

**THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE IN POWER AND POLITICS
(CASE STUDY: ERDOĞAN SPEECHES BETWEEN 2002-2020)**

***O PAPEL DA LINGUAGEM NO PODER E NA POLÍTICA
(ESTUDO DE CASO: DISCURSOS ERDOĞAN ENTRE 2002-2020)***

***EL PAPEL DEL LENGUAJE EN EL PODER Y LA POLÍTICA
(ESTUDIO DE CASO: DISCURSOS ERDOĞAN ENTRE 2002-2020)***

Didem AYDINDAG¹

ABSTRACT: The main aim of this article is to analyze if there is a radical shift in ideology from conservative democracy to National Outlook/Islamist ideology. The secular groups often assert that it was the hidden agenda of Erdoğan all along. Secondly, the article investigates the influential role of language in politics. The research is a comparative historical case study of Westernization, touching on the early republican era and highlights the National Outlook ideology's stance on the idea of westernization. The data consists of official and public speeches done by Erdoğan, particularly during the elections, collected through AKP's official website, domestic and international newspapers, and archives. Theoretically, the research mainly benefits from constructivist theories, particularly critical constructivism, in analyzing the transformation of the individual, unit, and subunit level identities.

KEYWORDS: Language. Politics. Power. Speech. West.

RESUMO: *O objetivo principal deste artigo é analisar se há uma mudança radical na ideologia da democracia conservadora para a perspectiva nacional / ideologia islâmica. Os grupos seculares frequentemente afirmam que essa foi a agenda oculta de Erdoğan o tempo todo. Em segundo lugar, o artigo investiga o papel influente da linguagem nas políticas. A pesquisa é um estudo de caso histórico comparativo da ocidentalização, abordando o início da era republicana e destaca a posição da ideologia do National Outlook sobre a ideia de ocidentalização. Os dados consistem em discursos oficiais e públicos feitos por Erdoğan, particularmente durante as eleições, coletados através do site oficial do AKP, jornais nacionais e internacionais e arquivos. Teoricamente, a pesquisa se beneficia principalmente das teorias construtivistas, particularmente do construtivismo crítico, ao analisar a transformação das identidades no nível do indivíduo, da unidade e da subunidade.*

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Linguagem. Política. Poder. Discurso. Oeste.*

RESUMEN: *El objetivo principal de este artículo es analizar si hay un cambio radical en la ideología de la democracia conservadora a la ideología de Perspectiva Nacional / Islamista. Los grupos seculares a menudo afirman que fue la agenda oculta de Erdogan desde el principio. En segundo lugar, el artículo investiga el papel influyente del lenguaje en las políticas. La investigación es un estudio de caso histórico comparativo de occidentalización, que toca la era republicana temprana y destaca la postura de la ideología de National Outlook sobre la idea de occidentalización. Los datos consisten en discursos oficiales y públicos*

¹ University of Kyrenia, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4752-5037>, Email: Didem.aydindag@kyrenia.edu.tr

realizados por Erdogan, particularmente durante las elecciones, recopilados a través del sitio web oficial del AKP, periódicos nacionales e internacionales y archivos. Teóricamente, la investigación se beneficia principalmente de las teorías constructivistas, en particular del constructivismo crítico, al analizar la transformación de las identidades a nivel individual, de unidad y de subunidad.

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Lenguaje. Política. Poder. Habla. Occidente.*

Introduction

One of the major ideological stances of the AKP, since coming to power in 2002, is that it is not another political party branch of Erdoğan's former alma mater the National Outlook ideology.

The party leaders often highlighted the Party's conservative democrat viewpoint that supposedly differentiated it from traditional Turkish Islamist parties. Within the conservative democrat viewpoint the Party's identity marker was its good ties with the Western states and dedication to Western ideals such as democracy, human rights and secularism. Lately this particular marker of ideological difference from National Outlook is questioned particularly due to Erdoğan's rising anti-Western rhetoric. Scholars are divided on the reasons of such anti-Western rhetoric. Some such as Ruşen Çakır (2018), inclined towards the non-ideological camp, argue that the main reason behind Erdoğan's anti-Western rhetoric does not stem from his Islamist background or his inclination towards the ideology but rather it is a result of serious political deadlock that he is in. In a similar vein, rising Euroskepticism on the part the AKP is seen as a result of domestic factors (ÖNIŞ & YILMAZ, 2009, GÜLMEZ 2013) which led to rising populism (GÖKSEL, 2019), and external factors (YILMAZ, 2011). Other scholars find this change to be rooted in ideological inclinations; for example (Bashirov & Lancaster, 2018) argue that after the AKP's decisive victory in the 2011 parliamentary elections, it grew free from structural constraints imposed by secular bureaucratic and military institutions. In a similarly ideological explanation, Çinar see the situation as an ideological shift from civilizational, native and national understanding to redefine Turkey's international identity (2018). There is also focus on seeing Turkey's distancing from the EU as a symbol of de-Europeanization of Turkey towards a more religiously decorated rhetoric (Saatçioğlu, 2016)). There are also studies focusing the issue from the EU estrangement lens arguing that it is an attempt by AKP to create counter narrative or counter conduct stemming from the lack of enthusiasm on the part of the EU for Turkey's membership (Cebeci, 2016), by adopting a critical constructivist lens looking at speeches (AYDIN-DÜZGİT, 2016, AYDİNDAG &

HÜSEYİN, 2021) or party manifestos (Balkır, 2016).

Despite these researches none of them focus on a comparative analysis between the National Outlook ideology and the AKP regarding the change in rhetoric. Therefore, the main aim of this article is to analyze if there exist a radical shift in ideology from conservative democracy to National Outlook/Islamist ideology which the secular groups often assert that it was the hidden agenda of Erdoğan all along. The article argues that the anti-Western rhetoric of Erdoğan at first had an ideological standing with the aim of redefining Turkey's international identity in a more Islamic way but then it evolved into a populist maneuver to mobilize domestic electoral base. Secondly the article argues that, this populist maneuver is what differentiates itself from the ideological stance of the National Outlook movement.

The anti-Western narrative of Erdoğan is not against the Western ideologies of democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms per se, but instead against the western states. This is a strong diversion from the National Outlook ideology where it was essentially against the Western ideals. Secondly at the time of Erbakan's promotion of National Outlook ideology it was not compatible with the state ideology and popular will which both were aligned towards Westernization and alliance with the Western states. Post-2014 AKP on the other hand benefited from the already established Euroscepticism of the population and the newly constructed neo-Ottomanist ideology. Thirdly, when analyzed the anti-Western rhetoric of Erdoğan, it is found that none of his speeches are directed towards the Western states but rather they were performed towards the domestic audience and in response to certain domestic policies or affairs.

In the following sections the article starts with the traditional understanding of Westernization uprooted in the Kemalist era. Then it shows the Turkish Islamists view on the West and Westernization which was mainly concretized in the political arena through National Outlook ideology of Erbakan. Then the article follows the AKP government and the two ruptures regarding the idea of Westernization during the era. The first rupture is the breaking away from the traditional National Outlook view of the West and following a pro-western, Europhilic agenda. The final rupture particularly concretized from 2014 onwards shows a revert back to anti-Western discourse which at first seemed similar to that of National Outlook ideology. The paper argues that this reversion is not an ideological transformation, but rather a populist voter maximizing discourse through securitizing Turkey's Islamic identity.

The article takes a different approach by providing an insight into how a change has occurred in the AKP regarding the Westernization process. In doing so the article sheds light on the transformation of the use of the West in discourses by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and also

to the reasons, domestic and international, that prompted such change. The research is a comparative historical case study of Westernization touching on the early republican era and highlights the National Outlook ideology's stance at the idea of westernization. The main focus of the article is how AKP stands in relation to National Outlook ideology. The data consists of official and public speeches done by Erdoğan particularly during the elections, collected through AKP's official website, domestic and international newspapers and archives.

Theoretically, the research is mainly benefiting from constructivist theories particularly critical constructivism in analyzing the transformation of individual, unit and subunit level identities. The choice of constructivism is because the theory allows more space to analyze individual level of analysis, furthermore it pays attention to how identities construct the foreign policy and national interest of states. The choice of critical constructivism resides in its focus on cultural production and reproduction of identity and the threat perception. Secondly, it's ability to elucidate the power relations inherent in identity formation. Finally, critical social constructivism manages to denaturalize the discourses and identities that are themselves cultural and social constructions. Critical Constructivists criticize the conventional constructivists by assuming that state identities are developed and redeveloped constantly, through foreign and security policies. Critical constructivism unlike conventional constructivism does not follow a cognitive stance for identity, it argues that "some form of alienation drive the need for identity either the assimilation of the other, if deemed equal, or his oppression, if inferior" (Hopf, 1998). Furthermore, according to critical theory identity is shaped heavily through power relations. Critical conceptualization of power operates and shapes consciousness. According to Critical Constructivists power is an inherent part of existence. Productive and the oppressive nature of human is shaped by power. In turn certain actors have in reproduction and production of have a privileged role. As successfully formulized by Weldes: (WELDES, 1999:17)

Discourses are sites of social power in two ways: first, some discourses are more powerful than others because they are located in and partake of institutional power. All things being equal the representations of state officials have immediate prima facie plausibility to the extent that these officials can be constructed as representatives who speak for us. Such representations are likely to be so regarded because they issue from the institutional power matrix that is the state. Secondly, discourses are implicated in power relations because discourses bring with them the power to define and thus to constitute the world, these representations of insecurity are themselves important sources of power.

It is the reason the study particularly focuses on Erdogan's speeches as the President of Turkey and the leader of the AKP, his speeches tend to have more influence on the public perception of the West in Turkey and construction of threat in foreign policy choices which benefit indirectly the ruling party through elections and policy changes.

Westernization and Turkey

Historically Turkish westernization process is understood not as a territorial border but as an ideology. There are several reasons for the construction of western identity. Ideologically the most important political actor in Turkish history which played huge role in establishment of modern Turkey, the Committee of Union and Progress, was nationalistic and western oriented; socially, the Turkish economic growth model was western inspired; culturally, not just the state elite but also the Turkish population prefer to be associated with the west, instead of east for example girls who are more light skinned and blue/green eyed and usually considered beautiful link – or try to link- their heritage to western countries (Aydindag, 2019), and Atatürk himself wished to establish a western style state with secular pillars.

Once the Republic was established, Westernization became an identity marker for the newly founded state. On the construction of its secular and western identity, the “other” for foundation of Turkey shaped by differences inherent to Turkey's historical and social reality as the Ottoman past. In other words, the other of the new identity was not directly from outside, but within the Ottoman history. Within the framework of the identity concept, the other is defined as a concept that shows what the self does not want to be. Ottoman past in this context defined what new Turkey does not want to be. This ‘past as other’ (Diez, 2005) was the main logic behind legitimizing or securitizing the religious and ethnic identities. As explained by Tanıl Bora (1996):

The “other” image of the Turkish national identity is intrinsic to Turkey's historical-social reality. The other is the "old Turkey". That is Ottoman Empire; it is the old civilization framed by the religious world view. In this new 'old identity' the Ottoman is perceived as oppressing the Turk. Islam is also thought of primarily in terms of the potential of this ancient civilization and the balance of the Ottoman Empire (hence the "danger of the reaction").

Although the newly established Republic tried to follow a neutral foreign policy against the superpowers of that era initially, its western orientation showed itself once it became a member of Europe within the context of economic and political developments. At the end of

World War II, the western orientation grew by not just becoming a western sympathizer but also becoming an ally to them (Yılmaz, 2014). In the Turkish foreign policy orientation one of the main principles of Kemalism, secularism, was also decisive. Turkish elite interpreted this principle radically and disregarded a common ground for cooperation with other Muslim nations. With the fear of continuation of the Ottoman past perception, Ankara not only refrained from an Islam oriented foreign policy, it also refrained from establishing close ties with the region. The Turkish secular elites preferred to isolate the foreign policy agenda from historical and cultural bonds of the Ottoman empire by following a strict Westernization policy. This mentality was symbolized at the foreign policy as a noninterventionist and reactive policy making.

National Outlook Movement and the Westernization

Necmettin Erbakan was the founder of Islamically oriented politico-religious National Outlook Movement. Since he founded the movement in 1969, it persists on existing through several Islamist or Islamically oriented political parties. National Outlook Movement identified Turkish identity with a discourse on Islamic order. The Movement's Manifest rejected all kinds of infidel political and economic ideas, which according to the Manifest is a result of secular Western ideals. In that respect the Manifest is also opposed to those western ideals.

By taking a critical stance against the West and Westernization process, National Outlook marginalized itself from the mainstream political parties and movements. According to National Outlook, Westernization was considered as a greater threat than the West itself because of its impact on the identity of the society and the state which was formerly and traditionally influenced by Islam. Therefore, according to National Outlook, in order to build a national order, western domination and westernization needed to be eliminated. The West was conceived as "the mother of all evils" and as such represented the absolute "other;" the "national self" was to be created through differentiation from the West (Dağı, 2005). In that respect Erbakan supported industrialization, economic independence and warned against rapprochement with the Europe. He considered the European Common Market to be a Catholic and Zionist project in order to achieve de-Islamization and assimilation of Turkey (Eligür, 2010). According to this view, the European cultural values are a fundamental part of Western/European imperialism, thus representing 'cultural imperialism,' their dominance in Turkey and in all non-Western states increases the power and scope of European/Western imperialism.

Not only Erbakan, but other influential leaders of the National Outlook were against Turkey's integration into the EU. Erdoğan himself made a speech in 1997 arguing that democracy is not an aim but a tool and 21st century would be the century for Islamic civilizations" (Erdoğan, 1997). In that respect, the Movement called instead for closer economic co-operation with Muslim countries. To unite against imperialist West by creating a Muslim UN, a Muslim Common Market under the leadership of Turkey and the D-8 countries are projections of this imagery (Cizre, 2008:56).

Regarding the foreign policy, National Outlook argues that the secular elite's (which he calls as 'imitators') obsession with the West is the main problem since it is not in coherence with traditional moral values of Turkish identity which revolves around an Islamic character. Therefore the proposed solution to foreign policy problems of Turkey were to be responded with the "World Union of Muslim Countries". According to the National Outlook's political party -Welfare Party- program, the Customs Union Agreement which was signed on March 6, 1995, was illegitimate" (TBMM, 1995).

National Outlook proves an overly ideological, rigid and polarizing background, focusing on "us vs. them", in that "us" being not Turks but more implying the Muslim world and "them" refer to the West. According to the ideology the defining element of Turkish identity was not secularism but Islamic religion, within this constructed identity his threat perception was contrary to traditional Turkish statist discourse that focus on Islamic threat but the West. The Turkish political culture at the time revolved around Westernization and secularity, therefore most of his ideas at the time did not extent within the Turkish culture and the secular elite's identity establishment. As a result, Erbakan-led government only lasted from 1996 until the 1997 postmodern coup. Although political Islam was initially overlooked, the military soon took steps due to the increasing role and power of the religious identity in the public sphere vis-à-vis the secular state structure (Aydindag & Isiksal, 2018: 302). On 28 February, the National Security Council issued a memorandum that precipitated the resignation of Necmettin Erbakan and the end of his coalition government. As previously mentioned, Erbakan and the February 28 incident proved to be a learning curve for the AKP. AKP leaders particularly Erdoğan had been oppressed during the February 28 process, and, as a result, they started to see the democratic conditionality imposed by the EU and the subsequent diminution of the role of the military as beneficial to their own survival (Dagi, 2005). From here one can argue that right from the beginning AKP was focused on constructing a party identity that is not focused on ideology – particularly religion- and more on pragmatism that would guarantee its survival in the secular system.

AKP Until 2013

The AKP took office in 2002 with promises of economic reform and relatedly the EU candidacy. This way Erdoğan would marginalize himself from traditional Islamist party identity of National Outlook Movement associated with antagonistic anti-western rhetoric and move towards pro EU foreign policy (Kirdis, 2015). Unlike National Outlook perception of the EU being a Christian Club, the AKP under Erdoğan leadership saw it as an impetus for liberalization, human rights and democratization which. These reforms also indirectly allow expansion of space for representation of Islamic identity in the public sphere.

The most significant example of the pragmatism of the party leadership came through establishing a mainstream identity for the AKP. The “conservative democracy” term avoided an explicit reference to religion, emphasized the party’s rupture from the National Outlook tradition in Turkish political Islam (Çağlıyan-İçener, 2009). Conservative democracy of AKP accepted human rights, democracy and the rule of law as universal values. The AKP embraced the dominant Western values while remaining committed to conservative roots.” (Cizre, 2008: 87). The social norms such as democracy and secularism which were shared by most of the Turkish population were adopted as the main element of AKP’s identity and successfully reflected in the voter turnouts in the 2002 general elections.

During that time, the Party took major steps towards democratization, equality and human rights in line with the EU candidacy. Between 2002 and 2004, 8 harmonization packages including the rule of law, human rights, and the market economy were approved by parliament so as to satisfy the Copenhagen Criteria (Gül, 2007). Erdoğan also supported the UN proposed Annan Plan which was about the re- unification of Greek and Turkish side of the Island as a federation. If both sides voted for the Plan then United Cyprus Republic would become an EU member on May 1, 2004. Finding a solution to Cyprus dispute was important for Erdoğan for two reasons Firstly, since it was one of the main obstacles for Turkey’s EU membership the dispute needed to be solved in order to gain respect both domestically and internationally, also to prove the Party’s commitment to westernization is not a facade. Secondly, the traditional security perception and discourse of Islamist National Outlook oriented political parties and secular Kemalist elites regarding Cyprus was “no solution is the solution”. In order to differentiate the AKP from them, Erdoğan wanted the resolving and the eventual reunification of the island. By differentiating himself from the traditional security perception on Cyprus issue, Erdoğan also defined and constructed a new identity for the AKP.

As mentioned previously, Islamic political identity was traditionally built in opposition to the West and Western values. Yet AKP realized that it needed the West and modern/western values of democracy, and the human rights in order to gain legitimacy from the secular establishment. They realized that gaining power through winning elections does not guarantee success or continuity for the Islamic identity in the political sphere.

The EU worked as an anchor in the construction of a separate identity of the AKP through two means: Firstly it differentiated the AKP identity from the former National Outlook identity and secondly it provided a coherence with the main identity marker of secularism- the westernization. Therefore the secular identity did not perceive the new AKP identity as a threat to itself unlike to that of National Outlook identity. In that respect international norms represented by the European Union membership played a more significant role (İnat & Duran, 2006). The new focus not only worked for political and cultural legitimacy of the Party but also helped Erdoğan to gain the popular and pro-EU associations' support domestically and the EU and the USA's support abroad. The importance of gaining the support of these associations is that normally pro-EU associations and sectors are usually considered under the domain of old elite intelligentsia aligning with Kemalist secular ideology, by permeating these sectors Erdoğan managed to gain their bases by showing his party is inclusive to all the population. For the secular elite, the European Union membership symbolized another breaking point for the Kemalist ideology of modernization and Westernization. Pious population supported the process hoping to broaden the scope of religious freedom in Turkey. Liberals believed the EU's influence would prod Turkey toward liberalizing reforms (Dalay & Friedman, 2013).

Through Europeanization and internationalization of internal issues Erdoğan transformed the parameters of both Turkish politics and Islamist politics. Erdoğan regarded international support as a fundamental factor in attaining political legitimacy. Erdoğan with a heavy cost learned enough from the February 28 process that electoral victory does not necessarily give legitimacy in the eyes of the state elite (Yavuz, 2006: 282). Erdoğan needed the EU's support in order to expand its political space and implement democratic control via preserving secularism and democratic rule. This put Erdoğan to leave his rhetoric of searching for Islamic rule and began using a secular language. Thus, the AKP has been successful in framing religious and local issues in terms of a broader European and universal language of human rights and political liberalism (Aydındag & Isiksal, 2018).

After October 2005 recognition of Turkey as an official EU accession country, major discussions erupted in the EU countries regarding Turkey's accession particularly in Austria and France. Five points in the agreement sparked severe reactions in Turkey: the issues of

permanent derogations; the extension of the 1963 Ankara Agreement to the (Greek) Republic of Cyprus; the absorption capacity of the EU; a statement in the agreement that the negotiation process would be open-ended; and the issue of the maintenance of good relations with Turkey's neighbors with particular focus on the Aegean issue. These points revealed that the method that the EU would apply to Turkey's integration with the EU would be different from the previous methods that the Union had applied for the former candidates and for Central and Eastern European Countries (Cizre, 2008:183). Furthermore, the French National Assembly adopted a change in its Constitution, also known as the "Turkish article," to hold a referendum over future expansion of the EU, this was a major blow to Turks (Yavuz H. M., 2009: 250). Additionally, the election to the French presidency of Nicolas Sarkozy, whose main campaign revolved around being against Turkey's EU membership and argument that the country had no place in an already overstretched Union (Bilefsky, 2007). Likewise, recommendation of privileged partnership instead of full membership was openly advocated by Angela Merkel and Nicholas Sarkozy reverted Turkish population and government's EU enthusiasm, along with a general disaffection by the population towards the West. The Cyprus issue which was also made a pre-condition for Turkish membership was discriminatory against Turkey since former accession conditions of Greece and Greek Cypriot government did not have such pre condition. These showed that the EU had a discriminatory approach towards Turkey (Aydindag & Isiksal, 2018). These circumstances coupled with the media representation of the EU, changed the public enthusiasm to the EU membership into euro-skepticism where people started to believe that Turkey would never become a full member, and even if that happens Turkish people would never fully benefit from the membership (Sipahioğlu, 2017).

From 2007 onwards Turkey's main foreign policy saw an expansion towards the Middle Eastern region. Up until then both traditional Turkish foreign policy and the AKP foreign policy were inclined towards the West and there wasn't any highlighting of Turkey's Eastern or Islamic heritage. One of the motivating factors in this regard is the Party leaders' belief that Turkey, as the inheritor of the Ottoman Empire, holds a particular responsibility for the nature of international relations in this region (Oğuzlu, 2008). Erdoğan's new foreign policy approach highlighted the territorial and historical background. The "depth" of Turkey is not just a foreign policy choice but also a reflection of domestic socio-political developments which started to transform the society through a new identity description (Aras, 2006). Erdoğan constructed this perception of Ottoman legacy and took it as a point of reference for shaping foreign and domestic policy orientations of Turkey's. Contrary to the secular pillars of Turkish foreign

policy, Erdoğan thinks that the future of Turkey is in the Ottoman past. As in the times of Ottoman Empire, Islam is seen as an alternative identity source (Heper, 2013).

In this respect Erdoğan's main theoretical framework was built upon Ahmet Davutoğlu's book *Strategic Depth* (Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu) which was published in 2001. Ahmet Davutoğlu also became Erdoğan's chief foreign policy advisor between 2003-2009, he became the Minister of Foreign Affairs from 2009-2014 and finally from 2014-2016 become the 26th Prime Minister of Turkey. As a professor of International Relations, Davutoğlu argued that the Kemalist disengagement from the Islamic world was a product of its disengagement from Islamic and the Ottoman past and its ideological fixation on Europe (Danforth, 2008). Despite this, what is found out in this term is that despite not receiving the warm welcome from the western states, Erdoğan did not have a hostile anti-western rhetoric. He continued to have close ties with the West, with sporadic criticism towards the Western states. Davutoglu architected neo-Ottomanism espoused mostly through 2009 - 2012 period. The policy entailed invocation of historical and religious connections with former Ottoman territories in the Balkans, Caucasus, and Middle East. Pursued in tandem with the principle of "zero problems with neighbors," the vision also nodded to the EU logic of functional spillover from trade, aid, and infrastructural integration (Onar, 2016).

These are important for two grounds, firstly, Cyprus issue, the EU opening and westernized outlook naturalized Erdoğan's attempts to construct a separate identity than that of formerly Islamist identity and also the traditional secular identity. Secondly the West's abstention towards Turkey's attempts created anti-Western nationalism at the societal level. This anti Westernism was separated from the Erdoğan's constructed identity and reflected in politics through legitimizing the development of relations with the Middle Eastern states without alienating the secular elite. The AKP's decision to conduct direct talks with Palestine's Hamas, Erdoğan's participation in an Arab League summit, his criticism of several Western policies towards the region are examples of this transformation (Yavuz, 2009:250).

Restructuring of civil military relations and reformation of judiciary for the sake of Europeanization affected the Turkish foreign policy implementation. Unlike in the Erbakan era, during Erdoğan's premiership the influence of the military and the traditional bureaucracy in foreign policy-making decreased (Talbot, 2013). This worked well with the re-identification of Turkish identity in a more Islamic way by framing Islam as belonging to oppressed and AKP representing the oppressed. For instance, Erdoğan, in his 2011 General Elections victory speech, said that "Believe me, Sarajevo won today as much as Istanbul, Beirut won as much as Izmir, Damascus won as much as Ankara, Ramallah, Nablus, Jenin, the West Bank,

Jerusalem won as much as Diyarbakir...the hopes of the victims and the oppressed have won" (BBC News, 2011). In effect, this discourse situated the AKP not just as a national political party but also as a regional actor representing the identity of oppressed Muslim masses. The speech had strong Islamic, Eastern undertone than a western undertone symbolizing through domestic policy discourse reflected in foreign policy. This construction of unified Islamic community portrayed Erdoğan as savior of the oppressed and religious guardian of the masses meanwhile otherizing not just the West but also western influenced identities within the state. In this discourse Erdoğan constructed a host of objects to be referent objects that are needed to be protected such as the Middle East region, the Islamic masses, the oppressed peoples in general. According to this logic of discourse what is good for Islamic identity of Turkey would benefit the whole region meanwhile continuing to sustain the excluded and marginalized identity of Islam in the country.

When Erdoğan's discourse is analyzed with respect to transformation of perception of the West in Islamic movements in Turkey there is a visible difference from the National Outlook ideology. In Turkish Islamism the concept of Islamic civilization regards Turkey as the center of the Islamic world. This Islamic consciousness has usually paid strong attention to the significance of Ottoman history in formulating an ideological framework in the Turkish context (Cizre, 2008: 83). Unlike the National Outlook vision of this significance being conflictual to Western civilizations, the AKP's discourse of civilization at the time incorporated two different conceptualizations of civilization: the Kemalist will to reach the contemporary civilization and a new Islamic ideal of the coexistence (Cizre, 2008:83). This neo-Ottomanist view is reflected in foreign policy through highlighting the importance of Islam as a common ground and as Ottoman legacy reaching multiple regions. In that respect Çınar's description of the AKP as not a reincarnation of traditional Turkish Islamism but an anti-establishment coalition and a proto-democratic political force (Esposito, Rahim, & Ghobadzadeh, 2017).

Here it is worth mentioning that unlike previous Islamist Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan who sought to create an Islamic alliance with Muslim countries like Iran as an explicit alternative to alliance with the West, the Erdoğan government sees Islamic World and the 'East' as a 'complement' of the ties to the 'West' and not as a 'replacement (Işıksal, 2015: 24)'. It is also a divergence from the traditional Turkish view of Turkey being a bridge that connects the East and West and the Cold War buffer state status. The "bridge" metaphor has traditionally been used in Turkish foreign policy discourse in cultural and material terms. The center state discourse in this sense, is not only a geographical definition, it is also a geopolitical perspective covering the role of history, culture and religion in the transformation of the international

system and the formation of a new regional-global system through Turkey's foreign policy (Yeşiltaş & Balcı, 2013). It gives a more proactive role to Turkey as a center state being able to maneuver several regions simultaneously. In that respect Turkey should hold a new role of security and stability provider.

Unlike the Erbakan's National Outlook vision of foreign policy based to some extent on the conflictual and -essential distinction between Islam and the West, the AKP preferred to use existing institutions like the OIC to advance cooperation between the Muslim world and the West (Yavuz, 2009).

AKP Since 2013

From 2013 onwards Erdoğan's narrative become hostile towards the Western states. The reason of this change is not due to a radical transformation of the identity but rather stemmed from a reaction to domestic and external factors. Externally the main pillar of Davutoglu doctrine, the zero problems with neighbors policy imploded after conflicts in the Middle Eastern states and their spillover effects in Turkey as seen in problems emerged with Egypt, Syria, Libya and Yemen (Hurriyet Daily News, 2015). Domestically, Turkey's democracy, which was explained by Davutoglu as one of the sources of Turkey's soft power, started to be criticized when it showed a low record in terms of human rights, especially after the Gezi events. From then onwards Erdoğan has blamed the Western states for every mishap that Turkey faced, including the 17-25 December 2013 corruption allegations, Iran sanctions case against Halkbank, and also July 15, 2016 coup attempt.

The change in discourse was also identified prior to the series of elections beginning with local elections of March 2014, followed by first presidential elections of August 2014, and then June and November 2015 general elections. In this regard, on December 12, 2014, at a council meeting of the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey Erdoğan said "The parallel structure has never acted alone. That country in the south was using it as a tool. The opposition parties and the actors of the old Turkey supported this structure." This is in line with Ruth Wodak's argument that all right wing populist parties construct a group as dangerous and a threat 'to us' to 'our nation', this phenomenon manifests itself as a politics of fear (Wodak, 2020). In this sense, Erdoğan's populism also divides society into these lines and any oppositional party or old elites who oppose the government automatically reflected as illegitimate or traitors. Contrarily anyone who support the government of the AKP's narrative of anti-Westernism is reflected as patriots or the real people of Turkey who love their land. In

that respect unlike the National Outlook's anti-Western premises Erdoğan's rhetoric is actually anti-elitist, anti-pluralistic and not really related to the Western ideology per se which can also be proved by none of his speeches are directly referred to western media. In all of Erdoğan's speeches the audience were domestic public and in most cases the accusations towards the West were related to domestic problems. Furthermore, it is important to note that it is not against the western values that he attacked but rather towards the western states. This explains the difference between the traditional anti-Western discourse of National Outlook and the Erdoğan led AKP. Erdoğan is rhetorically never against democracy, secularism, liberalism or other western-imported values, unlike Erbakan. On October 13, 2014 at the Marmara University 2014-2015 academic year commencement, he said "centuries ago, those who rebelled against Ottoman Empire by taking gold from the era's superpowers were the ones who betrayed Ottoman Empire. Lawrence was an Arab looking Englishman. Currently spies can emerge from their own people as traitors. The clergymen, the service mentality, journalist like appearance of the new Lawrences striving to set fire to the region. They need the Sykes Picot agreement" (Sabah Gazetesi , 2014). These speeches through referencing of Lawrence of Arabia and Sykes-Picot constructs a threat perception not only against Turkey but against all the Muslim states in the former Ottoman territories. Particular mentioning of Lawrence with his characteristic as Arab looking Englishman and referencing of clergymen, service mentality are all descriptions for Fethullah Gülen and his ties with the United States. This is a populist strategy that benefits in two means. Firstly, without referencing to former strategic alliance between the AKP leaders and Gülen, this referencing of Lawrence and tying it with Sykes-Picot separates the organizational ties between the party and the organization. Secondly, it creates an external enemy, both territorially and ideologically foreign/western to innocent Muslim population which according to the narrative is represented by the AKP.

As often argued, main characteristic of populism is that foreign policy making is subjugated to domestic policies. In that respect anti-western rhetoric work to gain public support. It gains support because it enables such a government to appeal to an imaginary —nationalist nostalgia (e.g. for the Ottoman Empire in Turkey) while simultaneously accusing an external enemy for current socio-economic and/or political troubles (Goksel, 2019). As seen in above speeches by Erdoğan, it is implied that the Ottoman Empire was collapsed not because of the regime's mismanagement, but because of the Western power's divide and conquer strategy. To put in other words, a commonly voiced belief in contemporary Turkey is that the Ottoman Empire did not gradually collapse by itself and that it was destroyed from within by Western powers and ethnic/religious minorities (Taş 2014). This insecurity has historical roots

in Turkey. The Sèvres Syndrome concept is used to explain the paranoia of the Turkey that Western powers are bent on dismantling Turkey vis-à-vis the abortive Treaty of Sèvres in 1920 (Guida, 2008). This has long standing importance for various segments of the society; such as the Kemalists, the nationalists, the leftists and the Islamists. By articulating the domestic threats with international ones, the AKP has naturalized its discourse in the election periods or during domestic mishaps.

Erdoğan's rhetoric became more palpable from 2017 onwards, particularly towards the run up to Constitutional Referendum of 16 April. When Netherlands refused to allow Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu to visit Rotterdam for a political rally and stopped Minister of Family Affairs Fatma Betül Sayan Kaya from entering the Turkish consulate in Rotterdam, Erdoğan said in a speech in Ankara on March 14, 2017 at the Doctor's Day "We know the Netherlands and the Dutch from the Srebrenica massacre. We know how corrupt their character is, how they slaughtered 8,000 Bosniaks there. We know them well. Nobody can give us a lecture on civilization, or act like civilized." (Hurriyet Daily News, 2017). According to results of a survey done in 2017 on foreign policy conducted by Kadir Has University, those who stated that "Turkey has no friends" increased from 17.2% to 22.5% in one year. In the same period, those who think that the United States is a hostile country increased from 10% to 16.2 (Kadir Has University, 2019) In that respect anti western rhetoric has wide appeal in Turkish society. Taş argued that

"Conspiracy theories have a long shelf life in Turkey. Such narratives, mostly drawing parallels between the imperial history of Europe and its political ambitions today, rely on an inflated self-confidence and superiority complex. The underlying assumption of these conspiracy theories is that Turkey's unbridled rise and political potency challenges and annoys the hegemonic western powers. Considering the discrepancy between political reality and national self-perception, these explanations flattering many Turks might really sell" (Taş, 2014).

Anti-Westernism is one the few factors that has the potential power to attract the voters of all the mainstream Turkish political currents namely Kemalism, Turkish nationalism, conservatism and Islamism and unite them around the authority of the central state mechanism. As such, it should be understood as an extremely potent force for generating legitimacy and public support to the AKP administration which has been isolated (Göksel, 2019). Therefore it is expectable that Erdoğan's most of anti-western rhetoric takes place before the elections and referendums.

More recently at an election rally in Izmir on 2019, in the wake of the terrorist attacks at two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, Erdoğan accused the international community of having double standards in categorizing terrorism. "All of the world leaders describe the terrorist attack in New Zealand as an attack on Islam and Muslims. They do not call the perpetrator a 'Christian terrorist.' Why can't they say that?" (Daily Sabah, 2019)

According to Ruth Wodak, right wing populist parties seem to offer simple and clear cut answers to fears and challenges by constructing scapegoats and enemies- Others which are to blame for woes by frequently tapping into traditional collective stereotypes and images of the enemy. The latter depend on the respective historical traditions in specific national, regional or local context (Wodak, 2020: 26). The continuous rise of anti-western sentiments in the public since 2005 worked well with populist anti-western rhetoric of the AKP, which is decorated with Ottoman era grandeur and the historical threat perception of the West stemming from the Sevres syndrome. What is important is that in all of his speeches it is not ideologies of the West or his attitude being idealistic in itself rather it is all against the Western countries working not for an ideology but for elections or other domestic or international struggles.

Conclusion

From the article it can be seen that the deep skepticism and even animosity for the West and the West's intentions toward Turkey aimed to unite Turkish religious conservatives and nationalists—crucial glue for the AKP's electoral coalition. This in turn points out to the most important difference than the National Outlook ideology whereby Erbakan never blamed the states directly, rather the ideology was based upon the westernization not the Western states themselves. Although Erdoğan's discourse is reminiscent of the National Outlook ideology, what differentiates them is that Erdoğan's narrative is not as a result of ideology but a result of populism.

Secondly, Erdoğan's populism is imbued with a pragmatic streak. Although in his rhetoric he blames the West, none of these speeches are aimed at the western leaders or the western population, rather they are aimed at domestic conservative population. Furthermore even when he blames the West his criticism is never the western values or ideals rather it is always the Western states and their histories. This is proved as none of these speeches preclude him from pursuing a relationship with Washington and even with a person like Donald Trump who has been associated with anti-Muslim stances. In a similar vein, the relations with Germany

and Holland are also improved despite accusing them in domestic electoral speeches with their Nazi background.

References

- ADALETVE KALKINMA PARTİSİ, AK PARTİ, (May 2015) <http://www.akparti.org.tr/site/icraat/14597/cozum-surecini-baslattik-adresinden-alindi>
- ARAS, B. (2006). Türk-İran İlişkileri: Değişim ve Süreklilik. *Avrasya Dosyası*, 12(2), 78.
- AYDİNDAG, D., & İSİKSAL, H. (2018). (De)Securitization of Islam in Turkey. *Revista de Cercetare si Interventie Sociala*, 62, 294-305.
- AYDİNDAG, D. (2019). The Evolution and Intersection of Academic and Popular Islamic Feminism in Turkey. *Religacion*, 4, 140-148.
- AYDİNDAG, D., & HÜSEYİN, I. (2021). Securitization of Identity in Turkey During the AKP Era. *Revista Género E Interdisciplinaridade*, 2(1), 498-523.
- BALKIR, C. &. (2016). Shifting Logics: The Discourses of Turkish Political Elites on EU Accession. *South European Society and Politics*, 21(1), 29-43.
- BASHİROV, G., & LANCASTER, C. (2018). End of Moderation: The Radicalization of AKP in Turkey. *Democratization*, 25(7), 1210-1230.
- BBC News. (2011, June 13). January 2018. Turkey election: Victorious Erdogan pledges 'consensus': <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-13744972>
- BİLEFSKY, D. (2007, June 25). *New York Times*. November 2017. Sarkozy blocks key part of EU entry talks on Turkey: <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/06/25/world/europe/25iht-union.5.6325879.html>
- BORA, T. (1996). İnşa Döneminde Türk Milli Kimliği. *Toplum ve Bilim*, 71, 168-194.
- ÇAĞLIYAN-İÇENER, Z. (2009). The Justice and Development Party's Conception of "Conservative Democracy: Invention or Reinterpretation? *Turkish Studies*, 10(4), 595-612.
- ÇAKİR, R. (2018, September 28). *Erdogan'in mevcut Batı karşitliğı İslamcı olmasından ziyade politik*. August 2020. Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uX6I7lp5GQM>
- CEBECİ, M. (2016). De-Europeanisation or Counter-Conduct? Turkey's Democratisation and the EU. *South European Society and Politics*, 21(1), 119-132.
- ÇINAR, M. (2018). Turkey's 'Western' or 'Muslim' identity and the AKP's civilizational discourse. *Turkish Studies*, 19(2), 176-197.
- CİZRE, Ü. (Dü.). (2008). *Secular and Islamic Politics in Turkey: The Making of the Justice and Development Party*. Routledge.
- DAİLY SABAH. (2019, March 18). June 2019. Erdoğan decries West's double standards in defining terrorism: <https://www.dailysabah.com/diplomacy/2019/03/18/erdogan-decries-west-double-standards-in-defining-terrorism>.
- DALAY, G., & FRIEDMAN, D. (2013). The AK Party and the Evolution of Turkish Political Islam's Foreign Policy. *Insight Turkey*, 15(2), 123-140.
- DAĞI, İ. (2005). Transformation of Islamic Political Identity in Turkey: Rethinking the West and Westernization,. *Turkish Studies*, 6(1), 167-186.
- DANFORTH, N. (2008). *Turkish Policy*. January 2018. Ideology and Pragmatism in Turkish Foreign Policy: From Ataturk to the AKP: <http://turkishpolicy.com/Files/ArticlePDF/ideology-and-pragmatism-in-turkish-foreign-policy-from-aturk-to-the-akp-fall-2008-en.pdf>
- DAVUTOĞLU, A. (2010, May 20). *Turkey's Zero-Problems Foreign Policy*. December 2016. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2010/05/20/turkeys-zero-problems-foreign-policy/>
- DİEZ, T. (2005). Constructing the Self and Changing Others: Reconsidering 'Normative Power Europe'. *Millennium- Journal of International Studies*, 33(3), 613-636.

- DİNC BELCHER, G. (2012). Journey From Islamism to Conservative Democracy: The Politics of Religious Party Moderation in Turkey.
- ELİĞÜR, B. (2010). *Mobilization of Political Islam in Turkey*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- ERBAKAN, N. (2007, February 14). *Prof. Dr. Necmettin Erbakan'ın İran Konuşmaları*. January 2018. Necmettin Erbakan.Net: <http://www.necmettinerbakan.net/haberler/prof-dr-necmettin-erbakan-39in-iran-konusmalari.html>
- ESPOSITO, J. L., RAHİM, L. Z., & GHOBADZADEH, N. (Ed). (2017). *The Politics of Islamism: Diverging Visions and Trajectories*. Springer.
- GÖKSEL, O. (2019). Foreign Policy Making in the Age of Populism: The Uses of Anti-Westernism in Turkish Politics. *New Middle Eastern Studies*, 9(1).
- GUİDA, M. (2008). The Sèvres Syndrome and “Komplo” Theories in the Islamist and Secular Press. *Turkish Studies*, 9(1), 37-52.
- GÜL, A. (2007). January 2018. T.C. Başbakanlık Avrupa Birliği Genel Sekreterliği: <https://www.ab.gov.tr/files/pub/abuyp.pdf>.
- GÜLMEZ, S. B. (2013). Rising Eurocepticism in Turkish Politics: The Cases of the AKP and the CHP. *Acta Politica*, 48(3), 326-344.
- HALE, W., & ÖZBUDUN, E. (2010). *Islamism, Democracy and Liberalism in Turkey: The Case of the AKP*. London: Routledge.
- HEPER, M., & SAYARI, S. (Ed.). (2012). *The Routledge Handbook of Modern Turkey*. New York: Routledge.
- HEPER, M. (2013). Islam, Conservatism, and Democracy in Turkey: Comparing Turgut Özal and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. *Insight Turkey*, 15(2), 141-156.
- HOPF, T. (1998). The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory. *International Security*, 23(1), 171-200.
- Hürriyet. (2003, 1 15). *Hürriyet Ekonomi*. May 2017. AKP, TÜSİAD'a geliyor: <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/ekonomi/akp-tusiada-geliyor-121766>
- Hurriyet Daily News. (2017, March 14). Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan'dan Hollanda'ya çok sert 'Srebrenitsa' çıkışı! Hollanda'dan yanıt geldi...: <https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/dunya/erdogandan-srebrenitsa-cikisi-hollandadan-yanit-geldi-40394978>
- İNAT, K., & DURAN, B. (2006). AKP Dış Politikası:Teori ve Uygulama. Z. Dağı içinde, *Doğudan Batıya Dış Politika AK Parti'li Yıllar*. Ankara: Pozitif Matbaacılık.
- İŞIKSAL, H. (2015). Turkish Foreign Policy During the AKP Era. *Turkish Foreign Policy in the New Millennium*. içinde Peter Lang.
- Kadir Has University. (2019). March 2019. Research on Public Perceptions on Turkish Foreign Policy: <https://khas.edu.tr/en/haberler/research-public-perceptions-turkish-foreign-policy-2019-0>
- KARADAG, R. (2010). (M. D. 10/7) May 2017. Neoliberal Restructuring in Turkey From State to Oligarchic Capitalism: <https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/43284/1/635645955.pdf>
- KİRDİS, E. (2015). The Role of Foreign Policy in Constructing the Party Identity of the Turkish Justice and Development Party (AKP). *Turkish Studies*, 16(2), 178-194.
- KİRİŞÇİ, K. (2006). Turkey's Foreign Policy in Turbulent Times. *Chaillot Paper*, 96.
- ÖNİŞ, Z., & YILMAZ, Ş. (2009). Between Europeanization and Euro-Asianism: Foreign Policy Activism in Turkey during the AKP Era. *Turkish Studies*, 10(1), 7-24. Between Europeanization And Euro-Asianism: Foreign Policy Activism in Turkey During the Akp ERA: <https://tr.boell.org/sites/default/files/downloads/ziyaonis.pdf>
- OĞUZLU, T. (2008). Middle Easternization of Turkey's Foreign Policy: Does Turkey Dissociate from the West? *Turkish Studies*, 9(1), 3-20.

- ONAR, N. F. (2016, February). *The Populism/Realism Gap: Managing Uncertainty in Turkey's Politics and Foreign Policy*. January 2020. Brookings Institute: <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/norafisherturkeyprojectpolicypaper-2.pdf>.
- ORAN, B. (Ed.). (2013). *Türk Dış Politikası: Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar* (Cilt II). İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.
- Recep Tayyip Erdoğan: "Demokrasi bizim için amaç değil araçtır. (1997). September 2019 Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qY52kEMQyBA>
- Saatçioğlu, B. (2016). De-Europeanisation in Turkey: The Case of the Rule of Law. *South European Society and Politics*, 21(1), 133-146.
- Sabah Gazetesi* . (2014, October 13). February 2019. Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan'dan Lawrence çıkışı: <https://www.sabah.com.tr/gundem/2014/10/13/cumhurbaskani-erdogan-konusuyor>
- SİPAHİOĞLU, B. Ö. (2017). Shifting from Europeanization to de-Europeanization in Turkey: How AKP instrumentalized EU negotiations. *The Turkish Yearbook of International Relations*, (Vol. 48).
- TAŞ, H. (2014). *Open Democracy*. June 2019. Anti Westernism in Turkey: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/north-africa-west-asia/antiwesternism-in-turkey/>
- TAURECK, R. (2006). Securitization theory and securitization studies. *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 9(1), 53-61.
- TALBOT, V. (2013). *ISPI Analysis*. December 2017 tarihinde Turkey And Iran:Resetting Relations? : https://www.ispionline.it/sites/default/files/pubblicazioni/analysis_224_2013_0.pdf
- TBMM. (1995, December 24). Refah Partisi Secim Beyannamesi: <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/eyayin/GAZETELER/WEB/KUTUPHANEDE%20BULUNAN%20ODIJITAL%20KAYNAKLAR/KITAPLAR/SIYASI%20PARTI%20YAYINLARI/199601072%20RP%20SECIM%20BEYANNAMESI%201995/199601072%20RP%20SECIM%20BEYANNAMESI%201995.pdf>
- WELDES, J. (1999). *Constructing National Interests: The United States and the Cuban Missile Crisis*. University of Minnesota Press.
- YAVUZ, H. (Ed.). (2006). *The Emergence of a New Turkey: Islam, Democracy, and the AK Parti*. University of Utah Press.
- Yeni Akit. (2016, June 2). *Yeni Akit*. February 2018. Erbakan açıklamıştı! Avrupa'nın hain Ermeni planı: <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr/haber/erbakan-aciklamisti-avrupanin-hain-ermeniplani-180242.html>
- YEŞİLTAŞ, M., & BALCI, A. (2013, May). A Dictionary of Turkish Foreign Policy in the AK Party Era: A Conceptual Map. *SAM Papers: Center for Strategic Research*(7).
- YEŞİLTAŞ, M. (2014). Turkey's Quest for a "New International Order": The Discourse of Civilization and the Politics of Restoration. *Perceptions*, 19(4), 43-76.
- YILDIZ, A. (2003). Politico-Religious Discourse of Political Islam in Turkey: The Parties of National Outlook. *The Muslim World*, 93(2), 187-209.
- YILMAZ, O. (2014). *A Constructivist analysis of Turkish Foreign Policy in 1980s and 2000s: The example of TurkeyU.S. Relations* . <https://d-nb.info/1068362820/34>
- WODAK, R. (2020). *The Politics of Fear: The Shameless Normalization of Far-Right Discourse*. Sage Publishing.

