' Denounce the May 27th [1960 coup]! Have you ever heard [Kemal] Kılıçdaroğlu or [Devlet] Bahçeli denouncing the May 27th coup? Because they are all putschists.(NTV Haber 2015).

To complete the portrait, Erdoğan skilfully juxtaposed himself beside Former PM Menderes and Morsi within the "oppressed camp":

> They are threatening us today with the fate they prepared for Adnan Menderes in the past. What do they say? 'You will end up like Menderes.' Referring to the death penalty given to Morsi, they put my picture at the top and wrote a caption below it saying, 'Death penalty to the President who was elected with 52 per cent'. They do not know that martyrs do not die; martyrs live forever both in the sight of Allah and in the hearts of the nation. (T.C.Cumhurbaşkanlığı 2015).

The final goal of this discourse was undoubtedly capturing votes as President Erdoğan stated that the parliamentary election on June 7th "would prevent Morsi's execution" (Anadolu Ajansı 2015). Internalising events in Egypt on this scale made it hard for the Turkish elite to reverse the path with Egypt. The most striking example was when

[7] Yassıada trials were a series of trials of leaders of the Demokrat Parti (DP) that took place after the 1960 coup and ended with the execution of PM Menderes, FM Fatin Rüştü Zorlu.

Erdoğan openly rejected [8] [a Saudi initiative] to meet El-Sisi on the sidelines of their visit to Saudi Arabia in March 2015 despite the convergence of Egypt and Turkey's policies toward the Saudi-led Operation "Decisive Storm" in Yemen (Tür 2020) and El-Sisi's openness[9] to dialogue with him. Erdoğan did not want to risk his Islamic credentials by committing an "identity violation" amidst a critical electoral campaign.

3.3 Egypt: Goal/Problem Change

Heavily occupied with a severe domestic crisis and a zero-sum clash with the Brotherhood, Egypt's Turkey policy evolved gradually in parallel with the developments on different fronts. Initially, the interim government appeared willing to de-escalate tension with Turkey or at least delay the clash; the Egyptian MFA summoned the Turkish ambassador several times and called the Egyptian ambassador to Ankara back for consultation in response to Erdoğan's remarks (Reuters 2013b). The new PM, Hazem Al-Beblawi, asserted that Egypt is keen to "reveal the actual situation to Turkey and preserve bilateral relations" (Anadolu Agency 2013). Furthermore, Egypt sent messages through different channels to Turkey, calling for a toning down of criticism. For instance, Turkey's ambassador to Cairo tried to organise a call between Muhammed Al-Baradei, the new vice president, and PM Erdoğan to solve the crisis (Salaheldin 2019). However, Erdoğan claimed that Al-Baradei asked to talk with him, but he declined his proposal because he did not want to "allow the coup administration to exploit him" (T24 2013c). Conversely, the Egyptian Presidency and MFA considered Turkish officials' statements on the situation in Egypt "an unacceptable intervention" in Egyptian internal affairs (RT Arabic 2013). By the end of September 2013, it was evident that the state's victory over the Brotherhood was on the horizon as an Egyptian court declared the latter a banned group and another court

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[8] In response to a journalist's question on a possible meeting with El-Sisi, Erdoğan said, "You must be joking", and conditioned any improvement in bilateral relations on political reform in Egypt (Hürriyet 2015a).

[9] On the contrary, in response to a question concerning a possible meeting with Erdoğan, El-Sisi stated that: "Egypt has no interest in escalation [with Turkey]; the situation depends on Turkey's policy" and stipulated any advancement in relations on Turkey's halting intervention in Egyptian affairs and attempts to alter the status quo through the Brotherhood and their media outlets (State Information Service 2015a).

recommended the dissolution of the FJP (BBC News Arabic 2013a; Reuters 2013a) Accordingly, given Ankara's limited economic and political leverage in Cairo, Egypt felt more confident in partially relinquishing Turkey. In this context, Cairo escalated its response to Turkey and cancelled the "Sea of Friendship" joint naval manoeuvres with Turkey, scheduled for October 21 and 28 in Turkey and called its ambassador back to Cairo (Aljazeera net 2013). Finally, on November 23rd, the Egyptian MFA summoned Turkey's Ambassador in Cairo and declared him persona non grata, downgrading relations to the level of Charges d'affaires, and Turkey reciprocated (France 24 2013; T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı 2013e).

3.3.1 System-Level Factors

During Obama's second term, Washington's growing prioritisation of security favoured the new government in Egypt as the U.S. acquiesced to Morsi's removal. Initially, Obama called on the Egyptian military to return to democracy and launched a review of the U.S. aid that Egypt received and halted the delivery of four F-16 fighter jets to Egypt, cancelled the "Bright Star" joint military drills with the Egyptian military (Fabbrini and Yossef 2015). However, the Obama administration avoided defining Morsi's dismissal as a "coup" since such a definition would have required the total suspension of aid to an increasingly important ally (Shama 2017). Subsequently, Secretary of State John Kerry visited Cairo in November and asserted that he saw "signs Egypt's military-backed rulers would embrace democracy." (Jamieson 2013). Washington rapidly realised that Egypt was no longer without options (Fabbrini and Yossef 2015); Russia, which perceived the Arab Uprisings as a threat, returned to the Middle East and seemed eager to seize any opportunity to enhance relations with Egypt (Dannreuther 2019).

Regionally, capitalising on the war on terrorism, Egypt received massive financial support estimated at $23 billion from Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states (Kausch 2015). This tremendous political support and financial inflows should have strengthened the new administration's self-confidence to such a high degree that Egypt returned a Qatari deposit of $2.5 billion (Al-Jazeera Net 2013). Moreover, the Egyptian administration successfully garnered Arab states's support in its crisis with

Turkey in response to the latter's unsuccessful attempt to discuss the Egyptian crisis in the UNSC. King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia stated support for the new regime, calling on those who "propagate sedition" (meaning Turkey and Qatar) to stop interfering in Egyptian internal affairs (Al-Arabiya 2013). Jordan and UAE followed Saudi Arabia's steps. Cairo's mobilisation of Arab support appeared efficient in deterring Turkey; FM Çavuşoğlu admitted the Egyptian role in isolating Turkey in an interview later in 2016:

> Upon assuming the MFA [in August 2014], our relations with Saudi Arabia were not at the desired level. Why? Because of Egypt, we know. [..] Likewise, there was a coldness in our relations with the United Arab Emirates. Again, that is attributable to Egypt (T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı 2016a).

To sum up, after Morsi's ouster, Cairo was subjected to lacklustre international pressures from the U.S. and, to a lesser extent, from the EU. However, these pressures did not go far enough to impose sanctions on the new government. Since Erdoğan was the fiercest critic of the Egyptian government, the latter had to address his criticisms.

3.3.2 Unit-Level Factors

To better understand the domestic impetus in Egypt's policy toward Turkey, we consider Goldmann's (2014) three dimensions mentioned in section 2.1. Firstly, the degree of the ruling elite's commitment to the existing policy. In this regard, General El-Sisi was the country's de facto ruler during the transitional process based on his overwhelming popularity. The only domestic actor who disagreed with his views on policy toward the Brotherhood during the transitional process was Vice President Muhammed Al-Baradei, who resigned in August (Fahmy 2015). Al-Baradei was, in fact, eager to preserve relations with Turkey. However, as mentioned earlier, Erdoğan did not hesitate to antagonise him. Once General El-Sisi assumed the presidency by mid-2014, he became the centre of gravity of foreign policymaking, like his predecessors (Achrainer 2022; Shama 2021).

The military and the MFA that dominated Egyptian foreign policymaking were all antagonised by Erdoğan's remarks. From the beginning, the military considered the model of civil-military relations that Turkey's AKP promoted a threat to its interests

but showed interest in another Turkish model from the 1980s.[10] Turkey's criticism of the Egyptian military was thought to undermine the latter's image. This was important because the military was, in the Egyptian ruling elite's strategic thinking, Cairo's primary asset in overcoming economic restraint in any regional rivalry (Shama 2020). Likewise, during Morsi's short term in power, the MFA resisted the Brotherhood's attempts to penetrate its ranks (Aly 2014). In addition, part of the zero-sum clash between the state and the Brotherhood laid behind the latter's challenge to the new regime's legitimacy, whether through discourse, violence, or rejection of any compromise (Nathan and Brown 2015). In alignment with this, Cairo knew that Turkey's challenge to the new regime was coordinated with the Brotherhood. Al-Watan newspaper reported details of a "secret transnational meeting" of the Brotherhood in Istanbul days after Morsi's removal, during which the group leaders discussed the strategies for resisting the new Egyptian government (Abdel Ghani and Mahfouz 2013). Therefore, the centres of power in Egyptian foreign policy were not committed to the previous policy. Secondly, the widespread support for a favourable policy toward Turkey was dramatically declining. A survey shows that except for the pro-FJP constituency, the vast majority (69%) of the Egyptian public in the post-Brotherhood period had a negative perception of Turkey and its regional role (Zogby Analytics 2013). Another poll conducted by a Turkish Think Tank, TESEV, demonstrates the sharp decline in Turkey's positive image in Egypt from 84% in 2012 to 38% in 2013. In addition, 68% of the respondents considered Turkey's attitude toward the Egyptian government "unfriendly" (Akgün and Gündoğar 2014). Egyptian Liberal and Secular forces showed sympathy for the Gezi protesters and viewed Erdoğan and Morsi as majoritarian leaders who "reduced democracy only to ballots"

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[10] Early in 2011, Field Marshal Hussein Tantawi, the head of the ruling Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), reportedly ordered Turkey's 1982 Constitution to be translated into Arabic to usher in writing a "Supra-constitutional document" known in Arabic as *Wathiqat El-Salmi* named after Ali El-Selmi, then-deputy PM. This document would be a framework of power-sharing arrangements (Cook 2012).Tantawi was interested in a Turkish Model of civil-military relations that goes back to the 1980s rather than the one that the AKP introduced after 2011. In the 2012 Egyptian Constitution, drafted during the rule of the brotherhood, some articles drew inspiration from the Turkish military's influence over politics in the 1980s, including military autonomy from civilian supervision and military domination of the National Defence Council and special status to the military in the constitution. The mentioned articles remained largely unchanged in the 2014 constitution (Springborg 2014).

(El-Labbad 2013). Therefore, since Erdoğan left no component of the anti-Brotherhood coalition (the military, state apparatus, civilian forces) uncriticised, Cairo believed Erdoğan was burning the bridges.

3.3.3 Instruments: In Search of Turkey's Achilles' Heels

During the 2014 annual meeting of the UN General Assembly, President Erdoğan increased his anti-El-Sisi rhetoric to the international level, criticising world leaders and the United Nations for what he viewed as a legitimisation of a person who conducted a coup d'etat and murdered thousands of innocent people" (T.C.Cumhurbaşkanlığı 2014). He also declined a proposal to attend a dinner at the UN to avoid sharing the same table with "such a person like El-Sisi" (Anadolu Agency 2015). This marked an unprecedented personal insult to an Egyptian president on an international platform. El-Sisi, in turn, responded with a statement that marked Egypt's policy toward Turkey:

> A president personally insulted me several times, perhaps 20 times or more, I did not respond, and I never will [..] what matters here is the action you take, not the words you say [..] we will never insult anyone, even those who deserve to be insulted (Al-Masry Al-Youm 2014).

Henceforth, the Egyptian president would ignore his Turkish counterpart's aggressive remarks. Instead, he responded with more concrete actions, one of which was to lead a conclusive diplomatic campaign at the UN to abort Turkey's effort to be a non-permanent member of the UNSC (Avni 2014).

3.3.3.1 Counterbalancing

Despite the decline in Egypt's regional power from 1967 onwards, the country still possesses the capacity to counter the attempts of emerging regional actors to assume regional leadership. As a regional reference that other regional actors seek to strengthen their aspirations, Egypt aligns with actors with mutual interests against rising powers (El-Labbad 2014). Egypt often implemented this alliance policy toward Turkey during the period in question. One of these occasions was when Egypt resisted

Saudi pressures to integrate Turkey into a Sunni bloc in Yemen. Instead, President El-Sisi proposed creating a “Joint Military Arab Force” to counter terrorism, excluding Turkey (Piazza 2019). A more critical example was Egypt’s growing engagement with Turkey’s traditional adversaries, Greece and the RoC, from 2013 onwards. In December 2013, Egypt and the RoC concluded a framework agreement on exploiting hydrocarbon reservoirs across the median line between the two countries in the Mediterranean (Al-Sharq Al-Awsat 2014). Later, in 2014, Egypt, Greece, and RoC’s Foreign Ministers met on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly -where President Erdoğan verbally targeted his Egyptian counterpart- and expressed solidarity with the Egyptian people against terrorism (Al-Quds Al-Arabi 2014). Greek and Cypriot Ministers asserted that they would serve as “Egypt’s ambassadors to the EU”, a vital diplomatic aid that Cairo needed while facing international pressures (Shama 2019). Subsequently, the three countries' presidents held nine annual trilateral summits between 2014 and 2021, known as the tripartite cooperation mechanism (Egyptian Presidency 2014, 2015b, 2015a, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021). Additionally, the armies of the three countries conducted a series of military and naval drills called “Medusa Drills” in the Mediterranean (Ahram Online 2016a). However, it is vital to note that Egypt has emphasised that its relations with the two countries are not aimed at any third party. Indeed, Egypt’s rapprochement with RoC and Greece since 2013 should not be exclusively reduced to only an act of counterbalancing Turkey as it had some pragmatist aspects. On the one hand, Greece's investments in Egypt are estimated at $3 billion, and the Greek market has the potential to be the Egyptian exports’ gate to Europe (Shama 2019). Additionally, Egypt’s aspiration to be a regional energy hub is thought to be achieved in the partnership framework with Greece and the RoC. Pro-government circles argue that the discovery of the supergiant Zohr natural gas field on the Egyptian coasts in the Mediterranean in 2015, with reserves estimated at 30 trillion cubic feet, could not have been possible without concluding maritime agreements with the RoC and Greece (Suleiman 2017). The official narrative also aligns with this argument. President El-Sisi has consistently asserted that ending the country’s power outage crisis in 2012 and 2013 can be attributed to the signing of maritime border demarcation deals with Greece and the RoC, which enabled Egypt to explore gas in the Zohr field (Abdel Aleem 2022). Nevertheless, certain Egyptian actions regarding the Cyprus issue were undoubtedly directed at Turkey. For instance, in 2014, Egypt

tried to isolate the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) diplomatically by excluding the latter's name from the final declaration of the OIC Ministers of Foreign Affairs meeting (Masrawy 2014).

3.3.3.2 Internalisation

As the new Egyptian Government perceived Turkey and AKP as threat elements and antithesis to the model of the civil-military relation it introduced, the official discourse of the Egyptian MFA and media propagated Turkey as a model of "what not to be," indicating to Erdoğan's increasing "authoritarian tendencies" (Aydın-Düzgit and Dandashly 2022). Although President El-Sisi himself refrained from reciprocating Erdoğan's criticisms, the state-controlled TV channels and newspapers relentlessly demonised the Turkish leader and his government. The main challenge that El-Sisi had to address was, undoubtedly, terrorism. The country witnessed around 1300 terrorist attacks between 2013 and 2017. In quantity and quality, these attacks posed an existential threat to the state and regime security. (Al-Behairy 2017). In dealing with this challenge, the government embraced a "one-size-fits-all" policy that perceived and propagated the Brotherhood and ISIS as belonging to the same terrorist bloc (Gamil and Zhao 2023). In December 2013, the Egyptian government announced the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organisation (AlArabiya 2013). In this context, the Egyptian government capitalised on Turkey's relations with the Brotherhood to consolidate internal support. Turkey was then portrayed as a sponsor of terrorism. For instance, in the state-sponsored TV series "Al-Ekhteyar" (the choice), a terrorist organisation leader was portrayed moving to fight in Syria through Turkey's Hatay City, attaining generous support from "Turkish brothers."(Ahmed Elawady 2023).

In alignment with this policy, in responding to Erdoğan's statements, Egypt focused on accusing Turkey of meddling in its internal affairs and funding terrorism (BBC News Arabic 2014; Daily News Egypt 2014). These perceptions were translated into a concrete policy of securitisation. For instance, following Erdoğan's speech at the UN in 2014, the Egyptian authorities imposed restrictions on travelling to Turkey for young people between the ages of 18-40, including attaining official permission from security agencies, justifying the decision as a measure to reduce young people's

joining terrorist organisations (Al-Arabiya 2014). Moreover, Egypt's unilateral cancellation of the Ro-Ro agreement was justified with Cairo's security concerns about the possibility of Ankara exploiting the agreement to support the Brotherhood logistically (Salaheldin 2019).

3.3.3.3 Easy and Provocative Choices

Although Egypt's responses to Turkey's policy regarding Egyptian domestic affairs were highly defensive, there are some signs of proactive moves regarding Turkey's "sensitive issues", depicted by then-FM Nabil Fahmy as "the easiest but the most provocative" actions:

> We held internal discussions at the Egyptian Foreign Ministry on how to respond [to Turkey]. The easiest but most provocative approach was for our public discourse to highlight both the Kurdish issue and the tragic Armenian Genocide. These were highly sensitive issues for Turkey as a whole, well beyond the Islamist ruling party or its constituency (Fahmy 2020).

Egypt aimed to signal messages to Turkey and deter it from meddling in its internal affairs. Firstly, Egypt utilised the Armenian issue to criticise Turkey; Pope Tawadros II of Alexandria visited Armenia to attend a commemoration program of the "Armenian Genocide", which he described as the "most significant crime committed during the First World War" (Al-Youm Al-Sabe' 2015). Later, 337 Members of the Egyptian Parliament submitted a request calling on the assembly to recognise the "1915 Armenian Genocide" (Ahram Online 2016b).

Secondly, Egypt cashed on the 2016 coup attempt to signal messages to Turkey. Despite officially refraining from commenting on the coup attempt in Turkey, the state-controlled media enthusiastically welcomed the coup in its first hours and went so far as to portray it as a "revolutionary act". Ironically, on the morning after the coup, Egyptian newspapers, including Al-Ahram, rushed to publish their issues with headlines declaring, "The Turkish army overthrew Erdoğan." (Al-Ayari 2016). Egypt also thwarted a statement calling for respecting Turkey's elected government in the UNSC. Egypt argued that the latter cannot classify governments as "elected" (RT Arabic 2016). Egypt has also abstained from a draft resolution in the OIC to classify

the Gülenist Cult, which Turkey has accused of orchestrating the 2016 coup attempt, as a terrorist organisation (Aljazeera net 2016). In addition, a group of members of the parliament requested to grant political asylum to Fethullah Gülen as a response to Turkey's hosting Brotherhood members (Ahram Online 2016b). The Egyptian PM asserted that the government did not receive such a request from Gülen but could evaluate it if asked (Daily Sabah Arabic 2016). State-owned Daily Al-Ahram magazine interviewed Fethullah Gülen, who condemned the Turkish government's foreign and domestic policies (Al-Husseiny 2017). Nevertheless, there is no sign that these moves were transformed into a full-fledged pro-Gülenist policy. Thirdly, in June 2016, Hürriyet, a Major Turkish newspaper, published an article accusing the Egyptian government of cooperating with the PKK. According to the intelligence report that Hürriyet claimed to have access to, Egyptian officials met PKK high-ranking members in coordination with the Iraqi federal government (Hürriyet 2016). However, there is no proof that this was translated into any concrete policy backing transnational Kurdish Irredentism. On the contrary, Egypt vehemently rejected the Kurdistan Regional Government's independence referendum in 2017 and called for respect for Iraq's territorial integrity (Egypt Today 2017).

3.4 Economic Relations: Limited Sanctions

After the 2011 Uprising, PM Erdoğan visited Egypt with a delegation of 250 Businessmen and signed ten agreements on economic cooperation with the SCAF government, established a High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council (Dünya Gazetesi 2011; Köroğlu 2011). In April 2012, the two countries concluded a three-year Roll-on-Roll-off (Ro-Ro) Transportation MoU that enabled Turkey to use Egyptian ports and lands as a transit route to export electronic appliances, textile products and foodstuff to Gulf markets instead of a war-ridden Syrian route. Egypt, in turn, used Turkish ports as a transit route to East European markets (Al-Jazeera Net 2012). During Morsi's short term, Turkey directed much of its external economic assistance to Egypt, as discussed earlier in this chapter. Moreover, the second meeting of the Strategic Cooperation Council resulted in the signing of 27 protocols mainly on economic cooperation (Yeni Şafak 2012). All these moves have paid off, as bilateral trade peaked at more than $5 billion in 2012 and 2013, while investments kept

growing. Nonetheless, during this period, Egypt and Turkey set $10 billion as a goal for bilateral trade volume to be reached by 2015, which has never materialised as of the writing of this thesis by mid-2024.

Despite initial assertions from Egyptian and Turkish officials that political tensions after July 2013 would not impact bilateral economic relations, several economic measures were later taken that negatively affected their economic ties. Firstly, the Egyptian government decided not to renew the Ro-Ro MoU with Turkey in response to Erdoğan's sharp remarks at the UN in 2014 (Al-Shorouq 2014). Egyptian officials justified this decision with economic infeasibility, with only $13 million in revenues in three years (Mosa'ad 2015). However, the Ro-Ro line was significant for Egypt in enhancing its position vis-à-vis the GCC and its transit trade and facilitating its access to markets like the Russian market (Mason 2016). The primary motivation behind this decision was security concerns, as mentioned earlier in this chapter. Turkey responded by imposing an anti-dumping duty on Egyptian polystyrene exports, which decreased from around $140 million in 2014 to almost zero in 2017 (Salaheldin 2019). Egypt, in turn, responded by imposing undeclared restrictions on Turkish exports via tightening bureaucratic procedures, especially those related to obtaining visas for entry to Egypt (Yeşilyurt 2020). This bilateral economic arm wrestling appears to have negatively affected mainly Turkish exports to Egypt, which diminished by around 30% from $3.44 billion in 2014 to $2.55 billion in 2017 (see **Figure 2**).

Turkish direct investments dropped to minus values in 2016 and 2017. [11] Moreover, the number of Egyptian tourists visiting Turkey decreased by around %14 between 2014-2016 due to the restrictions imposed by Egyptian authorities and the security issues in Turkey during this period (see **Figure 9**). Part of this decline could be attributed to Egypt's protectionist measures and increases in tariffs on "luxury goods" imports from different countries in early 2016, including Turkey and China, to

[11] The data provided by the Turkish Central Bank appears to be more organised and consistent with the statements of Turkish and Egyptian officials compared to the data from the Central Bank of Egypt. Therefore, due to this significant disparity, the author relied on the Turkish Central Bank's data. The Central Bank of Egypt data (in $million) was as follows: 2013/14: 31, 2014/15: 44.3, 2015/16: 77.5, 2016/17: 35.5, 2017/18: 41, 2018/19: 15.4, 2017/20: -9.6, 2020/21: 138.1, 2021/22 103.5, 2022/23: 118.4.

preserve declining U.S. dollar reserves (Khan and Miller 2016; Shamseddin 2016). On the other hand, Egypt managed to reduce the trade deficit with Turkey and increased its exports to Turkey by %18 from $1.4 billion in 2014 to $1.9 billion in 2017.

Figure 2 Economic Relations (2014-2017).

Source: Adapted from UN Comtrade, Turkish Central Bank (TCMB EVDS) data

3.5 Conclusion

Between mid-2013 and mid-2016, Egyptian-Turkish relations saw a significant decline primarily due to Turkey's uncompromising stance regarding Egypt's domestic politics, especially after the ouster of Morsi, which Ankara viewed as a setback to its regional aspirations. This period marked a shift in Turkey's policy towards Egypt, utilising criticism on international platforms, providing refuge to Brotherhood members, and using the situation to rally domestic support while fearing similar military interventions at home. In response, the Egyptian government leveraged the situation by aligning with Turkey’s rivals like Greece and the RoC, exploiting sensitive issues like the Armenian and Kurdish issues, and implementing securitisation policies against perceived threats from Turkey. Additionally, the economic ties between the two countries were strained.

CHAPTER 4

REGIONAL RIVALRIES (2016-20)

This chapter delves into the regional rivalries in which both nations were involved from mid-2016 to late 2020. It begins with an analysis of the programme change in Turkey's policy toward Egypt, together with other factors, marked a shift in relations with the system-level factors that overshadowed the unit-level factors. The chapter then discusses the evolution of bilateral engagement through a short-lived détente and rivalry in the East Mediterranean and Libya. Within this context, the chapter contends that while the intensification of these rivalries appeared to put both countries at odds, it significantly contributed to their recognition of each other's vital interests. Moreover, the chapter discussed economic relations within this period and the increasing tendency toward compartmentalising political and economic relations.

4.1 Foreign Policy Change

4.1.1 System-Level Factors

Shifts in the international and regional contexts have made change in Turkey's policy toward the Middle East and Egypt inevitable. In 2017, Donald Trump assumed office in the U.S. and denounced Obama's approach toward the Islamist movements. President Trump viewed the Brotherhood, Iran, and the IS as all members of the same monolithic terrorism camp (Stein 2021b). Saudi Arabia, in turn, was encouraged to initiate a new counteroffensive against its regional adversaries. On June 5th, 2017, Egypt joined Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain (known as the Arab Quartet) to impose an air, land and sea blockade on Qatar due to its support to the Brotherhood and relations with Turkey and Iran (France 24 2017). In the East Mediterranean, Turkey's relations with Greece and the RoC deteriorated more with

the collapse of the Cyprus talks by mid-2017. Egypt now intersects two hostile regional alliances for Turkey: the Arab Quartet and the Greek-Cypriot-Egyptian alliance in the East Mediterranean. Therefore, Turkey needed to revise its Egypt policy, which yielded a program change in the instruments it employed in the previous period. However, this change was unsustainable and was interrupted due to the regional developments. What further complicated the situation in the East Mediterranean is the increasing political and economic influence of Gulf states, namely Saudi Arabia and the UAE, in Egypt and Libya, and increasing relations with Greece and Cyprus (Abdel Ghafar 2021). Even though it has experienced setbacks in the Middle East from 2013 onwards, Turkey proved itself to be a regional actor that should be considered (Ayata 2015). Turkey's outperformance of most East Mediterranean nations, including Egypt, in macroeconomic terms (GDP, share of high technology to the GDP) and military terms (military expenditure, defence manufacturing) allowed it to allocate more resources to an ambitious military build-up (Stergiou and Kollias 2022). While this motivated Turkey to project its power on several regional theatres, it pushed Egypt to play its traditional role of counterbalancing emerging regional powers (El-Labbad 2014) by enhancing its alliances with Turkey's rivals further. In addition, the growing tendency of the international system toward a multipolar form paved the way for middle powers to be more assertive. Egypt's growing middle power aspirations manifested in comprehensive military modernisation projects, including massive arms deals with European states, enhancing Egyptian naval forces (Shama 2020). This feature was evident in Turkey's assertive moves after 2016, exemplified by frequent military interventions in Syria, Iraq, and Libya (Altunişik and Martin 2023).

4.1.2 Turkey: A Program Change

4.1.2.1 Unit, Individual-Level Factors

In May 2016, PM Davutoglu resigned and was succeeded by Binali Yıldırım, who was believed to be more loyal to Erdoğan and less interested in foreign policy (Yurteri 2019). This change paved the way for significant revisions of Turkish foreign policy. After the failed coup attempt on July 15, 2016, Turkish politics witnessed a

realignment of the ruling AKP and nationalist MHP. In April 2017, the AKP-MHP coalition, known later as *Cumhur İttifakı* (People's Alliance), managed to garner 51.4% of the popular vote for constitutional amendments that officially transformed the governmental system into a presidential one. The new system came into force after Erdoğan's re-election in 2018, formally granting him all executive powers, senior officials' appointments, and indisputable influence over foreign policymaking (Yurteri 2019). Erdoğan's strong control over decision-making mechanisms with the presidential system and the absence of rivals, especially with Davutoglu's departure in May 2016, facilitated Foreign Policy change in this period and beyond. The literature on Foreign Policy Change suggests that transformations in foreign policy under centralised systems are easier (Haesebrouck and Joly 2021). In line with the domestic realignment, Turkey's foreign policy has shifted away to a nationalist militarised orientation that was translated to a more visible role for the Minister of Defence Hulusi Akar in foreign policy (Taş 2022c). Furthermore, individual leadership factors became more visible, and there was an evident increase in resorting to [calculated] risk-taking, confrontational, and coercive diplomacy in almost all foreign policy areas (Aras 2019).

4.1.2.1.1 Indifferent Constituencies and Growing Opposition

Goldmann (2014) defines three domestic dimensions influencing the likelihood and extent of a foreign policy change. The first dimension is the degree of the ruling elite's commitment to the existing policy area. Some internal segments within the ruling AKP were highly critical of the government's policy toward Egypt. For instance, in 2014, the PM deputy Bülent Arınç called for a reconciliation process with Egypt similar to that of Qatar and Egypt, asserting that Turkey has to deal with a new status quo that has emerged in Egypt (Kara 2014; T24 2014a). In addition, former President Abdullah Gül called for the government to normalise relations with Egypt in a meeting with Erdoğan (Sputnik Türkiye 2015). More importantly, as discussed in the previous section, the leadership and the bureaucratic cadres showed flexibility to change. The second dimension considers the degree of popular domestic support, indifference or opposition to the policy. According to leading Turkish public opinion polls, there has been a significant decline in support of the government's Egypt policy, with only

29.8% of the Turkish public viewing Turkey's policy toward Egypt as successful. In comparison, 46.4% asserted that Turkey should recognise the new Egyptian administration (Aydın et al. 2013). Besides, public approval of the government's overall foreign policy waned to only 23.8% in 2015, while that of the government's Middle East policy fell to 17.9% in 2016 (Aydın et al. 2015, 2016). In addition, the Turkish opposition parties' criticisms of the government's foreign policy that led to Turkey's regional isolation were also vocal and unignorable (Esmer 2015). Aiming to pressure the government, the main opposition party, CHP, sent two delegations to Egypt in 2013 and 2016 to meet Egyptian officials. The heads of the delegations expressed their concerns about Turkey's relations with Egypt and criticised Erdoğan's harsh statements (Anadolu Ajansı 2013a; Milliyet 2016). The third dimension is the degree of centrality or significance of the issue the policy addresses on the domestic agenda. Turkish public opinion polls show that between 2013 and 2017, the Syrian Civil War and the war on terrorism were the main priorities of the Turkish population regarding foreign policy, not Egypt. Only 0.3% of Turkish voters perceived Egypt as a "serious threat" to their country. Moreover, the participants saw Egypt as the third most influential country in the Middle East's future after the U.S. and Turkey (Aydın et al. 2015). Therefore, the previous harsh discourse was inadequate to garner domestic support because neither events in Egypt were a priority for the Turkish public, nor was the government's foreign policy performance an excellent reference to capitalise on.

4.1.2.1.2 Leadership: Failure-induced Learning, Procedural Pragmatism

From 2013 through 2016, Turkey's Egypt policy experienced significant setbacks due to a lack of clear objectives and unsustainable, inefficient tools. On an individual level, Erdoğan's attempts to impose international sanctions on the Egyptian government in the UNSC and delegitimise El-Sisi in the UN General Assembly and other global platforms proved inconclusive. El-Sisi consolidated his international legitimacy by engaging with world leaders, including U.S. President Obama (Ahram Online 2014) and secured a non-permanent seat in the UNSC in 2015 (State Information Service 2015b). In addition, Erdoğan's criticism of the Egyptian government regarding the 2014 Israeli War on Gaza neither paid off in a Turkish mediatory role in ceasefire talks nor contributed to the delegitimisation of the Egyptian government. Hence, Erdoğan

realised that the new Egyptian regime's international legitimacy was no longer disputable and refrained from delegitimising it on global platforms. Finally, Erdoğan realised he "had something to lose" by unilaterally, fiercely criticising El-Sisi, as Turkish exports to Egypt declined from $3.44 billion in 2014 to $2.55 billion in 2017 (i.e. equivalent to the volume of Turkish exports to Egypt back in 2009). Egypt reduced the trade balance gap with Turkey from around $2 billion in 2014 to $0.5 billion in 2017. Thus, following PM Davutoglu's departure in mid-2016, the new PM, Binali Yıldırım, expressed Turkey's interest in revitalising mainly economic relations with Egypt regardless of the "2013 regime change, unfair death sentences" (CNN Türk 2016; Dünya Gazetesi 2016). Gradually, Erdoğan acquiesced to the status quo in Egypt upon a condition from the latter. He stated:

> Egypt is one of the most influential states in the region. [..] We do not and cannot have any problems with our Egyptian brothers. However, our diplomatic relations with the Egyptian government are at the chargé d'affaires level [..]I believe that positive steps to be taken in Egypt, especially the amnesty for political prisoners, will create social peace in Egypt and improve its relations with foreign countries. (Anadolu Ajansı 2017b).

The dynamic Failure-Induced Learning also manifested at an organisational level, i.e. Turkey's Foreign Ministry. Turkey's normative power and image as a democratic role model gradually waned after the Gezi protests and the 2016 coup attempt (Ayata 2015). In response to European criticisms regarding its dealings with those it held responsible for orchestrating the coup attempt, in addition to other dissident factions, Turkey itself began to use the rhetoric of non-interference- which Egypt used to use in response to Turkish criticisms. Consequently, Turkey shifted away from a value-based foreign policy and refrained from using democracy and human rights promotion rhetoric – that could serve as an argument against it- against the Egyptian government. Therefore, it was no surprise that from 2016 onward, the Turkish MFA ceased issuing statements on death sentences given to Brotherhood members, including Morsi. The Turkish MFA's last official statement regarding this issue was dated June 19, 2016, and was about a life sentence given to Morsi (T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı 2016b). Except for two statements in 2019 regarding Morsi's death (T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı 2019d, 2019a), the MFA did not issue any statements about Egypt's internal affairs or human

rights record after the 2016 coup attempt. This is even though nothing has changed in Egypt's domestic policy after 2016; courts gave Morsi two life sentences in 2017 and tens of death sentences to the Brotherhood members in 2018 (DW 2018; Hasanein 2017). Moreover, the inconsistency between the democratic norms that Turkey advocated on international platforms and its domestic and regional practices (e.g. criticising El-Sisi for conducting a coup d'etat but enjoying good relations with Sudan's Al-Bashir who seized power through a coup d'etat) was unsustainable (Futák-Campbell and De Sauvage Nolting 2022). Unlike all the coups that Turkey witnessed from 1960 onward, the July 2016 coup attempt was carried out aside from the chain of command by a faction of generals associated with a religious cult (FETÖ) led by a clerk. Therefore, the coup attempt should have proved that the AKP's and Erdoğan's concerns of a possible military intervention in Turkey -similar to that of Egypt- were unfounded. In addition, Turkey's policy toward the Brotherhood has shown early signs of adjustment. In 2014 and 2015, three of the Brotherhood's TV channels streaming from Istanbul, known for their radical discourse, Raba'a and Masr Al'an, and El-Thawra, had to shut down due to a financial crisis. Irrespective of whether that resulted from a financial crisis or Turkish instructions, some pro-government Egyptian observers interpreted it as Turkey revising its policy toward the Brotherhood (BBC News Arabic 2015a). The remaining two channels, Al-Sharq and Mekameleen, survived albeit with a shift toward a more moderate discourse. In 2015, Ayman Nour, an Egyptian Liberal politician, acquired the Al-Sharq TV channel from Basem Khafagy, a businessman associated with Islamist circles(Abdelfattah 2015). Nour appears to be assigned to moderate the Brotherhood's channels' discourse as he was believed to be able to address a broader Egyptian audience. Magued (2018) traced the trajectory of these channels, contending that they embarked on employing more effective, outreaching communication techniques while diversifying their guests to include figures with different political affiliations. Gradually, the interests of the Egyptian Brotherhood in Turkey, now merely a part of a weak diaspora opposition movement, became strictly tied to Turkey's policy (Taş 2022b). This was epitomised by Turkey granting citizenship to leaders of the Egyptian Brotherhood and other Egyptian opposition movements, like Ayman Nour and Mahmoud Hussein, from 2015 onwards (Mamdouh and Hamama 2024). Erdoğan himself became careful to keep a distance from the Brotherhood; e.g. he reinterpreted the meaning of the Brotherhood's

Rabia hand gesture to include nationalist symbols, advocating "One Nation, One State, One Flag, One Homeland" (Türkiye Gazetesi 2013). He consistently utilised the nationalist version of Rabia in electoral rallies, especially after the rise of pro-Kurdish HDP (Halkların Demokratik Partisi) in the 2015 elections and the breakdown of the Kurdish Peace Process (*Çözüm Süreci*). Erdoğan even posed with a statuette of the hand gesture in his office (Anadolu Ajansı 2015b). Finally, he incorporated this slogan into the party's bylaw, asserting it was his party's slogan, not that of terrorists (PolitikYol 2017). The de facto collapse of the pragmatist power maximisation equation (high benefit at low cost) that Taş (2022a) introduced (see section 3.1), coupled with the radical transformation and disintegration of the Egyptian Brotherhood (see section 3.2.3.2), should undoubtedly have prompted Turkey's leadership to revise its policy. All these shifts demonstrate the procedural pragmatist nature of Turkey's Egypt policy. Once previous policies and tools proved inefficient and even counterproductive, Turkey's leadership showed flexibility to change the course and reconfigure new tools or reframe the existing tools to be justifiable and politically practical to garner public support, all without overall jeopardising its general ideological framework. All these changes indicate a critical programme change (change in instruments) in Turkey's policy toward Egypt.

4.1.3 Adjustments in Egypt's Turkey Policy

In contrast to Turkey, changes in Egypt's policy toward Turkey were merely quantitative adjustments that changed according to regional conjuncture rather than a goal/problem or a program change. The domestic context of Egypt, including the structure of the Egyptian leadership and the ruling elite, remained almost unchanged in this period. The only change was that El-Sisi was re-elected in the 2018 presidential elections with 97% votes. The 2019 constitutional amendments increased presidential terms from four to six years, enabling El-Sisi to run for a third term in 2024, expanding his power to broader spheres while attaching more roles for the Armed Forces in foreign policy (Achrainer 2019). The structure of the foreign policymaking process also remained unchanged, with the president preserving his central role. The role of the Armed Forces in shaping Egypt's Libya policy was evident in forming the National Committee on Libya headed by the Chief of General Staff, who was responsible for

cooperation with the Haftar-led LNA (Akl 2017). The limited shifts in Turkey's and, to a lesser extent, Egypt's policies paved the way for a decline in domestic and bilateral factors' influence on bilateral relations. However, changes in the regional context and the two countries' involvement in two opposing regional camps overshadowed the bilateral dimension yet paradoxically contributed to a thaw in relations in the following period. The following sections trace the trajectory of bilateral relations in the shadow of regional rivalries from 2018 to late 2020.

4.2 A Short-Lived Détente

Following PM Davutoglu's resignation in May 2016, the new PM, Binali Yıldırım launched a normalisation process with Russia and Israel and expressed Turkey's willingness to develop relations with Egypt, especially in the economic field (CNN Türk 2016; Dünya Gazetesi 2016). In response, the Egyptian MFA asserted that Egypt is willing to improve relations with Turkey on condition that the latter recognises the new status quo in Egypt (CNN Arabic 2016a). Later, FM Çavuşoğlu confirmed that Turkey has the political will to improve relations with Egypt if the latter is willing to initiate a domestic political reconciliation process (Anadolu Agency Ar 2016a). Conversely, while welcoming any effort to normalise Egyptian-Turkish relations on the principle of non-interference, FM Shoukry considered his counterpart's comments on Egyptian domestic affairs as an unacceptable attempt to impose "tutelage" on his country (CNN Arabic 2016b). More importantly, President El-Sisi asserted that "there is no reason for hostility between Egyptians and Turks", indicating that Egypt gives Turkish officials a "chance" to revise their policies (Anadolu Agency Ar 2016b). As a result, Shoukry and Çavuşoğlu had a brief meeting on the sidelines of the Non-Aligned Movement summit in Venezuela, the first since 2013 (AlArabiya 2016). FM Shoukry welcomed the "recent reduction in the number of Turkish criticisms" directed at Egypt as a "good sign that suggests relations will gradually return to normal" (Daily Sabah 2017). He also visited Istanbul to attend the extraordinary summit of the OIC on Jerusalem following the U.S. decision to recognise the city as the capital of Israel (Anadolu Agency 2017). Moreover, Turkey declared a national mourning day following the bloody terrorist attack that targeted a mosque in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula (Anadolu Ajansı 2017c). On this occasion, Çavuşoğlu called Shoukry to show

solidarity with Egypt against terrorism (Anadolu Ajansı 2017a). Nonetheless, this détente did not stand long, as tensions in the Mediterranean and Libya heightened.

4.3 Regional Rivalry

4.3.1 The East Mediterranean

Despite its limited energy resources that do not even meet its domestic demand, Turkey's significant location at the intersection of energy-rich Russia, Azerbaijan, the Middle East, and an energy-hungry European market enabled it to become an energy transit corridor with a considerable network of energy infrastructure, transnational pipelines (Novikau and Muhasilović 2023). Therefore, Turkey aspires to become a regional energy hub by integrating the East Mediterranean gas resources into its pipeline network and exporting them to European markets. However, it should be noted that Turkey's perception of the East Mediterranean gas resources goes beyond economic interests and energy security perspective since it is directly embedded in a decades-long dispute with Greece and the RoC over the Aegean and the Mediterranean maritime jurisdiction zones (Demiryol 2019). To remove this obstacle, a U.S.-backed round of Cyprus reunification talks started early in 2014, hoping to conclude a peace deal that enables multilateral cooperation on transporting Cyrpiot gas to Europe via Turkish and Greek soils. In parallel, the U.S.-backed Turkish-Israeli reconciliation process paid off by mid-2016 as the two countries normalised their relations and launched talks on a prospective Leviathan-Ceyhan natural gas pipeline. However, the collapse of the Cyprus talks by mid-2017, coupled with Israel's unwillingness to be involved in the Cyprus dispute in Turkey's favour and disagreements on technical and economic terms, contributed to a setback of this path (Altunışık 2020b, 2020a).

Conversely, thanks to the supergiant Zohr gas field -which was discovered in 2015 and started production in 2017-in addition to two large LNG terminals in Idku and Demieatta, Egypt pursued a policy to become a regional energy hub. In February 2018, Egyptian and Israeli energy companies agreed to export gas to Egypt for liquefaction and subsequent transport to European markets or local consumption. The Egyptian president labelled the agreement as a "goal" that Egypt scored against other countries

aspiring to become a regional energy hub, meaning Turkey (Mourad 2018). Egypt and RoC also concluded an initial deal to establish a pipeline from the Aphrodite gas field to supply Egyptian LNG terminals. A deal that did not materialise due to Israeli-Cypriot disputes over the Aphrodite field (Demiryol 2019). Parallel to these developments, tensions between Turkey and the RoC in the Mediterranean escalated as the former intercepted a drilling ship belonging to Eni Energy that attempted to conduct exploratory activities in maritime zones claimed by Turkey. Subsequently, Turkey's FM declared the 2003 Egyptian-Cypriot maritime delimitation agreement void and null (Nedos 2018). Conversely, Egypt's MFA responded by confirming that "the legitimacy of the UN-recognized Egyptian-Cypriot Agreement is indisputable", warning Turkey of violating Egypt's sovereignty rights (Sky News Arabic 2018). Egypt's partnership with Greece and the RoC reached an unprecedented level in this period. Egypt backed Greece and the RoC during the Cyprus talks in 2016 and 2017 (Qandeel 2020). Between 2015 and 2022, Egypt conducted 12 joint military drills with Greece and the RoC known as "Medusa Drills" in the East Mediterranean (Diaa 2021). In November 2017, Egypt and Greece conducted joint naval training on the demilitarised Rhodos Island. Turkey's MFA protested Greece's violation of International Law, calling "third parties" not to participate in it (T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı 2017). The Egyptian Ambassador in Cyprus stated that her country would not hesitate to act militarily if Turkey's "aggressive actions" continued (CNN Türk 2018). Turkey also conducted several naval drills. One was early in 2019 when Turkey's naval forces conducted the massive "Mavi Vatan" naval drills Simultaneously in the Black Sea, the Aegean, and the Mediterranean (Genç 2019). Finally, early in 2019, Cairo hosted the first summit of the East Mediterranean Gas Forum (EMGF), to which Energy Ministers of seven countries, including Greece, the RoC, and Israel, were invited. The final declaration of the EMGF, where Turkey and Libya were excluded, asserted that the main objective of this organisation is to "assist the creation of a regional gas market" (Sky News Arabic 2019b).

4.3.1.1 A Discursive Interlude

Turkey's exclusion from EMGF early in 2019, reportedly on Egypt's initiative, alongside the beginning of Haftar's offensive on the Libyan Capital, pushed the

Turkish president to launch a new round of criticism of his Egyptian counterpart. However, this round of verbal tensions essentially differed from the past period (2013-2016). Erdoğan was not aiming to delegitimise the government but legitimise his country's actions, capture or maintain escalation dominance. He sought a moral pretext to justify and legitimise purely realpolitik-driven policies.[12]

Upon the execution of nine Brotherhood members accused of assassinating the Egyptian Persecutor General, Erdoğan fiercely criticised Egypt's human rights record:

> [..] He executed 42 people since taking office, including those 9 young people. [..] Amnesty International appealed to stop this but got no result. In our country, when [someone] is imprisoned [due to political reasons], they raise hell. Nevertheless, we do not have the death penalty. Where is the West? (AK Parti 2019).

The Egyptian MFA disclaimed Turkey's normative authority concerning human rights, pointing to the "human rights violations, the high number of political prisoners, and the arbitrary dismissals of hundreds of academics in Turkey" (CNN Arabic 2019a, 2019b). In addition, Erdoğan used Egypt's human rights record and its growing relations with the European Union to criticise the latter, which had been harshly criticising Turkey's human rights record.[13] Erdoğan criticised European leaders for accepting Egypt's invitation to the European Union-League of Arab States' 1st summit, which Egypt hosted in February 2019:

> "If you were sincere, true democrats, you would not accept the invitation of the country that operates such an execution mechanism." (T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı 2019b).

In addition, Erdoğan capitalised on former Egyptian President Muhammed Morsi's death amid the electoral campaign for the Istanbul Mayoralty, which the ruling

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[12] For example, he has turned to a new narrative to justify Turkey's increasing involvement in Libya:

> Those who believe that Turkey's interest in Libya is purely economic, military, and political are mistaken. In Libya, there is a community of one million Köroğlu [Kuloğlu] Turks whom Haftar seeks to cleanse ethnically. Those who question our role in Libya display ignorance of politics and history."(Aktan 2020).

[13] In February 2019, the European Parliament issued its Turkey 2018 report, which recommended suspending access negotiations with Turkey due to its "human rights violations"(Sabah 2019).

coalition portrayed as a “matter of survival”. Erdoğan claimed that his rivals threatened him of facing “Mursi’s fate” and contextualised the event in Istanbul's Mayoral elections: “Never forget that in our country there are El-Sisi-like persons. Accordingly, we need to stay awake.” (T.C. İletişim Başkanlığı 2019e). Moreover, he juxtaposed Ekrem Imamoğlu, the opposition coalition’s mayoral candidate, with El-Sisi: “Next Saturday [election day], we are going to elect Binali [Yıldırım] or El-Sisi” (Bloomberg HT 2019). He mourned Morsi as a “martyr of democracy” and criticised Western countries’ double standards in their relations with [democratic] Turkey and [undemocratic] Egypt (T.C. İletişim Başkanlığı 2019b). Erdoğan explicitly accused Egyptian authorities of murdering Mursi, assuring that he would work to try Egyptian officials in international courts and condemn them on all global platforms like the UN and the OIC (T.C. İletişim Başkanlığı 2019a, 2019d, 2019c). Egypt’s FM Shoukry accused Erdoğan of intervening in Egyptian internal affairs, embracing the “Muslim Brotherhood terrorist ideology” (Sky News Arabic 2019a). Erdoğan repeated these comments in his speech to the United Nations General Assembly, triggering a crisis between Egypt and Turkey, as Egyptian and Turkish Foreign Ministries traded accusations of human rights violations (CNN Arabic 2019d; T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı 2019b). The Egyptian mission to the UN drafted an extremely fierce official letter to the UN general assembly that accused Erdoğan of sponsoring terrorism, dictatorship, and genocide of ethnic minorities (Ahram Online 2019). Following Turkey’s “Peace Spring” military operation, Erdoğan responded to Egypt’s condemnation (CNN Arabic 2019c) by saying that the Egyptian President is a “murderer” and has no say in this topic (T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı 2019a). All in all, Erdoğan took no concrete step to try Egyptian officials as he assured, more interestingly, he approved FM Çavuşoğlu’s meeting with his Egyptian counterpart on the sidelines of the same UN General Assembly meeting where he mentioned Morsi’s death in his speech (Ergin 2020). Erdoğan began de-escalating his discourse as Turkey and Libya concluded a maritime deal. Egypt, in turn, continued the policy outlined in section 3.3.3.3 as provocative but easy choices. A pro-government journalist interviewed the head of the Gülenist Cult, Fethullah Gülen, and the Commander of the self-styled Syrian Democratic Forces, Mazlum Abdi (Al-Sherif 2019; Al-Watan 2020). Parallel to the crisis in the East Mediterranean in early 2018, the Cairo Mayor renamed Sultan I. Selim Street, declaring the Ottoman Sultan (1512-1520) “the first coloniser of Egypt” (Al-Ahram

2018b). Egypt mobilised the Arab League also to condemn Turkey's regional policy and military operations in Syria and Iraq and intervention in Arab Affairs (Al-Ahram 2018a). The Egyptian MFA condemned the Turkish operation in Syrian Afrin, citing it as Turkish occupation and a violation of human rights and Syrian territorial integrity (Al-Masry Al-Youm 2018).

4.3.2 Libya

Egypt believed that the international coalition that ousted the Qaddafi regime in 2011 "did not finish its job" with a proper nation-building process, causing severe challenges to Egypt's immediate security environment given the 1115-kilometre vulnerable porous borders it shares with Libya (Mühlberger 2016). This fragility in the neighbourhood has deepened Cairo's fears due to the fluidity of fighter and arms mobility between the Sinai Peninsula and Libya, which has resulted in frequent attacks on Egyptian security forces (Shama 2020).[14] Therefore, Cario's main objective concerning Libya was to create a centralised Libyan security body that possesses the capacity to defeat radical militias, stabilise chaos-ridden borders and prevent Jihadi spillover. To do so, Cairo pursued a three-layered policy involving officially backing the Tobruq-based government, throwing full support behind General Khalifa Haftar-led Libyan National Army (LNA), carrying out air raids on ISIS infrastructure[15] and tribal politics (Mühlberger 2016). This policy initially paid off as LNA captured all primary cities in the Libyan East, including Derna and Benghazi, with the assistance of Egyptian and Emirati air strikes and logistic support. It also stretched its alliances with the tribes of Fezzan in the south. These achievements allowed Egypt to impose Haftar on its then-main rival Algeria, enhancing his participation in the political process (Akl 2017). However, Egypt was aware of the sluggishness of LNA's advance and the difficulty of a decisive military victory. Hence, by 2016, Egypt demonstrated

[14] The most striking example of this fluidity was Hisham Ashmawy and his militant group, which led numerous bloody terrorist attacks on Egyptian security forces in Northern Sinai, Cairo and the Western Desert. In doing so, Ashmawy used Libyan territories as a safe haven and training base. In October 2018, the LNA arrested him in Libya's Derna City (Said 2018).

[15] Egypt conducted air strikes on ISIS bases in Libya first in 2015 in response to the terrorist organisation's brutal mass beheading of 20 Egyptian Coptic Christian workers in Libya (BBC News Arabic 2015b).

increasing openness to engage with conflicting parties in the West and the East (Shama 2020). In this context, Cairo hosted meetings among Libyan actors to find common ground on contentious articles of the 2015 Skhirat Agreement. Egypt wanted Haftar to preserve his position as the head of the Armed Forces and the GNA to maintain political leadership. However, in 2017, Haftar resisted Egyptian efforts and dismissed talks with the GNA as "futile" (Monib 2017). In addition, Haftar attempted to thwart Egypt's brokerage efforts and rejected a meeting with Al-Sarraj in Cairo (Soliman and Bahgat 2017). Henceforth, Haftar started to align more with the UAE, which hosted political talks between Haftar and the Sarraj without coordinating with Egypt (Melcangi and Mezran 2022). Conversely, Egypt opened communication channels with actors from Misrata city in the west (Soliman and Monib 2017). On the other hand, Turkey also had mainly economic interests in Libya; between 2008 and 2010, Turkish construction companies undertook 124 projects worth $8 billion, all negatively affected by political instability (Sabah 2011). Following the beginning of the Libyan Civil War, Turkey's initial involvement was limited, and it was careful to engage with both opposing parties (Kekilli and Öztürk 2020). However, Turkey's interest in Libya grew in parallel with the intensification of the East Mediterranean maritime disputes; Turkey felt sandwiched between adversary alliances, i.e. the Arab Quartet, Greece-Cypriot-Israeli axis, and perceived Libya as a key to achieving a breakthrough in the East Mediterranean and the Middle East. Turkey's interest converged with the GNA following Haftar's offensive on Tripoli in April 2019.

4.3.2.1 Engagement

In April 2019, the Haftar-led LNA launched a major offensive on Tripoli. Haftar's coordination with the UAE while ignoring Egypt's concerns about the potential for increased unrest and the elimination of any chance for a political resolution due to military escalation, left Egypt frustrated (Mada Masr 2019b). As mentioned earlier, Egypt was aware of Haftar's inability to capture a swift victory, yet it backed his offensive firstly because it had to maintain security arrangements (i.e. securing borders) with him and, to some extent, due to the pressures of the UAE which do not share borders with Libya. As Haftar's forces retreated to Gharyan City by mid-2019, Egypt urged Haftar to consider a ceasefire proposal (Mada Masr 2019a). Overall,

Egypt's efforts yielded no tangible result; Haftar continued his campaign on the Libyan Capital, leaving almost no room for manoeuvre for the GNA.

In November 2019, Turkey and the GNA signed two MoUs on maritime demarcation and military cooperation. In response, Egypt, Greece, Cyprus, and France issued a joint statement that condemned the Turkish-Libyan MoUs (Sputnik Arabic 2020). In December, Haftar declared initiating a "decisive war" to capture Tripoli (BBC News Arabic 2019). Subsequently, Erdoğan asserted that Turkey would send troops to Libya if the GNA requested (BBC News Türkçe 2019). Turkey's parliament ratified the MoUs and authorised the government to deploy troops to Libya. Turkish military experts started providing GNA forces with consultation (Sayın 2020). El-Sisi, in turn, stated that "Egypt would not allow any power to dominate Libya." the GNA is captative of radical militias, he added (Al-Ahram 2019). Shortly after, the Egyptian parliament authorised the president to take measures to protect Egyptian national security (Al-Ahram 2020a). Thanks to Turkey's support with Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV), military consultation, and allegedly with mercenaries from Northern Syria, the GNA managed to shift from a defensive position to an offensive one, with its forces imposing full control over the capital (Kardaş 2020).

As LNA was defeated along the Libyan West, President El-Sisi proposed a ceasefire initiative known as the Cairo Declaration, which Haftar and Aguila Saleh accepted. On the other hand, the GNA dismissed the Egyptian proposal and continued advancing toward Sirte city in central Libya. In a joint conference with President Erdoğan, Libya's PM El-Sarraj asserted his refusal to negotiate with Haftar (DW 2020b, 2020a). In response, Egypt resorted to a brinkmanship policy; on a visit to a military base, El-Sisi called on the Armed Forces to be ready for any combat tasks within Egyptian borders or, if required, abroad (Al-Ahram 2020b). The Egyptian president specified a clear endgame concerning the Libyan conflict:

> Any possible intervention by the Egyptian state in Libya has gained international legitimacy. We urge the conflicting parties to cease military advancement beyond the Sirte-Al-Jufra line and initiate dialogue to resolve the Libyan crisis. All actors must understand that the Sirte-Al-Jufra Line is our red line that should not be violated (CNN Arabic 2020a).

Later, the Egyptian Parliament approved in a closed session the deployment of troops abroad to confront extremist militias (BBC News Arabic 2020b). Libya's Tobruq-based House of Representatives (HoRs) also authorised the Egyptian armed forces to intervene militarily in Libya to confront "Turkish invaders" (DW 2020c). Analyses about the possibility of a hot military confrontation between Egypt and Turkey in Libya have begun to appear. However, by late August, the Libyan warring parties reached a ceasefire deal that Egypt immediately welcomed (BBC News Arabic 2020a).

4.4 The Libyan Stalemate: A Turning Point?

Turkey's main interest in Libya by 2019 was to protect the GNA, which it perceived as the lynchpin of its East Mediterranean policy. Ankara perceived a window of opportunity to cash on the divergence of pro-LNA actors' approaches and interests and the U.S. shift toward more counterbalancing the Russian presence in the East Mediterranean (Kardaş 2020). Given the instability in its Western neighbour, Cairo must have realised the high cost of engaging in a decades-long zero-sum Greek-Turkish dispute in the Mediterranean. All in all, the conclusion of Turkish-Libyan and Egyptian-Greek maritime deals marked a milestone in Turkey-Egypt relations. On the one hand, despite the official Egyptian condemnation of the Turkish-Libyan maritime deal, it is important to note that the deal did not encroach on Egyptian maritime zones, as stated by FM Shoukry:

> While the agreement between Fayez al-Sarraj and Turkey may not technically violate any Egyptian rights, we have consistently emphasised that this agreement is illegal (CNN Arabic 2020b).

In fact, Egypt's opposition to the Turkish-Libyan agreement primarily centred on allegations that the deal violates the 2015 Skhirat Libyan Political Agreement and the UN Security Council resolutions regarding the arms embargo on Libya (Anon 2019). By doing so, Egypt has essentially differed from Greece, which mainly emphasised the deal's violation of its claimed maritime boundaries. On the other hand, in response to Egypt's condemnation, Turkey's MFA, in turn, argued that Egypt's acquiescence to Greece and the RoC's "maximalist, uncompromising" claims in the past cost it a loss of an area of more than forty thousand square kilometres (T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı

2019c). Moreover, Turkey declared the 2020 Egyptian-Greek deal void and illegal, claiming that Egypt has ceded again significant maritime zones because of this deal (T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı 2020). Ankara's claim is mainly based on its rejection of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of Sea (UNCLOS), to which Egypt is a party. Hence, it was unimaginable for Cairo to embrace the Turkish approach to demarcating maritime boundaries, i.e. ignoring Greek islands' maritime jurisdiction zones, since doing so would jeopardise its interests and previous legal commitments (Magdy 2020). In other words, accepting the Turkish approach entailed a lower opportunity cost than the other way around, i.e. commitment to the UNCLOS. Instead, it appears that Cairo has cashed on the Turkish-Libyan deal to strengthen its bargaining power vis-à-vis Greece after 15 years of negotiations. Officials in Egyptian MFA reportedly recommended the presidency to implicitly acquiesce to the Turkish-Libyan maritime deal as it provides Egypt with a "significant maritime advantage" (Mada Masr 2020b).

Figure 3 Greece-Egypt Maritime Boundaries Demarcation.

Source: United Nations Treaty Collection (UNTC)

Conversely, aiming to discredit the Turkish-Libyan deal at any cost, Greece had to make more concessions to Egypt, which adhered to its traditional policy regarding demarcation principles and excluded Kastellorizo Islands (Meis) and about half of Rhodos from the deal's scope (see **Figure 3**) (Başeren 2020). Essentially, Egypt

contested Greek claims of full jurisdiction rights for islands equal to that of the mainland (Berberakis 2020). By doing so, Cairo secured a larger maritime zone than Greece's (56%-to-44%) (Magdy 2020). In addition, the Egyptian-Greek deal established a "partial delimitation of maritime boundaries between the two countries" that left room for "future delimitation of the Exclusive Economic Zone with other concerned neighbouring states", per the official text of the deal (Abdullah 2020). Finally, Turkey's FM welcomed the Egyptian move:

> One should be honest; while concluding EEZ deals with Greece and the Greek Cypriot Administration, Egypt was careful not to violate our rights (Ergin 2020).

This was the first step in a series of goodwill gestures Egypt and Turkey exchanged to initiate normalisation talks. Despite the risk of escalating bilateral disagreements between Egypt and Turkey to the regional level, it allowed them to engage and recognise each other's vital interests.

4.5 Economic Relations: Compartmentalisation Modus Vivendi

Both countries were motivated to preserve economic relations. Since communication at high levels has been minimal since 2013, business circles assumed [with approval from political authorities] the most crucial role in this respect. Turkish business circles' which served as quasi-diplomats and efficient tools of Turkish foreign policy (Atlı 2011), played an active role in mending economic fences between the two countries. Within this context, Rifat Hisarcıkoğlu, the head of Turkey's Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges (TOBB), paid a Turkish official's first high-profile visit to Egypt in late 2015, with the approval of Erdoğan and MFA (Hürriyet 2015b). Hisarcıkoğlu conducted intensive "business diplomacy" and frequently met with high-ranking Egyptian officials, including his Egyptian counterpart, Charges d'affaires in Ankara, and the Egyptian Ministers of Energy, Trade and Industry (Sputnik Türkiye 2016; TOBB 2017, 2018, 2019a, 2019b, 2023). Notably, in 2017, the Turkish-Egyptian Business Forum held its first meeting since 2012 in Cairo, where Turkish businesspeople informed Egyptian officials about the problems they have been facing since 2013 (Munyar 2017; Uğur 2017). In contrast, Egyptian businesspeople were less

vocal in voicing concerns, although they were interested in preserving these economic ties with Turkey and saw no benefit in restricting it (Moustafa 2023). In the 2000s, they enjoyed significant access to political power, assumed all economic ministries in Ahmed Nazif's cabinet, 50% of the 2005 People's Assembly seats, and established broad transnational networks (Adly 2019). Nevertheless, they did not enjoy the same access to political power under El-Sisi's presidency. They became "alienated friends" of the government rather than independent actors with a limited influence on foreign policy (Achrainer 2022).

Figure 4 Economic Relations 2017-2020.

Source: Adapted from UN Comtrade, Turkish Central Bank (TCMB EVDS) data

These efforts contributed to surviving bilateral trade at a conservative level of around $5 billion yearly as Turkish exports to Egypt increased again by %35 in 2018 and 2019, back to the level they reached in 2014. Nonetheless, businessmen's initiatives were insufficient to preserve the momentum that bilateral growth rates gained after the 2005 FTA. The average annual growth rate of bilateral trade volume drastically dropped from around 30% between 2007-2013 to less than zero between 2013 and 2020. This undoubtedly could be attributed to the suspension of periodic meetings of the Egyptian-Turkish Joint Economic Committee, the main official institutional body regarding bilateral trade, as the 2005 FTA allowed for the renegotiation of terms and the expansion of free trade, but this was impossible without any communication at the highest levels. Accordingly, it is safe to argue that economic relations could have been

developed if political relations had been better. The average annual net Turkish inflows in Egypt remained at a fixed level (see **Figure 7**). Moreover, Egypt's securitisation policy prevented Turkish investors from investing in the energy, transportation, and logistics sectors (Moustafa 2023). Within this context, Atilla Ataseven, head of TÜMİAD, applied to Egypt's Industrial Development Authority to establish an Industrial Zone and reportedly received the Egyptian government's approval to launch the project in 2019, which has never materialised due to the abovementioned policy (Ülker 2018). Turkey's interest in preserving trade, where it consistently kept an upper hand regarding trade balance, is somehow understandable. However, in Egypt, widespread calls to cancel the FTA with Turkey have fallen on deaf ears in governmental circles (RT Arabic 2020). More importantly, Egypt did not bandwagon the Saudi-led unofficial boycott of Turkish goods, reportedly did not positively respond to Gulf pressures, and state-controlled media did not go far regarding this issue (Mohamed Abdullah 2020).

One critical factor that has affected bilateral trade during this period was the relative decline in the prices of Egyptian and Turkish goods due to the continuous devaluation of the Egyptian Pound (EGP) since 2016 and the Turkish Lira (TL) since 2018. To understand this correlation, this section applies the Pearson Correlation Coefficient to each country's annual export volume to the other one and the average exchange rates of EGP and TL to the U.S. dollar between 2014 and 2022.

Year	TL-USD	Turkish Exports to Egypt	EGP-USD	Egyptian Exports to Turkey
2014	0.456	3.442	0.141	1.45
2015	0.365	3.249	0.129	1.265
2016	0.331	2.832	0.098	1.434
2017	0.275	2.547	0.056	1.932
2018	0.212	3.214	0.056	2.016
2019	0.176	3.508	0.060	1.77
2020	0.142	3.136	0.063	1.671
2021	0.112	4.513	0.064	2.647
2022	0.061	4.556	0.051	3.783
2023	0.043	3.34	0.033	3.768
Pearson Correlation		-0.498735505		-0.695457719

Table 1 Correlation between Export Volumes and Exchange Rates.

Source: Author's Calculations

The results show a negative correlation between the values of national currencies and the U.S. dollar and their export volumes to each other. Firstly, a strong negative correlation exists between the EGP value to USD and the volume of Egyptian exports to Turkey, with a coefficient of -0.6954. This partially explains the increase in Egyptian exports to Turkey after Egypt's devaluation decisions in 2016 and 2022, which gave Egyptian goods a competitive edge. Conversely, the correlation between the TL value to the USD and Turkish exports to Egypt is relatively moderate, with a coefficient of -0.49873. This also partially explains the increase in Turkish exports to Egypt after TL's devaluation in 2018 and 2022. The U.S. dollar shortage in Egypt also decreases Turkish exports to Egypt, as happened in 2023 (Türkiye İhracatçılar Meclisi 2024).

4.6 Conclusion

In this period, changes in Turkey's domestic environment, the failure of previous policy tools, and the decline of its status as a democratic model led to a significant programme change. Consequently, this period witnessed a short-lived reconciliation attempt that did not persist due to the changes in the system-level factors (the Gulf Crisis, the East Mediterranean rivalry and the Libyan conflict) that put Turkey and Egypt at odds with each other at the regional level. Antagonised by its exclusion from the Cairo-headquartered EMGF, Turkey responded by signing a maritime deal with Libya's GNA. Nonetheless, the peak of this regional clash was, at the same time, the de-escalation moment when both countries recognised each other's vital interests. Neither Turkey's maritime deal with Libya's GNA affected Egypt's maritime zones, nor did Egypt's deal with Greece violate Turkey's maritime zones. At this point, the two countries started to engage in a normalisation process.

CHAPTER 5

NORMALISATION (2020-2024)

This chapter addresses the significant goal/problem change in bilateral relations from late 2020 to early 2024. It first delves into the normalisation process that commenced in late 2020 with a focus on two paths: institutionalisation and addressing unsettled issues. Subsequently, it deals with the system-level and unit-level variables that have contributed to this change. The final section provides an overview of economic relations during this period, discussing intra-industry trade between Egypt and Turkey.

5.1 Normalisation Process

The normalisation process between the two nations started in August 2020 following a ceasefire in Libya. President Erdoğan declared that Egypt and Turkey are holding bilateral talks through intelligence channels (T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı 2020). In this context, examining this initially sluggish process within two overlapping patterns: institutionalisation and addressing the unsettled issues is possible.

5.1.1 Institutionalisation

Over the seven years between November 2013 and August 2020, bilateral communication between the two nations on the institutional level was at its lowest since 1961, when diplomatic relations were severed. Accordingly, the two countries needed to reset the framework of the relations to rebuild mutual trust. Initially, both countries delivered goodwill gestures to each other to express their willingness to normalise relations. In 2020, Turkey lifted a veto against Egypt's cooperation activities with NATO (Soylu 2021a). Egypt, in turn, instructed state-controlled media and TV channels to tone down their criticism of Turkey (Kalabalık 2020). Turkey reciprocated

by instructing the Egyptian opposition TV channels to soften their criticisms of the Egyptian government (Soylu 2021b). More importantly, Egypt was keen not to include zones that Turkey has claims on in a tender for hydrocarbon drilling activities it declared in 2021. A step that Ankara welcomed, then-defence minister Hulusi Akar appreciated Egypt's respect for Turkey's maritime borders (T.C. Millî Savunma Bakanlığı 2021). Subsequently, FM Çavuşoğlu took the message and asserted Turkey's willingness to hold diplomatic talks with Egypt (Anadolu Ajansı 2021). Erdoğan also voiced hope to accelerate the higher-level normalisation process with Egypt (Independent Türkçe 2021). Egypt's FM Shoukry, in turn, asserted that Egypt has always been keen to preserve relations with Turkey, indicating that his country expects "concrete steps rather than remarks" from Turkey(Akhbar Al-Youm 2021). Shortly after this statement, Turkish authorities officially imposed more restrictions on the Egyptian Brotherhood's Istanbul-based TV channels, pushing them down the tone of their criticisms of the Egyptian government (Abdulrazeq 2021). Shoukry welcomed Turkey's move, asserting that it paves the way for accelerating the normalisation of bilateral relations (Al-Jazeera Net 2021). Early in April, Çavuşoğlu and Shoukry had a phone talk, the first since 2017, and agreed on holding bilateral exploratory meetings on the deputy foreign ministers' level (BBC News Arabic 2021). Accordingly, delegations from both countries' MFAs held two rounds of exploratory consultations in Cairo and Ankara, respectively (T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı 2021c, 2021a).

5.1.2 Addressing Unsettled Issues

The main topic on the table during the period between 2021 and 2022 was Libya, where some positive developments directly related to Egyptian-Turkish relations happened. On the one hand, Egypt showed openness to reinvigorate relations with the GNA and, later, the newly formed Government of National Unity (GNU) in the West. An Egyptian delegation visited Tripoli in late 2020 and met with officials from the GNA to discuss the normalisation of relations (Al-Sharq Al-Awsat 2020). Subsequently, the Egyptian PM Mostafa Madbouly and other high-ranking Egyptian officials visited Tripoli and met the new Libyan PM Abdul Hamid Al-Dbeibeh (Al-Ahram 2021). On the other hand, Turkey showed similar openness to reach actors in

the Libyan East, including Aguila Saleh, the Speaker of the Libyan HoRs whom President Erdoğan met two times in 2022 and 2023 (T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı 2022, 2023). However, tensions between Egypt and Turkey emerged when the latter signed a maritime hydrocarbon agreement with the GNU, authorising Turkish companies to conduct exploratory activities in Libyan territorial waters (France 24 2022). Egypt and Greece declared this agreement void due to the expiration of GNU's term in power (Al-Jazeera Net 2022b). Moreover, Egyptian FM declared halting the path of talks with Turkey because the latter "did not change its practices"(RT Arabic 2022).

Nevertheless, these adverse developments did not totally jeopardise the normalisation process. In November 2022, both countries' leaders met on the sidelines of the FIFA World Cup inauguration ceremony in Qatar, the first in a decade (Al-Jazeera Net 2022a). Qatar reportedly played a vital role in mediating this meeting by hosting frequent unannounced meetings between Egyptian and Turkish diplomats and officials over months (Tharwat and Soliman 2022). The two countries appeared to be heading to compartmentalise the unsettled issues to move forward in relations. For instance, when Egypt unilaterally declared the demarcation of maritime zones with Libya in December 2022, Turkey only called on the two parties to determine maritime zones through bilateral dialogue (Anadolu Ajansı 2022) Bilateral relations started gaining momentum on several occasions. Following the Kahramanmaraş Earthquakes in February 2023 in Turkey, El-Sisi called Erdoğan on the phone for the first time and offered condolences (Mabrouk and Raghip 2023). Shortly after, FM Shoukry visited Turkey to express solidarity with Turkey, deliver Egypt's humanitarian relief and meet his Turkish counterpart (T.C. İletişim Başkanlığı 2023b). Later, FM Çavuşoğlu visited Egypt, and Shoukry visited Turkey. In May 2023, El-Sisi congratulated Erdoğan on his electoral victory, and both agreed to upgrade diplomatic relations to the ambassadorial level (State Information Service 2023). Finally, in July 2023, Egypt and Turkey declared upgrading their diplomatic relations to the ambassadorial level; Egypt appointed Amr El-Hamami as ambassador to Ankara, and Turkey appointed Salih Mutlu Şen as ambassador to Cairo (T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı 2023c). Finally, the normalisation process culminated on February 14th, 2023, when Erdoğan visited Cairo for the first time in over a decade since his last visit in 2012 (Egyptian Presidency 2024).

5.2 Goal/ Problem Change in Relations

The abovementioned developments indicate a significant goal/problem change in the policies of Turkey and Egypt toward each other. The following sections examine the system-level and unit-level factors contributing to these changes.

5.2.1 System-Level Factors

Following Joseph Biden's arrival at the White House, the U.S. Middle East policy witnessed a shift toward promoting regional normalisation efforts that started with the 2020 Abraham Accords, encouraging regional de-escalation and boosting U.S. allies' political, economic and security cooperation so the U.S. could devote more efforts to other regions (Dunne 2023). This shift contributed to a more fluid regional landscape dominated by fluctuating and hedging alignments (Kaye 2022). Moreover, prioritising European energy security following the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine war, the U.S. administration withdrew political and financial support for the EastMed pipeline Project. That paved the way for more stability and de-escalation in the East Mediterranean (Krasna 2022). In 2022, Egypt, Israel, and the EU signed a MoU for exporting Israeli gas to Egypt to be liquified and shipped to European markets, serving as a partial substitute for Russian gas supplies (El Safty and Rabinovitch 2022).

Moreover, the conflictual pattern that increasingly dominated the Middle East in the 2010s came at a huge financial, political, economic, military, and domestic cost to the regional actors, including Egypt and Turkey. Most importantly, almost all conflicts, including the Yemeni, Syrian, and Libyan Civil Wars and the Qatar blockade, ended with stalemates without tangible gains for regional actors (Nagy 2023). From 2021 inward, regional actors were involved in a broad reconciliation process that started with the Qatar-Arab Quartet reconciliation and extended to include Turkish-Gulf, Turkish-Israeli, and Turkish-Egyptian normalisation processes (Bakir 2022). On the other hand, there are increasing indications of growing but unspoken disagreements within the Arab Quartet. Disagreements between Saudis and Emiratis have emerged in issues like Yemen, OPEC+, trade restrictions, and the Abraham Accords (Nasr 2023). More importantly, already existing disagreements between Cairo and Abu

Dhabi on issues like the Red Sea, the Abraham Accords, Libya, and Ethiopia have become clearer in recent years (Mada Masr 2020a). In addition, there are disagreements between Saudi Arabia and Egypt on the latter's economic policies and delay in transferring the sovereignty of the Tiran and Sanafir Islands that Cairo ceded to Riyadh in 2016 (Anon 2023).

Hence, Turkey perceived these changes as opportunities for dismantling hostile regional alliances. Dismantling the Greece- the RoC-Egypt triad was among Ankara's main motivations to normalise relations with Egypt, as stated by Erdoğan: "Egyptians and Turks can't be at odds, and aligning the Egyptian people with Greece is unacceptable. We would like to see them where they should be."(Independent Türkçe 2021). In this context, when the final declaration of the 9th trilateral summit between Egypt, Greece, and the RoC in 2021 condemned Turkey, Turkish MFA considered Egypt's participation in this declaration an indication that "Egypt has not yet grasped the reliable partner with which to cooperate in the Eastern Mediterranean."(T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı 2021b). There appear to be signs that this goal has been achieved, as the Egyptian-Greek-Cypriot alliance is no longer as strong as it was. Notably, in 2022 and 2023, Egypt, Greece, and Cyprus did not hold the annual trilateral presidential summit that they consistently annually held between 2014-2021. Turkey's mending fences with Egypt could help the former join the Cairo-based EMGF, which officially became an international organisation by March 2021. FPC Literature suggests that a state could change its policy to join regional integration efforts and international organisations (Haesebrouck and Joly 2021). Turkey also aspires to conclude a maritime boundary delimitation agreement with Egypt. The Egyptian Brotherhood's role in Turkish foreign policy has been diminishing since 2015, and the group became a mere bargaining chip in Turkey's hands since the former could no longer maximise the latter's regional power. In addition, backing the group became unaffordable for Turkey, given Egypt's and Gulf states' unwavering opposition (Taş 2022b). Unconfirmed reports revealed that Turkey revoked several Brotherhood leaders' Turkish citizenship, a step that symbolised their waning role in Turkey's policy (Mamdouh and Hamama 2024). Turkey even went as far as to arrest some of the Brotherhood members who allegedly called for demonstrations in Egypt during the UN Climate Summit (COP27) that Egypt hosted in 2022 (Euronews 2022).

5.2.1.1 Counterbalancing

Egyptian-Turkish relations have recently shown a notable degree of coordination/policy convergence on regional issues that concern both nations, such as the Israeli war on Gaza, the Somali crisis, and the Libyan issue. Although it is early to fully assess this shift as these issues have not been concluded at the time of writing this thesis by mid-2024, there are vital signs of mutual understanding between the two nations. In most of the crises mentioned above, Egypt's traditional Gulf allies pursued divergent and even conflictual policies with the Egyptian ones. Moreover, the increasing rapprochement between Israel and the Gulf states since the 2020 Abraham Accords and attempts at normalisation between Saudi Arabia and Israel deepened Cairo's concerns of being regionally marginalised.

One of the most striking examples of this trend happened during the G20 summit in India when the U.S., EU, and other countries unveiled the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) project, which included the Gulf states, Israel, and Greece while notably excluding Egypt, Turkey. If realised, the IMEC would significantly negatively affect Egypt's Suez Canal geoeconomic importance and financial situation (Middle East Monitor 2023). Similarly, it would threaten Turkey's Middle Corridor trade route and the potential "Development Road Project" connecting Iraq's Basra City to Turkey's southeastern cities and Europe"(Duman 2023). Hence, it is noteworthy that the first official meeting between El-Sisi and Erdoğan was on the sidelines of the mentioned G20 Summit, where they discussed economic and political cooperation (Bozdoğan 2023). The following sections discuss regional issues in which the rapprochement between Egypt and Turkey emerged.

5.2.1.1.1 Somali And Sahel Region

In January 2024, Ethiopia, a land-locked nation aspiring to get a foothold on the Red Sea since Eritrea's independence in 1993, and the self-proclaimed Republic of Somaliland signed an MoU according to which the former would use Somalia's Berbera Port for trade and military aims (Askar 2024). Egypt, which ended negotiations with Ethiopia on the latter's Grand Renaissance Dam (GERD) in mid-

December 2023 without achieving any tangible result (Fadl 2023), unwaveringly rejected the mentioned MoU. Egyptian FM visited Eritrea, which already has concerns over Ethiopia's actions, and handed its president, Isaias Afwerki, a message from President El-Sisi (Ahram Online 2024b). Later, the Eritrean president met El-Sisi in Cairo, and both asserted that both countries are committed to Somalia's territorial integrity and a political solution for the Sudanese crisis (Al-Ahram 2024a). More importantly, during his visit to Cairo, the Somalian president met his Egyptian counterpart, who asserted that Egypt "will not allow anyone to threaten its brothers, especially if they requested its backing." (Ahram Online 2024a). A possible axis among Israel, the UAE -which implicitly backed the mentioned MoU- and Ethiopia in the Red Sea and the Horn of Africa could be a highly unfavourable development for the position of Egyptian geostrategic assets like the Suez Canal (Bakir 2024).

Similarly, Turkey, which heavily economically, politically and militarily invested in Somalia over the last decade, rejected the MoU and reasserted its support for Somalia's territorial integrity (T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı 2024). Subsequently, the Turkish minister of defence and his [Türkiye Scholarships alumnus] Somalian counterpart concluded a Framework Defensive and Economic Agreement in which Turkey would protect Somalian territorial waters for a decade (BBC News Türkçe 2024c). Although Cairo did not comment on the Turkish-Somalian deal, Egyptian observers close to the government circles asserted that the agreement should have been coordinated between Egypt, Turkey, and Somalia in a framework of cooperation and policy convergence rather than competition (Al-Said 2024). This was evident when President Erdoğan assured Egypt and Turkey fully committed to Somalia, Sudan, and Libya's territorial integrity during his visit to Cairo (BBC News Türkçe 2024a). The recent escalation of military coups and conflicts in the Sahel region in 2023 poses severe political, economic (possible decline in Egyptian exports) and demographic (growing illegal immigration waves) threats to Egyptian strategic national interests that force Egypt to diversify its alliances, revise its foreign relations (Al-Taweel 2024).

It's notable how Egyptian-Turkish coordination regarding this region grew; following Erdoğan's visit to Egypt, an Egyptian diplomatic delegation led by the deputy FM for African Affairs headed to Ankara, where they held talks with Turkish officials about addressing challenges in the Sahel region (Al-Ahram 2024b). Cooperation in the Sahel

region was among the topics Fidan and Shoukry discussed during the latter's visit to Ankara in April (Tarhan 2024).

5.2.1.1.2 Coordination in the Gaza War

The October 7th Gaza War was another occasion that boosted cooperation between the two countries. Their coordination on policy and humanitarian diplomacy levels during the War was unprecedented. A week after the war outbreak, Turkish FM Hakan Fidan visited Cairo to meet his counterpart and President El-Sisi. Later, he visited Cairo to attend the Cairo Summit on Palestine (T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı 2023a, 2023d). Furthermore, Erdoğan and El-Sisi met on the sidelines of the Joint Summit of the Arab League and OIC in Riyadh on Gaza. They discussed cooperation on the humanitarian crisis in Gaza (T.C. İletişim Başkanlığı 2023a).

During a joint conference in Cairo, both leaders called for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. At the same time, Erdoğan asserted that Turkey is working in solidarity with its Egyptian brothers to end the bloodshed in Gaza. El-Sisi also appreciated the cooperation between Egypt and Turkey concerning the war and humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Turkish ambassador to Cairo asserted that in coordination with the Egyptian MFA, Red Crescent, Turkey provided Gaza with thousands of tonnes of humanitarian relief (Amer 2024). While Erdoğan's criticism of Egypt during the 2008-9 and 2014 wars and the Mavi Marmara incident were sources of tensions between the two countries, this high level of convergence, if it continues, will have positive implications on bilateral relations.

5.2.1.1.3 Libya

It is essential to acknowledge that the complexity of the Libyan crisis is more related to the policies and interests of local actors who enjoy a high degree of political and economic autonomy. Haftar and the governments of the Libyan West are internal Libyan actors linked to a vast social, political, financial, and tribal network of interests in Libya, and they are not merely proxies of Egypt, Turkey, or others (Melcangi and Mezran 2022). For instance, Haftar, in coordination with Wagner forces, is reportedly

backing General Dgalo-led RSF in the Sudanese civil war in contrast to the Egyptian support for the Sudanese Military (Elsaidi 2023).[16] Therefore, reaching a long-term political settlement in Libya does not exclusively depend on an Egyptian-Turkish mutual understanding, even though it is a significant determinant. Generally, improvements in relations among regional actors involved in a civil conflict do not inevitably pay off in automatically terminating the conflict- a critical note well explained by Ahmed (2023):

> [..] regional breakthroughs alone cannot resolve a conflict's internal contradictions. [..] For example, the Jeddah Agreement of 1965 between [President] Abdel Nasser and [King] Faisal had previously failed to resolve the conflict between the Yemeni parties. Because the Republicans and the royalists did not find anything that met their demands, the conflict in Yemen was not settled until after five full years, during which the true balance of power between the local parties became clear. [..] Similarly, the breakthrough in Egyptian-Turkish relations has not yet led to real progress in resolving the conflict in Libya.

In a realistic move, Egypt and Turkey started to recognise each other's vital interests and essential roles in Libya. At the same time, they began to compartmentalise areas of divergence, as appeared in Çavuşoğlu and Shoukry's statements in 2023. The U.S., increasingly concerned about Wagner's control over Libyan oil fields since the latter's armed insurgency attempt in Russia in mid-2023, is encouraging Turkish-Egyptian collaboration in Libya (The New Arab 2023).

5.2.1.1.4 Defence Industry

Efforts of defence cooperation between Turkey and Egypt go back to Erdoğan's visit to Egypt in 2012 when Turkey agreed to provide Egypt with ten locally manufactured ANKA UAVs (Karaaslan 2012). In May 2013, then-Defence Minster El-Sisi visited

[16] There are further instances of this behavior. In 2021, Chadian opposition fighters, acting as mercenaries alongside General Haftar, used Libya's east and south as bases to initiate an offensive that led to the assassination of President Idriss Déby, who was an ally of Egypt (Walsh 2021).

Turkey and participated in the International Defence Industry Fair (IDEF'13). He also met then-PM Erdoğan and agreed on a $250 million credit for defence purchases — nevertheless, this cooperation was halted due to the rift in relations. Following the U.S. suspension of military aid to Egypt between 2013 and 2015, Cairo pursued a policy of arms supplier diversification and local manufacturing to decrease dependence on the U.S. Within this context, Egypt's former minister of military production, Mohamed El-Assar, initiated several, yet limited, attempts to co-produce arms domestically with foreign partners (Abul-Magd 2020). Conversely, in recent years, Turkey conducted an ambitious defence industry program, including manufacturing Combat Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, which proved efficient in conflicts in Syria, Libya, Azerbaijan, and Ethiopia.

Normalising relations with Turkey introduced new cooperation opportunities in defence industries. Egypt's minister of military production met Turkey's Ambassador to Cairo to discuss cooperation opportunities in the defence industry and invited Turkish companies to the Egypt Defence Expo'23 (EDEX'23) (Salem 2023).

Turkey's defence industry giant, Roketsan, participated in the EDEX'23 (Duyar 2024). More importantly, upon Erdoğan's visit to Cairo, Turkish FM Hakan Fidan asserted that Turkey agreed to provide Egypt with Combat Unmanned Aerial Vehicles and other technologies (BBC News Türkçe 2024b). In April 2024, Egypt's Chief of General Staff visited Ankara, met Turkey's Defence Minister, and visited UAV manufacturer BAYKAR (Abdelrazeq 2024).

5.2.2 Unit-Level Factors

5.2.2.1 Leadership, Coalitions: Business as Usual

The structure of ruling coalitions and the foreign policymaking process in Egypt and Turkey witnessed almost no significant change between 2021 and 2023. Similarly, Turkish popular and partisan support for the normalisation process with Egypt remained high, per a public opinion survey showing 38.2% of respondents backing the process, increasing from 34.3% in 2021 (Aydın et al. 2021, 2022). Given the high percentage of respondents with "no idea" about the issue (36% and 43.2% in 2021 and

2022, respectively), the support for the normalisation process appears high. Moreover, normalisation with Egypt was the most supported among other normalisation processes. As discussed in section 4.1.2.1.1, this has been the trend since an early period. Apart from some weak attempts within the AKP-linked circles to undermine the process[17], it is hard to find signs of serious resistance to this normalisation with Egypt. The same is also valid for Egypt. Moreover, both Erdoğan[18] and El-Sisi achieved electoral victories in May and December 2023, respectively. Therefore, the leadership variable remained almost unchanged. The only new changes in Turkish leadership happened when Hakan Fidan, former Head of Intelligence Service (MİT), assumed the MFA (Yetkin 2023). However, it is early to assess the impact of Fidan on Turkey's relations with Egypt.

After years of trading accusations of meddling in internal affairs, funding terrorism, and pursuing expansionist policies, the two countries began to seek common ideational ground in line with the convergence of interests and policies in many areas. Paradoxically, ideational themes like history, broadly employed in a conflictual framework in previous periods, have emerged as a shared ideal. According to Erdoğan, Egyptian and Turkish officials frequently assured that a "shared history" between the two nations goes back more than one thousand years (BBC News Türkçe 2024a). This tendency toward a shared ideational ground manifested in the two leaders' visit to Al-Imam Al-Shafei's shrine in Cairo. Both leaders enjoy significant support from Sofi orders known in Turkish as *Tarikat and* in Arabic as *Tariqa*. For instance, the Sheikh of the Egyptian Sufi orders has been leading the parliamentary majority since 2018, representing the "Mostaqbal Watan" party, one of the main pro-government parties (Abdel Hadi 2023). Erdoğan is known for his close political, social, and religious ties with Sofi Tarikats like İsmailağa (Bıçakçı 2023).

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[17] Following the first round of Egyptian-Turkish talks in 2021, Yasin Aktay, one of Erdoğan's former senior advisors who was allagedly responsible for coordination between Turkey and Egyptian diaspora opposition there, published a column where he fiercely criticised death sentences given to the Brotherhood leaders, reminding his readers of the Egyptian government's "brutality"(Aktay 2021). However, Aktay had no significant influence on Turkey's decision-making process. He later supported the process and justified the shift in Turkey's policy before the Arab audience.

[18] Despite the victory, the decline in the AKP's votes should have convinced Erdoğan to reset economic and migration policies and preserve the momentum of the new foreign policy orientation (Soylu 2023). Therefore, it is safe to argue that it positively impacted bilateral relations.

5.2.2.2 The Economic Impetus

The most significant unit-level change in this period was the deteriorating economy of both nations, which was undoubtedly the primary motivation for their involvement in regional normalisation processes and bilateral reconciliation.

Figure 5 Economic Indexes in Turkey (2013-2023).

Source: United Nations, Turkish Central Bank

Figure 6 Economic Indexes in Egypt (2013-2023).

Source: United Nations and Egyptian Central Bank

In Turkey, [official] inflation rates peaked at around 65% in 2022 and 2023. Turkish Lira was exposed to harsh devaluations in 2021, 2022 and 2023. Foreign Direct Investments in 2020 were at their lowest in a decade (see **Figure 5**). The economic crisis posed a significant challenge to Erdoğan's government on the eve of critical general elections in 2023. Therefore, by normalising relations with regional actors, Erdoğan aimed to boost the deteriorating Turkish economy by attracting Gulf investments and hot money and increasing Turkish exports to the region (Altunişik and Martin 2023; Bardakçı 2021). A worse situation is valid for Egypt, suffering a severe economic and financial crisis epitomised by hiking inflation rates, debt-to-GDP ratios, declining foreign direct investments, and foreign currency shortage since 2020 and 2021 (see **Figure 6**). The country had to devaluate its national currency several times in the mentioned period to meet the demands of the IMF. Tackling such economic issues that pose a significant threat to the regime's security by attaining external funds from Gulf states is no longer possible as the latter is now expecting more direct economic returns rather than political alignment (Ibrahim 2023). More importantly, the IMF conditions became almost totally linked to the Gulf's politically driven rentier financial assistance (Adly 2023). Consequently, this reflected a dire need for a new multidimensional foreign policy. President El-Sisi overtly delved into this issue only a month before meeting his Turkish counterpart:

> "Even [our Arab] brothers and friends have become convinced that the Egyptian state is unable to stand up again and that the financial support and assistance [they provided] over the years has formed a culture of depending on them to solve crises and problems."(Al-Sadiq 2022).

The next section provides an overview of economic areas of mutual interest between Egypt and Turkey, considering the changes in investments, bilateral trade and tourism.

5.3 Economic Relations

5.3.1 Investments

Around $20 billion of hot money was withdrawn from Egypt at the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Another wave of portfolio investment outflow estimated at $20

billion happened after the outbreak of the Russian-Ukrainian war in 2022. As these subsequent crises deepened the country's vulnerability, Egyptian decision-makers declared they tended to boost the economy through FDI rather than hot money (Werr 2022). This tendency converged with Turkey's business interests; Turkish companies suffering from increasing inflation rates and high production and labour costs in Turkey started to transfer their factories to Egypt, where they would enjoy cheaper production, energy and labour costs (minimum wage=6000EGP/$125) while benefitting from Egypt's FTAs to export to third parties (Duran 2023).

Figure 7 Foreign Direct Investments (2001-2022).

Source: Turkish Central Bank Electronic Data Distribution System (TCMB EVDS)

With the normalisation process, Turkish investments in Egypt reached the highest level, with $294 million in 2021. In a show of welcome, the Egyptian PM met a delegation of Turkish companies' representatives and granted them lands where they could establish factories. During the meeting, Turkish companies declared $500 million in investments in Egypt (RT Arabic 2023). Moreover, in March 2024, the Turkish conglomerate Doğuş Group and the Egyptian Group for Multipurpose Terminals signed a MoU on establishing an industrial logistic zone in Egypt's Matrouh City with investments worth $7 billion (Al-Shorouq 2024). Opening up important sectors like logistics to Turkish investors, which was impossible in previous periods,

remarks a significant change in Egypt's policy toward more de-securitisation. These investments generate a relatively high annual turnover for the Turkish economy, estimated at $1.5 billion (TRT Haber 2024). Highly concentrated in the industrial sector, it provides around 70 thousand jobs, facilitates technology and expertise transfer, and expands the scope of economic partnerships between Egyptian and Turkish companies.

5.3.2 Bilateral Trade

Figure 8 Bilateral Trade (2014-2023).

Source: Adapted from UN Comtrade, Trademap.

During this period, the two nations aimed to boost their bilateral trade and explore new opportunities for opening up to new markets. Meetings between officials and representatives from both countries' private sectors gained momentum. Bilateral trade volume peaked in 2022 at $8.34 billion, increasing by more than 60% compared to 2020. An overview of bilateral trade in the last decade shows that the share of Egypt's imports from Turkey to its total imports consistently remained fixed at an average of 4%. The same applies to the share of Egypt's exports to Turkey to its total exports, which accounted for 6% in the same period. Notably, this portion hiked to 9% when the trade balance between the two countries shifted in favour of Egypt for the first time

ever in 2023. Turkey aspires to increase its share in Egyptian. According to a report issued by the Association of Turkish Exporters (TİM), over the last decade, Egypt has imported a total of $158 billion worth of products within categories where Turkey has a competitive edge (Türkiye İhracatçılar Meclisi 2022). In fact, the two countries aim to increase the bilateral trade volume to $15 billion by 2028, as stated by their Trade Ministers and presidents (Bloomberg HT 2024; T.C. Ticaret Bakanlığı 2023). Moreover, they started negotiations to reinvigorate the Ro-Ro MoU line as Egypt recently signed a similar MoU with Italy (Morsi 2023). Erdoğan and El-Sisi signed a joint declaration on relaunching High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council meetings in all fields, including the economy, investments, and transportation (Altaş and Karataş 2024).

The normalisation process facilitated cooperation in new areas. In 2021, 2022 and the first half of 2023, Turkey emerged as the main importer of Egyptian LNG (Al-Arabiya 2023). Turkish FM asserted that Turkish national energy company BOTAŞ is willing to purchase Egyptian LNG directly from its Egyptian counterpart EGAS rather than the spot market. Turkey also is interested in cooperation in renewable and nuclear energy fields (T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı 2023b). Officials from BOTAŞ and EGAS met on the sidelines of Erdoğan's visit to Egypt and discussed cooperation in natural gas trade, infrastructure, technology and expertise transfer (BOTAŞ 2024b). Later, the Egyptian Ambassador to Ankara and BOTAŞ's general manager met upon a visit to the Egyptian FM to Turkey and discussed cooperation on natural gas (BOTAŞ 2024a). All these developments indicate that high-level political and diplomatic communication has a significant influence on bilateral trade. Had political relations between the two nations improved after 2016, it is likely that bilateral trade volume could have reached higher levels.

5.3.3 Tourism

The lockdowns that the COVID-19 pandemic caused in 2020 and 2021, the decline in Russian and Ukrainian tourism after the outbreak of the war in 2022, and the decrease in tourism revenues of both countries motivated them to boost cooperation in this

economically promising area. Tourism mobility from Egypt to Turkey did not stop during the heyday of the bilateral crisis, with only slight declines between 2015 and 2017 and during the COVID-19 pandemic. It also notably increased following the normalisation process. On the other hand, during the crisis, Egypt continued to grant Turkish nationals visas upon arrival at the touristic city of Sharm Al-Sheikh. Moreover, the number of Turkish tourists visiting Egypt experienced a 230% boom, with 150 thousand visitors in 2023 compared to 2022, per an Egyptian official, as Egypt started to grant Turkish citizens visas on arrival by 2022 (Al-Sourogy 2024; Hürriyet Daily News 2023). The Turkish and Egyptian Businessmen Association (TÜMİAD) expects around 230-300 thousand Turkish tourists to visit Egypt in 2024 (Al-Sharq Bloomberg 2024).

Figure 9 Egyptian Tourists Visiting Turkey 2013-2023 (in thousands).

Source: Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism[19]

A new dimension in tourism mobility between the two countries over the last decade has been the growing trend of educational tourism from the former to the latter. According to Turkish High Education Institution (YÖK) statistics, approximately ten

[19] There is a lack of reliable data on the influx of Turkish tourists to Egypt over the period in question.

thousand Egyptian nationals were enrolled in Turkish universities in the 2022/2023 educational year, constituting around 5% of total international students in Turkey. This number has multiplied over the last decade. Aside from the economic returns of this phenomenon, this considerably large community could serve as a bridge between the two nations in different areas of cooperation.

Year	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**
Number	199	410	697	1217	1921	2910	4109	5821	7847	9597

Table 2 The number of Egyptian students enrolled in Turkish universities.

Source: Turkish Higher Education Institution (YÖK)

In addition, Egyptian youth showed massive interest in learning the Turkish language at Yunus Emre Institute, even in the heyday of bilateral tensions (Kalabalık 2018). President Erdoğan also asserted that the Cairo branch of the institute receives the most considerable interest among other branches worldwide (BBC News Türkçe 2024a). Egypt also enjoys the most positive image among Arab countries in Turkey per a Turkish public survey (Küçükcan 2022). Therefore, both countries could cash on this mutual interest to strengthen economic, public and cultural relations.

5.3.4 Final Remarks on Turkey-Egypt Intra-Industry Trade

Most research on trade between Egypt and Turkey primarily focuses on the significance of bilateral trade in maintaining economic ties during political tensions. While the volume of bilateral trade is indeed important, as discussed in sections 3.4, 4.5, and 5.3, this section places greater emphasis on the composition of trade and the level of interdependence between Egypt and Turkey through the concept of Intra-industry trade (IIT). IIT could be defined as a two-way exchange of similar manufactured commodities within the same industry between two states, which differs from the traditional inter-industry trade (Thies and Peterson 2015). Adly (2021) briefly shed light on the growing tendency toward IIT between Egypt and Turkey. He argues that the IIT was among the factors that pushed the two nations to preserve bilateral

trade even during the bilateral crisis's heyday, as it indicates a significant involvement of broad stakeholders in these ties, including producers, consumers, distributors and workers. Therefore, state intervention's economic, political, and legal costs would have been prohibitively high. To understand this feature, this section measures IIT between Egypt and Turkey from 2014 to 2022 by applying the most commonly used Grubel-Lloyd Index (GLI).

$$GL_i \frac{(X_i + M_i) - |X_I - M_i|}{X_i + M_i} = 1 - \frac{|X_i - M_i|}{X_i + M_i}; 0 \leq GL_i \leq 1$$

Equation 1 Intra-Industry Trade Grubel–Lloyd index

Where X_i denotes exports, M_i denotes imports, and i denotes goods. A GL_i value of 1 indicates pure intra-industry trade, while a GL_i value of 0 indicates pure inter-industry trade.

Figure 10 Egypt-Turkey Intra-Industry Trade.

Source: Author's Calculations adopted from Trademap data[20]

[20] Below are the labels for the products' HS codes mentioned in this section:
- '27 Mineral fuels, mineral oils and products of their distillation
- '39 Plastics

Figure 10 shows sectors with a significant GLI value and a share in bilateral trade higher than 2%. These sectors accounted for roughly 50% of total bilateral trade volume between 2014 and 2022. Within these sectors, Turkey and Egypt exchange similar products in similar quantities. For instance, between 2014 and 2022, Egypt exported inorganic chemicals (HS Code '28) worth around $1 billion to Turkey and imported products belonging to the same sector from Turkey worth around $0.8 billion. A similar pattern applies to cotton and manmade stable fibre sectors ('52). This trend of intra-industry trade has been growing over time. For instance, products from the mineral fuels and oils sector (HS code '27) constituted around 11% of total bilateral trade volume between 2014 and 2022. These products started to appear as top exports for both Turkey and Egypt from 2017 onward, marking a shift from inter-industry trade dominated mainly by Turkey. A very similar situation is valid for the sector of electrical machinery and equipment and parts (HS code '85), meaning that Egypt managed to improve its position vis a vis Turkey in some sectors and was motivated to continue this trade.

HS Code	GL 2014	GL 2015	GL 2016	GL 2017	GL 2018	GL 2019	GL 2020	GL 2021	GL 2022
'27	0.101	0.060	0.076	0.820	0.540	0.432	0.848	0.596	0.505
'39	0.504	0.587	0.572	0.457	0.477	0.482	0.520	0.497	0.551
'28	0.699	0.998	0.951	0.842	0.799	0.934	0.854	0.902	0.944
'85	0.190	0.144	0.371	0.466	0.668	0.749	0.075	0.892	0.778
'52	0.939	0.693	0.625	0.661	0.893	0.870	0.110	0.609	0.661
'62	0.636	0.972	0.663	0.418	0.964	0.925	0.762	0.699	0.680
'55	0.816	0.717	0.740	0.690	0.844	0.777	0.975	0.538	0.391
'54	0.756	0.822	0.846	0.743	0.885	0.732	0.799	0.601	0.378
'40	0.364	0.470	0.430	0.533	0.569	0.361	0.478	0.473	0.645
'29	0.104	0.881	0.393	0.203	0.349	0.459	0.398	0.361	0.472

- '28 Inorganic chemicals
- '85 Electrical machinery and equipment and parts
- '52 Cotton
- '62 Articles of apparel and clothing accessories
- '55 Man-made staple fibres
- '54 Man-made filaments
- '40 Rubber and articles
- '29 Organic chemicals
- '25 Salt; sulphur; earths and stone; plastering materials, lime and cement
- '38 Miscellaneous chemical products

'25	0.439	0.554	0.829	0.765	0.733	0.792	0.872	0.870	0.742
'38	0.584	0.609	0.774	0.755	0.899	0.913	0.791	0.823	0.993

Table 3 Evolvement of Intra-Industry Trade (2014 and 2022).

Source: Author's Calculations adopted from Trademap data

In addition, there is a high level of integration in terms of intra-industry trade. For instance, Egypt exports propylene polymers to Turkey in the plastics sector (HS code '39), whereas Turkey exports acrylic polymers, polyacetals, and other polyethers to Egypt. In their account of the political effects of Intra-Industry Trade, Thies and Peterson (2015) contend that this type of trade strengthens peace, cooperation and political alignment between partner states, maximises mutual and complementary areas of collaboration, and contributes to decreasing the possibility of military confrontation. In addition, they argue that partner states engaged in IIT are more likely to conclude preferential trade agreements. Therefore, the composition of the growing IIT between Egypt and Turkey should have been among their motivations for launching negotiations to expand the existing FTA's scope. Moreover, while IIT was vital in surviving economic ties during the political crisis, enhancing it in the foreseeable future could, ceteris paribus, upgrade political relations between the two nations to higher levels based on more sustainable pillars.

Table 4 shows the 5 product categories where a clear inter-industry, i.e. a low GL index value, exists with a high share in bilateral trade estimated at 25% between 2014 and 2022. Among these sectors, Turkey indisputably dominates iron and steel ('72), mechanical appliances ('84), articles of iron and steel ('73), and vehicles other than railway and tramways ('87), while Egypt dominates only fertilisers ('31). Some of these products are intermediate goods with comparatively fair prices that Egyptian industries need.

HS Code	Label	Share in Bilateral Trade	Average GLI
'72	Iron and steel	7.54%	0.2949

'87	Vehicles other than railway or tramway rolling stock, and parts and accessories thereof	4.84%	0.0070
'31	Fertilisers	4.48%	0.1133
'84	Nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances; parts thereof	4.46%	0.0464
'73	Articles of iron or steel	3.49%	0.1054

Table 4 Egypt-Turkey Inter-Industry Trade.

5.4 Conclusion

Between late 2020 and early 2024, Turkey and Egypt underwent a normalisation process, gradually overcoming initial disputes to restore diplomatic ties at the ambassadorial level and significantly boost bilateral cooperation across trade, investment, tourism, and defence sectors. At the unit level, economic pressures, e.g. increasing inflation rates, public debts, and declining foreign direct investments, were the driving factors behind this rapprochement. At the system level, the convergence of both countries' interests in Africa's Horn, Sahel region, Libya and Gaza, alongside changes in regional geopolitics, including the decline of the Arab Quartet and challenges in their immediate regional environment, were among the main motivations.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

On November 23, 2013, following months of trading accusations between Turkey and Egypt, the latter's Ministry of Foreign Affairs declared Turkey's ambassador to Cairo a persona non grata, downgrading diplomatic relations to Charge d'affaires, and Turkey reciprocated. On July 4th, 2023, the two nations announced upgrading diplomatic relations to the ambassadorial level. During the intervening period, Egyptian-Turkish relations witnessed unprecedented tensions and rivalries. This thesis analyses the evolution of Egyptian-Turkish relations from mid-2013 to early 2024, divided into three distinct periods: mid-2013-mid-2016, mid-2016-late 2020, and late 2020- early 2024, applying the conceptual framework of Foreign Policy Change.

During the first period, from mid-2013 to mid-2016, bilateral relations declined due to Turkey's persistent and fierce criticisms of domestic developments in Egypt. Turkey perceived the Muslim Brotherhood's ouster in July 2013 as a major blow to its regional vision. This setback paved the way for the rise of other regional actors in areas that directly affected Turkish vital interests, e.g. Syria. Moreover, the ongoing changes in the Turkish domestic context, including the Gezi Protests, the collapse of the AKP's domestic coalitions, and the June 2015 elections, prolonged Turkey's criticism, resulting in a significant change in Turkey's policy towards Egypt. Turkey used three major tools to confront the new Egyptian government: acting as a normative power (delegitimising the new government on international platforms), hosting the leaders and members of the Egyptian Brotherhood, and leveraging events in Egypt to garner domestic support. In addition, there are important signs that the AKP initially perceived the military ouster of Morsi as a threat that could trigger similar interventions in Turkey. Conversely, the regional context favoured Egypt, which was highly antagonised by the Turkish criticisms. The new government in Cairo cashed in on the rising threat of terrorist organisations and international and regional actors'

relevant concerns to mobilise their support against Turkey. Changes in Egyptian policy toward Turkey were observed in the utilisation of three major tools: counterbalancing Turkey by aligning with the latter's traditional rivals, Greece and the Republic of Cyprus, resorting to "easy and provocative actions" that hit on Turkey's old and new Achilles heels, e.g. the Armenian and Kurdish issues and leveraging on the crisis domestically. Also, there were important signs that the El-Sisi government perceived Turkish support for the Brotherhood as a threat. This perception was translated into a securitisation policy on different issues. Regarding economic relations in this period, both countries took economic measures that negatively impacted their bilateral economic ties, such as Egypt's non-renewal of the Ro-Ro MoU and imposing anti-dumping duties on Egyptian exports by Turkey. This led to a decrease in Turkish exports to Egypt and a decline in the number of Egyptian tourists visiting Turkey. Egypt's protectionist measures and increases in tariffs on the imports of luxury goods from different countries also contributed to the decline in economic relations. On the other hand, Egypt managed to reduce the trade deficit with Turkey.

During the second period, from mid-2016 to late 2020, Turkey's domestic context witnessed significant changes, e.g. the July 2016 coup attempt and the rise of the AKP-MHP Coalition. Growing opposition to the AKP's foreign policy, the indifference of its constituencies concerning Egypt, and the lack of commitment to previous policy proved the inefficiency of internalising domestic events in Egypt to garner support for the ruling party. Moreover, the failure of Erdoğan's previous attempts to challenge El-Sisi's legitimacy, a decline of Turkey's normative power or status as a model of democracy, and the counterproductiveness of utilising the Egyptian Brotherhood all sparked a significant program change in Turkey's policy toward Egypt. Accordingly, Turkey significantly decreased its criticisms of the Egyptian government and launched a short-lived détente while Erdoğan gradually recognised the status quo in Egypt. However, changes on the system level (Qatar embargo, the collapse of Cyprus talks and the intensification of the East Mediterranean rivalry and the Libyan conflict) put Turkey and Egypt at odds with each other, yet this time at the regional level. With their significant locations and endowments, both countries aspire to become a regional energy hub. Despite the fact these aspirations are not totally conflicting given the existence of a third alternative, i.e., the East-Med Pipeline Project, and the divergence

of Turkish and Egyptian capabilities (pipelines vs LNG), Egypt backed Greece and Cyprus in their dispute with Turkey. Turkey responded to its exclusion from the Cairo-headquartered EMGF by signing a maritime deal with Libya's GNA, which had a significant effect on the path of the war. Nonetheless, the peak of this regional clash was, at the same time, the de-escalation moment when both countries recognised each other's vital interests. Neither Turkey's maritime deal with Libya's GNA affected Egypt's maritime zones, nor did Egypt's deal with Greece violate Turkey's maritime zones. Indeed, the latter, coupled with the stalemate of the Libyan civil conflict, was a turning point in Egyptian-Turkish relations. Egypt realised the high cost of involving in a decades-long Turkish-Greek dispute and tacitly respected Turkey's jurisdiction zones. Economically, this period witnessed significant efforts from business circles to revitalise economic relations regardless of the political rift. Although these efforts, coupled with the devaluation of national currencies, paid off in a significant rise in all bilateral economic aspects, the average annual growth rate of bilateral trade volume remained at the level it reached in 2013 ($5 billion). The suspension of periodic meetings of the Egyptian-Turkish Joint Economic Committee and Egypt's securitisation policy hampered the further development of economic relations. In other words, the two countries compartmentalised their bilateral relations' economic and political aspects. The composition of increasing intra-industry trade between the two nations was among the factors that contributed to the survival of economic ties. This pattern of trade strengthens cooperation between partner states, maximises mutual and complementary areas of collaboration, and increases the likelihood of concluding preferential trade agreements between them.

During the third period, from late 2020 to early 2024, the two countries embarked on a sluggish yet persistent normalisation process that survived despite the initial disputes over unsettled issues, resulting in the restoration of diplomatic relations to the ambassadorial level and a notable boom in bilateral cooperation. Unit-level factors, mainly the deterioration of the economic situation in both countries and the convergence of economic interests, were pivotal in mending fences. The change in Gulf states' bailout policy and, thereby, the inability of the Egyptian government to address the economic crisis by garnering the Gulf's financial assistance was an important motivation to explore opportunities for economic cooperation with Turkey.

Conversely, Turkish firms suffering from high production and labour costs at home rushed to capitalise on promising opportunities in Egypt. More importantly, system-level factors, including the decline of the Arab Quartet, the Egyptian-Greek-Cypriot triad, and further deteriorating Egypt's immediate regional environment (Sudanese civil war, Gaza War, and turmoil in Sahel region, Red Sea and Africa's Horn) gave momentum to bilateral relations. In addition, since economic cooperation was one of the primary motivations for this normalisation, bilateral economic ties gained significant momentum in three areas: trade, investments, tourism and defence industries. There are also significant signs that Egypt has changed its previous securitisation policy toward Turkish investments in specific sectors, including energy, transportation, and logistics, and opened these sectors to Turkish investors.

The incremental character of the FPC allows researchers to track the trajectory of specific policy areas over time, thereby facilitating an understanding of the reasons and motivations behind relevant policy decisions and trends. By applying such a conceptual framework, the thesis paid equal attention to system-level and unit-level elements and avoided overemphasising the influence of structure, ignoring the agency effect or vice versa. This framework also aided the author in balancing material and ideational elements. The thesis addressed the ideological notions of Turkish and Egyptian leadership within the framework of the concept of "Procedural Pragmatism". Over the last decade, this procedural form of pragmatism gave Erdoğan and, to a lesser extent, El-Sisi considerable room for manoeuvre. When previous policies and tools were found to be ineffective and even counterproductive (from 2015 onward), Erdoğan demonstrated flexibility by changing course and reconfiguring new tools or adjusting existing ones to be more justifiable and politically practical to gain public support, all without jeopardising the general ideological framework. That feature was more evident after the normalisation process, as the two leaders stressed the commonalities and shared identities after years of trading accusations on the same themes. However, it should be noted that FPC has certain limitations. On the one hand, most studies have used this approach to study the foreign policy of one country rather than bilateral relations between two countries. Therefore, the author faced a challenge in linking and interpreting the interactions between Egypt and Turkey, especially in the first period (2013-2016), during which bilateral diplomatic engagement was minimal. On the other

hand, despite the frequency of FPCs in the Middle East, even at extreme magnitudes (e.g. Egypt's foreign policy reorientation under El-Sadat), the integration of FPC literature into Middle Eastern studies is still limited. The literature focuses on particular foreign policymaking dynamics that exist mainly in Western political regimes and are weaker in Middle Eastern ones, as in the Egyptian case and, to a lesser extent, in the Turkish case. To illustrate, it's challenging to find a study of Egyptian public opinion regarding relations with Turkey, with only two exceptions; thereby, it was hard to ascertain the degree of domestic pressure on the Egyptian decision-maker in this respect.

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APPENDICES

A. TURKISH SUMMARY/TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Bu tezde, Mısır Arap Cumhuriyeti eski Cumhurbaşkanı Muhammed Mursi'nin iktidardan uzaklaştırıldığı 2013 Temmuz'undan Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Cumhurbaşkanı Recep Tayyip Erdoğan'ın Mısır'a resmi bir ziyaret gerçekleştirdiği 2024 yılının başlarına kadarki süreçte Mısır-Türkiye ilişkileri Dış Politika Değişikliği kavramsal çerçevesinde irdelenmiştir. İkili ilişkilerin siyasi, ekonomik boyutları çalışmanın kapsamına dahil olup birkaç istisna haricinde genel olarak nitel araştırma yöntemleri kullanılmıştır. İkili ilişkileri daha iyi kavrayabilmek adına, çalışmamızın kapsamına giren dönem üç döneme ayrılmış olup, bunlar: Temmuz 2013-Temmuz 2016, Temmuz 2016-Ağustus 2020 ve Ağustos 2020-Şubat 2024 dönemleridir. Buna göre, tez, giriş, sonuç bölümleri, kavramsal ve tarihsel çerçeve bölümünün yanı sıra yukarıda bahsi geçen üç dönem ayrı üç bölümde incelenmiştir. Çalışmada, ekonomik ilişkiler ikili ticaret hacmi, doğrudan yatırımlar ve turizm hareketliliği olmak üzere üç kriter dikkate alınarak ele alınmaktadır. Çalışmada analitik, birden çok düzeyli bir kavramsal çerçeve olarak Dış Politika Değişikliği kullanılmıştır. Bu kapsamda, tezin ana bölümlerinde (3, 4 ve 5. bölümler) ilgili dönemlerde ikili ilişkileri etkileyen etkenler birim düzeyi, liderlik ve birey düzeyi (ki bu iki düzey tek başlık altında toplanmıştır) ile sistem/yapı düzeyi olarak ayrılmıştır. Her üç düzeyde bir değişken seti belirlenmiş olup ona göre analiz yapılmıştır. Birim düzeyi değişkenler, kurumlararası güç dağılımı/dengesi, ittifaklar, hükümetin dış politikasına olan tutum (destek/muhalefet/ilgisizlik), ekonomik endeksleri kapsamaktadır. Liderlik dinamikleri ise başarısızlık kaynaklı öğrenme (Failure-Induced Learning) ile Prosedürel Pragmatizm'i kapsamaktadır. Yapı/sistem düzeyi değişkenler arasında uluslararası, bölgesel güç yapısı, iki ülkenin diğer güçlerle ilişkileri, ittifakları vs. dikkate alınmıştır.

Çalışmada, ikili ilişkilerin tarihsel gelişiminin analizi için T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığının erişime açık olan arşivi, yıllık bültenleri ve ikincil elden kaynaklardan istifade

edilmiştir. Bu kapsamda Mısır-Türkiye ilişkilerinin tarihi 5 döneme ayrılmış olup bunlar 1925-1950, 1950-1966, 1966-1980, 1980-2003 ve 2003-2011 dönemleridir. İlk dönemde, yeni kurulan rejimler arasında gerginlik yaşansa da 2. Dünya Savaşı'na doğru Akdeniz'de yükselen İtalya tehlikesini dengelemek için ikili ilişkilerde iyileşmeler olmuştur. Soğuk Savaşın gölgesinde geçen 1950'li yıllar ile 1960'lı yılların ilk yarısında ise iki ülke ayrı uluslararası, bölgesel ittifaklarda yer almış, hemen hemen tüm bölgesel meselelerde karşı karşıya gelmişlerdir. 1966 yılından itibaren özellikle Türkiye'nin Kıbrıs meselesinde yaşadığı sorunları aşmak için ikili ilişkilerde normalleşme yaşanmıştır. Türkiye genel olarak, özellikle Filistin konusunda Arap yanlısı bir politika izlemiş, Altı Gün Savaşı'nda tarafsız kalmakla birlikte İsrail'in işgal ettiği topraklardan çekilmesi gerektiğini savunan tüm uluslararası kararları desteklemiştir. 1980'den itibaren bölgesel ve global düzeylerde büyük değişimler yaşanmış, iki ülke ABD ile hareket etmiş, ikili ilişkiler gelişmiş, karşılıklı üst düzeyli ziyaretler gerçekleşmiş, ekonomik ilişkiler katbekat artmıştır. Bununla birlikte 1990'lı yıllarda Türkiye'nin Suriye ile yaşadığı gerginlikler, İsrail ile gelişen ilişkiler, Mısır'ı rahatsız etmiştir. Cumhurbaşkanı Mübarek'in 1998 Türkiye-Suriye krizinde üstlendiği arabulucu rolü ikili ilişkilere olumlu yansımıştır. Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP)'nin iktidar olduğu 2002'den sonra ise ilişkilerde hem iş birliği hem rekabet artmıştır.

2013'ün sıcak yazında yaşanan ikili ilişkilerdeki krize değinmeden, 2011-2013 döneminin genel hatlarını ele almakta fayda vardır. Çalışmamızın kapsamına giren dönemi daha iyi kavrayabilmek için yukarıda bahsi geçen dönemde iki önemli boyuta ışık tutmak gerekir. Bunlardan ilki; Mısır'da 25 Ocak 2011'de meydana gelen halk hareketini bir "fırsat penceresi" olarak algılayan Türkiye'nin iktidar partisi AKP'nin, dönemin şartları doğrultusunda Mısır'daki Müslüman Kardeşler ile hareket etmeyi pragmatist saiklerle tercih etmiş olmasıdır. Bu bağlamda Taş (2022) bu tercihin altında yatan pragmatist "güç maksimizasyon" denklemini ortaya koymuştur. Taş'a göre Müslüman kardeşlerin Mısır'da ve Arap dünyasındaki geniş ağları, tabanları (maksimum fayda), AKP iktidarına olan ideolojik yakınlığı, onun rejim güvenliğine hiçbir tehdit oluşturmamaları (minimum zarar) AKP'nin tercihinde etkili olmuştur. İkincisi; Türkiye'nin Mısır ile ilişkilerinden güttüğü amaca (dönemin Dışişleri Bakanı Davutoğlu'nun deyimiyle Türkiye-Mısır eksenini oluşturma hedefine) ulaşmak için

normatif güç olma iddiasında olmasıdır ki literatürde Türkiye Modeli olarak geçmektedir. Bunu yaparken Türkiye aslında bölgesel düzeyde revaçta olan bir dış politika tutumunu benimsemiştir. Buna karşın, özellikle eski Cumhurbaşkanı Muhammed Mursi'nin döneminde Müslüman Kardeşler hem batıda hem Mısır'da beğeni toplayan "Türkiye Modeli" nin uygulayıcısı olma iddiasında bulunmak, AKP'nin siyasi tecrübesinden yararlanmak ve Türkiye'nin Mısır'a sağladığı ekonomik destekten yararlanmak için Türkiye ile bölgesel ortaklığı faydalı bulmuşlardır.

Birinci Dönem: İkili Çatışma (Temmuz 2013-Temmuz 2016)

30 Haziran 2013 halk hareketini müteakiben Mısır ordusunun müdahalesiyle Muhammed Mursi görevden uzaklaştırılıp hapse girmiştir. Bunun neticesinde hem Türkiye'nin Mısır politikasında hem de Mısır'ın Türkiye politikasında Problem/Hedef Dış Politika Değişikliğine gidildiği görülmüştür. Mısır'da yaşanan rejim değişikliği Türkiye'nin bölgesel dizaynını aksatacak, hayati öneme sahip bölgesel meselelerde (Suriye İç Savaşı) başka aktörlerin güçlenmesine yol açacak kapasitede bir "Dış Şok" niteliğindeydi. Buna göre, Mursi'yi iktidardan indirmekle Orgeneral Abdelfattah El-Sisi sadece Türkiye'yi önemli bir müttefikten mahrum bırakmamış, aynı zamanda, genel olarak Ortadoğu'da, bilhassa Suriye'de Türkiye'nin statüsüne darbe indirmiştir. Dönemin Başbakanı Erdoğan'ın ısrarına rağmen Obama yönetiminin Beşşar El-Esed rejimine karşı askeri müdahale yapmayı reddettiği hatta Türkiye'nin güvenlik endişelerini ve hassasiyetlerini kale almayarak terör örgütü PKK ve Suriye kolu PYD/YPG'ye "boots-on-the-ground" olarak kullanmaya başladığı dönemde Mısır'daki gelişmelerin etkisi daha da artmıştır. Buna ilaveten, Mısır'da meydana gelen olaylar Türkiye-Katar ekseni için önemli bir test idi.

Mısır'daki askeri müdahalenin Türkiye'de geniş bir toplumsal hareket olan Gezi Protestolarının olduğu döneme denk gelmesi Türkiye'nin tepkisini daha da hiddetlendirmiş, uzamasına neden olmuştur. Bu bağlamda Erdoğan ve Davutoğlu sık sık Mısır'daki rejim değişikliği ile Gezi Protestoları arasında paralellik kurmuştur. Türkiye modelinin çöküşünü kabullenemeyen Erdoğan, milli iradenin meydanlarda değil sadece sandıkta tecelli ettiğini, Türkiye'nin askeri darbelerle mücadele konusunda Mısır için bir referans olduğunu ileri sürdü.

1. Normatif Güç olarak hareket etmek: Rol model olma iddiasında olan Türkiye Mursi'nin görevden uzaklaştırılmasının demokrasiye aykırı olduğunu, Müslüman Kardeşlerin düzenlendiği oturma eylemlerine yapılan sert müdahalelerin, Mursi ve arkadaşlarına verilen idam, hapis cezalarının insan hakları ihlali olduğunu ulusal ve uluslararası mahfillerde sistematik bir biçimde ileri sürmüştür. Özellikle Erdoğan ile Sisi'nin Cumhurbaşkanı olarak seçildikleri 2014'te Türkiye'nin eleştiri dozu hayli artmıştır. Erdoğan 2014 BM Genel Kurulundaki konuşmasında, Gazze savaşı sırasında Mısırlı mevkidaşını aşırı sert bir dille eleştirmiş, meşruiyetine meydan okumuştur. Dışişleri Bakanlığı da sistematik olarak Mısır'da meydana gelen olayları kınayan açıklamalar yayınlamıştır.
2. İçselleştirmek: AKP hükümeti Mısır'daki gelişmeler ile Türkiye iç siyasetinde tartışılan meseleleri jukstapoze ederek kitle konsolidasyonu ve seçmen desteğini kazanmayı amaçlamıştır. Bunun en çarpıcı örneği 7 Haziran genel seçimleri sırasında yaşanmıştır. Seçim kampanyası sırasında Mursi'ye verilen idam cezasını propaganda malzemesi haline getiren Başbakan ve Cumhurbaşkanı kendilerini sık sık Mursi ve Menderes'e, muhalefet liderleri Kılıçdaroğlu ile Bahçeli ise Sisi ve 27 Mayıs darbecilerine benzetmiştir. Nitekim hükümetin Mısır iç meselelerini bu denli iç politikaya alet etmesi, o dönemde ortaya atılan normalleşme girişimlerini akamete uğrattı.
3. Müslüman Kardeşleri Türkiye'de Barındırmak: AKP hükümeti özellikle Mısır-Katar ilişkilerinde yaşanan normalleşmeden sonra Katar'ın sınır dışı ettiği Müslüman Kardeşlere ülkesinin kapılarını açtı. Bu davranışın altında Türkiye hükümetinin Mısır'ın yeni hükümetinin zayıf olması ve ayakta kalamayacağına dolayısıyla Müslüman Kardeşlerin Mısır'ın geleceğinde bir rol oynayacağına inanması. Bunun en bariz örneği 2014 Cumhurbaşkanlığı Devir Teslim Töreninde Erdoğan'ın Müslüman Kardeşlerin üyelerini "Mısır Temsilcileri" olarak davet etmesidir. Ancak 2015'te Müslüman Kardeşlerin iç fraksiyonları arasında yaşanan çatışmalar, bölünmeler, genç kuşaklar arasında şiddete yönelimin artması ve bazı fraksiyonların teröre açık bir şekilde başvurmaları, örgütün İstanbul'dan yayın yapan TV kanallarının şiddet yanlısı, cihatçı, radikal söylem kullanması da Türkiye'nin örgüte verdiği desteği gözden geçirmesine yol açacaktır.

Mısır'ın bu dönemdeki Türkiye politikasının ise yerel, bölgesel ve global gelişmelere paralel olarak tedricen sertleştiği görülmüştür. İlk olarak, Mısır, Türkiye'den Mısır'daki olaylarla alakalı sert eleştiri yapmaktan vazgeçmesini talep etmiş, Mısır'ın Ankara büyükelçisini geri çekmiş, Türkiye ile yapılması planlanan "Dostluk Denizi" tatbikatını iptal etmiştir. Türkiye'nin eleştirileri devam edince Mısır Türkiye'nin Kahire Büyükelçisini istenmeyen adam ilan edip diplomatik ilişkileri maslahatgüzar seviyesine indirmiştir. Aslında İslamcı terör örgütlerinin yükselmesi, Suriye ve Irak'ta genişlemesinden endişelenen ABD ile Avrupa Birliği'nin bölgeye yönelik güvenlik odaklı politikaları, terörle mücadeleyi slogan edinen yeni hükümetin işine yaramıştır. ABD ilk başta Mısır'a bazı sembolik yaptırımlar uygulasa da üzerine çok gitmemiş, Mursi'nin azlini askeri darbe olarak nitelendirmekten kaçınmıştır. Mısır, Birleşmiş Milletler Güvenlik Konseyi'nde Mısır'a karşı yaptırım kararı çıkarmaya çalışan ancak başarılı olamayan Türkiye'ye karşı Arap ülkelerini mobilize etmiştir. Ayrıca, Suudi Arabistan ve Birleşik Arap Emirlikleri (BAE) olmak üzere Arap Ayaklanmaları ve Müslüman Kardeşlerin yükselişinden endişelenen Körfez ülkeleri Mısır'a 20 milyar dolardan fazla mali yardım sağlamıştır. Yıllar sonra Bakan Çavuşoğlu ülkesinin Suudi Arabistan ile ilişkilerinin bozulmasını Mısır'ın çabalarına yormuştur. Mısır'ın iç politikası ise Türkiye'ye yönelik politikayı olumsuz etkilemiştir. İlk olarak, Mursi'nin bir yıllık başkanlık döneminde Mısır dış politikasının iki ağır topu olan dışişleri bakanlığı ile orduda ciddi bir değişiklikten bahsetmek hemen hemen imkânsızdır. Ordu zaten 2011'den beri Türkiye'nin bölgede pazarladığı sivil-askeri ilişkiler modeline pek sıcak bakmıyor, Erdoğan'ın eleştirilerinden hayli rahatsız idi. Keza Dışişleri Bakanlığı Müslüman Kardeşlerin Türkiye ile koordinasyonunu, örgütün Türkiye'de yaptığı toplantıları yakından takip etmiştir. Ayrıca, Mısır'da yapılan kamuoyu anketlerinde Türkiye'nin pozitif imajı ciddi zarar görmüştür. Kaldı ki ilk başta etkin olan liberal ve seküler çevreler Gezi protestolarına sempati duyup AKP iktidarını Mursi gibi demokrasiyi sadece seçim sandıklarına indirgeyen otoriter bir iktidar olarak görmüşlerdir. Özetle, devlet kurumlarına kendi kadrolarını yerleştirmeyen Müslüman Kardeşler'in iktidardan düştüğü, dış politika elitinin eski politikaya bağlılığının olmadığı görülmüştür.

Mısır'ın Türkiye politikasında kullandığı araçlara bakıldığında Türkiye'nin aşil topuğunu arayış içinde olduğu görülmüştür. Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan'ın 2014'te

Birleşmiş Milletler (BM)'deki eleştirilerine cevaben Cumhurbaşkanı Sisi'nin şu açıklamasına bakmakta fayda vardır:

> Sürekli olarak şahsime hakaret eden bir cumhurbaşkanı var. Ben cevap vermedim, vermeyeceğim de. Önemli olan laflar değil, icraattır. Biz kimseye hakaret etmedik, hakaret edilmesi gerekenler dahil.

Türkiye'yi kendi içişlerine karışmasından caydırmak için Mısır söylemden ziyade somut adımlara başvurdu. Örneğin; 2014'te Erdoğan, Sisi'yi BM'de sert bir şekilde eleştirirken Mısır BM Güvenlik Konseyi'nin Daimi Üyeliğine seçilmeye çalışan Türkiye'ye karşı Suudi Arabistan ile birlikte lobi faaliyetleri yürütmüş ki Türkiye az farkla İspanya'ya kaybetmiştir.

1. Karşı Dengeleme: 1967'den beri Mısır dış politikasında gelenekselleşmiş "yükselen bölgesel güçleri dengeleme" politikasının Türkiye'ye uygulandığı görülmüştür. Bunun en belirgin örneği Mısır'ın Türkiye'nin geleneksel rakipleri olan Yunanistan ve [Rum] Kıbrıs Cumhuriyeti'yle gelişen münasebetleridir. 2014'ten 2021'e kadar Mısır, Yunanistan ve Kıbrıs Cumhuriyeti Cumhurbaşkanları "üçlü iş birliği mekanizması" kapsamında yıllık olarak bir araya gelmiştir. 2015'ten itibaren ise üç ülkenin ordu ve deniz kuvvetleri muntazaman "Medusa" tatbikatları düzenlemiştir. Bu üç ülkenin arasındaki ilişkiler özellikle 2017'den itibaren daha da güçlenmiştir.
2. İçselleştirmek, Türkiye'nin Normatif Gücüne meydan okumak: Mısır, Türkiye'nin eleştirilerine yanıt verirken Türkiye'nin insan hakları, demokrasi gibi konularda bir referans, model veya bir normatif otorite olmadığını vurgulamaya çalışmıştır. Mısır tarihinde eşi benzeri görülmemiş bir terör dalgası yaşandığı bir dönemde hükümet Müslüman Kardeşler dahil tüm Siyasal İslamcı hareketleri IŞİD ile aynı kefeye koyarak terör örgütü olarak ilan etmiştir. Hükümete bağlı yazılı ve görsel medyada Müslüman Kardeşlere destek veren Türkiye de söz konusu "terör kampının" bir üyesi olarak lanse edilmiştir. Türkiye'ye dair algının sistematik bir güvenlikleştirme politikasına dönüştüğü birkaç uygulama söz konusu olmuştur. Örneğin, 2015'te Türkiye'yi ziyaret etmek isteyen 40 yaş altında olan Mısır vatandaşlarına İçişleri Bakanlığından resmi izin alma zorunluluğu getirilmiş olup kararın amacı "gençlerin terör örgütlerine katılmasını engellemek" olarak gösterilmiştir.

3. Kolay ama kışkırtıcı adımlar: Mısır, Türkiye'ye içişlerine karışmasını engellemek amacıyla 1915 Ermeni "Soykırımı", Kürt sorunu, FETÖ ve Kuzey Kıbrıs Türk Cumhuriyeti gibi Türkiye için hassas konular üzerinden sinyaller vermeye çalışmıştır. Bu adımlar genel olarak maliyetsiz olması ve aynı zamanda Türkiye'yi kışkırtma kapasitesine sahip olması dolayısıyla Mısır hükümeti için cazip hale gelmiştir. Fakat belirtmek gerekir ki söz konusu sinyallerin bu konulara yönelik Mısır'ın geleneksel dış politikasında kalıcı bir iz bıraktığından bahsetmek mümkün değildir. Örneğin, Kürt meselesi üzerinden Türkiye'yi sert bir şekilde eleştiren Mısır, Irak Kürt Bölgesel Yönetimi'nin (IKBY) 2017'de düzenlediği bağımsızlık referandumuna karşı çıkmıştır. Keza, Ermeni "Soykırımı"nı tanıyan yasa tasarısı Mısır parlamentosuna sunulduysa da geçmemiştir.

Bu dönemde özellikle Erdoğan'ın 2014 BM konuşmasından sonra iki ülke, birbirlerine karşı ekonomik adımlar atmıştır. Mısır 2012'de imzalanan Ro-Ro anlaşmasını yenilememiş, Türkiye menşeli ihracata gayri resmi bazı bürokratik sınırlamalar getirmiştir. Türkiye, Mısır menşeli polistiren ithalatına anti-dumping vergisi koymuştur. Bunun sonucunda 2014-2017 arasında Türkiye'nin Mısır'a olan ihracatında %30'luk bir gerileme, Türkiye'ye gelen Mısırlı turist sayısında %14'lük bir gerileme yaşanmıştır. Keza, 2014'te 195 milyon dolar olan Mısır'daki Türk yatırım girişi 2017'de eksi 8'e gerilemiştir. Bahsi geçen kısıtlı yaptırımlara ilaveten Mısır'ın bu dönemde izlediği himayeci politikalar da ikili ticareti olumsuz olarak etkilemiştir.

İkinci Dönem: Bölgesel Rekabet Gölgesinde İlişkiler (Temmuz 2016-Ağustos 2020)

Donald Trump'ın başkan seçilmesiyle birlikte hız kazanan bölgesel rekabet ilk olarak Suudi Arabistan'ın başını çektiği, Mısır'ın da bir parçası olduğu Arap Dörtlüsünün Katar'a ambargo uygulamasında tecelli etmiştir. Buna 2017'de Kıbrıs görüşmelerinin sonuçsuz kalması, Türk-Yunan gerginliğinin artması, Körfez ülkelerinin Akdeniz'de artan nüfuzu eklenince Mısır artık Türkiye karşıtı iç içe geçmiş iki bölgesel blokun kesişim noktası olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Bu durumdan endişelenen Türkiye, ilk olarak Mısır'la tansiyonu düşürmeye yönelik adımlar atmışsa da ikili ilişkiler düzelmemiştir. Türkiye'nin, özellikle 2013'ten sonra bölgede yaşadığı tüm başarısızlıklara rağmen Doğu Akdeniz ve Ortadoğu'da hem kendini bir aktör olarak kanıtlamış olması hem de çoğu bölge ülkesinden (bazen de toplamından) daha iyi

ekonomik, askeri bir yapıya sahip (gayri safi milli hasılası, askeri harcamaları vs.) olması, Mısır için endişe vericiydi. Nitekim, Uluslararası sistemin giderek çok kutuplu bir hal alması Türkiye, bir ölçüde de Mısır gibi orta ölçekli aktörlere daha geniş hareket alanı sağlamaktadır. Bu da her iki ülkenin askeri modernizasyon projelerinde, Türkiye'nin Suriye, Irak ve Libya'da artan askeri operasyonlarında görülmüştür.

AKP-MHP'nin ittifak oluşturmaları, Cumhurbaşkanlığı Hükümet Sistemine geçiş gibi 15 Temmuz darbe girişiminden sonra Türkiye siyasetinde meydana gelen değişiklikler Türkiye'nin Mısır politikasında bir program değişikliğine (enstrüman değişimi) gidilmesine neden olmuştur. Çalışmamız, Goldmann'in (2014) iç politikanın dış politika değişikliğine etkileri konusunda ortaya attığı üç kriteri göz önünde bulundurmuştur. AKP içinde Abdullah Gül ile Bülent Arınç gibi birçok figürün hükümetin Mısır politikasına artan eleştirileri yönelten elitin eski politikaya bağlılığının söz konusu olmadığı görülmüştür. Ayrıca 2013-2016 arasında Türk seçmenin hükümetin genel dış politikası ve bilhassa bahse konu Mısır politikasına olan desteği ciddi bir şekilde azalmıştır. Buna ilaveten, Mısır iç politikasının gelişmelerinden ziyade Suriye iç savaşı, terör ile mücadele konuları seçmenin nezdinde merkezi bir konumdaydı. Binaenaleyh, ne hükümetin Mısır konusundaki sert söylemleri seçmenin desteğini kazanmak için uygun bir meseleydi ne de hükümetin dış politika performansı oy toplamak için iyi bir referanstı.

Çalışmamız ayrıca iki önemli liderlik dinamiğine ışık tutmuştur. Bunlardan ilki bireysel ve kurumsal düzeylerde başarısızlık kaynaklı öğrenmedir (Failure-Induced Learning). Erdoğan'ın Sisi'nin meşruiyetini sorgulatmak için sarfettiği çabaların kimisi sonuç vermemiş kimisi ise ters tepmiştir. Aynı zamanda Türkiye'nin Mısır'a ihracatının 2014'e kıyasla 2015-2017 arasında %30'dan fazla gerilemesi Erdoğan'ın sert çıkışlarının bir maliyeti olduğunu göstermiştir ki Türkiye'nin Mısır ile normalleşmeye yönelik ilk girişiminin odağında ekonomik ilişkiler vardı. 15 Temmuz'dan sonra Türkiye'nin normatif güç olma iddiasında önemli gerilemeler kaydedilmiştir. 2019 haricinde Erdoğan artık ne seçimlerde ne de BM konuşmalarında Mısır'ı hedef almaktadır. Aksine Edroğan Mısır'daki statükoyu zımnen kabul etmiştir:

> Mısır, bölgenin en etkili devletlerinin başında geliyor. Bizim Mısırlı kardeşlerimizle hiçbir sorunumuz yok, olamaz da. Fakat Mısır yönetimiyle diplomatik açıdan maslahatgüzar seviyesindeyiz. Küreselleşme, ticaret,

> ekonomik boyutlarda ilişkilerimiz var; Mısır tarafı TOBB öncülüğünde iş adamlarımızı Kahire'ye davet etti. Bunlar önemli ve gerekli. Bu ilişkiler siyasi boyuta da yansır mı diye sorarsınız, o önümüzdeki süreçte yaşanacak gelişmelere bağlı (Anadolu Ajansı 2017b).

Avrupa Birliği ve insan hakları örgütlerinin Türkiye'deki siyasi mahkumlar konusundaki artan eleştirilere cevaben Türkiye artık (en az Mısır kadar) "içişlerimize karışmayın" söylemini kullanmaya başlamıştır. Dışişleri Bakanlığının Mısır konulu açıklamalarında artık sadece terör olaylarını kınama açıklamaları yer almaya başlamıştır. Her ne kadar Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan'ın birkaç açıklamasında Mısır'daki siyasi mahkumlara af çıkartılmasını talep etse de bu konunun üstüne çok gitmemiş. Bu da Mısır tarafından olumlu karşılanmıştı. Kaldı ki 15 Temmuz darbe girişiminin 1960, 1971, 1980 ve 1997 darbelerinde olduğu gibi Laik generaller değil TSK'nın içine sızmış Fethullahçı Külte mensup generaller tarafından organize edilmiş olması Erdoğan ve AKP'nin Mısır'daki askeri müdahaleye dair endişelerinin yersiz olduğunu göstermiştir. Türkiye'nin Müslüman Kardeşlere yönelik politikasında küçük (adjustment change) de olsa önemli değişiklikler olmuştur. Radikal söylem kullanan Raba'a ile Masr Al'an TV kanalları kapatılmıştır. Geri kalan iki kanaldan biri Al-Sharq TV'yi İslamcı bir iş adamından satın alan Ayman Nour, daha ılımlı bir görünüm kazanmak için farklı muhalif cenahlara yer vermiş, kanalın söylemlerinde iyileştirmeler yapmıştır. En önemlisi, Müslüman kardeşler, Türkiye için artık bölgesel bir partnerden ziyade, zayıf bir sürgün muhalefetin bir parçası, Türkiye'nin elinde bir baskı aracı, pazarlık kozuna dönüşmüştür. Ancak, Mısır yine bu kanalların İstanbul'dan yayın yapmasına ve Müslüman Kardeşlerin Türkiye'de yapılanmasına her fırsatta karşı çıkmıştır.

Yukarıda bahsi geçen değişimler aslında Erdoğan'ın prosedürel pragmatizmine işaret etmektedir. Kullandığı dış politika enstrümanları başarısız kalınca hatta ters tepince gayet esnek davranıp değiştirmeye, bazen yeniden çerçevelemeye istekli olduğunu göstermiştir. Yukarıdaki örneklere ilaveten Rabia işareti bu pragmatizmin en çarpıcı örneğidir. Erdoğan, 2013'te Türk tasarımcı ve gazeteciler tarafından geliştirilen Rabia işaretini, Rabia meydanında yaşanan olaylara işaret etmek için kullanmıştır. Mısır Türkiye'nin Kahire Büyükelçisini istenmeyen adam ilan edince Tek Millet, Tek Bayrak, Tek Vatan, Tek Devlet olacak şekilde yeniden çerçevelemiştir.

Cumhurbaşkanı, Rabia'nın "yerli ve milli" versiyonunu özellikle Çözüm Sürecinin buzdolabına koyulduğu 2015 seçimleri sırasında geniş çapta kullanmaya başlamış, AKP genel başkanlığına döndüğü 2017'de ise partisinin iç tüzüğüne dahil etmiştir. Mısır'a bakacak olursak, bu dönemde iç politikada Türkiye'ye yönelik politika değişimini körükleyecek herhangi bir faktöre rastlamak pek mümkün değildir. 2018'de tekrar Cumhurbaşkanı olarak Sisi 2019'da anayasal değişikliğe gidip zaten geniş olan Cumhurbaşkanı konumunu daha da sağlamlaştırmış, süresini dört yıldan altı yıla çıkarmıştır.

İsrail'in doğal gaz kaynaklarını Leviathan-Ceyhan boru hattıyla kendi iç piyasasına ve Avrupa'ya taşımayı amaçlayan Türkiye, 2016'da İsrail ile normalleşme sürecini tamamlamış, bahsi geçen boru hattı için müzakerelere başlamıştır. Ancak 2014'te başlayan Kıbrıs görüşmelerinin 2017'de sonuçsuz kalması, Kıbrıs anlaşmazlıklarının tekrar yükselişe geçmesi neticesinde İsrail bu projeye pek sıcak bakmamıştır. Bunun yerine, İsrail, 2015'te keşfedilen 2017'de ise üretime başlayan Zohr doğal gaz sahasına, iki büyük doğal gaz sıvılaştırma tesisine sahip olan Mısır'la 2018'in başında anlaşma yapmıştır. Bu anlaşmayı Cumhurbaşkanı Sisi, meşhur "enerji merkezi olma konusunda [Türkiye'ye] gol attık" açıklamasıyla kutlamıştı. Türkiye'nin Dışişleri Bakanı Çavuşoğlu'nun 2003 Mısır-Kıbrıs Cumhuriyeti [Güney Kıbrıs Rum Yönetimi (GKRY)] deniz yetki alanları sınırlandırması anlaşmasını geçersiz olarak nitelendirmesi iki ülke arasında kriz çıkarmıştır. 2018'de Türkiye ile GKRY arasında yaşanan krizlerde Mısır, Rum tarafını desteklemiş, Yunanistan ile ortak askeri "Medusa" tatbikatlarına daha da hız vermiştir. Öyle ki, bu tatbikatlardan birisi uluslararası hukuk gereği silahsızlandırılmış olması gereken Rodos adası açıklarında icra edilmiştir. Türkiye de kıyısı olan üç denizde eş zamanlı olarak "Mavi Vatan" tatbikatını icra etmiştir. Son olarak 2019'da kurulan Kahire merkezli Doğu Akdeniz Gaz Forum'undan (DAGF) Türk tarafının dışlanması bir dönüm noktası olmuştur. DAGF'in kurulduğu ilan edildikten sonra Erdoğan Mısır'da baş savcı suikastı davasında yargılanan dokuz Müslüman Kardeşler üyesinin idamı üzerine Sisi'yi sert bir şekilde eleştirmiştir. Ayrıca Mısır'ın ev sahipliği yaptığı Arap Birliği-Avrupa Birliği zirvesine katılan Batı liderlerinin Mısır gibi, idam uygulamalarının olduğu bir ülkeye karşı sessizliklerini korurken Türkiye'yi insan hakları üzerinden eleştirmelerini ikiyüzlülük olarak niteledi. Keza eski Cumhurbaşkanı Mursi'nin ölümü üzerine

Erdoğan, Mısırlı yetkilileri uluslararası mahkemeler önünde yargılanması için elinden geleni yapacağını söylemiştir. Mursi'nin ölümü hakkında doğal bir ölüm olmadığına dair şüpheleri olduğunu söyleyen Erdoğan, 2019 BM genel kuruluna verdiği konuşmada bu konuya değinmiş, 23 Haziran'da tekrarlanan İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediye Başkanlığı seçimleri sırasında Millet İttifakının adayı Ekrem İmamoğlu'nu Sisi'ye benzetmiştir. Her ne kadar bu eleştirilerin 2013-2016 dönemindekilerle benzer tarafları olsa da özünde ciddi farklılıkları vardır. Bir kere bunlar normatif gücün ya da rol model olmanın bir tecellisinden ziyade klasik bir "whataboutism" örneğidir. Nitekim Mısır tarafı Erdoğan eleştirilerine cevaben Türkiye'deki insan hakları ihlallerine, siyasi mahkûmlara, akademisyenlerin işten atılmalarına işaret ederek Türkiye'nin bu konuda herhangi bir söz hakkı olmadığını ileri sürdü.

Libya'da ise Mısır 2014'ten beri çok boyutlu bir politika izlemiştir. İlk olarak Mısır Tobruk merkezli hükümeti ile emekli General Khalifa Haftar'ın liderliğindeki Libya Ulusal Ordusuna destek vermiş, Mısır'ın batısındaki kabilelerle akrabalık bağı olan Libya'nın doğusundaki kabilelerle ilişkileri geliştirmiştir. Bunun yanında, Sirte Körfezinde yirmi Mısırlı Kıpti'nin IŞİD tarafından hunharca öldürülmesi olayında olduğu gibi Mısır Hava Kuvvetleri Libya'da hava bombardımanı düzenlemiştir. Mısır'ın bu tercihindeki temel motivasyon Libya ile paylaştığı 1115 kilometre uzunluğundaki, terörist sızıntılarına çok müsait olan sınırlarını korumaktır. Kaldı ki, Libya ile 2013'ten sonra neredeyse savaş alanına dönüşen Sina Yarımadası arasında terörist ve silah akışının olduğu kanaatinde olan Kahire, batı komşusunu ancak birleşmiş bir askeri yapının zaptedebileceğine inanmaktaydı. Neyse ki 2016'dan sonra Kahire savaşan taraflar arasında arabuluculuk ve siyasi çözüme daha fazla ağırlık vermeye başlamıştır. İlginçtir ki Haftar bu süreçte Mısır'dan çok BAE ile Suudi Arabistan'a yakınlaşmış, Mısır'ın diplomatik çabalarına pek sıcak bakmamıştır. Öyle ki Nisan 2019'da başkent Trablus'a başlattığı askeri saldırıyı (aslında onun askeri yetersizliğinin farkında olan) Mısır ile değil (Libya ile sınırı olmayan, dolayısıyla oradaki istikrarsızlıktan olumsuz etkilenmeyen) BAE ile koordine ettiğine dair pek çok rapor bulunmaktadır. Buna rağmen Mısır sınır güvenliği için Haftar'ı desteklemeye devam etmiştir.

Türkiye ise Ortadoğu'da Arap Dörtlüsü ile Doğu Akdeniz'de Mısır-Yunanistan-Kıbrıs-İsrail dörtlüsü arasında sıkışmış, tek çıkış yolu Trablus'ta saldırı altında olan

Ulusal Mutabakat Hükümeti (UMH) ile anlaşmakta bulmuştur. Bu bağlamda, Kasım 2019'da imzalanan Türkiye-Libya deniz yetki alanları sınırlandırılması, askeri iş birliği mutabakat muhtıraları önemli bir dönüm noktası teşkil etmiştir. Türkiye'nin askeri desteği sayesinde UMH savunma taarruza geçmiş, Haftar güçlerini Sirte şehrine kadar geri püskürtmeyi başarmıştır. İşte bu noktada Mısır tekrar devreye girip ateşkes inisiyatifini ortaya atmış, UMH tarafından kabul edilmeyince de Sisi, gerilim tırmandırma politikasına başvurup askeri müdahale ile tehdit etmiştir. Nihayet, taraflar Ağustos 2020'de ateşkes anlaşmasına varmışlardır.

Burada önemli olan husus şu ki her ne kadar Mısır-Türkiye anlaşmazlığının bölgesel düzeye taşınması riskli olsa da taraflara birbirlerinin çıkarlarına saygı duymasının kaçınılmaz olduğunu göstermiştir. Mısır, asırlık Türk-Yunan ihtilafında tarafgirlik yapmanın ağır bir külfeti olduğunu Türkiye'nin Libya'da neler yapabildiğini görünce tekrar kavramıştır. Türkiye de Mısır ile iyi ilişkileri olmadan Doğu Akdeniz'de çıkarlarını korumasının mümkün olmadığını anlamıştır. Ayrıca, Akdeniz konusunda iki ülke arasında ciddi bir ihtilaftan bahsetmek pek mümkün değildir. Mısır, Türkiye-Libya mutabakat muhtırasını kınasa da Dışişleri Bakanı anlaşmanın teknik olarak Mısır'ın deniz yetki alanlarıyla çakışmadığını söylemiştir. Benzer şekilde, Türkiye, Mısır'ın Yunanistan ile imzaladığı deniz yetki alanları anlaşmasını tanımadığını, anlaşmanın Mısır'a kayıp verdiğini söylemiştir. Fakat bunun sonrasında dışişleri bakanı Mısır'ın Türkiye deniz yetki alanlarına saygı duyduğunu dile getirmiştir. Üçüncü taraflarla yapılacak çok taraflı anlaşmaların yapılabileceğini öngören Mısır-Yunanistan anlaşması aslında Türkiye ile benzer bir anlaşma yapılması için kapıyı açık bırakmıştır. Mısır, adaların anakara ile eşit egemenlik haklarına sahip olduğunu ileri süren Yunan tarafının taleplerini kabul etmemiş, Meis (Kastellorizo) adasını anlaşmaya dahil etmemiştir.

Bu dönemde özellikle Türk iş çevreleri ekonomik ilişkileri düzeltmek için önemli çabalar sarfetmiştir. 2015'in sonlarına doğru Türkiye Odalar ve Borsalar Birliği (TOBB) başkanı Rıfat Hisarcıklıoğlu, Erdoğan'ın onayıyla Mısır'a bir dizi ziyaret başlatmıştır. 2016'da göreve gelen Başbakan Binali Yıldırım'ın girişimiyle de desteklenen Hisarcıklıoğlu Mısır'da üst düzey yetkili ve bakanlarla görüşmeler yapmıştır. 2017'de Mısır-Türkiye iş forumu 2012'den sonra ilk toplantısını yapmıştır. Bu çabalar Türkiye'nin Mısır'a olan ihracatını 2014 yılındaki seviyesine tekrar

çıkardıysa da ekonomik ilişkilerden resmi olarak sorumlu yapı olan Karma Komitenin toplantılarının yapılmaması, üst düzeyde diplomatik iletişim eksikliği gibi nedenlerle ikili ilişkiler belli bir seviyede kalmıştır. 2005'te imzalanan Serbest Ticaret Anlaşması kapsamının genişletilmesine imkân tanısa da bu pek olmamıştır. Türk yatırımları, Türkiye'ye gelen Mısırlı turist sayısı tekrar yükselişe geçmiştir. Ancak, Mısır, lojistik, ulaştırma ve enerji gibi sektörlere Türk şirketlerin girişini kabul etmemiştir. Burada önemli olan husus Mısır hükümetinin Suudi Arabistan'ın ve Mısır'daki bazı çevrelerin ortaya attığı Türk mallarını boykot kampanyalarının peşine takılmamış olmasıdır. Ayrıca, Tezin bu kısmında bu dönem ve bir sonraki dönemlerde Mısır Pound'u ve daha sonra Türk Lirası'nın Dolar'a karşı devalüasyonunun ihracata etkisi Pearson Korelasyon Katsayısı kullanılarak incelenmiştir. Sonuç olarak, Lira ile Türkiye'nin Mısır ihracatı arasında (orta dereceli) -0.4987, Pound ile Mısır'ın Türkiye'ye ihracat arasında ise (güçlü) -0.6954 değerinde negatif korelasyon olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Başka bir deyişle, her iki ülkenin ulusal para birimlerinin devalüasyonu ikili ticarete olumlu yansımıştır.

Üçüncü Dönem: Normalleşme ve Yakınlaşma (Ağustos 2020-Şubat 2024)

Mısır-Türkiye normalleşme süreci Libya'da varılan ateşkes, Yunanistan-Mısır deniz yetki alanları sınırlandırılması anlaşmasının imzalandığı 2020 Ağustos ayında istihbarat kanalları üzerinden başlamıştır. Bu kapsamda sürecin iç içe geçmiş iki aşamasından bahsetmek mümkündür. Bunlardan ilki; kurumsal düzeyde iletişim kurma çabalarıdır. İstihbarat görüşmeleri kapsamında iki ülke birbirlerine iyi niyet göstergeleri sunmuştur. Türkiye, yıllar önce Mısır'ın NATO ile iş birliği faaliyetlerinde yer almasına koyduğu vetoyu kaldırmış, İstanbul'dan yayın yapan Mısırlı Müslüman Kardeşler, Muhalefet kanallarına eleştiri dozunu düşürme talimatını vermiştir. Mısır'ın çıktığı hidrokarbon arama ihalelerinde Türkiye'nin hak iddiasında bulunduğu deniz alanlarına saygı göstermesi Ankara'da olumlu karşılanmıştır. 2021 Mayıs ve Eylül aylarında Kahire ve Ankara'da iki ülke arasında Dışişleri Bakan Yardımcıları seviyesinde istikşafi görüşmeler yapılmıştır. İkinci aşama ise çözüme kavuşturulamayan Libya meselesinde yaşanan gelişmeler idi. Her ne kadar her iki ülke Libya'da çatışan taraflarla iyi ilişkiler kurmaya çalışsa da Libya Ulusal Birlik Hükümetinin süresinin dolması, 2022'de Türkiye ile hidrokarbon anlaşması imzalaması Mısır-Türkiye ilişkilerinde gerginlik yaratmıştır. 2022 FIFA Dünya

Kupası açılış maçında Katar'ın arabuluculuğuyla iki ülkenin Cumhurbaşkanlarının görüşmesi normalleşme sürecine hız vermiştir. Keza Mısır'ın 6 Şubat Kahramanmaraş depremlerinde Türkiye ile yürüttüğü diplomasi, gösterdiği dayanışma ikili ilişkileri başka bir evreye taşımıştır. Öyle ki 14-28 Mayıs genel seçimlerinden sonra iki ülke diplomatik ilişkilerini büyükelçi seviyesine çıkarmayı kararlaştırmışlardır. Hedef/Problem Değişikliği olarak nitelendirdiğimiz bu dış politika değişikliğini hem sistematik faktörlerle hem de her iki ülkenin iç politikasında yaşanan gelişmelerle açıklamak mümkündür.

Joe Biden'ın başkan seçilmesiyle birlikte ABD'nin Ortadoğu, Doğu Akdeniz politikalarında bölgesel müttefiklerinin iş birliğini teşvik etme, tansiyonu düşürme ve Abraham Anlaşmalarıyla başlayan normalleşme çabalarını hızlandırmak gibi yönelimler artmıştır. Bu bağlamda Suudi Arabistan'ın başını çektiği Arap Dörtlüsü'nün ve Katar, Türkiye ve İsrail'in dahil olduğu bölgesel normalleşme trendi hız kazanmıştır. Ayrıca, Rusya-Ukrayna savaşıyla birlikte önemi daha da artan Avrupa'nın enerji güvenliğini sağlamak isteyen ABD East-Med boru hattına verdiği desteği çekmesi Doğu Akdeniz'de tansiyonun düşmesine katkı sağlamıştır. Daha da önemlisi, Arap Ayaklanmalarıyla alevlenen rekabetin bölge ülkelerine yüklediği siyasi, iktisadi ve insani maliyetler sürdürülemez idi. Bölge ülkelerinin dahil olduğu Suriye, Yemen, Libya iç savaşları, Doğu Akdeniz rekabeti ve Katar ablukası gibi çatışma süreçlerinin hemen hemen hepsi kazananı olmadan çıkmaza girmiştir. Buna paralel olarak, Mısır'ın dahil olduğu Arap Dörtlüsü içindeki sorunlar giderek artmıştır. Suudi Arabistan ile Birleşik Arap Emirlikleri artık Mısır'la birçok konuda anlaşmazlık içindeler. Aynı zamanda 2013'ten beri Mısır'da izledikleri Finansal Kurtarma Politikasında (Bailout Diplomacy) değişikliğe gidip verdikleri mali desteğin ekonomik karşılığını istemeye başlamışlardır. Bölgede [pek değerli olmadığı anlaşılan] yalnızlık yaşayan Türkiye, bahsi geçen ihtilafları fırsat olarak algılamış, normalleşme trendine katılmıştır.

Özellikle 2023'te Sudan, Gazze, Kızıldeniz ve Sahil bölgesinde daha da artan savaşlar, iç karışıklıklar, bu konularda geleneksel müttefiklerininkinden farklı politikalar izleyen Mısır'ı önemli bir dengeleme unsuru olarak Türkiye ile daha iyi ilişkiler kurmaya sevk etmiştir. Bu kapsamda her iki ülkenin dışişleri bakanlığı Afrika konusunda koordinasyonu artırmaya yönelik adımlar atmıştır. 2024'ün başında

Etiyopya'nın Somaliland ile imzaladığı anlaşma her iki ülke tarafından kınanmıştır. Türkiye'nin Somali ile imzaladığı askeri ve ekonomik iş birliği anlaşmasına Etiyopya'nın anlaşmasından endişelenen Mısır'dan herhangi bir olumsuz tepki gelmemiş olması, anlaşma imzalanmadan Somali Cumhurbaşkanının Kahire'yi ziyaret etmesi zımni bir kabul olarak yorumlanmıştır. Keza, 2023/2024 Gazze Savaşının başından beri insani yardım, siyasi koordinasyon konularında Mısır-Türkiye iş birliği önemli boyutlara ulaşmıştır. Libya'da siyasi uzlaşı sürecinde ciddi bir ilerleme kaydedilemezken Mısır ile Türkiye'nin artık birbirlerinin çıkarlarını tanıdıklarına yönelik önemli alametlere rastlanmak mümkündür. Kaldı ki Rus özel güvenlik şirketi Wagner'in Libya'daki varlığından rahatsız olan ABD, bu konuda Mısır-Türkiye iş birliğini desteklemektedir. Buna ilaveten, Libya'daki iç çatışmalar ısrarla bir vekalet savaşı olarak lanse edilse de durumun böyle olmadığı, Mısır ile Türkiye arasında yapılacak bir anlaşmayla Libya'daki iç ihtilafın sona eremeyeceği ve binaenaleyh ikili ilişkilerin normalleşmesinin buna bağlı kalamayacağı anlaşılmıştır. 2013'te ikili ilişkilerdeki krizden ötürü askıya alınan Savunma Sanayi iş birliği konusu masaya yatırılmış, üst düzeyli ziyaretlerle hız kazanmıştır. 2013-2015 arasında silah alımı konusunda ABD ile yaşadığı sorunlardan dolayı silah kaynağı çeşitlendirme politikasını izleyen Mısır, Silahlı İnsansız Hava aracı alımı, ortak üretimi konusunda Türkiye ile anlaşmak istemektedir.

Yüksek enflasyondan kaçan Türk firmaları düşük işçi ücretleri, enerji ve üretim maliyetlerinden faydalanmak için Mısır'a akın etmiştir. Ayrıca, Mısır'ın üçüncü ülkelerle imzaladığı serbest ticaret anlaşmalarından yararlanmak isteyen firmalar 2021'de yaklaşık 300 milyon dolar değerinde yatırım yapmıştır. 2023'te Mısır başbakanıyla toplanan Türk firmalar ülkede 500 milyon dolar değerinde yatırım yapacaklarını duyurdular. Burada en önemli husus Mısır'ın politika değişikliğine gidip lojistik sektörünün Türk firmalara açılmasını sağlamasıdır. Bu kapsamda 2024'te Mısır Ulaştırma Bakanlığı ile Doğuş Grup arasında Mısır'ın Matruh şehrinde lojistik sanayi bölge kurulması için 7 milyar dolarlık yatırım anlaşması imzalanmıştır. Bunun yanı sıra 2022'de ikili ticarette 2020 yılına kıyasla %60 oranında artış yaşanmıştır. İki ülke ikili ticaret hacmini 5 yıl içinde 15 milyar seviyesine çıkarmak, 2005'te imzalanan serbest ticaret anlaşmasının (STA) kapsamını genişletmek istediklerini belirttiler.

Tez'de Mısır-Türkiye ticaretinde özellikle STA imzalandıktan sonra artan Endüstri İçi Ticaret (EİT) konusuna bir nebze de olsa dikkat çekilmeye çalışılmış olup analiz için kullanımı yaygın olan Grubel&Lloyd İndeksi (GLI) kullanılmıştır. İndeks'in değeri $0 \leq GLi \leq 1$ olup bir sektörde indeksin değeri 1'e yaklaştıkça sektörde EİT olduğuna 0'a yaklaştıkça ise endüstriler arası ticaret olduğuna işaret etmektedir. GLİ değerinin 0.4'ten fazla olduğu sektörlerin 2014-2022 arasında ikili ticaret hacminin kabaca %50'sini teşkil ettiği görülmüştür. Örneğin, ikili ticaretin %4.11'ini oluşturan inorganik kimyasal sektöründe 2014-2022 arası dönemde GLİ ortalama değeri 0.9 idi. Bu sektörün içinde, Mısır ile Türkiye benzer ürünler değiş tokuş etmektedirler. Mineral yakıtlar, plastik, pamuk, kauçuk gibi sektörlerde farklı ölçülerde benzer bir durumdan bahsetmek mümkündür. Aslında bu durum Mısır-Türkiye siyasi ilişkileri kötüye giderken taraflar arasındaki ikili ticaret neden devam etmiştir sorusunu kısmen cevaplamaktadır. Endüstri İçi Ticaretin yapısı gereği çok geniş faydalanıcı (üretici, tüketici, hammadde satıcısı, işçi, distribütör vs) kapsamaktadır. Dolayısıyla, devletin müdahalesinin siyasi, ekonomik ve hukuki maliyeti oldukça yüksektir. Bununla birlikte, ikili ticaret hacminin %25'ini oluşturan 5 sektörde (4'ünde Türkiye, 1'inde ise Mısır uzmanlaşmaktadır) EİT değeri çok düşüktür.

B. THESIS PERMISSION FORM / TEZ İZİN FORMU

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