

TURKISH PILLARS OF SOFT POWER IN SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE

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For my dear dad, Ioannis Rapis.

“Limba dultsi, multu adutsi.”

1. Introduction

Today's Turkey lies at a crossroads. There have been few states in history which have experienced the situation Turkey is facing today. Since the fall of the Cold War and the advent of a "New World Order"¹ there has been realignment and a shift of powers to different states. Russia, crippled by the dissolution of the Soviet Union and its unstable entry into a market economy could not resume partaking in a bipolar hegemony. The imposing specter of communism was essentially swept away, denuding the West of a common adversary ideology. The fall of the USSR eventually gave way not only to new regimes, but to the creation of new states as well. Near Turkey, conflicts arose in the Caucasus over ethnic and confessional self-realization in the cases of Abkhazia, the Chechen Republic and Nagorno-Karabakh. Yugoslavia having amassed a knot of foreign loans was set in dire economic shape and eventually fragmented into nationally represented states, and Ba'athist regimes in Syria and Iraq no longer had the full commitment of a Soviet paymaster. Turkey found itself at the center of this sudden change of winds.

The lifeblood of the regions surrounding Turkey was suddenly removed, and a vacuum of control emerged. In terms of state security this situation could be perceived as highly unstable. Ethnic conflicts, regime changes, border disputes, and economic transition all threatened to spill through Turkish borders if allowed unchecked.² Such activity posed a disruption to the democratization progress and economic development the state was attempting since the mid 1980's.³ Nonetheless, in the midst of such quagmire existed a visible opportunity. The precise subject under multiple potential security threats could in fact benefit from this situation. Under the leadership of Turgut Özal in the early 1980's, the Turkish economy underwent significant market liberalization, departing from the prior methods of a self-sufficient economy marked by "import substitution".⁴ There was indeed an increase in real GDP, notwithstanding high inflation,⁵ and there was enhanced opportunity in the regions surrounding. Furthermore, this manner of increased cooperation between Turkey and the volatile regions nearby increased the incentive for other areas to act in synchronization.

¹ Nye (1999), on US president George H.W. Bush's speech in 1991 following the First Gulf War

² Sayari (2000)

³ Brljavac (2011)

⁴ Ahmad (1993)

⁵ Heper and Keyman (1999)

With regards to international relations, the input of a state's economic strength produces a power output that is applicable onto foreign states, in the interest of promoting security and stability of each state, notwithstanding the hierarchical results of such policy. As described by Nye (1999), in many states applications of foreign power have differed through different historical periods in order to adroitly pursue an agenda. Such power can be expressed through economic, cultural, or military capabilities. Furthermore according to Nye (1999), such use of power can be split into two branches, a coercive or "hard" power; and cooptive, "soft" power. Examples of hard power are economic sanctions, placement of an ultimatum to a head of state, physical blockade of borders, ranging to military invasion of a sovereign entity.

In contrast to the "stick-and-carrot" approach,⁶ soft power is "the ability to shape the preferences of others" and showcases "the attractiveness of a country's culture, political notions and policies."⁷ While it often relies on hard power sources like economic performance, these sources of power operate independently.⁸ Soft power can be conceived of as the clout a state has facing the international community. It is a measure of how culturally significant, politically stable, economically reinforced and historically relevant a state is to its region and the international community, and consequently, shows where that potential is utilized.

Examples of soft power may be mass media programming such as the "CNN effect" of the US news conglomerate, perceptions of political stability in Scandinavian states, or worldwide support of the Vatican City stemming from millions of adherents to Catholicism. Unlike hard power, it is rarely implemented drastically; rather it sources strength from structure than on responsive actions. In this essay's words, the dissection of power between cooptive and coercive manifestations lies within the immediateness of decision-making. If to place international relations into a card game analogy, hard power is manifested in decisive reactions such as raising stakes, whereas soft power can be perceived as "having the cards stacked in one's favor", setting the precedent for the match.

Economic output and economic cooperation with neighbors is the crux of Turkey's power. Historically, successive Turkish governments used the image of military institution as a main outlet of power, in international conflicts including the Cyprus dispute.⁹ Receiving a

⁶ Kalin (2011)

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Nye (1999)

⁹ Zurcher (2004)

hefty two billion dollar foreign aid investment for modernization of the armed forces in the 1950's, Turkey's role as a bulwark for NATO against regional competition was secured in the early stages of the Cold War.¹⁰ As a recent turnaround during the new millennium, it appeared that Turkey had begun to rely less on its military complex in establishing a presence in neighboring regions. Rather than aggressively promote its military capabilities and presence in light of past regional tensions, Turkey is currently in an attempt to shift to the application of soft power.¹¹ This essentially implies that instead of using means of threat and coercion to achieve an end, subtle methods are delivered without clear mandates.

Turkey indeed aspires to use soft power as its core diplomatic tool, as claimed by Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu in his foreign policy assessment of 2007. Davutoğlu further concluded in his article that democracy is Turkey's most important soft power.¹² Furthermore, he mentions that Turkey must rediscover its past historical and geographical identities, being the "main center of a geo-cultural basin"¹³. In another point of his assessment, Davutoğlu also stressed the idea of a multilateral, "complementary" rather than "competitive" foreign policy.¹⁴ Such stated components of a foreign policy appear to be prudent, considering the historical relevance of the Ottoman Empire on the surrounding regions as well as the current situation of power politics in the regions surrounding Turkey.

The Balkans is one of the most promising and enticing of these regions. The past shared between the Southeastern Europe and the successor to the Ottoman Empire is culturally inseparable as there remain innumerable artistic, linguistic, religious, architectural remnants of interactions between the Turkish administration and the local populations.¹⁵ Furthermore, the current unstable results of the ethnic conflicts in the former Yugoslavia as well as prospects for Balkan accession into the European Union pique the interest of the academic and governing elite in local countries as well as the international community.¹⁶ More specifically, the combined presence of two economic and cultural forces like Western Europe and Turkey in this transitional region can be a future testing ground to the vigor of Davutoğlu's claim to "complementary" foreign policy.

¹⁰ Zurcher (2004)

¹¹ Sayari (2000)

¹² Davutoglu (2007)

¹³ Brljavac (2011)

¹⁴ Davutoglu (2007)

¹⁵ Kiel (1990)

¹⁶ Brljavac (2011)

Not all cases for power are identical for each state, much less for each contrasting region. The aim of this article is to holistically assess the soft power potential Turkey may wield specifically in Southeastern Europe. A key primary characteristic setting this area apart from other ones adjacent to Turkey is religion. In contrast to the emphasis placed by M.B. Altunisik in Turkey's combination of moderate Islam and democracy as a beacon for Middle East progress, the majority of Balkan states are historically Christian, nullifying a perceived advantage.¹⁷ Moreover, adding to Nye's stipulation of culture and Ahmet Davutoğlu's particular emphasis on common history and "democracy", using only this set of components can render the argument equivocal, due to the complexity of the region's economic and political evolution. The methodology below will introduce the pillars necessary for this essay.

2. Methodology

The four main components of Turkish soft power shall be divided within the literature section following. In addition to culture and long-shared history, it is vital to elucidate Turkey's economic situation. Due to reliance on hard power and relatively recent history with international trade, an assessment of strength and stability of the economy is necessary, as well as the interaction with Southeast Europe. Successful trade agreements, foreign direct investment from and into Turkey and overall output figures are all necessary to back the bountiful image soft power may use. Congruently, a further look into diplomatic tactics is required, as to perceive how adept and prepared the foreign ministry is to take on a multi-regional, multilateral approach. As mentioned above, vulnerability of states as well as conflicting geopolitical interests are rife in the regions surrounding Turkey. The numerous diplomatic and military conflicts frequently occurring in the Caucasus and the Middle East, as well as their aftermaths, will surely provide innumerable dilemmas for which the foreign ministry will have to be anticipating. The fourth point of the assessment is the democratic credentials of Turkey. Diverging from the political Islam emphasized in the Caucasus and Middle East,¹⁸ the most important facet in this area is the function of civil society.

In each section of the literature review, the findings are processed through two core determinants of soft power, as put forth by Ibrahim Kalin, "credibility" and "ability to persuade".¹⁹ That is, in deconstructing each of these four pillars, does Turkey possess an

¹⁷ Altunisik (2008)

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ Kalin (2011)

effective form of soft power potential and moreover, is it possible to exert this coercive power toward the Balkan countries? It would appear reasonable to respond positively at first glance, in light of a familiar history and culture. The aim here is to look past official rhetoric emphasizing all of the above, and distill the source of power. Contrapositive, the point of this essay is to identify the constraints of a subtle type of power in an unobvious region.

A large portion of sources used in this paper were obtained from the online aggregate journal, JSTOR, through proxy of the University of Macedonia. Other sources, "Studies on the Ottoman Architecture of the Balkans" and "Understanding International Conflicts" reflect a personal library, the latter forming the basal theme for this work. Furthermore, several professors provided literature from taught courses relating to the scope of this assessment. In the section discussing culture, several sources used in discussing Islam were provided by Professor Fotini Tsimpiridou by her course "Political Anthropology of Southeastern Europe", specifically in Western Thrace. The remainder of sources listed specifically on Turkey was a part of the reading list provided by Professor Dimitris Keridis for his course entitled "Security Problems in Eastern and Southeastern Europe". Finally, all newspaper articles listed in the references were found through search engine results.

3. Literature

Culture

According to Turkey's current foreign minister, Ahmet Davutoğlu, Turkey views itself as a player that will "pursue 'strategic depth' and 'zero problems' with its neighbors. It does so by fostering bilateral and multilateral ties, by using the country's Ottoman heritage as a foreign policy asset, and by exerting 'soft power' in its region."²⁰ What remains of the Balkan past is the legacy of an imperial culture embedded deeply within societies throughout the region, in cuisine, nomenclature, architecture, the arts, societal structure and even shared values. Different peoples throughout the Balkans could be united through elements of a common culture of the Ottomans once dominant in daily life.²¹

²⁰ Evin, et al. (2010)

²¹ Kalin (2011)

One salient aspect of a shared culture is that of language. Thousands of Turkish loanwords exist in official languages throughout the Balkan region.²² The implication of similar, and often identical, words cross-linguistically is simultaneously superficial and profound. The use many similar words is a binding factor in human interaction. To illustrate, “pasha”, originally a Turkish honorary title is still used today through many countries in the Balkans, as an affective. Common food, drink and entertainment having the same words following centuries of use is extremely important in the potential to familiarize one nationality with another.

Another important feature of culture is the prevalence of common music. The continuation of *rebetika* in many cafes throughout Greece today is an important cultural remnant.²³ Furthermore, it is also noted by Pennanen that much music of Anatolia shares same meter and similar instruments as in the Balkans.²⁴ Such a familiarity of common music will invoke more profound, emotional feelings of a shared heritage between formerly linked societies. As documented in the 2009 Bulgarian documentary, “Whose Is This Song”, a single melody played by the interviewer is cherished by locals ranging from Turkey to Bosnia. While feelings of modern nationalism, and not a common past, arose from the audiences featured, mutual recognition of a similar song is indisputably a potential binding factor between peoples. However, such vestiges without context are not sufficient to bring about recognition of a common past, as a historical bridge is required. State education has brought mistrust against the “Other”, and hasty presentation of common bonds also has the potential for skepticism and even violence. An effective method of linking the past is mass media programming.

Turkish serials have become increasingly popular throughout the Balkan countries including Greece, Albania and the former Yugoslavia.²⁵ Programs like “Binbir Gece” have been able to reintroduce Turkish names, language, customs and ethics through a mass medium of fiction, giving viewers a second look at Turkish culture outside of monolithic state education and popular rhetoric. It is precisely such contemporary mass media programming that will soften Turkey’s image in the Balkans. Indeed, such programming was a success in

²² Greenberg (2004)

²³ Pennanen (2004)

²⁴ Ibid

²⁵ Brljavac (2011)

many countries and continues to hold enthusiastic audiences.²⁶ This method of soft power of a bottom-up focus could potentially yield the most strength of all approaches.

Such serials have the perspective of a soap opera, revitalizing an Orientalist interest in Turkish culture. Emotional consequences of intrigue and betrayal captivate viewers while recognizable names, cultural values and religious beliefs swirl around decadent villas overlooking the Bosphorus. Primarily, the appeal of this programming lies in the capability to identify with the characters' dilemmas, thereby personifying Turkish rather than the objectification they may receive in societies formerly under Ottoman administration. Secondly, while programming themes do discuss poverty, central plots are often centered on seemingly prominent families. This is a key component in the soft power potential of mass media, in which society is presented to foreign audiences as affluent and independent.

Furthermore, such serials allow opportunity for a program providing cultural reconciliation via broadcasting. Specifically, in the summer of 2005, television channel MEGA repackaged a Turkish show for Greek audiences focusing on a contested love story between a Greek man and Turkish woman, entitled "Borders of Love". In addition to revolving about the obtuse matter of religious differences, attention was focused on shared traits between both cultures as well.²⁷ Familiar cross-cultural physical and verbal gestures were portrayed in this programming, as well as stressing the family structure.²⁸ It is important to note that from an ethnological point of view, this programming can lead to a blending of the societal ego and the cultural "Other". This recognition of commonalities, coupled with the diminution of petty differences such as scenes of bickering over which group invented the game of backgammon,²⁹ presume a reduced tension against the "Other".

Turkish Airlines' 49% acquisition of Bosnia's BiH Airways in 2008 or Turkish foreign investment in Serbian infrastructure (Brljavac, 2011) can be seen as encroachment or otherwise regarded as engagement by local citizens. Such concerns of "imperialist ventures" or claims of Neo-Ottomanism³⁰ are more likely to be assuaged by a familiarization process brought on by locally broadcast, Turkish-produced television. Furthermore, the easing of border restrictions in 2005 was another factor in cross-cultural contact. Since then, general

²⁶ Brljavac (2011)

²⁷ Papailias (2005)

²⁸ Ibid

²⁹ Ibid

³⁰ Kalin (2011)

agreements began for visa-free travel to Turkey and in 2009 citizens of all states in the Balkans, excluding Serbia, only require passports for entry.³¹ The proximity of Turkey and its relatively economical tourist prices, along with visa-free travel, are a step to efficiently promoting Turkey's image in the Balkans.

Conversely, Turkish culture and ideals entering the Balkans through NGO's are another asset to soft power. In the Western Balkans, Turkish organizations such as the Foundation of Journalists and Writers, Fethullah Gülen schools and the Bosna Sema Education institutions are an effective way of reaching out to youth.³² As the modernization-Europeanization of the Balkans continues with Romania's and Bulgaria's 2007 entry into the European Union and the pending accession of Croatia coupled with accession talks between Serbia and the EU,³³ future generations involved with Turkish-sponsored NGO's in their localities will be a valuable asset to Turkey's image. Mobilization of social capital through NGO's involved in education and professionals involved in the dissemination of information can be a key in reinforcing Turkey's position in the professional echelons of Balkan society.

One effective manner of communicating Turkish culture is through educational exchange programs. Between the years 1997 and 2002, the annual number of students from the Balkans in Turkey on a scholarship has ranged from 1,400 to 1,700 students. It is important to note that during this period, this number of scholarships for students of other countries near Turkey such as Azerbaijan and Central Asian states had steadily decreased to well below the Balkan average.³⁴ According to the Turkish Ministry of Education Strategy, the total number of secondary education scholarships provided to visiting students in 2010 was 6,328, of which 1,757 were granted to students from the Balkans. Of this total, 1,211 were bachelor scholarships and the remainder was composed of graduate and post-graduate students.³⁵

Nonetheless, a deep-seated mistrust of Turkey³⁶ in the Balkans could be a detriment to such a method. Old traditions of mistrust and wariness are entrenched in this region. Oral as well as formal traditions of centuries of Ottoman occupation of national territories can

³¹ Erin et al. (2010)

³² Brljavac (2010)

³³ Breuss (2009)

³⁴ Yanik (2004)

³⁵ TMES (2011)

³⁶ Pennanen (2004)

lend suspicion to the idea of Neo-Ottomanism.³⁷ Statements made by Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu in his speech during a visit to Sarajevo in 2009, such as “Sarajevo is ours” and “İstanbul is yours,” and that “the Ottoman centuries in the Balkans are a successful story that needs to be renewed”³⁸ has raised eyebrows among the international academic and governing elite.³⁹ Although these comments are out of context, such words seem to glaze over past sentiments. Some citizens in the Balkans may indeed not be persuaded by Turkish-produced media programs, and it still remains unclear how much of the population such programming actually is able to capture. Old rivalries are not easily forgotten, and if the masses stand to gain little benefit from Turkish activity in the region, such mass programming may be rendered naught. The key to foster a positive image in the Balkans is the notion of engagement, where citizens recognize a personal benefit from this interaction. Locals will need to feel a subsequent gain in order to be persuaded by Turkey’s actions. Ultimately, at a mass level, soft power between Turkey and the Balkans relies on such a strategy of mass cultural appeal. Here, Turkey definitely has credit as a powerful cultural force, but its ability to persuade is yet unforeseen.

Aside from traditionally Christian populations, an Ottoman past is a veritable asset, as a substantial portion of contemporary Balkan society professes Islamic traditions. According to the Pew Research Institute, in 2010, citizens identifying as Muslim constituted a non-minority status in Albania (82.1), Bosnia-Herzegovina (41.6) and Kosovo (91.7), while sizable minorities reside in Bulgaria (13.4), Croatia (1.3), FYROM (34.9), Greece (4.7), Montenegro (18.5) and Serbia (3.7).⁴⁰ The tradition of *tekkes* and dervishes relating to the Bektashi order also present in Anatolia predated the dominant Sunni populations of the Balkans today, and both orders have a past resonating a special relationship with Turkey.⁴¹ Furthermore, the differences between orders do not appear to have an endemic sectarian perspective. According to empirical research in 2010, the majority of respondents did not recognize differences between Sunni and Shia orders and did not appear to be able to qualify differences between the two.⁴² This is an important distinction to make in contrast to Muslim majority regions elsewhere, where political dialogue is often rife with sectarian divisions.⁴³ It is evident that Islam as an apolitical religious identity can be a unifying factor

³⁷ CSIS Report (2011)

³⁸ Somun (2011)

³⁹ CSIS Report (2011)

⁴⁰ Pew Forum (2010)

⁴¹ Mavrommatis and Tsihiridou (2012)

⁴² Pew Forum (2010)

⁴³ Ibid

between adherents in the Balkans. By proxy, this cements a connection to a large Muslim majority country opposite but adjacent to the Balkans.

A historically significant Muslim presence adjacent to the Turkish border is found in Greece and Bulgaria. Both states have Turkish-speaking Muslim populations as well as Slavic Muslims, in addition to a small contingent of Muslim Roma.⁴⁴ However, while discourse on the Turkish minority in Bulgaria is plentiful,⁴⁵ Greek Thrace holds three ethnic minorities adhering to a non-official religion, allowed to remain in Greece and acquire citizenship following the population exchanges between Greece and Turkey under the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne.⁴⁶ Here the matter of identity is obscure, especially for the Pomaks, Bulgarian-speaking adherents of Islam located within Greek borders. A uniquely traditional society still carrying on ceremonies of *panyir* and relying on the guidance of *babas* and the village *muhtar*, they are a marginalized group.

Notwithstanding linguistic differences to the Turkish minority, Pomaks are undergoing a process of homogenization by the Greek and Turkish governments alike. Due to the recent acceptance of the similar Alevi order by the Turkish government and Pomak access to Turkish satellite media, there is now a perceived link between these two Sufi orders.⁴⁷ Moreover, the entry of Turkish Sunni *hodjas* as spiritual leaders into Thrace has brought on insistence of an orthodox form of worship, advocating a state-centered approach to Islam. Furthermore, many *tekkes* acting as places of formal social gathering which promote an Alevi-Bektashi shared identity have strong backing from the Turkish state, mainly through cultural associations organized through the Turkish consul in Komotini.⁴⁸ Such networks combining the largest of *tekkes* have the potential to help this Greek minority look across borders for support rather than seek assistance from their resident state. It is also important to note that as the Pomak community remains weakly connected to surrounding society, they rely on the Turkish consul for work opportunity in their area. It is documented in Tsibiridou's study that the most successful laborers involved in the consul program are Turkish speakers.

There are two institutions retaining considerable influence on coordination of Islamic life in the Balkans. The official Turkish Presidency of Islamic Affairs (also called the Diyanet) maintains a network between mosques and Islamic communities across Europe for

⁴⁴ Tsibiridou (2007)

⁴⁵ Gözdayin (2010)

⁴⁶ Mavrommatis and Tsibiridou (2012)

⁴⁷ Ibid

⁴⁸ Ibid

immigrant Turks and native Muslims.⁴⁹ The Fethullah Gülen movement founded by its namesake writer in the 1960's and primarily involved in the educational sector, stipulates a moderate view of Islam, rejects political Islamism and advocates a globalist perspective as opposed to the preexisting statism of Turkey.⁵⁰ These two institutions combine an official and non-state approach of Turkish affairs for Islam in the Balkans, potentially giving an appearance of plurality within a common faith.

The Diyanet establishes itself in localities by using non-state immigrant organizations as a platform. The initial objective of the Diyanet was support for mosque associations and promotion of a state-sponsored image of Islam.⁵¹ However, since 1998 another aim of the Diyanet is cross-religious/cultural dialogue. While its influence is not as extensive in the Balkans as in Western European immigrant communities, counselors of religious services are employed in several former Yugoslav states.⁵² Notably, the Diyanet in each area has these counselors maintaining rapport with the consuls and embassies, as liaisons between them and the targeted public.⁵³ Similar to the effects of the Diyanet, Turkey was able to establish a Turkish cultural center in Novi Pazar, in the Serbian region of Sandžak where a large portion of Muslims reside. Moreover, Turkey has participated in mediation talks between the three core communities there, and diminishing calls for local autonomy from Serbia.⁵⁴

As opposed to state-sponsored institutions organizing and maintaining Islamic life outside of Turkey, Fethullah Gülen schools which are present in 120 countries, have 20 such institutions established in Bosnia-Herzegovina, FYROM and Kosovo.⁵⁵ Although this movement promotes "interfaith dialogue" just as the Diyanet began in 1998, this non-governmental institution appears to tackle the dilemma of coexistence in an inevitably globalized society through a deeper philosophical lens than simple "dialogue". A value placed by the Gülen movement is pragmatic reasoning, claimed to do away with the need of modern materialism present in society today.⁵⁶ It is evident that Gülen's rejection of physical materialism is directly related to his philosophical criticism of reductionism,⁵⁷ placing importance on mankind's inherent need for religion. According to Gözdayin, these

⁴⁹ Gözdayin (2010)

⁵⁰ Kuru (2005)

⁵¹ Gözdayin (2010)

⁵² Ibid

⁵³ Ibid

⁵⁴ CSIS Report

⁵⁵ Ibid

⁵⁶ Gözdayin (2010)

⁵⁷ En.fgulen.com

secondary schools operating across Southeastern Europe promote such a philosophy in the setting of a preparatory college.

In addition to Gülen institutions and the Diyanet's presence, the Turgut Özal Education Company opened secondary education schools in Albania to much acclaim.⁵⁸ Turkish universities such as International Burch University as well as IUS in Sarajevo, Epoka University in Tirana and the International Balkan University in Skopje also take part in the scholarship system previously mentioned.⁵⁹

Economy

A second important contributor to soft power is the actual economic power of Turkey. Although an existing culture provides the familiarity and prestige of an Ottoman heritage, a conducive backing of its cultural ideals is required. A powerful economy acts as a quantifiable outcome, the product of how these ideals interact with each other in creating a rational, functional system which will sufficiently provide for its contributors. As previously mentioned, Turkey transitioned from maintaining an effectively closed economy with methods of self-reliance and import substitution to liberalizing trade and capital markets beginning in the early 1980's.⁶⁰ These reforms encouraged international trade that by 2008, Import-Export revenues contributed to 52.3 percent of GDP.⁶¹ Turkey's nominal GDP in 2010 was 734 billion USD, estimated to grow to 778 billion USD in 2012.⁶² It is ranked 17th in nominal GDP, and according to experts at Goldman Sachs, it is likely to breach the top 10 group of national economies by 2050.⁶³

Much of this growth can be credited to the transition to a more open economy, resembling the image of the Washington Consensus. Following market liberalization during Özal's period in 1989, all barriers to international capital movements were removed.⁶⁴ Furthermore, competition laws were accepted, regulation of patents installed, establishment of rudimentary property rights was undertaken, in aim for EU accession. However, current institution-building in the economy has not been sufficient to match with development and growth. According to Togan, issues such as property rights still remain

⁵⁸ CSIS Report

⁵⁹ Ibid

⁶⁰ Ahmad (1993)

⁶¹ Evin et al. (2010)

⁶² Economist Intelligence Unit (2012)

⁶³ Brljavac (2011)

⁶⁴ Togan (2009)

incomplete in addition to minimal social inclusion (social safety net), rule of law, contract agreements, elimination of technical barriers to trade and service liberalization. Institutional performance is rated poorly in Turkey.⁶⁵ If the proper institutions are not established and improved in the coming years, assuming growth and development will continue in Turkey, the economic situation will end up in chaos. Furthermore, as stipulated by Lejour, in addition to sluggish economic growth, foreign direct investment will inevitably suffer as a result of institutional underperformance.

With regards to liberalization of state services, it is mentioned that lawmakers remain uneasy to privatize, fearing that it may upset society which perceives state services belonging to the Turkish nation.⁶⁶ This can be seen as a direct effect of the statist principle of Kemalism, indeed leaving a lasting effect on social institutions. This leads to a side question, whether the state diet of Kemalism is compatible with liberal democracy of a free-trading market economy and the potency of such a spoiler to a Washington Consensus-style economy. Furthermore, this calls into question if Turkey can remain a notable destination for foreign direct investment.

Between 2000 and 2008, GDP rose annually by an average of 5.9 percent. However, Turkey was not immune to the effects of the world financial crisis that followed in 2008.⁶⁷ According to the Economist Intelligence Unit, Turkey faced a severe shock of negative growth of -4.9 percent in 2009, rebounding in 2010 with a 9 percent growth rate. However, estimates of future GDP levels indicate a second slowdown in growth. Furthermore, trade negative trade imbalances have been present for years and are predicted to continue a path of further disparity.⁶⁸ Since the liberalizing reforms of the 1980's, where Turkish deficit was at 2 billion USD, through the years it had increased to 77.1 billion USD by 2011.⁶⁹ According to Business New Europe as well as to İzmen and Yılmaz, this deficit is largely in part to energy imports, in which a large portion is sourced from Russia.

External debt has also been an issue during the past decade with AKP (Justice and Development Party)'s rise to power. Nonetheless, as it has continued to grow, the rate of accumulation of equity is tapering off.⁷⁰ In terms of unemployment, there has been a noticeable fluctuation in the percentage of jobless workers in the past three years. The

⁶⁵ Lejour (2009)

⁶⁶ Cooper (2002)

⁶⁷ Evin et al. (2010)

⁶⁸ Economist Intelligence Unit (2012)

⁶⁹ Ibid

⁷⁰ Ibid

unemployment rate in January 2009 was 21 percent, then reaching a low of 12 percent in early 2011, and rose again toward the end of 2011 to 15 percent.⁷¹ While this rate is in line with the Eurozone economies at current, such a fluctuation and such high rates of unemployment demonstrate that Turkey has not managed to remain adroit the past few years.

Another erratic fluctuation is that of Turkey's global credit rating. According to Zaman's news article on September 20, 2011, the credit agency Standard and Poor's upgraded Turkey's rating to BBB-, a first in Turkey's history where its credit marked was deemed investment grade.⁷² Stock markets rallied on that day at the Istanbul Stock Exchange. However, this euphoria was short-lived. According to an article by Bloomberg on May 1, 2012, S&P downgraded Turkey below investment grade, citing "high external debt and the state budget's reliance on indirect tax revenues".⁷³ Showing increased faith in Turkish financial affairs, ratings agency Fitch upgraded Turkey's status to BBB-, citing Turkey's currency Issuer Default Rating as investment grade. Nonetheless, Moody's and S&P maintain their judgments below investment grade, and the prerequisite for inclusion in bond indexes is the approval by two of these three agencies.⁷⁴

Turkey maintains free trade agreements with all countries in Southeastern Europe, except Kosovo.⁷⁵ By 2008, total foreign trade volume between Turkey and Balkan states had increased from 2.9 billion USD in 2000⁷⁶ to 18.4 billion USD by 2011.⁷⁷ Moreover, as previously mentioned, visa-free travel into Turkey and back from the Balkans has allowed for reduced transactions costs between both areas, and indeed has proven successful. From 2000 to 2008, trade by former Yugoslav states and Albania with Turkey had increased by 84 percent.⁷⁸ While currently 55 percent of Turkish export trade is done with the EU, the most rapid growth in the past two decades has been in Southeast Europe, citing a twentyfold increase in trade revenues.⁷⁹ This growth appears to be very strong and implies a momentum for Turkish business within the Balkan region.

⁷¹ Economist Intelligence Unit (2012)

⁷² Zaman (2011)

⁷³ Bloomberg (2012)

⁷⁴ Reuters (5 November 2012)

⁷⁵ Turkish Ministry of Economy (2012)

⁷⁶ Brljavac (2011)

⁷⁷ Turkish Ministry of Economy (2012)

⁷⁸ CSIS Report, 25th April, 2011

⁷⁹ Evin et al. (2010)

Notwithstanding that trade figures with the Balkans are marginal—in 2009, a mere 6.7 percent of total Turkish exports,⁸⁰ it appears that its largest markets are Romania (12th largest market in exports worldwide), Bulgaria (21st largest) and Greece (23rd largest). According to Hisarciklilar and Kayam (20, Turkish-produced goods have the ability to sell due to competitive pricing in local countries. All states in the region, with the exception of Kosovo, have signed agreements preventing double taxation as well as bilateral investment and promotion agreements (except Kosovo and Montenegro).⁸¹

Foreign direct investment (FDI) by Turkey in the Balkans is steadily increasing. 30 million USD of investments were recorded by the Turkish Ministry of Economy in 2002, culminating to 189 million USD by 2011. As previously mentioned, Turkish acquisition of 49 percent ownership of BiH Airlines demonstrates regional leadership on the part of Turkish Airlines. Another notable investment was Turkish financing stake of 85 percent in construction of interstate highway, in Serbia.⁸² In 2010, a joint project to build a highway connecting Serbia to Albania via Kosovo worth 700 million EUR between Turkish ENKA and U.S. Bechtel engineering firms was signed, in addition to another project between three Turkish firms, Kolin, Juksel, and Makwo, to build a highway between Belgrade and the Montenegro coast.⁸³ In May 2010, Turkish LIMAK won a 20-year contract to manage Prishtina International Airport.⁸⁴

Aside from construction projects, substantial Turkish investment in banks and telecommunications has been noteworthy. The establishment of Turkish Ziraat Bank Bosnia in 1997 was the first foreign capitalized bank in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Following Kosovo's independence, Turk Ekonimi Bankasi opened offices in Pristina, in addition to the founding of Banka Kombetare Tregtare in Albania.⁸⁵ Moreover, in 2007, Çalık-Turk Telekom successfully took over Albanian Albtelecom.⁸⁶ Other states pale in comparison to FDI figures in Romania, reporting 5.5 billion USD in 2011. The areas of banking, insurance and housing are core sectors of investment, and there are currently 166 projects undertaken by Turkish firms.⁸⁷

⁸⁰ CSIS Report, 25th April, 2011

⁸¹ Turkish Ministry of Economy (2012)

⁸² Brljavac (2011)

⁸³ CSIS Report, 25th April, 2011

⁸⁴ Balkan Insight

⁸⁵ CSIS (2011)

⁸⁶ Balkan Insight

⁸⁷ Turkish Ministry of Economy (2012)

In spite of marked unemployment, high inflation, high external debt and poorly performing institutions, Turkey has demonstrated definite improvement in its GDP from previous years. More recently, Economy Minister Çağlayan reported that exports through May 2012 increased by 7.3 percent compared to the same time period last year, and predicts the economy is on target for its attempted growth rate of on target for its attempted growth rate of 4 percent for 2012.⁸⁸ Regardless of what Turkish ministers claim, the figures listed above appear discouraging and the international community, taking into account influential credit ratings, appears to express doubt on the stability of Turkish capital markets.

Turkey has made incredible progress in raw GDP figures. However, what is evident is a lack of real stability in the system. Although the Turkish lira is significantly stronger today than its abysmal performance in the 1990's⁸⁹, inflation remains a constant problem, which will perhaps lead analysts to recall the "boom-bust" cycles of the previous decades.⁹⁰ Even as recently as 2002, inflation was recorded at 45 percent.⁹¹ According to the Economist Intelligence Unit, coinciding with government targets of 4 percent GDP growth, 2012 was indeed a year of fluctuating inflation rates, beginning with 10.4 percent. This peaked to 11 percent in April,⁹² dropping to a 14-month trough of 6.4 percent in November.⁹³ Furthermore, each source in this paragraph predicts a bottoming out of inflation in 2013 to circa 5 percent. This diminishment of inflation coincides with an estimated closing GDP growth for 2012 at 3.2 percent, below government expectations.⁹⁴

Foreign direct investment within Turkey is substantial. Prior to the global financial crisis in 2008, over 3,500 foreign-affiliated companies had opened offices in Turkey since 2000.⁹⁵ Much of Turkey's growth in the past three decades following the liberalizing reforms owe to capital inflows and foreign firms.⁹⁶ According to the World Bank, Turkey is on par with the rest of the region, and exceeds its income group in its credit rating, regulatory quality, on the World Bank's index of economic freedom and control of corruption. However, one area significantly below par is the political risk rating, ranking poorly in

⁸⁸ Hurriyet (2012)

⁸⁹ Economist Intelligence Unit (2012)

⁹⁰ Cooper (2002)

⁹¹ World Bank (2011)

⁹² London Southeast News

⁹³ Today's Zaman, 3rd December, 2012

⁹⁴ Business New Europe

⁹⁵ İzmen and Yılmaz (2009)

⁹⁶ Economist Intelligence Unit (2012)

government stability in 2011.⁹⁷ Along with political instability, other hurdles to doing business in Turkey are lack of available local finance and perceived high taxation, especially on labor.⁹⁸ Areas of high performance in the business environment are the number of days required to start a business (8 days to establish a limited liability company—markedly quicker than the European average), property registration and the legal protection of shareholders, in which state law on FDI stipulates equal rights for foreign and domestic investors, and face constitutional restrictions in line with international law.⁹⁹

It is evident that Turkey has incredible economic will, demonstrated especially during its liberalizing reforms undertaken by Özal in the 1980's and under the current stewardship of the AKP. Successive governments have shown a commitment to open trade and business abroad, in line with the current neoliberal hegemony, and receiving favorable opinions in doing business inside borders. Coupled with its large population of 76 million (World Bank), Turkey does indeed possess an ability which can be used to persuade. However, of these 76 million, 12.6 percent over the age of 15 remain illiterate and However taking into account the aforementioned situation, economic stability does not yet have a solid record, and while analysts at the Economist Intelligence Unit as well as İzmen and Yılmaz emphasize upon projections of the Turkish economy and the effects of reforms, macroeconomic stabilization remains unseen.

Foreign Policy

Foreign Minister Davutoğlu outlined Turkey's foreign policy primarily emphasizing a complementary and not "competitive" policy. That is, it is Turkey's best aim to work on a multilateral level with other states having a similar foothold in regions, sharing responsibilities of providing security, such as the Balkans.¹⁰⁰ Davutoğlu further outlined five points of foreign policy pursuit. The first is defined as a balance between democracy and security within the Turkish Republic. That is, there is a necessity of democratic governance and respect of human rights for successful implantation of soft power in the regions outside the borders. Coinciding with soft power, a policy of "zero problems" with neighbors is something for which Turkey strives. This involves bilateral and multilateral free trade

⁹⁷ World Bank (2011)

⁹⁸ İzmen and Yılmaz (2009)

⁹⁹ Ibid

¹⁰⁰ Davutoglu (2007)

agreements and open dialogue on issues obstructing progress.¹⁰¹ A number of agreements were made with both Greece and Bulgaria, including a Friendship Treaty with Bulgaria following its post-communist regime change.¹⁰²

Davutoğlu's third point of expanding relations with neighboring regions is being continuously applied to the Balkans. This can be exemplified by the cases of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo following the dissolution of Yugoslavia. This principle was accomplished with the ideal of complementary foreign policy, working with NATO, the US and the EU in working to resolve the crisis following the war. Turkey was actively involved in peacekeeping operations in Bosnia following the war, as well as stationing 1,000 troops in Kosovo.¹⁰³ Furthermore, after declaration of independence of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in 1991, Turkey was the first state to found an embassy in Skopje.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, Turkey had signed a number of free trade agreements with Albania as well in the late 1990's, but such efforts were overshadowed by Greece's prior dominance in the area.¹⁰⁵

A multilateral approach, as previously mentioned is also emphasized by Turkey as a fourth point to its foreign policy. It is about recognizing states and their sovereignty as well as historical presence, and actively working with foreign governments to achieve common goals. A complementary approach to diplomacy appears very attractive to other governments for exactly the reasons mentioned. There exists a concept of a shared responsibility as well as shared benefits, of which can be negotiated with a communicative foreign ministry as Turkey's.

The fifth point provides a future goal for Turkey, that of "rhythmic diplomacy". This involves a skilled coordination for cooperation of other states under Turkey's aegis. Outside the Balkans, such a tactic has included Turkey in the past having hosted a summit for resolution of sovereignty conflict between Pakistan and Afghanistan or participating as an observer in Arab League or African Union, as well as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).¹⁰⁶ In the Balkans, such procedures have brought together former belligerents of the Yugoslav Wars in a gesture of regional cooperation among them. This type of conflict resolution was pushed forward by the Istanbul Declaration in 2010, with the aim to stop future conflicts by way of promoting democracy throughout the region in

¹⁰¹ Ibid

¹⁰² Brljavac (2011)

¹⁰³ Sayari (2000)

¹⁰⁴ Ibid

¹⁰⁵ Ibid

¹⁰⁶ Davutoglu (2007)

hopes of EU accession.¹⁰⁷ This meeting culminated in Serbian legislators issuing the Srebrenica Declaration, a formal apology for the Srebrenica massacre committed by Ratko Mladić's Bosnian Serb forces during the Yugoslav Wars.¹⁰⁸ Consequently, TİKA, Turkey's humanitarian aid agency, aside from healthcare and crop aid, has been instrumental in reconstruction and development of Islamic institutions in the Western Balkans following the Yugoslav Wars.¹⁰⁹ This includes updating of mosques and Ottoman monuments, in synchronization with the Diyanet and the Turkish Ministry of Culture.¹¹⁰

As the economic sector of Turkey may remain in want of a complete liberal institutional development, it is apparent that the diplomatic sector and civil society institutions are being given intense attention. Since its foundation in 2010, the Office of Public Diplomacy acts to communicate and inform the international community of Turkish developments, to inform and publicly clarify policy goals and the Turkish image abroad. Furthermore, it acts as a regulator of international organizations originating in Turkey, enforcing communication and a coordinated policy between non-governmental organizations and the public sector.¹¹¹

Turkey's potential status as an energy transit country could prove to be a bargaining chip in foreign policy. The Nabucco pipeline sourced from Azerbaijan would be able to pass through Turkey to provide gas to central Europe, passing through Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary to its terminus near Vienna. Such a construction project is deemed to relieve Europe of its reliance on Russia for energy provision.¹¹² Turkey's position, while not a producer, would have the power to provide and "unprovide" energy for the Balkans, as well as the rest of Europe. If built, the Nabucco pipeline would provide Turkey with an awesome force of biopower, as described by Foucault, where governments can determine the sheer existence of whole populations.¹¹³ While the situation is a hypothetical and unlikely, Turkey would indeed be endowed with the power to determine the fate of human lives during a winter cold snap.

Moreover, the implications of Turkey involved in regional pipeline politics with Russia could complicate affairs between all parties including producers, transit countries and

¹⁰⁷ Brljavac (2011)

¹⁰⁸ CSIS Report

¹⁰⁹ Ibid

¹¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹¹ Kalin (2011)

¹¹² Evin et al. (2010)

¹¹³ Foucault—The Will of Power (1976)

consuming countries. For example, in expressing interest for laying down a pipeline in the Caspian Sea to bring through Turkmen natural gas, Russia voiced its opposition.¹¹⁴ In a report provided by whistleblower Wikileaks in 2011, an advisor of SOCAR expressed Russian opposition to sale of Azerbaijani natural gas to Europe. Stipulating that if joint-stock company GAZPROM would import supplies, all gas from Azerbaijan would be routed exclusively to Russia, and not as intended through the Nabucco line.¹¹⁵ It is important to note that Russia is one of Turkey's largest trading partners, providing Turkey with one-third of imported oil and two-thirds of imported gas. Clearly, interests are already crisscrossed through Asia Minor, and the Nabucco pipeline can also act as a complicating factor to Turkish foreign policy. Dependency on Russian import and export of energy is a major constraint to Turkish foreign policy in the Caucasus, Central Asia and Middle East.

Another current conflict of interest with Russia regards the Syrian civil war. While the rebel Free Syrian Army (FSA) battles against government forces, the conflict spilled across the Syria-Turkey border in September 2012, with shells fired by Syrian forces landing on Turkish territory.¹¹⁶ Turkey responded by initiating cross-border operations, also firing artillery.¹¹⁷ In October 2012, Turkey forcibly ground a Syrian-registered civilian aircraft flying from Russia to Syria, revealing a cargo containing "munitions" and other materiel upon inspection.¹¹⁸

Nonetheless, Turkey acquired the responsibility filling the void of a hegemonic power following the Cold War in interest of state security, and the awards are clear. Participation in international forums and spearheading initiatives concerning issues at a geographical distance from Turkey has demonstrated initiative on the part of the foreign ministry. An instinctual use of a common heritage throughout the regions it pursues gives Turkey an edge that no other major power can currently match. Opposed to the stick-and-carrot diplomacy of the US, Turkish familiarity and common identity, if properly packaged, can be used to achieve goals for both parties involved.¹¹⁹ Neither replicating a Western hegemony nor aggressively promoting an expansionist agenda, Turkey acts communicatively and actively engages other state leaders and international organizations according to its

¹¹⁴ Evin et al. (2010)

¹¹⁵ Wikileaks

¹¹⁶ Reuters (9 October 2012)

¹¹⁷ Wall Street Journal Online (2012)

¹¹⁸ BBC News Europe (11 October 2012)

¹¹⁹ Kalin (2011)

needs. It appears though, that affairs regarding immediate security of Turkey do indeed receive coercive responses such as the aircraft incident.

Moreover, illustrated in the previous paragraphs, active policies of involvement in region cooperation are bound to draw other states into conflict. This is evident in that Turkey's ambitious efforts conflicts of interest will ultimately reach a critical mass and decisive, immediate action will become necessary. However, the future will depend on Turkey's commitment to the five principles described by Davutoğlu. Thus far, vis-à-vis diplomatic tactics, Turkey's goals and its participation in these cases have demonstrated credibility and an ability to persuade by local engagement and leadership of regional initiative.

Democracy

Turkey's history regarding a crest-and-trough democracy and its legitimacy in legislation has come a long way since the entrance of the AKP in 2002. A history marked by four coups d'état by the military and legislative actions initially dominated by the state establishment did not bode well for Turkey's standing as a liberal democracy.¹²⁰ A statist ideology promoted by the modern day father of the republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, with a strict interpretation of secularism, strongly opposed to any overtly Islamic elements in public life.¹²¹ At the mass level, Turkish statism resulted in a fixation on maintaining publicly-owned enterprises. However, with the advent of trade liberalization in the mid-1980's a new class of entrepreneurs manifested, pious and not favoring a western lifestyle.¹²² Money with a new image came about, and the political scene needed to respond accordingly.

The mid-1990's coalition between Tansu Ciller's True Path Party and the Islamic Refah Party was considered an anomaly in the eyes of the state elite and the military. Supported by the Milli Görüş movement, a statist, anti-globalist Islamic institution, Necmettin Erbakan rose to the position of prime minister in this coalition.¹²³ As a change of action, in 1997, the military did not directly intervene this time, and simply handed a memorandum to the state council pressuring for a resignation of government and this

¹²⁰ Ahmad (1993)

¹²¹ Bozarlan (2006)

¹²² Kuru (2005)

¹²³ Ibid

resignation did indeed occur.¹²⁴ Erbakan's Refah Party was subsequently dissolved, and he was banned from participating in politics by the Supreme Court a year later.¹²⁵ Nonetheless, this was a turning point in which the military recognized its limit. Moreover, following AKP's former Refah politician Recep Tayyip Erdoğan rise to prime minister in 2002, by 2004, the authority of the National Security Council, overrun with military generals, was transformed into a civilian institution.¹²⁶

The rise of AKP in 2002 was reflection of popular will and domestic power, now more accurately represented by individuals benefitting from market liberalization, namely the entrepreneurial "Anatolian Tigers", forming the business association of MUSIAD separate from the Istanbul establishment's TUSIAD.¹²⁷ The AKP enjoy a majority in the Turkish parliament with Recep Tayyip Erdoğan at the head of government. It is now claimed that the political elite are now competently representing the will of their constituents in parliament, and no longer solely subscribing to a clientelist machine that once determined domestic policy.¹²⁸

Another essential component of a liberal democracy is steadily growing, of civil society. According to Joseph Nye's claim, civil society is the locus of soft power.¹²⁹ And as mentioned earlier, the democratization of Turkey itself enhances its soft power abroad, convincing the global community the legitimacy of Turkey's identification as such. There exist numerous organizations within Turkey which push for causes outside of parliament, contributing to a genuine function of a liberal democracy. Currently, there exist over 60,000 civil society organizations in Turkey.¹³⁰ The Turkish state monopoly on mass media was ended in the early 1990's, and there now exist a plurality of independent media disseminating information to the public.¹³¹

If civil society is applied in an anthropological approach, including informal organization of citizens, then the Mavi Marmara Incident demonstrates the power of civil society today in Turkey quite well. Erdoğan's impassioned reaction to then-ally Israel's heavy-handed response to the flotilla (Evin, et al., 2005) demonstrated the scale of influence

¹²⁴ Ahmad (1993)

¹²⁵ Kuru (2005)

¹²⁶ Rumelili (2011)

¹²⁷ Kuru (2005)

¹²⁸ Ahmad (1993)

¹²⁹ Altinay (2008)

¹³⁰ Caylak (2008)

¹³¹ Kuru (2005)

that civil society may project on government policy. While support of Israel under the AKP may have floundered before the rise of AKP, this event brings human rights to the fore of political discussion. According to Evin et al., Turkey has shown renewed commitment to fighting human trafficking across its borders.¹³²

Another essential component is Turkey's participation in international organizations such as OSCE, NATO, and the European Council¹³³ which indicate aspirations of joining the European Union, demonstrate a willingness to adhere and maintain liberal democratic ideals. Furthermore Turkey has taken upon itself to encourage foreign journalists and academic studies on the country, unprecedented in such volume. For example, in 2002 the number of foreign correspondents registered was 65, and by 2009, 265 were registered.¹³⁴ Such increased transparency to foreign analysis demonstrates a confidence of its image and capabilities to present to the foreign press and academia.

Notwithstanding the number of foreign journalists involved in Turkish affairs, in 2011, it was recorded that over 100 Turkish journalists are incarcerated for publishing illegal material.¹³⁵ The Kurdish situation remains a problem at home and in the perceptions of the international community. Reforms nonetheless are in progress, albeit much belated. In 2002, legislation was passed allowing for the broadcast of the Kurdish language on television and radio, and the state of emergency southeast Turkey was finally removed. In addition to several leftist websites, a number of pro-Kurdish news sites are continuously face blocks by the judiciary.¹³⁶ The following year, teaching of the Kurdish language was allowed, albeit not as a minority language course, but in the provision of private lessons.¹³⁷

Yet this transition to a civil society does not have its difficult moments. Most outstandingly is informal street intimidation and formal incarceration of writers critical to traditional Kemalist ideals,¹³⁸ bizarrely compared to rosy image of foreign correspondants encouraged to visit and report on Turkey. Further attested by Altinay, brutal force used by police on protestors without facing any reprimand from government indicates a lack of faith in civil rights and freedom of expression in criticizing the government. For Kurdish civil rights, the dismemberment of the PKK after the capture of its leader, Abdullah Öcalan, allowed the

¹³² Evin et al. (2010)

¹³³ Kalin (2011)

¹³⁴ Ibid

¹³⁵ Democracy Digest (2012)

¹³⁶ Akdeniz and Altiparmak (2008)

¹³⁷ Rumelili (2011)

¹³⁸ Altinay (2008)

government to take a relaxed stance with the Kurdish issue. However, if the situation should arise once more, there is a high likelihood that Turkey will respond with force within its own borders.¹³⁹ In the case of democratic values being promoted there seems to be a clash with the state philosophy of Kemalism. While AKP appears to be rolling back some more obstructive elements of rigid secularism¹⁴⁰ allowing for further religious freedoms, it would appear that Turkey must reevaluate the uses and importance of Kemalism in Turkey today.

A graver historical issue is that of the Armenian Genocide, which has not been acknowledged by any government official, often seen as an insult to “Turkishness”.¹⁴¹ States applying soft power today, which have committed acts of genocide in the past such as Germany for its policy of mass killings of Jews, Roma, Slavs and other groups during World War II, have officially declared so, providing reparations for lives and property lost. What is most striking is that through the Istanbul Declaration in 2010, Turkey led a multilateral discussion aimed to help Serbia confront its ghosts of ethnic cleansing in Bosnia. In this era of reconciliation and international involvement, Turkey will continue to face a major setback in the Armenian affair. A large Armenian-American lobby in the United States pushes for US recognition of the Ottoman massacre as genocide, and numerous US politicians have been vocal of their support for this measure.¹⁴² Several EU states have recognized this as genocide, and are vocal for Turkey’s recognition.¹⁴³

In the case of assessing the situation of democracy, it can be said that since its establishment as a republic, through military coups and domestic conflict, Turkey is striding toward a democratic system which emphasizes plurality and economic liberalism, and cautiously sanctions a system of open communication and dialogue between its citizens and the elite. However, accounting for the issues mentioned above, Turkey is not a full democracy at this point. Its maintenance of an authoritarian state philosophy and lack of crucial reforms continues to and will keep hindering its prospects of becoming a fully-fledged democracy. The Kemalist elements of nationalism, secularism and statism keep the country in an ideological deadlock and at a crossroads of amending this code or continuing to utilize it. With its recent legislation regarding privatization of state-owned enterprises and the loosening of religious restrictions, the AKP appears to making headway into a period of

¹³⁹ Cooper (2002)

¹⁴⁰ BBC News Europe (31 March 2012)

¹⁴¹ Cooper (2002)

¹⁴² Cameron (2002)

¹⁴³ Gordon and Taspinar (2006)

reform, although limited. The case for a functioning liberal democracy within Turkey remains weak and likely will not appear credible to many governments.

Conclusions

In light of the four pillars used to assess soft power in Turkey today and its potential for the Balkans, the use of soft power has its apparent strengths which can propel Turkey to the forefront of setting the agenda in this region. However, Turkey faces chronically unresolved issues that will continue to plague society and will provoke an image crisis if they are not adequately addressed. Each facet will be compactly overviewed in the buildup to the final resolution of soft power.

Turkey's diplomatic institutions are a great strength. The channel of communication it has offered to the world, in addition to a suggestion of complementary foreign policies demonstrate a capable, cooperative state willing to create a real future for the surrounding regions. The broad, yet well-defined policy guidelines set out by foreign minister Davutoglu provide a favorable image the international community wishes to see, emanating qualities of a liaison between East and West through cultural strengths.

Inside the diplomatic corps, there is a real coordination of policy between state and non-state entities, ensuring the export of a cohesive message. Since the collapse of communism, Turkey was quick to react in formalizing diplomatic relations with the Balkan states and supporting ones following devastating wars, which established a precedent sure to serve its future interests in the region. Reiterating, the biopower potential of the Nabucco pipeline is tremendous for Turkey's influence on the Balkans. In short, Turkey's quick reaction to crisis situations and construction of diplomatic institutions give it the power and prove its power to take control of these situations and produce a positive-sum outcome.

Primarily, Turkey has a huge historical significance on the Balkans that involves many shared experiences and worldviews. While this facet of Turkey's soft power may not win the power battle single-handedly, Turkey cannot win without it. Where the United States and the European Union failed to engage local leaders into cooperation, Turkey has an institutional and cultural memory that allows both parties to find an understanding between them without an immediate need for the predominant carrot-and-stick approach. Academic discourse regarding the Balkans is filled with references to the cultural "Other", a different, exclusive community. As Western Europe perceives the Balkans, although part of Europe, as

the “Other”¹⁴⁴, the Balkans transitively see Turkey as this “Other”. However, such a past, with the proper engagement of media broadcasts can inoke images of a more familiar “Other”.

Economically, Turkey appears to have been quite adventurous and not averse to risk-taking. Its credibility though is lacking in the sense that effects of its actions result in unstable cycles of cut credit ratings, high inflation and high unemployment. A lack of effective institutions would appear to tarnish Turkey’s attempt for a reputation of fiscal responsibility. Nonetheless, nominal GDP continues to rise, and stable growth amidst a global financial crisis is expected in 2013. Furthermore, in the midst of a European crisis where economies are contracting, Balkan states can look to other areas of opportunity, including Turkey. Turkey’s driving force of soft power is its economic production.

In terms of democratic credentials, Turkey is in a perceived stage of development. While this may not necessarily hinder soft power in the Balkan region, internal government actions, namely facing the Kurdish problem do elucidate a flawed side of the Turkish state. Nations which witnessed ethnic conflict, on TV and to the fullest extent, in real life, are not liable look favorably upon the Kurdish issue. The key point here is that the democratic process is in a phase of development, which does not necessarily ensure a liberal democratic end. AKP or succeeding party decisions in Turkey’s venture into civil society and transnational involvement will funnel the path it can take as further developments occur in the region.

Turkey has tremendous potential for maneuvering in the Balkans using a soft power approach. Yet this potential remains largely unproven. Turkey still vacillates between clinging onto a traditional, statist philosophy and modernizing into a mature liberal democracy modeling the West. In order to realize complete soft power as wielded by a liberal democracy, further reforms of economic institutions and political realities need to be made. However, as the governing elite realizes and has begun to promote, Turkey does not belong exclusively to the West. A mix of Occident, Orient and economic liberalism do not guarantee a Western carbon copy. The most interesting development during AKP governance is the founding of a public diplomacy office. While acting as a public relations institution and monitoring civil society functions, these activities are not far removed from the functions of the oft-criticized, omnipresent “Ministry of information” found in authoritarian Middle Eastern capitals.

¹⁴⁴ Karosmanoglu (2009)

At this time, this is a state composed of questionable contradictions. Civil society, the foundation of breaking state autocracy and sowing a pluralist society, is encouraged but regulated under an official state office. Reporters from abroad are invited to reside in Turkey, a state with one of the highest numbers of incarcerated journalists worldwide. The foreign ministry seeks active cooperation with neighboring states with a shared culture to solve interethnic disputes, but continues to oppress a sizable linguistic minority within its own borders. Most provocatively, the Turkish government encourages other states' recognition of atrocities committed when it cannot openly confront its own past misconduct. Democracy is Turkey's weakest pillar.

Turkey's venture into soft power is at most, a decade-old experiment. As it was once an armed gatekeeper against communism during the Cold War, that role evaporated quickly. Recalling the card game analogy, while there does indeed exist an institutional memory harking back to Ottoman administration of the surrounding regions, this memory was not formed in an era of liberal capitalism. Turkey will be forced to raise the stakes and "up its ante" in dealing with the Balkans, as well as the Middle East, and if it does not, its influence will inevitably wane. Soft power potential is undisputed, but interaction with the nature of its neighbors, as the Turkish foreign ministry is so keen to extrapolate upon, may be the roadblock to realizing soft power. Surrounded by regions where diplomatic language is based on coercion and incentives, and often leads to violent conflict, Turkey will have to adjust its rhetoric in opportune situations. In the escalating situations of Syria and Iran, Turkey may not have to relinquish its soft power in intergovernmental affairs, as previously mentioned a portion of soft power can be founded on hard power. It would appear that in all areas around Turkey, the cards have been stacked centuries ago and Turkey will need to continue to play the game, with changed rules.

In the specific case of the Balkans, the prospect of EU accession remains far more attractive than it does for Turkey. European soft power, having a longer history and a non-polemic society, has a cause for legitimacy. No violent conflicts have occurred in any EU states, save Slovenia and Croatia, since World War Two. The image of a European Union, free of involvement in wars will remain a more recent and more prosperous image than of a shared Ottoman past. Turkey is apt to supplement areas where Western Europe has proved unsuccessful, in terms of cultural understanding, yet its economic power against the European Union is incomparable.

Ultimately, culture will remain Turkey's strength, and if coupled with the forces of a liberalized economy and a large, educated population churning out an abundance of human capital, it will reendow this state with a superior advantage beyond other present major powers.

5. Counterpoint Resolution

Given Turkey's long, undulating history, a soft power image can be easily reduced to mere words. If the incoming government continues with the status quo management described in this essay, and does not relinquish its perceptions a need for "balance" between security and democracy, this behavior will indisputably lead to adherence of coercive power beyond borders. The current Syrian conflict will be a testing ground for Turkish response to security threats, and how the case for international dialogue and "zero-problems" will progress with illiberal states like Syria. Effectiveness of soft power application and to what extent Turkey wishes to remain a complementary actor will remain on display.

This essay examined the application of a pluralist, Western perception of soft power. In examination of state credibility, it is necessary adhering to the formal ideals of soft power, yet the criteria for soft power vary from case to case. Subsequently, the regional definition of soft power can eventually become malleable. If Turkey can effectively in the future obtain from its neighbors what it wishes without relying on coercive tactics, then the core argument for the need of pluralism in a democracy could be quashed.

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