

Turkish Foreign Policy towards the Middle East

An Analysis on Turkey's Foreign Policy Transformation after the 1980s

Master's Thesis
Global Political Economy

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AKP	Justice and Development Party
AL	Arab League
ANAP	Motherland Party
BP	Baath Party
CA	Central Asia
CE	Council of Europe
CUP	Committee of Union and Progress
D8	Developing 8
DTP	Democratic Community Party
EC	European Community
ECO	Economic Cooperation Organization
EEC	European Economic Community
EM	Eastern Mediterranean
EU	European Union
FM	Foreign Minister
GAP	South Eastern Anatolia Project
GMEP	Greater Middle East Project
HLSCA	High Level Strategic Cooperation Agreement
HLSCC	High Level Strategic Cooperation Council
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Association
IC	Intellectuals Club
IHH	International Humanitarian Relief
IR	International Relations
KDP	Kurdistan Democratic Party
LN	League of Nations

MBC	Middle East Broadcasting Corporation
ME	Middle East
MEPP	Middle East Peace Process
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NE	Near East
NP	National Pact
OE	Ottoman Empire
OIC	Organization for Islamic Conference
OPC	Operation Provide Comfort
PAM	Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean
PKK	Kurdistan Workers' Party
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
PM	Prime Minister
PUK	Patriotic Union of Kurdistan
SOFA	US – Iraq Status of Force Agreement
SPA	Sykes-Picot Agreement
SU	Soviet Union
TBMM	Grand National Assembly of Turkey
TFP	Turkish Foreign Policy
TFPME	Turkish Foreign Policy towards the Middle East
TGS	Turkish General Staff
TOBB	Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey
TRT	Turkish Radio-Television Corporation
TV	Television
UAE	United Arab Emirates

UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSCOM	United Nations Special Commission
USA	United States of America
USSR	United Soviet Socialist Republics
WWI	World War I
WWII	World War II



ABSTRACT

The change in economic policy and the emergence of a new wealthy class in Anatolia, with the effect of identity transformation, motivated Turkish Governments to follow a multidimensional foreign policy after the 1980s. The Islamic dimension of identity, cultural and historical connections increased the relations with the countries in the Middle East (ME) and Turkey's economy started to be dependent to the developments in the ME. The identity dimension in Turgut Ozal's foreign policy caused to remember the Ottoman past in the region and neo-Ottomanism, which proposed that Turkey to be the main power in the former Ottoman territories emerged as a both identity and strategy to increase the Turkey's political sphere of influence in former Ottoman territories. After 2003, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) has followed more conceptualized foreign policy based on the identity, historical and cultural connections and the decrease in the influence of United States of America (USA) in the politics of the ME empowered the Turkish Government to follow the neo-Ottomanist strategy to be the main power in the ME. Since the Gulf War in 1991, Turkey became increasingly connected with the ethnic groups within Iraq and became the major organizer in Iraqi politics. Also, the increased criticism of the Turkish government coupled with the strong support of Turkish people, against to Israeli politics has been the major factor to attract both the people and the politicians in the ME.

Key Words: Turkish Foreign Policy, Middle East, Identity, Palestine, Iraq.

INTRODUCTION

“We are a European country and we are an Asian country. We have direct access to the Balkans, the Caucasus, and the ME. So, Turkish foreign policy (TFP) has to be multiregional, multidimensional. We are also part of European history. But at the same time, the history of more than 20 [Middle Eastern and Balkan] countries could be written only using Turkish archives. We have more Bosnians in Turkey than in Bosnia itself, more Albanians than in Albania, as well as Kurds and Arabs. Because of these historic connections, all these countries have certain expectations from us (Matthews et. al., 2009)”.

After the 1980s, Turkey’s policy agenda started to change starting from the highly economic growth and industrial development. The economic development also brought changes in social structures and also in the conduct of a new foreign policy to be more influential state over the region of Turkey.¹ In this respect, the restoration of democracy and a growing income enabled the political, ethnic and religious minorities to join the democratic system fully (Lowry, 1996: 103). Apart from the structural change and economic growth, exports started to increase as well. Because of some problems with the European Community (EC) in the 1980s, Turkish businessmen focused on the ME economies such as Iran, Iraq, Libya and Saudi Arabia. So for the first time in Republican history, Turkey became dependent on economic conditions in the ME. The demand for change the social structure and the identity especially from Kurds and some ethnic groups brought the new identity formation as Turkish Citizenship within Turkey in Turgut Ozal’s governance.² In foreign policy matters it created Neo-Ottomanism, which is a wider identity abroad and Ottoman rather than Turkish covering all neighbouring peoples and all minorities in Turkey. In this light, the collapse of Soviet Union (SU) in 1989 increased the importance of neo-Ottomanist foreign policy because of

¹ The notion of the region of Turkey or Turkey’s region emerged after the 1980s to refer the geopolitics of Turkey both in terms of the territory and identity connection with the Caucasus, ME, the EM and the Balkans. Also, Ahmet Davutoglu (2001) in his book “strategic dept” conceptualized it as Turkey has religious, cultural, historical and nationality connections with these regions to show that Turkey cannot follow one sided foreign policy like in the Cold War period only towards the West (For Turkey’s geopolitical map refer to Figure 1 in the Annex)

² Turgut Ozal was the leader of the Motherland Party (ANAP), which won the elections with the majority of the votes after the coup, and he later became the 8th president of Turkey. As a Kurdish originated person, his vision was the liberalization and democratisation of the country. He created the South Eastern Anatolia Project (GAP) for the development of south eastern Anatolia, where the majority of the people are Kurdish, and he first argued about the solution of the Kurdish problem in more democratic way after the Military Coup. In his governance time, Turkey’s domestic dynamics were changed and Turkey started to follow more active policy in Turkey’s region based on the neo-Ottomanism (Anderson, 2008).

the end of Cold War meant an end to capitalist-communist competition and support for cultural and ethnic similarities became increasingly important. After the 1990s, Turkey started to play an active role in the ME with the transformation on *kemalist system*³ starting by the Gulf War. With the Gulf War Turkey's importance as regional power rose (Robins, 1991: 65-67). After 2003, the AKP government empowered the neo-ottomanist foreign policy of Turkey by getting the majority of the votes in elections and the identity politics of Turkey conceptualized more with "Strategic Dept" concept of Turkish Foreign Minister (FM) Ahmet Davutoglu.

Since its inception, the TFP towards the ME (TFPME) has become a highly debatable topic, attracting increasing attention in the academic literature.⁴ The existing research focuses on various aspects of the new policy. Thus, contrasting the international identity of the post-1980s period of Turkey with before, some scholars (Davutoglu, 2001) analyze the TFPME after the 1980s, including the discourse of the soft power, which refers the cooperation with the neighbours rather than the coercion. The fact that the TFP is directed by the Turkish FM Davutoglu with his strategic dept concept, which was created to show Turkey's political sphere of influence with the identity politics (Seker, 2009). Other authors (Gulmez, 2009) perceive the TFPME as to create a stable region, which will affect the Turkey's internal economy and security politics, to be more influential actor in the world politics. Finally, some scholars argue that Turkey's foreign policy transformation affected the regional stability of the ME and intended to solve the long term problems in the regional politics (Daly, 2008; Cook and Sabbagh, 2008; Baca, 1995: 3).

Moreover, some scholars (Iba, 2009; Ozdalga, 1999) attempt to explain where Turkey's neo-Ottomanist foreign policy ideas originated. However, up until now, the academic literature analyzing the TFPME has not offered a comprehensive theoretically-informed account, related with the origins and evaluations of the policy to show the effectiveness of Turkey in the ME. Attempting to fill this gap in the research on the TFP, in this thesis I intend to

³ Kemalist system was based on the Kemalism as a doctrine represented the ideas, principles and the actions of Ataturk. Ataturk did not write anything about the doctrine of the Kemalism. However, after he died his ideas and principles were mentioned as Kemalism and became Turkey's main ideology, which was protected by the republican institutions. Kemalist ideology mainly includes the principles of Ataturk such as republicanism, populism, secularism, reformism, nationalism and statism. Also, Ataturk's foreign policy ideas were including the non-intervention to other states' internal politics, relations based on the nation-state structure and westernization (Uyar, 2006; Burak, Undated).

⁴ For contribution to the debate on TFPME, see: Robins, 1991; Bagci, 1998; Sander, 1998; Gozen, 2000; Davutoglu, 2001; Barkey, 1996.

conceptualize and evaluate the TFPME, arguing that the TFPME may be best understood by looking at the identity dimension of it.

I put the hypothesis in this paper as two-fold. Drawing on the insights of the theoretical concept of social constructivism, I argue that *the TFPME has been largely developed in neo-Ottomanist identity perspective with Turkey's foreign policy actions in the ME after 1980s*. The neo-Ottomanist nature of the TFPME displays the optimistic belief of the Turkish politicians that the broader identity connections may be successfully adapted and used to intervene in the policies of the ME for increasing Turkey's political sphere of influence. In this sense, common culture, values and interaction among Turkish and the Middle Eastern societies have seen as the main factors to empower the success of Turkey's policy. These important factors in Turkey's foreign policy formulations stay at the core of the second part of my hypothesis, which states that *in its multidimensional perspective, neo-Ottomanist foreign policy of Turkey has increased Turkey's political sphere of influence in the ME*. In order to verify my hypothesis, I ask: Does neo-Ottomanist foreign policy of Turkey increase Turkey's political sphere of influence in the ME? Other questions guiding this analysis are: What factors (actors, circumstances) contributed to the identity perspective of the TFPME? Is there evidence to confirm that the policy is designed on identity perspective? What are the main differences of TFP before and after the 1980s, which effect to strengthen or weaken the political influence of Turkey in the ME? Can the conditionality work in the context of the increase in Turkey's political sphere of influence in the ME? What are the costs and benefits as a result of Turkish Governments' policy actions in the ME? Finally, which aspects in both foreign policy design and regional politics prevent to successful application of neo-Ottomanist foreign policy of Turkey in the ME?

In analyzing the TFPME, this paper divided into six chapters. In the first chapter, I will present the existing research on TFPME. In doing so, I will first mention theoretical approaches and then theoretically informed analysis on TFPME with their importance to this research. After having presented the main theoretical perspectives and the analyses on TFPME, I will mention about the limitations of the existing research and what the research will focus on alternatively.

In the second chapter, I will introduce the reader to the theoretical underpinning and the methodological framework of this paper. In doing so, I will first mention realist perspectives

and the realist premises on TFPME with their analytical limitations. After having presented the core features of social constructivism, I choose identity, interest and foreign policy concept to explain the emergence and development of TFPME after the 1980s. In remaining part of the second chapter I will describe the sources and the research methods I used for the analysis presented herein.

In the third chapter of this paper I will provide a comprehensive background of the situation in the ME and TFP in the period of 1923-1980, starting with the Ottoman governance strategy in the ME. In addition, I will discuss the reasons behind the end of Ottoman governance in the ME and the political formation of Turkey in terms of the relations with the ME. Importantly, in this chapter, I will discuss the key issues related with the political ideology of Turkey, which were the main reason to prevent the effectiveness of Turkey in the ME.

The fourth chapter will present a theoretically informed empirical investigation, which will intend to verify whether the transformation has occurred on the identity dimension in TFPME after the 1980s. In doing so, the chapter is divided into three sections. The first section will analyze the transformation of TFP after the 1980s. The second section will explain the concept of neo-Ottomanism as Turkey's foreign policy approach and the third section will analyze the factors, which motivate the approach of Turkey towards the ME.

Drawing on neo-Ottomanist perspective, which offers the Turkey to be the major organizer of the policies in the former Ottoman territories, in the fifth chapter, I will address the key questions related with the effectiveness of TFPME by analyzing the policy actions and the outcomes after the 1980s. In the concluding chapter I will present the summary of main analytical findings of this thesis, thereby answering the research questions. I will then provide some policy suggestions based on the findings of the analysis presented in here.

With the organizational character of this paper being explained, I would like to make some remarks, relevant to the analysis put forward in this paper. First of all, it is necessary to point out that the transformation of TFP has occurred in a certain period, thus I will show the evaluation of neo-Ottomanist concept and Turkey's policy approach towards the ME to some extent. However, the purpose of this paper is to show mainly the effectiveness of neo-Ottomanist foreign policy of Turkey towards the ME. This will be done by drawing on

theoretical literature and on empirical evidences from the cases, where Turkey effectively involved in foreign policy transformation period and examining the current context of the TFPME with the certain cases. Due to the limited scope of this study, the structural alternatives to the TFPME are not discussed. However, by showing some limitations about the construction of the policy currently, this research will be a reference point for future researches regarding improvement possibilities.

1. THE REVIEW ON TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS THE MIDDLE EAST

Turkey's foreign policy transformation after the 1980s and approach to the ME have caused the emergence of a broad academic debate. Moreover, controversial in the field of Turkey's approach towards the ME is the conceptualization of Turkey's foreign policy approach in the ME politics. The purpose of this section is to give an overview to the reader about the existing literature and to explain the main policy analysis. The first part of this section includes different theoretical approaches to the TFP and theoretically informed analysis of Turkey's approach to the ME after the 1980s with their importance to this paper. The second part includes the limitations of existing research to illustrate the foreign policy transformation of Turkey.

1.1. Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkey's Approach to the Middle East after the 1980s

The studies about the factors, which shape the foreign policy of Turkey generally focused on Turkey's geopolitical and strategic importance since its establishment. Moreover, these studies were based on the historical explanations and analysis. However, the main internal factors, which were shaping the foreign policy of Turkey, were not given enough attention. Especially, the post-Cold War period in TFP was mainly related with the end of the Cold War and change bipolar distribution of power in the TFP analysis. In this context, TFP before the 1980s was mainly linked with the effect of Kemalist regime to follow the Westernization as being dependent to the West and how the foreign policy norms have been shaped according to the security of the state especially in the Cold War period. Furthermore, the post-Cold War period foreign policy of Turkey was analyzed by considering Turkey as dependent to the Western system and following the actions according to the role, which was drawn by the hegemonic powers. On the other hand, Turkey's involvement of some problematic areas were

shown as the power politics of Turkey on rationalist perspective and state interest was emphasized of these interventions (Bulut, 2003: 162-163; Urer, 2001: 74; Kodaman, 2003: 41).

1.1.1. Theoretical Debate on Turkey's Approach to the Middle East

The actual role and the influence of Turkey in the ME politics have been debated by different theoretical perspectives in academic literature. Depending on the different theoretical perspectives, the conceptualization of the Turkey's role in the ME politics changes significantly. In the following, I first review the conceptualization of this role in two theoretical approaches in TFPME, rationalism and neo-gramscianism, and additionally introduce the social constructivist approach on Turkey's foreign policy transformation.

From *rationalist perspective*, the recent political approaches of Turkey can be examined as adaptation to the changed conditions within Western oriented policy perspectives (Sander, 1998: 70). In this context, the increase in Kurdish separatism mainly after the Gulf War affected Turkey's relations with the neighbouring countries in the ME based on the security dimension because of their support to the separatism in Turkey (Ayman and Atesoglu, 1994: 146-148). Moreover, one of the motivations that Turkey and the US empowered their alliance in the post-Cold War period was related with the balance of power dimension because of the regional threat of Russia and their interests merged to be against to Russia's influence over the region (Koni, 1994: 5-14). In this context, mainly because of the developments in the post-Cold War period were happening in the neighbouring places of Turkey, Turkey intervened to the regions in terms of the national interests (Baharcicek, 1998: 377). While, Turkey's relations with the European Union (EU) was problematic after the 1990s, Turkey did not abandon the relations with the EU because of the interests of Turkey was merging with the EU's political approaches (Bagci, 1998: 313-314). Moreover, Turkey's strategic location as a passageway for European energy resources and possible affects to the post-Soviet countries and the ME motivated the West to continue the relations with Turkey on mutual interests (Simsir, 1993: 59-98). In this sense, Turkey's actions in the post-Cold War period were related its own interests, rather than the global interests in the Cold War period (Gonlubol et. al., 1996: 312). In this sense these developments brought the Turkey to be in the central role.

From a *neo-Gramscian perspective*, the reason why Islamic references were mainly used after the 1980s in Turkey was related with the passive revolution concept, which was made to

eliminate the effect of Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979 (See Parla, 1995). In this context, the revolutionary sources were demobilized in the country. As Gramsci argued, “revolution-restoration” process after the French Revolution in the European countries satisfied the demands of the people; but, empowered the regime of the dominant class in the European countries (Gramsci, 1971: 114-120). In this environment, neo-liberal policies were applied in Turkey, because of the new Anatolian entrepreneurs, who were the proletariat before changed their vision to market economy (Erbakan, 1991: 29, 65-66; Bugra, 2002). Furthermore, Erbakan’s aim to create an Islamic union in economical matters with the Muslim countries were banned with a post modern coup in 1997 to continue the hegemony of the West over Turkey by force as neo-Gramscianism mentioned (Ozdalga, 2002: 134). After 2001, a hegemonic capitalist project was applied in Turkey by dividing the main Islamist party. In this context, Tayyip Erdogan created the AKP based on the classification of the US as moderate Muslim and was shown as an example to the Muslim countries to prevent the radical Islamist groups. Moreover, the approaches of the AKP was supported by the majority of the people from many different perspectives because of it was originated from a civil society movement (See Casanova, 1994). In addition, AKP’s recent actions in the ME was to have a role in the US based Greater ME Project (GMEP) and send the message of the West to the Middle Eastern countries. For instance, Hamas declared to follow same policies with AKP as a result of this policy perspective (Tempo, 2006).

Finally, as the role of the ideas and the identity to the foreign policy preferences, a *social constructivist perspective* on TFP after the 1980s assumes that Turkey’s involvement in the foreign policy actions have been based on the identity of Turkey. In this context, this assumption implies that social interaction affects the identity and interests of the actors and they are not constant, may change in the process of social interaction. In this sense, the volatile situation of Turkey’s region such as in the ME, Balkans, Caucasus and the Eastern Mediterranean (EM) motivated Turkey to actively involve itself in these regions according to the identity (Laciner, 2009a). When Turkey increased the interactions with the countries in the region, socio-economic interactions increased both Turkey’s influence and economic capacity in the region (Eralp, 2000: 241-245). In addition, Turkey’s relations with the West were also related with the identity of Turkey, because the West saw an opportunity from Turkey’s identity connections with the multiple regions. Furthermore, Turkey aimed to create a common market with the Muslim countries in the second half of the 1990s and the main driving force for these developments were the Muslim factors in Turkey’s identity (Ozcan,

1998:5-34). In the first decade of 21st century, the identity politics of Turkey was conceptualized with the work “Strategic Depth” of Turkish FM Ahmet Davutoglu and historical, cultural, religious and nationality factors were added to the foreign policy norms of Turkey. These political principles increased interactions and empowered with agreements, abolition of visas and regional alliances on former Ottoman territories (Kirisici, 2009: 29-57).

1.1.2. Policy Analysis in Turkish Foreign Policy towards the Middle East

This section covers the policy analysis of TFPME including different approaches by considering them as useful or not for the content of the thesis. Concrete studies are putting the policy transformation of Turkey at the core of their research since the 1980s. While the early foreign policy of Turkey was analysed mainly on national interest factors, the Cold War period was analyzed both with the national interests and dependency of Turkey to the West by living under the hegemony of the US. In addition, the identity dimension to the TFP analysis was mainly included after the 1980s. In this context, research to date has confirmed the idea of this thesis that TFPME after the 1980s can be best analyzed using the identity dimension. The analysis shows that Turkey has arranged its political system according to the western values and followed the policy developments, which were originated from the West in international politics. In this sense, this has been the continuation of the late Ottoman political system based on the westernization. Moreover, because of Turkey was established as the nation-state, national interests were the main driving force for Turkey’s policy actions since the establishment (Gonlubol and Kurkcuoglu, 1985: 462). In this context, Turkey had cooperation first with the United Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) against to the threat of the West starting from the national liberation war, then with the France and the United Kingdom (UK) against to the threat of Germany in the World War II (WWII), when Germany occupied the Albania (Hurewitz, 1959: 226-228). In the Cold War, because of the threats coming from the USSR Turkey moved to the Western camp and joined to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1952 after the successful operations in Korean War in the 1950. In addition, Turkey received the aids from the West with Truman Doctrine for the development and modernization of the country, which was the rational choice of political elites (See Ekinici, 1997). In this sense, the analyses in rationalist perspective have been useful for the arguments of the thesis mainly to show the period, when the identity perspective was not applied to the foreign policy setting and how Turkey has been directed by the political elites in this period. On the other hand, Turkey’s involvement within the Western camp was presented as the acceptance of the hegemony of the West with the consent on neo-Gramscian perspectives (See Parla, 1995). However, Turkey’s situation was not considered by neo-

Gramscian perspective, which Turkey had no other options to secure itself in the region, and their analyses have not been applicable. Then, the rationalist approaches explain the issue usefully as Turkey applied to the EC membership for the economical benefit of it based on the rational choice. Furthermore, Turkey's only action different than the Western camp was the intervention of Cyprus in 1974 and it was also related with the national interest of Turkey, which differentiated from the Western interests in the region (See Gurel, 1993). In this sense, the rationalist analysis of Turkey's intervention to Cyprus has been useful to show the situation of Turkey in the pre-1980s period as the rational actor to follow the own interests. In contrast, the analysis in neo-Gramscian perspective show that Turkey faced with the embargoes from the West after the Cyprus intervention, which was in neo-Gramscian analysis as the continuation of Western hegemony over Turkey with coercion (See Parla, 1995). However, the results of the Western embargoes have not happened like how the West demanded, which put into question the utility of neo-Gramscian analysis with regard to Turkey's policy toward Cyprus question since 1974.

The end of the Cold War brought an era when the US became dominant with the "new world order" projects, based on the own interests (Gokirmak, 1996: 4). In terms of Turkey's internal politics, neo-Gramscian analysis argue that the Islamic references had been used with Turkish nationality after the 1980s because of a passive revolution to eliminate the effect of Islamic revolution, which was happened in Iran in 1979, for continuation of hegemony of the US over Turkey. In this context, these were not for the demands of the people, but to increase integration into the US conservatism. In addition, the liberalization of economy and privatizations were made with the demand of the US, which could not be achieved in the 1970s because of the strong opposition from the proletariat in Turkey (See Bugra, 2002). However, neo-Gramscian analyses are not useful to explain the internal transformation and its effects to foreign policy preferences of Turkey because of the internal dynamics of Turkey have not been considered. Then, as constructivists usefully analyzed that the abolition on the restrictions of religious issues in Turkey was the main demand of Turkish people since emergence of Turkey. In this sense, Turkey has found its main identity by satisfying the demands of Turkish people. Subsequently, the main identity, which emerged after the 1980s, shaped the foreign policy preferences (Anderson, 2008). In terms of the foreign policy actions in the post-Cold War period, rationalist perspectives argue that micro nationalism increased in the post-Soviet countries and mainly conflicts occurred in the regions of Turkey. Thus, Turkish governments followed the foreign policy because of the threats in the region to

Turkey on rationalist perspective. In this context, the increase in Kurdish separatism with the effect of the Gulf War and the supports of the neighbours to Turkey's separatist groups determined the relations of Turkey with the neighbours based on security and power politics after the Cold War (Ayman and Atesoglu, 1994: 146-148). While the rationalist analysis on security policy of Turkey shows the issue partly useful for the analysis in this paper, they have been weak to explain mainly how Turkey became a part to the major conflicts in the region. Then, constructivist analysis usefully shows that Turkey involved with the problems in Turkey's region according to the identity of Turkey, rather than threats (Khalilzad et. al., 2000: 97), because Turkish governments followed a strategy based on cooperation, rather than the balance of power. In this sense, Turkey had coalitions with the US in some interventions because of Turkey's identity politics overlapped with the interests of the US. When the Cold War ended, political analyses mentioned that the importance of Turkey would decrease in the Western camp. However, the major regions for the intervention of the West were around Turkey and its importance increased unlike the suggestions as the analyses usefully mentioned for the paper. In addition, the strategic location of Turkey and its possible influence to the post-Soviet countries determined to empower the relations of the West with Turkey based on the interests, which have been a basic fact as additive to the construction of the paper to show how the interests of the West with Turkey's identity policy overlapped after the 1980s (Baharcicek, 1998: 377; Simsir, 1993: 59-98). Moreover, neo-Gramscian analyses show the issue on partly useful for the analysis in this paper as Turkish governments' any attempt to separate from the hegemony of the US was not allowed by the internal dynamics, which was supported by the US and these initiatives empowered the hegemony of the US over Turkey (See Ozdalga, 2002). In this sense, the political groups in Turkey were forced to integrate to the Western system and act according to the demands of the hegemonic powers for neo-Gramscian perspective. However, as rationalist analyses usefully mention for this paper that the post-Cold War period of TFP mainly based on the own interests of Turkey different than the global interests in the Cold War period, because Turkey's active involvement of the regional politics was the own projects of Turkey to increase the relations with the countries in the ME (Gonlubol et. al., 1996: 59-84).

Furthermore, Turkey started to follow a more conceptualized identity policy with the AKP's governance since 2003. In this sense, historical and cultural roots have been included to the foreign policy preferences to be effective in the policies of Turkey's region (Davutoglu, 2008: 78). As constructivist analysis usefully mentioned for the basis of the paper, mainly Turkey

became a part of the problems related with the identity of it in constructivist analysis. On the other hand, neo-Gramscian analysis shows the recent foreign policy actions of AKP as they were related with the combining religious groups and provincial bourgeoisie to demobilize them to create the hegemony of the US. This system was supported as a model to export to the Middle Eastern countries, which is Islamised Americanism in the analysis of neo-Gramscianism. However, when the TFP in the AKP period is analysed, there have been so much clashes of the interests between the US and Turkey and the US-Turkey relations have been in the worst period after Iraq War in 2003, which shows the analysis of neo-Gramscianism are not useful. Alternatively, rationalist analysis showed the issue partly useful for the paper as Turkey has followed the economical benefits in the ME politics and Turkish companies became the main traders in the region, which shows the dimension of it on material interests based on rationalist perspectives. However, constructivist analysis usefully showed the effects of socio-political interaction with the Middle Eastern countries, which have resulted with the removal of visa restrictions and multiple agreements to bring the countries closer. In this context, the main driving force to fasten the process was the identity dimension of the foreign policy setting (Laciner, 2009b).

1.2. Limitations of Existing Research

The studies, which have been dedicated to analyze the foreign policy transformation of Turkey after the 1980s, are including different perspectives in their formulations. These studies have contributed to the academic debate on broader perspective; however, these studies have major limitations to explain the foreign policy actions of Turkey especially in the post- 1980s period. When the general analyses of the research are analyzed, the domination of traditional and critical perspectives is seen with their regard to show Turkey's location in the world politics. Such researches, based on rationalist perspectives, showed the issue on more state interests' bases without considering the internal factors that affect the foreign policy of Turkey. Following, critical neo-Gramscian perspectives place Turkey as the main actor in the region, which follow the policies on the bases of the hegemony of the US, and mainly policy successes extended the area of global capitalism. In this context, they created their analyses based on some data, which were acquired as a result of the policy actions and the policy mechanisms. However, these perspectives did not fully mention the policy actions in broader perspective and their analyses to explain the foreign policy of Turkey after 1980s have been weak.

Furthermore, Social constructivist analysis have been presented well by considering the internal dynamics of Turkey and the changed conditions of the world from power politics to the identity based foreign policy approaches after the 1980s. Furthermore, their focus is clearly linked with the Turkey's identity connections with the neighbouring countries on a normative dimension to show Turkey's sphere of influence and creation of strong ties with the formal agreements and strategic alliances. The role of Turkey has been conceptualized in this context mainly with the AKP period in TFP and the identity references on foreign policy became in the top level in this period mainly to express the political sphere of Turkey in the region. However, while constructivist analyses mainly show the importance of identity to examine the foreign policy of Turkey, they have some limitations to explain the identity transformation of Turkey from Turkism to neo-Ottomanism, which cover wider nationality as the former Ottoman nations. In this context, the identity based foreign policy of Turkey remains a reactionary policy related with the identity of Turkey in their analyses, which prevents to understand the main strategy of Turkey. In contrast, this thesis intends to show that the foreign policy actions of Turkey after the 1980s have been based on a neo-Ottomanist strategy to make Turkey as the main actor in the ME as the successor of Ottoman Empire (OE). In this sense, the thesis will link the policy actions of the post-1980s period TFP and the policies of the OE to show how Turkish governments have acted in neo-Ottomanist perspective. In sum, basically the results of the analysis will show the reasons behind the increase in mainly Turkey's political sphere of influence in the ME different than other countries, which have identity connections and foreign policies based on their identities, in the region.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

Charles Ragin (1994: 25-60) pointed out that “[...] theory is an attempt to specify as clearly as possible, a set of ideas that pertain to a particular phenomenon [...]. Social research is a dialogue between ideas and evidence”. In the subchapter (2.1) I will cover the realist approaches and the limitations of them to illustrate TFP after the 1980s. In the subchapter (2.2) I will cover constructivism as the main theoretical approach, which is related with the empirical evidence. Then in the subchapter (2.3) I will cover methodological setting and resources that I have relied on in my research.

2.1. Realist Approaches

Because the topic in my thesis is related with the foreign policy, which is somehow dealing with the interests of the states, and the main theory for application to my thesis is constructivism mainly emerged against to realist premises, I will start to briefly explain the realist approaches in connection with the thesis topic. The roots of realism in international relations (IR) come from the 1930s. The most famous authors on realist theories are E. H. Carr, Georg Schwarzenberger, Reinhold Neibuhr and Hans Morgenthau (Archer, 1983: 75). Realism became a dominant paradigm since it has emerged and especially in the Cold-War period it was the main theory for research in IR. According to realism, states are the basic actors and states act on the zero sum game principle in IR (Kegley & Wittkopf, 1993: 22-25). In addition for the realists, international system is anarchic and international *anarchy* increases the competition, which causes a decrease in demand for cooperation among states. In this respect, realism argues that the international organizations do not eliminate the anarchic structure of the international system over states and a pessimist approach about the international cooperation exists in Realism (Grieco, 1988: 492). As it is seen, non-state actors are not considered in realism and international and human rights are not universal because there is no universal morality (Klarevas, 2004: 18). In this sense, all activities of states are connected to war; because of this military power is of paramount for states (Carr, 1946: 109).

According to Morgenthau (1978:10), power is not only military power. The shape and the structure of power are determined according to the political situation. In this respect, power can be something, which is used to control other entities. On the other hand, for Carr (1946: 109), power can be grouped in three aspects: military, economic and propaganda. In addition, the importance of military power originates in its importance for the competition among states and military power is both as a tool and as a final goal. According to Carr, war is made to make the military power of one state supreme or eliminate to increase the power of another state (*Ibid.*, 111). Realists argue that the collective security is not effective in international politics because of the states act on *zero sum game* perspective. In this sense, strategic cooperation with Iraq has been important for Turkey's security to prevent the creation of a Kurdish state in Northern Iraq and fight with the separatist Kurdish groups (Institute for Strategic Studies, 2009: 3). Another important issue for realists is the "balance of power" (Sofka, 2001: 147-148). In this system, when there is a threat from outside the state, a state tries to balance the power by increasing its own power or creates coalition with the other states. On the other hand, while the balance of power is expressing mainly the coalition

among states, “*bandwagoning*” express that being closer to the base of the threat. In other words, bandwagoning occurs when weak states enter a coalition with stronger states (Walt, 1987: 17). While recent strategic agreements among Turkey, Iraq and Syria can be seen as a coalition for security policies (TRT, 2009a); in realist perspective it includes the alliance for protection from their potential threats of these states. Another important issue that realists insist is “national interest”. National interest is the most important aspect to analyze the international politics for realists. Because for realists national interest aspect is important to understand the realities in international politics and without this aspect political and non-political aspects cannot be separated (Morgenthau, 1978: 11). However, realists argue that it is not possible to make a single, definite explanation of national interest just like power. According to Morgenthau, while national interest is more continuous and constant, power is a more changeable aspect (Eralp, 1996: 81). In realist account IR means the relations between nation-states and these relations based on national interests and power (*Ibid.*, 75). In this sense, TFPME is considered as the maximization of national interests by increasing the relations among the states in the ME. According to Carol Migdalovitz (2008: 6), Turkey is interested to link Iraq’s natural gas to the Nabucco pipeline project; in this sense, the interest factor is driving the relation with Iraq rather than its identity.

Realists are divided into realists and neorealists. Both theories have a lot of common points such as that both theories are state-centric and they mention that international system is competitive, material benefit are more important for states, and states are egoist actors, which try to maximize their benefits. While the basic common points exist, they separate to explain the actions of states in international politics. Neorealism started to be popular in 1970s. Neorealists tried to interconnect with other approaches by protecting realist premises (Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, 2001: 119). In their book, “Power and Independence: World Politics in Transition”, Keohane and Nye argued that there are many different actors in the international arena, but there is no hierarchical structure in it. The transformation of power is seen in the international arena and this can transform from military power to economic power (Donnelly, 2000: 29). While Keohane accepts that there are many different actors, he emphasizes that states are only rational actors in the world politics to maximize their interests (*Ibid.*, 7). However, the end of the Cold War brought to decrease the popularity of realist approaches in IR. According to Eralp (1996: 85), realist approaches could not predict the changes in international politics after 1989 and realism could not be successful in the analysis of this process. On the other hand, these developments did not remove realism totally from IR.

Mearsheimer in his article titled “The False promise of International institutions” in 1994 collects realist premises as the international system is anarchic, each state has the own military power and this authorizes states to protect themselves, states are reasonable and they act for their survival (Donnelly, 2000: 7).

2.1.1. Limitations of Realist Approaches

One of the deficiencies of realist perspectives is their excessive concern with the nation state. The state is the most important actor in realism such that realists insist that international politics is the interaction among states (Nye, 2000: 4). The common point for realists is the state exists as a single unit (Eralp, 1996: 85). However, this excessive emphasis on state causes an unclear understanding of global issues. Recently, there are a lot of global actors other than states (See Hall & Biersteker, 2002). If the different actors such as international organizations, individuals and the differences between the structures of nation states are analysed, the basic nation state concept of realism is not enough to understand global politics (Ferguson & Mansbach, 2003: 88). If Turkey’s political influence in the ME is analyzed, there is the effect of Turkey’s political culture, which is called “Turkish Model” as a synthesis of secular democracy and Muslim identity (Rashwan, 2007: 13-22). So, the groups, individuals and identity factors are important and realism does not deal with them. In this respect, it is not possible to see IR as only the interstate relations (Klarevas, 2004: 22).

Secondly, according to realists competition exists among states like it does among individuals (Rourke & Boyer, 1998: 13). In this sense, struggles between states are the basic actions in the world scene. So, power determines the supremacy of states and the aim of foreign policy is to increase, protect and exercise power (*Ibid.*, 15). However, the realist assumption of power as mainly military power which is the basic determinant of global relations is not valid. For instance, while the US spends half of the world’s military budget, the success in foreign policy of the US is not effective (Nye, 2004: 16-21). Turkey has felt *insecure* and uncertain about its ME neighbours because of the negative historical experiences. In this respect, Turkey’s foreign policy approach to its neighbours was as they were potential threats to Turkey. However, the new foreign policy approach changed Turkey’s relations with its neighbours and the absence of problems with its neighbours made Turkey more politically active in the ME (Institute for Strategic Studies, 2009: 4).

Thirdly, realists do not accept changes in global relations. According to realists, the anarchic nature of the world system shapes world politics. The basic actors are states and the relations between states are determined by their power. Both classical realists and neorealists argue that this structure will not change (Rourke & Boyer, 1998: 17). In addition, realists argue that balance of power structure can change only with the war, and it creates one of the most important problematic to explain the changes, which occurred without the war (Eralp, 1996: 87). When TFP after the 1980s is analyzed, conditions in the world politics and the domestic factor in policy involvements effected to change foreign policy principles (Sayari, 2000: 169). This change occurred without war and was mainly conjectural changes affected by the new foreign policy set of Turkey unlike realists insisted.

Fourthly, realists do not relate with the political ethic. Hans Morgenthau (1978: 12) argues that nations are seen as the entities that follow own interests, which would be just. According to realists, global ethical principles cannot be applied to the state actions with their abstract formulations and ethic-based foreign policy will weaken the states in comparison with the other states, which follow their own interests (Donnelly, 1998: 30). Individual can say that justice should be applied even if the world collapses; but the state cannot say this kind of expressions on behalf of its citizens whose protection is under the state's responsibility (Morgenthau, 1978: 13). However, realist theory forgets about the fact that state is the construction of *individuals* by arguing that individual can bind him/herself with the ethic rules, but the state cannot. In this sense, the change in TFP after the 1980s has mainly occurred unlike the premises of realists with the effect of ethnic, religious and political groups in Turkey. They supported and sponsored main political parties both financial and voter power and it lead politicians to deal actively more with their demands in foreign policy (Laciner, 2009a).

In this subchapter, I presented the theoretical foundations of the realist approaches and critique about the limitations to explain the TFPME after the 1980s. Because of the excessive focus on the centrality of state sovereignty, the realist perspective is not able to offer a plausible explanation of global developments. If the states are only actors in international politics, how can the effect of groups, individual and identity be explained in Turkey's political influence in the ME? Why has Turkey become more influential while other militarily powerful states exist? If changes occur only with war, why has the foreign policy changed and the influence of Turkey in the ME increased without it? If only states decide about foreign

policy without considering the individuals, how can Turkey's social change and its effect to foreign policy change be explained? In the following subchapter, the insights of social constructivism will be applied to provide plausible answers to these questions.

2.2. Constructivism

“A theory of society should provide conceptions of the nature of human social activity and of the human agent, which can be placed in the service of empirical work.” (Giddens, 1986, cited in Hopf, 2002: 1).

Constructivism is not a theory of IR. However, the discussions about social constructivism are rapidly increasing in the debate of theories of IR. As a social theorem, constructivism stands in the middle of rationalist and materialist approaches (See Wendt, 1994; 1995; 1999). In this sense, constructivism had been affected from positivist and post-positivist debate in the theories of IR and developed on the critiques of neorealist and neoliberal approaches (Ruggie, 1998: 862). After the Cold War, identity, norms, culture and institutions became important topics to analyze the world politics and the increase in researches on these areas brought the constructivism to a central position (Lapid and Kratochwil, 1996: 105-126). Rationalist and constructivist approaches differ mainly on social and spiritual explanations. Anarchy, sovereignty, political interests and identities are socially constructed and vary over time. As Wendt stated, international structure emerges from the social interaction, not from the material satisfactoriness (Wendt, 1995: 73). Culture and ideas are important in shaping of IR discourse and reality. Interests are subjective and associated with changing identities. There are some differences in social constructivist intellectuals, but mainly they focus on the identity, norms, culture, national interests and international management. In this sense, constructivism is about the human consciousness and the role of its plays in international life (Ruggie, 1998: 878, 883). Here, the consciousness is a socially constructed fact and constructivists focus on the roles of ideas, culture, norms, knowledge and arguments in both social life and in politics. This approach indicates (like in critical theory) that the *social reality* has been configured by the people and can change. In this respect, the analysis of the social formation of international politics requires the analysis of the social structure which shapes the identity, interests and interactions of the actors (Wendt, 1995: 81). This approach contradicts with the rational theories.

The sovereignty approach in constructivism is different than the main theories of IR as well. Mainly, sovereignty is seen as the notion between subjects. In this context, sovereignty means nothing without other factors. Sovereignty is an institution for constructivist logic and this institution reduces the threat of anarchy (Wendt, 1994: 388). In this sense, the sovereignty claims of the states create a social environment where the state can have interaction with other states. Sovereignty in a historical context has been socially constructed. In this sense, it will be wrong to see sovereignty as constant, unchangeable and based on some data (Biersteker & Weber, 1996: 2, 11). The socially construction of state sovereignty leads us to think that the constructive relation between state and sovereignty. The sovereignty approach in constructivism is also same for the security notion. As a requirement for social mentality, security cannot be reduced to defence, balance of threat and attacks or these kinds of material objects for constructivists. Being secured or not is related with the quality of the relation and reflects the stability and change in the parties of these relations. The important thing is that the security related with the interests to be defended (McSweeney, 1999: 101). The end of the Cold War mainly effected the change in the security notion. While the notion of security for states is related with sovereignty, security for society is linked with the identities. In this sense, the security notion is institutionalized to cover widely accepted values as well (Tanrisever, 2005: 118-122).

The application of social constructivist approach to explain the TFP is a new process affecting the discipline of IR. A social constructivist approach is different from the rational ontology based theories such as realism and liberalism. According to Wendt (1995: 71), the basic structures of international politics are social rather than material and these structures shape the identities and the interests of the actors. In this sense, while explaining the interests of the actors, constructivism meets with rational theories. This approach stands on the ongoing construction of the TFP after the 1980s and shows the issue on both materialist and idealist factors. Idealist factors both have normative and institutional aspects and reflect not only individual but also collective meaning. In this sense, idealism and constructivism are related. Because, while idealism mentions that the world exists from the ideas, constructivism insists that anything that is known must be created in the mind of the knower (See Glasersfeld, 1995).

In a social constructivist approach, identity consists primarily as the social group from the distinctive ideas of individuals within the community (Wendt, 1995: 81). “Neo-Ottomanism” as the combination of Muslim, Turkish and liberal dimensions, can be given as an example to this. Secondly, a partnership, which makes it different from the other societies, is sought. In

this sense, “Past-Ottoman nations and others” issue has become important especially for the ME. In addition, social identity is not identified as being a member of only one group. Furthermore, it requires multi-dimensional perspective. According to constructivists, the emergence of collective identities is possible on the bases of cooperation among states. The understanding of how social constructivist approach sees IR require checking the ontological assumptions. In this sense, constructivism is a theorem, which is based on the construction of social reality ontologically (Guzzini, 2000:160). So, constructivism made possible to effectively analyze IR by adding the identity, culture and speech factors, which were excluded by other theories of IR. The understanding of neo-Ottomanist foreign policy of Turkey requires these factors as well. In this sense, rearticulating Turkish identity and respect for cultural diversity as in the Ottoman past and elimination of economic *boundaries* by respecting political borders in Balkans, Caucasus and ME are the main characteristics (Yavuz, 1998: 40). Constructivism does not exclude the classical power and interest factors, basically deal with how identity and ideas affect of them, to understand the state actions (Walt, 1998: 29-46). The meaning of identity and the scope of interest are related with the shared information among the people. In this sense, analysis in IR should start with the culture and then tend to power and interests (Wendt, 1999: 193). In this sense, some elements in Turkish culture such as the “voluntarily donation”, “donating to the relatives, poor and orphan” and “relieving” were the most important issues to empower the social structure of the OE (Yediyildiz, 1991: 4-7). The construction of neo-Ottomanist foreign policy is also based on the inclusion of these elements in the formation of foreign policy norms. In this sense, Turkey’s foreign policy norms have been based on sharing the wealth by removing the barriers among the peoples in the region (See Hurriyet, 2009; TRT, 2009b; Kardas, 2009a; BBC, 2006).

The theoretical concept of constructivism provides valuable insights for the understanding of the specific cases assessed in this paper. Thus, applying these insights to the TFPME, I will argue, that the TFPME represents the transformation in the identity setting in Turkey and its affects to foreign policy changes since the 1980s. Looking at the developments since the 1980s, underlying the design of the TFP and exploring the driving forces behind it, I will in particular, argue that the TFP has developed in the identity perspective with the agreements and Turkey’s active involvement in regional issues. With the analysis of the social constructivist concept I will show how Turkey was able to increase its political influence, and, as I will demonstrate, a model for the Muslim world with its democratic and secular

structure with the majority Muslim population, a trusted mediator for the solution of regional conflicts and a culture exporting country for mainly Middle Eastern countries.

It is necessary to mention that the arguments of constructivism have been criticized on several grounds. Neorealism is the main opponent for many constructivists and many critiques come from its theorists. For instance, neorealists are sceptical about the existence of international norms. In this sense, scepticism in neorealists is about whether states can be friends with the interaction, because for neorealists the anarchic structure of the international system forces states to act as egoist. For realists, it is not possible to implement the states with the communitarian norms (Mearsheimer, 1995: 82-93). Nevertheless, anarchy is a more complex entity and does not always leads to a violent conflict. Without a focus on ideas, social interaction on the formation of identities and interests, anarchy cannot be understood. In this sense, when the norms are internalized by the actors, they become a part of the identity. Then *norms* start to identify the identity and the interests. So, in constructivism the norms are constructive, not regulatory (Searle, 1995: 27). Another critique from neorealists is related with the constructivist view of change. For neorealists, constructivists point out that some factors may lead to change in the discourse of IR and in some cases; they argue that the change in material world effect to change in the discourse (Mearsheimer, 1995: 369). So, for neorealists constructivists provide few insights about the change of the discourses. However, constructivism deals with change, mainly. Actually, neorealism is dealing with the constant situation of the anarchic structure in the international system (Wendt, 1999: 17). The analysis of social interaction is the most important concept, especially to show how constructivism is dealing with the change. Applying this terminology to the case of the TFPME, I will associate the change in TFP since the 1980s and Turkey's active involvement in the problematic issues in the ME. Indeed, the experiences from the history motivated Turkey to deal with the issues more seriously by considering public demand. In short, the new identity set as from ethnic Turkish to multi-cultural and multi-ethnic Turkish affected to follow a new multi-dimensional foreign policy, shortly neo-Ottomanist foreign policy, which is mainly related with increasing the Turkey's influence on former Ottoman regions.

2.2.1. Identity, Interest and Foreign Policy

Since the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, theoretical literature on TFP has been mainly dominated by rationalist approaches. By the mid 1980s, however, the new economic policy created a new wealthy class in Anatolia, which affected the reinvigoration of TFP with

the emergence of the culture and the value centred foreign policy norms. Nevertheless, because of the individualist approaches in their methodology, the starting point for rationalists is individual-actors in social explanations. In this context, rationalists could not illustrate the post-Cold War foreign policy approaches of Turkey. According to Wendt (1987: 342), the main weakness of rationalist theories is that they could not propound the notion of state, which is the basis of their theories. In this sense, they cannot explain how the modern state gained a continental and sovereign identity. Individualist methodology created a “hidden ontology” (Ruggie, 1986: 131-136). Because of this, rationalists cannot ask the social and cultural sources of the identity and interests of the actors. In short, rationalists could not develop identity and interest theorems (Ruggie, 1998: 862-863). In this sense, rationalists can only analyze the actions of actors in the context of assumed identities and interests, but constructivists mainly deal with how identities and interests are both constructed and emerged at first. While rationalists developed mainly theorem for actions, constructivists developed identity and preference theorem. For instance, after 1990s some liberal and conservative intellectuals in Turkey began to make reference to the multi-religious and multi-cultural feature of the OE (Cetinsaya, 2003: 378-380). Subsequently, there was a discourse that emerged both with the concepts of liberal conservative intellectuals and the ideas of ordinary people. While people follow these ideas, the conceptualization of these ideas was done by the liberal conservative intellectuals in the society. In this sense, majority of the people supported the liberal conservative parties, which follow these neo-Ottomanist policies. This perspective lead politicians to deal with liberalization of the country more and the new identity setting changed the preferences of traditional foreign policy from one dimensional western oriented foreign policy to multi-dimensional neo-Ottomanist foreign policy.

Moreover, rationalist approaches cannot see the possible changes in identity and interest portfolios, nor the effect of these changes to foreign policy or structural results of them. However, constructivists argue that the main sources of the interest are ideas and identities. Foreign policy trends or national security understandings and strategies are internalized on the identity construction process of the states (See Katzenstein, 1996). In this sense, TFP generally set on the idea that Turkey has multiple connections such as religious with the ME, both religious and nationality with the Caucasus and historical links with the Balkans and these connections should be the norms of Turkey’s foreign policy (See Davutoglu, 2001).

According to constructivists, actors follow the actions which are appropriate to their identity, statute, social environment and cultural structure (March & Olsen, 1998: 943-969). As we can say that the social construction of reality, for constructivism, actors do not exist free from the social environment and the value system, which is brought by the social environment (Onuf, 1998: 59). For instance, different segments of Turkish society, from political parties to student unions exercised a great support for Palestinians against to attacks came from Israel (Aras & Bıçakçı, 2006: 367-381). In this sense, Turkey has initiated a campaign against Gaza tragedy and Turkish Prime Minister (PM) Recep Tayyip Erdoğan had regional and international visits to end it by calling international society to lift embargoes and isolations over Palestine (Candar, 2009). Here, the appropriateness to norms in foreign policy setting is seen starting from individual and groups' norms in national level, which is mainly related with the identity, and the protests in other countries in international level in accordance with the humanitarian support.

The TFPME, which is the subject of analysis in this paper, represents the domestic context of the Turkey's recent foreign policy toward the ME and Turkey's role for the cooperation as a regional power. The success of TFPME in achieving its objectives is, thus, inextricably related to the effectiveness of the Turkey's continuation of social reforms in facilitating domestic *transformation* in the country. While domestic transformation causes an emergence of new foreign policy norms, interactions between individuals and the groups also affect the foreign policy directions both in Turkey and in the Middle Eastern countries as well. In this process, the transformation in society occurs both in Turkey and Middle Eastern countries, but mainly the domination of Turkey's political, social and religious culture as democratic, secular state and Muslim identity is seen. Therefore, in my further investigation of the Turkey's impact on the domestic and political realm of the ME, I will employ the insights offered by social constructivism.

In this subchapter, I presented the theoretical foundations of constructivism for the empirical analyses, which will be conducted in upcoming chapters. The theoretical base of this paper is constructivism as the main concept. Constructivism will theoretically inform the empirical investigation of the social and political origins of the TFPME after the 1980s. Starting with the realist approaches, the previous subchapter showed that the TFPME after the 1980s cannot be explained by realists' premises, because of the identity dimension behind it. In particular, constructivist analysis will help to explain why Turkey's political sphere of

influence increases in the ME since the 1980s. Since constructivism is hypothetically expected the effect of interest and identity to the emergence of foreign policy norms, with this in mind it is also important to mention the affect of strategic agreements to the common interests of the people in the region. After the introduction of theoretical background of my thesis, I will now briefly describe the sources and methods that I have used in my research.

2.3. Analysis of the Sources and Research Methods

This thesis relies on the analysis of primary sources, such as speeches by politicians and researchers on Turkey and the ME and publications of different countries related with the topic. The primary factual information is predominantly acquired from the reports and the official documents developed in the context of TFPME, such as Turkey's contributions to Iraq report and Turkey - Iraq High Level Strategic Cooperation Council (HLSCC) report.⁵ While no interview was made in the research period, instead of this the published interviews, which were made by the other researchers or journalists with some politicians, were used to collect some data. The argumentation put forward in this thesis also makes use of a broad range of key up to date secondary literature, including the books and articles from the journals, such as the *Journal of Turkish Weekly*, *Journal of the Faculty of Economics in Istanbul University*, *Journal of Society and Science*, *Journal of Middle East Review*, *Journal of International Affairs* etc.

Having presented my sources, I would like to discuss the methods I used in writing this thesis. In order to support my line of argumentation in analyzing the TFPME, throughout the forth and the fifth chapter I employ a qualitative research method. The purpose of the qualitative analysis is the same in these two chapters. Thus, in the fourth chapter, I collected the key issues and the concepts of the transformation of TFP after the 1980s with those of factors, which motivates to approach of Turkey towards the ME. In doing so, I attempt to show that the effects of foreign policy transformation of Turkey to the approach of Turkey to the ME. In fifth chapter I used qualitative methodology to collect data about ME politics and the foreign policy actions of Turkey. Additionally, I employ the speeches of the politicians and journalists in the cases to support my arguments. Although, Turkey's involvement in Iraqi politics and the Palestine problem are seen as the case studies, in order to reinforce some aspects of my argument. Finally, I present the case studies by selecting from Turkey's foreign policy areas

⁵ These reports and documents have been acquired by me on the web pages of the governmental institutions and the Ministries.

in the ME. Having presented the theoretical core of the empirical analyses, and having introduced the research methods, I will now turn to presenting the key factual background information on the situation in the ME and TFP from 1923 to 1980.

3. THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY (1923-1980)

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the reader with the necessary background information on the ME since OE and the TFP until the 1980s, before proceeding with actual analysis of the TFPME. Since the TFPME after the 1980s builds on neo-Ottomanist perspective, the subchapter 3.1 of this chapter will first briefly sketch out the Ottoman governance strategy in the ME. The following subchapter 3.2 will discuss the emergence of Arab nationalism and the involvement of the West in the ME. Then, the subchapter 3.3 will show Turkey's early ME policy and West oriented foreign policy trend. Finally, the section 3.4 will introduce the reader that the political ideology factor on foreign policy setting in Turkey.

3.1. Ottoman Governance Strategies in the Middle East

If a comparison is made with Anatolia, Mesopotamia or Caucasus, the term ME was not used until the 20th century (Laciner, 2006). Because of the British army needed a place between London and East for logistic support to its eastern colonies, the term ME emerged. This region was in the middle of the East (Mumbai) and the West (London) and closer to the colonies in the East (Davison, 1960: 665-675). Subsequently, this region was called as the ME for the first time in the correspondences between Ministry of India in Britain and the colony officers in India. In the 1900s, the boundaries, which show the ME complicated. After World War I (WWI), while Greece and the South of Italy were mentioned as the *Near East (NE)*, the region between eastern part of the NE and Afghanistan were referred as the ME (For the map of the ME, refer to Figure 2 in the annex). The geographic theme of the ME was clearly determined after WWII because Britain based the most important armoury by Egypt in the name of "The ME Logistic Centre of Britain" in WWII times (See Adelson, 1995).

The relations amongst OE and other Muslim sultanates in the ME existed since the emergence of Ottomans; however, the Ottoman hegemony was constructed after *the Battle of Marj*

*Dabiq*⁶ and *the Battle of Ridanieh*,⁷ when Ottomans annexed the Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Egypt. Afterwards, the Ottoman Sultan *Selim I* conquered the territories of Egypt in 1517, Mekka Sheriff *Ebu Numey* obeyed the Ottoman rule and the governance of *Harameyn*⁸ became officially under the control of Ottomans. Furthermore, with the conquest, Ottoman Sultans were called as the Servants of Harameyn (*Hadimu`l-Harameyn*) (Kazici, 2003: 127). As a tradition in Muslim society in that time, the protector of Harameyn should spend the whole expenditures of it, which is called *Surre*⁹, until to the end of 18th century Surre was sent by both Istanbul as the capital of the Empire and the Egypt as the commonwealth. Except Harameyn, Surre was being sent to Jerusalem because of *Al Aqsa Mosque*¹⁰ as another holy place for Muslims was located in there. For instance, in *Sultan Murat III* (1574-1595) times, Surre was sent as cash money 196 pocket to Medina, 87 to Mekka and 11 to Jerusalem (Atalar, 1991: 34). As it is seen, the highest amount was sent to Medina, where the grave of the *Mohammed* was located. This tradition continued until the collapse of OE as one of the factor, which was keeping the Muslim people under the control of them. The Ottomans were sending this aid to Harameyn because of being the strongest Muslim country in that time and owning the *Caliphate*¹¹ title of Ottoman Sultans. Because of this holy mission, Ottomans did not apply any taxes to *Hejaz region*¹² and have sent substantial aid (Yavuz, 1984: 179). In this respect, main success of Ottoman governance in the ME was depending on the protection of Islam and Muslims (Inalcik, 1995: 26). Since Mehmet II (1451-1481), Ottoman Sultans believed that they were the ruler of the greatest Muslim country since Prophet Muhammad (Ortayli, 1999: 33). In this sense, a famous Egyptian Muslim scholar Abdulaziz Cavis (1918: 16) argued that all Muslims agree that the Ottomans *deserved* the Caliphate. Thus, Ottomans showed great respect to Holy places, which were located in the ME and the importance of their aids were as the presents to the people in that region. Mainly, the success of OE in the

⁶ The battle was between OE and Mamluk Sultanate in 1516 near Halab- Syria. After the battle, Ottomans annexed the Syria, Lebanon and Palestine (See William, 2007).

⁷ The Battle of Ridanieh was between Mamluk Sultanate and OE in 1517 in the city of Ridanieh. After the Battle, Mamluk Sultanate collapsed and the Ottomans annexed the Egypt (See William, 2007).

⁸ Harameyn represents the holy places in Islam such as Mekka and Medina. Since the emergence of Islam, Harameyn has ruled by Sheriffs, and it continued in Ottoman time as well.

⁹ Surre was amount of money that was being sent to Harameyn with a special ceremony. The amount of money was being spent to the needs of Harameyn and the poor people in that region (Atalar, 1991: 3-5).

¹⁰ Muslims believe that the Mohammed went to his night journey from Mecca via Al Aqsa Mosque and also Muslims were praying first to there and then Mohammed led them to pray towards the Ka'aba (Lundquist, 2007: 45).

¹¹ Caliphate represents the governance of Islam, which gets its power from the rules of the prophet Mohammed. Caliphate was seen as the leader of all Muslims and this institution continued until to the end of OE. Caliphate was abolished after the establishment of Turkey in 1924 (Crone, 2005: 308-309).

¹² Hejaz region is in the west side of the today's Saudi Arabia territory. Hejaz region is very important in Islam because of it includes the holy places Mekka and Medina. (For the map of the Hejaz region refer to Figure 3 in the Annex)

ME was related with their socially constructed Muslim identity and the priority in internal politics to take care with the holy places in the ME. Another important issue in Ottoman aids to Mekka and Medina was large numbers of poor people were living in these holy places and the people, who come from the Prophet Mohammad's family was living there as well (Saricik, 2003: 53). The Surre tradition shows the Ottomans' governance strategy in the ME and mainly it disproves the claims of Arab nationalists that Ottomans exploited them. Then, the analysis showed that there was no petroleum industry in Ottoman time and the living of many Middle Eastern nations was dependent on trade and the *aid* of Ottomans. However, many orientalist studies in Europe and the US in the end of OE showed that the Ottoman rule in the ME as the exploitative, especially to increase the nationalism in Arabs for the colonial intervention of them (Faroqhi, 1999: 273).

Ottomans were the official and the substantive governor of the ME between the 16th and 20th centuries, and they were controlling the populations by creating developed governance relations. Because of a long term governance was bound to the *consent* of the people, Ottomans created *autonomy* to rule in their territories, where a wide variety of nations and cultures existed (Barkan, 1953: 303-307). This autonomy was not including the cultural and ideological factors. Periodically, *Alevis* and *Shias*¹³ were supported to eliminate their relations with Iran and on the contrary, minority Sunnis¹⁴ in Iraq. For the regions, which were far from the centre, a family was selected to restore the rule or a clan was being empowered. This direct and indirect governance strategy continued until the 19th century and then the new governance strategies were needed to continue the hegemony in the ME (Deringil, 2003: 311-342 and Gilsenan, 1996). The Ottoman economy and trade mentality was stagnating; in the same time, the West's dynamic economic and technological attempts were in place. Subsequently, Ottoman trade and economic order started to corrupt and the West's *dominance* was obvious at the end of the 18th century (Onsoy, 1999: 9). The main reason was OE had no social classes and private enterprises occurred in early capitalist development and state-private sector coordination, which required colonial policies. As the governor of a geography, which was economically dependent to the West, the Ottomans could not prevent its dispersion

¹³ As in other Muslim sects, Shias and Alevis are based on the Koran and the Prophet Mohammed's sayings. However, Shias are differentiating on that the first Caliph after Mohammed would be Ali, who was Mohammed's cousin, so they reject the legitimacy of Rashidun Caliphs. Also, Alevis are considered in one of the many branches in Shia Islam (Episoto, 2002: 40).

¹⁴ Sunnis are the largest group in Islam. The word Sunni comes from the actions and the speeches of Prophet Mohammed, which called "Sunnah". Sunni school of law is divided to four as Hanafi, Maliki, Shafii, Hanbali. Ottoman sultans and the majority of present Turkey's population were belonged to Sunni Muslim group and Hanafi in Sunni school of law (Meri, 2005: 5; Ramadan, 2006: 26).

even they know the nature of required reforms. The reform processes and then latterly wars brought the great monetary problems. The main aim of Ottoman bureaucracy after the 19th century was to create a new order. However, the Westernization and modernization movements in this new order created the social and institutional framework of Western colonial power, which was the actors in the ME at the end of the OE and were the basic reasons to establish the nation states after colonization.

In sum, “Muslim” identity of Ottomans was the main factor to successful governance in the ME. In this sense, Ottoman sultans exercised the great respect to holy places, and they have interested with the ME in terms of the religious feelings rather than a centre for profiting. While, this approach of the Ottomans motivated mainly Muslim Arabs to integrate the empire more, the wide autonomy for the non-Muslim Arabs for their religious rituals was another reason to integrate them. However, the developments in Europe mainly affected the Ottoman territories starting from the Balkans to the ME. In this context, Ottoman bureaucrats tried to follow reforms to remove the problems and achieve the unity of the empire. Nevertheless, the dominance of the Europe over OE rounded off the power of the empire in the ME.

3.2. The Emergence of Arab Nationalism and the Involvement of the West in the Middle East

Nationalism, as an emerged factor with the effect of some developments, is a *problem* for some and *liberation* for others. According to Anderson (1991: 52-58), when the press had become more prevalent publishers started to publish more books in the local languages to earn more and the language of the people became the language of their states. Subsequently, it provided a great support to development of national culture and nationalist ideologies. In this sense, the emergence of Arab nationalism mainly did not differ from the nationalist ideologies in Europe, because of the emphasis on Arabic language and the culture. As Gellner (1983: 27) stated that “the emergence of nations are dependent to some circumstances like states, and they do not born because of the obligations”, Arabic nationalism developed by depending on some *circumstances* as well. The decrease in military power of OE increased the *interventions* of Europe in Ottoman territories after the 18th century. The increase in nationalist ideology in Europe showed first its effect on the Balkan territories of OE, which started to undermine the Ottomanist policies to keep the whole ethnic and religious groups under the Ottoman rule, and spread to the ME with the effects of foreign missionary education institutions, especially in

Lebanon, Syria and Egypt. The analysis in the 19th century international politics shows that an Arabic problem did not exist in that time. Mainly, identities are referred as the *Muslim* and *non-Muslim* and Arab only represented non-resident Bedouin people, who live in the desert (Zeine, 1958: 36).

In the 19th century, there was religious competition between super powers to increase their influence on Christian minority and religious places. The cultural influence of Europe emerged mainly in Christian Arabs in Syria. Main aim of these missionary activities was to construct an Arab generation, who would know the Arabic past and influenced from the *European culture* (Lewis, 1993: 172). The Christian intellectual Arabs, who had been trained in the Missionary schools started to publish newspapers in Arabic both in Egypt and Syria to influence the people and lack of official Arabic newspaper in OE accelerated this process. In this sense, Arab nationalism quickened after Britain's formal annexation of Egypt in 1882 (*Ibid.*, 173). Furthermore, nationalism increased in the Muslim Arabs and Turks because of the Muslim intellectuals, who lived in France. When they resided in France, they learnt mainly the notions of "motherland" and "nation" and published their books in that perspective. For instance, Egyptian *Rifa'ah Rafi el-Tahtavi* (1801-1873) was a very important person to spread the nationalist ideas in Arabs. The innovation of Tahtavi was that his ideas about Egyptian patriotism, and he tried to base it on Islamic perspectives (Hourani, 1984: 68-69). Actually Islamic belief was including sympathy to birth place before nationalism emerged, but it was politicized with the works of Tahtavi. While mentioning nation and states, Tahtavi emphasized that the nation can be limited to a certain country (Dawn, 1973: 123-124). Furthermore, his ideas caused the decrease in the importance of some Islamic institutions, which were binding Muslims and the localization of the identities and their discourse with the Islamic belief system started to change the identity construction from a single Muslim Identity to localized national Muslim Identities, which was the main reason to increase the different voices in different Arab regions in the late OE. On the other hand, Arab nationalism differentiated according to religion as well. While Muslim Arabs were against to the western style *reforms*, which were done by OE to empower the country, Christian Arabs aimed to have an independent state (Genc, 2000: 37-40). For instance, *Wahhabi*¹⁵ rebellion occurred in Muslim Arabs, which was based on religious ideas, and they were arguing that the decline in Muslim world could not be solved by Westernization of the country, but Ottomans should create the policies on the bases of *Koran* and *Prophet Mohammed's* ideas (Tug, 1969: 256).

¹⁵ Wahhabism emerged in the 18th century in today's Saudia Arabia. Wahhabis argued that to bring Islam back by removing the innovations in it (See DeLong-Bas, 2004).

The Ottoman bureaucracy tried to eliminate these nationalist movements in Arabs as well. *Sultan Abdulhamit II* (1876-1909), was afraid of the emergence of a new Arabic Caliphate. Because of this, he followed *Islamist* policy, which was based on the unity of Muslims by referring to the Muslim identity of the OE and put the Arabs to higher positions in military and administrative bodies. In this context, Sultan Abdulhamit II successfully used the caliphate institution to eliminate the nationalism in Muslim Arabs and because of this Arab nationalism developed slowly in his time. For instance, in 1877-78 assembly Arabs acted as they are only representing their regions, where they have been selected and there was not a common Arab vision among Arabic delegates (Kayali, 1998: 31). In this sense, intellectual Muslim Arabs aimed to increase the effectiveness of OE, rather than establishing their own countries. Moreover, other non-educated and peasants in Arabic regions were not dealing with these issues (Zeine, 1958: 58). After the dethroning of Sultan Abdulhamit II, Arabic nationalism developed very fast. The reason was the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) (*Ittihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti*)¹⁶ could not answer the demands for more autonomy their regions and it motivated Arabs to increase their demands for independence (Harari, 1962: 106). Furthermore, the election results in the Second Constitutional Era (*II.Mesrutiyet*)¹⁷ did not satisfy the Arabs, and they claimed that the Turks arranged the elections in favour to them (See Ahmad, 1969). In this context, the policies of the CUP such as the *centralization* of Ottoman authority, using Turkish in all public spheres created problems mainly for Arabs. The increase in independence claims in Arabs motivated the CUP to change the policy from *pan-Islamism* to *pan-Turkism*, and it created a reaction within Arabs against to this *Turkification* policy (Lewis, 1993: 174). However, the new identity construction shifted the policy from pan-Islamism to pan-Turkism, were decreasing the control of OE mainly in the ME, where Arabs were living. In this sense, many secret associations were established to spread the Arab nationalism such as in Istanbul, Lebanon, Egypt and Syria. Subsequently, an Arab Congress was organized in Paris including both Muslim and non-Muslim Arabs in 21 June 1913. They declared at the end of the congress that the OE should be reformed and the Europe should help in this reformation process (Haurani, 1984: 283). Furthermore, they gave

¹⁶ The CUP came into power by the dethronement of Sultan Abdulhamit II and governed the OE in 1909-1918. They have originated from “Young Turks” organization that studied in Europe and returned to OE. They were arguing the westernization and the secularization of the OE. Under this umbrella Albanians, Bulgarians, Arabs, Slavs, Jews, Greeks, Turks, Kurds and Armenians mainly found (Hanioglu, 1995; 2001).

¹⁷ After the Sultan Abdulhamit II, constitutional monarchy was restored in OE 1909-1918. There were many political groups, but the CUP was dominant in the parliament. The new parliament in Second Constitutional Era included delegates of 142 Turks, 60 Arabs, 25 Albanians, 23 Greeks, 12 Armenians, 5 Jews, 4 Bulgarians, 3 Serbs and 1 Vlachs (Miller, 2004).

their reform demands to the Paris Ambassador of OE including Arabic should be recognized as the official language in Arab regions and the military service should be done in the *own* regions of Arabs (Kurkcuoglu, 1982: 37-38). However, the governance of OE was thinking about how to recover lost territories, rather than the reforms. When the OE joined WWI, in an alliance with Germany, the UK and France approached to the Ottomans' unpleasant citizens Arabs and they supported some separatist groups in Arabia such as *Sheriff Hussein of Mecca* (Zeine, 1958: 99-100). The important thing in WWI time was that the separatist Arabs were divided to three groups. The first was a group in Syria and their aim was to prevent the Syria from the occupation of France. The second group was lead by Sheriff Hussein, and they aimed to create an independent Arab kingdom, which would include worldly and spiritual authority in it and the third one was a group in Iraq and their aim was to be saved from British occupation (*Ibid.*, 105-106). However, *the Balfour Declaration* in 1917¹⁸ cast a chill upon Arabs even they got promises from the UK and France for the independent Arab states. Moreover, a few days later the Bolsheviks in Russia disclosed the *Sykes-Picot Agreement (SPA)*,¹⁹ which was signed before the Bolshevik revolution and these developments were interpreted as the betrayal by Arabs (Harari, 1962: 108). After WWI, OE collapsed and the four *mandate* Arab states were established based on SPA. Afterwards, the established satellite states were the mandates such as Lebanon and Syria belonged to France, Iraq and Palestine tied to Britain and Jordan was established in the territories of Palestine in 1922 (Lapidus, 2002: 643).

After the OE, the same techniques have been pursued to increase the hegemony of the West in the ME. Until WWII, the colonial order in the ME was restored by sharing the governance of the state with bureaucrats and some social classes, which can influence the colonial order. Then, the colonial order found the social and institutional infrastructure to secure the system (Barnett, 1998:34-37). In this sense, many *institutions* in the countries of the ME were established in the colonial time such as the military and police forces by dividing the unitary geography to different governance forms. Subsequently, the social relations between the people were effected from the boundaries, which were drawn *artificially*. In this sense, the

¹⁸ Balfour Declaration was a formal letter of statement by British government on November 2, 1917. The declaration was made in latter by British FM Arthur Balfour to British Jewish community leader Walter Rothschild. In this declaration, the territories of Palestine were granted as the national home to the Jewish people (Yapp, 1987: 290; Stein, 1961: 470).

¹⁹ SPA was a secret agreement to share the territories of OE among the UK, France and Imperial Russia in 1916. According to the agreement, Britain would control today's Jordan, the southern Iraq and a small area around Haifa; France would get the South Eastern Turkey, Northern Iraq, Mosul, Syria and Lebanon; Russia would get Istanbul, the Turkish Straits and Ottoman Armenian Vilayets. The region of Palestine would be governed by an international administration (Fromkin, 2001: 286, 288).

situation of Arabs was arranged to create the reasons for intervention. While there was a wide autonomy to the states in the ME in Ottoman time, the colonial powers *removed* this autonomy, and it created resistance mainly from the local people, because of the multi-ethnic and multi-religious factors in the region. In this sense, the expenditures of the colonial states in that time were mainly for the administration and the control rather than the infrastructure (See Owen, 1992). In this sense, the understanding of the ME politics requires analyzing the colonial period, because of the political and economical institutionalization in the colonial period and their ongoing effects on the social and economical relations in the countries of the ME. Furthermore, the ME was known with some problems in international politics such as Israel and Palestine problem, artificial states, which were created by the colonial powers, ineffective politicians, political instability and petroleum, ethnic composition, terrorism and water supply (See Memis, 2002). After WWII, any kind of colonization ended and Westerns did not stay in the ME except the Western *Jews*, who migrated to Palestine. However, the colonial state structure evaluated to the nation-states and it increased its affect in the region (Walt, 1987: 21-26). The end of the colonial period was brought from “above” by the *bureaucratic elites* rather than the revolutionary movement of the Arab people. In this process, the power of the states increased by empowering the bureaucratic elites and the state funded social classes. In this context, both sovereignty and the *Arabism* were the most important aspects on the creation of Arabic state systems (*Ibid.*, 216). Subsequently, any *democratization* attempts were caught by the security and intelligence departments of the states which emerged in the colonial period. In this sense, the post-colonial state structure occurred as a triangle including authoritarianism, totalitarianism and corporatism. In addition, the foreign policy of post-colonial Arab states was based on the rationalist framework, because of being oblivious to the internal dynamics of the states and the most important ideological component for the Arab states has been *nationalism*. In this sense, the ideology of the *Baath Party (BP)*²⁰, which was based on the nationalist-socialist framework, started to be powerful and anti-West image of the BP was the main driving force in politics in some Arab countries after WWII. While the nationalism has been the most important factor to isolate the Arab states in the ME, it negatively effected the relations between Turkey and the Arab states as well. In this sense, nationalism remained only as a tool to increase the domination of the leaders in the Arab states. For instance, the Palestine problem was always on the agenda in the

²⁰ BP was the nationalist and socialist party, which was based on the idea that the Arab unity in a socialist Arab state. BP ideology first emerged in 1940 in Syria and main theoreticians were Salah al-Bitar and Michael Aflaq. The revolutions in Iraq and Syria brought the governance of the Baath Parties in 1960s. The Baath regime of Saddam Hussein was destroyed by the US intervention in Iraq in 2003; but, the BP regime in Syria still continues (Nuseibeh, 1972: 76).

Arabic countries, while there was no longer any progress for peace with the increase in nationalism, bringing the problem into the agenda by elites has also made to shelve the internal political problems by mobilizing the people for Palestine.

The ME was one of the most critical areas in crisis on East/West polarization after WWII. In this sense, the developments, which occurred because of the internal dynamics of the region, had existed for forty years. The rich *petroleum* resources in the ME were the most important reason to keep the region under the control of the West. Until the 1970s, the balance, which was created according to the traditional competition, was satisfying all parts. However, the oil shock in the 1970s motivated the West to have stronger control in the region (Heykel, 1993: 41). The hegemony of the US was restored after this time and the existence of *Israel* was the most important issue to deal with the ME (Kayabali & Arslanoglu, 1990: 87). In this sense, the collapse of the SU dragged to the ambiguity of regional actors and the US created the new strategies for settling the ME. Recently, the *political Islam* has been the candidate for the governance of the ME as a *counter hegemonic* movement. In this context, there is a coalition between *political Islam* and the *nationalism* in the ME. Furthermore, the movements for political Islam do not criticize the authority of the post-colonial states even they live under the pressure of them, because of the anti-West image of both. The recent trend in the societies of Arabic countries shows that if the elections are made on more democratic basis, it will be resulted with the *victory* of the political Islam (See Beinini & Stork, 1997).

In sum, the increase in Arab nationalism and the intervention of the West in the ME were linked to each other. Because nationalist ideology originated from the Europe, it passed to the Ottoman territories with the foreign missionary education institutions. In this sense, the increase in nationalism mainly affected the multi-ethnic and multi-religious based OE, and it fastened to lose of the domination in the ME. The lack of official press in the Arabic language empowered the private press in Arabic language, which was mainly issued to increase the nationalist feelings in Arab society. While the emergence of nationalism in Muslim Arabs was based on the anti-reforms in the Islamic rules, the Christian Arabs followed western style nationalism to create their own states. However, the policy change in Ottoman governance from pan-Islamism to pan-Turkism accelerated the collapse of the Ottoman dominance in the ME. The new colonial order was set according to the secret agreements among the great powers. The colonial order in the ME mainly affected social and economical conditions of the Arabs. In this sense, artificially drawn boundaries caused to the emergence of the unfinished

conflicts. While the Arab nationalism was the main factor for the political life in the ME, recently political Islam increased the power in Arab society.

3.3. Turkey's Early Middle East Policy and the West Oriented Foreign Policy Trend

After WWI, the OE collapsed and the national liberation war within Anatolia resulted with the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, which was based on the Anatolian, mainly Turkish speakers of former Ottoman citizens. In this sense, Turkey became the neighbour with the great powers such as France and the Britain in the ME. In *the Treaty of Lausanne*,²¹ Turkey solved the problems with the Western states. After the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, the policies were mainly for economical development and Turkey tried to solve the problems in a *peaceful way*. In this sense, the settlements of the *reforms* required the peace in outside and stability in inside. Turkey's neighbours in the ME were mainly former Ottoman territories except Iran and the image of some Arab groups were not positive in Turkey because of their alliance with the Britain and France against to the OE in WWI (Toker, 1996: 193). While Turkish people were successful at defeating the colonial powers in Anatolia, it was not same for Arabs, and they stayed under the *mandate* of the Britain and France until WWII. After the Treaty of Lausanne, Turkey specified the relations with the Eastern states based on the National Pact (NP) (*Misak-i Milli*).²² The main aim of the NP was to establish a nation-state in the area, where mainly *Turks* had located. In this sense, Turkey disclaimed the rights over Arab territories, which had been under the control of OE for ages and the amicable relations were created with the neighbours.

The early foreign policy of Turkey was based on the rationalist framework that the protection of the *independence* and the national interests (Kurat, 1975: 265). The establishers of the Republic of Turkey had seen that how the OE was isolated in the region, and they followed the cooperation policy with the great powers. Furthermore, the revolutionary policies were followed in Turkey such the removal of the caliphate,²³ *secularization* of the country and *westernization*. However, these reforms caused the emergence of protests inside and in some

²¹ International recognition of the sovereignty of Turkey as the successor state of the OE was accepted with the Treaty of Lausanne (Soysal, 1989: 67-242). See also the full text of the treaty. Available at: http://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Treaty_of_Lausanne

²² NP represents the aimed boundaries for Turkey, which emerged in the national liberation war (Kaymaz, 1977: 2).

²³ The removal of the Caliphate caused to the decrease in the influence of Turkey in Islamic countries. Until that time, Atatürk was the most popular person in Muslim areas because of the victory against to the Imperialist Western countries (Gökalp and Georgeon, 1990: 26).

Muslim countries against the governors of Turkey (Gonlubol & Sar, 1997: 88). The main reason to the removal of the Caliphate was that the political power of the Caliphate had not worked in WWI to combine the Muslims under the OE and whereupon any sovereign state would not accept the *supremacy* of the Caliphate. However, these radical reforms were understood as the Turkey was becoming irreligious and the new identity setting of the Republic of Turkey, which was based on the ethnic Turkish, secular and western state was the most important issue to determine the relations with Muslim states. In this sense, the relations between Muslim states and Turkey came to an end after the 1930s (Duman, 1999: 2). Turkey was also *oblivious* to the ME after the reform processes. Main reasons of this policy were Turkey could not risk to fight with France and Britain and there was *anti-Turkism* with the anti-west in the ME (Kruger, 1932: 149). In this sense, the colonial powers were the interlocutors for Turkey to solve the problems in the ME. Then, Turkey started to follow the policies only towards the West. While Ataturk period was mainly the transition period for the emergence of the reforms, *Kemalism*, which was including the own ideas and the principles of Ataturk for Turkey's development and the reform process became the national ideology of Turkey.

Because of one of the main ideas of *Kemalism* was the Westernization, the West *orientation* has mainly seen as the foreign policy preference since the establishment of Turkey. Subsequently, the balance of power structure and the national interest factors in the *realist* theoretical framework were the main determinants of Turkey's foreign policy. After WWII, three factors were important to determine this orientation as the foreign currency reserve deficit of Turkey, the *threats* and the pressures coming from the SU and financial and the military aids with *the Truman Doctrine* (1947) and *the Marshall Plan* (1948).²⁴ However, the main factor to motivate Turkey to ally with the West was the pressures coming from the SU to annex some territories of Turkey (Karpas, 1975: 83). In this context, pro-western policy of Turkey was the rational preference of "Turkish political elites." Moreover, West oriented foreign policy was considered as the *civilization* process and the reconstruction of the society on *Western values* with the preference of Turkish political elites (Oguzlu, 2004: 96). In this sense, the western orientation was also related with the mistrust of the public authorities to the nation-construction process such as the fear from the increase in Islamism and ethnic

²⁴ While the Truman doctrine included the aids by the US to Greece and Turkey for the containment policy of the SU, Marshall Plan was organized as the aid for reconstruction of the Western Europe after WWII. The Truman Doctrine included harsh side of the Containment policy against to the SU; but the Marshall Plan was the soft side (Aydin, 2000: 103-139).

problems, which can cause to collapse of the Kemalist regime of Turkey. Subsequently, westernization of the identity would secure the system of Turkey by eliminating the possible threats coming from the internal dynamics. However, while the identity perspective of the Western oriented foreign policy debate mainly mentioned after the 1980s in TFP in the EU membership discussions, this perspective was not directly applicable to the foreign policy formation in the bipolar condition of the Cold War because of it did not represent the demands of the people.

Turkey's orientation to the West can be analyzed in four groups as: the westernization in a respectable position in the Western Camp, Westernisation as anti-communism, Westernization despite the West and the Westernization for the alliance of the civilisations. When the speeches of the party leaders and the government officers were analyzed, the Westernization was mentioned that the *own liberation principles* of the Turkey and the Kemalist state identity, which was based on the Western values, and the Westernization was not oriented with the external pressures. In this sense, the most important issue was to get the support of the people to empower the Westernization process as well. In his speech to a newspaper in the 1965, Turkish PM Suleyman Demirel mentioned the Westernisation policy of Turkey as:

“The aims of Ataturk reforms are to reach the Western civilization. Western civilization is not different from the nations' customs, traditions and cultures; but it is based on the placing scientific thought instead of the superstition, enlightening and freedom of the minds, and the increase in economic welfare level. The wonderful customs, traditions and cultures of Turkish people, which had emerged since the thousands of the years are not contrast to reach the Western civilisation” (Demirel, 1967: 171).

One of the most important factors to empower the westernization process as the only foreign policy tendency was Turkey's membership applications to some *western institutions* after WWII. In this sense, Turkey became a member to the Council of Europe (CE) in 1949, to NATO in 1952 and has applied to the membership of European Economic Community (EEC) in 1963. These institutions were identified with Westernization and were considered necessary for equal membership in the West for Turkish political elites (Dagli & Akturk, 1988: 49). In addition, if Turkey's membership to Euro-Atlantic institutions is analyzed, the Western image was showing *anti-communist* factor of the identity, mainly in the Cold War period (Bilgin & Yilmaz, 2005: 40). In this respect, While Turkey's involvement in the Korean War, allowing the US to use the military bases for intervention of the Lebanon civil

war in 1958, Turkey's critique of the communism and the neutrality of the Afro-Asian states in Bandung Conference in 1955, were the examples to West oriented policies, Turkey's Cyprus policy and the intervention to Cyprus in 1974 was only one example to show apart from the Western orientation of the TFP before the 1980s (Aydin, 2000: 114). However, these pro-western policies even in Turkey's own region were the most important reasons to be criticized by the Arab countries in the ME. In this sense, many Arab countries, especially Baath regimes, criticized Turkey after the Cyprus intervention and the Greek governance of Cyprus were supported by some Arab countries because of their non-aligned movement alliance with Cyprus. Moreover, anti-communism dimension of the Western oriented foreign policy mainly emerged in the speeches of Menderes period in the 1950s, then followed by the Suleyman Demirel in the 1960s and in the nationalist front coalition in the 1970s as well and Westernization was declared as following Ataturk's reforms.²⁵ However, the nationalist and Islamist parties in the nationalist front coalition were differentiating sometimes in terms of Westernization and they were arguing the membership to the Western institutions was good if they were seen only as the *support* to fight with communism, because of the Westernization process was damaging the *national culture* and the *Muslim identity* of the people (Turkes, 1979: 450 & Erbakan, 1975: 63). In this sense, they supported the Cyprus intervention as the expression of national strength against to the West (*Ibid.*, 262). In addition, Westernisation was linked with *democratization* and *liberalization* of the society in the 1970s as well. Subsequently, Turkish PM Bulent Ecevit in 1978 argued that the westernization of Turkey was not possible with the dependency to the US and the protection of NATO's southern coast, which Turkey has been considered according to the strategic and the geopolitical importance by the West, it was only possible with the spread of the democratic values to Turkey's region, which includes the Balkans, the ME and the Caucasus.²⁶ Furthermore, Turkey's intervention to Cyprus in the 1974 was considered in this perspective because of the character of the intervention to a region of conflict. Even the questioning the alliance with the West started in the 1970s, it became stronger in the 1980s. The coup in 1980 caused to be criticized by the EC about the human rights, the situation of democracy and the Turkey's military existence in Cyprus. In this sense, it was one of the factors that affected the Turkey to follow multi-faced foreign policy unlike the pre-1980s period.

²⁵ The three different periods were mainly governed by the liberal and conservative parties. In the government program of the National Front coalition Communism was mentioned as against to the rights, liberty and the unity of the people (Demirel, 1967: 70).

²⁶ Bulent Ecevit was the leader of Republican People's party and the PM in the 1978. His vision regarding Westernization was mainly related with to have Western values rather the security issues (Ecevit, 1978: 203-208).

In sum, the negative image of the Arabs in WWI as the alliance with the colonial powers motivated Turkey to follow the pan-Turkism which meant that the disclaiming the past-Ottoman territories and the reform processes such as the removal of the caliphate and secularism were understood as the Turkey was being irreligious in the Muslim countries. In this sense, the relations came to an end and Turkey mainly started to follow the policies toward the West on the bases of Kemalism. After WWII, Soviet demands to annex some territories of Turkey motivated Turkey to join the western camp and it became a member to the western institutions. While anti-communism was the main factor to determine the foreign policy of Turkey in the Cold War period, It was aimed to internalize as the Westernization process for the development of the country based on Atatürk's reforms. However, the Cyprus intervention of Turkey damaged the relations with the West and Turkey's alliance with the West was started to be criticized in domestic policy. In this sense, domestic context of the critiques mainly effected to follow a new foreign policy perspective after the 1980s.

3.4. The Political Ideology Factor on Foreign Policy Setting in Turkey

The foreign policy analysis of Turkey was mainly dominated by the *realist* perspective, which has included the stationary policy behaviours and states' same actions in the same conditions. In this sense, the internal and regime factors have been neglected for the foreign policy analysis of Turkey. However, the historical background, political system and the special features of the governors are very important for the analysis of any states. According to the article 1 in the constitution, the Turkey is a republic. In this context, *republican* governance, which was based on the Kemalist doctrine, had been created in Turkey.²⁷ The most distinctive feature of the republicanism is that to convert the individuals to follow a "common benefit" rather than the individual benefits of them. Subsequently, republicanism looks for *virtue* both in the citizens and the governors as well. The continuation of the common benefit aspect requires non-stop followers of it. In this sense, the system shows "enemies", who are waiting for the corruption in the state, to the followers to increase their virtue for common benefit perspective (Vazquez, 2000: 2). In this context, *external enemies* are very important to unity of the nation and to empower the republican system. Moreover, the republican system in Turkey has been shaped in the same way since the establishment of it. Because of the threats

²⁷ In the first part about the form of the state, article one mentions that "the Turkish state is a republic". For the whole text of the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey, online available at: http://www.anayasa.gov.tr/images/loaded/pdf_dosyalari/THE_CONSTITUTION_OF_THE_REPUBLIC_OF_TURKEY.pdf.

from external enemies in the republican system, mainly foreign policy was based on the security notion in realist perspective. In addition to other factors, the priority on security of the early foreign policy of Turkey can be explained with the effect of regime type of Turkey as well (Aydin, 1999: 156-157). In this sense, the creation of a nation-state on the *legacy of OE* required this kind of policy formulation because of the difficulty on the formulation of “common values” and virtue based action expectation from the citizens. In addition, continuation of the security based foreign policy perspective of Turkey was related with the feature of the republican governance character as well. Because the common feature of the republican governance is their cohesion to the changing conditions (Coats, 1994: 16).

Furthermore, if the republican character is deceived, cannot be acquired in the political depression times and can insist some policies to follow. In this sense, the opposition between republicanism and democracy emerges, because of the removal of the republican character brings the democratic structure.²⁸ In this context, republican character should be always on the alert and the existence of the enemies is the shortcut to continuation of the system in the republican tradition. In this sense, the republican foreign policy dimension of Kemalism affected the relation of Turkey with the neighbours as they were the potential *threats* to Turkey’s national unity. Subsequently, the threats to Turkey’s national unity perspective empowered the *military* to be in the *decision making* process related with the republican governance mentality. In this sense, the strength of Turkish General Staff (TGS) on the realist foreign policy setting was a result of the republican character of the Kemalist regime. So, the republican tradition includes the relation between the military and the continuation of the republican governance (*Ibid.*, 18-19). In addition, the relations among *individual*, *society* and *military* had been internalized by the establishers of Turkey as well. Because the military had ensured the liberation of Turkey and it was a fact to survive of the country. Thus, founder of Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk declared:

“The Republic of Turkey trusts only two things. One of them is the decision of the nation, other one is the bravery of the military, which got the world’s appreciations in the most tragic and difficult conditions; so trusts these two things”(Genelkurmay Başkanlığı, 1984: 45).

On the one hand, the effect of the republicanism to formulate the foreign policy was only one factor. On the other hand, some other principles of Kemalism since the establishment of Turkey, which were the status quo and westernization, were the other factors to formulate the

²⁸ In this context, democratic governance character is more moderate and individualist different than the societal character of the republicanism (Coats, 1994: 16).

foreign policy of Turkey. Then, the *status quo* policy of Turkey was based on the protection of the present boundaries, non-irredentist policy and the continuation of the present balances (Oran, 2001: 46-49). Actually, these policies were important to the modernization of the society; because of the need for a certain time to adopt the people to the Western social structure, which was unfamiliar to the Turkish society. As a general evaluation, TFP was formulated mainly by the principles of Kemalism and did not sheer from basic principles, even developed with the effect of some external conditions. However, the foreign policy of Turkey has started to change in accordance with the global and domestic developments after the 1980s.

In conclusion, I would like to highlight some key aspects of this chapter, which are important for the analysis put forward in the upcoming chapters. The basic approach of OE toward the Arabs was related with the Muslim factor of their identity and the caliphate institution was collecting the whole Muslim groups under the OE in the ME. However, the emergence of the nationalism mainly affected the OE's Muslim subjects for independence and the latest Islamist policies of the Ottomans were not effective to stop the collapse of it. The policy change from pan-Islamism to pan-Turkism in the late OE determined the national identity of Turkey as the Turkish, which was based on the nation-state structure. The reform process such as the removal of the caliphate, secularization of the country and the Westernization brought to an end to the relations among Turkey and the Muslim countries. Subsequently, Turkey has followed one dimensional West oriented foreign policy with the rational choice of the governmental elites. The republican character of the Kemalist foreign policy of Turkey created an empire of fear whose neighbours were the potential threats to its independence and territorial integrity. The foreign policy of Turkey was based on the zero-sum game principle until the 1980s, because of the effect of domestic and the global developments, it has turned to a multi-dimensional and cooperation based relations with the countries in the region. Assuming that this chapter equipped the reader with necessary background information on the situation in the ME and TFP in 1923-1980, in the next chapter I will proceed with theoretically informed empirical analysis, aiming to find out the reasons to follow multi-dimensional neo-Ottomanist foreign policy of Turkey, which has connected with the domestic and global developments.

4. TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY AT THE END OF THE COLD WAR AND THE POST-COLD WAR PERIOD

In its “multidimensional” perspective, a number of analysts came to a conclusion that the TFP after 1980s has been overly in “neo-Ottomanist” in its framework (Turkes, 2004: 197), having been inspired by the policy ideas and instruments designed for a more active role in Turkey’s region. Thus, Sedat Laciner (2009a) argues that the *volatile* politics in the Caucasus, the Balkans and the ME, forced Turkey to have a more active role based on the “identity” of Turkey. He further notes that Turkey’s transition from isolationist foreign policy to active participation in regional issues provided a potential to achieve economic and political expectations (*Ibid*). Theoretically informed by the insights of Constructivism, this chapter intends to examine whether the above-mentioned propositions are true. In stating this, the chapter is divided into three sections. The first section investigates the transformation of TFP after the 1980s and its impact to the post-Cold War TFP directions. The second section conceptualizes “neo-Ottomanism” as Turkey’s foreign policy approach. Finally, the third section considers the approach Turkey has taken towards the ME and specifies the factors behind it. Drawing on primary sources, this chapter, thus, attempts to trace the identity traits of the TFP after the 1980s.

4.1. The Transformation of Turkish Foreign Policy after the 1980s

After the military coup in September 12, 1980, Turkey faced the wide changes from its social structure to the economic system and as well as its foreign policy setting. Mainly, Turkey was under the military regime in 1980-1983 and the democratic elections were allowed in 1983 (Hale, 1988: 160-165). However, the effect of the military coup, problems in democracy and the human rights subjects negatively effected Turkey- EC relations. In this sense, it was one of the motivations for Turkey to look for alternatives to Europe, because the “*Europeanness*” was the only project of the Turkish political elites, but not the majority of the people. Furthermore, the election in 1983 resulted with the victory of Turgut Ozal’s ANAP. His vision about the liberalization of the Turkish economy and the emergence of the *new wealthy class* in Anatolia, which was mainly liberal conservative, was another motivation that Turkey aimed to increase the relations with the Eastern countries. In this context, the effect of the identity to foreign policy preference theorem in the constructivist framework has been important to analyze increasing relations with the Eastern countries, because of the demands from the majority of the people. In this sense, Turkey has changed some republican foreign

policy principles because of the need to have good relations with the neighbours to increase economic and the cultural relations (Sayari, 2000: 169). While there were some changes in international politics at the end of the 1980s, however, Turkey's adaptation to these developments was related with the change in some republican character of the foreign policy formation.

The crisis in the republican political system was related with their connection with the nation-state structure. Because change in the republican system required altering the nation-state structure to a more pluralist base, it also transformed Kemalist principles as well (Touraine, 2000: 315). In this sense, the spread of liberal mentality in the West, which finished a long political term, created a new term that everything was based on the economy. Moreover, international competition, the value of the national currencies and the emergence of the new technologies were main trends the government was focusing on (Touranie, 1995: 367). Subsequently, the security based foreign policy on realist perspective was not appropriate for the new term and the security notion has been linked to the market mechanisms and the identity in Turkey. Moreover, with the political institutions, the economic and cultural institutions were added to the foreign policy setting mechanisms (Beck, 1997: 209-210). As the internalization of foreign policy trend or national security and strategies occur on the identity construction process in constructivism (See Katzenstein, 1996). The identity construction process in the post-1980s period internalized the new security, common culture and national strategy principles in Turkey. So, the change in republican foreign policy dynamics was related with this, because of the republican governance was based on the common benefit issue, which was not applicable in liberal perspective. In this sense, the change in political mechanism caused the emergence of non-political analysis of the developments, due to the existence of the new *alternatives*. In addition, the common benefit has not been filled with the political approaches because of the separation between economic and political governance, which caused to change the content of the common benefit. In this sense, the increase in trade relations with the enemies to the republican system would contradict with the national interests as well. As the Wendt (1995:71) argued the social structures of international politics shape the identity and the interest of the actors, the foreign policy strategies have been analyzed by not only national security interests, but also more on the identity based economic interests in Turkey (Akad, 2004: 23-50). In this context, both material and idealist factors affected the approach of Turkey to the East. The change in the foreign policy premises in Turkey from security to the economy and culture factor after the

1980s were based on a new mentality (Eralp, 2002: 180). This mentality was based on the perspective of foreign policy with socio-economic eyes and Turkey became open to any changes in national politics as well. So, some economic institutions have been powerful in politics and the individualist character of this system motivated the individuals and groups to be powerful to affect the foreign policy setting in Turkey.

The end of the Cold War changed the global balance of power, which were based on the bipolar distribution of power. In this sense, Turkey's importance in the West increased related with the possible effect to the former Soviet countries and the ME because of the identity of Turkey. The transformation process in domestic policies, which have emerged since the 1980s, quickened because Turkey's geography was in an intersection of EM, Balkans, Caucasus and the ME, where the main changes were occurring (Sander, 1994: 419-425). In this sense, the problematic situations in Turkey's region such as the Gulf War, Bosnian crisis, the tensions between Israel and Syria, Karabag problem between Armenia and Azerbaijan motivated Turkey to actively engage in the problematic regions and Turkey has increased the *military capacity* unlike other NATO allies because of these problems (Khalilzad et. al., 2000:97).²⁹ According to Wendt (1995:81) identity occurs from the distinctive ideas of the individuals and groups in the society. Thus, Turkey's involvement of these problems was directly related with the identity of Turkey, which was including different ethnic, religious and political groups of the former Ottoman territories, as it was mentioned in constructivist perspective. In this sense, the post-1980s liberalization movement affected the individuals and group to be effective more in the social and political life of Turkey. Subsequently, Turkey has followed an active interventionist foreign policy unlike the reactionary Cold War foreign policy period. In addition, Turkey's interventions in some problematic areas were in an international coalition as well. For instance, Turkey's key role in the Balkans such as in Bosnia and Kosovo wars was in an international coalition (Lesser, 2000: 183). Moreover, Turkey joined to the international gulf coalition with the US after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in the ME as well. The main reason of these coalitions was that Turkey's interests based on its identity were overlapping with the interest of other parties in the coalition, who was mainly the US and other NATO allies.

²⁹ Mainly, the wars started to emerge because of the change in the international system. Briefly, the Gulf War started against to the Iraq's invasion of the Kuwait in 1990, Bosnia crisis emerged because of the tensions with the Serbs in Bosnia in 1992, Israel and Syria tensions emerged because of the boundaries and the effect of the Palestine problem and the Karabag tension occurred in 1991/1992 because of the Armenia's occupation of the Azerbaijani territory in Karabag.

Furthermore, the approach of Turkey towards the Islamic countries quickened in 1995 with the establishment of *Developing 8* (D8) organization.³⁰ The approach of the PM Necmettin Erbakan was understood as being anti-Western at that time; however, his policies were the continuation of Turkey's active foreign policy based on the Muslim factor of the identity. Erbakan aimed to create a common market with the Islamic countries under Turkey's leadership; however, resuming normal relations with the West was not possible for Turkey during this time (Ozcan, 1998: 5-34). The main difference of Erbakan's Islamism with the Ozal's neo-Ottomanism was Erbakan's ideas, which were based on political Islamism with the anti-West image. However, Ozal's neo-Ottomanism was more moderate, multidimensional and economy based foreign policy approach and Islam was one of the factors, but not the main. In this sense, Erbakan-Ciller coalition ended with a post-modern coup which was called 28 February Process (*28 Subat Sureci*) in 1997.³¹ Subsequently, the tie of Turkey with the West to balance the system was protected with the 28 February Process, however, conservatism in the people increased as a reaction. After a coalition government, and a financial crisis in 2001, Tayyip Erdogan's AKP came into power with the majority of the votes in 2003 elections. The foreign policy of Erdogan government was drawn by the Ahmet Davutoglu, who was the chief advisor of the Erdogan and appointed as the FM in 2009. Davutoglu's concept on foreign policy was called "Strategic Depth", which was based on neo-Ottomanist framework. According to Davutoglu (2001: 49), the main problem for Turkey with the neighbours was the alienation, negative images and prejudices especially towards the ME, and the change in the foreign policy would end the negative images of both societies. In this sense, the concept of Turkey, which can be an influential state in the regions such as Balkans, Caucasus, ME and the EM, emerged as the foreign policy norm. As constructivists argue that the main source of interest are ideas and the identity. For Davutoglu (2008: 78), historical and cultural roots for the neighbouring region for Turkey were important to specify the political sphere of it. So, these political engagements were related with the remembering of the past-relations of these regions and exploring cultural engagements. In this sense, he has followed the policy of "zero problem with the neighbours" (*Ibid*). Subsequently, Davutoglu's foreign policy vision was called as the continuation of Ozal's neo-Ottomanism, because of the

³⁰ D8 was an alliance for economic development with the majority Muslim populated countries. D8 countries consist of Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan and Turkey. The D8 agreement included reducing the tariffs on specific goods between the member states with a supervisory committee. *Source*: Official Web Page of the D8. Available at: <http://www.developing8.org/>. [Accessed 30.10.2009]

³¹ The reason of the intervention to the democracy from military and the bureaucracy was related with the fear of Erbakan government that Turkey was moving to an Islamic Republic because of the domestic policies and the international policies of them. Subsequently, Erbakan government resigned and the decisions of the National Security Association (*Milli Guvenlik kurulu*) about the fight with anti-secular images and the control of the religious places were accepted (Gokmen, 2002).

main political developments had also occurred in past-Ottoman regions. As the constructivists argue that the actors follow the policies, which are appropriate to the culture, social and cultural structures of them (Onuf, 1998:59), Davutoglu argues that the vision on historic-cultural features of Turkey is the main advantages for the involvement of Turkey in the neighbouring countries. For instance, he argues in his book “Strategic Depth” about the Jerusalem “no political problem can be solved without considering the Ottoman archives” (Davutoglu, 2001: 333). In this context, his reference to Ottoman history shows his political perspective based on the neo-Ottomanism on foreign policy preference. In addition, his vision that making boundaries *de facto* by respecting sovereignty of states has seen as the return to Ottoman backyard. In this sense, the economic *interdependence* with the countries especially in the ME has been the main character of this policy formulation (Kirisci, 2009: 29-57). So, the removal of visa barriers, economic and political partnership agreements in the ME such as with Iraq, Syria, Qatar, Libya, Iran and Jordan, clearly shows the result of the success of the policies of Davutoglu.³² In total, TFP after the 1980s has been indeed driven by the neo-Ottomanist foreign policy perspective because the multiple evidences confirm that many of the elements of neo-Ottomanism have been almost mechanically applied to the multi-dimensional relations of Turkey. So, below I will detail the concept of neo-Ottomanism in TFP perspective.

4.2. Neo-Ottomanism as Turkey’s Foreign Policy Strategy

Neo-Ottomanism was first mentioned in the late 1980s by some liberal intellectuals. The main arguments on neo-Ottomanism debates were related with the multi-ethnic and multi-religious composition of Ottoman society and tolerance culture of the OE, which was keeping the people together. As the constructivists argue that the identity emerges from the distinctive ideas of the individuals and groups in the society (Wendt, 1995:81), Saban Iba (2009: 38) mentions that the military coup governance in 1980-1983 allowed the following of a new spiritual character in the social life and the state education system. In this context, the Muslim factor, which was excluded before the 1980s, was included to the social and political structure of Turkey. As constructivists argue that the identity of the state shapes the foreign policy preferences, *Turkish-Islam synthesis*, which was mainly argued by the Intellectuals Club (IC) (*Aydinlar Ocagi*) and suitable to the character of the system after 1980s, in the identity shaped the foreign policy of Turkey to have more active relations with the countries in Turkey’s

³² Since Ahmet Davutoglu was appointed as the minister for foreign affairs in Turkey, highly economic and strategic agreements have been fulfilled with the mainly the countries in the ME (Laciner, 2009b).

region (See Kafesoglu, 1985; Ozdalga, 1999:414-438). In this context, the identity connection of Turkey with the former Ottoman nations created a debate in public and academic arena on the emergence of Turkey as a regional power on former Ottoman territories, which has religious, national and historical connections, in the post-1980s period of Turkey. Subsequently, the ideological and political structure of neo-Ottomanism based on three developments such as, the compromise of Kemalist state with the Ottoman and Islamic legacy, being a regional power with the self confidence and superiority complex based on Ottoman legacy and the increase in Turkey's approach to the Muslim world, not only to the West (*Ibid.*, 39). In this sense, neo-Ottomanists intellectuals criticized the strict secular system with the early nationality building and demanded more interaction with the newly independent states after the Cold War such as in the Central Asia (CA), Caucasus and some Arabic dominated states in the ME. In the early times of the emergence of neo-Ottomanist concept, Turkey's economic and political powers were not effective to be a regional super power. However, the policies on more intervention in the regional issues increased Turkey's political sphere of influence step by step.

According to Davutoglu (2001:85), the common points between Ottomanism in the late OE and neo-Ottomanism after 1980s can be analyzed with five points. First point was the state has been reformulated in accordance with the global developments in both the late OE and Turkey after the 1980s. Secondly, a new political identity and culture formulation was done to eliminate the increasing of nationalism in both periods as well. Third was the cohesion between the western and national values like the establishment of the parliament in the late OE and Ozal's arguments, which linked the US based "*new world order*"³³ concept with the traditional values. Forth, as Ottomans' integration trend to European system after *the Congress of Vienna in 1815*³⁴ and Turkey's EU membership process in post-Cold War period and finally, the cohesion to the policies of the super powers similarly after the Congress of Vienna with Britain and post-Cold War the US – Turkey alliance. Especially in post-Cold War period Turkey started to follow the policies in these directions. As the constructivists argue that the social interaction shapes the international system rather than the material satisfactoriness (Wendt, 1995:73), both the cooperation was achieved between the US, Israel and also the Arabic countries in the ME as the "big brother" to balance the system.

³³ The new world order mainly refers post-Cold War balance of power system of international politics. It mainly argued by the US politicians to create a system based on the US hegemony (Pastusiak, 2004).

³⁴ The main characteristic of the Congress of Vienna was related with to restore the order in Europe after the Napoleon's wars. OE was not invited to the Congress, but mainly followed the consequences (See Nicolson, 1946).

The rise of Erdogan's AKP in the first decade of the 21st century brought again a proactive policy of Turkey based on neo-Ottomanism in Turkey's region. The main critique of the FM Davutoglu on Turkish political elites were related with their blind position to Turkey's Ottoman potential and for him, their vision emerged because of the Western orientalist perspective towards them, which viewed Muslim Turkey as the second class state. As the constructivists argue that foreign policy trends and the national security understandings of the states are internalized in the identity construction process (See Katzenstein, 1996), Turkey's neo-Ottomanist identity could play a major role by increasing the relations in multiple regions without ending the relations with the West (Taspinar, 2008: 15). Different than the many critiques on Islamist politicians in the 1990s, many secular and liberal intellectuals supported the Davutoglu's neo-Ottomanism because of it gave value to relations with the West rather than seeing it as an alternative. Furthermore, the number of factors such as the economic relations, historical connections and cultural ties were mainly discussed in Davutoglu's neo-Ottomanism. In this sense, the traditional multilateralism has turned the *reinforcing* process of the sides in Turkey's relations (Onis and Yilmaz, 2009: 9). Thus, neo-Ottomanism changed the political structure of Turkey to be more soft power rather than the coercive character (Taspinar, 2008: 1).

For the constructivists, the security notion is related with the identity and the interests to defend (McSweeney, 1999: 101). In this context, the change in identity setting from pan-Turkism to neo-Ottomanism caused to change the security preferences in Turkey as well. While Turkey was dealing with the problems based on the Turkish nationality in the nation state structure, a *wider* nationality in neo-Ottomanist perspective directs the TFP on more egalitarian structure, because of the multi-national and multi-religious basis. The recent developments of TFP have shown that the Turkey's approach to Armenia is in cultural bases and supporting Annan Plan referenda in Cyprus shows the policy of solution of the problems on a wide strategic culture, based on neo-Ottomanism.³⁵ Furthermore, neo-Ottomanism on the energy policies of Turkey has increased the effect of Turkey in the region such as the agreements with the Georgia and Turkey's use of Batumi airport as the domestic portal in

³⁵ Turkey's approach to the solution of the problem based on the unification of Cyprus in 2004 Annan plan referenda motivated Turkish Cypriots to vote YES for the application of the plan. However, the plan was rejected by NO vote of the Greek Cypriots (House of Commons Annan Plan Report, 2005). Also, the Turkey-Armenia approach to normalization of the ties was formalized by the agreement, which was signed in October 2009 in Switzerland. In this agreement, Turkey promised to open the boundaries to Armenia, which was closed after the Armenia's occupation of the Azerbaijan territories of Nogorno-Karabag (BBC, 2009). So both approaches show Turkey is dealing with the problems on neo-Ottomanist perspective, which includes wider identity formulation rather than pan-Turkism.

Georgia (Onis and Yilmaz, 2009: 9). As the constructivists mention that the identity and the scope of the interest are related with the shared information among the people, which occurred in a certain time period, neo-Ottomanism includes the same policy of OE by aiming to control the whole energy pathways of Europe like Ottomans' control of the trade ways of Europe in the past. In this context, neo-Ottomanist foreign policy has increased the relations with Russia on energy policy and Turkey became an energy hub both the allowing the west's Nabucco and Russia's south stream pipelines via Turkey's territory (Kardas, 2009b).³⁶ As the constructivists argue that the actors follow the actions based on their value system and the social environment (Onuf, 1998: 59), the neo-Ottomanist foreign policy directives of Turkey to the ME have been based on the values and the social environment. In this perspective, Turkey's strong critique of Israel's Gaza³⁷ operations and the international initiatives of Turkey to stop the violence to the Palestinians have shown that the approach of the Turkey on identity bases, which was driven by neo-Ottomanism. According to Soner Cagaptay (2009), the recent foreign policy of Turkey based on the creation of a Muslim block in the ME, which was empowered by anti-Israel activities; by doing so, Turkey is looking to increase the interests in the ME. As the constructivists mention that the main sources of the interests are identities and ideas, Turkey's identity and interests are merging to increase the relations with the ME, because of the stability of the ME and the increase in *trade* relations positively affecting the stability and economic development of Turkey (Taspinar, 2008: 24). In total, the inclusion of the Islam factor in the identity setting was the main determinant to the emergence of neo-Ottomanism because much evidence confirms that the increase in Turkey's political sphere of influence mainly occurred in the Islamic countries on former Ottoman territories. Below I will detail the effect of neo-Ottomanism increasing of Turkey's political sphere of influence in the ME.

4.3. The Approach of Turkey towards the Middle East

The foreign policies of states are shaped by some national, international and transnational factors. However, the importance of these factors change according to the features of their regions and the countries. In this context, the four factors, such as economic, historical, ethnic and policy preference are important in analyzing the Turkey's approach towards the ME. First of all, economic needs are very important for a country's foreign policy directions. The trade

³⁶ The energy policies of Turkey based on to be the main country to control the Energy ways of the West. For more information about Turkey's Energy Strategy, Available at: http://www.energetska-strategija.hr/doc/stdr/turkeys_energy_strategy_en.pdf. [Accessed 02.11.2009]

³⁷ Gaza strip lives at the coast of the Mediterranean Sea and internationally recognized as the territory of Palestine (For the location of Gaza in the Palestine Map refer to Figure 4 in the Annex).

and investments are connecting the countries more in international politics. While a nationalist and protectionist economic structure was shaping Turkey's foreign policy dependent on the West's aid to finance the development before the 1980s, the liberalisation of the economy and the international trade caused an increased export oriented foreign policy trend after this period. Turkey's export level to the ME reached to fifty percent of the total export capacity for the first time (Ataman, 1999: 258-279). In this context, economy became one of the factors to closer the relations of the countries in the ME and the mutual investments among the countries connected the people more in the region. Recently, Turkey's removal of the visa requirements with the many Middle Eastern countries shows the level of how economic relations have increased to a high point and positively effecting the development of both sides (Laciner, 2009b). As constructivism meets with the rational theories to explain the interests of the actors, because both idealist and materialist factors behind interests, the success in economic relations of Turkey in the ME was mainly linked to Turkey's identity and the interests as well. For instance, the main infrastructure projects and reconstruction of Iraq were succeeded by Turkish companies; also the project to use the national currencies in economic relations with Iran has shown the growing economic influence in the region.³⁸ Also the most important example to the growing economic ties with the effect of identity has been on cinema and film series sector (*Ibid*). As the constructivists argue that the identity of the actors shapes the preferences of them, the Turkish film series and the cinema films, which include religious, common Muslim culture background with a westernized social life, have been the most *popular* in Arabic countries and Turkish film companies increased their share in the ME.³⁹ In this sense, the popularity of Turkey's culture has increased with the effect of these film series and cultural interaction has increased the political relations as well. According to the authorities of the ME Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) Television (TV) channel, that is broadcasting to 22 Arabic countries from the United Arab Emirates (UAE):

“Arab society grew more closely acquainted with Turkey by watching Turkish movies and TV programs. The societies noticed that they did not espouse different values as they got to know each other culturally. After these broadcasts, the number of Arabs visiting Turkey was seen to increase significantly. Arab society began to better understand the structure of Turkish society and to free itself from prejudices. Now tours are regularly organized to Istanbul. The reactions to the Gaza attacks led to an increase in positive

³⁸ Recently, Turkey signed many economic agreements with the Middle Eastern countries. The preference of Turkish companies in the ME was mainly related with the approach of them to the Arab society, which was related with their identity (Sabah, 2009a; Sabah, 2009b)

³⁹ The area of influence of Turkish cinema and the film series are not restricted only with the ME, and they have been popularly followed in the Balkans, CA, and Caucasus as well. For the ME case, Turkish film artists have been the most popular artists in the ME and they had a lot of fans. Some political groups criticized the popularity of them, and they claimed that they are undermining the Arabic culture (Gubash, 2008; Welt, 2009; TRT, 2009c).

opinions about Turkey. On the other hand, the idea that Turkey will destabilize the ME receives support neither from Arab society, nor from Arab regimes. All these developments indicate that Turkey's role in the ME increased (Ayhan, 2009)."

Moreover, historical heritage creates a positive or negative effect on a country's actions. In this sense, states cannot design the future by blinking the historical heritage of them (Davutoglu, 2001: 65-93). As the constructivists mention the cultural values and the connections that shape a country's relations with the others, when Turkey started to protect the Ottoman heritage in the ME and increase the relations on common cultural bases with the countries, it has earned more privileges on the international stage (*Ibid.*, 551-563). The changed circumstances in the *Islamic world* created many opportunities for Turkey. Islam had spread until to the Central Europe in Ottomans period and recently, it became the second major religion even in the West by effecting the western civilization. In this context, the tensions in both civilizations occur because of the lack of the dialogue. As the constructivists argue that the main sources of the interests are ideas and identity, Turkey is the country that plays a major role to solve problems with dialogue and the dialogue both with the West and the Muslim world creates political and economic benefits for Turkey. As the president of the US Barack Obama mentioned in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (TBMM) in his visit to Turkey, "Turkey is living at the centre of the things. This is not where East and West divide; this is where they come together".⁴⁰ In this context, Turkey's involvement both in the western institutions such as in NATO and the EU and Muslim institutions such as in the Organization for Islamic Conference (OIC), D8 and the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) are important for Turkey's active involvement both in the Western and Muslim political arenas on neo-Ottomanist perspective.

In addition, the foreign policy of the countries is closely related with their ethnic dimension. Ethnic connections shape the relations of the states and people, with their threat and common interest perceptions. Moreover, the ethnic groups, who live outside of their country, interest with their country of origin and affect the foreign policy of their country of residence to favour their country of origin. The most important example to this lobbying power is the favour of Israel in the US foreign policy because of the Jewish lobby in the US (See Ari,

⁴⁰ The US president Barack Obama had his first country visit (after the traditional visit to Canada) to Turkey. Many analyses express that this meant that Turkey will be very important in his IR strategy. For more information see the remarks by the President Obama to the Turkish Parliament. Available at: http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-By-President-Obama-To-The-Turkish-Parliament/. [Accessed 10.11.2009]

2001). As the constructivists mention that the actors follow the actions which appropriate to their identity, statute, social environment and cultural structure (March & Olsen, 1998: 943-969), the Turkish society has been motivated to increase the relations with the East because of their “Eastern” cultural origin and has increased the relations such as with Iraq, Syria and Iran, where Turkish, Arabic and Kurdish people are mainly living. So, Turkey had to follow a multi-dimensional foreign policy in the ME by considering different *ethnical connections* of the people. After the Cold War, Turkey removed the isolationist policy toward the East and started to connect with the Balkans, the Caucasus, the ME and CA on multi-dimensional foreign policy perspective. The positive effects of these relations occurred on both sides, while Turkey reduced the dependency to the West on economical perspective, the East developed more with Turkey’s investments and trade relations with them. Subsequently, ethnic connection helped to increase the Turkey’s sphere of influence in the ME, mainly on soft power perspective and the credibility of Turkey in the West increased because of this connection. For instance, the Kurdish groups in Iraq were important to increase the connection between Iraq and Turkey (Peterson, 2002). As constructivism was based on the social reality, which includes identity, culture and speech factors, the social reality of Turkey motivated to connect with all groups in Iraq. In this sense, Turkey’s relation with the Iraqi Kurdish groups was based on cooperation to protect the Kurdish groups from the threat of the central government of Iraq since the Gulf War and after the US occupation in 2003 Turkey developed the relations with the all ethnic and religious groups in Iraq. In this context, neo-Ottomanism, which combines whole former Ottoman nations, as Turkey’s foreign policy perspective caused to deal with the whole groups in the ME on more egalitarian bases.

Finally, as constructivists mention that the political preferences of the countries, which have been shaped by the state identity, specify the foreign policy directions of the countries (Calis, 1996: 135-155). The political objectives of the countries affect the national interests directly, because foreign policy is a tool to reach these political objectives. In this context, the change in foreign policy trend only occurs with the change in political preferences. The political preference of Turkey, when connected with the previous factors, affects the approach of Turkey towards the ME. In this sense, Turkey’s changed state identity in the 1980s allowed Turkey to have *active* relations with the countries in the ME. For instance, the situation of the Kurdish groups in Iraq motivated Turkey to actively engage with them, because of the nationalist movement of Iraq would cause the emergence of an ethnic conflict, which contradicts the egalitarian structure of neo-Ottomanism and the increase in Kurdish

nationalism, would negatively affect the new identity setting of Turkey. Furthermore, Turkey involved in the “water problem” of the ME and proposed a project as “*water for peace*” to end Arab-Israel conflict (Ataman, 1999:182). Recently, the ambiguity of the future of Iraq, instability in Persian Gulf and the Palestine problem causes the Turkey to actively engage with the ME.

This chapter aimed to present empirical evidence of identity traits of TFP after the 1980s with regards to neo-Ottomanist perspective of the foreign policy setting. With this purpose, the readers were introduced to the main driving forces and logics behind the neo-Ottomanist perspective of the TFP. Additionally, the core elements of TFP, which shape the approach of Turkey towards the ME, were pointed out. In sum, the evidence and the arguments presented above strongly indicate that the neo-Ottomanist foreign policy of Turkey increases the political sphere of influence in the mainly ME. The heavy identity dimension of neo-Ottomanist foreign policy towards the ME is clearly evident on the official agreements, in the design of the methodologies and the instruments of the policy and, the conceptualization of it. The identity based design of the policy can, in a large part, be explained by the dominant role of the Turkey in formulating and administering both the agreements and foreign policy applications. The following chapter will attempt to show the detailed foreign policy applications in two different cases in the ME.

5. TURKEY IN THE MIDDLE EAST AS A REGIONAL POWER

As it has been argued in the previous chapter, when looking at the developments of TFPME, it becomes evident that neo-Ottomanism has been the determinant of foreign policy norms after the 1980s. It is argued that TFPME has proven, in its original context, to be a strong tool for the sustainable promotion of stability, economic development, and democratization in the countries of the ME. The identity orientation of the TFPME displays the optimistic belief of the Turkish politicians that the projections of the agreements, cultural interaction among the people and the economic interdependency of countries have been successful in increasing Turkey’s political sphere of influence in the ME. In this chapter, I intend to explore the effectiveness of Turkey’s conditionality-based foreign policy tactics in the context of the TFPME. In order to be able to explore the success of the TFP in the ME, the key question which this chapter is developed is: “under which conditions and in which instance neo-

Ottomanist foreign policy of Turkey has been successful in increasing Turkey's political sphere of influence in the ME? To answer this and other related questions this chapter will employ socio-political developments both in Turkey and the selected countries in the ME, with the effect of the developments in the international system. Two sections in this chapter are devoted to two different case studies. As such, the first section (5.1) examines Turkey's political involvement in Palestine problem in the context of its identity. The second section (5.2) analyses the position of Iraq in Turkey's neo-Ottomanist foreign policy approach to show the effect of the broader identity perspective on the increase in political sphere of influence. I argue that neo-Ottomanist foreign policy of Turkey is effective in increasing Turkey's political sphere of influence in the ME, if the examination of the policy is made through the prism of constructivism.

5.1 Turkey in Palestine Problem: the Change in Regional Dynamics

The political status of the Palestine occurred with the increase in effectiveness of the UK, France and the US after the OE in the ME. This evolution can be divided to four terms such as the emergence of the Jewish residence in 1892 in the Ottoman Palestine, the replacement of Ottoman governance with the UK in 1918, the emergence of Israel in 1948 and the victory of Israel in 1967 to expand the majority of the territory of the Palestinians (Lewis, 1999: 180). These developments increased the anti-Western movements in the ME and merged with the Islamist ideology later. The main reason of the unsolvable situation of the problem in Palestine is related with the emergence of the radical organizations, which were funded by the countries in the ME. In 1964, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)⁴¹ was established and used the guerrilla war tactics against Israel after 1967. However, other parties, who involved Israel-Palestine conflict themselves, complicated the emergence of the peace. In this context, the involvement of Palestinian political party Fatah, which was supported by the Saudi Arabia, Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Gaza, which were supported by the Iran and Syria, created a conflict not only against to Israel, but also amongst themselves.⁴² The

⁴¹ PLO was established with the great support of the Egyptian leader Gamel Abdel Nasser because of the competition for the leadership among the Arab leaders. In this context, Palestine national fund was established to finance PLO and Arab states demanded to get Palestinians to their military schools for training to the war against to Israel. So, PLO offices were established in the Arab states and Palestine Liberation Army was formed to support the war against Israel. PLO combined whole Palestinian organizations and was recognized as the only legitimate authority to represent the Palestinians by Arab League (AL), OIC and the United Nations (UN) in 1974 (Al Madfai, 1993: 21; Geldenhuys, 1990: 155).

⁴² Fatah is one of the political parties in Palestine Parliament, which was founded in 1954, and the main difference of other Palestinian organizations that it is not regarded as the terrorist organization by any other governments (Aburish, 1998: 41-90). Moreover, Hezbollah is a Shia political party, which has emerged in 1982, and a military organization operating in Lebanon and famous with the resistance movements, especially against

main aim of Syria and Iran has not related with the rights of only the innocent people in Palestine. Mainly, the short term wars occurred between Israel and Syria because of Israel's occupation of Golan Heights⁴³ in Syria since 1967 and Lebanon because of the Hezbollah's attacks against to Israel related with the Palestine problem. On the one hand, Syria has supported Hezbollah to protect the control over Lebanon and Iran has used Hamas to increase the bargaining power with the US. On the other hand, Israel's operations against to Hezbollah in 2006 and recently Hamas are not mainly to defend the rights of their citizens, but also related with removing Syria and Iran from the process.

5.1.1. Turkey's Involvement in Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process

The Palestine problem for Turkey has been mainly linked to the demands of Turkish society. In this sense, the Palestine problem differentiates from the other political issues in the ME and the holy places for Muslims in the Jerusalem and their situation attracts many Turkish people to deal with it. According to a Turkish opinion poll conducted in 2000, 41 percent of the people in Turkey were thinking that the governance of *Jerusalem* should be given to Palestine, 29 percent of them thought that autonomous governance should be created and only 2 percent of Turkish people were thinking that the Jerusalem should stay in Israel (Aras and Bicakci, 2006: 367-381). As the constructivists argue that the meaning of identity and the scope of interests are related with the shared information among the people, the majority of the people have been motivating the Turkish governments to deal with the Palestine problem with their great support, in the context of neo-Ottomanism on their identity.

The sensitivity of Turkish people and the governments on the Palestine problem is not new. When the occupation of Israel extended in the Palestine in 1967, fire attacks occurred to the Al-Aqsa Mosque in 1969 and Israel declared the whole of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, Turkish governments did some critiques against to Israel because of the demands of the public opinion. However, Turkey's strong alliance with the US in the Cold War and the post-Cold War period mainly affected the foreign policy of Turkey to be neutral or pro-Israeli in Palestine problem on realist perspective, which was contradicting the social demands and

to Israel (Shlaim, 2001: 384-423). Furthermore, Hamas is a political group and a paramilitary force in Palestine, which was founded in 1987. Hamas is a large majority leading party in Palestine parliament now, but the US, Israel, Canada and the EU classify Hamas as the terrorist organization (Sela, 2002: 335-342).

⁴³ Golan Heights are in the south western region of Syria and neighbours with Israel, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria. After 6 day wars between Israel and Syria in 1967, because of the Palestine problem, Israel occupied the Golan Heights and still the occupation of Israel continues (For the location of Golan Height in the Map refers to Figure 5 in the Annex) (Pedatzur, 2009).

historical-cultural bonds of Turkey. A recent poll about the perceptions of the people in foreign policy showed that the Palestinians are in the forth line of the friendship in IR for Turkish people and their level is so much above of the Americans and Israelis (Kirisci, 2002:14). Also, according to the poll in 2000, 71 percent of Turkish people interested with the Palestine problem and 60 percent of people demanded more active role for Turkish politicians in Palestine because of the cultural, religious and the historical *connection* of the people with the Palestine, which are the norms of neo-Ottomanist foreign policy of Turkey as well. As the constructivists argued that the basic structures of international politics are social, rather than material and these structures shape the identity and the interests of the states (Wendt, 1995:71), when the public opinion and official speeches in Palestine were analyzed, it is seen that the sensitivity of Turkish people to the Palestine problem is not one sided and Palestinian people and the politicians are also mainly dealing with the Turkey's involvement in Palestine problem (Candar, 2001).

The Israel-Palestine peace process quickened mainly with the Oslo Accords in 1993 and various stages passed since the signing of the agreements.⁴⁴ There were many negotiations and progress for the solution of the problem; however, Turkey's involvements with the Palestinian problem directly speed up in the early years of the 21st century. The increase in Turkey's role in the ME after the 1980s, because of the new identity setting based on neo-Ottomanism, created a confidence for the political issues in Turkey. In this sense, the statements of the politicians started to change. For instance, Israel's Jenin operation was mentioned as "*genocide*" by former PM Bulent Ecevit in 2002 (Dymond, 2002) and also Turkish PM Erdogan criticized the death of Ahmad Yassin in 2004 and declared the behaviours of Israel in refuge camps as "state terror"(Peuch, 2004).⁴⁵ As constructivists mention that the identity occurs from the distinctive ideas of the people as the social group in community (Wendt, 1995:81) and shapes the foreign policy of the states, another poll, which was done in 2003, showed that 66 percent of Turkish people support the Palestinians' struggle against to Israel and another poll in 2004 showed that 82 percent of Turkish people supported the Turkish PM Erdogan because of his speech as "state terror" for Israel's operations in

⁴⁴ Oslo accords provided the creation of a national authority of Palestine in the Palestinian territory within five years and Israel would withdraw from the West Bank and Gaza (For the location of Gaza and West Bank in the Map refers to Figure 4 in the Annex). However, Oslo accords lost the credibility with the Second Intifada, when the public boycott started in Palestine in 2000 (Dershowitz, 2003: 3).

⁴⁵ The Jenin Operation of Israel happened in 3-11 April 2002, with the intervention of Israeli soldiers to Jenin refuge Camp and the main reason of the intervention for Israel was the attack from these regions to Israeli territories (For the location of Jenin in the Palestine Map refer to Figure 6 in the Annex) (Rees, 2002). Also Ahmad Yassin was a founder of Hamas and was killed by an Israeli pilot as assassination in 2004 (Prusher and Lynfield, 2004).

refuge camps (Aras and Bicakci, 2006: 367-381). In this context, as neo-Ottomanism proposed to have more active role in the former Ottoman regions, Turkish society and the state policy have merged to follow neo-Ottomanism in this direction.

Turkey's serious involvement of Palestine problem was linked with socio-economic dimension by establishing Palestine Economic and Social Collaboration Office in Turkey and also establishment of a branch in Palestine as well. In addition, in the time of Israel's withdrawal from Gaza in 2005, Turkey offered to be a mediator and help the Palestinians on their economical needs. The Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB) created a project by the name of the "Industry for Peace" at the border of Israel and Gaza Strip.⁴⁶ This project was important to show the interaction among the Turkish politicians and the business leaders to follow same policy directions, because the main framework of neo-Ottomanism is related with being a *soft power* for the solution of the problems and the projects based on economy explains the way to achieve the peace in Palestine. This initiative was supported not only in Turkey, but also in the international arena to promote the peace in the region as well. However, this project was destroyed during the Gaza conflict in 2006, and again the TOBB leader Rifat Hisarciklioglu announced that they were ready to recover loses in the project to create the stability in the region. According to constructivists, actors follow the actions based on their statute, identity, social environment and cultural structure (March & Olsen, 1998: 943-969), as it is seen, the support of Turkish people increasing when the new developments occur, and they support not only governments, but also their own associations to take action in Palestine as well. For instance, one of the Turkish charity organizations International Humanitarian Relief (IHH) has involved to the main medical treatment of Palestinians both in Palestine and in Turkey with the support of Turkish people.⁴⁷ In addition, Turkish people organized a protest against to Israel in 2002 and all religious groups such as Muslim, Christian and Jewish people participated to this organization, which was showing that the tolerance culture to differences in the OE and the basic link with new political perspective of Turkey as neo-Ottomanism.

⁴⁶ The main project was including creating one of the main industrial centres in the region for the development. For more information about the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey - Industry for Peace Initiative (TOBB-BIS). Concept and Implementation. Available at: <http://www.tepav.org.tr/eng/admin/dosyabul/upload/IndustryforPeaceInitiative.pdf>. [Accessed 15.11.2009]

⁴⁷ IHH was mainly supported by Turkish people financially and also voluntarily activities. For more information; Official Web Page of IHH Organization. Available at: <http://www.ihh.com/en/gesundheit-palastina/>. [Accessed 20.11.2009]

Furthermore, the victory of Hamas in the elections of Palestine in 2006 was interpreted differently by Turkey. Hamas, as a radical organization, was seriously against the existence of Israel in the region and most of the strong allies of Israel and the Western camp did not recognize the victory of Hamas. However, Turkish PM Erdogan mentioned that the elections in Palestine happened in a free environment and everybody should respect to the decisions of the Palestinian people (Radikal, 2006). In addition, Turkish politicians argued that Turkey's approach to Hamas was in a good way to solve the Palestine problem, because Hamas would search for the allies in the ME to legitimate the victory of them. So, possible allies would be Hezbollah in Iran-Syria axis, and it would increase the radicalization of Hamas, which would threaten the ME Peace Process (MEPP) (Congar, 2006), because the main aim of neo-Ottomanism related with the ME has been to increase the stability and the increase in radicalization in some parts would undermine the success of the policy. In this context, Iran invited Hamas after the election victory, which was supporting the Turkey's perception, and then the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) in Turkey invited the leader of Hamas Khaled Meshal to Turkey as well. Subsequently, mainly *criticisms* came from the US and the Israel to Turkey about the visit of Hamas. As the constructivists argue that the main sources of the interests are identities and the ideas of the actors, because of the foreign policy trend and national security ideas and strategies are internalized in the identity construction process (See Katzenstein, 1996), Abdullah Gul, who was the FM of Turkey, responded that Turkey cannot stay neutral for the developments in Palestine (Civaoglu, 2006). In addition, Gul talked to Israel's FM Tzipi Livni as the Turkish diplomacy team advised to Hamas to follow the democratic way in their action and create a diplomatic relation with Israel for the solution of the problem (Akyol, 2006). As neo-Ottomanism requires multi-dimensional connections, Turkey also followed diplomatic activities in the EU to send economic aids to Palestine under Hamas rule. In addition, Turkey's directly involvement of the problem in the context of its identity showed its effect with the Annapolis Conference in 2007.⁴⁸ Before the Annapolis Conference, the president of Israel Shimon Peres and Palestinian leader Mahmud Abbas came together in Turkey and because of the success of this policy Turkey has been invited to the Annapolis conference. In this sense, the policy change of Turkey after 1980s showed its effect to take a part on the Palestine problem in 2007 and the foreign policy shift mainly represented the implementation of the multi-dimensional neo-Ottomanist foreign policy to implement own alternative foreign policies mainly in the ME.

⁴⁸ Annapolis Conference was held in the US and firstly, two state solutions were mentioned in the Israel and Palestine negotiations. The conference ended with the formal statements of the parties (Ravid, 1997).

5.1.2 Turkey and Palestine Problem after Israel's Gaza Operation

“President Peres, you are older than I am and you have a very strong voice. I feel that you perhaps feel a bit guilty and this is why you have been so strong in your words, so loud. Well, you killed people. I remember the children, who died on the beaches. I remember two former PM in your country who said that they felt very happy when they were able to enter Palestine on tanks. I find it very sad that people applaud what you have said because many people have been killed and I think it is very wrong and not humanitarian to applaud any actions that have that kind of results.”⁴⁹

When Israel started to attack on Gaza in 27th of December 2008, the whole attention of the world turned to Palestine again. In Israel's attacks more than one thousand Palestinians died and also around four thousands people were injured. Israel argued that the operation was because of the terrorist attacks of Hamas. However many analysts mentioned that mainly civilians died in Israel's operation, and it was a crime against to humanity. Turkey has strongly elicited the Israel's attack from starting to end and organized a ME tour to create a solution to this problem shortly after the operation has started. As constructivists argue that the main sources of interests are ideas and identities, firstly, the Turkish PM Erdogan stopped the communication with the PM of Israel Ehud Olmert and declared the operation of the Israel as “the crime against to humanity”. The main anger of Erdogan was because of Olmert had visited the Turkey only five days before from the Gaza operation of Israel, and he promised to Erdogan that any operation will not happen in Gaza (Yildiz, 2008). Subsequently, Gaza operation of Israel created the difficulty for Turkey's credibility in the ME and Turkey's position against to Israel started to be stricter, because of Turkey was negotiating with Israel and Syria for being mediator to solve the border disputes between them and the Israel's behaviour undermined the Turkey's position to be the *mediator* between Israel and Syria (Kalin, 2009). In addition, the sensitivity of Turkish people was obvious on Palestine problem and Erdogan's credibility on Turkish people could be affected as well.

After the Gaza operation of Israel some arguments raised by some columnists that Turkey should end diplomatic, military and economic relations with Israel. However, this kind of reactions would both end Turkey's position as mediator in the region and also would contradict with the multidimensional perspective of foreign policy goals of Turkey after the 1980s based on neo-Ottomanism. In addition, Turkey had some military agreements with

⁴⁹ For Turkish PM Erdogan's speech against to the president of Israel Simon Peres in World Economy Forum in Davos-Switzerland; You Tube (A Video Sharing Web Page) (2009). Tayyip Erdogan Davos-Subtitles from the Guardian. Available at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oY83lsO5VrM&feature=related>. [Accessed 26.11.2009]

Israel to buy some military equipments with the joint projects and these projects were also agreed in Olmert's visit to Ankara, which was five days before of Gaza operation (Writers, 2009). The time of these military agreements was also bad for Turkey, because Turkey would be seen as the supporter of Israel in these actions. However, Turkey's aim was not exclusion of one of the parts, but a search for the solution of the problem in the ME. As constructivists argue that the actors follow the actions, which are appropriate to their identity, statute, social environment and cultural structure (March & Olsen, 1998: 943-969), Turkey tried to create a consensus to solve the Palestine problem by doing first ME tour shortly after the Gaza operation of Israel. However, because of the lack of consensus among many Arabic countries, a plan could not be created. In this sense, Turkey's initiative to have a visit to Middle Eastern countries was showing that Turkey's political involvement within the ME occurred because of the affect of neo-Ottomanist foreign policy of Turkey, which was based on the soft power perspective of Turkey to solve the problem. One of the most important factors of these visit was Turkish PM's former chief advisor Ahmet Davutoglu's meeting with the leader of Hamas Khaled Meshal in Syria and he *advised* to Meshal that to create the unity among the Palestinian groups and follow the actions on more pragmatic way. According to Palestine observer of the UN Prof. Dr. Richard Falk, Turkish Government's attempt to communicate with Hamas was important in 2006 for the welfare of the people in Gaza and the security of Israel, if the parties had followed the peaceful way (Falk, 2009). In this sense, the elimination of the radicalization of the groups would be ideal to achieve the peace in Palestine as neo-Ottomanist perspective proposed. Moreover, Turkey's diplomatic attacks to solve the problems were considered in the international arena. For instance, after its summit in Cairo, the AL declared to support of Turkey's diplomatic initiatives to finish the problem. Also, French president Sarkozy's demand for the help to create a solution in Palestine problem after Davutoglu's meeting with Meshal confirmed it.⁵⁰ In addition, the name of Turkey was mentioned to create an international peace force to serve in Gaza, which shows the changed image of Turkey in the ME as a country trusted to protect the peoples in the region. In this context, Turkey's initiatives after Gaza tragedy were mentioned with many compliments in Arabic press and Erdogan's foreign policy initiatives to increase the relations with the countries in the region were mentioned (Moubayed, 2009). As constructivists argue that analyzes of international politics should start with the culture and then tend to power and interests (Wendt, 1999: 193), the active diplomacy in Gaza problem was related with Turkey's neo-Ottomanist foreign policy vision and self confidence, which was acquired

⁵⁰ Erdogan and Sarkozy discussed about the ceasefire conditions in Gaza Strip (CNN Turk, 2009a).

because of the increasing relations with the countries in Turkey's region. So, Turkish government has followed a proactive policy to create stability and the peace in the countries of Turkey's region as Davutoglu (2008: 77-97) has proposed.

After the Davos discussion⁵¹ of Turkish PM Erdogan with Israel's President Peres about the Gaza operation of Israel, the relations between Turkey and Israel have been in its worst condition. However, Erdogan's popularity strongly increased both in Turkey and the Middle Eastern countries and mainly the comment about Erdogan was "Hero of Davos" (For the photos about Erdogan's popularity after Davos in both Palestinian and Turkish people refer to Figure 7 in the Annex) (Macleod, 2009). As constructivists argue that the foreign policy trend, national security understanding and strategies are internalized in the identity construction process of the states (See Katzenstein, 1996), Erdogan's strong *critiques* in Davos against to Israel's Gaza operation, which was based on the foreign policy trend, national security understanding and strategies in neo-Ottomanist identity of Turkey, caused to increase the Turkey's persuasiveness and trust in the ME because of neo-Ottomanist identity of Turkey included to be effective over the peoples in the ME as the major actor. While the other Arab politicians were arguing that Hamas was the main responsible organization for Israel's Gaza operation, Turkey accused Israel for the Gaza tragedy and argued that Israel should be expelled from the UN by considering Israel did a state terror in Gaza (Rainsfort, 2009). As constructivists argue that the culture and ideas are important in shaping of IR discourse and reality, the support of all institutions and the political groups in Turkey to Erdogan's arguments attracted the Arabs in the ME to increase the popularity of Turkey as well. According to a survey conducted in the Gaza by the Jerusalem office of Friedrich Ebert Stiftung after Gaza attacks, 89, 6 percent of people were content with Turkey's policies about Palestine problem, which was so important to show that Turkey has more support comparing with the other institutions and the countries (Ayhan, 2009). In addition, the increase in support to Turkey and Erdogan in the Arab *public opinion* was directly related with the major Arab TV channels' arguments and their TV programs, where the Turkish people and the all political groups were shown in Turkey while they were protesting the Israel by referencing to the Ottoman past of the region, which neo-Ottomanism refers to be a political power in the ME. In this context, many Arab TVs showed the protests in different regions of Turkey as "live" and the interests with the protests in Turkey was showing both the interests of people

⁵¹ During a panel discussion about the Israel's operation on Gaza in the World Economy Forum in January 29, 2009 in Davos-Switzerland, Erdogan has panned the Israel about last Gaza Operation and accused the Israel from harshly killing of the children and civilian people in Gaza (Bennhold, 2009).

and the press in the ME. In this context, Abdulaziz I. Al Mahmoudi, who is executive director in Qatar's Al-Arab News Paper, after his interviews with the Arab leaders and the societies in many Middle Eastern countries, expressed that:

“Arab society only consents to the intervention of Turkey in Iraq and Palestine. It will not react to this and will support such an intervention. The 2003 (Iraq) War brought really new conditions to the region. No one trusts Egypt in the ME. Both politically and economically, Egypt is not a power capable of solving the problems of the countries in the region. Furthermore, the Egyptian regime is accepted neither by its own people, nor by other Arab people. On the other hand, Erdogan is a prominent leader, who by now has won the trust of Arab peoples. His attitude and policy concerning the Gaza question promoted him as a folk hero for Arabs (*Ibid*).”

The next crisis between Turkey and Israel occurred in the organization of “Anatolian Eagle” joint military training, which is organized regularly every year in Turkey, mainly for NATO members.⁵² So, before training has started, Turkey announced that the international dimension of the military training was cancelled and Israel could not participate in the training. The Israeli press argued that the cancellation of the joint military training occurred because of Israel's operation in Gaza (Katz, 2009). Furthermore, the US state department spokesman declared that Turkey's behaviour to exclude a part from the military exercise at the last minute was inappropriate. On the contrary, Turkish MFA emphasized no political meaning should be given to this (CNN, 2009a). However, the following speeches from Turkish government officials have confirmed the arguments of Israeli press. In an exclusive interview with the CNN International about the exclusion of Israel from the military training, the Turkish FM Ahmet Davutoglu expressed:

“We hope that the situation in Gaza will be improved, that the situation will be back to the diplomatic track. And that will create a new atmosphere in Turkish-Israeli relations as well. But in the existing situation, of course, we are criticizing this approach, the Israeli approach (CNN, 2009b).”

Similarly, in his October 2009 statement to the press, the Turkish PM, Erdogan expressed:

“We have taken the conscience of our people into consideration when we decided... I had to be the voice that expresses the existence of my people and my people were rejecting Israel's participation (Ynet, 2009).”

⁵² The Anatolian Eagle joint military training has happened since 2001 in Konya-Turkey. The purpose of the training was mainly for training of the air forces of participant countries. Besides Turkey and NATO, 11 countries participated to this training till 2009. For more information; official web page of Anatolian Eagle Tactical Training Centre. Available at: <http://www.anadolukartali.tsk.tr/default.asp?loc=en&p=anasayfa>. [Accessed 02.12.2009]

The analysis of Turkey's exclusion of Israel from the military training shows that it has directly related with the multidimensional neo-Ottomanist foreign policy of Turkey. Because as constructivists argue that the identity of the states shapes the foreign policy preferences of them, Erdogan expressed the exclusion of Israel was based on the demands of the Turkish people, who showed the great anger against to Israel after Gaza operation, and the ideas of the people were also in the same direction with neo-Ottomanist foreign policy perspective, which demand not military, but diplomatic solutions related with a culture of tolerance, based on the support of the majority of the people in Erdogan's policies.⁵³ The exclusion of Israel from the military training exercises was closely before the Erdogan's Iran visit as well. In this context, Turkey's behaviour against to Israel has sent a message that it desired having increased relations with Iran (Baghdadi, 2009). Because Iran is the main threat for Israel and the policy of Israel was adopted to eliminate Iran to produce the nuclear weapons. Furthermore, in Palestine debate Israel threatened Iran by struggling with the groups, which were supported by Iran. In addition, the main debate in the Israel public opinion was that Iran has been the threat for the existence of Israel and Israel could bomb Iran in 2008. In this context, Turkey's approach to Iran created worrisome in the ME (*Ibid*). However, while the approach of Turkey towards Iran was showing that it demands amicable relations with Iran, it was also important to be the mediator to create amicable relations between the US and Iran, which became tense because of the Iran's nuclear ambitions. As constructivists argue that the interests are subjective and associated with the changed identities over time, Turkey's strong critiques of Israel, by knowing the need of Israel to Turkey for staying in the ME, helped to increase the relations with Iran, who is the strong *enemy* of Israel in the ME, and as neo-Ottomanism proposed Turkey played a balanced multidimensional foreign policy to be the main organizer of the relations in the ME.

Also, the next crisis between Israel and Turkey occurred because of a soap opera named as Separation (*Ayrilik*), which was shown in an official state TV channel in the Turkish Radio-Television Corporation (TRT). In 13th October 2009 part of the soap opera, the Israeli soldiers were portrayed as the child-killers (Haaretz, 2009). If the production of these kinds of movies and soap operas are analyzed, they express that they have many followers and express the ideas of the people in the country. In this case, it showed that government of

⁵³ Here, the support meant both with the democratically voting for the AKP and joining to the demonstration for the support of Palestine, where all groups in Turkey were meeting. In addition, as a matter of fact AKP is getting the first or second the most votes in all places of Turkey. For instance, in south eastern Anatolia, where the majority of people are Kurdish, only AKP and Independent Kurdish candidates were competing in 2007 elections (BBC Turkish, 2007).

Turkey allowed to the production of a soap opera against to Israel in the official state TV channel by considering the demands of the people, which shows the influence of people to the actions of government as well. As constructivists argue that identity consists as the social group from the distinctive ideas of individuals in the community (Wendt, 1995: 81), mainly the Turkish soap opera *Separation* showed the vision of Turkish people about Palestine problem and have expressed that anti-war position of the people, which neo-Ottomanism in Turkey's foreign policy perspective proposes. In this context, many Israeli presses mentioned that the soap opera included high level provocation and aimed to create an anti-Israeli and anti-Semitic sentiment in Turkey (Mutlu, 2009). Moreover, the MFA in Israel invited Turkey's Charge d'affaires in Jerusalem to express the disturbance of Israel from the soap Opera and argued that this is a great provocation and produced with the support of Turkish Government (*Ibid*). In addition, the sensitivity to Palestine problem was shown in a different case in the same week. After the opening ceremony of Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM) in Istanbul in October 23, 2009, Erdogan and an Israeli Parliamentarian discussed in a break about the recent situation and relations between Israel and Turkey. When Israeli parliamentarian expressed that the Palestinians are killing the children as well, Erdogan with his vision based on neo-Ottomanism expressed:

“They are killing as well, how many people you and they are killing? They are defenceless people. You are using phosphorous bombs. So, what is the power of the Palestine to defend themselves and what about the power of Israel for defence of the people? Today, Israel has a different place in the world politics. Israel is a country, who has the nuclear weapons. Shall I hide this information? I have to say what the truth is (Sabah, 2009c).”

In addition, the last “soap opera crisis” occurred between Israel and Turkey because of a scene in a TV program called the Valley of the Wolves (*Kurtlar Vadisi*) in a private TV channel of Turkey, where the Mossad agents of Israel were shown as the kidnapper and the main actor attacked to the Israeli embassy and killed the security man in front of the Israeli flag. The next day on January 12, 2010, the Israeli vice FM Danny Ayalon invited the Turkish Ambassador in Jerusalem to mention that the scenes in the soap opera disturbed Israel and tried to *humiliate* the ambassador with his actions and speeches in public (Federman, 2010). In this context, as the constructivists mention that the culture and ideas are important in shaping IR discourse and reality, the President of Turkey Abdullah Gul warned Israel in that action by mentioning that the Turkish Ambassador in Israel represents the Turkish people and threatened to withdraw the ambassador in the same day if the government of Israel did not apologize to the ambassador. In a few hours the government of Israel sent the letter of excuse

to the Turkish Ambassador to end the crisis (Barker, 2010). Later on, many politicians and the journalists in Israel accused the Ayalon because of being responsible person from this crisis and asked for his resignation by mentioning that Turkish people will not forget this action, which will increase the support of the people to the anti-Israeli actions of Turkish Government. In this context, the Arabic media announced the end of the crisis as “Israel only understands in Turkish” by mentioning while Israel was not following even the resolutions of the UN, how immediately it pulled back on the same day after Turkey’s threat (Nahmias, 2010). Also, in a few days later when the Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak visited the Turkey in 17-18th January 2010, as previously planned, neither Turkish PM Erdogan nor President Gul have not had meeting with him apologetically (Williams, 2010). Mainly, Barak had meetings with Turkish FM and Defence Minister to empower the ties with Turkey by mentioning that the behaviours of vice FM of Israel Ayalon against the Turkish Ambassador were wrong. In this sense, the actions of the Israeli Government shows that they cannot risk or deceive Turkey, which means that the need of Israel to Turkey in the ME politics is at a very high level and the Turkish Government is aware of this.

Until the recent tensions between Israel and Turkey, Turkey’s expressions about Israel and Palestine were seen as for the internal politics of Turkey by international society. However, recent developments mainly affected the relations both between the states and the people in Turkey and Israel. In this sense, Turkey’s actions related with the conscience and sensitivity of Turkish people based on neo-Ottomanist identity was seen as the support of the anti-Israel activities of Turkey and support for the enemies of it. As constructivists argue that the actors follow the policies according to their identity, Erdogan’s expressions, which were that “if Israel violates the air space of Turkey in order to conduct to the operations against to Iran, Turkey’s reaction will resemble to an earthquake (The Jerusalem Post, 2009),” after Iran visit was confirming the doubts of Israel. When the expressions of Erdogan against Israel are analysed, as previously mentioned, the strong public support is motivating Erdogan to increase the attacks against Israel. While his critiques have increased his popularity, as the main objective of neo-Ottomanism in foreign policy setting, Turkey is becoming the main organizer of the regional politics in the ME, where OE was the main power in the history. In this context, Turkey’s policies against to Israel are both motivating the Arabic countries to follow the similar policies in Turkey’s vision and creating a pressure to the Israel for not following the military policies against to both Palestine and the neighbouring countries in the ME and follow the policies in peaceful way.

In sum, the evidence and arguments presented above strongly indicate that neo-Ottomanist foreign policy of Turkey on Palestine problem indeed represents an effort to emulate the success of former OE in the ME politics. The heavy identity perspective of Turkey's neo-Ottomanist approach to Palestine problem is clearly evident on the recent developments, in the design of the methodologies and the instruments of the policy and, in its strategic conceptualization. The identity design of the policy can, in a large part, be explained by the dominant role of Turkey in formulating and administering the foreign policy actions related with Palestine problem. In this context, neo-Ottomanism as Turkey's foreign policy approach on Palestine problem has been one of the main cases that caused to increase Turkey's political sphere of influence both in Palestine politics and other Middle Eastern countries because of the multidimensional connections of Palestine problem.

5.2 The Position of Iraq in Turkey's Neo-Ottomanist Foreign Policy Approach

The British occupation of Ottoman commonwealths such as Mosul, Baghdad and Basra caused to emerge today's Iraq in international politics (For the locations of Mosul, Baghdad and Basra in the map of Iraq refer to Figure 8 in the Annex) (Batatu, 1993: 503 – 525). First, Britain wanted to rule Iraq directly. However, because of the fear from public reactions, Faisal, who was the son of the sheriff of Mecca, was appointed as the king of Iraq in 1921 (See Edmonds, 1957). Subsequently, Iraq became independent in 1923 and member to the League of Nations (LN) in 1932. In 1958, the kingdom collapsed under a revolution of Abd al-Karim Qasim and Abd as-Salam Arif and the Republic of Iraq was declared by Qasim's presidency. However, Qasim was defeated with a revolution by Arab Socialist BP and Arif became the president in 1963. In addition, Qasim, Arif and a group of military officers brought down the Baath regime with a counter revolution in November 1963 and their regime continued until the next revolution by BP in 1968. While General Hassan Al Bakr was President in Baath regime, Saddam Hussein was appointed as the vice President of Iraq (See Matar, 1981). When Al Bakr resigned from the presidency in 1979, Saddam Hussein became the President of Iraq and stayed in the presidency as a major dictator for 24 years. Thus, mainly the policy of Iraq was occurred as revolutions and counter revolutions until the end of 1970s. There were a lot of developments in Saddam Hussein period; however, Iran-Iraq war in the 1980-1988 is the most well known, which occurred because of Saddam Hussein's idea to expand the territories

of Iraq.⁵⁴ The Iran – Iraq war damaged the economy, infrastructure and social structure of Iraq. In this sense, the decrease in global petroleum prices and the debt to other Arabic countries negatively affected the Saddam regime in Iraq (Anderson and Stansfield, 2004: 84-87). In this context, Saddam Hussein tried to solve these problems by occupying the territories of Kuwait in 1990, where they were claiming that historically belonged to Iraq.⁵⁵

5.2.1. Turkey and the Gulf War in the Context of Foreign Policy Transformation

“Turkey cannot be prisoner of the NP borders (Turgut Ozal, 1992, cited in Laciner, 2009a).”

In August 1990 Iraq annexed Kuwait by arguing that Kuwait was doing illegal petroleum researches in problematic regions and it was producing more than states' quota of petroleum products. Also, at this time the Cold War ended and the US became the only global superpower. In this changed political environment, the UN Security Council (UNSC) created the resolution 660, which mentioned that Iraq had to withdraw from the territories of Kuwait before 15 January 1991, and also following resolution 661 has been created to apply economic and diplomatic embargoes over Iraq.⁵⁶ Because of irreconcilable behaviour of Saddam Hussein, some of the UN members started to stock their military equipment in Saudi Arabia to coerce Saddam Hussein (For the location of Saudi Arabia in the map refer to Figure 8 in the Annex) (Telhami, 1994:153-158). However, as the constructivists argue that the anarchy, sovereignty, political interests and identities socially constructed and vary over time, Turkey's vision was not exactly similar with the US (unlike the Cold War period) because of the problematic situation of Iraq could affect directly the *internal* politics of Turkey and Turkey's internal dynamics had been changed on neo-Ottomanist perspective after the 1980s. Turkey supported both resolutions and stopped the trading activities with Iraq immediately. However, Turkey initially refused the request of the US President George H. W. Bush to stop

⁵⁴ The Iran-Iraq War emerged because of Saddam Hussein wanted to use the advantage of the chaotic environment to expand the territories towards to Iran after Islamic revolution in Iran and also afraid of to emerge the Shia insurgency in Iraq that may be influenced from Iranian revolution. Because of the demographic structure include 70 % Arabs, 25 % Kurds and 5 % Turkmen and Assyrians; while 65 % of the people are Shia Muslim, 35 % of them are Sunni Muslim in total 97 % of Muslim people in Iraq's 31 Million populations. While Turkmen are a Turkic ethnic group in Northern Iraq, Assyrians as well a Christian ethnic group located in Iraq, Syria, Iran and Turkey (Ari, 2004: 372-401).

⁵⁵ Since the establishment of Iraq, the territory of Kuwait has been problematic. The main argument of Iraq was Kuwait was governed under Basra province in OE time and should be linked to Iraq again (For the location of Kuwait in the map refer to Figure 8 in the Annex) (Ghunaim and Markaz, 1999: 52, 60-61)

⁵⁶ For more information; the UNSC Resolution 661 (1990). Available at: <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/575/11/IMG/NR057511.pdf?OpenElement>. [Accessed 18.12.2009]

petroleum pipelines and mentioned that Turkey would support the initiatives to end of Iraq's occupation of Kuwait (Gozen, 2000: 351), because of the balanced policies, which neo-Ottomanism has proposed. Also, Turkey later extended the embargoes because of the radicalization from Iraq when it became a threat to the regional security, and also stopped the exports on the petroleum pipelines as well. Subsequently, Turkey followed a successful diplomacy to continue of the embargoes over Iraq and allowed the NATO soldiers to use Turkey's military bases. In addition, Turkey stocked more than one hundred thousand soldiers to Turkey's boundary with Iraq to force Saddam to end of the occupation of Kuwait (*Ibid.*, 248-271). The main reason of Turkey's proactive approach to Gulf War was related with the absence of the USSR, which allowed it to play a more active role in the region as neo-Ottomanist foreign policy indicates. The Gulf War started with the bombardment of Iraq by the allied forces and resulted with Iraq's expelling the territories of Kuwait in 27th of February 1991, because of the pressures, embargoes and also bombardments of the US and allies in Iraq within the Gulf War. Turkey did not join to the Gulf War directly, but supported the US and allied countries in their operations. Because, President Ozal saw an opportunity that Turkey can increase its sphere of influence to show the importance of Turkey to the West and also have a leading role in Iraq in the post-Gulf War era (Robins, 1991: 71). Of course, Ozal's neo-Ottomanist foreign policy approach was related with the changed internal dynamics. In this context, as constructivism includes the foreign policy preferences are related with the identities of states, the demand of the society for active foreign policy based on the *identity* of Turkey was the main determinant of Ozal's policies. When some critiques emerged against to Ozal's activism in foreign policy, Ozal with his vision based on neo-Ottomanism expressed:

“Many things have changed in Turkey... In foreign policy the days of taking a cowardly and timid position are over. From now we will pursue an active policy based on circumstances...My conviction is that Turkey should leave its former passive and hesitant policies and engage in an active foreign policy (*Ibid.*, 70).”

Also, because of the support of the US, there were rebellions against Saddam's regime by some Kurdish groups in the Northern Iraq and the Shia groups in the south. When Saddam Hussein struggled with these rebellions, more than one million Kurds fled to Iran and Turkey as refugees. In this sense, the coalition powers initiated Operation Provide Comfort (OPC) in Northern Iraq with no fly zone to protect the Kurdish groups.⁵⁷ Moreover, Turkey did a cross border operation in the Northern Iraq with more than thirty thousand soldiers to keep the

⁵⁷ The main aim of OPC was to keep the Kurdish groups in the Northern Iraq. A military group was formed to organize it mainly from the US, France and Britain (BBC, 1991).

Kurdish groups under control. In this sense, Turkey succeeded to keep the Kurdish groups in their region in a short period (Sezgin, 1996: 127). Also, thanks to the OPC, Turkey had coalitions with Massoud Barzani and Jalal Talabani against the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and supported them in their regional and international activities.⁵⁸ As constructivist mention that the notion of security is related with the interests to defend and covers widely accepted values based on the identity (Tanrisever, 2005: 118-122), the main driving force for Turkey's cooperation with the Kurdish groups was related with the changed identity structure of Turkey since the 1980s. Because while Turkey was dealing with only Turkmen groups before, the identity setting on *wider nationality* perspective based on neo-Ottomanism shaped the policy of Turkey to deal with the other groups in both Turkey and former Ottoman territories.

When Iraq recognized the boundaries and the independence of Kuwait in 1994, the UNSC resolution 986 in 1995 allowed the Iraq to sell petroleum products by removing some embargoes over it (Gozen, 2000: 342-370). Moreover, when Saddam's powers annexed Erbil in Northern Iraq in 1996, the US extended no fly zone in the North as a reaction and Saddam's powers left Erbil to Barzani's Kurdish group (For the location of Erbil in the map of Iraq refer to Figure 8 in the Annex). So, the balance of power was broken down between Kurdish groups in the Northern Iraq. In this sense, Turkey captured the initiative in the Northern Iraq and created an armed power from Iraqi Turkmens and Assyrians to end the clashes between Kurdish Barzani and Talabani groups (Oznur, 2003: 352-360). This was because the main aim of Turkey's policy in Iraq was to protect the territorial integrity of Iraq. In this context, as the constructivists mention that the sovereignty has been socially constructed in the historical context and not constant, unchangeable and based on some data (Biersteker & Weber, 1996: 2), different than the Turkmens and Assyrians, the Kurdish leaders Barzani and Talabani have been invited to Turkey by Turkish President Ozal because of the contingent developments in the policies of Iraq. Ozal gave Turkish passports to them and allowed to open an office for their groups in Turkey. In addition, Turkey has sent economic aid to Kurdish tribes in Northern Iraq and tolerated them to trade in Turkey even

⁵⁸ Mesut Barzani is currently the president of Kurdish region in Iraq and the leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP). Also, Jalal Talabani is currently the president of Iraq, and he was the founder of Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). Also, PKK is a Kurdish separatist organization, which makes armed struggle against to Turkey and PKK is listed as the terrorist organization by many countries and organizations and the US, UN, EU and NATO (Hussein, 2007: 232; BBC, 2005 and The Committee to Protect Journalists, 2008).

when they resorted to smuggling. Thus, wider nationality setting based on neo-Ottomanism shaped these political developments of Turkey. In this sense, Turkey aimed to decrease the nationalist ideologies, which were the main reasons to the emergence of conflicts between the groups in Iraq. However, while these developments occurred among Turkey and the Kurdish groups in Northern Iraq, interestingly, PKK increased its power in the South Eastern Turkey and the PKK operations mainly effected the efficiency of Turkey's approach in Northern Iraq because of the Turkey had to deal with the internal politics (Casin, 1996: 225-251).⁵⁹ In addition, Turkey's importance has increased because of the only open border for international coalition and the Kurdish region of Iraq. In this sense, the economic conditions of the Kurdish people in Northern Iraq increased and their support to the PKK was reduced. At that time, Turkey had agreements with KDP and PUK, but sometimes they made coalitions with PKK because of the competition between both groups and political tactics of global powers (Ulger, 1996:207-217). Before the Gulf War, Kurdish groups in Northern Iraq were under the threat of Saddam Hussein, however, the Gulf War brought a free environment for them in Northern Iraq and mainly federal structures have been created for Kurdish region. These demands also affected to change the policies of Iran and Syria, who were supporting Kurdish groups before against to Saddam. In this sense, they started to defend the territorial integrity of Iraq as well (Ozdag, 1996: 81). As constructivists argue that the interests are subjective and associated with the changing identities, Turkey's political influence occurred mainly in these countries related with the situation of Iraq, because these countries had the Kurdish groups in their countries and the increase in Kurdish nationalism would be threat for their territorial integrity. In addition, Turkey was the main country, which could be effective in any problem by the balanced relations based on neo-Ottomanism with both the West and the ME. When KDP, PUK and the US leaders have met in Dublin-Ireland, Turkey has sent a representative, and they declared to have a common behaviour against to PKK. However, Turkey's problem about struggling with PKK did not finish because of the instable situation of Northern Iraq (Baca, 1995: 343).

Another resolution 687 in 1991 had been created in the UNSC to determine the cease fire conditions after the Gulf War.⁶⁰ According to this resolution, mass destruction weapons in

⁵⁹ Mainly, the increase in PKK's terror activities in Turkey in the 1990s were linked to the external support by political analysts. Because for them, the global powers supported the separatist groups in the ME as a pressure tool to the countries. In this sense, global powers aimed to eliminate the power of Turkey in the policies of Iraq (Davutoglu, 2001: 439)

⁶⁰ For more information; the UNSC Resolution 687 (1991). Available at: <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/596/23/IMG/NR059623.pdf?OpenElement>. [Accessed 28.12.2009]

Iraq would be controlled and destroyed by the UN Special Commission (UNSCOM) and the International Atomic Energy Association (IAEA).⁶¹ Furthermore, the end of the embargoes over Iraq was linked to these controls. However, Iraq's relations with the UN arm controllers were problematic as well. In this sense, the US and allied powers bombed Iraq with the Operation of Desert Fox in 1998 to force Iraq to cooperate with the UN for arm controlling. Also, in the same year the US president Bill Clinton created a law called "*Iraq Liberation Act*", which included the option of a regime change in Iraq.⁶² Thus, the problematic situation related with the UN arm controllers was creating opportunities to intervene in the Iraq for the US. Iraq's last refusal to enter the UN arm controller into Iraq in 2002 was the turning point. In this context, the US Congress backed President George W. Bush's decision to declare war against to Iraq in October 2002. Moreover, Turkey organized a meeting named as "the Neighbouring Countries to Iraq" to prevent the emergence of Iraq War for the peaceful solution of the problem. However, the US did not recognize this meeting and organized military operations to Iraq (CNN Turk, 2007). The US demanded to open a second front to enter Iraq via Turkey. The Turkish government prepared the law to give permission to the US troops; however, the TBMM did not approve the law to allow the US to use the South Eastern territory of Turkey on March 2003. So, tactically Turkish Government showed the support to the US by bringing the law to TBMM, but when TBMM did not approve the law, Turkey secured itself to avoid an anti-Turkey sentiment in Arabic societies. However, Turkey's non-allowance created tension in US-Turkey relations during Iraq War period and the US tried to find the new allies to follow the aimed projects in Iraq until 2007. As constructivist argues that the actors follow the actions according to their identities, Turkey followed the policy based on neo-Ottomanist identity. In this sense, Turkey's refusal to the US demand became one of the main factors that helped to increase the relations of Turkey with the Middle Eastern countries in following time period. As the main foreign policy reference of the US was to combat with international terrorism in post September 11 period, the US and allied countries attacked to Iraq by using only a front line in south with the arguments of removing mass destruction weapons, to cut the support of Saddam to terrorism and freedom for Iraqi people. Afterwards, Saddam's regime collapsed in Iraq and the whole Iraq was under the control of the US in April 2003.

⁶¹ IAEA was established as an international organization in 1957 to promote the peaceful use of atomic energy and prepare reports for the UNSC and General Assembly. Also UNSCOM was established after the Gulf War because of the need to assist to the IAEA in nuclear areas. For more information; Official Web Page of UNSCOM. Establishment. Available at: <http://www.un.org/Depts/unscom/General/basicfacts.html#ESTABLISH>. [Accessed 29.12.2009]

⁶² For more information; Iraq Liberation Act of 1998 (1998). Available at: http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=105_cong_public_laws&docid=f:publ338.105.pdf. [Accessed 29.12.2009]

5.2.2. Turkey – Iraq Relations after Iraq War

“Turkey shares a common history and culture with Shias, Sunnis, Kurds, Turkmens, Assyrians and all other groups in Iraq. So, Turkey supports all actors to involve the political process of Iraq (CNN Turk, 2009b).”

The occupation of the US brought the end of Baath regime and created a power vacuum in Iraq. Because of the complexity of Iraq’s ethnic and religious groups similar to a microcosm of the whole ME, the developments of Iraq directly affected the policies of the countries in the region. In this context, Turkey’s Iraq policies after the 2003 were based on some basic elements such as the general policies of Turkey towards the ME, basic developments related with Iraq, the problems with the Iraqi Kurdish groups and Turkey’s internal policies (Taskiran, 2003: 1). In addition, Turkey’s refusal to allow to use the South Eastern Anatolia for the US troops for entering Iraq lead the US to increase the relations with the Kurdish groups in Iraq because of only support of them to the US occupation of Iraq. In this context, independent Kurdish state claims of the Kurdish leaders increased because of their alliance with the US (Cook and Sabbagh, 2008). However, the independent Kurdish state issue was against to the US interest because if the Kurdish groups separate as a different state, the remaining part of Iraq would be only in the hand of the Shia group with their more than 80 percent majority and would increase the sphere of influence of Iran. Subsequently, the interests of Turkey and the US merged in the political situation of Iraq and Turkey followed the actions by knowing these facts. As Constructivists mention that security cannot be reduced to defence, balance of threat and attacks as a requirement of social mentality; being secured or not is related with the quality of the relations and reflects the stability and change in the relation and security is related with the interests to defend (McSwenny, 1999: 101), the occupation of Iraq motivated Turkey to increase the relations with the neighbours in the ME to get their support for Turkey’s Iraq policies on *soft power* vision and also to extend the relations with Iraqi groups from Turkmen and Kurdish groups to Sunni and Shia groups as neo-Ottomanism proposed to have a multi-ethnic and multi-religious identity setting.

Mainly, the policy outcomes of Turkey occurred after 2007, when criticisms started to emerge in both the US public opinion and international society related with the failure of the US to restore the peace and stability as promised in Iraq. In this sense, the US started to approach Turkey after 2003 intervention to the Iraq crisis and the US-Turkey cooperation to reconstruct Iraq caused an increase in Turkey’s sphere of influence in Iraq. First, Turkey organized a second joint meeting in Istanbul as “Iraq’s Neighbouring Countries” on November 2007 and

invited all neighbours with the representatives of international organizations as neo-Ottomanism proposed to have multidimensional connections. Furthermore, the US supported this initiative unlike the first meeting in 2003 and mainly Turkey demanded more active contribution of Iraq's neighbours to reconstruction of Iraq.⁶³ Secondly, the increase in US-Turkey approach showed its effect when the US *allowed* the Turkey to do military operations to the PKK camps in Northern Iraq on December 2007. After the US' declaration of the dates for withdrawal from Iraq with the US – Iraq Status of Force Agreement (SOFA) in 2008,⁶⁴ Turkey's relations with Iraqi groups and government started to be more active because of the absence of the US would bring Turkey to increase the relations for actively involving the regional politics in the context of neo-Ottomanism. As constructivists mention that culture and ideas are important in shaping IR discourse and reality and interests are subjective and related with the changing identities, Turkey and Iraq signed High Level Strategic Cooperation Agreement (HLSCA) in Turkish PM Erdogan's visit to Baghdad on July 2008. The HLSCA included areas such as security, economy, education, culture and many areas, which would bring both states to have a partnership in IR.⁶⁵ In this context, starting from political, economic, energy, water resources, cultural, security and military areas the relations between Turkey and Iraq have been developed to create a long term strategic partnership in the region as neo-Ottomanism proposed. In economic issues, the increase in the capacity of Kirkuk-Ceyhan Oil Pipeline, the establishment of a pipeline to transfer Iraq's natural gas to the international markets, the establishment of new border checkpoints and free trade agreements between Iraq and Turkey have been proposed.⁶⁶ In political, diplomatic and cultural areas Turkey also mentioned that the independent and developed Iraq would be supported with the relations of Iraq.

After the signing of HLSCA, the Minister of Foreign Trade Zafer Caglayan and Ahmet Davutoglu have visited Iraq and had meetings with the leaders of all ethnic and religious groups in Iraq on August 2009. In these meetings, final statements were made on to develop the strategic relations of Turkey and Iraq based on security, political dialogue, economic

⁶³ For the Final Communiqué of the Ministerial Conference of the Neighbouring Countries of Iraq (2007), Available at: <http://iraq-itag.org/docs/JointStatementIraqNeighbours1107.pdf>. [Accessed 03.01.2010]

⁶⁴ SOFA agreement included the withdrawal of the US army from cities in June 2009 and also the US declared to withdraw from the Iraq until 2011 (BBC, 2008).

⁶⁵ For more information; the Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2008). Joint Political Declaration on the Establishment of the High Level Strategic Cooperation Council between Governments of the Republic of Turkey and the Republic of Iraq. Available at: <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/data/DISPOLITIKA/Bolgeler/ortadogu/irak/Ortak%20Siyasi%20Bilirge%20%C4%B0ngilizce.pdf>. [Accessed 05.01.2010]

⁶⁶ For more information; the Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Turkey's Contributions to Iraq. Available at: http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-contributions-to-iraq.en.mfa. [Accessed 06.01.2010]

interdependence and cultural areas in neo-Ottomanist framework. Also, Davutoglu expressed that the main aim of Turkey's relations with Iraq has been to form integration both with the state and the people in Iraq. As constructivists mention that the meaning of identity and scope of interests are related with the shared information among the people. So, the analysis in IR should start with the culture and tend to power and interests (Wendt, 1999: 193), Davutoglu mentioned that Iraq is not only a neighbour nor ally for Turkey; Turkey sees Iraq as a country to create the future together (CNN Turk, 2009b). Davutoglu with his statement aimed to increase the Turkey's political sphere of influence in Iraq by creating developed relations based on neo-Ottomanism. Because, the time of HLSCA was important to show that Turkey has followed a strategic policy to be effective after the end of the US occupation in Iraq. Moreover, when the US withdraws from Iraq, there is a fear that to emerge an ethnic conflict among Iraqi groups. In this context, Turkey's policy is also eliminating the emergence of an ethnic conflict in Iraq.

Also, Turkey's approach towards the Iraqi ethnic and religious groups has extended to Kurdish groups, Sunni groups and Shia groups step by step in neo-Ottomanist identity framework. In this context, because of the Turkey's involvement within the Iraq's internal political environment starting from 2007, a balanced policy among whole groups in Iraq was created. As constructivists argue that the main sources of interests are ideas and identities; foreign policy trend, national security understanding and strategies are internalized on the identity construction process (See Katzenstein, 1996), the main motivation to increase the relations with all groups in Iraq was related with the multidimensional connections between Iraqi groups and the people in Turkey. Subsequently, Turkey has reduced the possible effects of the developments of Iraq to its own internal politics. In this sense, starting from 2005, Turkey connected with the Sunni groups' leaders of Iraq and invited them to Ankara and motivated them to become involved in the political processes of Iraq.⁶⁷ As the first country that has consulate in Mosul, where mainly Sunni groups are located, Turkey motivated the Iraqi nationalist groups for their participation in the elections as well. In addition, Turkey arranged a secret meeting as a mediator between the Sunni resistance groups and the US in 2009 and a protocol was signed between the parties for officially recognizing the Iraqi Sunni groups in the political system of Iraq (Aljazeera, 2009). After the problematic times with the Kurdish groups, Turkey renewed the approaches towards to recognize their achievements. Since the occupation of Iraq started, Turkey has increased the economic ties with the Kurdish

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

groups in Northern Iraq on economic way; however, there were some *fears* in political perspective. When the US declared to withdraw from Iraq, Turkey started to have more active political relations with the Kurdish groups to arrange the political system of them based on neo-Ottomanist perspective. In this context, Turkey's political dialogue, sending representative to the federal elections of Northern Iraq, joint economic and political programs showed the change on the relations to be more influential state over Kurdish groups (Cetin, 2009). Also, with the signature of HLSCA, Turkey declared that it would protect the federal structure of Iraq. In addition, Turkey has increased the relations with the Shia groups to eliminate the possible coalition of them with Iran and increase the own sphere of influence over them. In this context, the meetings with the Shia resistance groups' leaders and opening a consular in Basra, where mainly Shia groups are located, was important to show the strategic approach of Turkey (Daly, 2008).

After these approaches of Turkey for actively involving Iraqi politics, Turkey had the position to be the mediator between Syria and Iraq on the problem, which occurred because of the bombing in governmental places of Iraq in 19th of August 2009. In this bombing more than one hundred people died and six hundred people were injured in Iraq. After the bombing, Iraqi PM Nuri al-Maliki accused Syria of supporting the bombing activity in Iraq; because one week later of the bombing, Wisam Ali Khazim Ibrahim claimed that he organized this bombing with the orders of BP leader in Syria (Myers, 2009). Later, Iraq called back the Damascus ambassador to show the tension and demanded to apprehend the people, who organized terrorist activities in Iraq. However, Syria *refused* to give them to Iraq and the tensions increased to a very high level (Al-Salaam et. al., 2009). As constructivists mention that actors follow the actions which are appropriate their identity, statute, social environment and cultural structure (March & Olsen, 1998: 943-969), Turkish FM Davutoglu had visits both to Syria and Iraq to decrease the tensions and create the peace and stability in the region on neo-Ottomanist perspective to increase Turkey's effect in the region as the main actor. Moreover, Davutoglu demanded information from PM Maliki related with the evidence to show Syria's support to terrorist activity to send the Syrian authorities, as Syrian Leader Bashar al-Assad demanded (CNN, 2009c). Furthermore, Davutoglu declared that he got the information based on the terrorist attacks and offered to create a triple mechanism among Iraq, Syria and Turkey to eliminate the future problems as well (Gulmez, 2009). In the same time, Iranian FM Manouchehr Mottaki had visits first to Syria and then Iraq to be active in the solution of the problem between Iraq and Syria as well. However, because of the Iran's

support only to Shia groups and *weak* relations with all groups in Iraq, Iran's influence could not be created unlike Turkey and had not be supported by the Iraqi government as well. In addition, Iran and Syria were actually allied in many areas before the emergence of the tensions; Syria mainly supported the initiative of Turkey to be the mediator rather than Iran because of the effectiveness of neo-Ottomanist foreign policy of Turkey. For instance, in an interview with President of Syria Bashar al-Assad expressed:

"Turkey's intermediation efforts arrived really quickly. Timing was an important factor. Moreover, Turkey's approach was really objective and realistic. As a matter of fact, Turkey's general approach is, "If some problems arise among my neighbours, this will affect me in some way or another." Before Turkish FM Ahmet Davutoğlu came to Damascus, PM Recep Tayyip Erdoğan called me, and I immediately responded positively to his offer of intermediation and supported Turkey's efforts. In several days, we will hold a meeting in Turkey to discuss this problem (Kenes, 2009a).

Also, the first HLSCC Ministerial meeting based on HLSCA between Iraq and Turkey was made with the participation of Turkish FM Davutoglu and his counterpart Hoshyar Zebari in Istanbul in 17-18th September 2009. Importantly, the AL Secretary General Amr Mousa and Syrian FM Walid Muallem participated to discussions for the regional implications of the agreements as well. In this meeting, the parties discussed the basic details of the agreements that will be held in the next visit of Erdogan to Iraq (Gozen, 2009). A month later in 15-16th October 2009, the HLSCC meeting was held on Prime Ministerial level and forty eight agreements were signed between Turkey and Iraq including the water problem, security, economic and cultural relations of both people (Kenes, 2009b). As constructivists meets with rationalist approaches to explain the interests of the actors to show the issue on both materialist and idealist factors, with these agreements Iraq and Turkey were linked with many subjects and as neo-Ottomanism proposed soft power vision of Turkey importantly increased the sphere of influence of Turkey to reconstruct Iraq according to the interests of Turkey. Also, Davutoglu visited the Iraqi Kurdish leader Barzani in Erbil in 30th October 2009, Barzani declared in accordance with Turkey's neo-Ottomanist vision that the democratization process of Turkey should be supported by the all parts of Turkey and if PKK does not change, they will be rejected by Kurdish people (Kenes, 2009c). As constructivism mentioned that the identities shape the foreign policy preferences of states, neo-Ottomanism shaped Turkey's multidimensional approaches to all groups of Iraq and resulted with the support of Kurdish groups to end the PKK and Kurdish leaders supported the idea to solve the problems by peaceful means. In an interview, Barzani criticized the recent actions of

PKK and declared that PKK is trying to sabotage the peaceful environment of Turkey (Ntvmsnbc, 2009a). Finally, after the shut down of Kurdish originated Democratic Community Party (DTP) by Constitutional Court in Turkey with the argument of their support to PKK activities, a group of Kurdish parliamentarian had a conference in Northern Iraq and Kurdish academics criticized them for not following the democratic way and their support to bloody activities of PKK.⁶⁸ In this context, the majority of Kurdish people demanded the peaceful environment in the region, while the PKK demands to continue own existence by increasing the ethnic conflict (Zibak, 2009).⁶⁹ As Owen Matthews and Christopher Dickey (2009) stated in their article “Triumph of the Turks” in *Newsweek*, Turkey became the main beneficiary from the Iraq War without joining the War. In this sense, Turkey increased the trade relations and became the top trader country with Iraq economically. Furthermore, Turkey became politically the main country to control the whole groups in Iraq because of neo-Ottomanist approach to them. In this context, mainly neo-Ottomanist identity setting became the main factor to increase the Turkey’s sphere of influence in Iraq different than the power factor of the US and religion factor of Iran.

The purpose of the empirical analyses presented in this chapter was to show some efficiencies of the TFP, which caused an increase in Turkey’s sphere of influence with the effect of domestic transformation since the 1980s. A qualitative analysis conducted in this chapter strongly indicates that, although the TFP heavily relies on the model of Ottoman governance strategy in the ME, it was reformulated as neo-Ottomanism after the 1980s. First, the demand of the people in Turkey for actively involving the political process of the ME has empowered the liberal conservative parties, who are mainly following neo-Ottomanist ideas. Secondly, the foreign policy preferences have been linked to the identity of the Turkey by considering the demand of the people in Turkey in many policy actions. Thus, the situation

⁶⁸ Similar with the critiques of Kurdish intellectuals, the Constitutional Court in Turkey declared that the main reason of shut down the DTP was because of the involvement of DTP with terrorism and violence and mentioned that a political party must act in line with democratic social values (Karabat and Altintas, 2009; Ntvmsnbc, 2009b).

⁶⁹ As the political ideology of PKK, which is based on to create a Marxist Kurdish state, and the identity of majority of the Kurdish people, which is strict Muslim, are analyzed, the main reason why PKK could not control the majority of the Kurdish people in Turkey was based on the importance of religion for Kurds. For instance, according to the research on the Socio-Economic and Socio-Cultural Structures in the Eastern and South-eastern Anatolia, which was carried by the Bahcesehir University Strategic Research Centre, while 47, 5 % Kurdish people mentioned that DTP does not represent the Kurdish people, 23, 5 % of them mentioned that it represents the Kurds. In terms of the Identity, 89, 5 Kurdish people answered the religion to the question “what is the most important thing in your life?”, while the ethnic identity was mentioned by 57 % of the Kurdish people. In addition, while 41, 1 % Kurdish people mentioned that PKK means a terrorist organization, 9, 9 % of them mentioned PKK is an organization to defend the rights of the Kurds. Moreover, “is being citizen of Turkey important for you” question was answered as 99 % yes by the Kurdish people (Reuters Turk, 2009).

of the ME, which was mainly the intervention area for the western imperialist powers, since the collapse of the OE has also affected the Middle Eastern countries to actively support the policies of Turkey. Because of the references to the history in neo-Ottomanist foreign policy of Turkey, the stability of the ME in OE has attracted the attention of the countries in the region to see Turkey as the main organizer of the policies in the ME. In sum, this chapter highlighted that, first of all, TFPME has the key compliance – including elements of the governance model, on which the TFP heavily draws. Secondly, economic and political context of the countries in the ME strongly appropriate to increase the relations mutually, because of the needs and the demands of the societies are merging. These findings highly indicate that neo-Ottomanist foreign policy of Turkey has increased the Turkey's political sphere of influence in the ME since its set up in the 1980s.

6. CONCLUSION

This paper provides a theoretically informed empirical assessment of TFPME after the 1980s. The aim of the analysis presented in this paper was two-fold: first of all, to examine and evaluate the origins of TFPME, secondly, to show how the policy actions increased Turkey's political sphere of influence in the ME. In this sense, two hypotheses have been developed to analyze the issue. The first hypothesis states that after the 1980s, TFPME has been largely developed in a neo-Ottomanist identity perspective. The second hypothesis claims that in its multidimensional perspective, neo-Ottomanist foreign policy of Turkey has increased its political sphere of influence in the ME.

The TFPME has appeared with the Turkey's economic policy change and the identity transformation after the 1980s. When the Islamic dimension of the society, which had been excluded before the 1980s, were allowed for the first time in social life and state education system, the identity of Turkey has emerged in a suitable perspective to a new foreign and economy policy structure of Turkey (Iba, 2009: 38). In this context, Turkey had the Turkish-Islamic synthesis in identity perspective and this was the first attempt to closer the relations with the ME in terms of the historical, cultural and religious connections. At the same time, the strong support of the people to the political ideology of Turgut Ozal contributed in softening the strict secular kemalist system of Turkey to involve the public opinion in the policy formation and direct the foreign policy on the basis of the identity of Turkey (Sayari, 2000: 169). While there were some changes in international politics at the end of the Cold War and post-Cold War period, the adaptation to these changes were related with the change

in republican characteristics of the system in Turkey to increase the effectiveness of Turkey in the regional politics. In light of the inability to effectively involve the problematic cases in the region, Turkey had coalitions with the major powers in terms of the mutual interests in the same issue (Lesser, 2000: 183). The conceptualization of Turkey's foreign policy based on neo-Ottomanism was needed to become more effectively involved with regional politics to increase its political sphere of influence. In this context, the recent foreign policy of Turkey was conceptualized by Davutoglu with his Strategic Depth concept to set the TFP on the basis of the common history, values and identity dimension in the regions of Turkey.

As the analysis presented in this paper revealed, the emergence of TFPME can be attributed to the search for alternatives to Europe mainly on economic matters and put the identity dimension to the foreign policy preferences of Turkey to be the main organizer as the successor of OE in the ME (Kirisci, 2009: 29-57). In this sense, Turkey's economic relations with the ME has reached for the first time to fifty percent level in the history of Turkey and the identity of Turkey to sell more products in the ME became the main factor such as the Islamic style products, Soap Operas and the cultural heritage of Turkey have attracted Middle Eastern tourists (Laciner, 2009b). Due to the historical heritage of Turkey coming from the OE as the meeting point of the civilizations, Turkey had the major role to solve the problems based on the dialogue with Turkey's involvement of both Eastern and Western civilizations. The neo-Ottomanist foreign policy of Turkey towards the ME has been, thus, seen as an opportunity to use the ethnic and religious differences of the people in Turkey as the samples from former Ottoman territories to connect of Turkey with the ME more for increasing the political sphere of influence.

Bearing in mind the above mentioned reasoning, the identity connections of Turkey appear in the foreign policy preferences to increase the relations and be the main actor in the ME. In this context, the main areas of Turkey's interventions happened were it possessed identity connections in terms of ethnic and religious bases. At the heart of this framework, the instability and the problematic situations in the Persian Gulf and the Palestine caused Turkey to become actively involved in the policies of ME. In sum, the findings resulted from examination of conceptual origins of the TFPME and of the logics behind its formulation support the hypothesis that *the TFPME has been largely developed in neo-Ottomanist identity perspective with Turkey's foreign policy actions in the ME after the 1980s.*

As a result of neo-Ottomanist identity design, the TFPME is fundamentally based on the principle of following active foreign policy in the ME. The identity dimension of Turkey based on the sensitivity of the people in Turkey has been important to successfully involve the Palestine problem. However, as it has been argued in this paper, this intervention has changed the traditional relations of Turkey with Israel, originated from the US-Turkey alliance, and Turkey has found it as the best way to attract the Arab societies. Since the TFPME represents a strategy to increase the Turkey's political sphere of influence in the ME, the anti-Israeli policy actions of Turkey has aimed to force Israel to follow Turkey's policy actions based on solving the problems by peaceful means. The major power of Turkey in this policy perspective was the need of Israel to Turkey as the only country, which is the US ally and has good relations with Israel in the ME. The TFPME has included a soft power perspective in the ME, especially to solve the problems with the dialogue and integrate the countries in the ME with the increase in economic relations (Taspinar, 2008: 1). These are aimed to emerge with the support of Turkey in economic way as well. However, the instability in terms of the security issues affects the success of these developments. First of all, Turkey's neo-Ottomanist foreign policy approach contradicts with the aggressive policies of some countries in the ME such as Israel and the success to build a peaceful environment has been developed. Secondly, the unilateral approaches and lack of a common vision of Arab politicians to some problems prevent the emergence of a peaceful environment in the ME. Considering these factors, Turkey mainly aimed to affect the public opinion in the ME to influence the politicians to follow same policies with its perspective. As the recent developments in Arab societies have been analyzed, mainly Turkey attracted the Arab societies in the ME with the foreign policy actions related with the Palestine problem (Ayhan, 2009). In sum, the approach of Turkey to the Palestine problem has been the major factor to affect the increase in Turkey's political sphere of influence in the ME because of the interconnection of the Palestine problem with the whole ME.

While in Iraq case the effective conditionality has been the main factor to involve within the Iraqi policies since the Gulf War and Turkey started to restore the own perspective based on neo-Ottomanism, when the influence of the US started to decrease in Iraq. This displays that Turkey effectively used the conditionality factor in Iraq (Matthews and Dickey, 2009) and the identity connection became the main factor to reorganize the situation by connecting the whole groups on neo-Ottomanist perspective. Furthermore, Turkey formalized these identity connections with the mutual agreements, based on strategic partnerships to empower neo-

Ottomanist strategy of Turkey. Finally, Turkey became the main actor in Iraqi politics by being the top trading country and coordinating the whole groups in Iraq, which was the main strategy of Turkey based on neo-Ottomanist perspective. Overall, based on the above mentioned findings it can be concluded that, the active foreign policy of Turkey based on neo-Ottomanism, the vision to offer the stability and policy way as being a soft power *in its multidimensional perspective, neo-Ottomanist foreign policy of Turkey has increased Turkey's political sphere of influence in the ME.*

It is necessary to point out that the research presented in this paper highlighted some serious foreign policy actions of Turkey towards the ME. In the consideration of the fact, the power vacuum and the instability of the ME, which were mainly related with the normative dimensions, required the formulation of the foreign policy strategies by analyzing the identities of the peoples and the countries in the ME. Thus, it seems the identity based foreign policy of Turkey is the key approach to create the solution to the traditional problems in the ME.

This thesis aimed to critically evaluate the TFPME by explaining its potential success. It was not however intend to show neo-Ottomanist foreign policy of Turkey is the only way to increase the political sphere of influence of Turkey. The most obvious policy suggestions with regard to improving the current neo-Ottomanist foreign policy of Turkey would be in three-fold. First of all, the Turkish government needs to continue the balanced policy actions especially in Israeli-Palestine axis to prevent the empowering of Islamism instead of neo-Ottomanism both in Turkey and in the ME. Secondly, the EU membership process of Turkey should not be slowed down by considering that while the membership of Turkey to the EU will give more power to Turkey to use the benefits of the EU to be more influential actor in the ME, but in contrast, the refusal of Turkey from the membership by the EU will empower the image of Turkey in the ME as the reason of Turkey's refusal is because of it being a Muslim country. Finally, Turkey should continue the policy of not being a part to any conflicts by developing the policy formulations more to include even the small ethnic groups in the ME. In doing so, the regional policies of the ME should be organized by getting the ideas of all sides to increase the integration among the societies.

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8. ANNEX

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Figure 1: Turkey's Geopolitical Map



Source: Open Source Geopolitics

http://2.bp.blogspot.com/_qbTzzDXvZn8/SdZosiZXFcI/AAAAAAAAAaY/mTfTs2rcrrM/s400/bazargan+in+wider+context.jpg

The map shows the geopolitics of Turkey, which is subject to Turkey's region including the areas of the Balkans, the Middle East, the Eastern Mediterranean and the Caucasus.

Figure 2: The map of the Middle East



Source: CNN online news web page

http://www.cnn.com/WORLD/struggle_for_peace/land_maps/middle_east_region.jpg

The countries in the Middle East are listed and the red coloured territory in Israel represents Palestine.

Figure 3: The map of the Hejaz region

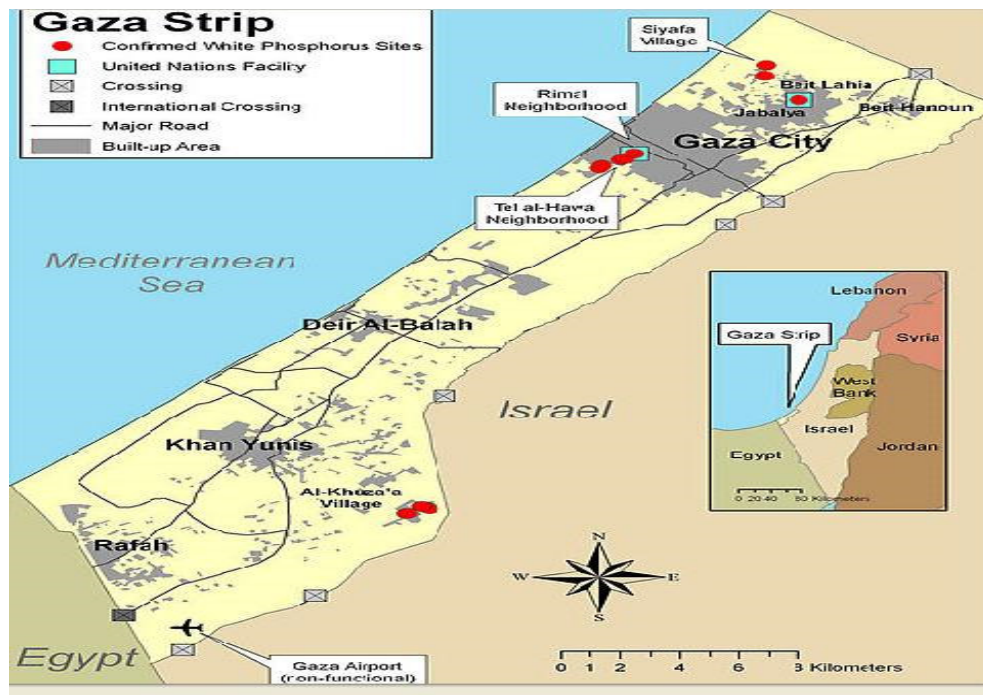


Source: A social share web page

<http://www.dirkthenoorman.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2007/03/350px-hijaz.png>

The Hejaz region area marked with dark green colour.

Figure 4: The Location of Gaza and West Bank in Palestine Map



Source: A social share web page (Twoday.net)

<http://static.twoday.net/scusi/images/Weisser-Phosphor-Gaza.jpg>

Gaza Strip was located far away from another Palestine territory West Bank, which is shown in the little map.

Figure 5: The Location of Golan Heights in the Map



Source: CNN News International

<http://www.cnn.com/WORLD/meast/9909/14/israel.syria/golan.heights.jordan.map.lg.jpg>

The location of Golan Heights were shown in the Map

Figure 6: The Location of Jenin in Palestine Map



Source: Top News Web Page

<http://www.topnews.in/files/west-bank.gif>

Jenin is located at the north part of the map

Figure 7: The Pictures about Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan's Popularity of both Palestinian and Turkish People

Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 1

Source: The Huffington Post

<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/huff-wires/20090130/eu-turkey-israel/images/7c40877d-f2cf-43ed-b8e1-5677f471f8d8.jpg>

A Palestinian raises a Turkish Flag while people are attending for Friday praying in Jebaliya refugee Camp of Gaza Strip on January 30, 2009 in Palestine.

Photo 2

Source: MSM Monitor

http://cache.boston.com/resize/bonzai-fba/Globe_Photo/2009/01/30/1233371713_4485/539w.jpg

A Palestinian holds the portrait of Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan in front of the damaged Parliament building in Gaza strip on January 30, 2009 in Palestine.

Photo 3

Source: Today's Zaman

<http://medya.todayszaman.com/todayszaman/2009/01/31/demonstrations-01.jpg>

The supporters of Erdogan welcome him in Istanbul-Turkey after Davos meeting. A person holds a plate written "Welcome the World Leader".

Figure 8: The Map of Iraq



Source: Chicago Kent College of Law

<http://www.kentlaw.edu/perritt/courses/civpro/1-17-05ColorizedIraqMap.jpg>

The Map of Iraq shows the regions in Iraq and the neighbouring countries of Iraq.

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Ahmet Görgen

Kassel, 28.01.2010

