
Globalization, Modernity and Democracy- Turkish Foreign Policy 2009 and Beyond

E. Fuat KEYMAN*

Abstract

The end of the Cold War meant the end of the 'buffer state' identity of Turkish foreign policy – an identity which was based mainly on the geopolitical position of Turkey in world politics. Since the 1990s, Turkey has been in search of a new identity, which has required a much more active and constructive foreign policy behavior. Furthermore, as the world has become more globalized, more interdependent, and more risky, having "strategic depth," this new foreign policy identity entailed the employment of not only geopolitics but also identity and economy. Thus, geopolitics, modernity and democracy have become the constitutive dimensions of Turkish foreign policy today. This development in Turkey's foreign policy identity and behavior has been perceived in global academic and public discourse as Turkey becoming a "key and pivotal actor of world politics." This paper explores the ways in which Turkish foreign policy would become effective and achieves its main aim, that is, to contribute to the creation of a fair, better, and democratic global governance.

Key Words

Pro-active foreign policy, the post-9/11 world, globalization, democratization, modernization, Turkey-EU relations.

Introduction

In his influential work on world politics in the post-Cold war era, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives*, published in 1997, Zbigniew Brzezinski suggests that "Turkey and Iran are not only important geostrategic players but are also geopolitical pivots, whose own internal condition is of critical importance to the fate of the region. Both are middle-sized powers, with strong regional aspirations and a sense of historical significance."¹ Of course, there have been radical changes in Turkey, as well as in world politics, since Brzezinski penned this description of Turkey in 1997. Yet, as it will be elaborated in what follows, Brzezinski's diagnostic statement about Turkey, and his important reminder that there is a link between the 'internal conditions' of a country and its 'foreign policy behavior/identity' has remained true. Turkey's 'geopolitical pivot' and regional power

* Director, Istanbul Policy Center; Professor of International Relations, Sabancı University, Turkey.

role in world politics has become even more important in recent years. Turkey has been expected to initiate a proactive, multidimensional and constructive foreign policy in many areas, ranging from contributing to peace and stability in the Middle East to playing an active role in countering terrorism and extremism, from becoming a new “energy hub” to acting as one of the architects of “the inter-civilization dialogue initiative,” aimed at producing a better vision of the world, based on dialogue, tolerance and coexistence.² Thus, there has been an upsurge of interest in, and a global attraction to, Turkey and its contemporary history. Moreover, the global attraction to the country has stemmed not only from the geopolitical identity of Turkey, as a strong state with the capacity to function as a “geopolitical security hinge” in the intersection of the Middle East, the Balkans and the Caucasian regions, but also from its cultural identity as a modern national formation with parliamentary democratic governance, a secular constitutional structure, and a predominantly Muslim population.³

The Global Context

The end of the Cold War meant the end of the ‘buffer state’ identity of Turkish foreign policy – an identity which was

based mainly on the geopolitical position of Turkey in world politics.⁴ Since the 1990s, Turkey has been in search of a new identity, and, as Ahmet Davutoğlu has correctly pointed out, this new identity has required a much more active, constructive foreign policy behavior. Furthermore, as the world has become more globalized, more interdependent, and more risky, having “strategic depth,” this new foreign policy identity entailed the employment of not only geopolitics but also identity and economy.⁵ Thus, geopolitics, modernity and democracy have become the constitutive dimensions of Turkish foreign policy today. This development in Turkey’s foreign policy identity and behavior has been perceived in global academic and public discourse as Turkey becoming a “key and pivotal actor of world politics.”⁶ What is

important here is that it is the increasing role and visibility of ‘soft power’ – rather than ‘hard power’ stemming from its military and geopolitical capabilities – that has framed the proactive, constructive and multidimensional activism in Turkish foreign policy, and has given meaning to its ‘strategic depth,’ at the same time creating a global interest in, and global attraction to, Turkey.⁷ Of course, the soft power-quality of Turkish foreign policy has been derived from Turkey’s interesting and important journey

The end of the Cold War meant the end of the ‘buffer state’ identity of Turkish foreign policy – an identity which was based mainly on the geopolitical position of Turkey in world politics.

in modernity, despite its continuing deficits in making itself multicultural, democratic and plural; from its political commitment to democracy, despite its deficit in making itself consolidated and deepened; from its economic dynamism, despite its deficit in making itself an economy which is sustainable in terms of its success in human development; and from pro-active, problem-solving and dialogue-based good neighborhood diplomacy, despite its deficit in making itself also realistic and effective. All of these qualities of the recent Turkish foreign policy, as it will be elaborated in the following pages, have not only given rise to an upsurge of interest in Turkey, but also paved the way for the country to be perceived as a key and pivotal actor whose regional power status involves strong soft power capabilities in addition to its traditional geopolitical importance. As has been pointed out by many foreign policy analysts, there is no doubt that today Turkey is a regional power and a pivotal actor in global politics, with its geostrategic importance, its modernity, its democracy, and its economy – all of which have constituted the political and discursive basis of the proactive, multi-dimensional and constructive identity of Turkish foreign policy.⁸

The global context in which Turkey has become one of the key actors of world politics is what has come to be known as the ‘post-September 11 world.’ In fact, if the post-Cold War era constitutes the historical context in which Brzezinski wrote *The Grand Chessboard*, it is “the

post-September 11 era” that gives meaning to the global changes and transformations which have also made Turkey an important player in world politics.⁹ As Lenore Martin suggested in her introduction to *The Future of Turkish Foreign Policy*,

[t]he tectonic forces that reshaped international relations at the end of the twentieth century – the collapse of the Soviet Union, ethnic conflicts in the Balkans and Eurasia, the growing stridency of Islamic fundamentalism, globalization of national economies, and increasing demands for democratization and civil society – also thrust Turkey into an increasingly pivotal role on the geopolitical stage. The aftershocks at the beginning of the twenty-first century, the events of September 11, 2001, the global spread of anti-Western terrorism, the U.S. invasion of Iraq, and the cracking of consensus in NATO and the UN threw up additional challenges for Turkey that have confirmed and complicated its critical role.¹⁰

Similarly, Graham Fuller, in his work entitled *The New Turkish Republic*, defines Turkey as a pivotal state in the Muslim world, and argues that, with its proactive foreign policy drawing global attention and attraction, Turkey is becoming a regional power in the post-September 11 world.¹¹

It should be noted, however, that global changes and transformations have brought about risk and uncertainty in our globalizing world, and led Stephen Larrabee and Ian Lesser to title their work on Turkish foreign policy *Turkish Foreign*

Policy in an Age of Uncertainty.¹² This means that the proactive, constructive and multi-dimensional Turkish foreign policy, and the global attraction to Turkey that has emerged with it, do not necessarily lead Turkey to become more democratic, more globalized, or more closely integrated to Europe. It is likely that Turkey functions, and will continue to function, as a “globalized pivotal state” on the grand chessboard of the post-September 11 world. Yet it is also possible that Turkey, in the post-September 11 world, could become a more nationalist and inward-looking strong state in its reaction to risks and uncertainties, as in the case of the recent rise of nationalism, the increasingly security-based foreign policy discourse concerning the Kurdish issue and the problem of Northern Iraq. Larrabee and Lesser suggest in this context that:

Turkey may be a pivotal state in Western perception, but uncertainties in transatlantic relations may make the very concept of the “West” unclear as seen from Ankara. Above all, Turkey faces daunting political, economic, and social pressures, with implications for the vigor and direction of the country’s foreign and security policies. The range of possibilities is now quite wide, from a more globalized Turkey, more closely integrated in Europe and the West, with a multilateral approach toward key regions, to a more inward-looking and nationalist Turkey, pursuing a more

constrained or unilateral set of regional policies.¹³

Relying on Larrabee and Lesser, it can be argued that whether Turkey becomes globalized or an inward-looking nationalist state is a choice that Turkey and domestic forces in Turkey make in terms of democracy and modernity. A Turkey with a consolidated democracy and multicultural modernity can maintain its soft power and pivotal state status in the post-September 11 world. On the contrary, a Turkey focusing solely on geopolitics, security and unilateralism in its foreign policy behavior, as well as in its domestic politics, would be a more inward-looking and nationalist Turkey.

A Turkey with a consolidated democracy and multicultural modernity can maintain its soft power and pivotal state status in the post-September 11 world.

The recent discussions about Turkish foreign policy have also involved the question of whether or not there is a need to have a ‘main axis’ on which the proactive state behavior would gain realism, effectiveness and efficiency. Four options are worth emphasizing here: (a) a proactive foreign policy with Turkey-EU relations as its main axis (integration); (b) a proactive foreign policy with Turkey-US relations with its main axis (security); (c) a proactive foreign policy with Turkey-Eurasia relations as its main axis (autonomy and security); and (d) a proactive foreign policy without a main axis (autonomy and pragmatism).¹⁴ These options have been put forward,

EU-full membership anchor should still be considered and taken into account by the Turkish state and the AKP government as the main axis of a viable Turkish foreign policy.

voiced and defended by a number of actors having different visions of Turkey and Turkish foreign policy. To be realistic and effective, a viable Turkish foreign policy, relying more on Turkey's soft power, as well as attempting to make Turkish modernity multicultural and plural, and with Turkish democracy consolidated and deepened, should accept and put into practice Turkey-EU relations as the main axis of proactiveness and constructiveness.¹⁵ Compared with the other options, Turkey-EU relations are economically, politically, historically, culturally and geographically-constructed relations of deep integration with a system-transforming capacity in the areas of democracy, identity, security and economy. Today, despite the existing problems of the lack of trust and the increasing feeling of ambiguity and insecurity about the future of these relations, the EU-full membership anchor should still be considered and taken into account by the Turkish state and the AKP government as the main axis of a viable Turkish foreign policy.

The Post-9/11 World

To substantiate this brief analysis of the changing identity and behavior

of Turkish foreign policy in which the AKP has played the dominant role, it is useful to pause and look at the basic characteristics of the post-September 11 world, which in fact constituted the foundation for the increased global attraction to Turkey. This attraction to Turkey can also be observed in the emergence of a number of identity-based perceptions that have been attributed to Turkey in the global academic and public discourse in the post-September 11 world. All of these identity-based perceptions have entailed expectations from Turkey to become proactive, constructive and multidimensional in its foreign policy behavior and orientation. Moreover, these identity-based perceptions of Turkey, and the expectations that have occurred in them, concerning the "soft power role" of Turkey in the post-September 11 world, have created increased support and a strong legitimacy for the AKP experience on a global scale in international relations.

It would be no exaggeration to suggest that the current state of international relations has been increasingly marked by the September 11 terrorism and its devastating impact on our world. Today it is possible and necessary to define the world in which we live as the post-September 11 world. A quick glance at the recent discussions on global politics about the impacts of the 11 September 2001 terrorist attack reveals that there have been important ruptures, which this terrorist act has created in world affairs. These ruptures brought about

a number of fundamental and radical ambiguities in world affairs and global politics which have altered the current state of international relations or the existing structure and dynamics of the international system so much that it is possible to define the nature of the present as international relations in the “post-September 11 era.” A point of clarification is worth emphasizing at this stage. Unlike the neoconservative ideology of the Bush administration that has tended to characterize the post-September 11 era as a totally ‘new stage,’ ‘new condition’ or ‘new epoch’ in international relations, I suggest that to speak of the nature of the present world affairs and global politics as the post-September 11 era should entail the recognition of ‘continuities and changes’ in international relations. In other words, to speak of the post-September 11 era is to recognize the novelty of the crucial impact of the September 11 terrorism on international relations without losing sight of the continuing fundamental problems of the existing international system in terms of security, social justice and democratization.

These ruptures are namely those of “the emergence of the world risk society” and “the changing nature of American hegemony.”¹⁶ In what follows, I will briefly delineate these ruptures. Today we live in a world risk society which involves the feeling of ambiguity, uncertainty and ontological insecurity about the nature, as well as the future, of international relations; such a feeling

has also been derived from the fact that terrorism is a serious and real danger that operates as a globalized act of violence and intimidation directed mainly toward the innocent. The September 11 terrorist attack and its continuation in Istanbul, Madrid, London, Bali and Egypt have given rise to the idea of the world risk society. It should be pointed out, however, that the idea of a risk society is not new. The recent environmental hazards and accidents on the one hand, and the increased number of devastating financial crises in different parts of the world on the other, have already demonstrated that we live in a globalizing world in which modern societies are becoming risk societies.¹⁷ Likewise, the September 11 terrorism generated an important change in the way in which the American foreign policy acts with a hegemonic vision of the world. It has resulted in the reconstruction of hegemony on the basis of the privileged status of (a) military power and security over economic power and social justice, (b) unilateralism over multilateralism, (c) politics as a friend-foe relationship over politics as negotiation, (d) hard power over soft power, and (e) community and security over liberty and freedom. With this change, the new American foreign policy operated as a neo-conservative ideology of power and domination, and has attempted to reorganize global politics and world affairs through the acts of war and occupation.¹⁸

These radical transformations have constituted the “post-September 11

world.” It is in this historical context that there has also emerged an upsurge of interest in, and a global attraction to, Turkey and its modern history – a history that has demonstrated that a secular, democratic, constitutional democracy is possible in a social setting where the population is predominantly Muslim. The post-September 11 world involved not only the rapid spread of inhuman and deadly terrorist attacks throughout the world, but also their link to Islam and, thus, the codification of Islam as a foe, as a dangerous other, and as a potential terrorist. Moreover, in this world, we have seen that war and occupation have become the main strategy of the US foreign policy in its global war on terrorism. Thus, not only have international relations since 11 September 2001 been framed increasingly by a ‘clash of civilizations’ discourse, war and occupation have brought about the increasing power of state-centric politics in global affairs. The codification of Islam as the negation of secular modernity and liberal democracy is fundamental to this discourse, and has led to the suggestion that success in the ongoing global fight against terrorism depends to a large extent on the possibility of articulating Islam with modernity and democracy. In political and academic discourse, this suggestion has been formulated in a variety of forms, ranging from the idea of ‘exporting democracy through war and occupation, leading to necessary regime change in failed states’ to calls for ‘global democratic governance’ capable of establishing an effective foundation for

the coexistence of different cultures and civilizations in a manner that involves tolerance, respect, and responsibility as the guiding principles of social interactions in international, regional, and intranational relations.

In the post-September 11 world, Turkey and its historical experience of modernity has constituted a significant case for the possibility of the coexistence of Islam and democracy.¹⁹ As a social formation with a large Muslim population, Turkey has succeeded in establishing itself as a modern nation with a strong secular state structure, transforming its political system into a multiparty parliamentary democracy and creating a free-market economy. Moreover, as a social formation located at the intersection of the East and the West, Turkey’s identity has always been marked by its will to reach the contemporary level of civilization, understood as Westernization and Europeanization.²⁰ In other words, even though Islam has remained a significant symbolic reference in the formation of cultural identity in Turkey, its modern history has been characterized by Westernization as a site of secular modernity, economic progress, and democracy. Moreover, despite the existence of a number of regime breakdowns and democratic-deficit problems in its multi-party system, Turkey has nevertheless persisted in its commitment to parliamentary democracy and its norms. It is this commitment that accounts for the ability of political Islam to not only find for itself a place in the

The Turkish experience of modernity and democracy has not been without serious problems and recursive political, economic, and cultural crises.

multiparty parliamentary democracy in Turkey, but also to enlarge that place so as to allow social forces that emphasize their Islamic identity to become the governing party of a strongly secular state, as in the case of the recent majority governments of the AKP and its increased societal support and political power.

As will be elaborated in detail, of course, the Turkish experience of modernity and democracy has not been without serious problems and recursive political, economic, and cultural crises. In fact, the history of modern Turkey can be described as one of “success and failure” – successful in establishing the necessary institutional structures of modernity, such as a nation-state, modern positive law, parliamentary democracy, market economy, and citizenship, but at the same time a failure in making modernity multicultural, consolidating democracy, creating a stable and sustainable economy, and enshrining rights and freedoms in the exercise of citizenship. Yet, it is precisely because of its constant and persistent commitment to secular modernity and democracy, as well as to Westernization and Europeanization, that Turkey has become one of the crucial actors in global politics. The deepening of Turkey-EU relations, the European Council’s

historical decision at its December 2004 summit to begin full accession negotiations with Turkey, and finally the start of these negotiations on 3 October 2005 cannot be explained without taking into account the increasing importance of Turkey in today’s highly insecure world. Similarly, Turkey’s ability to experience the coexistence of Islam with modernity and democracy in a generally peaceful manner has also been central to Turkish-American relations in the recent years. In its unilateral act to restructure the Middle East region through war and occupation, the Bush Administration has approached Turkey and its experience of modernity as a ‘model’ for the region.²¹ The recent interest in Turkey, especially in terms of the possibility of Turkey’s full accession to the EU, can also be observed in most of the Islamic countries. In fact, a quick glance at the growing study and debate about Turkey in the global academic and public discourse reveals that Turkey is perceived as an important, even pivotal, actor in international relations, both regionally and globally.²²

Indeed, in the post-September 11 world, Turkey has been playing a proactive and pivotal state role in numerous and varying areas of world politics, each of which constitutes a crucial domain of global conflict and security, global governance, and global political economy.²³ These areas of conflict, governance, and political economy can be listed as follows: i) The occupation of Iraq and the Kurdish question in relation to Northern Iraq; ii) the Iran problem

and the future of the Middle East region; iii) the Russia question and the future of Eurasia; and, its implications for Europe, iv) the crisis of multiculturalism and the question of Islam in Europe. The country has a central position also in the discussions about the clash of civilizations in global politics, the global democratic governance and the question of Europe as a global actor, and Mediterranean politics and identity. One should also mention the global political economy and global energy politics as among the areas where Turkey's ascending presence and role can be felt. The country's presence and influence is also to be

augmented in most of these areas parallel to its membership of the Security Council of the United Nations in 2009-2010. Moreover, these roles have brought about a number of identity-

based perceptions that have been attributed to the role of Turkey in the post-September 11 world. Firstly, as a modern nation-state formation with democratic governance and a secular constitutional structure, Turkey is a 'model country' for the possibility of stability and peace in Iraq in particular, and in the Middle East and Islamic world in general. In fact, with its more than a century-long modernizing reform and constitutional democracy experience, Turkey is the most successful example in the world today of a secular democracy within a Muslim society. Secondly, Turkey's modern

history constitutes both an 'alternative to the clash of civilizations thesis' (as in the case of the *Inter-Civilization Dialogue Project*, led by the United Nations, Spain, and Turkey), and a 'significant historical experience' from which the Islamic world, in particular countries such as Malaysia, Morocco and Indonesia, can learn in their attempts to democratize themselves. Particularly instructive may be the AKP and its ability to establish an electoral victory through its claim to be a 'conservative-democratic center-right party'. Thirdly, with its ability to sustain, and even deepen, its secular democracy

in a peaceful manner, along with its 'dual identity as both a Middle Eastern and European country,' Turkey's recent governance by the AKP has made Turkey a 'pivotal state/regional power'

in the process of fighting against global terrorism without making Islam the focal point of opposition. Fourthly, parallel to the deepening of Turkey-EU relations after the beginning of full accession negotiations, there is an increasing perception, especially among economic and foreign policy actors, that Turkey is a 'unique case in the process of European integration' with the ability to help Europe to become a multicultural and cosmopolitan model for a deep regional integration, and a space for the creation of a post-territorial community on the basis of post-national and democratic

There is an increasing perception, that Turkey is a 'unique case in the process of European integration' with the ability to help Europe to become a multicultural and cosmopolitan model for a deep regional integration

citizenship, as well as a global actor with a capacity to contribute to the emergence of democratic global governance. The possibility of Europe gaining these qualities depends to some extent on its decision about the accession of Turkey to the EU as a full member. Fifthly, with its dynamic economy, recursive growth rates, and young population, Turkey has become one of the important, but not pivotal (such as India, Brazil), ‘emerging market economies of today’s economic globalization.’ Moreover, although Turkey does not produce oil or natural gas, it has recently begun to act as an “energy hub” for the transmission of natural gas between the Middle East, the post-Soviet Republics and Europe.

Modernity and Democracy: Success and Failure

All these perceptions of Turkey and its proactive foreign policy have to do with the concept of soft power, which is the fact that Turkey is the most successful example in the world today of a secular democracy within a Muslim society. In fact, it is through its commitment to secularism and democracy, as well as on the basis of its success in economic dynamism, that Turkey has presented a significant historical experience for the coexistence of Islam, democracy and liberal market values in a time when the modern world has been experiencing a growing suspicion toward multiculturalism in general, and toward Islam in particular, as in the case of

Europe and America. Turkey in its recent experience has proved that coexistence rather than clash is possible, and it is through coexistence that not only can a secular constitutional and democratic system be possible in a national formation with a large Muslim population, but that the national formation can also play a proactive and constructive role in the creation of peace and stability in global politics. To appreciate, as well as learn from, this experience, it is useful to attempt to analyze Turkish foreign policy from the perspective of modernity and democracy. The global perception of Turkey as an important soft power and pivotal state derives from the suggestion that Turkey’s alternative route to secular modernity and democracy makes the Turkish experience interesting and important, especially in the recent restructuring of world affairs, in which the question of how to face Islam has been brought to the fore. Turkey’s experience of alternative modernity and democracy constitutes only one answer, but an effective one to this question.

The perspective of modernity, in this sense, provides a useful analytical device to demonstrate in a sociological and historical way not only the peculiar nature of Turkish modernity but also its recent democratic transformation. In employing the perspective of modernity in the analysis of Turkish foreign policy, we could learn from three important theoretical accounts of modernity. First, by relying on Charles Taylor’s

Two Theories of Modernity, in which he differentiates between what he calls 'cultural' and 'acultural' theories of modernity, one could employ "a cultural theory of modernity."²⁴ Whereas cultural theory recognizes cultural differences and the peculiar nature of each culture, and therefore maintains that the association of modernity with the West does not result in the idea that other cultures can modernize by following and imitating Western modernity; acultural theory, on the other hand, sees modernity as the development and growth of Western reason, secularism, and instrumental rationality. By employing a cultural theory of modernity, one sees that since its inception, Turkish modernity was mainly a project of political modernity aiming to establish a modern nation-state, a modern national economy, and modern national law, but lacking a social ethos in terms of creating a secular/individual-based national identity.²⁵ Thus, Turkish modernity has achieved the establishment of political modernity, but this did not mean the demise of the role of Islam in everyday life as a main symbolic reference for identity-formation. Secondly, by relying on Gerard Delanty's analysis of modernity, we could suggest that alternative modernity emerges from within the conflictual nature of modernity, involving a tension between political modernization (state and economy) and cultural modernization (identity), or between autonomy and fragmentation.²⁶ Following Delanty, alternative modernities can

be approached as historically and discursively constructed societal claims, embedded in cultural modernization and its recent fragmentation and aiming at altering the state-centric and secular model of Turkish modernity. Thirdly, by relying on the theory of alternative, multiple or global modernities, one could make a suggestion which has two dimensions: the first is the recognition of the fact that modernity is not one but many, meaning that there are different and varying articulations of economy and culture in different national sites; and secondly that in our globalizing world, as well as in the post-September 11 world, modernity is becoming distinct from Westernization, meaning that a disjuncture between modernity and Westernization has been emerging and increasingly deepening in recent years. In fact, in our globalizing world, we have been observing that more and more cases have emerged where the claim to political and economic modernity (the nation-state and market capitalism) does not involve the acceptance of the Western secular and individual-based reasoning.²⁷ Modernity cannot be associated or identified with Westernization. The acceptance of modernity does not necessarily and automatically lead to a secular-individualistic culture and self. From Japan to China, from Iran to Malaysia, from Islamic fundamentalism to Occidentalism, in a wide spectrum, the increasing disjuncture between modernity and Westernization, and the concomitant emergence of the idea of alternative, multiple and global

modernities, together have been shaping global politics in recent years. As a matter of fact, it is the recent experience of Turkey in having the coexistence of Islam, democracy and free market values by maintaining its secular constitutional structure that has demonstrated to the world that a social formation with a large Muslim population can fulfill the disjuncture between modernity and Westernization without necessarily accepting the clash of civilizations thesis.

However, coexistence rather than clash also needs democracy; in fact, a “consolidated version of democracy which makes the articulation of modernity and democracy possible.”²⁸ For this reason, the perspective of modernity has to be completed with a critical analysis of the history of contemporary Turkey from the perspective of democracy and its consolidation. As has been suggested by many, although Turkey’s travel in modernity has always involved a reference to democracy, this history has revealed a paradox: a ‘success’ in the transition to democracy, but a ‘failure’ in making it consolidated.²⁹ It was in fact the case that Turkey until very recently had displayed a ‘paradoxical development’ in terms of the simultaneous presence of its ‘success’ in modernization and democratization and its ‘failure’ both to make its modernity more liberal, plural, and multicultural, and to consolidate and deepen its democracy by making it more participatory, stable and strong. In other words, even though Turkey had been

successful in creating a modern political and institutional structure necessary for political modernity, that is, the emergence of the nation-state, modern state bureaucracy, secularism and citizenship, as well as in the process of the transition to democracy, that is, the transforming its single-party political system into a multiparty parliamentary democracy, it had failed to consolidate and deepen its modernity and democracy. This paradox had manifested itself (a) in the problem of regime breakdowns (1960, 1971, and 1980) in the multiparty parliamentary system, (b) in the emergence of identity based conflicts since the 1980s (the question of Islamic resurgence, the Kurdish question, and the problem of civil society), and (c) in the problem of strong state and its clientelistic, corruption based and populist mode of governing. All these problems have been the main obstacles to the consolidation of democracy in Turkey.

A consolidated democracy includes both a formal understanding of democracy as a political regime with institutional norms and procedures, and, more importantly, a substantial understanding of democracy as a specific type of society in which the language of rights, freedoms, and responsibilities constitutes a dominant normative and legal norm concerning not only the question of ‘the regulation (or the governance) of societal affairs’ but also the question of ‘the creation of unity in a diverse and multicultural social setting’ in a given society.³⁰ By

democratic consolidation, it is usually meant the deepening of democracy in state — society/individual relations, and one can define the deepening process in behavioral, attitudinal, and constitutional terms:

Behaviorally, a democratic regime in a territory is consolidated when no significant national, social, economic, political, or institutional actors spend significant resources attempting to achieve their objectives by creating a non-democratic regime or turning to violence or foreign intervention to secede from the state.

Attitudinally, a democratic regime is consolidated when a strong majority of public opinion holds the belief that democratic procedures and institutions are the most appropriate way to govern collective life in a society such as theirs and when the support for anti-system alternatives is quite small or more or less isolated from the pro-democratic forces.

Constitutionally, a democratic regime is consolidated when governmental and non governmental forces alike, throughout the territory of the state, become subjected to, and habituated to, the resolution of conflict

within the specific laws, procedures, and institutions sanctioned by the new democratic process.³¹

Of course, these dimensions imply that, in addition to a well functioning state:

Five other interconnected and mutually reinforcing conditions must also exist or be crafted for a democracy to be consolidated. First, the conditions must exist for the development of a free and lively civil society. Second, there must be a relatively autonomous and valued political society. Third, there must be a rule of law to ensure legal guarantees for citizens' freedoms and independent associational life. Fourth, there must be a state bureaucracy that is usable by the new democratic government. Fifth, there must be an institutionalized economic society.³²

All these behavioral patterns and reinforcing conditions indicate that democratic consolidation involves both a formal/procedural understanding of democracy and a substantial/societal understanding of democracy, and more importantly, the simultaneous existence and operation of both. Within the context of Turkey, the history of democracy demonstrates a success in terms of transition but a failure with respect to consolidation. In this sense, the problem in Turkey has less to do with democratic transition, that is, the formal/operation of democracy, but more to do with its deepening in societal affairs.

The problem in Turkey has less to do with democratic transition, that is, the formal/operation of democracy, but more to do with its deepening in societal affairs.

A viable Turkish foreign policy with strong soft power capabilities and capacities requires a consolidated democracy.

On the basis of these methodological openings, developed with reference to the concepts of alternative modernity and democratic consolidation, it can be suggested that Turkey with its ability to achieve the coexistence of Islam, secular modernity and democracy constitutes an alternative modernity facing the problem of democratic consolidation. Moreover, it is democratic consolidation that strengthens the recent perception in global academic and public discourse of Turkey as an important actor and pivotal state whose experience of modernity and democracy should be taken seriously by any attempt aiming at going beyond the clash of civilizations, beyond the orientalist divide between the West and the East, and more importantly beyond the culturally essentialist and fundamentalist desires to codify difference as the dangerous Other. A viable Turkish foreign policy with strong soft power capabilities and capacities requires a consolidated democracy. Going back to Larrabee and Lesser's suggestion that:

Turkey may be a pivotal state in Western perception, but uncertainties in transatlantic relations may make the very concept of the 'West' unclear as seen from Ankara. Above all, Turkey faces daunting political, economic, and social pressures, with implications for the vigor and direction of the country's

foreign and security policies. The range of possibilities is now quite wide, from a more globalized Turkey, more closely integrated in Europe and the West, with a multilateral approach toward key regions, to a more inward-looking and nationalist Turkey, pursuing a more constrained or unilateral set of regional policies.

It should be suggested that, without an attempt to consolidate Turkish democracy in a way to articulate it with multi-cultural modernity based on coexistence rather than clash, Turkey can easily slip towards becoming a nationalist state and having an inward-looking foreign policy orientation with a strong emphasis on security.³³ In fact, this is precisely what has been confronting Turkey and its proactive foreign policy. The more the AK Party government is losing its political will to further and upgrade Turkish democracy, the more nationalism is framing the terms of political and foreign policy discourse, as a result of which rather than being an alternative to the clash of civilization thesis, Turkey itself is being confronted by reactionary and exclusionary nationalisms, voiced strongly by Turks and Kurds in ethnic terms, as well as by left, liberal and conservative political ideologies.

Conclusion: Renewing Turkey-EU Relations

The possibility of democratic consolidation in Turkey occurred in

recent years, as Turkey-EU relations have deepened and gained a degree of certainty with the beginning of the full accession negotiations on 3 October 2005. In fact, since the Helsinki Summit of 1999, where Turkey was granted the status of a candidate country for full membership, Turkish-EU relations have gained 'certainty'. This certainty has forced the political and state actors in Turkey to focus on democracy, since the candidate-country status requires Turkey to fulfill the Copenhagen political criteria, which means having modernity and democracy linked and upgraded in a given candidate country for full EU membership. Turkey's efforts to make a number of important legal and constitutional changes before the Copenhagen Summit of 2002 was only enough to obtain a conditional date (2004 without a delay) for the beginning of full accession negotiations with the EU on condition that it meets the Copenhagen political criteria in terms of implementation in its state-societal relations. Turkey's efforts to consolidate its democracy in order to obtain a starting date for negotiations were successful, as the European Council decided in its December 2004 summit that Turkey would begin the full accession negotiations on 3 October 2005. In fact, the negotiations have started and given Turkey the status of a country in the process of gaining full membership.

There are still reactions, ambiguities and uncertainties in Europe with respect to the question of Turkey's full membership. Likewise, 'Euroscepticism'

has been on the rise in Turkey. However, there are two points worth making. First, the EU anchor has so far played a positive role in strengthening the level of democracy in Turkey, insofar as it has forced the AK Party government to initiate a number of institutional and constitutional reforms to start the full accession negotiations. Since the requirement of meeting the Copenhagen political criteria means moving in the direction of democratic consolidation, Turkey's reform process has placed democracy as the main basis for political competition among political parties, as well as for the regulation of state-society/individual relations.³⁴ Despite the recent political and judicial crises in terms of the headscarf affair and the AK Party closure case, parliamentary democracy has still remained an accepted political norm. This means that even though Turkish democracy is in need of being consolidated, democracy rather than authoritarianism is the likely candidate for becoming 'the only game in town.'³⁵

Secondly, despite uncertainties and the problem of trust involved in Turkey-EU relations, these relations have been the most system-transforming relations

Turkey-EU relations have been economically, politically and culturally system-transforming relations, and in this sense, should be the main axis of Turkish foreign policy and its proactive, constructive and multi-dimensional operation.

in terms of Turkish modernity and democracy, which has also generated positive impacts on Turkish foreign policy. Unlike Turkey-US relations or Turkey-Eurasia relations, Turkey-EU relations have been economically, politically and culturally system-transforming relations, and in this sense, should be the main axis of Turkish foreign policy and its proactive, constructive and multi-dimensional operation. As a matter of fact, the time when the global attraction to Turkey has increased in the post-September 11 world is also the time when Turkey was going through its democratic reform process to start the full accession negotiation with the EU. Moreover, the effect of EU soft power on Turkey, which has been exercised through the requirement of meeting the Copenhagen political criteria, and thus demanded democratic transformation in state-society/individual relations, as well as economic transformation to create stability and development in economic life, has made a significant contribution to the increasing importance and use of soft power by Turkey in its foreign policy behavior in the post-September 11 world. Both regionally and globally, Turkey, under the soft-power pressures coming

Turkey should focus on its priorities, not only to make its proactive foreign policy realistic and effective, but also, and more importantly, to maintain its role in global politics as an important actor and pivotal state.

from the EU in terms of democratic and economic transformation, has begun to employ and focus on soft power in its proactive, constructive and multi-dimensional foreign policy.³⁶ In other words, as Turkey has demonstrated a political will to upgrade its democracy, and acting upon it through democratic reforms, it was also being perceived in global academic and public discourse as one of the important actors and pivotal states of world politics.

Furthermore, as Ian Lesser has correctly pointed out, Turkey should focus more and more on “priority setting” rather than multi-dimensional “engagement”, in order to make its proactive and constructive foreign policy realistic and effective. Lesser argues that:

The entente with Greece, openings with Syria and even with Iran, the prospect of a real opening with Armenia. These are meaningful things but these are all things in Turkey's neighborhood. If you look at the scope of Turkey's foreign policy activism in recent years, it does sometimes seem as if Turkey is trying to do all things at once and be all things to all people. Under certain conditions, that could be a perfectly valid approach. When I look ahead, I see the climate for Turkey becoming more difficult and less encouraging to that kind of strategy. Turkey has had the luxury of not having to choose, for example, between Eurasia and the West, between the Muslim world and Europe, etc. In coming years, *Turkish foreign policy will be more about priorities and less about general activism.*³⁷ (emphasis added)

As Lesser suggests, Turkey should focus on its priorities, not only to make its proactive foreign policy realistic and effective, but also, and more importantly, to maintain its role in global politics as an important actor and pivotal state. As the post-September 11 world is creating multipolar rather than unipolar world politics, and as conflict in this world is becoming a conflict among great powers, as in the cases of 'the Russia question' and 'the Iran problem,' I would suggest that Turkey in its pro-active foreign policy should place a strong emphasis on priority over general activism. In a time when these changes are occurring, Turkey is serving a non-permanent member of the Security Council in the United Nations (2009-2010). The success of Turkey in its new role depends on how it will react to conflict and change. Whether Turkey will shape its proactive foreign policy by giving primacy over priority or not determines the degree of its effectiveness and transformative power. It is in this context that it becomes important and useful for Turkish foreign policy to have an 'effective anchor' or to establish a 'main axis' in its multi-dimensional operation. As it has been argued in this article, rather than Turkey-US relations, Turkey-Eurasia relations, or Turkey as acting an independent state without priority and anchor, Turkey-EU relations

should constitute the main anchor or axis of Turkish foreign policy, despite the existing problems and ambiguities in Turkey's Europeanization process. Contrary to the first three options, Turkey-EU relations are deep integration relations, constructed historically and institutionally, generating a number of economic, political and identity-based system-transforming impacts both in Turkey and Europe.³⁸ The need to place emphasis on priority over general activism also requires in Turkish foreign policy an effective EU anchor, which is compatible with and useful for Turkey's regional power and pivotal state role in the post-September 11 world.

It is in this sense that I would conclude by suggesting that a viable Turkish foreign policy requires (a) a proactive, constructive and multi-dimensional state behavior; (b) taking the concept of soft power seriously; (c) having the EU anchor as the main axis of foreign policy; and (d) coming to terms with the fact that it is not only geopolitics, but also, and more importantly, an articulation of modernity and democracy that sustains and deepens the global interest in, and global attraction to, Turkey in the post-September 11 world.

Endnotes

- 1 Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives*, New York, Basic Books, 1997, pp. 124-35.
- 2 The terms proactive, constructive, as well as multi-dimensional foreign policy, indicate a change in Turkish foreign policy behavior from its buffer state identity during the Cold War, where it had tended or preferred to be “reactive, passive, bilateral and security-oriented”, to its pivotal state identity in the post-Cold War, and Post-September 11 era, where it had a more active, more multi-dimensional (even in the way it approaches to its bilateral relations, as in the case of Turkey-Greece relations, the Cyprus problem, and Turkey- Middle East relations) and more constructive and problem-solving identity in its relations both with its border countries and with its regional and global affairs.
- 3 For a more detailed analysis about the recent Turkish foreign policy activities, see Lenore G. Martin and Dimitris.Keridis (eds), *The Future of Turkish Foreign Policy*, Cambridge, MIT Press, 2004.
- 4 For a detailed analysis of both the nature and the end of the buffer state identity of Turkish foreign policy, see Barry Rubin and Kemal Kirişçi, *Turkey in World Politics*, Istanbul, Boğaziçi University Publications, 2002.
- 5 Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik*, Istanbul, Küre Yayınları, 2001.
- 6 Stephen Larrabee and Ian. O. Lesser, *Turkish Foreign Policy in an Age of Uncertainty*, Santa Monica, RAND, 2003.
- 7 The concept of soft power refers to a co-optive, non-coercive and consent-based power, rather than a command-based, coercive and hard power. State power gains legitimacy in the eyes of others through its soft power whose sources include diplomacy, economy, culture, and identity. Through soft power, the state gets the other state to “want what it wants”. Soft power involves consent. For details, see Joseph Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, New York, Public Affairs Books, 2004. For an important account of the role of soft power in Turkish foreign policy, see, *Insight Turkey: Special Issue on Turkey's Rising Soft Power*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (April-June 2008).
- 8 Lenore G. Martin, “Introduction”, in Martin and Keridis (eds), *The Future of Turkish Foreign Policy*.
- 9 For the importance of September 11 on foreign policy, see Steve Smith, Amelia Hadfield and Tim Dune (eds.), *Foreign Policy: Theories, Actors, Cases*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008.
- 10 Martin, “Introduction”, p. 3.
- 11 Graham E. Fuller, *The New Turkish Republic: Turkey as a Pivotal State in the Muslim World*, Washington, United States Institute of Peace Press, 2007.
- 12 Larrabee and Lesser, *Turkish Foreign Policy in an Age of Uncertainty*.
- 13 Ibid., p. 3.

- 14 These options have been put forward in Turkish academic and public discourse and debate on the question of what should be the main axis or the main foundation of Turkish foreign policy in its proactive, constructive and multi-dimensional operation in the post-Cold War era in general, and in the post-September 11 world in particular. I have also extrapolated these positions in my research on ‘Turkey in a Globalizing World’; for a detailed account of these positions, see Morton Abramowitz (ed.), *Turkey’s Transformation and American Policy*, Washington, A Century Foundation Book, 2000; Martin and Keridis (eds.), *The Future of Turkish Foreign Policy*; Larrabee and Lesser, *Turkish Foreign Policy in an Age of Uncertainty*; Graham E. Fuller and Ian O. Lesser, *Turkey’s New Geopolitics*, Westview, Boulder, 1993; E.Fuat Keyman and Ziya Öniş, *Turkish Politics in a Changing World*, Istanbul, Bilgi University Publications, 2007.
- 15 We have elaborated this point in Keyman and Öniş, *Turkish Politics in a Changing World*.
- 16 For details see, Arjun Appadurai, *Fear of Small Numbers*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2006; see also Ulrich Beck, *Cosmopolitan Vision*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2006.
- 17 See Frank J. Lechner and John Boli (eds.), *Globalization Reader*, London, Blackwell Publishing, 2004.
- 18 Noam Chomsky, *Hegemony or Survival*, New York, Hamish Hamilton, 2003; Stanley Aronowitz and Heather Gautney (eds.), *Implicating Empire*, New York, Basic Books, 2003.
- 19 See for example Berna Turam, *Between Islam and the State: The Politics of Engagement*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2007; Dietrich Jung and Catharina Raudvere (eds.), *Religion, Politics, and Turkey’s EU Accession*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008; Zülküf Aydın, *The Political Economy of Turkey*, London, Pluto Press, 2005.
- 20 Keyman and Öniş, *Turkish Politics in a Changing World*; Esra LaGro and Knud Erik Jorgensen (eds.), *Turkey and the European Union: Prospects for a Difficult Encounter*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.
- 21 Abramowitz (ed.), “*Turkey’s Transformation and American Policy*”.
- 22 See, for example, Erik Cornell, *Turkey in the 21st Century: Opportunities, Challenges, Threats*, Richmond, Surrey, Curzon Press, 2001; Abramowitz, “*Turkey’s Transformation and American Policy*”; Keyman and Öniş, “*Turkish Politics in a Changing World*”; LaGro and Jorgensen, *Turkey and the European Union*; Fuller and Lesser, “*Turkey’s New Geopolitics*”.
- 23 For a general account of these areas, see A. Williams, *Failed Imagination? New World Orders of the Twentieth Century*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1998; Smith, Hadfield and Dunne (eds.), “*Foreign Policy: Theories, Actors, Cases*”.
- 24 Charles Taylor, “Two Theories of Modernity”, in Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar (ed.), *Alternative Modernities*, London, Duke University Press, 2001, pp. 172-197.
- 25 See Şerif Mardin, *Din ve İdeoloji*, Istanbul, İletişim Yayınları, 1999.
- 26 Gerard Delanty, *Social Theory in a Changing World*, Cambridge, Polity, 1999.
- 27 Samuel Noah Eisenstadt, “Multiple Modernities”, *Daedalus*, Vol.129, No.1 (Winter 2000), pp. 1-31.

- 28 See Keyman and Öniş, “*Turkish Politics in a Changing World*”.
- 29 See Ilkay Sunar, *State, Society and Democracy*, Istanbul, Bahçeşehir University Publications, 2004; Ergun Özbudun, *Contemporary Turkish Politics*, Boulder, Lynne Rienner, 2000; Feroz Ahmad, *Turkey: The Quest for Identity*, Oxford, One World, 2003; Keyman and Öniş, “Turkish Politics in a Changing World”.
- 30 Keyman and Öniş, *Turkish Politics in a Changing World*, Chapter 1.
- 31 Özbudun, *Contemporary Turkish Politics*, p. 14.
- 32 Ibid, p. 15.
- 33 Larrabee and Lesser, *Turkish Foreign Policy in an Age of Uncertainty*, p. 3.
- 34 For a detailed analysis, see E.Fuat Keyman (ed.), *Remaking Turkey*, Oxford, Rowman Little, Oxford, 2008.
- 35 See Keyman and Öniş, *Turkish Politics in a Changing World*, Chapter 2; Özbudun, *Contemporary Turkish Politics*, Conclusion.
- 36 Senem Aydın Düzgüt and E. Fuat Keyman, “Turkey and European Integration”, in E. Fuat Keyman (ed.), *Remaking Turkey*, Oxford, Lexington, 2007, pp. 245-259.
- 37 Ian Lesser, “Turkey to Face Tough Foreign Policy Choices”, *Today’s Zaman*, 18 September 2008.
- 38 For a detailed analysis of these system-transforming impacts, see Feyzi Baban and E. Fuat Keyman, “Turkey and Postnational Europe”, *European Journal of Social Theory*, Vol. 11, No.1 (February 2008), pp. 107-124.