The Arab Spring Effect on Turkey's Role, Decision-making and Foreign Policy

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PREAMBLE

From a rising star and a model to being heavily involved in every conflict in the Middle East, Turkey, its decision-making and its foreign policy appear to have attracted a lot of attention. From the arrival of the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP or JDP) until the advent of the so-called Arab Spring, Turkey's foreign policy and soft power were a case that no other government or decision-maker could ignore. Successes and achievements attracted others and encouraged them to emulate Turkey's experience. Nevertheless, such achievements and successes suffered a heavy blow with the repercussions of the Arab Spring. Turkey, which had lived as an outsider since the establishment of the New Republic, has become part of the region and its conflicts. This book analyses Turkey's role in the Arab world. It examines Turkey's foreign policy toward the region, studies the decision-making process in Turkey and considers this in relation to recent developments in the region. Turkey's involvement and recent activism in the Arab world is evaluated, and various institutional and official responses and reactions toward the recent developments there are noted and examined. Turkey's shifting policy is analysed in a number of case studies of Arab Spring countries. It is argued that the "change" in Turkey's foreign policy and approach toward the region in the past four years is merely a reaction to the revolts and not a preset strategy or policy. In other words, Turkey's reaction entailed a flexible and resilient policy for dealing with regional developments. Thus, specific Arab Spring cases—such as the Syrian conflict and the revolutions/counter-revolutions in Libya, Tunisia and Egypt—have been sought in order to provide the basis for a sound and valid argument that the Arab Spring as a whole affected Turkey's foreign policy opportunities. Although many have argued that the Arab Spring did not represent a single, homogeneous event, and that the different episodes of it ended up in quite different outcomes, the ultimate result is that the Arab Spring influenced Turkey's relations with the Arab countries—in some cases paving the way for greater Turkish involvement in the region, while in others decreasing Ankara's leverage. The role of the ruling party and domestic conditions has had a decisive impact on decision-making and has contributed to the political formulation of Turkey's novel approach toward the region. Along with other internal and external factors, the "strategic depth" doctrine and

"zero problems with neighbours" policy have been influential in shaping Turkey's relations with the Arab world—before and after the eruption of the Arab Spring. It has become evident, nonetheless, that Turkey's influence and image in the Arab world has waned. This decay in position and leverage constitutes an important example of how a successful policy and a power's ascending role can be negatively altered, damaging what has been achieved over a period of time.

CHAPTER ONE

AN OVERVIEW

Introduction

Turkey is an important country and possesses unique characteristics that qualify her for a central role, not only in the Middle East region but also globally. Turkey, which has the 17th largest economy in the world, shares a history of peace and war with Arabs and Europeans alike. The US has acknowledged the importance of Turkey and entrusted her with various regional projects such as the Greater Middle East project during the second Bush administration. Turkey is a member of NATO and considered by many scholars an acceptable model of moderate Islam. The official heir of the Ottoman Empire, Turkey ruled Arabs for more than 400 years. Although most Arabs saw in Ottoman rule a form of imperialism and a reason for the backwardness of Arab societies, surprisingly, with the arrival of Justice and Development Party (AKP or JDP) to power, attitudes changed. Turkey was able to gradually gain unprecedented popularity among Arabs. With her rising regional popularity and status, many scholars envisaged a greater regional role and clout for Turkey.

The outbreak of Arab revolts—better known as the Arab Spring— significantly contributed to the timing of this book. With this in mind, its time-focus begins with the accession to power of the AKP and lasts until the November 2015 election and Ahmet Davutoğlu's resignation. The 20th century as a broader frame includes major domestic and regional changes such as the declining role of the military in Turkey, the US occupation of and then withdrawal from Iraq, changes in power balance and the outbreak of the Arab Spring. Many Western observers consider the Arab Spring to have started as a democratic event that may be aligned with similar waves that took place in Latin America and Eastern Europe. On the other hand, some Arab intellectuals have argued that the Arab Spring is nothing but another foreign conspiracy to further weaken and divide the Arab world. In fact, the Arab Spring turned a static region into a dynamic and changeable environment, leading to massive transformations and changing

the landscape of the whole Arab world. Among the changes that followed the Arab Spring was the decline of Turkey's status in the Arab world. Turkey's official relations with many Arab countries were negatively affected, in some cases diplomatic relations were downgraded, and her popularity with ordinary Arabs decreased accordingly.

In contrast to several hypotheses positing that Turkey's new activism and foreign policy in the region was a pre-designed policy that is meant to result in a "drift toward the East," or to "shift axis" (Acara and Aydin 2011, p.2), it appears that the shift in the Turkish role is pragmatic and is mainly a resilient reflection of the recent developments in the region. Hence, this book examines the ramifications of the so-called Arab Spring for Turkey's foreign policy and hence her role in the Arab world. In other words, there are two main variables; Turkey's role (and foreign policy) on one side and the Arab world (and the Arab Spring) on the other side are connected in a causal relationship and in a way that exemplifies a clear model in international relations. Initially, observers found that Turkish democracy and modernization were important constituents in what has become known as the Turkish Model. According to this view, the model is meant to elicit a reaction from Arabs, either to inspire regimes to follow suit and hence commence meaningful reforms or to instigate the masses to push their regimes toward a similar end. In either case, the ultimate outcome would lead countries toward strategic depth and Davutoğlu's concept of interdependence and should eventually boost Turkey's leverage in the region. However, the massive changes that took place in the Arab world caused a dramatic change in Turkey's role and status. Turkey's foreign policy toward the Arab world changed and the pillars of strategic depth, "zero problems with neighbours" policy and soft power were all affected. The change led to a number of remarkable outcomes: first, Turkey has had to deal with the Arab world on a micro (national) level instead of her previous macro-level dealings. A case-by-case policy meant that Turkey felt obliged to take sides and hence led to the second outcome, which was the recalibration of her involvement and role in the region, its dynamics and details. Ankara's decision-makers' updated strategy and novel vision of Turkey's role in the region, replacing the position of role model with direct intervention and acting as perceived champion of democracy for Arab people and youth, was the third outcome. Following on from the third outcome, and distinguishing between the people and their regimes, Turkey had to face inevitable clashes with the existing regimes in the Arab world. A fourth outcome, losing her status as an external, neutral and credible mediator and source of inspiration, also led to a fifth outcome, which was the deterioration of Turkey's soft-power

capabilities. This was notable in Ankara's continuous calls for some Arab presidents to step down, threats of the use of military power and other incidents such as the downing of a Russian jet on 24 November 2015. Tense relations with a number of Arab regimes ensued and Turkey's role and foreign policy were labelled as sectarian, particularly with Turkey's vocal support for Islamic movements. Finally, the Arab Spring and its repercussions moved Turkey's status from that of a comprehensive-policies state to that of an obligated-policies state.

In this regard, examining the history, developments and transformations in Turkey's foreign policy can be considered a stepping stone in framing a sound analysis of Turkey's foreign policy and role in the Arab world. A state's decisions and foreign policies hinge upon a number of factors that vary between the domestic, the external and the role of an individual.

Domestic factors can be seen as either static or dynamic (Kiriş and Yatağan 2015, pp.31–32). Static domestic factors include conditions maintaining specific aspects of a nation or state's behaviour. They represent organic features that are deep-rooted elements in a state or a nation. This can include history (e.g. Ottoman), traditions (e.g. Middle Eastern), culture (e.g. Turkic), geostrategic location (between the East and the West), religion (basically Sunni Islam) and ethno-national composition (Kurdish and Turkish).

Dynamic domestic factors include changing conditions that are affected by certain domestic, regional or international developments. They may be political structures (e.g. the role of the military or perhaps the harmony between the president and the prime minister), economic and financial conditions (that help or constitute an obstacle to decision-makers), or the influence of public opinion or the images and beliefs of decision-makers (e.g. Atatürk: Westernization and secularism; Erdoğan: neo-Ottomanism and moderate Islam).

On the other hand, external factors come in line with the international structure which constitutes a specific order that affects the attributes and styles of decision-makers. In other words, regional structure and order formulate styles, attributes or rules set by decision-makers for their nations. Thus, it can be said that the prevailing systemic structure played a crucial role in determining Turkish foreign policy. This foreign policy, hence, was organized into a new structural framework or "structural periods." Okman posits that Turkish foreign policy is envisioned on the basis of its historical depth. That being said, the historical depth makes

responsiveness to structural attributes a general theoretical framework. The selected principles (that come out of these attributes) turn out to be styles adopted by decision-makers (Okman 2004, pp.5–6).

To elaborate, following the Great War, a new order began and with it the attributes and styles of decision-makers in Turkey were reformulated. This was reflected in what has come to be known as Kemalism: a mode of identification valorizing secularism, Westernization and a detachment from Islamism. Similarly, following the Second World War, another order was established and with it came new attributes and styles that included Menderes's openness to the Islamic world while joining NATO. In a similar way, with the collapse of the former Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, another new order arose in which Turkey's significance for NATO declined remarkably. These developments implied new attributes and styles that were reflected in the policies of former president Turgut Özal (Özalism) and former foreign minister İsmail Cem. The US occupation of and then withdrawal from Iraq and the ensuing change in power balance are considered other regional factors that preceded the arrival of the AKP to power in Turkey and affected their vision and foreign policy.

In fact, Turkey's foreign policy-making is based on a number of dimensions; cultural, historical, strategic, regional and domestic. Oran and Askin, for instance, find that the cultural dimension is a mixture of Central Asian, Islamic and Western. Each element has had its effect on Turkey's foreign policy, orientation and practices. The Central Asian cultural dimension relies on leaders rather than institutions (Oran and Aksin 2010, p.3). So, finally, there is the role of the individual factor: the leader. This may be considered the most crucial factor in the decision-making process in Turkey. It is unequivocal that the role of the leader (under Erdoğan) has grown remarkably, making leadership crucial to the analysis of Turkey's foreign policy from a decision-making perspective and essential in order to understand Turkey's state decisions, role and foreign policy.

This book elaborates on the above and analyses the forms, paradigms and levels of Turkish involvement and intervention in the region. It also aims to analyse the advantages and the challenges arising from Turkey's role. The present and central conundrum is how the earlier policy suffered a reversal and how this might be rectified. Additionally, special attention is paid to the effects of massive transformations in the Arab world on Turkey's activism, perceptions, decisions, image and role. In this respect, this book investigates three interlocking factors. The first is the difference

between Turkey's approach and role before the eruption of the Arab Spring, when Turkey dealt with Arab states at a macro level, and after the Arab Spring, when it has been forced to deal with them at a micro level. Second is the image of Turkey in the eyes of Arabs before the Arab Spring, when they found in Turkey an honest broker—and at times a model—and after the outbreak of the Arab Spring, when Turkey has been brought inside the sphere of Arab affairs and has also deemed herself forced to take sides. The third factor is Turkey's aspiration to assume the role of mentor—derived, according to her critics, from her Ottoman nostalgia—and ending up being dragged into the same dilemmas that face other states.

Two main developments triggered the motivation behind carrying out this work: the Arab revolts or Arab Spring; and the developments in Turkish foreign policy which saw Turkey emerge as a key player in world politics, with growing clout and presence in the Arab world, and then the dramatic decline in her status and popularity. To study these developments, this research inspects a number of variables, including the Arab world and the Arab Spring, and Turkey's role and foreign policy. Analysis is conducted on the macro level of a defined Arab world. The research draws lessons from Turkey's experience and activism and introduces a hypothesis regarding the possibility of a potential role for Turkey in the Arab world, in light of the changes in Turkey's foreign policy toward the Arab world in the aftermath of the eruption of the Arab Spring; the limitations of Turkey's soft-power tools and capabilities; and her economic capacity, regional competition and domestic developments.

This work aims to provide a contribution to a topic which has not been properly studied. Although many publications have discussed the issue of Turkey and her foreign policy toward the Middle East in general and the Arab world in particular, few have addressed it in the context of the aftermath of the Arab Spring, and in the holistic way in which this book approaches the subject. Phillip and Pugh state that the term "original contribution" has been inevitably interpreted narrowly, as it does not mean a real breakthrough (2005, p.35), but there are a number of reasons for emphasizing the novelty of this work. For instance, even with the existing studies that tackle the role of Turkey in the Arab world, through different conditions and at various times, the impact of the Arab Spring and the massive changes in the Arab world have not been fully covered.

Hence, the originality of this work lies in introducing and analysing the nature and prospective role of a key player (Turkey) in the Arab world, in

light of extraordinary events that struck a region that has long been described as slow to engage with or immune to democratic transformations. The book also provides the novelty of analysing Turkey's foreign policy toward the Arab world, examining the impact of the Arab Spring in shaping, and at times changing, the role of Turkey as a reflection, and not as an independent variable.

Another novelty of this work is that it adds a new perspective in studying Turkey's role and foreign policy, which is that of the decision-making process. The book also provides a contribution to literature in dealing with the variables in question in a holistic way that ranges across historical, descriptive, analytical, correlative and evaluative strategies. Unlike most previous studies, this one does not rely only on primary and secondary sources, but also draws on interviews with key policy-makers and experts in the field. Finally, this work can be considered a significant tool in bridging the gap between the academic and policy worlds. In sum, it is hoped this book will be a new source and will be utilized as a reference point by decision-makers, academic institutions and universities, think-tanks, scholars, and researchers in future examinations of the Turkish role in the region, and will provide a model that can demonstrate how changes in static variables (unplanned developments in a—previously classified—stable environment) can negatively affect and disturb strategic achievements.

Reams of academic articles and books have been published on aspects of Turkey's foreign policy in the Arab world, some tackling the transformations in Turkey's foreign policy, Turkey's soft-power tools and the Turkish Model others focusing on Turkey's responses to the Arab Spring and relations with the Arab world in light of these transformations. Since the advent of the Arab Spring, the most remarkable offerings on this topic have been Graham E. Fuller's *Turkey and the Arab Spring leadership in the Middle East* (2014); Aaron Stein's *Turkey's new foreign policy: Davutoğlu, the AKP and the pursuit of regional order* (2015); Birol Baskan's *Turkey and Qatar in the tangled gepolitics of the Middle East*, Cihan Tuğal's *The fall of the Turkish Model: how the Arab uprisings brought down Islamic liberalism*, and Bulent Aras and Fuat Keyman's *Turkey, the Arab Spring and beyond* (all 2016); and Pinar Gozen Ercan's *Turkish foreign policy: international relations, legality and global politics* and Idris Demir's *Turkey's foreign policy towards the Middle East: under the shadow of the Arab Spring* (both 2017).

Background

More than 25 nation-states were established in former Ottoman territories in the wake of the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. The founder of the new Turkish Republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, and the new rulers' traumas and perceptions of that period were what primarily shaped Turkey's ensuing relations with the Arab world. Along with Turkey's ideology of modernization and Westernization, the new rulers blamed conservative Islamic ideas for holding back progress in the region and thus firmly eschewed any form of pan-Turkism or pan-Islamism, turning their backs on the Arab world (Carley 1996, p.5). Burand (1996, p.172) infers that Turks have always considered the Middle East to be a kind of quicksand that they would prefer to avoid and that Turkish foreign policy has thus been to observe events in the Arab world rather than be involved in them. For this reason, Turkey's relations with the Arab world remained limited, even though they shared a common history and culture.

However, in the last decade everything has changed. Turkey has emerged as an important, active player in many of the world's major events, a change that entailed a new vision, in relation not only to the Arab world but to the world at large. Turkey has started to appear much more evident on the world's map, with an increasing role in several regions in the world, including the Caucasus, the Balkans and the Arab region. While the end of the Cold War led to a decline in Turkey's weight and importance to the allies, NATO and the West in general, the US withdrawal from Iraq brought Turkey back on track. Former US secretary of state Henry Kissinger anticipated that Turkey would fill part of the regional void left by the US withdrawal: "Turkey's influence is growing at a time that the U.S. is withdrawing from Iraq and Afghanistan, plus Libya is opening up—so Turkey can play a significant role" (Parkinson 2011, p.1).

The collapse of Iraq and US withdrawal left a power vacuum that many powers tried to fill. This accompanied the arrival and rise of the AKP, which used all these circumstances to announce a new era in Turkey's foreign policy and her future as a regional player (Küçükcan 2012, p.1). The main pillar for this new approach, which will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter and in the following chapters, is the *strategic depth* doctrine, which relies on the *zero problems with neighbours* policy. As this policy got underway a change in the region's status quo was ushered in, leading to an unprecedented rise in Turkey's role and weight. Her soft power was argued to be the key to such success, and many opted to call it mass (public) diplomacy (Bakeer 2013, p.1).

With its rising status, analyses of Turkish foreign policy have evolved remarkably since 2002. In the process of raising the country's profile in the region and achieving her foreign policy goals, Turkish officials stress the vital importance of soft power. As a matter of fact, over the last decade Turkey has been the only country able to promote relations at two levels in the Arab world: the governmental and the public. This engagement policy has paid off in several ways and Arab intellectuals, activists and youth leaders have taken a keen interest in what some have described as the "Turkish Model" (Kalın 2011a, p.1). In a different contribution, Ibrahim Kalın, deputy undersecretary and chief policy adviser to Turkey's current president and former prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, contends that Turkey's stable democracy, her growing economy and her proactive foreign policy have generated growing appreciation of the country's achievements, which has augmented her soft power in the region. This has been reflected in the Arab world's lively debate about how Turkey has been able to reconcile Islam with democracy and to have a proactive and independent foreign policy and maintain outstanding economic development (Kalın 2011a, p.1).

Turkey's engagement in the region has taken a variety of forms, ranging from the political to the economic and cultural, proffering educational support, mediation and military assistance. Soap operas, tourism and abolishing visa requirements have been other platforms that have boosted Turkey's profile and reputation in the region. For instance, soap operas broadcast on numerous satellite channels in every single Arab country led to outstanding results. As an outcome, the number of Arab tourists visiting Turkey has rapidly increased (Candemir 2013, p.1), there has been a noticeable growth in relations and platforms gathering together Turkish and Arab intellectuals, civil society actors and businesspeople, and Turkey's officials have been shuttling to and warmly received in Arab countries (Beletchi 2013). One of the novelties, and hence successes, in Turkey's foreign policy toward this region has been her increasing eagerness to play a third-party role in the management and, if possible, the resolution of regional conflicts. Since the end of the Cold War several Turkish governments have played with this idea, but the current AKP government has gone further and made the peace-builder role an important element of the country's policy toward the region. Her main asset has been the position of having good relations with the parties in different conflicts, and, exploiting this, Turkey has developed to become an effective third-party mediator (Altunışık 2008, p.50).

Without doubt, these tools have accelerated Turkey's policy of mending fences with the Arab world. Figures up to 2011 showed the increasing popularity of Turkey and her president and former premier Erdoğan, and at the same time Turkey's image was boosted and her status as a model widely spread. Many Arabs found in Turkey a model for transformation and this was clearly reflected in consecutive polls in 2010 and 2011 (Dinç 2011, pp.64–69). By 2010, one year before the first spark of the Arab Spring, 75 per cent of Arabs had a positive view of Turkey (Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation 2011, p.5).

Arabs received Turkey's proactive policy and activism in the region with enthusiasm; polls showed that many called upon their leaders to emulate the Turkish Model while others saw in Erdoğan a long-awaited hero. These reactions boosted the confidence of Turkey's decision-makers, who took them as a call to redress the earlier aversion of the Arab world to Turkey. When the initiation of the Arab democratic revolutions known as the Arab Spring created a momentous impact throughout the Arab world, a prominent role for Turkey in the region was anticipated. Many Arabs looked to Turkey as a model and source of inspiration. The new Arab ruling elites announced their praise and respect for the Turkish experience, many choosing to name their parties after the ruling party in Turkey, the Justice and Development Party (Beletchi 2013).

Therefore, with the Arab uprisings Turkey had the opportunity to confirm her status in the region. Ibrahim Kalin argues the Arab Spring might have "vindicated the new strategic thrust of Turkish foreign policy," while Steven Cook contends that current Turkish foreign policy was actually the result of careful balancing between hard policy and values. In effect, the Arab Spring put this dual nature of Turkey's foreign policy to the test (Akyol 2011, p.1). The Arab revolts profoundly changed all calculations and assumptions, leaving no country with the luxury of showing indifference to regional developments or pursuing a low-profile foreign policy. These massive transformations in the Arab world led forward-looking actors in the region to hope for the type of order that would reflect their national interests and foreign policy priorities (Öğuzlu 2013).

Nonetheless, even as Turkey's image began evolving in the eyes of Arabs, due to her policies and activism, it has eventually become evident that such evolution has started to fade. Thus, the success in implementing a strategic depth doctrine and a policy of zero problems with neighbours was evident until it was disrupted by the Arab revolts. The unexpected upheaval in the Arab world took Turkish and other decision-makers by

surprise. Turkey's reaction to the Arab revolts varied. The first two stages of the Arab Spring, in Tunisia and Egypt, were straightforward for Turkey's foreign policy and demonstrated Turkey's rising regional influence. However, the Libyan and Syrian crises exposed Turkey's limited political capabilities and her inadequate potential for a regional role. Both cases represented a serious challenge and Turkey's responses were reluctant and, at times, hazardous (Akyol 2011, p.1). The Syrian crisis is a case in point; it has posed a serious challenge to all the achievements Turkey was able to register in the previous period. The crisis in Syria has not only divided Arab public opinion over how Turkey's role and position in the region is perceived, but also negatively affected some of the success Turkey was able to build during the course of the previous decade.

This reality was reflected in consecutive polls between 2011 and 2013 on Turkey's role and image in the Arab world. In the 2013 poll released by the Turkey Economic and Social Studies Foundation (TESEV),[1] the survey showed that positive perceptions about Turkey in the Arab world have decreased, with 59 per cent supporting a greater regional role for Turkey (compared with 69 per cent in 2012 and 78 per cent in 2011). Turkey, ranked first in 2011 and 2012, fell to third place in 2013 in terms of positive perception, after the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Saudi Arabia. The sharpest decline was in Egypt and Syria, where positive views of Turkey remarkably decreased by 50 per cent (Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation 2014, p.9).[2] It can be said that instead of holding the position of an inspiring outside force, Turkey was sucked into the region by the Arab Spring, forcing it to take sides and threaten to use hard power on a number of occasions.

It is undoubtedly the case that the Arab Spring uncovered other weaknesses. For instance, despite her success in drama and soap operas, Turkey's weak media capabilities were revealed by the Arab Spring. Running one Arabic-speaking satellite channel only was not sufficient to

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[1] TESEV is an independent non-governmental think-tank, analysing social, political and economic policy issues facing Turkey. Based in Istanbul, it was founded in 1994 to serve as a bridge between academic research and policy-making process in Turkey. See http://www.tesev.org.tr/Eng/.

[2] Polls can be an indicator or an index of the success of Turkey's soft power and new policy toward the region, and since soft power is Turkey's main tool to achieve greater leverage, polls can be considered a valid means.

convey her messages to the Arab public.[3] Turkey's ambition either to be an independent player or to expand her influence came into question for many internal critics. A USAK Centre for Middle Eastern and African Studies report finds that Turkey's foreign policy suffers from an "expectations-capabilities" gap, highlighting Turkey's limited diplomatic, economic and soft-power capacity as an international player which seeks a bigger role in the region (Dinçer and Kutlay 2012, pp.1–2). Although the Arab Spring revealed many weaknesses in Turkey's foreign policy and power balance in general, most reports, polls and future analyses favoured Turkey and her potential geostrategic importance (Bakeer 2013, p.1).

What is Soft Power?

Turkish politicians have repeatedly stressed the importance of soft power in achieving Turkey's vision and strategy toward the Arab world. "Soft power" refers to the ability to change what others do through attraction and persuasion rather than compulsion and coercion. While the latter can be classified as hard power, the use of inducement, attraction and convincing characterizes soft power. Joseph Nye (1990) was first to coin the term, yet scholars are still divided and have failed to agree on an exact definition of soft power. Among those who have offered contributions on on soft power are Schneider (2005), Mattern (2005), Arndt (2005) and Chong (2007).

Nye (2004, p.5) finds that inducement lies within the boundaries of hard power as part of the equation of carrots (inducement) and sticks (threats), and hence his definition of soft power is "getting others to want the outcomes that you want … [it] co-opts people rather than coerces them." He believes that the crux of soft power is shaping the preferences of others, yet resources (whether culture, laws or institutions) are significant in determining the effectiveness of soft power. Nye (2004, pp.8–13) argues that in international politics, the resources that produce soft power come chiefly from the values an actor (either an organization or a state)

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[3] Another aspect was materialized in the scarcity of Arab-speaking specialists and diplomats in Turkey and the limited number of Turkish research centres and academic institutions in the Arab world. After decades of disengagement—compared to Europe and the US—Turkey came late to the region, especially in this field. Although this can't be considered a fault in Turkish foreign policy, research centres, Arabic speakers and Arabic-speaking channels are important tools in penetrating the region and getting closer to the people.

expresses in its culture (that can be transmitted through various means including commerce, tourism, personal contacts, visits and exchanges), in the models it sets through practices and policies, and in the way it manages relations with other actors. Throughout his book, Nye tries to demonstrate the various instruments of soft power, including public diplomacy, speeches, state-branding, drama and TV shows, movies, education (universities, books and scholarships), scientific centres, culture and notions (globalization and democracy), sport and the Olympics, food, music, immigration, Nobel prizes, internet, video games, non-governmental organizations, brands (cars and electronics), peace-keeping missions, and assistance to poor and developing countries.[4]

Nye (2004, pp.15–16) points out as well the limitations of soft power, positing that the imitation of or attraction to a successful model does not necessarily bring about the desired outcomes. For example, when Japan was widely admired for her technology and industrial success, imitation by other countries reduced Japan's market share. For that reason, Nye urges the importance of differentiating the conditions under which attraction can lead to desired outcomes or otherwise, including similar cultures. As a result, Nye claims that attraction can cause "a diffuse effect" that may create an influence but not an action.

Nye (2004, pp.17–18) also considers sceptical views which find the use of the term "soft power" in international politics impractical, since governments cannot control the issue of attraction. Other sceptics, according to Nye, argue that opinion polls cannot be taken as an accurate measure of popularity or attraction and thus as an indicator of the effectiveness of soft power. Other scholars, such as Niall Ferguson (2004), criticize or dismiss soft power as ineffective on the basis that there are only two incentives in the international realm: economics and force. For his part, Ying Fan offers the relationship between China and Japan as a case in point of how far soft power can play a role, albeit a limited one when considering the various geopolitical and strategic givens. The animosity between China and Japan, despite historical and cultural links, economic interests and Japan's success as a "cultural" super-soft power, remains unchanged (Fan 2008, p.151).

Arguably, it can be difficult to distinguish soft power from hard power and determining the boundaries of the former constitutes a big challenge for

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[4] See, for some examples, Nye (2004, p.76).

scholars. For example, according to the aforementioned views, propaganda accompanying hard power or a military campaign can controversially be classified soft power. Another elaboration on this is the Turkish Model, which is considered an effective soft-power tool. One important element that is considered an appealing and attractive part of this model is Turkey being a member of NATO and having a strong military, which are classified as hard-power tools. Soft power and hard power can work in conjunction and the lack of clarity and the difficulty of assessing its success led to the emergence of the concept of "smart power." Nye conceptualizes smart power as something lying between hard and soft power that can be considered a sort of "third way" (2009, pp.160–163). To elaborate, this new concept in foreign policy is based on the combination of (1) thesis: to coerce through hard-power means (military, economic and financial power); (2) antithesis: to attract the other so as to achieve interests through soft power means of attraction and persuasion and; (3) synthesis: a third way that is neither hard nor soft power, but skilful combination of both—"smart power" (Pallaver 2011).

In practice, Qatar represents an evident illustration of the successful use of soft-power tools in the Arab world. State-branding proved to be a successful tool for Qatar's desire to promote herself as a neutral and progressive leader in the Arab and Islamic world and to gain more regional and international recognition. Not limited to state-branding, Qatar utilized various soft-power means, including hosting conferences, sports games (e.g. the 12th Pan Arab Games in 2011), investments in various realms such as Islamic charities, culture and education, sports clubs, banks, Al Jazeera, and Qatar Airways. In addition in 2008 Qatar unveiled the Qatar National Vision (QNV) 2030 generational state-branding project (Ulrichsen 2014, pp.38–45).

The Turkish Model

Views vary on the definition of the Turkish Model,[5] but one may conclude that there are two different understandings of the term. The first one emphasizes the compatibility of Islam and democracy and the second the moderation of Turkish Islam and Turkish modernization and their role in the country's long path of democracy based on state-instilled secularism. Göksel (2012, pp.104–110) categorizes interpretation of the Turkish

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[5] Further examination of the term itself follows in Chapter Three, page 82.

Model into three groups. The first interprets the Turkish Model as a "centrally controlled modernization process under military tutelage," the rationale of which is that the people in the region are not yet ready for democracy and thus the modernization process should be shaped and carried out by the educated elite. The second sees in the Turkish Model an example of "a moderate Islamic party co-existing with secular parties within a secular and democratic state structure," and the rationale behind this understanding arises from the belief in the importance of the ruling AKP. The latter rationale makes the Turkish Model synonymous with the AKP model, which in turn assumes the position of a role model for Islamic and conservative political movements in the region. The third group attributes great importance to the Turkish Model as it demonstrates the failures of authoritarian secularism and radical Islam; this group represents the young generation of the Arab revolts, influenced by the "liberal social life and economic prosperity in Turkey."

Although Altunışık (2005, p.45) contends that the Turkish Model emerged after the end of the Cold War, it can be argued that this phenomenon began in the aftermath of the power vacuum that followed the US occupation of Iraq. Considering the lack of Arab models of liberalization, democracy and economic development, Kaya finds that the Turkish experience shows that Arabs do not have to choose between authoritarian government and an Islamist regime, as it offers a third option: Islamic liberalism. Kaya (2012, pp.27–28) categorizes the Turkish Model as represented to the Arab world in various versions: the military control model, pre-2002, in which the military controlled the secular state, and the country modernized under military control before democratically bringing Islamic actors into politics; the Islamic power model, which shows Turkey as a representative of the consolidation of Islamic power in a formerly secular system; and the youth model, which is the one adopted by the people, particularly the young people, protesting in the Arab streets.

In fact, the term has attracted wide attention, yet it has always been confusing and a matter of disagreement rather than an agreed-upon phenomenon. To former Turkish foreign minister İsmail Cem, Turkey, as a democratic country and having acquired European standards of human rights in the Islamic world, should be presented to other Middle Eastern countries as the standard, calling this the Turkish Model (Örmeci 2011b, p.224). To Rached el-Ghannouchi, Al-Nahda's leader in Tunisia, the Turkish Model is appealing because it allows an Islamic government to operate in a secular society (Murinson 2012, p.16).

Neo-Ottomanism

For the sake of clarification, neo-Ottomanism[6] derives its name from Turkey's novel involvement in the Arab world and links it to the former Ottoman Empire's sphere of influence. According to Murinson (2006, p.946), neo-Ottomanism was an intellectual movement that advocated Turkish pursuit of an active and diversified foreign policy in the region based on the Ottoman historical heritage, and was first introduced by leading Turkish columnist and academic Cengiz Candar. Turgut Özal, during his tenure as prime minister (13 December 1983–31 October 1989) and then as president (9 November 1989–17 April 1993), laid the foundations of this new doctrine, and provided political stature to the Yeni Osmanlicaler (neo-Ottomanist) "movement also known as Ikinci Cumhuriyetciler or the Second Republicans" (Murinson 2006, pp.945–947).

Özal defined the Ottoman Empire as a historical example for incorporating Islamic and Kurdish identity into Turkish political culture. He drew parallels between the political structures of the Ottoman Empire and the US, emphasizing that both allowed for different cultures and gave people freedom to exercise their religion, nationality and economic preferences. In terms of domestic politics, it is used in order to define Özal's vision of a more inclusive and multicultural state. The term was also briefly reinstated to characterize the foreign policy overtures of Turgut Özal in the late 1980s. Although the term "Ottomanism" or "neo-Ottomanism" has not become closely associated with any clear and consistent definition, and may have led to some confusion, it indeed refers to both domestic and foreign aspects and is now widely associated with one of the main principles of Turkish foreign policy during AKP era. This vision, and hence doctrine, took more mature and comprehensive shape under the AKP government.

Strategic Depth Doctrine

Strategic depth[7] doctrine refers to a new vision for Turkish foreign policy based on an ideological foundation and introduced by Turkey's former foreign minister and prime minister Ahmet Davutoğlu. It began with his

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[6] Further discussion on the term follows in Chapter Three, page 70.
[7] Further examination of this term follows in Chapter Two, page 61.

book *Stratejik Derinlik* (Strategic depth, 2001)—the product of a Turkish
political thinker with an Ottoman and Islamic background, which became
the main reference book on understanding Turkey's foreign policy under
the rule of AKP. His strategic depth doctrine or strategy was designed
before the establishment of the AKP, when he was not part of any political
party. His strategy aimed at transforming Turkey from a frontier state into
a central state, with multiple axes, especially the Arab one, as part of his
Middle East strategy. His strategy was based on: (1) alleviating conflicts
and differences between Turks and Arabs through the use of cultural
dimension; (2) activating the economic and cultural fields and avoiding
any involvement in political problems. Again, strategic depth was based
on a static hypothesis of the region. The military was neutralized; it did not
have any part in drawing up foreign policy (AbdeJalil 2015).

Davutoğlu admitted that since the foundation of the modern Turkish
Republic in 1923, the country had largely ignored the countries of the
Middle East, calling for the redress of this imbalance in the country's
foreign policy. Thus, Davutoğlu found that there should be a new
approach toward neighbouring countries in order to create a new political
climate for the solution of common problems. He also argued that what he
described as Turkey's "historical legacy" required her to establish herelf as
a regional power in the centre of her own sphere of influence (Yeşilyurt
and Akdevelioğlu 2009, pp.40–41).

In *Strategic Depth*, Davutoğlu proposes a model of international relations
that combines national behaviour with cultural and moral values. He puts
forward a vision for Turkey's new foreign policy: Turkish involvement
should be subject to the principles of strategic depth, yet resilient to
respond to any changes. The new policy assumed that due to domestic and
regional changes, Turkey had changed from being a "bridge" state into a
"central" state. Davutoğlu based his doctrine on specific geopolitical and
historical givens and a new orientation for Turkey's international position,
defining a strategic roadmap for Turkey's foreign policy-making.
Davutoğlu criticizes Turkey's traditional static foreign policy, naming
three methodological foreign policy principles: a visionary approach, a
consistent and systematic framework, and utilization of soft power.[8] His

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[8] "Visionary approach" refers to detecting the crisis before it emerges and stepping
in efficiently. Thus, vision-based strategies are required in foreign policy-making
instead of "crisis-based" ones. "Consistent and systematic framework" refers to
unification of strategic mindset, strategic planning and political will in foreign

doctrine is based on four main pillars: (1) a secure neighbourhood based on a common understanding of security; (2) a proactive, high-level political dialogue with all neighbours; (3) fostering regional economic interdependence; and (4) promoting "multi-cultural, multi-sectarian peace and harmony." Through Davutoğlu's strategic depth concept, Turkish foreign policy has been transformed in style, substance, instruments and mechanisms (Tica-Diaconu 2011, p.1).

Davutoğlu's "zero problems with neighbours" principle has perhaps been the most controversial element in his doctrine. In fact, economic motivations played an important role in forming and implementing the policy of zero problems with neighbours. Davutoğlu's first reference to this famous mantra was in an article in 2007 (Güzeldere 2009, p.15). This policy is linked directly to the first pillar of the strategic depth doctrine and offers peaceful territorial security by means of peaceful settlement of disputes while avoiding widespread threat perceptions. In direct connection to the third pillar of strategic depth, "zero problems with neighbours" favours diplomacy; international negotiation; and political, economic and sociopolitical mechanisms to reinforce mutual interdependence. Thus, the aim of the policy is to normalize foreign relations with neighbours and to seek, afterwards, to develop constructive relations based on political, economic and sociocultural relations in a clear connection to the third pillar of the doctrine. In other words, this policy purposes "maximizing cooperation with the neighbours while minimizing problems in its surrounding regions" (Işıksal 2015, pp.20–23).

Defining the Arab World

This book applies the term the "Arab world" rather than the widespread term the "Middle East." The main reason behind this is to limit the scope of the analysis to specific geopolitical boundaries, due to the continuous disagreements on the exact definition of the Middle East. The term "Middle East" appeared first in 1902 in an edition of the British journal *National Review*, in an article by Alfred Thayer Mahan entitled "The Persian Gulf and international relations," in an attempt to delineate a region from the Mediterranean to India (Mohomed 2012, pp.197–208). During the Second World War, the term wasemployed by Britain when it

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policy-making. "Utilization of soft power" refers to the significance of non-coercive and consent-based power (Işıksal 2015, pp.16–17).

established the Middle East Command in Egypt, which had been known previously as the "Near East" (Oran and Aksin 2010, p.113).

For a time, the "Near East" was the term used for the Levant, Egypt, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria and Jordan, while the "Middle East" applied to Iraq, Afghanistan and Iran. Some definitions limit the Middle East to the countries bound by Egypt to the west, the Arabian Peninsula to the south, and as an extremity Iran to the east, while others consider the Middle East to stretch from Mauritania in West Africa, including all the countries of North Africa, and as far eastward as Pakistan. *The encyclopedia of the modern Middle East* includes the Mediterranean islands of Malta and Cyprus in its definition of the Middle East. A more expansive view of the Middle East includes former south and south-western republics of the former Soviet Union, such as Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan, because of the republics' cultural, historical, ethnic and especially religious overlap with countries at the core of the Middle East (Elhusseini 2014, p.7).

The Arabs are a very well-known nation, yet neither are they a nationality in the legal sense nor have they ever had a single state. They lived scattered as tribes before the period of the prophet Mohammed; thereafter they started to live together as one people, under Islam; then under Western occupation and colonization; and finally under modern states and incumbent regimes. They share history, language, religion and traditions and they have always felt closer to other Arabs than to any other nation. The Sykes–Picot agreement of 1916 divided Arabs into different nationalities, separate states and various regimes. Now, there are Arab states that are members of the Arab League of States, but there is no single Arab state of which all Arabs are nationals (Lewis 2002, p.1).

The Arab world has a special importance for the three monotheistic religions and from a geostrategic perspective. It has been the centre of attention for the various advantages it possesses: natural gas, oil, iron, phosphate and other natural resources; strategic location (traditionally the Silk Road); being the centre of main international naval routes and a huge market for consumer goods. As a result, the region has provided a major backdrop for numerous conflicts and has been an important target for irredentism and intervention, with major powers having tried to establish a foothold there since medieval times.

The term the "Arab world" has a specific geographical and political extent that includes countries ranging from the Atlantic Ocean to the Indian

Ocean, i.e. Morocco to the west, the Arabian Peninsula to the south, Iraq to the east and North Africa to the north, a range which politically encompasses all members of the League of Arab States, excluding observer members such as Turkey (Elhusseini 2015, p.39). The present League originates from the six founding members of the Arab League in 1945: Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Syria. Other Arab countries joined the after winning their independence, including Yemen, Libya, Sudan, Morocco, Tunisia, Kuwait, Algeria, the UAE, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, Mauritania, Somalia, Palestine, Djibouti and Comoros. Five out of the twenty-two Arab League member states experienced genuine uprisings, while 14 other countries have shown less pronounced but real enough levels of mass movements.

The Meaning of the Arab Spring

The term "Arab Spring" is an allusion to the revolutions of 1848, which is sometimes referred to as the "Springtime of Nations," and to the Prague Spring of 1968. Kaya (2012, p.26) defines the Arab Spring as follows:

> a complex, rapidly unfolding phenomenon of uprisings, revolutions, mass demonstrations and civil war, a diverse set of movements with diverse instigators and aspirations, including freedom, economic opportunity, regime change and ending corruption. It started in Tunisia in December 2010 and spread to the rest of the Middle East throughout 2011. Although it is the most significant event to happen in the Middle East in recent history, we do not yet understand its trajectory and cannot predict its outcome. Despite the fact that the process was intended to advance the values of freedom, justice and democracy, it can still produce less desirable outcomes, requiring alternate approaches to standard diplomatic and economic approaches with a long-term view.

Rogan (2011, p.4) notes two names for the revolutionary movements that struck the Arab world: the Arab Awakening and the Arab Spring. The latter is Western terminology, while Arabs opt to call it an "Awakening." Both expressions deal with social, constitutional and ideological facts. Rogan stresses the fact that "the Arab world has reached a historic turning point that is unlikely to be reversed." Ramadan refers to the fact that while some call it the "Arab Spring or Revolutions," other cautious writers tend to use the term "Arab uprisings," noting that it remains difficult to ascertain and to assess what has happened or is actually happening in the Arab world (Ramadan 2011, p.13). Bajaj argues that the Arab Spring was an economic phenomenon within nations before it became a political crisis

across nations. Therefore it is, according to Bajaj, a story of political terms and economic realities (Bajaj 2013, p.1).

Many scholars see in the Arab Spring a fourth wave of democratization (each followed by a reverse movement), in accordance with the concept developed by Samuel M. Huntington. According to Huntington, the first wave occurred between 1828 and 1926, with its roots in the then-recent French and American revolutions. The second wave took place from 1943 to 1962, and featured coups and the establishment of authoritarianism across Latin America and South and East Asia, and allied occupation after the Second World War. The third wave, in the 1970s and 1980s, manifested in the collapse of the former Soviet Union and swept Southern Europe, South America and Africa (Huntington 1991).

Some scholars, such as Ali Sarihan and Klaus von Beyme, opt to include the events after the collapse of the Soviet Union, leading to democratic transitions of varying success in Eastern Europe, in the fourth wave of democracy. Sarihan also inserts the current Arab revolts within this framework. He opines that with the onset of the current Arab Spring, the fourth wave of transformation or "[d]emocratization of Communist and Islamic Regimes" began (Sarihan 2013, p.1). According to another conceptual notion, Kenan Engin calls the Arab Spring the fifth wave of democracy, begun in 2011 and still ongoing (Engin 2011, p.1). The Arab Spring has produced a vacuum of strategic colonelcy in the region, revolts having shaken the traditional image of typical leadership.

In contrast, Turkey has fared well and has been able to introduce an appealing alternative. By doing this, she succeeded in cementing her status as a major regional power with steady engagement that varied between unlimited projects and cooperation in all realms. As revolutionary verve spread across the Arab world, Turkey adopted a new stance; however, this has varied country by country. Before the onset of the Arab Spring, Turkey had already established strong and deep economic ties with the regimes in Libya, Syria and Saudi Arabia, and in the past decade it had become Syria's primary trading partner (Gumuscu 2012, p.1).

The Arab Spring began when a Tunisian man, Mohamed Bouazizi, a market trader, set himself on fire in protest against those preventing him from selling his fruit and vegetables. His tragic self-immolation ushered in a point of no return in the region, leading first to unprecedented upheaval in Tunisia on 18 December 2010, and galvanizing similar events of popular outcry in Egypt (which had Khaled Said, a young man who had

died in police custody, as one of its icons of revolution). Other Arab countries followed suit, as they shared and endured similar economic conditions and the spoilt existences of oppressive regimes.

Tunisia's Ben Ali was forced to seek refuge in Saudi Arabia after 24 years of rule; Egypt's Mubarak had to abdicate after 30 years in office; Yemen's Saleh was forced to resign after more than 33 years in power; Libya's Gaddafi, a 40-year de facto ruler, was brutally killed; Syria's Assad, serving as president and ruling Syria with an iron fist for 13 years after succeeding his father who had led Syria for the previous 30 years, is still clinging onto power. Other protests struck Algeria, Jordan, Oman, Somalia, Sudan, Djibouti, Iraq, Bahrain, Kuwait, Morocco, Lebanon, Mauritania, Saudi Arabia and Palestine. However, these revolts were contained by the governments, either harshly or through reforms and constitutional changes that gave more democracy and freedoms to the people. For her part, Keyman (2013, p.1) views the Arab Spring as the conclusion of the post-colonial period in this part of the world, the normalization of history and a time for the participation of peoples as active agents in history.

Turkey's Foreign Policy: Historical-Cultural Factors

A remarkable change in Turkish foreign policy has led to a degree of activism, most notably in the Arab world, which had never been seen throughout the history of the Turkish Republic. This extraordinary proactive foreign policy of Turkey toward the Arab world has catapulted the country to the forefront of academic interest.

Among the contributions to literature on Turkey's foreign policy is Aras and Görener's (2010, p.73) offering, which describes Turkey's traditional foreign policy as a "long-entrenched passive and isolationist stance, particularly in the affairs of the Arab world" (2010, p.73). To a large extent, until the 1980s, Turkey was economically and politically isolated, poorly integrated into the world market and inactive on the international stage, despite being part of Western security policy. According to the state ideology, Turkey saw herself as surrounded by enemies which strove to weaken the country and, if possible, claim territory (Güzeldere 2009, p.14). For that reason, Turks considered the Arab world to be a kind of quicksand that they would prefer to avoid, and Turkish foreign policy has thus adopted a hands-off approach, observing events rather than being involved in them (Burand 1996, p.172). Many scholars (Kassem 2013, pp.71–72) refer to the arrival of Justice and Development Party into power

as a turning point in Turkey's foreign policy. However, it is worthwhile to return to some cornerstones in Turkey's foreign policy in general and hence the bases that formulated the AKP and its new policy toward the Arab world.

In an important contribution, Oran and Aksin provide facts and analyses based on documents on Turkish foreign policy. They argue that Turkish foreign policy is based on a number of dimensions. They divide these into cultural, historical, strategic, regional and domestic dimensions. For instance, the cultural dimension is a mixture of Central Asian, Islamic and Western elements. Each element had its effect on Turkey's foreign policy, orientation and practices. The Central Asian cultural dimension relies on leaders rather than institutions, whereas the Islamic dimension gives Turks a different identity and separates them from Arabs. In other words, being Muslims and an integral part of this region but not Arabs is what makes Turks different from the majority of the inhabitants, who are mainly Arab Sunnis, with the exception of Iranians, who are neither Arabs nor Sunnis but overwhelmingly Shiite. Finally, the Western dimension influenced Turkey's general foreign policy orientation with a particular impact on her secular and democratic social features (Oran and Aksin 2010, p.3).

Oran and Aksin (2010, pp.9–12) define Turkey as a strategic medium power (SMP) or a regional power (RP), referring to a number of sources affecting Turkish foreign policy, including military, political and economic factors. Security factors, national security and economy are important in determining the orientation of Turkey's foreign policy. Murinson (2006, p.945) argues that the main sources of the traditional foreign policy of the Turkish Republic are the historical experience of the Ottoman Empire (the tradition of the balance of power); the nationalist Kemalist revolution and creation of the Republic itself (hence, isolationism); Western orientation expressed in the policy of Europeanization and modernization; and the suspicion of foreign powers and interests. Küçükcan (2012, p.1) argues that primary analysis of foreign actors and variables is a must in order to foresee new strategic choices and how the current policy may evolve in the future. Foreign policy choices and decisions constitute a process.

This becomes more complicated in practice; external factors may change the speed and direction of the process; decisions that once seemed to be indispensable can be reviewed and foreign policy choices can be altered within acceptable limits. Küçükcan (2012, p.1) contends that Turkey's foreign policy is shaped according to the priorities of the country and the region. Aydin (2000, pp.103–104) suggests that structural determinants—