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FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Miami, Florida

DEMOCRACY PROMOTION AND TURKEY

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

POLITICAL SCIENCE

by

Bilal Ciplak

2014

To: Interim Dean Michael R. Heithaus
College of Arts and Sciences

This dissertation, written by Bilal Ciplak, and entitled Democracy Promotion and Turkey, having been approved in respect to style and intellectual content, is referred to you for judgment.

We have read this dissertation and recommend that it be approved.

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The dissertation of Bilal Ciplak is approved.

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Florida International University, 2014

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DEDICATIONS

I dedicate this dissertation to my wife, Zehra, and to my daughter, Sara, who was born on June 14, 2014.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my deep appreciation and gratitude to my advisor Dr. Mohiaddin Mesbahi, without whose guidance, this dissertation would not have been completed. Despite other commitments, he always dedicated quality time to me. I would also like to thank my dear committee members Dr. Ronald Cox, Dr. Markus Thiel, and Dr. Benjamin Smith for their valuable feedback and support throughout my dissertation research. Dr. Cox's detailed comments were especially helpful in developing my arguments in a systematic manner. Also, our Chair Dr. Rebeca Salokar and the Graduate Director Dr. Clement Fatovic deserve special thanks. They have always provided us with a friendly and supportive environment in the department. Furthermore, my dear friends Nikolas Esitashvili, Arslan Rana, and Mirsad Krijestorac were there whenever I needed them. I would like to convey my special thanks to them.

Without the support of the FIU Graduate School through Doctoral Evidence Acquisition and Doctoral Year Fellowships, I would not have been able to complete this dissertation. Therefore, I want to dedicate a special thanks to the FIU Graduate School. Also, I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Maureen A. Donnelly for her constructive feedback in the process of graduation. The EU Center of Excellence at FIU also provided me with financial assistance in my data acquisition process. I am indebted to them. I would like to convey my deep appreciation to the deputies and CSO representatives that accepted my interview proposal. I also want to convey my appreciation to the secretaries of my department, Maria C. Wilkinson-Diaz and Mayte Rodriguez who always showed a smiling face and a warm welcome whenever I needed their assistance. My special thanks are due

to my editor Aytul Ergul Hallman for the genuine interest she has shown in improving my text and the editorial comments she has made.

Finally, I would like to express my special thanks and utmost appreciation to my parents, my brother, Murat, and to my wife, Zehra, without whose understanding and constant support, I would not have been able to advance to the point I am at.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION
DEMOCRACY PROMOTION AND TURKEY

by

Bilal Ciplak

Florida International University, 2014

Miami, Florida

Mohiaddin Mesbahi, Major Professor

The dissertation documented the degree of Turkey's involvement in the promotion of democracy in the Arab Middle East (ME). Initially, I investigated why and under what conditions Turkey promotes democracy in the ME, and then I explained strategies through which Turkey promotes democracy in the region. I applied the neo-classical realist theoretical framework and a mixed methodology in the research, and I provided evidence from two sources: face-to-face interviews with the Turkish and foreign officials and common citizens, and the statistical data from institutions, such as the OECD, Turkish Statistical Institute, and World Bank.

My research indicates that Turkey promotes democracy through seven channels. These channels are official development assistance (ODA), mentoring, demonstrative effect, normative pressure, conditionality, military power, enlargement, and civil society organizations. Turkey promotes democracy in the ME for three substantial reasons: first, to advance its security and economic interests; second, to improve the political, social, and economic conditions of people living in the region; and third, to create long-term regional stability, crucial for cooperation in economic and security realms.

I attempted to engage in debates with two distinct, but interrelated fields of comparative politics and international relations. My most important contribution to the field is that I documented Turkey's case of democracy promotion regarding the degree of Turkey's involvement in this endeavor, its strategies, specificities, and effectiveness in the region. I also contribute to the field as I explained the difference between democracy promotion policies of a regional power, such as Turkey, and global powers, such as the US. I further engaged in discussions that illuminate some aspects of the interplay between the identity and strategic interests in states' foreign policy decisions.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADK	Kemalist Thought Association
AFAD	Disaster and Emergency Management Office
AKP	Justice and Development Party
ATV	National TV Channel
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BDP	Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party
BMENA	Broader Middle East and North Africa
CNN	Cable News Network
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DAD	Democracy Assistance Dialog
DI	Direct Investment
DP	Democracy Promotion
DTP	Democratic Left Part
DUP	Democratic Union Part
EEC	European Economic Commission
EU	European Union
FAM	Foreign Affairs Minister
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
Hamas	Islamic Resistance Movement
HLSCC	High Level Strategic Cooperation Council
HRITC	Human Rights Information and Training Centre

HSCC	High Level Strategic Cooperation Council
ID	Identification
IHH	Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief
IOs	International Organizations
IR	International Relations
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham
KRG	Kurdish Regional Government
LDC	Least Developed Countries
MAZLUMDER	Organization of Human Rights and Solidarity for Oppressed People
ME	Middle East
MGK	National Security Council
MHP	Nationalist Movement Party
MIT	Turkey's National Intelligence Service
MKYK	Central Decision Making and Implementation Unit
MP	Member of Parliament
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDI	National Democratic Institutes
NED	National Endowment for Democracy
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NPWJ	No Peace without Justice
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

OHA	Turkey's Official Humanitarian Aid
OIC	Organization of Islamic Cooperation
OOF	Other Official Flows
ORSAM	Center for the Middle Eastern Strategic Studies
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PKK	Kurdish Workers' Party
PM	Prime Minister
SETA	Foundation for Political, Economic, and Social Research
SGIR	Standing Group on International Relations
TBMM	Turkish Parliament Statistics
TDA	Total Development Aid
TESEV	Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation
TIKA	Turkish International Development Agency
TNOC	Turkish National Observers Committee
TOBB	Union of Turkish Chambers of Commerce
TOKI	Turkey's Official Construction Development Agency
TRT	Turkey's official TV channel
TUBITAK	Research Council of Turkey
TUMSIAD	Whole Industrialists and Businessmen Association
TUSKON	Turkey's Industrialists and Businessmen Confederation
TUSIAD	Secular Economic Elite
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UK	United Kingdom

UN	United Nations
US	United States
USAK	International Strategic Research Centre
USD	United States Dollar
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction

CHAPTER I: SIGNIFICANCE, THEORY, & METHODOLOGY

Context of the Study

“There exists an unmistakable demand in the Middle East and in the wider Muslim world for democratization,” proclaimed Recep Tayyip Erdogan at the very onset of his tenure in office as Prime Minister of Turkey in January of 2003 at Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government. (International Strategic Research Organization 2003) This announcement heralded the nature of his government’s initial public rhetoric and the subsequent policy toward the Middle East. The view that democracy should be ‘exported’ and supported abroad is not new. Such diverse policy makers as John F. Kennedy, William J. Clinton, and George W. H. Bush subscribed to it and actively promoted it. Thus, “[d]emocracy promotion has become a pervasive feature of international politics mostly because of the highly held belief that democratic regimes offer greater human freedom, economic prosperity, and international peace.” (Peksen 2012)

While democracy has been traditionally promoted by wealthy Western states, in the present research I focus on Turkey, a developing country that has promoted democracy in the Arab Middle East over the past decade. My question is why and how Turkey, under the leadership of a political party with roots in political Islam, is *counter-intuitively* engaged in promoting democracy abroad. Conventional wisdom suggests that Turkey’s current AKP (Justice and Development Party) government should have acted to preserve stability and the regional status quo by supporting authoritarian political regimes, not by challenging them. To address the aforementioned questions, I have developed a theoretical framework that combines elements from two related but distinct categories of *identity* and *strategic*

interests. The research has implications both for diverse sets of policy makers and academics. In Chapter I, I develop my research question, show its significance, and describe the theoretical framework and methodology in greater details.

In contrast to many expectations, during the AKP's (Justice and Development Party) rule, Turkey has emerged as a promoter of democracy in the Middle East (ME). In 2004, Turkey became a co-chair of the Democracy Assistance Dialogue (DAD) along with Italy and Yemen within the framework of the Broader Middle East and North African (BMENA) Initiative. (Bagci and Sinkaya 2006) BMENA initiative sets up a platform to discuss and promote democracy in the Middle East. (Bagci and Sinkaya 2006) Although participation in this initiative marked Turkey's emergence as a promoter of democracy and human rights, Turkey's effort to promote democracy precedes the AKP government. Initially, Turkey started advocating Turkish minority rights in Bulgaria, Greece, and Iraq since its establishment as a republic. (Ozel and Ozcan 2011) Turkey did defend Muslims' collective and individual rights during the collapse of the former Yugoslavia even though Ankara was involved in human rights abuse against the citizens of Kurdish descent and, ironically, its own practicing Muslims. Thus, Turkey's human rights activism did not receive serious attention and, whenever it did, was largely dismissed as hypocrisy. (Ozel and Ozcan 2011)

Turkey started to develop a more balanced approach to the promotion of human rights and democracy in its foreign policy after the AKP came to power. (Ozel and Ozcan 2011) The AKP has been involved in democratization both in domestic and in international spheres simultaneously. (Kirisci 2012) The AKP's support for democracy and human rights has become more vocal since the beginning of the Arab Spring. (Kirisci 2012) The

AKP has been involved in a number of initiatives and projects that aim to advance human rights, good governance, and open market economies, in the Arab Middle East, during its tenure in office.

The AKP's decision to promote democracy raises many significant questions. For example, what motivates the AKP to promote democracy? How does the outside influence coming from the United States (US) and the European Union (EU) impact the way the AKP promotes democracy? Richard Morningstar, in *Promoting Democracy and the Rule of Law: American and European Strategies*, argues that "the critical point from the policy-making standpoint is that democracy and democracy promotion are multi-faceted concepts that are difficult to define and often difficult to agree on." (Morningstar 2009) As different actors might have different understandings of democracy, it is particularly important to question the AKP's conception of democracy and the kind of democracy the AKP promotes in the Arab Middle East. Therefore, the concern is whether the AKP promotes a liberal democracy as it is understood in the West or a different type of democracy, distinct from the Western conception of democracy.

I utilized a flexible theoretical framework to answer the aforementioned questions. Also, I employed a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. The numerical data was obtained from the Turkish Statistical Institute, World-Bank, OECD, TIKA, and United Nations' web sources. Semi-structured interviews with the Turkish deputies were also incorporated into the present research. Official and unofficial interviews with CSO representatives, common citizens, and societal leaders were also incorporated into the research. All these issues are further discussed in the following sections.

Research Question

In this dissertation, I examined the question of why and how Turkey promotes democracy in the Arab Middle East (ME), or to put it in a larger context, what are the reasons that make Turkey behave the way it does in the ME since the AKP came to power? To answer this question, the dissertation explored the reasons and conditions under which Turkey promotes democracy. To be more specific, does the AKP support democratization in the Arab Middle East for normative reasons or to advance national interests? Moreover, I further examined the type of strategies and tools the AKP utilizes to promote democracy in the region, such as coercion, diplomacy, and development aid. Most importantly, this dissertation documented the strategies and initiatives through which Turkey supports democratization in the ME. On a wider level, I intended to provide an assessment that speaks to the leading debates in international and comparative politics about why, how, and under what circumstances states promote democratization.

Significance of the Study

This research hopes to affect the terms of scholarly debates in the field of international relations and comparative politics for at least three reasons. First of all, democracy promotion is generally discussed from the perspective of the major powers. Democracy promotion literature often examines the US and the EU's democracy promotion agendas. Scholars have been conducting research on the role non-governmental organizations (CSOs), international organizations (IOs), and civil society organizations (CSOs) play in promoting democracy in other states. (Peksen and Comer 2012) Nevertheless, research on the role of regional powers, such as Turkey and Brazil, in

promoting democracy is very limited. Consequently, researching Turkey's democracy promotion will significantly contribute to our understanding of how a regional power differs from a global power in its promotion of democracy abroad.

In addition to Turkey's regional power status, Turkey's Muslim identity makes it an interesting case for research on democracy promotion. Democratization literature often argues that non-Western cultures are incompatible with democratic values, because of their emphasis on the hierarchical societal order in such cultures, which are believed to undermine individual freedoms. (Huntington 1993) Islam as an Eastern religion, then, is described as irreconcilable with democracy. Nevertheless, the case of Turkey demonstrates that democracy is promoted by the AKP, which is deeply rooted in political Islam, and promoted by a wide range of Islamic CSOs aligned with the AKP. Democracy promotion by Islamic political and social groups is a new development that needs a fresh examination and a nuanced explanation. Thus, the research will contribute to the newly emerging literature on Turkey's support for the democratization in the Arab ME. The present research will also help us understand the nature and degree of Turkey's impact on the transitioning Arab states.

Thirdly, Turkey is still a transitional democracy and an ongoing target of democracy promotion from the US and the EU. As discussed earlier, democracy promotion is often being debated from the perspectives of the US and Europe. These states are wealthy, consolidated democracies. (Kirisci 2012) Turkey's democracy, on the other hand, is yet to be consolidated. In fact, the AKP promotes democracy both in Turkey and in the Middle East simultaneously. Moreover, my research tries to uncover the relationship between the Western democracy promotion in Turkey (target identity of Turkey) and

Turkish democracy promotion in the Arab Middle East (donor identity of Turkey). In other words, I will attempt to explain whether there is a connection between Turkey's donor and target (of democracy promotion) identities, and whether Turkey has learned anything from its experiences with its Western donors. Therefore, I attempt to make a theoretical contribution to our understanding of the link between target experiences and donor experiences of a promoter state.

Theoretical Framework

The present research follows a top-down conception of the state similar to that of neo-classical realists¹. (Lobell, Ripsman and Taliaferro 2009) In this conceptualization, states are represented by the national security executive, including the head of government, ministers, and officials responsible for making foreign policy decisions. The chief executive has access to privileged information about the international constraints, as well as domestic issues from the responsible state institutions. Therefore, he is well-positioned to frame issues of national interest. (Lobell, Ripsman and Taliaferro 2009) Although the executive is potentially autonomous from the society, the institutional arrangements force her/him to engage with the societal actors, such as economic institutions, representatives, political parties, and the societal leaders. (Lobell, Ripsman and Taliaferro 2009) The perceptions, norms, and values of the leader also influence his/her behaviors. (Rose 1998)

¹ For more information about neo-classical realism, see Gideon Rose. Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy. *World Politics*, 51: 1, 144-172, 1998; Randall L. Schweller. *US Democracy Promotion: Realist Reflections*, in: Cox et al. 41-62, 2000; William C. Wohlforth. *Realism and foreign policy*, in: Smith, Steve Hadfield, Amelia Dunne, Tim (eds.), *Foreign Policy. Theories Actors Cases*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 31-48, 2008.

To contextualize the propositions of neo-classical realism for Turkey, Turkey's democracy promotion policy is being carried out by the AKP government with deep roots in political Islam. In Turkey, the head of the government, the Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, is also the national security executive.² He makes foreign policy decisions with his ministers (Ahmet Davutoglu being the most important), advisors, and experts from relevant state institutions.³ The key AKP members are devoted Muslims. Therefore, their ideas and values influence their policy priorities and foreign policy decisions. In fact, it is not a coincidence that the Turkish state started to engage more assertively with the ME, a region with predominantly Muslim population, during the AKP administration.

In addition, the leader formulates the national interest by conducting a risk assessment calculation. He has to take into consideration the state's relative power capabilities and goals vis-à-vis the other states' power capabilities and intentions. However, the leader also needs to take into consideration domestic factors, such as public opinion, as well as the domestic constraints that may limit or circumscribe his agenda. (Lobell, Ripsman and Taliaferro 2009) In the process of foreign policy formulation, institutions – such as the MIT (Turkey's National Intelligence Service), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ministry of Domestic Affairs – provide the PM and his foreign policy circle with privileged information to which the ordinary people do not have access. In Turkey, during the AKP rule, the substantial domestic factors impacting Turkish foreign policy have been the Kurdish separatist movement (the PKK), the Kemalist status quo, and public

² The Turkish President has a more symbolic role in the Turkish political system. However, compared to the other European parliamentary systems, Turkish president has more power.

³ I make this claim on the basis of my interviews with a number of deputies.

opinion. The most significant external factors are the influence of the United States and the EU over Turkey's decision makers.

Finally, the national security executive needs to calculate the power capabilities of his/her state to advance a foreign policy goal. There are various power instruments available to states. These are soft power, hard power, and structural power instruments.⁴ Soft power refers to "the ability to get others to want what you want." (Nye 2007) The power of attraction, persuasion, credibility, and carrots (incentives) and sticks (coercion) are important soft power tools. (Nye 2007) For example, Turkey's democratization in the last 12 years is strongly being influenced by the carrots and sticks of the EU membership. On the other hand, hard power is "the ability to get others to do what they otherwise would not do." (Dahl 1957) Hard power has two components: military power (more important) and economic power (less so). States, including Turkey, have sometimes employed hard power to promote democracy abroad, such as in Japan and Libya. Finally, structural power is the institution-building capacity of states, determined largely by economic factors.⁵ While the soft and hard powers are important in terms of the promotion and the spread of the democratic values and institutions, the structural power arguments are especially helpful in explaining the effectiveness of Turkey's democracy promotion policy in the target states. It is necessary to acknowledge the aforementioned approaches of power to

⁴ For a detailed analysis of Turkey's power, see Osman Bahadır Dincer and Mustafa Kutluay. *Turkey's Power Capacity in the Middle East: Limits of the Possible, An Empirical Analysis*. International Strategic Research Organization, USAK Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, USAK Report No: 12-04, June 2012.

⁵ For structural power arguments, see Susan Strange, "An Eclectic Approach", in Craig N. Murphy and Roger Tooze (eds.), *The New International Political Economy*, Lynne Publishers, Boulder, 1991, p. 34.

have a meaningful understanding of why Turkey does what it does and how much influence Turkey has in the rapidly changing ME. (Kutluay and Dincer 2012)

In this dissertation, neoclassical realists give us a sense of context in which to explain the democracy promotion policy of Turkey. However, Turkey's identity will enable us to better understand the specific articulation of Turkey's foreign policy choices. In the following section, I will broadly explain the interplay between the Turkish identity and strategic interests.

Identity

The AKP conceptualizes Turkey as a "regional power" in the ME. However, before going further in my analysis, I would like to briefly introduce the concept of regional power. I define a region as a cluster of states that share a substantial amount of commonalities with each other. An example of regional power is a major state that has the capacity to generate substantial change in that region. As global powers also have interests in that region, changes in the distribution of power at the regional level have global implications. In this regard, Turkey, as a regional power, needs to take the interests and policies of the global powers, such as the US, into consideration while engaging with the ME. In fact, this research indicates that the US has a great influence on the calculation of Turkey's foreign policy goals.

However, there are several factors that determine whether or not a state is effective in wielding power within a particular region. Firstly, regional power needs to have a role-

conception⁶ towards the region. This role conception is the regional power's vision of the region. Secondly, the global powers have to be aware of the state endorsing itself as a regional power. Thirdly, there should be a certain level of acceptance of the regional power role of the state that endorses itself as such. Fourthly, a regional power needs to have the power capabilities to realize its goals, such as military, economic, and institution building capacity. (Thompson 1973) Turkey, as the second largest NATO army, 16th biggest economy globally, and 6th biggest market in the EU, has a population of 75 million.⁷ Therefore, with these credentials, Turkey can play a regional power role in the ME. Turkey's historical relationship as the heir of the Ottomans with its neighbors also strengthens its position as a regional power.

There are different explanations for why states promote democracy abroad. According to some scholars, states promote democracy to serve their security⁸ and economic⁹ interests; according to other scholars, democracy promotion is a result of the

⁶ For the impact of states' role conceptions on their foreign behaviors, see, for example, Kalevi J. Holsti. National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy. *International Studies Quarterly*, 14: 3, 233-309, 1970.

⁷ For a detailed analysis of Turkey's power, see "Osman Bahadir Dincer and Mustafa Kutluay. *Turkey's Power Capacity in the Middle East: Limits of the Possible, An Empirical Analysis*. International Strategic Research Organization, USAK Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, USAK Report No: 12-04, June 2012."

⁸ See, for example, Randall L. Schweller, US Democracy Promotion: Realist Reflections, in: Cox et al. 41-62, 2000.

⁹ For more information about the relationship between states' commercial interests and democracy and their foreign policies, see Andrew Moravcsik, *Taking Preferences Seriously: A Liberal Theory of International Politics*, in *International Organization*, 51: 4, 513-553, 1997; Robert Gilpin, (*War and Change in the World Politics*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1998) as a realist from the political economy field assigns a greater importance to economic power than the traditional realists, such as Hans J. Morgenthau (*Politics among Nations*, Alfred A. Knop, New York, 1962).

projection of states' democratic identity in the international arena.¹⁰ However, another group of scholars argues that states promote democracy for a combination of strategic and normative reasons. According to the third group, well-established democracies have both a normative claim to and a genuine strategic interest in promoting democracy.¹¹

I find the liberal approach, which is the third argument, the most appealing for the Turkish case. However, the liberal approach needs to be put in its proper context. Similar to Olsen, I argue that states could have both normative and strategic goals in promoting democracy. However, when their strategic interests are threatened, their concerns for strategic interests prevail over their normative goals.¹² From the liberal perspective, advanced democracies initially promote democracy to serve their own security and economic interests. Secondly, states promote democracy, as it serves the collective interest of the international society by paving the way for mutually beneficial economic and security cooperation. Finally, states promote democracy, as it also serves the interests of

¹⁰ For example, see Mark Peceny. A Constructivist Interpretation of the Liberal Peace: The Ambiguous Case of the Spanish-American War. *Journal of Peace Research* 34: 4, 415-430, 1997; Paul Kowert and Jeffrey Legro, Norms, Identity, and Their Limits: A Theoretical Reprise, 451-497, 1995.
<http://www.ciaonet.org/book/katzenstein/katz12.html>

¹¹ Also, see Edward D. Mansfield, Helen Milner, and B. Peter Rosendorf. Why Democracies Cooperate More: Electoral Control and International Trade Agreements. *International Organization*, 56: 3, 477-513, 2002; Thomas Risse Kappen. Democratic Peace, Warlike Democracies: A Social Constructivist Interpretation of the Democratic Peace. *European Journal of International Relations*, 1: 4, 491-517, 1995; finally see Emmanuel Kant. *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch*. 1795.
<https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/kant/kant1.htm>

¹² For example, see Thomas Carothers, *Aiding Democracy Abroad*, 1999; also, see McFaul, *Ukraine Imports Democracy*, 2007; furthermore, see Dalacoura, *US Foreign Policy and Democracy Promotion in the Middle East*, 2010; Moreover, see Fuller, *Turkey and the Arab Spring*, 2014; also, see Karakas, *Democracy Promotion or Demotion*, 2010; Moreover, see Ozer and Ozcan, *Do New Democracies Support Democratization*, 2011; Also, see Graye .R. Olsen, *Europe and the Promotion of Democracy in Post-Cold War Africa: How Serious is Europe and for What Reason?*, *African Affairs*, 97/388: 366, 1998.

the recipient societies, such as the protection of human rights, fostering social development, economic growth, and domestic political stability.¹³ (Czempiel 1996)

Turkey as a regional power has a mixture of normative and strategic motivations for promoting democracy in the ME. The AKP, which perceives Turkey as a regional power,¹⁴ promotes democracy in the ME for three significant reasons: firstly, the AKP promotes democracy to advance Turkey's security, strengthen its strategic alliances with elected, like-minded Islamist governments, and protect its economic interests in the ME. Secondly, Turkey promotes democracy, as the AKP thinks that democratization in the region will foster mutually beneficial economic (open market) and security cooperation. In this regard, stability is crucial for sustainable economic and political relations between the neighboring countries. Thirdly, the AKP thinks that democratization in the ME will foster positive social change, such as diminishing inequalities between genders and races; will increase economic development by fostering intra-regional trade; will rise the human capital necessary for the functioning of the system; protecting human rights which is the precondition of domestic political stability; and will lead to the enforcement of a clear rule of law which is important both for the protection of human rights and economic activities of the Turkish investors.

However, regardless of whether states promote democracy for their ideals or not, when their substantial interests are threatened, their concerns for their strategic interests

¹³ Also, see Peter J. Schraeder. The State of the art in International Democracy Promotion: Results of a Joint European– North American Research Network. *Democratization* 20(2): 21–44, 2003; Kant, Perpetual Peace, 1795; Wolff and Wurm, Towards a Theory of External Democracy Promotion, 2011.

¹⁴ Dincer and Kutluay, Turkey's Power Capacity in the Middle East: Limits of the Possible, An Empirical Analysis, 2012.

prevail over their ideals.¹⁵ The reason behind this is that promoting democratization is “a complex and conflict-ridden process of political change.”¹⁶ (Wolff and Wurm 2011) In this process, “(potential) rewards do not come quickly, while costs are immediate.”¹⁷ (Wolff and Wurm 2011) To provide an example, “whenever the ideal of democracy clashed with the US national security objective of containing communism during the Cold War, for example, both Democratic and Republican administrations were willing to downplay the authoritarian shortcomings of a variety of US allies, such as Ferdinand Marcos of the Philippines, Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, and Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi of Iran, in favor of their strong support for US anticommunist policies.”¹⁸ (Schraeder 2003)

Similarly, Turkey has been faced with substantial challenges that have threatened its security, alliances, and economic interests while promoting democracy in the ME. When this happens, Turkey tries to find a middle way not to backtrack from promoting democracy and scarify its strategic interests. However, when the developments starts to threaten the Turkish strategic interests, then Turkey makes the best use of available foreign policy tools, such as military and diplomacy, to eliminate the threats. In such times, Turkey’s democracy

¹⁵ For example, see Thomas Carothers, *Aiding Democracy Abroad*, 1999; also, see McFaul, *Ukraine Imports Democracy*, 2007; furthermore, see Dalacoura, *US Foreign Policy and Democracy Promotion in the Middle East*, 2010; Moreover, see Fuller, *Turkey and the Arab Spring*, 2014; also, see Karakas, *Democracy Promotion or Demotion*, 2010; Moreover, see Ozer and Ozcan , *Do New Democracies Support Democratization*, 2011; Also, see Graye .R. Olsen, *Europe and the Promotion of Democracy in Post-Cold War Africa: How Serious is Europe and for What Reason?*, *African Affairs*, 97/388: 366, 1998.

¹⁶ See Wolff and Wurm, *Towards a Theory of External Democracy Promotion*, 2011, pp 80.

¹⁷ See Wolff and Wurm, *Towards a Theory of External Democracy Promotion*, 2011, pp 80.

¹⁸ Also, see Carothers, *Aiding Democracy Abroad: The Learning Curve*, 1999.

promotion gains a highly strategic orientation.¹⁹ For example, Turkey's support for democratization in Syria and Libya in the process of the Arab Spring, and in Iraq after the occupation of the US in 2003 is a good example of this case.

Another important question concerns how states promote democracy. There are a number of tools available to the states when promoting democracy. These are diplomacy, foreign aid, political conditionalities, economic sanctions, covert intervention (such as coup d'états and psychological warfare), paramilitary intervention (such as funding a guerilla organization), and finally military intervention. (Schraeder 2003) The examination of the last twelve years of the AKP rule indicates that Turkey prefers to rely on non-coercive ways of democracy promotion, such as foreign aid, diplomacy, and mentoring. However, when Turkey's strategic interests are threatened, Turkey makes use of military tools as well.

When the AKP started to promote democracy in the ME, it stressed a multilateral, consistent, internally driven, and long term process of change. Turkey as a regional power, which based its policies towards the ME on the notion of regional ownership, did not want to see the occurrence of radical developments, such as foreign interventions, which could destabilize the whole ME for the purpose of promoting democracy. Nevertheless, Turkey was compelled to deviate from the aforementioned principles in the process of the Arab Spring. Initially, when the Arab Spring arrived to Libya, Turkey was being engulfed into a limited military intervention as a NATO member state. Next, when the conflict in Syria

¹⁹ Ozel and Ozcan, in *Do New Democracies Support Democracy?* (Turkey's Dilemmas, 2011) explain how Turkish democracy promotion is strategically driven. I think, the authors underestimate the importance of Turkey's ideals in its democracy promotion policy.

started to threaten the Turkish security interests, Turkey provided assistance to the Syrian rebels and refugees in a number of ways, such as humanitarian aid, intelligence, and weaponry. In both cases, Turkey's military support was reluctant.

However, an important question is that although Turkey has major strategic interests in other parts of the world, such as the Central Asia, the Balkans, and Iran, why does Turkey, under the AKP rule, promote democracy in the ME? I argue that the identity of Turkey's policy makers influence the articulation of their foreign policy priorities. For example, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Turkey under the nationalist conservative government rule (Turgut Ozal's Motherland Party) prioritized Central Asian Turkish Republics in its foreign policy. Similarly, Turkey under the AKP rule, which has deep roots in political Islam and which assigns a "regional power role"²⁰ to Turkey in the region, promotes democracy in the Arab ME.

Furthermore, examining the AKP's relations with the groups in the Arab ME, it is seen that Justice and Freedom Party of Egypt, Justice and Construction Party of Tunisia, Hamas in Palestine, and Justice and Development Party of Libya come out as important partners of the AKP. This brings up the question, why does the AKP establish firm relations with the Muslim Brotherhood, but not other groups? The reason is that the AKP's willingness alone is not enough; that is to say, the attitudes of the corresponding groups towards the AKP matter just as much. In this regard, strong partnership requires the consent

²⁰ For example, Kalevi J. Holsti in *National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy* (International Studies Quarterly 14: 3, 233-309, 1970) argues that states have different role conceptions that influence their relations with other states. In this regard, the AKP's conception of Turkey as the heir of Ottoman Empire and as a regional power in the ME influences its behaviors in the ME. The AKP tries to create a democratic order in the ME partly because of its role conception towards the region.

of both sides. Despite some divergences, both the AKP and the Muslim Brotherhood share similar ideas and goals regarding the Muslim world. (Fuller, 2014) Therefore, the ideological similarities that the AKP and the Muslim Brotherhood share facilitate the formation of strong ties between them.

To sum up, in the present research, identity refers to the norms, perceptions, and values of the AKP government. The AKP perceives Turkey as a regional power, which is connected to the ME by common geography, culture, religion, and history. The AKP also comes from the Islamist (political Islam) tradition. The AKP's roots in political Islam influences its choice of groups with which the AKP forms alliances, and the tools the AKP utilizes to promote democracy in the ME. In this dissertation, Turkey's strategic interests refer to its survival (territorial integrity), alliances, and economic interests in the ME.

This research conceptualizes the impact of identity and strategic interests on Turkey's democracy promotion policy as: *Promotion of Democracy = Security/Economic Interests × Identity*, where the multiplicative term represents the interactive impact of these two factors. However, the impact of identity on states' foreign policies is not constant. The identity might have more influence at times, and less influence at some other times. In this regard, when states' immediate security risks are not present, their identities influence their behaviors more. However, when they face a security threat, their identities matter less.

In the research, my main goal is to document Turkey's democracy promotion case in the Arab ME. Therefore, the non-Arab states will not be included in my analysis. However, I will sometimes mention Turkey's engagement with non-Arab states to better contextualize the Turkish democracy promotion in the Arab ME.

Methodology and Data Sources

My research explores why and how Turkey promotes democracy in the ME. In order to answer these questions, I employed the neo-classical realist framework, asserting that in order to understand a particular foreign policy choice, a researcher needs to take into consideration domestic and international contexts in which that foreign policy decision is formulated. In addition, the neo-classical realists attract attention to the role of identity of the national security executive when formulating foreign policy decisions. Therefore, in the dissertation, I first examined the domestic and international contexts in which the AKP formulated its democracy promotion policy. Secondly, I explained how the AKP's perception of Turkey as a regional power and its roots in political Islam influenced the specific articulation of its democracy promotion policy.

In order to explain why and how Turkey promotes democracy in the ME, I employed a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. In my dissertation, I advanced my thesis of Turkey's democracy promotion in the Arab ME through the examination of a number of its strategic interests, such as economy, security, and alliance formation, which are directly related to regional stability in the ME. The impact of Turkey's economic interests on its democracy promotion policy was easy to quantify: I employed statistical data that indicated changes in Turkey's GDP per capita, export to the ME, import from the ME, FDI (Foreign Direct Investment), and changes in Turkey's trade volume with the ME between 2002 and 2012. I easily found statistical data on these variables from official sources, such as the OECD's and Turkish Statistical Institute's webpages.

However, it was not always possible to explain Turkey's democracy promotion solely on the basis of numerical data. For example, in the fourth chapter, in order to uncover the relationship between Turkey's core strategic interests in the ME and its democracy promotion policy, I needed to explain why the AKP leaders thought that the developments in Iraq, after the US occupation, and Syria, in the process of the Arab Spring, undermined Turkey's national security. Furthermore, while Turkey's foreign aid to the elected political parties connected to the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Tunisia provided me with numerical data to support my thesis, which asserted that the AKP backed political parties associated with the Muslim Brotherhood in the process of the Arab Spring, the statistics did not explain why the AKP supported the Muslim Brotherhood over other groups in the Arab ME. In such situations, my elite interviews and secondary sources substantially helped me to fill the gaps.

In line with this mixed approach, King, Keohane and Verba argues that "in the same research project, some data may be collected that is amenable to statistical analysis, while other significantly important information is not." (King, Keohane and Verba 1994) In light of this view, I tried to address my research question in the best possible way, without discriminating among the type of data – numerical or qualitative.

One way that I explained how the AKP formulated its democracy promotion policy was by examining domestic and international contexts (Chapter II and III) in which the AKP formulated this policy. I utilized a process tracing technique in these two chapters. However, process tracing does not mean the exclusion of the numbers from the empirical analysis. Collier argues that the goal of process tracing, which is generally used while conducting qualitative research, is to take advantage of numerical analysis if it helps

discover causal mechanisms between the dependent and the independent variables. Therefore, I used both direct quotes from my elite interviews, secondary sources, and numerical data to explain the process in which the AKP formulated its democracy promotion policy by examining the AKP's interaction with systemic and domestic actors simultaneously.

Before explaining my data sources, I would like to elaborate further on process tracing technique. Collier defines process tracing as: “process tracing examines diagnostic pieces of evidence—often understood as part of a temporal sequence of events or phenomena—with the goal of achieving and refining causal inference.” (Collier 2011) George and McKeown further argue: “the process-tracing approach attempts to uncover what stimuli the actors attend to; the decision process that makes use of these stimuli to arrive at decisions; the actual behavior that then occurs; the effect of various institutional arrangements on attention, processing, and behavior; and the effect of other variables of interest on attention, processing, and behavior.” (George and McKeown 1985)

In this dissertation, semi-structured elite interviews occupy an important place. I conducted semi-structured, face-to-face interviews between Summer 2012 and Spring 2014. My interviewees included opinion leaders, TIKA experts, ordinary people, MPs, diplomatic personnel, and CSO leaders. The interviews took place in Ankara, Istanbul, Gaziantep, Hatay, Miami, and Fort Lauderdale. Although most of the interviewees were from Turkey, I had the chance to talk to high ranking representatives from the US, Syria, Kosovo, Yemen, and Egypt. My interviewees consisted of both males and females above 18 years of age. As I indicated previously, most of the interviewees are in leading positions in their countries. However, I also had the chance to talk to the common citizens in Turkey.

Because of cultural reasons specific to Turkey, I had to conduct unofficial interviews sometimes.²¹ I focused on four sets of questions during my interviews. The first set concerned the interviewees' perception of Turkey; the second set of questions concerned the interviewees' perception of the ME; the third set of questions was related to the interviewees' opinion of the role Turkey could play in the ME. The fourth set of questions measured the interviewees' perception of democracy, democracy promotion, authoritarianism, and regime change in the ME.

The other sources of data for my qualitative analysis are the official web-archives of the Turkish state institutions, such as the Turkish Parliament and ministries, media, and secondary sources, such as empirical books and articles. Often, my interviews were not adequate for developing a cohesive argument. In such situations, I had to resort to either statistical data or secondary sources.

The statistical data in this chapter is gathered from the web-sources of United Nations, World Bank, various Turkish ministries, Turkish Statistical Institute, OECD (Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development), Global Humanitarian Assistance, TIKA (Turkey's Development and Cooperation Agency) Development Reports, and several public opinion research conducted by SETA (Foundation for Political, Economic, and Social Research).

²¹ In Turkey, high ranking officials were highly skeptical of me as a researcher for recording their voices. This skepticism also prevented them from speaking freely. Therefore, in many instances, in order to understand what was happening in the field, I kept the conversation informal. This way, my interviewees were much willing to reveal their real opinions.

The Plan of the Dissertation

My dissertation consists of nine chapters, the first and the last being the introduction and conclusion. The second chapter examines the domestic context in which the AKP started to promote democracy in the Arab ME. The domestic context entails Turkey's economic and political transformations under the AKP government.

In the third chapter, I examine how Turkey's relations with the West influenced its democracy promotion policy in the ME. I also explain the influences of the US and the EU on Turkey's democracy promotion policy.

In the fourth chapter, I explain Turkey's economic and security interests and Turkey's alliances in the context of Turkey's democracy promotion in the ME. Furthermore, I examine the conditions under which Turkey applies military power to defend its substantial strategic interests in the region. This chapter is a hybrid chapter in the sense that it explains one of the important tools of democracy promotion, Turkey's military power, and Turkey's motivations for promoting democracy in the ME.

In the fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters, I document Turkey's strategies of democracy promotion in the ME. The fifth chapter examines Turkey's democracy promotion through Turkey's Official Development Assistance (ODA). The sixth chapter explains Turkey's democracy promotion through mentoring, normative pressure, demonstrative effect, conditionality, peace building, and enlargement. Finally, the seventh chapter focuses on the involvement of the Turkish civil society in Turkey's democracy promotion in the ME.

The eighth chapter examines the limitations, strengths, and the specificities of Turkey's democracy promotion.

CHAPTER II: DOMESTIC POLITICS: THE EMERGENCE OF TURKEY AS A POWERHOUSE IN THE REGION UNDER THE AKP GOVERNMENT

Neo-classical realism argues that statesmen make decisions by taking into consideration both domestic and international incentives and constraints. (Lobell, Ripsman and Taliaferro 2009) Therefore, the relevant domestic and external factors that impact the decisions of statesmen need to be taken into account while explaining states' foreign policies.²² In this chapter, I examine the domestic factors which have affected the AKP's democracy promotion policy broadly. Furthermore, I argue that Turkey's transformation into a more open society and economic powerhouse has provided the AKP with favorable conditions to exert Turkey's regional power role more forcefully in the ME.

This chapter explains the transformation of Turkey into a more confident democratic state under the AKP rule. When the AKP came to power in 2002, it was constrained by political (the Turkish military and the Republican People's Party), economic (poverty and high inflation rate), and security problems (the PKK). Therefore, the AKP was not able to act independently.

However, the AKP successfully changed the conditions in its own favor by 2007. The AKP managed to retain the support of the Turkish masses and the West. As a result, threats originating from the Kemalist status quo against elected political parties were being eliminated. The most important step taken in this regard was the establishment of the civilian control over the Turkish military. Also, by 2007, Turkey emerged as an economic powerhouse and a more open society. In this new environment, the AKP started to

²²Rose, *Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign policy*, 1998; for why states promote democracy, see Schweller, *US democracy promotion: Realist reflections*, 2000.

formulate more independent foreign policy decisions. This resulted in Turkey's self-endorsement as a regional power in the ME more assertively. Although the Arab Spring, Gezi Park protests and the 17 December 2013 corruption scandal challenged the AKP's authority, the AKP remains to be the most powerful party in Turkey. (Fuller 2014) In this chapter, I explain the process of this intricate domestic change through which Turkey has emerged as a powerful state that aspires to lead the ME.

In this dissertation, my goal is to explain how and why Turkey promotes democracy in the ME. However, without understanding the aforementioned domestic political and economic transformations, as a result of which Turkey emerged as a powerhouse, it is impossible to fully comprehend Turkey's democratic activism in the ME. Turkey did promote democracy before the Arab Spring. However, its promotion remained within the normative framework until 2007. Nevertheless, after the subordination of its political rivals, and Turkey's accumulation of substantial wealth, the AKP started to promote democracy more forcefully in the ME.

Turkey projected the power that it accumulated under the AKP rule particularly in the course of the Arab Spring by providing the Arab Spring countries and the protestors with foreign aid and military support. Interestingly, since 2004 Turkey's democracy promotion has gained a more strategic orientation, reaching its peak in the process of the Arab Spring. In this chapter, I explain the process of Turkey's economic and political transformation under the AKP rule in detail. However, before explaining the AKP's impact, initially I would like to provide some preliminary information about the history of democratization in Turkey dating back to its Ottoman roots.

Democratization during the Ottoman Empire

Turkey's first democratization attempts are often traced back to November 3, 1839, which was the date of the Ottoman Empire's Tanzimat Declaration, which, for a time, transformed the empire into a constitutional monarchy.²³ The main reasons for the reform were to stop the separatist groups motivated by nationalist movements, to prevent the outside intervention of the European powers in the domestic affairs of the Ottoman Empire, and to retain Western support in international issues. (Ozkan 2012)

The reformation process was deepened by Islahat Declaration in 1856.²⁴ The declaration improved minority rights, and further restricted the Sultan's authority. (Ozkan 2012) By the late 1800s, Russia had increased its support for the Slavic Balkan nations (which were still a part of the Ottoman Empire), and supported their separatist goals. As a result, the Ottoman Empire decided to share the power with the Ottoman citizens in order to prevent the partition of the Empire, resulting in the Mesrutiyet Declaration in 1876. By the Mesrutiyet declaration, the citizens of the Ottoman Empire, including Christians, were granted representation in the Ottoman Parliament. However, the parliament would only be responsible to the Sultan and function only as an advisory body. (Ozkan 2012)

However, these reform movements did not produce the desired outcomes. As a result of nationalist movements, the Christian minorities in the Balkans, supported by the

²³ For detailed info, see Cemil Birsell. *Tanzimat'ın Harici Siyaseti*. Tanzimat I, İstanbul: Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı. 661-722, 1999; Also see Gülnihâl Bozkurt, *Alman-İngiliz Belgelerinin ve Siyasî Gelişmelerin Işığında Gayrimüslim Osmanlı Vatandaşlarının Hukukî Durumu (1839-1914)*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu. (1996).

²⁴ For Further information, see M. Tanju Akad. *Islahat Fermanı*. Düünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi, İstanbul: İz Yayını vol. 6, 1994; Also See Fatih Demirci. *Islahat Fermanı ve Müsâvât Meselesi*. Gazi Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Yayınlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Ankara, 1999.

European powers, separated from the Empire. Eventually, the Young Turks, a group of well-organized and western educated Turkish intellectuals, revolted against the Ottoman Empire in 1908. (Ozkan 2012) The revolt resulted in the redistribution of power among the Ottoman's political institutions. For instance, the responsibility for governing shifted from the Sultan to the parliament. However, these reforms were also short-lived due to the participation of the Ottoman Empire in the First World War, followed by the War of Turkish Independence, which resulted in the establishment of the Modern Turkish Republic.

Certainly, the reform process in the Empire was triggered by the desire to prevent the external intervention in domestic affairs. (Cansu 2006) Another reason was to stop separatist movements of the Christian populations, such as Greeks, Serbians, and Bulgarians. (Gumus 2008) However, it also led to lively debates among influential Ottoman elites, such as scholars and governors, regarding the concept of democracy and its compatibility with Islam. There were three main lines of thinking: the first group argued that The Quran commanded that the ruler should be consulted before making decisions, and non-Muslims along with the Muslims could serve in such an advisory institution. The second group suggested that Islam only allowed the representation of Muslims in such an institution since non-Muslims could not be trusted. The last group declared that the nation was not mature enough to adapt a system that considered representation. (Tekin 2000) Most importantly, the idea of democracy was associated with freedoms and consultation, and faced with no significant opposition.

The Establishment of the Modern Turkish Republic

In 1923, the Ottoman Empire collapsed and the Republic of Turkey was founded under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. It was established on four core values: secularism, democracy, Turkishness, and Sunni-Islam. (Ergil 2000) Within this context, three groups were given minority status, Armenians, Jews, and Greeks. (Grigoriadis 2006) Although there were substantial ethnic and sectarian minorities among Muslims, their differences were not recognized by the founding fathers of the Turkish Republic. The foundation of the Turkish nation would be Islam. In 1920, when Atatürk opened the first national assembly of Turkish Republic, he reiterated that “the national assembly did not consist of Turks, Cerkes, Kurds, or Lazs, but instead consisted of Islam, that included all these components.”²⁵ Paradoxically, as Atatürk was building a strictly secular state, he tried to consolidate national unity defined by religion. The institutionalization of Sunni Islam as the state religion has caused tensions among Sunni-Alevi and secular-religious citizens of Turkey ever since.

The problem, however, was that the young Turkish state expected the Muslim minorities to meld within the Muslim (Sunni)-Turkish identity. (Yegen 1999) Therefore, the pillars on which the Turkish nation was being built also produced the cleavages around which the parties and the voters would organize. For example, the distinguishing principle among the Turkish political parties has been their religious-secular orientations (such as AKP vs. CHP), as well as their ethnic-national identities (such as BDP vs. MHP). Both

²⁵ Atatürk delivered this speech during the opening ceremony of the first parliament of the modern Turkish Republic. In Turkish: "Bu Meclis sadece Türkler'in değildir, Kürtler'in de diğer anasır-ı İslam'ın da Meclisi'dir". Meclis Haber (Parliament News), March 14 2014. http://www.meclishaber.gov.tr/develop/owa/haber_portal.aciklama?p1=124047

religious and nationalist parties are considered to be on the right wing in the Turkish context; whereas the secular and ethnic parties are considered to be rather on the left wing.

The Turkish state remained as a one party system until 1946; nevertheless, it was compelled by the domestic and international developments to introduce the multi-party system. (Akcapar, et al. 2004) On the domestic front, Turkey had to answer its citizens’ demands for a political system established on pluralistic representation. On the international level, Turkey had to fulfill NATO’s membership criteria by transitioning to a multiparty system, which would serve the main goal of Kemalism—westernization of the country. However, beginning from 1960, Turkey’s democratization process was interrupted by the military several times.

Table 1. Cleavages in Turkish Politics Rooted in its Foundation

Cleavages in Modern Turkish Politics, Rooted in its Foundation		
Turkish Identity	Versus	Kurdish Identity
Sunni Identity		Alawi Identity
Strict Secularism		Demand for Religious Tolerance

The May 27, 1960 military coup resulted in constitutional changes that introduced liberal political reforms as well as proportional representation. (Esmer 2002) According to Duverger, representation determined by “single member plurality district” produces a two-party system, while “the double ballot majority system” and proportional representation

produces a multiparty system.²⁶ (Duverger 1972) The reconfiguration of the Turkish election system on the basis of proportional representation produced multiple competing groups, such as Islamists, nationalists, and leftists in the political arena. (Grigoriadis 2006) From that moment on, the Turkish political system has rarely experienced a single party government in power. (Esmer 2002)

The constitution adopted after the 1980 military coup brought some political restrictions. For instance, it introduced a 10% national threshold to reduce the number of political parties to a more manageable level. (Özbudun 2000) Three other articles had a substantial impact on the way the Turkish society organized itself politically. Article 33 prohibited associations from pursuing any kind of political goals, including, but not restricted to engaging in political activities, receiving support from political parties, and cooperating with public organizations and foundations. Article 81 prohibited the formation and operation of political parties defined by ethnic, racial, or religious lines. Article 58 prohibited the use of any other languages except Turkish for political campaigning. Finally, the 1980 constitution also banned the use of Kurdish names. As a consequence, the Kurdish village names were replaced by the Turkish ones.²⁷

However, according to Martin Lipset, countries with political parties organized around deep cleavages have healthy democratic systems, (Lipset 2000) and as suggested by Moshe Maor, in Europe, cleavages emerged as a result of the national (French) and industrial (British) revolutions. (Maor 1997) Contrary to Lipset and Moar, the ground for

²⁶ Also, see Bill Park. *Modern Turkey: People, State, and Foreign Policy in a Globalized World*. USA: New York, Routledge, 2012.

²⁷ Turkey's constitution which was introduced after the 1980 military coup.

democracy in Turkey was unlike those in France and Britain. In Turkey, parties are organized around secular (left)-religious (right) and ethnic (left)-national (right) lines as a result of the definition of Turkey's core values which were Turkishness, Sunni Islam, and secularism. Turkish military elites prohibited parties to organize around religious and ethnic lines, as exemplified in the 1980 constitution. (Tachau 2002) As a result, the existing deep cleavages within the society were exacerbated.

The 1980 constitution, which restricted political rights and freedoms and introduced neo-liberal economic policies, had a complex impact on Turkish political life. Modernization indicators, such as urbanization, literacy and GDP rates dramatically increased (See **Table 2**). As a result, Turkey's middle class grew substantially. Groups, emerging around the already existing cleavages, faced political restrictions in 1980s. Thus, while religious groups had to go underground, leftist Kurdish groups started to launch attacks against Turkish armed forces. Despite political openings and economic development, the leftist Kurdish groups still continue their militant struggles. There has been a deep divide between the Kurdish and Turkish nationalists and the secular and religious groups in Turkey.

In the early 1990s, Turkey went through a political liberalization process once again. Political and cultural rights of the minority groups were improved. The educational levels of individuals significantly increased. The introduction of liberal economic policies produced new economically powerful classes in Turkey, such as the conservative bourgeoisie. (Taspinar 2012) In this process, globalization trends, the EU membership process, advancements in mass communication and economic and educational developments have greatly contributed to the formation of a pluralistic society in Turkey.

However, this era is also marked by the political instabilities caused by the coalition governments, resulting in mismanagement of economic, political, and social problems. (Coskun 2003)

Table 2. Turkey’s Socio-Economic Development

Year	Urbanization	Literacy rates	GDP % Capita
1980	43%	65%	\$1.56
1990	53%	79%	\$2.78
2000	64%	86%	\$4.19
2013	72%	94%	\$15.30

*Source: Turkish Statistical Institute

In 2001, Turkey experienced a severe economic crisis, triggered by a political crisis under the Democratic Left Party (the DTP) rule. Inflation rates dramatically increased. For example, in 1994, inflation rates went up to 120.21%, and remained around 70% until 2000. In 2002, when the AKP came to power, inflation rates decreased to 29.75%. In 2012, it was measured as 7.40%. (Worldwide Inflation Data 2014) In the 1990s, Turkey could hardly find an international institution to borrow from. Those that did stipulated high interest rates.²⁸ Also, unemployment rates increased in this period. Furthermore, Istanbul was hit by a major earthquake in 1999, resulting in over 60,000 casualties and the destruction of massive cities like Istanbul and Balikesir. The casualties associated with the violent activities of the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) exceeded 30,000. (Teymur and Smith 2008) The Turkish status-quo did not know how to deal with problems of this magnitude. The Kemalist establishment (military, Republican People Party (the CHP), and

²⁸ For example, Public Debt Management Report (April 2003), prepared by the Turkish Treasury, indicates that between 1992 and 1999, the average interest rates in Turkey was 32 %.

their allies in the other sectors of the society) continued to remain the de facto power. However, people started to lose their faith in the secular Kemalist elite. (Cagaptay 2011) All these developments also marked the beginning of a new era in Turkish politics.

The AKP Era

Under the AKP rule, Turkey went through substantial political and economic transformations. As a result, Turkey emerged as a powerful actor in the ME. The AKP promoted democracy similtenously inside and outside the country. However, until Arab Spring, Turkey promoted democracy through normative chanel in the ME, and until then Turkey's democracy promotion policy was more idealist than realist. However, Turkey's support for democratization in the ME became more strategically driven in the course of Arab Spring. Meanwhile, we witness the militarization of Turkey's democracy promotion in the region. It is important to realize that Turkey would not have been able to play such an assertive role, if the Turkish military had not been taken under civilian control and if the Turkish economy had not grown at such great extents (See **Table 2**).

In the following part, I will examine the AKP's impact on Turkey's democratic transformation in three phases. The initial phase is characterized with the AKP's promotion of liberal democracy, the second phase is associated with conservative democracy and the third phase is identitfied with authoritarianism and a deviation from universal democratic standards. In each consequitive phase, the AKP's democracy promotion policy gains more strategic orientation.

The First Phase: Liberal Democracy

As I indicated earlier, after obtaining power in the 2003 national elections, the AKP had to deal with problems in three main areas: economy (poverty, high inflation rates, unemployment, low growth rates, inefficient banking sector, and corruption); rights and freedoms (minority rights, religious rights, freedom of expression and association, and the strictly secular military that dominated the elected civilians); and security (fighting against terrorism emanating from the PKK and reforming the security sector to subordinate military to the civilians). The AKP's domestic and international policies are driven by attempts to address these three sets of issues.

Initially, the AKP needed to survive in an international and domestic environment un-friendly to Islamic groups. On the domestic front, the AKP declared its commitment to Turkey's secular values and accepted westernization as the priority of its foreign policy. The AKP tried to address the concerns for the Islamization of the country by prioritizing the practical needs of people such as food, security, and justice in their party agenda. (Yakis 2012)

In order to survive in the crude political environment, which was unfriendly to the Islamic political groups, in Turkey, the AKP launched a strategy which had both international and domestic components. Internationally, the AKP took steps that reinforced its domestic moves: the AKP started Turkey's EU accession process negotiations, which was initiated by the Helsinki process in 1999. The AKP declared strong interests in cooperating with the US to solve regional problems. (Erdogan 2003) As a result, the AKP was able to retain the support of the EU and the US. The AKP also successfully received the support of a large portion of Turkish citizens (See **Table 3**). Afterwards, the AKP

constantly increased its votes; consecutively, from 36% to 42%, from 42% to 47%, and from that to 50% in the following elections and referenda, which indicated people's support of the AKP. (Yakis 2012)

Table 3. Political Parties and Voters' Profile on the basis of Voters' Self-definition

The Political Parties	The Voters Profile on the basis of Voters' Self-Definition
The AKP	Religious (42%), Conservative (34%), Nationalist (35.7%), and Kemalist (24.3%) (A lower middle class party; a lower economic and educational status comparing to the RP)
The RP	Kemalist (85%), Social Democrat (42.6%), nationalist (28.9%), Democrat (26.3%) (An upper class party; the highest economic and educational status)
The MHP	Nationalist (84.3%), Kemalist (52.9%), Religious (23.5%), Conservative (18.6%)
The DTP	No idea (36.2%), Democrat (34%), Religious (14.9%), Nationalist (10%) (Very low educational and economic status)

* This table is drawn on the basis of A&G (2008) Public Opinion Poll.

The EU's impact on Turkey's Democratization during the AKP Rule

The AKP passed a series of harmonization packages to bring Turkey closer to the EU. Freedom of expression was extended; freedom of religion, association, assembly, and press were improved. Furthermore, the death penalty was removed from the penal code and the right to a free trial was improved. Some other improvements were made regarding the equality of the sexes, making the closure of political parties by the constitutional court more difficult, civil-military relations, and cultural and lingual rights. (Park 2012) For instance, the MGK (National Security Council), which was previously dominated by the Military, was assigned a civilian chair, and its function was reduced to an advisory institution. (Park 2012) The MGK used to be an institution over which the military

exercised control over the civilian authorities. Its reorganization on the basis of democratic principles helped civilian authorities to have greater control over the military. Moreover, restrictions on Kurdish language and cultural rights were removed. Moreover, a TV channel broadcasting in Kurdish, TRT6, was established for the first time, and restrictions over the associations, which were introduced by the 1980 constitution, were removed. (Park 2012)

Consequently, the EU accession process had a significant impact over democratization of Turkey under the AKP rule. Furthermore, the democratization reforms that were carried out in the AKP's initial term were liberal in nature. However, this would slowly change towards conservative reforms after the AKP's second electoral victory. Before explaining the second term of the AKP rule, I would like to introduce the impact of the US on domestic politics of Turkey under the AKP rule.

Eliminating the domestic threats with the support from the US

The AKP's initial support for Turkey's democratization was a matter of its survival given the domestic and international constraints at the time. (Casier, Jongerden and Walker 2013) At home, constraints included demands for greater rights and freedoms, security problems stemming from the PKK, and economic problems. Whichever of these was to be dealt with, the AKP had to either obtain the approval of the military or had to confront its objections. As it had been recorded before, almost all the previously elected governments were able to deal with such issues as much as and in the way that was permitted by the Military. Indeed, a party like the AKP, which has roots in political Islam, had to be extra cautious about the military, which disliked the Islamic political groups.

Needless to say, the international political conditions were both fruitful for objectives of the AKP and the USA. The USA was after the idea of promoting democracy in the ME so as to prevent the spread of radicalism.²⁹ Also, the AKP was after exerting its conservative democratic ideals in an environment where the biggest opponent was thought to be the Military. The new US approach to the ME led the US to support the election of a moderate party with deep roots in Turkish political Islam. (Aydogan 2012) An important element of the US' BMENA (Broader Middle East and North Africa) project required the inclusion of Islamist groups in the political system to moderate them. (Dalacoura 2010) Turkey presented a fertile ground for the implementation of the BMENA project. (Aydogan 2012) The AKP transformed into a pro-western democratic party. Therefore, the US helped the AKP obtain power. However, this does not mean that there were negotiations and direct US assistance to bring the AKP to power. The US just adopted a supportive attitude towards the AKP before and after it was being elected. Nursel Aydogan, the BDP MP, reiterated that:

The US wanted to redesign the ME on the basis of its BMENA project, which was being discussed before the AKP obtained power in Turkey. BMENA requires the establishment of the moderate Islam in the region. In this regard, the US helped the moderate Islamists, the AKP, obtain power in Turkey... The actor that helped the AKP obtain power is also the actor that is

²⁹ For further details, see Dalacoura, *US Foreign Policy and Democracy Promotion in the Middle East: Theoretical Perspectives and Policy Recommendations*, 2010; Also, see Bagci and Sinkaya, *Greater Middle East Initiative and Turkey: AK Parti's Perspective*, 2006; Furthermore, see Akcapar, Akgun, Altunisik, and Kadioglu, *The Debate on Democratization in the Broader Middle East and North Africa: A Civic Assessment from Turkey*, 2004.

trying to redesign the ME. The US is now presenting the AKP to the ME as the representatives of the moderate Islam. Also, regionalization is an important component of globalization. By bringing the AKP to power, the US also got rid of the ethnic nationalist Ergenekon group (Turkey's deep state). As the strong opponent of Kurds and Arabs, Ergenekon would prevent the regionalization in the ME. Regionalization was an important element of the BMENA project. (Aydogan 2012)

However, the AKP still needed to prove to the US that it could become a credible partner. The AKP's commitments to the westernization of Turkey and to Turkey's possible EU membership played a crucial role in creation of an environment of trust between the Islamic AKP and the US. Also, the AKP got involved in a number of beneficial cooperation with the US, such as helping the US forces in Iraq and Afghanistan. (Carol 2002) The AKP's cooperative attitude towards the US fostered the US idea that if the military did not constrain the AKP, the AKP could become a much useful partner for the US. (J. Barkey 2005) Soon, the military would be taken under the civilian rule. Aydogan would suggest that "Think about that, the AKP imprisoned the General Staff of the Republic of Turkey, incarcerated 50 top military officials, and put the top Ergenekon leaders into the jail. And the AKP is claiming that it did all these by itself. I do not believe in this. It is unbelievable. I think the US provided a substantial help to the AKP in this process." (Aydogan 2012)

The AKP's pro-democracy, pro-secularism, and pro-neoliberalism, which combine to generate pro-Westernism, calmed the initial concerns about its Islamist background. The AKP's commitment to the EU process reinforced the pro-western AKP perception of the West. Domestically, the threats from the Kemalist establishment, which had strong ties

with the US and Europe, was being eliminated. Then, the AKP would only be bound by subsequent elections, rather than extralegal mechanisms, such as military coup d'états. Furthermore, western support created advantages for the AKP in the Muslim world, since for the first time an elected Islamist government had good ties with the West. The Western support contributed substantially to the AKP's pursuit of its goals in the ME.

On the other hand, the AKP balanced the secular economic elites by allying with conservative economic groups. The emerging Anatolian—religious—bourgeois in Gaziantep, Kayseri, Malatya, and Sivas (called Anatolian tigers) provided strong support for the AKP. (Taspinar 2012) TUMSIAD (Whole Industrialists and Businessmen Association) and TUSKON (Turkey's Industrialists and Businessmen Confederation) are two conservative major business associations that backed the AKP. Thanks to these two establishments, the AKP reached an equilibrium with the TUSIAD (the secular economic elite).

On the other hand, TUSIAD did not act quite in line with the BMENA project³⁰ of the US that aimed to democratize the ME. As reported by an American diplomat, “Union of Turkish Chambers of Commerce (TOBB) with which Sak is affiliated, has been actively seeking to encourage trade with the Middle Eastern countries. He contrasted this interest with TUSIAD (which represents the large, Istanbul- based conglomerates) which has not participated in fora like BMENA. Sak finds TUSIAD myopically focused on the EU, missing the point that a Turkey with stable, developed economic ties to its Middle Eastern neighbors is a more attractive candidate for EU membership.” (Wikileaks 2014) This might

³⁰ See Chapter III for detailed information about the BMENA initiative.

be one reason due to which the AKP obtained western support despite the opposition of TUSIAD and other forces of the Kemalist status quo.

The AKP's cooperative attitude with the West strengthened the AKP's role in domestic and international politics. The AKP reoriented itself as a promoter of human rights, open markets, and democracy. "This ensured that the AKP gained international legitimacy. Building coalitions internally as well as externally – with liberals at home and the Western powers on the international stage – was a way for the AKP to gain power and secure its hold on it." (Ozpek 2014) However, it would be naïve not to see the AKP's initial idealism for promoting human rights in the region as well.

After the AKP's second election in 2007, the domestic rivals were already subordinated, and the trust of the western powers was already secured. By the end of the AKP's first term in office in 2007, Turkey had already reached substantial levels of economic development, and had transformed into a more open society. Therefore, the AKP was able to formulate more independent domestic and foreign policies within this newly emerging environment of freedom. Furthermore, the substantial growth of Turkey's economy would provide the AKP with capability needed to play a more assertive role in the ME. In the following part, I will be explaining the second term of AKP in power, associated with an environment of freedom and increased conservatism.

The Second Phase: Conservative Democracy

The second phase of the AKP rule, 2008-2011, is associated with conservative policy initiatives. It began with victory in the parliamentary elections in July 22, 2007 and continued in August in the presidential elections, which were won by Abdullah Gul, a key

AKP leader. The elimination of threats from status quo forces allowed the AKP to govern with more confidence. In July 2008, the AKP faced a closure case in the Supreme Court on the basis of the complaint that the AKP was incrementally Islamizing the secular Turkish state. The AKP was accused of increasingly becoming the center of anti-secular acts, such as freeing the turban.³¹ (ntvmsnbc 2008) However, 5 out of 11 members of the constitutional court voted against the closure of the AKP. As a result of the absence of the support of a qualified majority, the case resulted in non-closure of the AKP.

The failure to close the AKP started a new era for the AKP's political orientation. After the closure case, there was neither a military, nor a Supreme Court threat that could confine the AKP. The checks which once existed in the Turkish system were no longer as big of a threat. The Republican Party had been turned into a small opposition force, and the military had returned to its barracks. Furthermore, the AKP reorganized the constitutional court on the basis of the Copenhagen Criteria of the EU membership. By the 2010 referendum, the closure of the political parties was banned by law. (Secim Haber 2014)

Under these new circumstances, the AKP started to enact socially conservative policies. The AKP's initiative for tightening up abortion procedures³² and the regulations

³¹ Turban is a head covering made from a long piece of cloth that is wrapped around the head as defined by the Cambridge online dictionary.

³² You can find further information on abortion debate in this link <http://gundem.milliyet.com.tr/kurtajda-10-haftayi-dusurme-calismasi/gundem/gundemdetay/30.05.2012/1546745/default.htm> you can also find The AKP's policies concerning women from this link: http://www.akparti.org.tr/upload/documents/Women_Of_Turkey_Steps_Of_Home.pdf

for the sale and use of alcohol³³ were the most significant conservative policy drafts. Both of these restrictions contributed greatly to the emergence of Gezi Park protests in Summer, 2013. After Gezi Park protests, the AKP would continue to pursue conservative policies, such as expressing interest in monitoring male-female mixed student houses.³⁴

Although, the conservative policy drafts were few in number, when combined with Erdogan's ambitious conservative speeches, they managed to further alienate seculars and liberals, as well as a small group within the conservative class considering such actions to be harmful for Turkey's ongoing democratic development. The fact that Gezi Park Protestors consisted of mainly leftist, liberal, and a small group of conservatives protestors is evident for the groups feeling strained by the AKP policies.³⁵ According to a survey conducted on Gezi Park protestors, only around 4% claimed that they protested for environmentalist cause; the rest felt that their liberties were under threat. (Ozpek 2014) This clearly indicated that Gezi Park protests symbolized the difficulties of the new democratic Turkey that the AKP had to deal with.

³³ You can find detailed information about regulating the use and sell of alcohol from this link: <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/23250986.asp>

³⁴ You can listen to Recep Tayyip Erdogan regarding his opinions on male-female mixed student houses from this Youtube video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z68UIyy_6ac

³⁵ For further Information, see <http://democracyandsecurity.weebly.com/security.html>; [I visited the areas Istanbul's Gezi Park in Taxim during the demonstrations in Summer 2013.](#) I investigated the groups that participated in the protests by taking pictures of their signs and the name of their organizations. The outcome indicated that there was a liberal, socialist, Marxist, and Leninist, (leftist) coalition in Gezi Park (in Turkey religious parties are considered to be rightist and secular parties are considered as leftists). Also, Alevis, some Leninists Kurdish groups, a small group of conservative Muslims, calling themselves anti-capitalist Muslims, were also present in Gezi Park. In terms of media, the secular media, such as the Hurriyet and the Radical, and conservative media, such as the Today's Zaman (center right), criticized the AKP government, and released stories more empathetic to the protestors. While the protests started as an environmentalist cause, it turned into anti-capitalist, anti-Western, and anti-AKP demonstrations after its initial stages.

Furthermore, there are international consequences of the political and economic transformation of Turkey under the AKP. For example, the US and the EU would step back from promoting democracy in the ME when the Islamic groups gained power in 2005 and 2006 region-wide. (Tocci 2011) In contrast to the West, Turkey provided a robust support to the elected Islamist parties in the region. As a result, Turkey, under the AKP, strengthened its alliance with Islamic parties in the ME. On the other hand, the new geopolitics that was emerging with the Arab Spring in the ME compelled the US, the EU, and Turkey to work together more closely, at least until each actor made a cost benefit calculation of their possible moves. Therefore, until Gezi Park movement, Turkish-US and Turkish-EU relations continued to improve despite some set-backs. However, Gezi Park protests initiated a new era in the Turkish-Western relations. In the following section, I will explain how the AKP started to deviate from the universal democratic principles at home as a result of challenges in the process of Arab Spring.

The Third Phase: Increased Authoritarianism

The third phase of the AKP rule started when the Arab Spring hit Syria and the AKP sided with (and aided) the opposition. However, when the conflict in Syria continued longer than the AKP expected, the AKP started to feel insecure. Yasar Yakis declared that “In foreign policy, you never put all of [your] eggs in one basket. Turkey had bet that Assad would fall in no time and that it would be the first to reap the rewards... The way things stand now, if Turkey continues to insist on a Syria without Assad it will be left isolated.” (Yakis 2014)

There were several reasons for the AKP's insecure feelings. Firstly, the conflicts near Turkey's borders caused the deaths of several Turkish citizens living in villages near Syria, not to mention hundreds of thousands of deaths in Syria, causing a societal unrest in Turkey. Secondly, Turkish Alawis started to indicate their wrath to over interference of the AKP in Syria, which they found as a Sunni response to an Alawi government out of hatred as a result of sectarian differences. Thirdly, the Gezi Park protests started as an environmentalist protests, but it turned into an anti-AKP movement later on. Six Alawi citizens of Turkey lost their lives during the protests. The death of Alawi youths created the fear that some hidden forces were trying to pull Turkey into the Alawi-Sunni conflict which had already been present in the region.³⁶

Fourthly, counter-movements against Islamists in Syria, Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia, created substantial suspicions in Turkey. The AKP administration started to think that some secret coalitions, consisting of domestic opposition forces in the Muslim countries and international capital owners, collaborating with western ambassadors and media were planning to dismantle the AKP rule.³⁷ Fifthly, all the allies of Turkey abandoned Turkey

³⁶ Interestingly, all individuals that lost their lives during the Gezi Park Protests were of Alevi background: Abdullah Comert, is an Alevi, and was killed in Antakya; Ethem Sarisulluk was killed in Ankara; Mehmet Ayvalitas died in Istanbul; Mustafa Sari was killed in Adana; Irfan Tuna was killed in Ankara; Ali Ismail Korkmaz was killed in Istanbul. <http://www.haberself.com/h/1914/>

³⁷ Yenisafak, Faiz Lobisini Cildirtan Iki Rakam (Two numbers that make the interest lobby go crazy), 15 June 2013. <http://yenisafak.com.tr/gundem-haber/faiz-lobisini-cildirtan-iki-rakam-16.06.2013-533055>; Ibrahim Karagul, Asil Hesaplasma Secimden Sonra (The Real confrontation is after the Elections), Yeni Safak, 11 March 2014. <http://yenisafak.com.tr/yazarlar/IbrahimKaragul/asil-hesaplasma-secim-sonrasinda/50736>; AKP friendly Presses, such as the Star, and the TV channels, such as the Kanal A, also have published OPED and stories in the same line.

in its support for a regime change in Syria,³⁸ and these created a hostile and economically burdensome environment for Turkey.

For many political analysts and the national and global audience, the attitude of the AKP was quite lenient towards the abusive police and highly disappointing for the Gezi Park protestors. Both for the analysts and the national and global audience, this signified a new type of authoritarianism in Turkey, in the wake of Kemalist status quo.

The AKP's authoritarianism which was actually triggered by the Syrian conflict gained a new momentum with the Gezi Park protests. After the beginning of the Syrian conflict, the AKP increasingly based its actions on the notion that some western capital owners, which has been called interest rates lobby by Recep T, Erdogan, and their local accomplices³⁹ were scheming to overthrow the AKP.⁴⁰ During the AKP administration, Turkish interests rates decreased substantially, which caused a decline in the revenue of interest rate lobby (big banks and financial institutions), which had long enjoyed high rates

³⁸ For further information, see Abdulbari Atvan. *Turkiye Suriye Krizinde Yanlizlasti* (Turkey has become lonely during the Syrian Conflict). BBC Turce, 10 October 2013. http://www.bbc.co.uk/turkce/haberler/2013/10/131010_abdulbari_atvan_suriye_turkiye.shtml; Cumali Onal, *Erdoganin Sert Soylemleri, Turkiyeyi Ortadoguda Yanlizlastirdi* (*The Harsh Rhetoric of Erdogan Pushed Turkey into Loneliness in the ME*). Zaman Gazetesi, 2 February 2014. http://www.zaman.com.tr/dunya_erdoganin-dis-politikadaki-sert-soylemleri-turkiyeyi-ortadoguda-yalnizlastirdi_2197036.html; Nick Tattersal, *Analysis: Turkey's 'worthy solitude' sidelines Erdogan in Middle East*. Reuters, 18 September 2013. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/09/18/us-turkey-isolation-idUSBRE98H0K620130918>

³⁹ Although Erdogan included the Gulen Group and the Turkish status quo in "local accomplices" group, he has never clarified how these groups were related to each other. I only try to explain why the AKP behaves authoritarian since the beginning of conflict in Syria. I assert that the AKP has become more authoritarian because of their perception of the aforementioned conspiracy.

⁴⁰ See John Perkins, Youtube Video, 16 February 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zi0-MFZFaNM>; Suleyman Yasar. *Nedir Faiz Lobisi: Erdogan Neden Lobiyi Isaret Etti* (*What is interest rates lobby and why Erdogan highlighted it?*). Sabah Gazetesi, 10 June 2013. <http://www.sabah.com.tr/Yazarlar/yasar/2013/06/10/nedir-faiz-lobisi-erdogan-niye-lobiyi-isaret-etti>.

of return and a prestigious status. (ntv-msnbc 2013) The local groups, unsatisfied with the AKP, coalesced with the interest rates lobby according to this theory.⁴¹ From that time onward, the AKP would read any development that challenged its authority through this conspiracy lenses.

There were several developments that strengthened the AKP's stance; firstly, the Gezi Park movements, secondly, the removal of Islamist Mursi from power by a bloody military coup in Egypt, thirdly, the murder of the nationalist leader in Tunisia which caused serious political turmoil and almost created a civilian coup d'état against the ruling Islamist Al-Nahda Party, fourthly, the ongoing Syrian internal conflict, which has detrimental impact over the societal cohesion of Turkey due to high numbers of Turkey's Alawi and Kurdish citizens, and finally the 17 November, 2013 corruption scandals in which four ministers of the current ruling the AKP are involved. The AKP perceived these developments to be the consecutive steps to remove the AKP from power, not by elections, but by the other coercive means. Recep T. Erdogan perceives the 17 December 2013 corruption scandal in Turkey as the latest episode of a larger scenario to remove the AKP from power. According to Recep T. Erdogan, dismantling the AKP by operations, such as the Gezi Park protests and the 17 December 2013 corruption scandal, was a part of replacing political parties with Islamic traditions in power with the secular and Western-friendlier ones region wide in the ME.

⁴¹ According to John Perkins, Koc Group in Turkey called IMF in, after the Gezi Park Protests and 17 December Corruption Scandal; this means that Koc group is the Turkish branch of corporate (Perkins call it Corporatocracy) network that tries to control the world. John Perkins, Youtube Video, 16 February 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zi0-MFZFaNm>.

Finally, it is important to put the AKP's approach to democracy in the right context. First of all, the AKP has conceptually and practically supported democratization of Turkey.⁴² However, as Recep T. Erdogan suggested, there were two processes of democratization for Turkey: introducing democratic rules and their enforcement. In enacting rules, evidently the AKP has become highly successful in introducing democratic reforms, as I explained in the section on the AKP's liberal era. However, the implementation phase needs time, as the AKP itself needs to learn how to act within a liberal democracy during times of crisis. The 17 December 2013 corruption scandal that ended up with the arbitrary dismissal of hundreds of police officers and reassignment of thousands of police staff by governmental decree is a good example of the problems with democratic internalization and implementation of Turkish institutions. However, Turkish civil society that has gained substantial power, and rule of law, which has become more democratic, under the AKP rule, could constrain some of the AKP's anti-democratic tendencies.⁴³

Gezi Park Protests has been an important tipping point for the AKP's approach to democratization in the region. These protests have created deep suspicions in the AKP circles about the real intentions of the West in Turkey. These suspicions have deeply impacted the AKP's behaviors both domestically and internationally. In the following section, I would like to explain the Gezi Park Protests in more detail.

⁴² For further information for the AKP's conception of democracy, see Justice and Development Party, *Ileri Demokrasi Yolculugu (Advanced Democracy Journey): AKP Iktidarinda Turkiyenin Demokratik Degisimi ve Gelisimi (Turkey's Democratic Change and Development under The AKP Rule), 2002-2012*. Justice and Development Party, 2012.

⁴³ For the role of civil society in democratic consolidation, see Linz and Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, 1996.

The Gezi Park Protests

I believe those who have started these protests and are giving them direction/leading them are aiming to overthrow the government and remove it from office. But the security services and the cautious approach by the government have prevented those harbouring this aim from achieving it. I don't believe they will attempt to engage in such action anymore.

Former Minister of Justice Mehmet from the AKP, Ali Şahin, 2013

The rhetoric of “the internal collaborators of an international capital group” was initially used by the AKP during the Gezi Park Protests. The protests started on May 28, 2013. That day some protestors went to the Gezi Park in Taxim, Istanbul to show their reaction to the damage given to the green areas in the park. They installed their tents there and waited for a night in a peaceful manner. Next day, police used water and pepper-gas excessively to end the protests. When the police brutality against the protestors became national news, many people gave a negative reaction to excessive use of force by the police and went to the area to support the protestors. Then, people who were disturbed by the government's perceived authoritarian approach after 2007 national election also joined the Gezi Park protestors.

When the protests grew, political parties and groups started to join in, either to make their voices heard or to take advantage of the protests. Among such groups, there were the Republican People's Party, Turkish Socialists, Marxists, and the PKK (Kurdish Workers Party).⁴⁴ Furthermore, some Alawi groups also joined the protests because of their

⁴⁴ I visited Gezi Park during the advanced stages of the protests. I had interviews with several participants. I investigated the participant groups. I photographed the signs and slogans they used to understand their social and political backgrounds. Most of them disclosed their identities as they carried signs that indicated the name of their associations. Some others used slogans, which could easily reveal their ideologies. My

disapproval of the name of a bridge (Yavuz Sultan Selim, who Alawis believed scattered their ancestors during Otto-Persian war) to be build on the Bosphorus. Therefore, while initially the protests had started for apparantly an environmentalist cause by a small environmentalist group, after the over-use of force by police, the nature and the combination of the protests changed and it turned into an anti-AKP, anti-neo-liberalist, and anti-capitalist movement.⁴⁵

The demands of the protestors ranged from liberty to Kurds, to a socialist order, and to respect for the secular life-style. However, it was obvious that there was a leftist coalition in the area, unsatisfied with Erdogan's harsh rethorics as well as policies signalling increasing authoritarianism in the country. (Ciplak 2013)

However, Erdogan defined the Gezi Park protests as an attempt by the internal coloborators of an international socio-economic and socio-political establishment to end the AKP rule in Turkey and to take Turkey to the bad old days. According to Erdogan,

It (Gezi Park protests) was prepared very professionally... Social media was prepared for this, made equipped. The strongest advertising companies of our country, certain capital groups, the interest rate lobby, organizations on the inside and outside, hubs, they were ready, equipped for this. (Hurriyet Daily News 2013)

For Recep T. Erdogan, the Gezi Park protestors wanted to remove the democratically elected AKP government from power forcibly. While in Tunisia,

goal was to understand what the protestors wanted, who the protestors were, and whether they were accurately being represented in media or not.

⁴⁵ You can find more information about the anatomy of Gezi Park Protests and the groups that were involved in the protests from this link: <http://democracyandsecurity.weebly.com/security.html>

addressing the Gezi Park protests, Recep T. Erdogan reiterated that “the majority dicta over the minorities is unacceptable; however, no one should expect us to accept the minority dicta over the majority either.” (Euractive 2013) This was an obvious indication of Erdogan’s perception that a conspiracy was being carried out to shift power from the majority to the minority in Turkey.

At the end of the protests, hundreds of journalists and activists were detained and imprisoned. “By 24 June, there had been roughly 4,900 detentions in relation to the Gezi Park protests across Turkey.” (Amnesty International 2013) In terms of media workers, in July 22, Turkey’s Journalists Union reported that 59 journalists lost their jobs, and 34 were detained. (Amnesty International 2013) Among them, there were very well-known journalists, such as Yavuz Baydar (The co-founder of P24, the Platform for Independent Media) and Can Dunder (A columnist of the Cumhuriyet Newspaper). Not to mention, the terrorization of those who attended the protests or who supported the protestors by providing them with materials, such as medicine and food.

Shortly after the Gezi Park Protests, this time, the AKP’s authority was challenged by the December 17, 2013 corruption scandals. This also had detrimental effects over the AKP. The corruption scandal reinforced the idea that some hidden forces were trying to dismantle the elected government via undemocratic means within the AKP circles. This idea also found wide acceptance within the Turkish society. The AKP received 45% of the votes in March 30, 2014 local election. Therefore, it is important to give a detailed explanation about the 17 December 2013 corruption scandal.

The 17 December 2013 Corruption scandal

On December 17, 2013, financial crime unit of the Turkish police detained at least 52 people according to Today's Zaman. Among them, there were the sons of Interior Minister Muammer Güler, Economy Minister Zafer Çağlayan, and Environment and Urban Planning Minister Erdoğan Bayraktar. Detainees also included Istanbul's Fatih district Mayor Mustafa Demir, Iranian- businessman Reza Zarrab, Turkish construction mogul Ali Ağaoğlu, Halkbank General Manager Süleyman Aslan, Emlak Konut General Director Murat Kurum, and many bureaucrats from the Environment and Economy ministries.

The bribe investigation was carried out by Zekeria Oz, "the prosecutor who launched the investigations into Ergenekon, a clandestine criminal network accused of working to overthrow the government." (Today's Zaman 2013) The suspects were "accused of rigging state tenders, accepting and facilitating bribes for some major urbanization projects, obtaining construction permits for protected areas in exchange for Money." (Today's Zaman 2013) This particular investigation concerned Agaoglu, the well-known businessman, and the bureaucrats that played a role in giving the permit for the urbanization projects on protected areas, illegal to build, and rigging state tenders. The accusations also included "helping foreigners to obtain Turkish citizenship through falsified documents, involvement in export fraud, forgery of documents and gold smuggling." (Today's Zaman 2013) Investigation for this particular accusation concerned the Iranian businessman Reza Zerrab, the interior affairs minister, and the related bureaucrats. "There are also claims that the suspects illegally sold historic artifacts that were unearthed during excavations of the Marmaray project, which connects Europe and Asia with a railway tube under the

Bosphorus.” (Today's Zaman 2013) The final investigation concerned the Mayor of Fatih-Istanbul, and the other related bureaucrats.

One of the AKP's central promises for coming to power was to fight against corruption in the country. Therefore, the corruption scandal created a major unease within the AKP as the corruption accusations could be the very reason to end the AKP rule in Turkey. In Recep T. Erdogan's conception, the global establishment was behind the 17 December 2013 corruption scandal: they tried to remove the AKP from power by the Gezi Park protests, but they failed; afterwards, they tried to dismantle the AKP by the corruption scandal. Erdogan attracted attention to the timing of the emergence of the corruption scandal by pointing out the nearing local elections.

Recep T. Erdogan reiterated that in terms of the graft and corruption operations, they were in the realm of justice, and it would be resolved within that realm. (Haberler 2013) However, he also attracted attention to the international aspect of the graft operation. According to RTE, an international coalition had been built against the AKP, and some local media and capital owners, and some groups cooperated with it as their local collaborator.⁴⁶ Recep T. Erdogan reiterated that:

Pay attention to the TVs, newspapers, and capital owners and organizations. Pay attention to those well-known groups inside and outside the country. They could never come together in the past. These establishment and groups are acting together against the government, national will, and democracy. The alliance that

⁴⁶ For further information, check ntvmsnbc, *Erdogan: Faiz lobisinin neferi oldular (Erdogan: They became the soldiers of interest rate lobby)*, 23 June 2013; John Perkins, Youtube Video, 16 February 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zi0-MFZFaNM>.; Suleyman Yasar. *Nedir Faiz Lobisi: Erdogan Neden Lobiyi Isaret Etti (What is interest rates lobby and why Erdogan highlighted it?)*. Sabah Gazetesi, 10 June 2013. <http://www.sabah.com.tr/Yazarlar/yasar/2013/06/10/nedir-faiz-lobisi-erdogan-niye-lobiyi-isaret-etti>.

was being established only during the military coups d'états have again been established. (Haber 3 2013)

Furthermore, for Erdogan, the goal of this international coalition was creating chaos by disempowering the AKP in the upcoming local election, which would result by the demise of the AKP rule in Turkey. From this point of view, the graft probe, which involved four AKP ministers, was perceived as a military coup-like operation orchestrated by a cooperating group of international and domestic forces against the AKP government. The end result of such a situation would be a chaos, as Turkey would turn back to coalition governments, unable to govern Turkey in the present complex international environment. (BBC Turkish 2013)

Some dirty hands cannot create chaos in my beautiful country. No matter which organization they use, no matter which tong, which agent, and which betrayer they use. This nation, for its future, knows how to give the needed answer to these international establishments. Everybody should know their limits. These (acts) are left behind in May 27, September 12, and February 28.⁴⁷ This nation has been awakened and empowered. No one can subdue this nation, this country. (BBC Turkish 2013)

Covered under the graft dress, completely illegal, (it is) an extremely dirty, dark ambush. The goal of this conspiracy, which was put forth last week, is clear: to ruin peace and stability. We will overcome this trick played on Turkey. (The Wall Street Journal 2013)

⁴⁷ These are the military coup d'états carried out in 27 May, 1960, September 12, 1980 and February 28, 1997. By mentioning these, Erdogan tried to say that the last corruption operation against the three ministers in the government were a result of a dirty campaign carried out by a ruling international coalition.

As during the last corruption scandal, any recent international or internal development, which touches the AKP one way or another, has been met with serious suspicions by its leaders, and have been responded very harshly. In this tense psychological environment, the AKP sometimes has taken anti-democratic steps: a good example of this anti-democratic step is the shifts and dismissals of the police chiefs and staff who were working on the graft and bribe operation until it came to the media attention, from their posts. From the beginning of the graft probe operations in 17 December 2013 until 23 December 2013, hundreds of police chiefs were dismissed from their posts for being a part of the so-called gang that initiated graft probe operation and thousands of police staffs' and prosecutors' work places have been shifted.

For Recep T. Erdogan, all these officers were related to Fethullah Gulen⁴⁸ and acted on the basis of his orders. Therefore, their loyalty was to Gulen rather than to the Turkish State. In Erdogan's conception then this was a problem for the state, as the state does not and could not recognize any parallel authority. The end product was the dismissal of hundreds of police officers from their positions. According to Recep T. Erdogan, the Gulen group was in coalition with the local forces, such as Republican People's Party, Nationalist Movement Party, and the Peace and Democracy Party, (Haber 3 2013) and an international interest lobby, which included some foreign mission representatives, such as American Ambassador Frances Ricciardone, and some international capital and media owners. (The Wall Street Journal 2013) However, Gulen did not accept the accusations, yet he pointed out that the issue of corruption cannot be undermined by such accusations.

⁴⁸ Fethullah Gulen, a Turkish Imam, preacher, and Islamic scholar, as well as the leader of a major civil society movement, is residing in Pennsylvania, the US at the present.

In conclusion, until 1945, Turkey's transition to a multiparty system, it was ruled as a one party dictatorial regime. Afterwards, Turkey experienced several military coups with an approximate frequency of one in a decade. In addition to military coups, Turkey had to fight a war against the PKK, which caused the loss of over 30,000 lives, substantial resources, and economic stagnation. Nevertheless, Turkish democracy has been able to survive, and under the AKP rule, Turkey emerged as a more open society and a stronger economy. In this regard, I have described three phases of the AKP. In the first phase, the AKP tried to ensure its survival in the unfriendly domestic environment dominated by the Kemalist status quo. The AKP did so by retaining a greater societal support and strengthening its relations with the West. As a result, the AKP successfully subordinated the military to the civilian control as a part of its broader democratization agenda.

In its second phase, which started after the 2007 presidential election, the AKP started to engage with the ME more forcefully. Due to the subordination of the status quo forces, the AKP started to formulate more independent foreign policy decisions. Under the AKP rule, Turkey became the largest economy in the ME, the 6th largest in the EU zone, and 16th largest in global level.⁴⁹ The improved economic power of Turkey enabled the AKP with capabilities to realize its regional goals. It is in the intersection of these two developments that the AKP started to promote democracy more forcefully in the region.

In the third phase, which started with the escalation of conflict in Syria in the course of Arab Spring, the AKP was bothered by developments in Arab Spring countries, such as the military coup d'état in Egypt, Gezi Park protests and the 17 December corruption

⁴⁹ For Further information on Turkey's economic indicators, see CIA World Facts Book

scandals in Turkey. The AKP perceives these developments as a part of a broader global agenda to replace the Islamic governments with secular ones region-wide, including the AKP in Turkey. Just as in its first term in office, the AKP again feels the threat of its own survival, and therefore, acts on the basis of the preservation of its rule in Turkey. This has direct relation with the AKP's democracy promotion policy in the ME. Turkey's democracy promotion policy in the region has become more and more strategically driven since 2004. Under the present circumstances, particularly in Syria, Turkey's democracy promotion is no more than a realist endeavor. (This will be explained broadly in the following chapters)

CHAPTER III: TURKEY, THE WEST, AND DEMOCRACY PROMOTION

Turkish foreign policy is guided by both our democratic values and our interests. ... Turkey has always been encouraging the administrations to address the legitimate expectations of

their people and undertake the necessary reforms. However, now, given the home-grown and irreversible march toward more democracy in the region, Turkey has stepped up its efforts to support this process.

Ahmet Davutoglu, 2012

Neo-classical realism argues that statesmen make decisions by taking into consideration both domestic and international incentives and constraints. (Lobell, Ripsman and Taliaferro 2009) Therefore, the relevant domestic and external factors that impact the decisions of statesmen need to be taken into account while explaining states' foreign policies. I explained the domestic political context in which the AKP developed its democracy promotion policy in the previous chapter. This chapter examines the external factors that influence Turkey's democracy promotion.

My main argument is that the US grand strategy to fight radicalization in the Muslim world after the 9-11 attacks is the origin of the official Turkish democracy promotion policy in the ME. In order to fight radicalization, the US designed a two-legged strategy: liberal interventionism in Iraq and Afghanistan and the BMENA Initiative. As a result of the convergence of the Turkish and American Interests in the ME in the early 2000s, Turkey became an active participant of the BMENA initiative. The EU on the other hand had an indirect impact on Turkish democracy promotion policy by transforming the Turkish state structure into a more democratic one.

In the present chapter, I will initially explain the origins and the development of the US approach to democratization in the ME after the 9-11 terrorist attacks. Next, I will examine the Turkish reaction to the American approach to democratization in the ME.

Finally, I will focus on the EU's reaction to the US' BMENA Initiative and the EU's impact on the Turkish democracy promotion policy.

In the present chapter, my goal is to explain the systemic influences on Turkey's democracy promotion policy. I consider the US and the EU as two relevant systemic actors that need special attention. However, the main focus of this chapter is not the US' and the EU's approaches to democracy promotion in the ME or elsewhere. As I am primarily interested in Turkey, I will explain the US' and the EU's policies to the extent they help me understand the Turkish democracy promotion policy in the ME.

The American Democracy Promotion after 9-11

In the post-cold war environment, the US and its allies emerged as the winners. The EU, previously a common market, started to turn into a political union to further expand. The number of democracies as well as the quality of democracy in transitional democratic countries considerably increased. However, the Middle East was still characterized by poverty, dictatorship, and the worst of all, lack of prospects for change. In this environment, some groups started to resort to violence, resulting in tragedies, such as the 9-11 terrorist attacks.

On the verge of the collapse of the Soviet Union, some prominent American scholars as well as policy-makers debated the new challenges that awaited Western civilization. They pointed at Islam as a major obstacle and source of conflict. For example, Bernard Lewis's, in his work, *The Roots of Muslim Rage*, which was published in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1990, argued that Muslims were being defeated in three stages. Initially, they lost the battle to the West in the world domination, then they were defeated

in their own countries as a result of the flow of Western ideas and culture, and finally their authority was being challenged even in their own house by their emancipated women and children. All these have made a confrontation between Muslims and the West inevitable. Samuel Huntington, borrowing the concept of Clash of Civilizations from Lewis argued that “the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and dominating source of conflict will be cultural.” (Huntington 1993) According to Huntington, while language, ethnicity, and traditions would matter, religion would be the main determinant of these civilizational divisions.⁵⁰ Although the claims of conflict of civilization received substantial opposition from scholars,⁵¹ after the 9-11 terrorist attacks, such civilizational arguments gained a new momentum. For example, New York Times declared Clash of Civilization as the best seller shortly after the 9-11 terrorist attacks. (Kashefi 2013) The line of thinking resembled in the Clash of Civilizations was also being reinterpreted into popular culture by Hollywood and mass media outlets.

Huntington’s theory was a response to Francis Fukuyama’s *The End of History*. Fukuyama believed that the collapse of the Soviet Union marked the end of the history as no significant ideology was left to challenge the Western liberalism. Fukuyama argued that “what we may be witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War, or the passing of a

⁵⁰ For more information about the reactions to Huntington’s thesis of the Clash of Civilizations, see Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart. *Islam & the West: Testing the ‘Clash of Civilizations’ Thesis*. John F. Kenefy School of Government, 2002. Also see Gabriele Marranci. Multiculturalism, Islam, and the Clash of Civilizations Theory: Rethinking Islamophobia. *Culture and Religion* 5 (1), 2004.

⁵¹ For example, see Salim Rashid . *The Clash of Civilizations? Asian Responses*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997; Also see Bruce M. Russett and John R. Oneal’s. A Response to Huntington, *Journal of Peace Research*, 37(5): 611-612, 2000; Also See Jonathan Fox, *Two Civilizations and Ethnic Conflict: Islam and the West*, *Journal of Peace Research* 38(4): 459-472, 2001.

particular period of post-war history, but the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government.” (Fukuyama 1992) To Fukuyama, the end product would be the victory of liberal democratic values, deeply rooted in Western civilization.

However, few scholars and commentators expected that the new challenge would actually come from radical religious groups. In 2001, the US went through the tragic 9-11 terrorist attacks. A group of extremists from the Middle East carried out suicide attacks against World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon near Washington DC. The results were 3000 casualties. These attacks demonstrated the magnitude of radicalization in the ME. If the US did not provide the ME with the necessary attention, this radicalization could threaten the American interests globally for decades to come. In this psychological context, the American elites (politicians, scholars, and analysts) situated lack of freedom and economic development as the root cause of terrorism and radicalism in the ME. (Taspinar 2003) “The so-called ‘participation-moderation’ thesis - that the inclusion of Islamists in a democratic process would encourage them to move away from extremism and terrorism towards a more moderate interpretation of Islam – now served as a foundation” (Dalacoura 2010) for the US policy towards the ME. Considering that the new security challenges to the US at its own soil came from non-state actors, the idea of democratization in the ME gained more credibility.

The 9-11 tragedy occurred at a time when the US policy circles and academics declared that the US had attained world-wide hegemony after subordinating the Soviet Union. (Dalacoura 2010) After the September-11 attacks, Nathalie Tocci suggested, neoliberals and neo-conservatives would try to reconcile the tension between pessimistic,

as resembled by Lewis and Huntington, and optimistic views, represented by Fukuyama, by promoting democracy through one-size-fits-all institutional design and through the cultivation of pro-American elites in the Middle East. (Tocci 2011) Dalacoura, on the other hand, suggested that the victory of democracy over the communist world motivated the US to promote democratization in the ME as well, and the 9-11 tragedy enforced the view that lack of democracy was the main cause of radicalization in the Muslim world. (Dalacoura 2010)

Within the post-9-11 ideational context, to fight radicalization, the US designed a two-legged strategy within the framework of its Middle Eastern policy under George W. Bush Administration in January 20, 2001. (Dalacoura 2010) Initially, the US would use coercion to deter the states sponsoring terrorists. The obvious manifestation of this policy was intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq. By intervention, the US would also try to install democracies in these countries. Democracy promotion by military intervention is called liberal interventionism. The second of the two-legged strategy stressed democracy promotion, to resolve radicalization in the Muslim world. In this new context, the US policy circles redefined the Muslim world as the Broader Middle East and North Africa (BMENA). The BMENA included the whole Arabic peninsula, Arabic speaking North African states, and non-Arab states, such as Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan.

The US administration started to give the first official sign of its new approach to the BMENA by launching the Middle East Partnership Initiative in December, 2002. The Middle East Partnership Initiative would be followed by the 2004 BMENA Initiative in order to address the need for democratization of the region in a well-structured and well-disciplined manner. In May 2004, the US invited the countries in the ME, members of the

NATO, the G8, and the EU to discuss the future of the ME, on the Sea Island. The conference was called the Broader Middle East and North African (BMENA) Initiative. (Akcapar, et al. 2004)

The BMENA Initiative had three particular goals regarding the region. The first one was that democratization —good governance, respect for human rights, free exchange of ideas, and the participation of society in decision making, and the rule of law— necessitated reforming political sphere of the states. The second goal was to promote freedom of expression, educational opportunities for all, and gender equality in the social sphere. The final goal of the initiative was to create jobs, promote entrepreneurship, expand trade and investment through intra-regional trade, increase access to capital, and to provide support for financial reform in the economic sphere. (G8 Research Group 2005) As a result, an official document, “Partnership for Progress and a Common Future with the Broader Middle East and North African Region,” was released to express commitment of the G8 countries to pursue cooperation with regional governments, businessmen and civil society in the ME to realize the goal of democratization. (BMENA Initiative 2004) However, because of objections of the Europeans, the participants excluded Pakistan and Afghanistan from the list of BMENA countries.

The DAD (Democracy Assistance Dialog), a project under the “Forum for the Future,” was designed to provide a platform for the Middle Eastern scholars, politicians, journalists, and activists to exchange opinions on political, social, and economic matters. (Bagci and Sinkaya 2006) The DAD also aimed to facilitate dialog between the countries in the region and CSOs, to promote women’s rights and electoral assistance in the ME. These practices, if repeated, would turn the civil-society and government interaction into a

routine, crucial practice for democratic reforms. Thus, panels, conferences, lectures, and workshops were organized to discuss the ways to strengthen human rights, good governance, and transparency in the Middle East. The participants included the Middle Eastern and Western civil society organizations (CSOs) and government representatives. For example, Doha, Sana, Alexandria, and Istanbul conferences in 2004 were good practices of CSO-government opinion exchanges. The DAD program placed a special emphasis on the improvement of the role of women in the political, economic, and social sectors of their societies in the ME. (DAD 2005-2006)

When the BMENA Initiative caught the attention of the Middle Eastern media, it attracted substantial criticisms from the political elites in the region. For example, Al-Hayat, an Arabic newspaper in the UK, revealed to its readers the Western plans to promote democracy in the BMENA. This was followed by an outcry of the governments in the ME. They considered Western democracy promotion as the imposition of Western values over the Muslims and intervention of the West in the domestic affairs of the Muslim states. (G8 2004)

On the other hand, debates on the need for reform in the ME, led by the US, and the subsequent initiatives, produced a greater space for political freedoms in the BMENA region. For example, the Egyptian government gave greater freedoms to the activities of the political and civil society organizations. In this context, the Kifaya movement would organize a demonstration bringing together the Islamist and secular groups in Egypt for the first time. (Dalacoura 2010) Furthermore, Mubarak amended Article 76 of the Egyptian Constitution to allow multi-party presidential elections in Egypt. (Schemm 2005) Similarly, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States decided to hold elections to form various

councils and assemblies. (Dalacoura 2010) Although these reforms were considered to be too little to make a meaningful change and to be acts intended to appease the US on minimal terms, such small steps set an important cornerstone for the mobilization of people that led to the Arab Spring afterwards. Such movements were organized as a result of pressure from the hegemon and encouraged ordinary people to struggle for their freedoms, and frightened the dictators in the region.

Despite such positive developments, by 2006 the US withdrew its support from promoting democracy in the ME. The election of Hamas (the Islamic Resistance Movement) in Palestine in January 2006, the relative success of Hezbollah in Lebanon's elections, the strong comeback of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt's elections winning 88 seats in the Egyptian parliament in 2005, and the election of the radical sectarian parties in Iraq in 2005, which had ties with suicide bombers, were seen as counter-productive for Western interests. According to the West, democratization only benefitted the Western-unfriendly groups in the ME. As a consequence, the West removed its support from the promotion of democracy in the region. (Youngs and Wittes 2009) An official from the Turkish foreign mission pointing at the Israeli factor reiterated that:

One of the major reasons that the US removed its support from democratization of the ME, which left Turkey alone in this endeavor, was the isolation of Israel in the ME and its encirclement by the Muslim Brotherhood from Turkey to Tunisia. The US means Israel and Israel means the US. It would be naïve to expect the US to remain silent during a Western-unfriendly, so Israel-unfriendly, geo-political formation. (Interview with a diplomat from Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2014)

There were some other factors that clearly indicated the withdrawal of the US support from promoting democracy in the ME. The first was an increased amount of aid to the militaries in the region. (Youngs and Wittes 2009) The non-recognition of the Hamas government by the US after the popular elections in Palestine and the provision of an increased amount of aid to the Egyptian military were the other indicators of the US policy change in the region. Barack Obama, during his Cairo Address after his election in 2009, clearly accepted the US backtracking from supporting democracy under the George W. Bush administration.

I know there has been controversy about the promotion of democracy in recent years, and much of this controversy is connected to the war in Iraq. So let me be clear: no system of government can or should be imposed upon one nation by any other. That does not lessen my commitment, however, to governments that reflect the will of the people. (Obama 2009)

Although Obama tried to indicate the US support for democratic transformation in the ME again, the US was still concerned about its strategic interests. Therefore, the US would continue to work on finding a more balanced approach on the promotion of democracy and maintaining strategic interests in the ME. (Ozel and Ozcan 2011)

The US Interest in Turkish Model

The history of Turkey's presentation as a model by the US precedes the BMENA Initiative. Turkey was initially presented to the post-Soviet Central Asian Republics as a model in 1990s. In this regard, Turkey started to engage with the Central Asian Turkic Republics politically. However, this did not create the desired impact due to Turkey's

domestic problems, such as economic stagnation and human rights abuses. (Ozel and Ozcan 2011) Therefore, this initial Turkish political activism was often dismissed as hypocrisy by the target states. (Ozel and Ozcan 2011)

Turkey had been promoted as a model by the US for a second time after the 9-11 tragedy; but this time to the Arab ME. In 2002, when the “Forum for the Future” was being introduced, George W. Bush reiterated that “Turkey provided Muslims around the world with a hopeful model of a modern and secular democracy.” (Peterson 2009) Also, Condoleezza Rice stated that “Turkey represents an excellent model: a 98% Muslim country that has a great importance as an alternative to radical Islam.” (Peterson 2009) In 2004, the US invited Turkey to become one of the co-chairs along with the US.

Similarly, Graham Fuller, in *Turkey’s Strategic Model: Myths and Realities*, claimed that Turkey’s progressing democracy and accommodating political system makes Turkey an attractive model for the Muslim world. According to Fuller, Turkey was emerging as “a genuine model that finally offers[ed] a degree of genuine appeal to the region.” (Fuller, 2014) Fuller argued that Turkey has recently emerged both as a Western and Eastern power simultaneously: Turkey exercises greater sovereignty supported by its citizens, progresses in resolving its substantial problems, such as the Kurdish issue, is more confident in taking independent foreign policy decisions, and is more willing to engage and solve regional problems. To Fuller, this Turkey could finally play the desired role in the ME. (Fuller, 2014)

On the other hand, some scholars and policymakers pointed out some features of Turkey that could actually weaken the Turkish role in the ME. According to Taspinar⁵², a Turkish role might not be accepted so readily by the religious Arab public as a result of Turkey's historical experience as a colonial power, its negative experience with its staunch secularism, and its warm relations with Israel, disliked in the ME. He warned the American policy makers to be conscious of these factors. Similarly, Steven Everts, in "An Asset but not a Model: Turkey, the EU and the Wider Middle East," argued that Turkey could be a source of inspiration for the region, but could not be a model. (Everts 2004) He presented three main reasons for that. First, historically Turkey has enjoyed strong ties with the West. Furthermore, Turkey's secular system guarantees the peaceful change of power between different groups, pointing out the AKP as a case in reality. Lastly, the EU membership accession process strengthens Turkey's democracy. According to Everts, these three conditions were absent in the ME. Thus, the Turkish model could not be emulated by the wider ME. Yet Turkey could become a source of inspiration for them.

Regardless of the debates over the specificities of the Turkish model, there was a general consensus in the US that Turkey should play an important role in the ME. However, Turkey had to resolve some of its domestic problems to become a credible model in the region. Therefore, the US would provide Turkey with substantial assistance in its democratization process under the AKP. Madeline Albright (Federal News Service 2012)

⁵² Taspinar's article provides a good framework for understanding the role that was attributed to Turkey in democratization of the ME, by the West. (Omer Taspinar, *An Uneven Fit, the Turkish Model and the Arab World*. The Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution, Analysis Paper Number 5, 2003)

successfully summarizes what Turkey means for the US, what kind of problems it has, and what it can do in the ME:

I think stability in the Middle East is obviously one of the big ones, and in terms of relationships with Europe, I think issues also on -- energy issues. They are sitting in a geographically amazing place, in terms of various connections of pipelines, discoveries of new fossil fuel, a variety of different aspects, and then also, I think, on a variety of political relationships as a country that has a Muslim majority party, I think, and a secular one -- that it has a role to play in terms of how it operates within the Arab Awakening. And I also think, in terms of looking at more global outreach, I believe, that the United States is better off if we are operating in partnership with other countries... And in terms of the areas that are important -- of how to deal with terrorism, how to deal with nuclear proliferation, how to deal with that growing gap between the rich and the poor, energy and environment -- those are all areas in which I think we can have a good relationship with Turkey. (Federal News Service 2012)

So we think that actually, Turkey's participation with us can help us be more effective in places like the Middle East, and the kind of new partnership we're talking about can help Turkey be more effective in its diplomacy so its confidence can, in some sense, become -- it can start punching at its weight in the future. That's the potential of the new partnership we talk about. (Federal News Service 2012)

Obviously, Turkey occupied a prominent place in the American democracy promotion initiatives in the region, mainly because of its identity as a pro-Western, democratic Muslim nation. Nevertheless, in 2006, the US backtracked from promoting

democracy in the ME. Since then they have been working on formulating a more balanced approach between supporting democratization and advancing its strategic interests in the region. The process of Arab Spring has made this even more difficult for the US. However, Turkey continued to support democratization in the region. Disagreements over supporting Islamic groups in the Arab ME have sometimes brought Turkey at loggerheads with the US. In the following section, I will provide a detailed examination of Turkish reactions to the American approach to democratization in the ME, during the AKP rule.

Turkey's Reactions to the American Democracy Promotion in the ME

Initial Talks between Turkey and the US

Turkish official democracy promotion policy in the ME starts with the American BMENA initiative. However, it is crucial to address the interaction between the US and the Turkish officials before the BMENA initiative in order to fully comprehend the Turkish role in the process. The AKP discussed the democratization of the ME with American policy makers long before the 2004 BMENA meeting in Sea Island. Before coming to power, Erdogan traveled to the US, and delivered a speech in Harvard, Kennedy School of Government on January 30, 2003, shortly before the US intervention in Iraq on March 19, 2003. Meanwhile, Erdogan had not become the prime minister yet. As he was imprisoned for reciting a religious poem, considered to be a threat to Turkey's secular rule by the status quo, his party had to make some legal changes to provide him with the legal space he needed to become the PM. He finally became the prime minister on March 14, 2003. Therefore, this early speech had a symbolic importance for the US as it would indicate Erdogan's conception of democracy, open markets, and globalization. Erdogan's clear

emphasis on cooperating with the West, supporting an open market economy, and promoting democratic governance in the ME was in line with the US interests.

However, during his Harvard Address, Erdogan raised some objections over the method of promotion of democracy in the ME. For example, Erdogan clearly declared that democratization in the ME had to happen incrementally as an internally driven process. Recep T. Erdogan opposed the US liberal interventionism in the region. According to Erdogan, the West, namely the US and the EU, had the responsibility to provide a supportive environment to the democratization of the region by only encouraging the Arab governments to reform. By this Erdogan indicated his opposition to the imposition of Western values over the ME. Finally, Erdogan strongly opposed the US' one-size-fits all approach. According to Erdogan, if these factors were taken into consideration, democracy promotion in the Muslim world would not be perceived as a neo-crusade against Muslims. According to Erdogan, if the process was rightly managed, the region could finally enter the process of modernization. Erdogan argued:

I believe determined and consistent yet gradual processes will enhance the chances of success in democratization. The foundations of democratic transition should be laid in accordance with a sincere and committed strategy that is supported by various policy tools, and implemented wisely. And, the governments in the region must be made aware that this is necessary and thus be encouraged. (Erdogan 2003)

According to Erdogan, “democratization in the Middle East is an outcome that must be attained.” (Erdogan 2003) Therefore, for him, the question was not whether such democratization was possible, “but instead how to meet the yearning of the masses in the

Middle East for democracy; in other words, how to achieve democratization in the Middle East.” (Erdogan 2003) In Erdogan’s views, “there exists[ed] an unmistakable demand in the Middle East and in the wider Muslim world for democratization.” (Erdogan 2003) However, Erdogan focused attention on different historical and political conditions of the states in the ME. For Erdogan, democracy promoters needed to take into consideration such country-specific reasons to initiate and maintain a successful democratization process in the region. Erdogan argued:

The purpose cannot be creating self-styled democracies, but rather encouraging steps that are conducive to establishing democratic rule at universal standards. Obviously, this would be a formidable journey... I take the debate on the method of promoting of democracy seriously. (Erdogan 2004)

Despite his strong support for the democratization of the ME, Erdogan disagreed with the way the US approached the issue of democratization towards the region. Erdogan believed that the US was stuck between democratization and the stability of the ME, crucial for its interests. By this, Erdogan simply pointed out the US traditional support to the anti-democratic regimes in the ME, such as Mubarak in Egypt. Erdogan noted that democratization emerges in a stable (not chaotic) environment. According to him democracy and stability could go hand in hand incrementally as an internally driven process. Erdogan pointed out,

I am aware of the thesis that the United States has long since invested exclusively in stability and this has obviated democratic transformation in the Middle East. The theory that expects healthy democratization to emerge out of an environment of

instability could not be substituted as a wholesome policy.
(Erdogan 2003)

However, Erdogan had another good reason to oppose the approach that gave priority to stability over democratization. The US strategy that ignored the strong demand of people in the region for democratization to keep the so-called stability created deep suspicions towards the US involvement in the regional issues. In the people's view, the so-called American democratization mission was only another way to exploit their resources, reinforcing American domination in the region. (Dalacoura 2010) Erdogan suggested that this skepticism of Western intentions has always been problematic for the Western promotion of democracy, and more so in the ME. Furthermore, the suspicions towards the US have fed the radical elements in the region. According to Erdogan,

A confidence problem exists on the part of the people of the region who desire democratic rule in principle, but remain suspicious of both the fashion with which democratization is presented and the purposes of the democratic world. Therefore, the observation must be explicitly made: In the Middle East and in the Muslim world, suspicions linger concerning the objectives of the West and notably the US. These suspicions exist both at the level of states, and more importantly at the level of societies and individuals. This creates a resistance in the region and feeds radical elements and their abuse of the issue of religion. (Erdogan 2003)

The Turkish government opposed the unilateral approach of the US government in the regional issues from the beginning. According to Ahmet Davutoglu, the current Foreign Affairs Minister of Turkey, the problems of the ME were so complex that they could not

be resolved without the contribution of the local actors. Therefore, Erdogan stressed the importance of a multilateral process of decision making. Multilateralism for Turkey meant that the governments, CSOs, and intellectuals had to participate in the democratization process of their countries. In this regard, Turkey stressed a process of democratization through regional ownership, gradual change, consistency, multilateralism, and Western support without the imposition of Western values over the Muslim nations in the region. (Akcapar, et al. 2004)

After Erdogan's Harvard Address, Turkey promoted democracy more forcefully in subsequent regional summits. For example, on May 12, 2003, soon after the speech of George Bush at Bulgaria's Bourgas Free University, Abdullah Gul, the foreign minister at the time and the current President, invited all parties concerned with the ME to carefully think about democratization of the region. This is known as the first Turkish attempt to support democratization in the Middle East. (Akcapar, et al. 2004) On May 28, 2003, during the summit of Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Tehran, Gul declared that "first we need to put our own house into order" to the Muslim leaders, pointing out the necessity of democratic transformation in the ME. (Akcapar, et al. 2004) Also, Gul expanded his ideas on democratic transformation of the region during a conference organized by Economic Research Foundation (Iktisadi Arastirmalar vakfi) in Istanbul, and during the World Economic Forum in Jordan on June 22, 2003. (Akcapar, et al. 2004) Further, during the Istanbul Summit (June 14-18, 2003), ministers of the OIC member states discussed the need for reform in the Muslim World. As a result, it was decided that democratic representation and implementations in the member states should be

strengthened. For the first time, the secretary of the OIC was popularly elected, and the member states supported the idea of domestic dialog for democratization among the member states rather than external demand for democratization from the West. (Akcapar, et al. 2004)

Turkey's Response to the BMENA Initiative

When the US presented its plans to promote democracy in the BMENA region within the context of the BMENA Initiative, Turkey fiercely supported it. Initially, there was a convergence between Turkish and the American interests in the Middle East in seeing a stable region, buying inexpensive energy, combatting radicalization, supporting entrepreneurship, and promoting an environment of freedom. (Bagci and Sinkaya 2006) Secondly, Turkey wanted to repair its weakened ties with the US as a result of the rejection of the famous legislation, which became famous as the March-1 Bill, by the Turkish parliament that did not allow the US to use Turkish territories, air space, and harbors to occupy Iraq. (Aydogan 2012) Thirdly, the BMENA Initiative provided Turkey with a chance to discuss the security threats, such as spill-over effect of ethnic and sectarian violence, emanating from the American occupation of Iraq on Turkey's national security. (Bagci and Sinkaya 2006) Finally, the AKP, which perceives Turkey as a regional power, has aspired to adopt a proactive role in shaping the future of the ME. The US Grand Strategy to combat radicalism in the region created an opportunity for the Turkish government to realize its regional goals.

Turkey was willing to contribute to political, economic, and social change in the ME. However, not only as a model which does not have any agency, but also as an actor

that has substantial interests in democratic transformation of the ME. Therefore, Turkey became one of the co-chairs of the BMENA along with the US. Also, Turkey, along with Italy and Yemen, held the co-chair position of “Democracy Assistance Dialog” (DAD). (Bagci and Sinkaya 2006) “The Governments of Italy, Turkey and Yemen, as Government Sponsors of the DAD, have undertaken a consultation process with their NGO counterparts, which led to the presentation of a DAD program at the Forum for the Future meeting held in Rabat in December 2004. The DAD partner CSOs are the Human Rights Information and Training Centre (HRITC, Yemen), No Peace Without Justice (NPWJ, Italy), and the Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (TESEV, Turkey).” (DAD 2005-2006) Turkey appointed Ambassador Omur Orhun as the head of BMENA Initiative to represent Turkey.

According to TESEV (Akcapar, et al. 2004), Turkey could play an important role in some particular areas in the ME. TESEV urged Turkey to play the role of a moderator in the solution of Palestinian-Israeli conflict, which necessitated mediation between Syria and Israel as well, to help build a democratic, fully sovereign, and territorially intact Iraq to promote the idea of benchmarking as Turkey could help set the criteria for a Muslim democracy, and to help create a security environment on the basis of regional ownership and cooperation, which would result in further regionalization of the ME. All these premises were completely in line with the premises of “Partnership for Progress and a Common Future with the Broader Middle East and North African Region.” The suggestions of TESEV were important as the history indicates that Turkey has tried to fulfill all the aforementioned tasks in the last 10 years under the AKP administration.

The involvement of Turkey in BMENA caused controversies in Turkey. The AKP government was harshly criticized by the opposition. The deputy president of the Nationalist Movement Party, Tugrul Turkes perceived BMENA as another project that aimed at the American domination in the ME. According to Turkes, “the AKP assertively got involved in the project to capture a role in the ME.” (Turkes 2012) He further argued that “if the US was sincere in democratization of the ME, it should have started with its closest ally in the region, Saudi Arabia; why does the US not tell them to democratize. Why does the US not use its influence to convince its closest ally in the region? This is just ironic.” (Turkes 2012) He further suggested, “Turkey should not intervene in the domestic affairs of other countries; if you intervene in their domestic affairs, they will intervene in yours.” (Turkes 2012) Turkes further asserted that such an intervention could lead to political disasters in the region, including Turkey. Therefore, for Turkes, the AKP made a strategic mistake by partaking in the BMENA initiative.

Turkey’s Response to the Backtracking of the US

The backtracking of the US from supporting democratization in the ME generated a negative reaction in Turkey. According to the AKP administration, the US treatment of devoted Muslim politicians in the ME was both unfair and irrational. The AKP strongly believed that if the West was sincere in promoting democracy in the ME, then it needed to be more inclusive. In this context, democratization in the region had to be carried out by the involvement of all the relevant actors in the process (the AKP’s multilateralism principle). The Islamic political groups were important actors that always influenced the

political processes of their countries. Therefore, Turkey opposed the West when it stopped supporting democratization in the region.

Also, withdrawal of US support from democratization in the ME created a substantial level of mistrust against the US in the AKP administration. The AKP started to question the real intentions of the US in the region. In the same process, Turkey adopted a more independent (from the US) foreign policy in the ME. In this regard, the AKP's warm relations with Iran, Syria, Hamas, and Hezbollah in 2006-2009 would anger the US, to the extent of questioning the Turkish membership in NATO. Emrullah Isler, the AKP's MP and the advisor of the Erdogan on the ME, indicated his disappointment with the removal of the US' support for democratization of the region:

When this project was first introduced, I came to believe that democracy will come to and spread in the region. However, then, we witnessed that this project was not being realized or could not be realized. Perhaps, the reason behind the non-implementation of this project was the negative reaction of the dictators to it in the region... They (the West) actually, also saw that these dicta regimes would not continue this way. Therefore, this project underlined some matters regarding democratization of the region. We, then, became really hopeful. However, our hope was broken by the abandonment of this project. (Interview with Emrullah Isler 2012)

Turkish decision makers believed in the sincerity of the US in the promotion of democracy. Believing in the strategic value and moral superiority of democracy, Turks in coordination with Western policymakers started to promote human rights and democratic opening in the region more forcefully. Isler revealed this point as:

Yes. This region needed human rights and democracy. Women rights, cultural rights, educational rights. We accepted this project (BMENA) as we thought it would contribute to the economic development and growth of the region. However, who stepped back from this project later on? Again those who came up with this project. What is now? This time, people revealed their wills, (it's implicit meaning was that) only we decide on our future and on what is good for us. They indicated that they did not want such (dictatorial) regimes (in the Arab World), by putting their free wills forward by the Arab Spring. (Interview with Emrullah Isler 2012)

Although the US withdrew its support from the promotion of democracy in 2006, Turkey continued to provide a strong support for the challenging democratic forces in the Arab ME. Therefore, Turkey developed substantial relations with groups, such as the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas. This issue is discussed in more detail in the fourth chapter.

Turkey's Reaction to the US Interest in the Turkish Model

As indicated in the previous section, the US had a strong interest in the presentation of Turkey as a model. (O'Sullivan 2003) Turkey provided Washington with the opportunity to showcase a successful example of a secular democracy in the ME. (Taspinar 2003) What was more important was that, Turkey was also willing to play this role under the AKP administration. For example, shortly after Erdogan's Harvard Address, during his Washington trip, Murat Mercan, the deputy governor of the AKP, stated that Turkey could provide the ME with a great model of the cohabitation of democracy and secularism in a Muslim nation. Furthermore, Mercan believed that Turkey could contribute to the solution

of security problems in the region through the promotion of democracy. According to Mercan,

Turkey can inspire some Arab countries in terms of democracy. One of the cornerstones of the Turkish democracy is laicism, and religion has no place in the state system. If the elements, such as democracy, laicism, and open market economy, could be established in the region (Middle East), the security risks that emerge in the region and threaten the whole world can largely be resolved. Turkey can contribute to this process significantly. (Mercan 2003)

Furthermore, Turkey's self-promotion as a model state was being reflected into the work of influential Turkish scholars. For example, Sinan Ulgen tried to clarify what the Turkish Model actually was in his work *From Inspiration to Aspiration*, which could also be called the Turkish model from the Turkish perspective. Ulgen broke the Turkish political model into various categories, such as Turkish political party and security systems, housing and private sectors, regional economic integration, and financial institutions. He argued that the Arab states could learn from the Turkish experience in these particular areas. (Ulgen 2011) His goal was to provide the Middle Eastern countries with concrete answers on how the Turks conducted their business. Similarly, Kemal Kirisci, in his work *Turkey's Demonstrative Effect and Transformation of the Middle East*, argued that Turkey's rapidly growing economy, progressing democracy, and proactive foreign policy could be the areas in which the ME could learn from Turkey. However, he also argued that the Turkish model was already being processed into the Arabic societies because of the

substantial levels of interaction between Turkey and its neighbors under the AKP rule. (Kirisci 2011)

The self-promotion of a moderate Muslim democracy by a political party rooted in political Islam in Turkey had significant importance for the US. The AKP's transformation from an anti-Western to Western-friendly Islamic political force increased the hope in the West towards the transformation of similar political movements in the same direction in the wider Muslim world. As the US generally supports the American-friendly groups, (McFaul 2007) such a transformation would strongly benefit the US. Under the AKP rule, the Turkish model continued to gain credibility both in the West and the Muslim world. This credibility was a product of the AKP's initial peaceful foreign policy, economic success over time, and its ability to perform in a secular democratic framework, strongly impacted by the AKP's commitment to the EU membership process. (Akgun and Gundogar 2013-2014)

Turkey also wanted to play a regional power role that maintained and controlled the transformation in the ME. Therefore, in the coming years, Turkey would turn into a safe haven for panels, conferences, and meetings where CSOs, intellectuals, journalists, and governmental officials exchanged ideas to promote democracy in the ME. On the other hand, the EU played a great role in strengthening the Turkish role by turning Turkey into a center of attraction, increasing Turkey's international credibility.⁵³ However, the AKP

⁵³ See John O'Sullivan. *Turkiye Demokrasi Icin Iyi Bir Model (Turkey is a good model for democracy)*. Zaman Gazetesi, 13 November 2003. <http://arsiv.zaman.com.tr/2003/11/13/yorumlar/yorum3.htm> ; Bagci and Sinkaya, *Greater Middle East Initiative and Turkey: AK Parti's Perspective*, 2006; Akcapar, Akgun, Altunisik, and Kadioglu, *The Debate on Democratization in the Broader Middle East and North Africa: A Civic Assessment from Turkey*, 2004.

still needed to resolve its domestic political problems, such as the Kurdish issue, to play that regional role.⁵⁴

As a part of the promotion of the Turkish model, the US increasingly started to refer to Turkey as a “moderate Muslim country.” However, this labeling by the US received negative reactions from Turkish political elites. Erdogan (RTE) declared that “these descriptions are very ugly; it is offensive, and it is an insult to our religion. There is no moderate or immoderate Islam. Islam is Islam and that’s it.” (Milliyet 2007) In many other instances, Erdogan would stress that “Islam is the religion of peace.” (Time Turk 2011) On the other hand, Turkish secular elites considered the redefinition of Turkey on the basis of moderate Islam as problematic and harmful for Turkey’s secular identity, which is formed over centuries of struggle and for which Turkey has been singled out as a distinct country. (Turkes 2012) Due to these reactions, the US had to revisit its definition of Turkey, calling Turkey a source of inspiration for the region from that point on. (Migdalowitz 2002)

In the following section, I will initially explain the EU’s reaction to the BMENA Initiative and then I will examine the EU’s indirect impact on Turkish democracy promotion policy.

The EU’s Impact on Turkey’s Democracy Promotion

The EU and the BMENA Initiative

The present section is written for those who wonder whether the EU had any impact over Turkey, and if it did, what kind of influence it had. The EU’s role on Turkey’s

⁵⁴ A number of deputies who I interviewed confirmed this point.

democracy promotion is not direct and not as important as the role of the US. Therefore, I will only explain the areas where the EU impacted Turkey, by mostly relying on secondary sources.

After September 11, 2001, similar to the US, the EU started a democracy promotion initiative, called “Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.” This policy was a continuation of the 1995 Barcelona Process. By Barcelona Process, the EU wanted to promote democracy in the Mediterranean area. Like the US, the EU believed that lack of democracy in the ME was the primary cause of radicalization in the Muslim world, and that this has progressively harmed Western security. In this regard, Western interests could better be served by democratic transformation in the ME. (Youngs and Wittes 2009)

On the other hand, the EU and the US had some different opinions regarding the promotion of democracy in the ME.⁵⁵ For example, Europeans considered the American way of promoting democracy as ineffective as a consequence of its instant and instrumental nature. It was instant because the US believed that democratic transformation in the ME could happen in a very short period of time. It was instrumental as the US promoted democracy in the ME only to advance its security interests. Furthermore, Europeans criticized the US for making decisions unilaterally. The EU argued that Arab-Israeli conflict was an equally important source of radicalization for the Muslims, in addition to lack of democracy in the region. Thus, the EU suggested that promotion of democracy and the settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict had to happen at the same time. The EU also suggested an incremental and consistent process of long term democratization via

⁵⁵ Richard Youngs and Tamara Cofman Wittes, Europe, the US, and Middle Eastern Democracy: Repairing the Breach, Saban Center Paper Series,1, 2009.

participation of the governments in the region and their CSOs. (Interview with an American Diplomat 2013) According to the EU, the BMENA as a region was too wide. Therefore, the EU demanded the exclusion of Afghanistan and Pakistan from the list to implement a more effective democracy promotion policy in the BMENA region. This resulted in the exclusion of these two countries from the BMENA.

However, there seems to be a parallel relationship between the US and the EU democracy promotion policies in the ME, regardless of the aforementioned differences. Like the US, the EU shifted its support away from the democratization of the ME when the Islamic groups gained power during the elections in 2005 and 2006 due to their highly critical stances towards the roles of Israel and the West in the region. In the following section, I would like to explain the EU's impact over Turkey's democracy promotion policy in the ME.

The EU's Influence over Turkey

Turkey-EU relations have a different pattern than the Turkish-US relations. Turkey's relations with the EU have been driven by its membership process, which has deeply shaped its institutional and normative structures. On the other hand, Turkey's relations with the US have been motivated by its geostrategic interests. Turkey took part in the BMENA initiative as a European and Middle Eastern power at the same time. It was also involved as a country whose democracy was in the making and which could contribute to democratization in the ME substantially. While Turkey partook in the initiative, it was still receiving substantial assistance from the EU to improve its own democratic standards.

Yet at the same time, Turkey started to provide support for democratization in the ME by participating in the BMENA Initiative.

For the sake of parsimony, I will examine the EU's impact on Turkey through four significant stages. Firstly, the EU helped Turkey to institutionalize democratic norms. Secondly, Turkey has learned a great deal about how the EU conducted its business through its membership in EU institutions. Thirdly, the EU contributed to the growth and influence of the Turkish CSOs. Finally, the EU membership process increased the credibility of Turkey in the Muslim World.

The EU and Institutionalization of Democratic Norms in Turkey

As indicated in the previous chapter, Turkey started on its path to democracy long before the establishment of the modern Turkish republic. However, the two significant external sources of the institutionalization of democratic values have been the NATO membership and the EU accession process. In this section, I will examine the particular impact of the EU on democratic transformation of Turkey, which directly impacted Turkey's foreign policy formulations.

EU-Turkey relations in the last five decades have had a substantial influence on Turkey's democratization. In 1963, Turkey was granted the Associate Member Status to the European Economic Commission (EEC). Turkey became a member of the European Customs Union in 1995. In 1999, Turkey was offered the accession status during Bulent Ecevit's coalition government. In 2001, a 1000-page National Program was prepared by the government to bring Turkey in line with the Copenhagen Criteria of the EU membership. In 2004, the AKP started accession negotiations with the EU. And in 2005,

the AKP passed several EU harmonization reform packages in Turkey. (Park 2012) Each stage helped deepening democracy in Turkey.

Countries in the process of EU membership experience a Europeanization in their domestic systems and international affairs. This Europeanization is identified with the civilian control over the military, an increased role of CSOs in the political decision making, and the utilization of diplomacy rather than hard power in the realization of foreign policy goals. (Terzi 2010) Turkey has gone through this transformation in the EU accession process under the AKP rule. The Turkish military was taken under the civilian control; the Turkish political parties have become more democratic; the Turkish government started to follow a diplomacy-intensive foreign policy; and finally the Turkish CSOs became more involved in Turkey's decision making processes. (Terzi 2010) This process has resulted in an increased confidence in the Turkish government, leading to a more assertive Turkish role in the international realm.

Turkey's Learning from the Regionalization in the West

One way the EU has impacted the orientation of the Turkish foreign policy is through Turkey's membership in European institutions. Turkey has gained substantial experience by getting involved in Western institutions, such as the European Commission, the European Common Market, The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and NATO. Turkey's membership to the OSCE has provided Turkey with invaluable experience in the areas of political economy of regional integration and the importance of human rights for long terms stability in a region. (Turkey Foreign Affairs Ministry Website 2013) Turkey has been a part of the OSCE since 1975. During its

involvement, Turkey learned a great deal about how modern Western states conducted their businesses. Emrullah Isler clearly pointed out the role of positive example of the EU in the formation of Shamgen, which is a free-trade-zone between Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria:

Real-politic necessitates the existence of the states which are in strong solidarity and cooperation and the states which are in regional cooperation. Like in the EU, we (Turkey) have laid the foundations of this. We have removed the visa requirements between Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan. This initiative would spread wave by wave... When governments elected via elections come to power in the region... Regional integration in the ME will become much easier. (Interview with Emrullah Isler 2012)

Taking into consideration that Turkey has had stable interaction with the West for almost a century, it will be clearly seen that through this interaction, Turkey actually transferred the experience that it gained from the West to the ME. This automatically benefited the West as Turkey was involved in transferring the values that the West wanted to promote in the region for a long period of time. Yet, when the Islamic parties came to power in 2005 and 2006 region-wide, the West backtracked from promoting democracy in the region. This also put Turkey in a difficult position when Turkey continued to support democratization after the election of the Islamic groups in the region.

The EU's Impact on the Turkish CSOs

The democratic institutionalization on the basis of European harmonization packages provided the Turkish civil society with a fertile ground to flourish both in number and in influence. The CSOs grew by 44% between 2001 and 2011. (Saglam 2011) The

rapid increase in the number of CSOs is related to three factors: the transfer of the supervision of the CSOs from police to local governments, being able to receive funds from foreign donors without governmental approval, (Zenn 2011) and the overall increase in educational and economic indicators of Turkey in the process of the EU membership since 2004. The major foreign donors that contribute to the budget of the Turkish CSOs are the EU and its members.

In the course of the EU membership, CSOs acted much more independently, rapidly growing in their performances and influence. Furthermore, partnership with the EU provided Turkey with further credibility, and Turkish CSOs were well-received wherever they operated in the ME. Although the EU is the largest donor of foreign aid for the Turkish CSOs, the Islamic CSOs that have done the most regarding humanitarian work are not ecstatic with this source of aid. The reason behind this is the notion that “the Western aid is conditional: if they give you financial aid, then they ask you something in return, and we do not want to be bounded by that.” (Unsal 2012) The EU and the US are not very keen to support Islamic groups unless they are seen as moderate. (Youngs and Wittes 2009) Secular, women, youth, and LGBT CSOs are the predominant recipients of aid from the EU. However, these secular CSOs do not perform humanitarian activities in the ME.

The EU’s impact over Turkey’s Soft Power

In the 1990s, Turkey often “reflected the predominance of hard power in the pursuit of foreign policy goals.” (Terzi 2010) Nevertheless, diplomacy has gained a prominent place in Turkish foreign policy in the last 10 years, transforming Turkey toward utilization of soft power. (Terzi 2010) The main reason behind this change was the reconfiguration of

the Turkish political system on the basis of democratic norms and the strategic calculations of the AKP within this new political framework. Abdullah Gul indicated on several occasions that the EU membership process created a very positive image of Turkey in the ME. It is this positive image that actually facilitates the diffusion of Turkey's democratic values in the ME as people in the Middle East wanted to live in a system similar to that of Turkey afterwards. In this regard, Turkey provides the ME with a positive role model as a secular, democratic, and economically powerful Muslim nation. (Kirisci 2012)

The level of social, cultural, economic, and political interaction with the ME clearly indicate the increased soft power of Turkey under the AKP administration. For example, the numbers of Arab tourists that have visited Turkey substantially increased.⁵⁶ The number of students that have come to continue their education in Turkey, the number of regional conferences being held in Istanbul, and the number of Turkish schools and cultural centers all around the world, including the ME, drastically rose.⁵⁷ Furthermore, the dramatic increase in Turkish Airlines' flights to all regions in the world, substantial development of the Turkish economy, substantial increase in Turkish humanitarian aid recognized by the UN, watchers of Turkish TV series that could be indicated by hundred millions (Kirisci 2012) and finally the respect that the Turkish leadership gets from the region are all important indicators of Turkey's increased soft power. Due to the increased interaction with Turkey through the aforementioned channels, people in the ME gradually wanted their country to be like Turkey.

⁵⁶ For detailed information see Chapter VII's Demonstrative Effect section.

⁵⁷ For detailed information see Chapter VI and Chapter VII.

Hitherto I have explained the impact of the complex interaction between the US-Turkey and the EU-Turkey on Turkey's democracy promotion policy in the ME. Nonetheless, this chapter will remain incomplete, if I do not explain their stances in the course of Arab Spring. In the following part, I would like to explain briefly how these actors responded to the emergence of the Arab Spring.

The Arab Spring

“Some people think the Arab Spring is a conspiracy: like someone pressed the button from some hidden places. This is not correct. People decided that it was enough, and they wanted to make their own decision. People risked their lives for this, they crossed the wall of fear of dictators, and this is why this transformation and evolution is happening in the ME... However, great powers could manipulate this process by shaping the developments in favor of their own interests in the course of the Arab Spring,” said Emrullah Isler, the advisor of Erdogan on the ME. As this clearly indicates, both Turkey and the West were caught unprepared by the Arab Spring. Isler would later suggest that “ordinary people took over the task of democratizing the ME when the great powers backtracked. While the democratization of the ME was decided top-down (pointing out BMENA), it happened bottom-up later on.” (Interview with Emrullah Isler 2012)

Turkey considered the Arab Spring to be a part of the larger picture, - the global demand for democracy, the open market economy, and the rule of law. (Interview with Emrullah Isler 2012) The AKP administration thought that as the demand for the aforementioned factors was global, the wave of democratization could not be stopped in the region. According to the Turkish administration, the advancement of mass

communication, such as social media and more traditional global media networks played a crucial role in this regard, by bringing the positive political, social, and economic conditions of the developed world to the attention of ordinary young people living in the impoverished and authoritarian ME. Furthermore, an AKP MP suggested that Turkey, as a rapidly developing Muslim democracy, provided the Muslim societies around the world with a good example of what a Muslim nation could become, if properly governed. In this respect, he argued, “If Turkey’s good example was not there, Arab Spring would not be happening today, it would happen, but may be ten years later.” (Interview with Emrullah Isler 2012)

By the time Arab Spring started, Turkey had consolidated its status as a regional power. (Alessandri and Altunisik 2013) Turkey developed strong relations with Syria, Iran, Russia, Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Muslim Brotherhood prior to the Arab Spring. Turkey’s warm relations with the aforementioned actors angered the West, accusing Turkey of betraying its Western allies. Turkey had also become a center of attraction for the Arab people as a result of its EU membership process stemming from its rapidly growing economy, and most importantly its political approach that loudly voiced the opinions of people of the ME in global and regional summits.

More importantly, the role of Erdogan in this process cannot be underestimated. For example, A Syrian doctoral student reiterated that “Erdogan is more Arab than the Arab leaders, so we wish Erdogan was our leader,” (Interview with A Young Syrian Scholar in Miami 2012) indicating that finally a Muslim leader voiced the opinions of people of the region in a powerful yet peaceful manner. Many other individuals that I had the chance to discuss from the Arab ME expressed similar thoughts. In the same line, Isler

also reiterated that “as Arab streets did not see the leadership that Erdogan displayed in their own leaders, they accepted Erdogan as one of their own. Erdogan displayed a leadership that was missed and looked for in the region for a long time.” (Interview with Emrullah Isler 2012) However, the popularity of Erdogan, the democratically elected Turkish leader, would anger the authoritarian Arab leaders at the same time.

When the Arab Spring started, Turkey was compelled to take a side. In the Turkish psyche, democratization was good for the region as ordinary people would finally have the chance to create a system where they were being truly represented. Democratization of the region was good for Turkey as well due to democratic system’s compatibility for long term business transactions and sustainable political cooperation. Democratization of the region would also facilitate the reintegration of the Middle Eastern nations that share a common history, religion, culture, and geography. Ahmet Davutoglu⁵⁸ referred to the uprisings as “the normalization of history in the ME.” Although the AKP supported democratization, it wanted the transition to democracy to happen in a peaceful way, without chaos, provocations, and instabilities. (Alessandri and Altunisik 2013) Thus, Erdogan would call on Mubarak to step down:

Mubarak, we are human beings. We are not immortal... When we die the imam will not pray for the prime minister or for the president, but he will pray for a human being. It is up to you to deserve good prayers or curses. You should listen to the demands of the people and be conscious of the people and their rightful demands. (Today's Zaman 2011)

⁵⁸ Ahmet Davutoglu is Turkey’s foreign affairs minister.

Most importantly, Turkey's early reaction to the uprisings in the Arab world was motivated by its humanitarian concerns and strategic interests in a democratic ME. However, when the spring arrived to the next door, Syria, and when the Islamic parties came to power one by one in the Arab Spring states, Turkish motivation for supporting the opposition turned into a more strategically driven endeavor. The Arab Spring indicated the limits of Turkish power. Turkey understood that it was not capable of determining the future of the ME alone.

The Arab Spring also reshaped alliances in the ME. Due to its support of the rebels in Syria, Turkey has been at loggerheads with Iran and Hezbollah in the region. Although this position brought Turkey closer to the US and the EU in their approach to the ME initially, when the conflict escalated in Syria, the Turkish and Western policies towards the ME started to diverge. The West was scared of the empowerment of the radical religious groups; therefore, did not provide full support to the opposition in Syria. Furthermore, the victory of the Islamic parties after the Arab Spring compelled the US and the EU, which tried to balance their short term strategic interests with their desire for the democratization of the ME, to work with them reluctantly.

The Arab Spring worked against Israel's interests: Israel was forced into isolation, losing its closest Muslim ally, Turkey, as a result of its harsh reaction to the Mavi-Marmara that ended with the death of nineteen human rights activists, and also losing its closest Arab ally Egypt when the Muslim Brotherhood party was elected in the course of the Arab Spring. Furthermore, the Islamic administrations in Turkey, Egypt, Palestine, and Tunisia started to cooperate more forcefully, favoring Palestine against Israel. This substantially

changed the attitude of the US towards the democratization of the region as the Israeli security has been one of the crucial strategic interests of the US in the region.

Initially, the US tried to influence the newly elected parties in Egypt and Tunisia towards adopting a liberal democratic approach, not-hostile to the West and Israel. The US wanted the Arab Spring countries to organize their political systems on the basis of secularism, similar to that of Turkey. The US, the EU, and Israel constantly pointed at Turkey as a role model that could and should be emulated. However, Turkish model was being diminished to the AKP model actually. When the political parties tied to the Muslim Brotherhood obtained power in the post-Spring Arab states, the West hoped that they would adopt a political stance similar to that of the Turkish AKP, such as being open to cooperation with the West, being willing to operate within a secular framework in their native countries, and supporting the institutionalization of liberal democratic norms.

While the Muslim Brotherhood indicated their admiration for the success of the AKP within the secular framework of Turkey, they suggested that Arab states had different conditions from those of Turkey. Therefore, the Muslim Brotherhood said that Turkey could not be emulated as a role model in its fullest extent. However, they argued, some experiences of Turkey could surely be emulated. In comparison, in Tunisia, Ganushi's elected Al-Nahda party was more willing to emulate the AKP model.

It is fair to argue that at some level, Egypt under Morsi's leadership aimed to establish itself as an alternative model to Turkey. For example, when Erdogan visited Egypt after the Arab Spring, the Deputy President of Egypt's Justice and Freedom Party reiterated that "we welcome Turkey and we welcome Erdogan as a prominent leader, but we do not think that he or his country alone should be leading the region or drawing up its future."

(Reuters 2011) Similarly, one of my interviewees, a top administrator in the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, argued that “Morsi could not take Turkey as a role model completely. (Interview with a Top Representative of the Muslim Brotherhood 2012) He further stated that “Egyptian people do not want a secular state; they want Islam to be combined in the Egyptian civil law. In Egypt, even Communists go to mosque and pray. A person might be Communist in ideology, but when it comes to worshipping, we all worship in the same line together. And this is the difference between Turkey and Egypt; Turkish communists don’t pray.” (Interview with a Top Representative of the Muslim Brotherhood 2012) He further argued that the new political leadership in Egypt wanted to build the economic system of Egypt following Islamic values that excluded interest rates. When I asked whether they had human capital to build such a complex economic system that needed to be successful to solve urgent economic problems of Egypt, he said “yes.”

The West did not get the answers it expected, particularly from Egypt. Considering the backtracking of the US and the EU from democracy promotion, when the Islamic forces gained power in the ME in 2005 and 2006, their subsequent reactions to the demands of the Egyptian Islamists could easily be predicted. When the military coup d’état occurred in Egypt, the West remained silent, and did not refer to it as coup d’état. The West only raised its voice when the Egyptian military employed extreme violence against protestors, which resulted in several deaths. Similarly, the US administration did not provide the Morsi government with substantial support. Only one month before the military coup, the US approved 1.5 billion dollars aid to the Egyptian military, (Stanly, 2013) which was considered as financing military coup d’état of July 3, 2013 in Egypt.

The military coup in Egypt could also be interpreted as the Western attempt to compel the Egyptian Islamists to go through the same experiences that the Turkish Islamists went through before the 2002 national election in Turkey. After the 1999 postmodern military coup d'état in Turkey, the AKP, separating from the Turkish Islamist party, emerged as a pro-West, pro-democratic, and pro-secular political force, playing a constructive role in the international politics. The military coup in Egypt might be an attempt to get similar results, transforming the Egyptian Islamists into a moderate party like the AKP.

In conclusion, Turkey has traditionally been regarded as a trusted ally of the US. After the AKP came to power, Turkey was initially projected as the model of democracy and secularism for the Muslim world by the West. In this regard, the AKP, which had deep roots in political Islam, was attributed an important role initially by the West as it provided a litmus test for the cohabitation of secularism and Islam, increasing the hope for the transformation of the Islamic political forces into Western friendly, democratic, and secular political movements that supported globalization. However, this projection has not been consistent. Turkey itself attracted substantial criticisms when it approached the regional and global powers that the West perceived to be its rivals.

Turkey had substantial interests in promoting democracy in the ME. Initially, Turkey's support of the Western democracy promotion brought Turkey's foreign policy in line with that of the EU and the US. Turkey's emphasis on democracy in its foreign policy towards the ME empowered Turkey's domestic and international roles, and eliminated the possible opposition of these two great powers against its political activism in the ME. Moreover, the US and Turkey had convergence of interests in interacting with a politically

stable region, buying inexpensive energy, combatting radicalization, supporting entrepreneurship, and promoting an environment of freedom in the ME. As Turkey shared a common population, geography, religion, and culture with the ME, the developments directly impacted the Turkish strategic interests.

Despite Turkey's considerable support for the American initiatives, launched to promote democratization in the ME, the AKP raised some objections. The AKP supported an internally driven, long-term, and consistent democratization process in the ME. In this regard, the AKP opposed the liberal interventionism and one-size-fits-all methods of the American democracy promotion. The AKP stressed that the West had to confine its role with the provision of a supportive international environment for democratic transformation in the ME.

Although the EU did not have a direct impact on Turkey's democracy promotion policy, it has had profound impacts over the Turkish state structure by democratizing it. Turkey has learned a great deal about how the modern West conducted its business from the EU. Turkey's EU process transformed it into a soft power that the ME started to watch with admiration. In the new liberal environment, fostered by the membership process, the Turkish Islamic CSOs acted more independently. As a result, some of major humanitarian and democratic projects of Turkey have been carried out by Turkish Islamic CSOs in the ME.

Turkey started 2007 as an economically and politically more powerful country. It also started as a country which developed substantial ties and alliances with the actors in the region. These alliances were in line with the BMENA Initiative premises, which stressed the socialization of Turkey with the other states in the region. However, when the

AKP upgraded its relations with Hamas, Iran, and Syria, the West strongly criticized Turkey, as they found this move of Turkey as a departure from its Western orientation. As the West already backtracked from promoting democracy in the ME, they also started to oppose the previously set roadmap for the promotion of democracy in the region. Therefore, they wanted Turkey to backtrack from supporting democracy in the region as well, instead of respecting its agency. However, this did not happen, at least willingly for Turkey. As a response, Turkey accused the West of not doing what it preached; respecting the democratic choice of people.

The Arab Spring caught the world unprepared. Turkey, the EU, and the US were compelled to take stances. In this regard, Turkey welcomed the process of Arab Spring, and called on the authoritarian leaders in the ME to introduce changes regarding the rightful demand of the protestors. On the other hand, while the US wanted the region to go through political change, it also has tried to shape the developments to create a more conducive environment for its strategic interests. The EU's stance has been very similar to that of the US.

CHAPTER IV: TURKEY'S STRATEGIC INTERESTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST: TURKEY'S APPLICATION OF MILITARY POWER

The ME has been largely ignored by the Turkish governments since the inception of the modern Turkish Republic in 1920 despite Turkey's cultural affinity and geographic proximity with the region and its vested strategic interests there. Turkey, which claims a regional power role in the ME, is linked to the region by shared culture, populations, religion, history, and geography. Also, the ME abounds in natural resources, such as oil and natural gas; it contains substantial Kurdish and Alevi populations, which could threaten Turkey's territorial integrity during crisis times. Moreover, the ME is a great potential market for the Turkish industrial products. Despite so many favorable variables, Turkey failed to develop meaningful relations with its southern neighbors until the AKP came to power. The AKP does not only consider Turkey as a Middle Eastern country, but due to the aforementioned connectednesses, it defines Turkey's role as a regional power which aspires to lead the region.

As I argued in the previous chapters, Turkey started its official democracy promotion policy in the ME by BMENA Initiative of the USA in 2004. The AKP has both a normative claim to, and strategic interest in, the promotion of democracy in the ME. Turkey has interests in a politically stable region, buying cheaper energy, deradicalization, supporting entrepreneurship, and promoting an environment of freedom in the ME. (Bagci

and Sinkaya 2006) Examining each of these variables, it is obvious that Turkey under the AKP rule promotes democracy for at least three substantial reasons:⁵⁹ Firstly and most importantly, to promote its own security and economic interests; secondly, for the benefit of the people (human rights, decreasing inequalities, etc.) in the target states; and thirdly, for the benefit of the region (f.e., inter-state trade) as a whole, in which the AKP considers Turkey as a leader.

The guiding premise of this chapter is that the primary concerns of states are their strategic interests, (Morgenthau 1962) and strategic interests dominate the values when they are being threatened.⁶⁰ Yet, these strategic interests are being articulated within respective cultural environments of the leading actors.⁶¹ Therefore, the strategic choices between states might differ. Nevertheless, it is crucial to note that states do promote democracy to help the target states. It means that states could have humanitarian agendas. However, when their immediate interests are threatened, states become preoccupied with

⁵⁹ See, for example, Bagci and Sinkaya, Greater Middle East Initiative and Turkey: AK Party's Perspective, 2006.

⁶⁰ See, also, Wolff and Wurm, Theorization of External Democracy Promotion: A Proposal for Theoretical Classification, 2011; Schweller, US democracy promotion: Realist reflections, 2000, p 43; Also, see Graye .R. Olsen, Europe and the Promotion of Democracy in Post-Cold War Africa: How Serious is Europe and for What Reason?, *African Affairs*, 97/388: 366, 1998.

⁶¹ Overall, the interviewees had a negative image of the ME. The MPs as well as the administrators of the Islamic CSOs associated the ME with wars, conflicts, bloodshed, pains, dictatorial regimes, lack of human rights, lack of freedoms, Israeli aggression over the Palestinians, oil, imperialism, oppression, and the center of radicalism. Also, some of the interviewees identified the ME with positive factors, such as being the foundation of religions and the origins of human civilizational developments. On the other hand, Turkey was associated with Ottoman legacy, Europe, pains of democratization, strong secularism, the leader of Muslim world, economic growth, and sometimes negative issues, such as the conflict with Kurdish citizens. In this regard, in the Turkish self-perception, Turkey is better than the ME, and at some point, Turkish decision makers think that Turkey has a historical responsibility towards the ME. However, this line of thinking is especially dominant among the AKP MPs. The CSOs, on the other hand, claimed that considering the human resources of Turkey, Turkey should only play a humble role in the ME. In regards with democracy and secularism, my interviewees found the democratic and secular identities of Turkey as an asset.

defending their immediate interests.⁶² However, this does not mean that they abandon their ideals.

It should be noted that Turkey's initial engagement with the ME is not as strategically oriented as the later stages of Turkish democracy promotion, which began around 2007. Between 2003 and 2007, Turkey's democracy promotion in the Arab ME remained as a principled stance, except in Iraq where Turkey had to engage with advancing its national security interests. However, by 2007 Turkey had established tight economic relations and firm alliances in the ME. When the Arab Spring started, Turkey had vested economic and strategic interests in the ME. As a result, Turkey has forcefully tried to eliminate the challenges against its own security and economic interests by promoting democracy through the utilization of diverse power instruments since the beginning of the Arab Spring.

There are many soft and hard power tools available to Turkey while promoting democracy in the ME. However, Turkey's preferred way for promoting democracy in the ME has been soft power instruments, such as diplomacy and foreign aid (See the following chapter for details). When Turkey's democracy promotion policy in the region is examined, it is seen that Turkey started to utilize hard power in the process of the Arab Spring when its substantial economic and security interests are threatened. During the years before the Arab Spring, the AKP stuck to soft power tools to promote democracy in the ME. Even at

⁶² For example, see Thomas Carothers, *Aiding Democracy Abroad*, 1999; also, see McFaul, *Ukraine Imports Democracy*, 2007; furthermore, see Dalacoura, *US Foreign Policy and Democracy Promotion in the Middle East*, 2010; Moreover, see Fuller, *Turkey and the Arab Spring*, 2014; also, see Karakas, *Democracy Promotion or Demotion*, 2010; Moreover, see Ozer and Ozcan, *Do New Democracies Support Democratization*, 2011.

present, the bulk of the AKP's democracy promotion is carried out with a diverse set of soft power tools.

When Turkey's interests are being hurt, application of hard power tools to promote democracy is not automatic. Turkey often tries very hard to abstain from the utilization of hard power in the region. However, as it will be shown in this chapter, Turkey is being engulfed into and compelled to use hard power to eliminate the emerging threats towards its interests in the process of change in the ME. In this regard, in the following section, I would like to give an account of under what conditions Turkey applies military power to eliminate these challenges, and when Turkey abstains from the utilization of military power, even when its substantial interests are being threatened. In this regard, I examine the cases of Iraq, Syria, and Libya to explain this complex situation.

However, before discussing these specific cases, I would like to explain how the AKP relates democratization of the region to its strategic interests. First of all, the AKP thinks that stability in the region is the precondition for the establishment of sustainable economic and political ties in the ME with which Turkey wanted to establish firm relations after the AKP came to power. However, lack of freedoms and substantial human rights abuses are the crucial impediments against the regional stability. (Interview with Ali Sahin 2012) To state it more clearly, people whose rights are constantly being violated, whose opinions are not being respected, whose grievances are not being heard, and who do not have a source of income could apply and have applied violent means of self-expression in the region. (Erdogan 2003) In this regard, shortages of freedom and economic opportunities in the region have caused radicalization. Invasion of Iraq in the wake of the

9-11 tragedy, which has had destabilizing impacts over the whole region is a good example for that.

Moreover, democratization in the region would result in the election of like-minded governments which make better partners in trade and politics due to the shared democratic processes and mechanisms. When human rights violations decline and when power changes hand peacefully, the system becomes more legitimate, and legitimacy brings more stability. (Interview with Emrullah Isler 2012) Democratization of the region will also help escape from the post imperial regional order, established on the basis of artificial borders between states and nations, paving the way for a greater integration in the ME. (Interview with Ali Sahin 2012)

In the following section, I would like to discuss how the AKP conceptualizes Turkey's democracy promotion in the ME. Then, I will start to explain the cases in which Turkey's democracy promotion becomes more strategically driven and militarized.

Problematizing the Promotion of Democracy

Turkish policymakers and officials have a different understanding of Turkish democracy in the ME. The MPs of the opposition parties, such as Turkish nationalist MHP and Kurdish nationalist BDP strongly oppose the idea that Turkey, under the AKP administration, supports democratization in the region. According to the members of the opposition parties, Turkish democracy is not mature yet; and therefore, the AKP administration is not in any position to promote democracy elsewhere. However, as indicated in the previous chapter, by participating in BMENA Initiative, the AKP's involvement in promoting democracy in the ME became official. (Kirisci 2011)

The deputies representing the AKP do not perceive their acts as democracy promotion in the ME. According to the AKP deputies, they have no intention whatsoever to bring democracy to or to change the regimes in the region. The AKP MPs pointed out that promoting democracy would mean the intervention in domestic affairs of brotherly nations; and they argued that this was not in any way what the AKP intended to do. (Interview with Emrullah Isler 2012) Furthermore, they argued that while Turkey still had problems with its own democratization, such as its problems with its Kurdish citizens, how could it claim a democratizer mission elsewhere. For the AKP MPs, what they did was to provide help to the friendly nations when it was demanded. (Interview with Ali Sahin 2012) They also indicated that they only warned the non-democratic Arab states about what could happen if they did not transit to democratic system, when the Arab Spring started. In this regard, an AKP deputy (2012) suggested, what we are doing is to maintain stability in the region in the long run, which serves the interests of the people in the region. Without stability, there cannot be development and progress. The wave of Arab Spring is threatening the stability in the region, and the only way to deal with this is to give people what they want.⁶³

However, the paradox was that, often, in their speeches they explained how they helped the Middle Eastern states to develop their political and economic systems by sharing Turkey's experiences, and how they trained the political parties in Egypt and Tunisia to maintain effective political campaigns. These acts were "de facto" promotion of democracy. I could not interpret this as unconscious promotion of democracy as the AKP

⁶³ A number of AKP deputies that I interviewed between 2012 and 2014 also conformed this point.

leadership provided a substantial support to the 2004 BMENA Initiative to democratize the ME. However, for the interviewees, these were the attempts to create a fertile ground for developing long term fruitful political and economic relations.

Islamic CSOs in Turkey opposed the idea that Turkey promotes democracy in the ME. According to some of the top officials I interviewed, Turkey still had substantial problems with its own democratic, social, and economic developments. (Interview with CSO members in Ankara 2012) Considering these shortcomings of Turkish democracy, Turkey was not in any position to promote democracy in the ME. However, they added that it was true that the AKP administration had the ambition to play a major role in the region.

The CSO representatives provided a more rational framework for what Turkey could do. According to them, simply Turkey's human capital and economic power was not sufficient to play the role that the AKP administration wanted it to play. (Interview with CSO members in Ankara 2012) Therefore, they argued that Turkey should only try to make humble contributions to the solution of the problems in the region through diplomacy and humanitarian aid. If not, Turkey could risk its national security. They both opposed the neo-ottoman tendencies of the AKP administration and suggested that Turkey should approach the people in the region as equals. (Interview with CSO members in Ankara 2012) Nevertheless, the CSO representatives also accepted the self-criticism that, they often acted as if they were superior in their interactions with partners in the region.

The CSOs ideas about the extent of Turkish role was also shared by TIKA (Turkish Developmental Agency) experts who worked on the field to provide humanitarian assistance to the needy areas in different parts of the world, such as Asia, Africa, and

Europe. They often criticized the AKP administration for exaggerating the Turkish role. According to them, the way Turkey provided aid did not have a long-term strategy. They argued that when the Turkish aid was provided this way, it did not benefit the Turkish interests in the long run, as the provider and the benefits it provided were forgotten after a while. (Interview with TIKA experts in Ankara 2013) One of the interviewees argued that “when we deliver aid to people, people have no clue about who did it. When the West does it, it uses tools such as signs and boards that indicate the identity of the provider, they organize opening ceremonies and parties to celebrate it. Also, we as the Turkish state do not still know how to turn this aid into strategic benefits.” (Interview with TIKA experts in Ankara 2013)

However, what cannot be ignored is the fact that Turkey has been involved in a modest act of promoting democracy in the ME. Turkey did support democratization in the region in principle and through a number of intergovernmental initiatives. Yet, Turkey does not call what it does as the promotion of democracy. For Turkish officials, the term promotion of democracy means an intentional effort to alter regimes, and Turkey does not have any intention to change the regimes in the ME.⁶⁴ (Interview with Emrullah Isler 2012) Instead of promoting democracy which would mean intending to change the regimes and which would basically refer to interfering with the affairs of ME, what they attempt to do is to share experience to create positive change and to maintain stability in the region as they want the region to prosper as a whole.⁶⁵ (Interview with Emrullah Isler 2012) They

⁶⁴ The author’s interview with a number of AKP MPs, Grand National Assembly of Turkey, June 2013.

⁶⁵ The author’s interview with a number of AKP MPs, Grand National Assembly of Turkey, June 2013.

argue that they do not try to change the regimes in the ME, nor does Turkey have the capability to do it. Nevertheless, Turkish officials have difficulty in explaining Turkey's participation to the BMENA, which is an initiative designed to democratize the ME.

There are a number of reasons for this confusion. One of the most important is that Turkish democracy is still in the making, so is the Turkish democracy promotion policy. Therefore, Turks find it difficult to accept the case of democracy promotion by a democracy in transition, like Turkey. Also, the term "bringing democracy" contains some sort of cynicism in the Turkish psyche as the Turks associate this concept with the exploitation of the natural resources of the poor countries by the Western states. Moreover, Turkey lacks a well designed institution or structure, formed for the purpose of promoting democracy. (Kirisci 2011) The West has been trying to change the regimes elsewhere for a long period of time; therefore, Western nations are experienced in this whereas Turkey is quite inexperienced.

Hitherto, I argued that Turkey has both strategic and idealist reasons to promote democracy in the ME. In this regard, Turkey's promotion of democracy is mainly geared to the advancement of its strategic interests. However, democratization also will improve the conditions of people in the region in terms of factors, such as human rights and inequalities. Finally, democratization is good for the region as a whole in terms of creating conditions for sustainable economic and political ties between the states in the region. (Interview with Emrullah Isler 2012) In this context, Turkey does promote the interests of the people that it feels close to. However, when Turkey's strategic interests are threatened, its concerns for its immediate strategic interests dominates its ideals towards the region. At

this point, Turkey's democracy promotion itself becomes an instrument to eliminate the challenges towards its interests.

Therefore, in the following section, I would like to give a detailed account of how Turkey behaves when its immediate security and economic interests are being threatened. I detected three substantial strategic interests for Turkey in the course of Arab Spring, which are survival, economy, and alliances. I indicate that when these interests are being threatened, Turkey applies a combination of hard and soft power tools to eliminate the challenges towards itself. In this regard, sometimes Turkey is compelled by its allies to apply military power to fix the problems emanating in the process of change in the region.

Survival

Under the AKP administration, Turkey has faced two developments that threatened its national security. The first one was the American occupation of Iraq in 2003 under the George W. Bush Administration. The second development is the escalation of conflict in Syria in the course of Arab Spring. In both cases, Turkey's democracy promotion gained a highly strategic orientation. Democracy promotion itself became a tool to ensure the national security.

Turkey's national security dominates its democracy promotion agenda particularly when it deals with its immediate neighbors, such as Syria and Iraq. There are a number of reasons for that. Turkey shares a long border with Syria and a long and mountainous border with Iraq. There is a substantial drug trafficking that follows the Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, and Turkey routes, which then connects to Europe as a final destination point. Moreover Turkey has problems with its Kurds. Iraq, Syria, and Iran also contain large Kurdish

populations. These three countries also include different confessional groups in Islam. In this regard, substantial political developments in these countries directly impact Turkey's national security. (Turkish Foreign Affairs Ministry 2014) As a result, Turkey tries to engage with surrounding countries to diminish the security risks originating from political developments.

In the following section, I would like to introduce the cases of Iraq, Syria, and Libya in more detail. Iraq and Syria are discussed within the framework of threats against Turkey's survival or territorial integrity. Libya is discussed within the framework of threats against Turkey's economic interests. I argue that due to the presence of the US in Iraq, Turkey was not able to utilize its military power to reduce the security risks emerging in Iraq. In the case of Syria, Turkey supports democratization, but it avoids the overt utilization of the military power due to its fear of being associated with the radical groups and due to the possibility of direct military confrontation with the Assad regime. In Libya, Although Turkey promoted NATO intervention against France's unilateral intervention, it tried to avoid becoming a part of a militarized solution in Libya. However, Turkey was compelled to partake in the military intervention against Gaddafi by the US when the operations in NATO lasted longer than expected.

A-Iraq

After the 9-11 terrorist attacks, the US designed a two-legged strategy to fight radicalization in the ME. The first leg suggested military intervention in countries like Iraq and Afghanistan to deter the terrorists. The second leg suggested the launching of the

BMENA initiative to promote democracy in the ME. As a result, the US invaded Iraq on March, 2003.

However, as I argued in the previous chapter, Turkey opposed the thesis of liberal interventionism clearly, when Erdogan visited the US in January 30, 2003. The Iraq intervention in March 19, 2003 indicated that Turkey's opposition to the US liberal interventionism did not matter. Furthermore, the unilaterality of the US decision for the intervention in Iraq caused dissatisfactions among its European allies, (Youngs and Wittes 2009) including Turkey that constantly stressed the importance of multilateralism.

Before the military campaign, the US was hopeful that the Turkish parliament would pass a bill that enabled Turkey to become a part of the coalition forces in Iraq led by the US. This bill would also enable the US to use Turkish harbors, airbases, and land as an initial entrance point to Iraq. However, the March 1, 2003 bill was disapproved by 250 against 260. This was a shock for the US. However, this did not mean that the AKP administration did not support the idea of being a part of the coalition. Actually, the opinion of the top officials in the newly formed AKP was quite supportive of approving the March-1 Bill. Fatma Sahin, the former AKP minister, reiterated that:

Right after we were being elected as MPs, they brought the March-1 Bill in front of us. They were asking us to make a decision regarding an issue, crucial for Turkey's and the region's future. We were new and unexperienced. We did not even know what our responsibilities were then. Some MPs approved of the bill and some others disapproved. But all of us were shaking, as we were inexperienced MPs, yet voting for such a crucial decision. The outcome was the disapproval of the bill. Thanks god it was not approved. Its disapproval caused the creation of a

very welcoming international environment for the AKP government, in those inexperienced days. (Fatma Sahin 2014)

There were two particular reasons for the AKP's support for joining the coalition that intervened in Iraq. The first was that if there was a new regional formation or development in the ME, Turkey had to partake in them to protect its interests or to depict an image as such to calm the public; and the second was that the AKP feared that that the US would remove the financial and diplomatic support of Turkey at home and internationally. (Sol Portal 2012) At the beginning of this matter, the US had offered Turkey USD 6 billion conditioned on the approval of the bill. (Sol Portal 2012)

However, despite all the efforts of the AKP to get the bill approved, the parliament opposed the March-1 Bill, causing a cold shower effect in the Bush Administration and negatively impacting the Turkish-American relations. Fatma Sahin reiterated that “we needed that money so much. It (the stipulated US aid) was crucial for the new AKP administration. Turkey has gone through substantial economic growth under the AKP, and looking at those old days, we really need to be quite happy about our current economic situation.” (Fatma Sahin 2014) Turkish financial sector was also upset about the disapproval of the March-1 Bill. (Sol Portal 2012)

As a natural extension of the aforementioned concerns, the parliament approved of the second bill which allowed the US to use its Incirlik military base, located in Adana province of Turkey, for the US air force operations in Iraq. The second bill was approved of to save the alliance with the US, as it was considered quite beneficial strategically. As the rejection of the first bill dominated the public discussions globally, the approval of the second bill did not attract much attention.

Therefore, the disapproval of the March-1 Bill caused a warm welcome to the AKP administration in the region. The opinions, previously constructed by being the “puppet of the West” were replaced by an anti-war and peaceful Turkey that was independent enough to oppose the US, which was its close ally. Turkey was perceived as more confident. However, many attributed the Turkish rejection of the bill to the Islamic orientation of the AKP, although in reality the AKP’s key figures worked very hard to pass the March-1 Bill.

The war in Iraq had detrimental effects on the regional security in the ME, which was one of the principle reasons that Turkey opposed it. Iraq turned into a platform where the terrorists were being trained. Every other day, suicide bombers would explode themselves in the crowded centers of the Iraqi cities, turning them into a living hell. Ironically the US involvement in Iraq ignited more terrorism. Furthermore, an autonomous Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) was established. This created substantial fears in the ME. This fear was the fear of destabilization of the surrounding countries which contained substantial Kurdish populations and the fear of re-formation of the ME on the basis of Alevi-Sunni sectarian lines.

Although the American intervention in Iraq was a nightmare for Turkey, Turkey had to work to protect its strategic interests in Iraq. Significant Turkish interests in Iraq included preventing the division of Iraq on the basis of ethnic or sectarian lines that could lead to the formation of an independent Kurdish state in oil-rich northern regions. Such a formation could motivate the Turkish Kurds to separate from Turkey; protecting the small Turkish-speaking Turkmen minority living in northern Iraq; preventing the establishment of “a potentially hostile nondemocratic fundamentalist Iraqi state; finally, preventing the

violent activities of the PKK, the Kurdish rebels, which had been using northeastern Iraq as a training camp. (Barkey 2005)

As the Iraqi state was controlled by the US after the invasion, Turkey did not have much choice to work towards realization of its security goals except supporting the establishment of democratic mechanisms in Iraq, a project designed by the US within its grand strategy to fight radicalism in the ME. However, Turkey was also aware that considering the conditions of the time, only a functioning democratic state would be able to keep all different ethnic and confessional groups together. Kurds would not accept the superiority of any other group any more, particularly at a time when they had substantial gains as a result of their cooperation with the US during the Iraq war.

Turkey had to engage in Iraq's domestic affairs in order to influence the developments in Iraq in its own favor. Turkey decided to support democratic mechanisms in Iraq to help establish an Iraqi state that could survive and that could control its borders. Turkey tried to mitigate the aforementioned negative outcomes of war by establishing multilateral institutions, such as "Iraq's Neighboring Countries Process", founded in 2003 in the eve of Iraq war. (Turkish Foreign Affairs Ministry 2014) The purpose of this organization was to develop a supportive international environment to reintegrate Iraq to the neighborhood. This has been a useful process for the peace, prosperity, and development in Iraq and security and economic interests of its neighbors.

As a part of its agenda to influence the developments in Iraq in its own favor, Turkey paid special attention to the 2005 Iraqi national elections. Before the elections, Turkey tried to convince Sunnis, who had previously decided to protest the elections, to participate. The statistics indicated that 70% of Iraqis went to vote, and Sunnis secured 19

seats as a result of Turkey's activism. Shias formed the majority in Iraq, and Jalal Talabani, a politician of Kurdish origin, became the president. This was good news for Turkey, as the participation of such diverse Iraqi groups provided a certain level of legitimacy to the new Iraqi government. Before the 2010 national elections, Sunnis confessed that they made a strategic mistake by protesting the elections in 2005, as a result of which the Shias gained most of the seats in the Iraqi parliament. Ambassador Celikol suggested that:

We want an Iraq that is in peace with its neighbors and its citizens, as well as a pluralist, democratic Iraq. In order to establish this Iraq, we, as Turkey, are doing whatever we can contribute. Some positive developments are happening in Iraq nowadays. First of all, an administrative law is being accepted in Iraq. Elections were held in January and November in Iraq. However, as a result of the nonparticipation of the Sunnis in January elections in Iraq, the Iraqi parliament had problems in terms of representing the Iraqi people as a whole. Therefore, we tried to convince the Sunnis to participate in November elections. This way we wanted the new parliament to be representative of the whole Iraq. In our meeting with the Sunnis, we stressed that they certainly had to participate in the new political process. The Iraqi parliament that will gather in the upcoming days has gained a way more representative nature than before. (Celikol 2006)

In addition, Turkey mentored the Iraqi state in setting its legal economic framework. For example, Turkey helped the Iraqi state in creating the new democratic Iraqi constitution and laws. (TUSIAD 2012) After the war, Turkey started to share technical know-how and experience with Iraq. For example, Turkish economic associations, such as TUSIAD, helped Iraq substantially in drafting a framework for its economy. (TUSIAD

2012) Turkey also tried to create multilateral institutions to reduce the security risk emanating from Iraq to the region to minimum levels.

In the process of engagement with Iraq, trade ties between the two countries considerably improved. At the present, Iraq is one of Turkey's biggest trading partners. By 2012, Iraq had become the second largest destination for Turkish industrial export products. In 2008, High Level Strategic Cooperation Council (HLSCC) between Turkey and Iraq was founded. This framework was created to strengthen the trade ties between the two countries by the participation and coordination of relevant ministers and bureaucrats. (Turkey Ministry of Trade 2014)

To sum up, Turkey had no chance except promoting democracy through soft power tools in Iraq under the American occupation. Turkey promoted democracy through engaging with different groups and through mentoring the Iraqi authorities. Turkey did so to ensure Iraq's territorial integrity. If Iraqi state fell apart, its divisions on the basis of ethnic and sectarian lines could have impacted the Kurds and Alevis in Turkey. Therefore, by promoting democracy in Iraq, Turkey tried to ensure its own security. Turkey rarely applied the military power to deter KRG from supporting the PKK, which was using North Iraq as a training base. In the following section, I will explain how Turkey dealt with developments in Syria.

B-Syria

Turkey and Syria had antagonistic relations before 1998 for a number of reasons, and the most crucial of which being Syria's claims over Hatay, Syria's support to PKK, and disputes over the share of water between Syria and Turkey. However, Turkey and Syria

signed the Adana Agreement in October 20, 1998, after Syria expelled Abdullah Ocalan, the leader of the PKK, from its borders. From this point on, Turkish Syrian relations substantially developed in a number of areas, such as politics, economy, and culture. (Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2014) (See **Table 5** and **Table 6**)

However, the Arab Spring created a destabilizing impact over the ME, including Syria and Turkey. Turkey was threatened by four particular factors. These are the Syrian refugees crossing the Turkish border, the new Kurdish formation in Rojava, sectarian unease, and the new radical religious formation (ISID). Therefore, Erdogan declared: "We do not see Syria as a foreign problem, Syria is our domestic problem because we have a 850 kilometer border with this country, we have historical and cultural ties, we have kinship." (The AKP 2014)

The very first challenge to Turkey came from the Syrian refugees. After the conflict escalated in Syria, over a million Syrians sought refuge in Turkey. "There are more than 400 thousand refugees in the region of Gaziantep alone" (Zander 2013) and over 1 million refugees in Turkey.⁶⁶ Some Syrians crossed the Turkish borders with a valid passport, but most of them did not possess a passport. While Turkey turned a blind eye to the entrance of most of the Syrian refugees into Turkey, due to the difficulty of controlling the border, many other entered without Turkey's consent. While Turkey found it unacceptable to close its borders to innocent Syrian civilians, Turkey was also frustrated as suicide bombers and the spies of the antagonistic Syrian regime could enter Turkey. An example of this was when a car full of explosive materials exploded in Reyhanli town of Hatay, leaving 52

⁶⁶ The official data on the number of Syrians in Turkey is unreliable, as most of the Syrians cross the Turkish borders without the approval of the Turkish authorities.

deaths and 155 injured behind.⁶⁷ Not to mention the fear that it created in the public. The attackers (Nasir Eskiocak and Ergin Ordek) confessed that they met with Assad and his high ranking officials before the attacks several times to plan the attacks. (Mehmet Sahin 2014) An interviewee from Reyhanli reiterated that Assad promised large amount of money to some of his distant relatives in a village near Reyhanli to explode a car in the city center of Ankara, which was changed to Reyhanli later on when the Turkish Intelligence Service (MIT) became aware of their plans.

The second threat to Turkey came from the Kurdish Formation in Rojava, Syria. A large group of Kurds in Syria, which had structural ties with the PKK, wanted to create an autonomous government, similar to that of Iraq. This threatened Turkey in two ways: firstly, this formation could encourage the Turkish Kurds to do the same; and, secondly, as the Rojava Kurds had close ties with the PKK, this formation would strengthen the PKK, an organization that had caused the lives of around 40 thousand in Turkey.

The third threat to Turkey came from the Alawi-Sunni conflict in Syria. Syria is governed by the Alawi minority, and in Turkey, there is a substantial group of Alevis that identify themselves with Alawis in Syria. It means that Turkey has been supporting the opposition against the Alawi Assad regime. Turkish Alevi minority reads this attitude of Turkey from sectarian lenses as they see it as a Sunni act against Alawis as a group. Similar to the Turkish Alevis, 54% of the Syrians think that Turkish policies towards Syria are sectarian. (SETA 2013) The death of six individuals with Alevi backgrounds during the Gezi Park protests further strained the Alevi population in Turkey as they started to think

⁶⁷ Some of the people that I talked and who live in Reyhanli told me that the number of deaths and injured was way greater than what the officials revealed.

that there was an intentional violent campaign against the Alevis in Turkey. However, this frustrated the Turkish state as well. The Turkish officials started to think that some hidden forces tried to pull Turkey into sectarian conflicts in the ME. As a result, the sectarian conflict in Syria started to affect the relations between different sectarian groups in Turkey negatively.

The fourth factor that poses a threat to Turkey's national security is the radical religious formations in Syria. In February 3, 2014, the media, using the Turkish intelligence services as their sources of information, revealed that 20 suicide bombers, who were the members of the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISID), crossed the Turkish borders to explode themselves in three major cities of Turkey, namely Ankara, Istanbul, and Hatay. (Taraf 2014) In addition to the violent campaigns carried out by the Kurdish rebels crossing the borders, this time Turkey had to deal with the threats posed by the Assad regime as well as the members of the ISID, angered by Turkish policies towards them. All these brought the difficulties of controlling the southern borders of Turkey and the AKP's overly relaxed border control policy into question.

Turkey's support for democratization turned into backing the opposition at all costs against the Assad regime when the conflict in Syria started to harm Turkish national security. Thus, supporting anti-Assad groups had become a tool of engagement in Syria to eliminate the threats towards the national security. Turkey's initial idea was that the immediate removal of Assad would provide stability in its southern borders after a short term of political unease. However, the Turkish administration had finally understood the complications in Syria. Yasar Yakis, the former foreign affairs minister of Turkey, was quite critical about Turkey's Syrian policy and reiterated that:

In foreign policy, you never put all of [your] eggs in one basket. Turkey had bet that Assad would fall in no time and that it would be the first to reap the rewards... The way things stand now, if Turkey continues to insist on a Syria without Assad it will be left isolated. (Yakis 2014)

To sum up, when the Arab Spring arrived to Syria, Turkey had to make a decision, whether to support Assad or support the opposition. Initially, Turkey tried diplomacy to push Assad to introduce some reforms demanded by his people for seven months. When Assad resisted, Turkey started to support the opposition. There were a few important reasons for this. Firstly, Turkey's pro-democratic stance during the protests in Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt created an expectation that Turkey should react similarly in Syria as well. Secondly, Turkish CSOs pressured the government to oppose the Syrian government's violent campaigns against the protestors. Most importantly, Turkey thought that if it supported the opposition, Assad would fall in no time, and Turkey would reap the rewards when the new government came to power in Syria.

However, when the conflicts continued longer than the AKP imagined, it resulted in security risks for Turkey. Consequently, Turkey started to support the Syrian opposition in many ways. For example, first, Turkey let the Syrian opposition to organize in Istanbul. Secondly, Turkey opened its doors to the Syrian refugees whose numbers have exceeded 1 million until at the present. Thirdly, when the Syrian Kurds indicated their will for the formation of an autonomous Kurdish region and when the radical ISID formation emerged, Turkey started to provide military assistance to the Free Syrian Army that worked for a democratic and territorially intact Syria. Turkey trained the Free Syrian Army in Reyhanli

Refugee Camp, (Kemal 2012). However, there is no official data about the extent and type of Turkey's military assistance to the Syrian Sunni opposition.

Finally, Turkey has been providing substantial humanitarian assistance in the form of food and shelter to the Syrians within Syria. The official data from AFAD indicates that Turkey has already spent USD 2.5 billion on Syrian refugees in the form of humanitarian assistance since the conflict escalated. (See the following chapter) Regardless, the Turkish democracy promotion policy has partly been militarized at the present as Turkey is being threatened by the aforementioned developments in Syria.

Turkey has become more and more isolated due to its emphasis on a Syria without Assad. Turkey's Western allies do not share this opinion with Turkey. Considering the radical elements in Syria and Iraq, which are busy establishing the ISID, the US and the EU finds the Assad regime as less frightening. On the other hand, the Assad regime has obtained Russian and Iranian support in material terms, and Chinese diplomatic support. Therefore, Syria has empowered its position against the Syrian opposition and countries, such as Turkey, Saudis, Qatar, and the West, that supported the opposition. Although Turkey wants to redesign its Syrian policy, it seems that Turkey does not have much option left.

In the following section, Turkey's economic interests as another reason for Turkey's democracy promotion will be explained. I also demonstrate how Turkey's democracy promotion is militarized in Libya to protect its economic interests.

Economic Interests

Once trade relations between countries reach a meaningful level, they start to concern themselves with the safety and stability of their economic interests in the corresponding states. Democracy promoter states often think that democracies make better trade partners. (Russet 1993) There are three particular reasons for this: Firstly, democracies have legal mechanisms to channel the grievances of their people. This prevents the occurrences of radical movements harmful for investment and security in that country. (Aviles 2012) Thus, respecting human rights means long term stability in the markets. Secondly, enforcement of a clear rule of law in democratic systems provides a greater security for the investors in terms of protection of their capital and business transactions. Finally, in order to facilitate its economic interaction with others, states try to harmonize their market rules and regulations with the other states' regulations. The EU enlargement process is the best example for this. Therefore, I argue that Turkey's democracy promotion helps to create sustainable markets for its investments by harmonizing the targets' economic and legal frameworks with those of its own. When Turkey's economic interests are being threatened, Turkey tries to eliminate these threats by utilizing a diverse set of foreign policy tools, such as coercion and diplomacy.

Turkey's rapidly growing economic relations with the ME is a considerable factor that motivates Turkey to support the institutionalization of the democratic norms and values in the ME. (Turkey Ministry of Economy 2014) Turkey's industry has displayed a substantial improvement in the last twelve years under the AKP rule. The increased industrial production necessitated finding stable markets for the Turkish products.

(Kulaklikaya and Nurdun 2010) As the West was going through financial crisis, the ME seemed to be a life-saving market for the rapidly growing Turkish industry.

Tables 4 and 5 indicate that Turkey's export to the ME increased along with economic development at home. While in 2002, Turkey's export to the ME was USD 4.44 billion and its import was USD 3,09 billion, in 2012 its export increased to 33,25 and its import to 17,64 billion dollars. As the statistics indicate the main beneficiary of the increased trade volume between Turkey and the ME has been Turkey.

Table 4. Turkey's Economic Indicators

Turkey's Economic Indicators				
Column1	GDP in Billion Dollars (\$)	Growth Rates (%)	GDP % Capita in (thousands)	GINI index
1990	150	9.2	2,7	-
1995	169	7.8	2,8	-
2000	266	6.7	4,1	-
2001	196	-5.6	3,0	-
2002	232	6.1	3,5	42.7
2003	303	5.2	4,5	43.4
2004	392	9.3	5,8	42.6
2005	483	8.4	7,1	42.5
2006	531	6.8	7,6	40.3
2007	647	4.6	9,2	39.2
2008	730	0.6	10,2	38.9
2009	615	-4.8	8,5	-
2010	731	9.1	10	-
2011	775	8.5	10,5	-
2012	1125	-	-	-

*Source for Table 4: the Turkish Statistical Institute Website

Table 4 indicates that in 2002, when the AKP came to power, Turkey's overall GDP was 232 billion dollars; and it went up to 1125 billion dollars under the AKP rule. This meant that Turkey displayed high levels of economic growth in the last decade. If we

do not consider the decline in 2008 and 2009 as a result of the global financial crisis, the average for Turkey’s economic growth under the AKP rule has been 6.44% between 2002 and 2012. The overall export of Turkey went from 39,3 billion dollars in 2003 to 152,6 billion dollars in 2012.⁶⁸ On the other hand, “Turkey’s general imports have increased from a 55,6 billion dollars in 2003 to 236,5 billion dollars in 2012.”⁶⁹ Most importantly, Turkey’s improving trade ties with the ME is an important part of Turkey’s economic growth.

Table 5. Turkish-Middle Eastern Trade Relations 1999-2012

Turkish-Middle Eastern Relations 1999-2012			
Value: Billion Dollars			
Years	Export to the ME (\$)	Import from the ME (\$)	ME Tourists visiting Turkey
1999	3.676.894	3.416.675	-
2000	3.359.010	5.462.082	762.226
2001	4.079.652	5.027.569	764.133
2002	4.448.081	3.095.397	780.431
2003	6.675.410	4.203.113	880.935
2004	9.677.673	5.250.389	1.031.226
2005	12.229.495	7.475.826	1.288.538
2006	13.528.786	10.065.346	1.285.507
2007	17.683.329	12.503.176	1.617.553
2008	28.907.378	16.386.510	1.917.329
2009	24.842.752	9.568.391	1.955.402
2010	28.508.171	16.318.007	2.192.773
2011	31.968.565	24.082.631	2.438.206
2012	33.252.927	17.647.838	-

*Source for Table 5: the World Bank Website⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Economy, Countries & Regions: Middle East, 02/17/2014. <http://www.economy.gov.tr/index.cfm?sayfa=countriesandregions®ion=4>

⁶⁹ Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Economy, Countries & Regions: Middle East, 02/17/2014. <http://www.economy.gov.tr/index.cfm?sayfa=countriesandregions®ion=4>

⁷⁰ <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/views/reports/tableview.aspx#>

Turkey's main export items to the ME include "stones and precious metals, iron and steel, electrical machinery and equipment, vehicles, machinery and mechanical appliances, mineral fuels and oils." (Turkey Ministry of Economy 2014) Turkey mainly imports raw materials, such as fuels and minerals, "pearls, stones and precious metals, plastics and articles thereof, organic chemicals, aluminum and articles thereof."⁷¹ Furthermore, as stated by the Turkish Ministry of Trade, "the total value of projects undertaken by Turkish contractors in Middle East countries exceeded 65,8 billion dollars by the end of 2012. When we take into consideration the figures for projects undertaken in 2012, which was about 11 billion dollars, the importance of Turkey's achievements will be more visible. Prestigious projects such as construction of new airports, undergrounds, refineries and other facilities for petrochemical industries are also among the projects undertaken by Turkish contractors in these countries." (Turkey Ministry of Trade 2014)

Moreover, the growing economic relations resulted in Turkey's will to create a predictable rule of law to facilitate and sustain this interaction. The AKP has supported the creation of a predictable trading environment in the region in principle since the early days of its administration. Turkey's Ministry of Trade clearly stresses the importance of a predictable trading environment by revealing that "the Middle East has been an important export destination for Turkey and Turkey attaches great importance to the bilateral and regional initiatives for facilitating trade and for creating a fair and predictable trading environment in the Middle East." (Turkey Ministry of Trade 2014) One of the main concerns of the Turkish businessmen and investors regarding the ME was the safety of

⁷¹ Approximately 65 percent of Turkey's imports from the region are concentrated on mineral fuels & oils.

their capital transaction. In this context, enforcement of an understandable rule of law that would ensure justice when the conflicts arise regarding their business transactions was crucial. Precondition for a working rule of law was of course the political stability in the Middle Eastern markets. According to Ikenberry, “democracies are able to develop relations based on the rule of law rather than political expediency, and this facilitates stable and mutually beneficial dealings.” (Ikenberry 2000)

A large portion of the Turkish democracy promotion in this regard has been through mentoring. Turkey helped redesign the economic policies of a number of Middle Eastern countries on the basis of neoliberal reforms. For example, Syria demanded Turkish help to redesign its economy to integrate Syria to the Western markets. (Interview with Ali Sahin 2012) The AKP shared its experience about economic policies and reforms with Syria. Considering that the AKP redesigned the Turkish economic system on the basis of the Copenhagen Criteria required for membership, the nature of reforms Syria implemented could easily be understood. This way, Syrian market underwent a substantial process of economic liberalization.

However, when the Arab Spring started, Turkey’s economic interests were being threatened in the ME. The Libyan case is particularly important in terms of indicating the relationship between the extent of Turkey’s economic interaction in a country and what Turkey could do to protect its economic interests when they are being threatened. Therefore, I would like to give a detailed account of how Turkey was being progressively engulfed into a military intervention against Gaddafi rule in Libya in the course of Arab Spring, despite Turkey’s insistence on diplomatic means of conflict resolution there.

Libya

Turkey developed strong economic relations with Libya under Gaddafi rule. Before the Arab Spring (and still), Turkey was among Libya's greatest trade partners, along with Italy, Germany, the UK, and South Korea. (Turkey Ministry of Trade 2014) Turkey's export to Libya totaled to USD 2 billion, and its import totaled to USD 500 million. Turkey's investment in Libya's construction sector was particularly important in this regard. In 2011, Turkish construction firms operated in 100 construction sites in Libya to implement 214 major construction projects. Around 25 thousand Turkish employees worked for these companies. The value of these projects totaled to USD 15 billion. (A. Koray 2013)

To provide some detailed information about these construction projects, for example, SEGA was building the whole infrastructure of Libya's Al Qaryah ash Sharqiyah city in Jabal al-Gharbi district. Cevahir Group was building the Benghazi Mall in Benghazi. Çeltikoğlu implemented the Wadi El Mejaneen sewer system project of the city of Tripoli. (Sabah Gazetesi 2011) Turkish construction companies were also involved in many other projects, such as constructing railways, hotels, malls, schools, and hospitals. (Sabah Gazetesi 2011) It would not be an exaggeration to argue that Libya was being built by the Turkish construction companies. Therefore, Turkey had concentrated interest in Libya's construction sector. When the Arab Spring hit Libya, Turkey started to preoccupy with the future of its economic interests there. Turkey tried to take a stance that would not harm its economic interests in Libya.

The protests in Libya began in the first week of February, 2011. Because of the significant Turkish presence there, Turkey was not able to develop a coherent policy

throughout the process. Turkey was simply trying to understand the situation in Libya to make the right decisions, which would not risk its economic interests there. (Dursunoglu 2011) Turkey established firm relations with Gaddafi before the Arab Spring. Therefore, Gaddafi rule provided Turkey with some kind of warranty for its investment in Libya. On the other hand, Turkey was not able to predict whether Gaddafi would fall or not when the protests started. In this regard, initially Turkey remained unresponsive to the demands of the protestors in Libya. Next, Turkey claimed the role of a mediator when the conflicts grew. Finally, Turkey joined the opposition camp after realizing the impossibility of the survival of Gaddafi regime. (Dursunoglu 2011)

In February 21, 2011, Ibrahim Dabbasi, the Libyan deputy permanent representative, to the UN called the UN to impose a no-fly-zone over Libya. The next day, Nikolas Sarkozy, the French President, called on the EU to impose sanctions against Gaddafi, and started to provide a robust support to the protestors in Benghazi. Same day, Turkey's ambassador to Libya, Levent Şahinkaya claimed that the protests in Libya were not as big of a threat as they were being depicted in the global media. Furthermore, he fingered at the ongoing pro-Gaddafi protests in Tripoli to indicate the extent of the societal support for Gaddafi. (Kaya 2011) Turkey claimed that the views that suggest a no-fly-zone over the Libyan skies were unintelligible considering the current circumstances.

Nevertheless, the protests would continue to grow. In February 27, 2011, Mustafa Abdul Jalil, who was the former justice minister of Gaddafi, established National Transitional Council. In March 15, 2011, Lebanon's ambassador to the UN, Nawaf Salam, proposed the UN to pass a resolution on no-fly-zone in Libya. France and the UK, who had already voiced similar ideas, provided a robust support to this proposal. On March 17,

2011, the UN passed the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973. After the 1973 resolution, France organized military campaigns against Gaddafi. On March 21, 2011, France organized a conference in Paris to discuss the crisis in Libya, and Turkey was not invited.

Turkey perceived France's premature intervention in Libya as France was trying to advance its energy interests in Libya by bringing a new French-friendly government to power. France was buying 15% of the Libyan oil before the Arab Spring. (Regan 2011) In this sense, France was the second largest customer of the Libyan oil, after Italy (28%).⁷² Mustafa Abdul Jalil's claim that the new Libyan government would give the priority to the countries that helped Libya the most in its reconstruction process (in the process of the removal of Gaddafi from power)" would reinforce Turkey's opinions about France's motivations about Libya. (S. Koray 2011) This was worrying for Turkey, as it had a great stake in Libya's construction sector. If Turkey provided full support to Gaddafi, and if the opposition won instead, the future of the Turkish economic activities in Libya would be under a great risk. (Dursunoglu 2011)

When the Libyan crisis became internationalized, Turkey was still insisting on that the protests in Libya were not very big and was portraying a pro-Gaddafi image. In February 22, 2011, Turkish officials indicated that they were negotiating compensation from Gaddafi for their losses during the protests. (Dursunoglu 2011) In February 28, 2011, Turkey strongly opposed the NATO intervention in Libya. In March 3, 2011, Ahmet Davutoglu reiterated that "No group in Libya wants an external intervention. External

⁷² Also, see Julian Borger and Terry Macalister, The Race is on for Libya's oil, with Britain and France both Staking a Claim, *theguardian*, 2011. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/sep/01/libya-oil>

intervention would make the situation worse.” Davutoglu added that they shared their opinions that “We don’t want Libya to become the second Iraq,” with Clinton and Obama. (Dursunoglu 2011)

However, beginning from March 14, 2011, Turkey would progressively adopt a mediator role to resolve the conflict without a military intervention. (S. Koray 2011) As a result, Turkey started to call on Gaddafi to introduce reforms to address the rightful demands of the protestors. Moreover, non-invitation of Turkey to the Paris Conference made Turkey fear that it was being treated as an outsider by France. (Dursunoglu 2011) On the other hand, in April 6, 2011, due to Turkey’s claim for mediation role, the protestors, supported by France, accused Turkey for supporting Gaddafi. (Dursunoglu 2011) Turkey started to realize that the balance of power changed in favor of the opposition in Libya, and Turkey was being excluded from the process if it did not take the right decisions.

After France’s military attacks against Gaddafi on March 22, 2011, Turkey started to promote NATO’s involvement in the Libyan crisis on the basis of the UN Security Council Resolution 1973. Turkey’s goal was to prevent France’s sole leadership in this process. Turkey as a NATO member would have more power in influencing the decision making. (Dursunoglu 2011) Turkey’s promotion of NATO succeeded. NATO decided to partake in Libyan crisis. On March 23, 2011, NATO started to monitor the arm embargo against Gaddafi, which was previously being carried out by France, UK, and the US. NATO took charge of the mission on March 31, 2011. The Turkish parliament would allow Turkey to participate in the military intervention in Libya on March 24, 2011, including the enforcement of no-fly-zone. However, the way Turkey acted was in direct contrast with what it had promoted until a few weeks before.

Turkey would continue its mediation role until April 9, 2011. Despite NATO's involvement, Turkey would insist that the crisis in Libya should be resolved by Libyans alone. Similarly, Turkey declared that Turkey's role as a NATO member state would be restricted to the provision of humanitarian assistance to the crisis-hit Libya and evacuation of civilians from Libya. Turkey would also take part in inspecting the arm embargo against Gaddafi. (McGreal, Sherwood and Milne 2011) Furthermore, Turkey promoted the inclusion of the Arab states within the NATO forces to enlarge the basis of the intervention against Gaddafi, which Turkey thought would bring more legitimacy to this intervention. (Dursunoglu 2011) The US supported this idea, and invited the Arab League states to partake in the limited air strike against Gaddafi. As a result, the goal was accomplished; no individual country would determine Libya's future on its own, including France; and Turkey would not be one of the countries that attacked Libya.

Meanwhile, on May 23, 2011, Turkish officials held a meeting with Mustafa Abdul Jalil in Turkey, and indicated that National Transitional Council was the legitimate representative of the Libyan people. (The Tripoli Post 2011) This signified that Turkey stopped claiming a mediator role, and started to support the opposition. Furthermore, Turkey decided to provide the Libyan opposition with financial assistance which totaled to USD 300 million. (Watson 2011) The USD 100 million was provided to the Libyan opposition in the form of cash donation to buy food and pay salaries. The second portion, USD 100 million, would be delivered in the form of credit donation; and the third part of the assistance would be provided in the form of credit loans to the National Transitional Council. Turkey started to provide the Libyan opposition with financial assistance in July, 2011. This had happened shortly before the opposition entered Tripoli. (Watson 2011)

Turkey was compelled to partake in military intervention later on; when the Gaddafi regime survived longer than it was expected, some countries started to indicate their discontent with the duration of the military intervention under the NATO leadership. (Dursunoglu 2011) For example, on May 23, 2011, Norway called back its planes, and Italy called upon the NATO to stop the operations. When the coalition started to break, the US strongly criticized the countries, including Turkey, for not providing military support. As a result, Turkey participated in the military intervention by providing the alliance with six F-16 Fighting Falcons. Before that, Turkey had provided the alliance with five ships and one submarine to enforce the naval blockade and arm embargo. Turkey's Izmir Port and Incirlik military base were also available for the use of NATO during the intervention in Libya. The NATO ended its mission on October 31, 2011.

After the intervention, Libya had to go through a reconstruction process. This was what Turkish construction companies had been waiting for. Turkey's efforts in Libya paid off. Hitherto, Turkish firms have held 544 projects in Libya with a total value of USD 27,7 billion. (Turkey Ministry of Trade 2014) Turkish investment in Libya has exceeded 37 billion dollars already. Currently, Libya is the third biggest market for the investment of the Turkish firms. While before the Arab Spring the trade volume between Turkey and Libya was around USD 2,5 billion, only one year later at the end of 2012, the trade volume between the two countries had reached USD 3.5 billion. (Koray 2013)

To sum up, the growing economy of Turkey provided Turkey with the ability to follow a more assertive foreign policy by expanding its investment and diplomatic mission, particularly in its region. Turkish industrial growth compelled the AKP government to find markets for the Turkish companies, and maintain stability in these markets. This also

required creating a clear framework for the economic interactions. (Official data is provided in the 5th chapter) However, in the Arab Spring, Turkey's economic interests were severely being threatened in countries, like Libya. Hence, Turkey's partaking in the military intervention stemmed from its intention to protect its economic interests.

Under the AKP rule, Turkey developed substantial relations with Islamic groups in the ME. When the Arab Spring arrived, these groups gained more power and were being elected in a number of countries, such as Egypt, Tunisia, and Libya. Therefore, Turkey would try very hard to help the elected government to succeed. Turkey perceived the elected government as strategic allies. In the following section, I will explain how Turkey tried to protect its alliances in the process of the Arab Spring.

Strategic Alliances with Like-Minded Governments

Turkish motivation for promoting democracy has become more strategic during the Arab Spring. By the time the Arab Spring took place, Turkey had developed substantial relations with the Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas, Iran, and Syria in the ME. Turkey's warm relations with these groups attracted considerable criticisms from the West as the West had already backtracked from promoting democracy in the ME in 2006.

However, this did not stop the empowerment of the Islamic groups in the ME. Parties associated with the Brotherhood emerged as the most powerful political actors in Arab Spring countries in 2011-2012 national elections. For example, Egyptian Freedom and Justice Party obtained 47.2% of the votes, Tunisian Al-Nahda (Renaissance) movement obtained 51.1% of the votes, and the Libyan Justice and Development Party gained 17 seats (the second biggest party), in national elections. The election of the Muslim

Brotherhood, with which Turkey developed strong ties before the Arab Spring, empowered the Turkish role in the region substantially. The victory of the Islamic groups since 2005 pushed Israel into historical isolation.

After the AKP came to power, it heavily invested in developing strong relations with states in the region due to a combination of strategic and ideological factors. For example, Turkey signed a Free Trade Area agreement with Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan in 2007. Although, a Turkish-Egyptian Strategic Dialogue Framework Memorandum was signed in Istanbul, on November 3, 2007, the relations were not elevated to desired levels until the Arab Spring. After the democratic elections in Egypt in 2011, which resulted in the victory of the Islamist Freedom and Justice Party, Turkey and Egypt signed the High Level Strategic Cooperation Council (HSCC). As it is discussed in the previous sections, Turkey had similar agreements with the other neighboring countries, which paved the way for “Shamgen Free Trade Zone” that allowed the free flow of people and goods between Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and Turkey. (Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2014)

However, it is important to realize that Turkey’s previous efforts to improve ties with regional actors substantially contributed to its role in the region after the Arab Spring. Winners of the Arab Spring, the Islamic groups, have had a favorable approach towards the Turkish role in the region. The AKP strengthened its relations with the Islamic groups in a number of ways, such as mutual visits, the training of the members of Islamic parties

in Turkey, holding mutual conferences, supporting Palestinians against the Israelis, and providing financial assistance.⁷³

This continued after the Arab Spring, when Turkish top officials who visited Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya indicated their wills for strong cooperation and offered financial assistance to the newly elected governments. In this regard, Turkish state provided the Egyptian Freedom and Justice Party with 1 billion USD aid in the form of concessional loan, half of it to be paid in 2012 and the other half 2013. (Development 2012) The support that the AKP provided to the Islamists by Turkey was translated as playing into the sectarian dynamics of the region by the seculars in the region. (Alessandri and Altunisik 2013) Nonetheless, provision of this aid was a clear indication of the AKP's inclinations towards the conservative forces in the Arab ME, who were its ideological partners.

The Turkish AKP and the Muslim Brotherhood, which obtained power in Egypt and Tunisia, had a common approach in a number of areas. For example, the relations between Israel and Turkey were bitter due to the Mavi Marmara tragedy. The Muslim Brotherhood was a strong critic of Israel in its treatment of the Palestinians. Like Turkey, the Muslim Brotherhood also backed the Syrian opposition against Assad. Furthermore, the Muslim Brotherhood criticized pro-Assad Iran for its detrimental role in Syrian crisis. (Al-Monitor 2013) Morsi, who was also an influential member of Egypt's the Muslim Brotherhood, revealed: "We should all express our full support of the struggle of those who are demanding freedom and justice in Syria and translate our sympathies into a clear political vision that supports peaceful transfer of power to a democratic system. (Tisdall

⁷³ Turkey provided the Morsi government with USD 1 billion after he was elected to the presidential office.

2012) Moreover, similar to Turkey, the Muslim Brotherhood has been at logger heads with Iran over its Syrian policy. Also, both the AKP and the Muslim Brotherhood oppose the intervention of foreign powers in the region; both Turkey and the Brotherhood aim to form a peaceful political atmosphere and a fertile ground for the cooperation between the Muslim nations.

However, removal of Morsi from power by a military coup d'état, the prolonging civil war in Syria, which could have had spill-over effect on Turkey, and the unstable political environment in Tunisia, caused by the killing of the Mohamed Brahmi, the leader of the nationalist opposition, all damaged Turkey's new alliances in the ME. In order to prevent this deteriorating situation in the ME, Turkey has been providing full support to the opposition in Syria, providing technical, financial, and diplomatic assistance to Tunisia, and has recently downgraded its diplomatic relations with Egypt under the interim government, after the military coup. (Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2014)

The likelihood of a successful democratic transition required a supportive international and domestic environment. The international environment was not quite supportive toward the newly elected Islamic parties. For example, the US had traditionally provided Egypt under the Mubarak rule with substantial financial support. However, the US withdrew this aid from Egypt when the Freedom and Justice Party was in power. The provision of 1.5 billion USD aid to Egypt one month before the military coup d'état has been perceived as financing the military coup in Egypt (Stanly, The Telegraph 2013) by Turkey. The unfavorable approach of the US and the EU towards the elected Islamic governments in the region has deeply disappointed Turkey.

In this regard, despite Turkey's history as a staunch Western ally, its policies towards the post-Arab Spring ME have not been quite in line with the Western interests. Therefore, Turkey found itself at loggerheads with the West regarding their attitudes toward the democratically elected Islamic groups. The divergences between Turkey and the West were so deep that they pushed Turkey into a strategic loneliness in the ME after the removal of Morsi from power. Turkey has been doing whatever it has been able to do so as to strengthen its international position, and supporting the oppositions in the Arab Spring countries has become a part of this.

To conclude, it can be said that Turkey supported the American democracy promotion in the ME within the BMENA framework. The reason for Turkey's support was its belief in the positive outcomes that democratization would produce, such as economic development, good governance, respect for human rights, enforcement of the rule of law, and regional integration. If democratization of the region was to produce these outcomes, both Turkey and the other states in the ME would benefit from it. Supporting BMENA would also repair the damaged Turkish-US ties after the disapproval of March-1 Bill in Turkey. However, Turkey had some reservations. Democratization, according to Turkey, had to happen incrementally, consistently, in an internally driven fashion, and without external intervention. In this regard, Turkish and the EU stances were very similar.

When the Arab Spring took place, both Turkey and the West had to take a side. Turkey considered the Arab Spring to be a positive development; thus, its interpretation was that events had started to flow in the right direction. Turkey considered people's demand for human rights, good governance, rule of law, and economic development as a part of global movement for democratization. For Turkey, these were the rightful demands

of people. In this regard, these demands would not be and should not be reversed, as the region profoundly needed such a transformation.

As Olsen suggested, when interests are at stake, the primary concern of states becomes their interests rather than their values.⁷⁴ When the conflict escalated, Iraq, Libya, and Syria, and Turkey became preoccupied with their security and economic interests. In Libya and Syria, Turkish democracy promotion became militarized. While Turkey was compelled to partake in military intervention against Gaddafi by the US, Turkey has been providing military assistance to the Free Syrian Army in Reyhanli refugee camp. Turkey could not use its military power in Iraq under the US control. As a result, Turkey utilized soft power tools to promote democracy in Iraq, which Turkey considered to be the only way to keep Iraq's unity - as one piece, which was crucial for Turkey's own territorial integrity.

By the time Arab Spring took place, Turkey had established substantial economic ties in the Arab ME. Turkish investment dramatically increased in the region. Also, Turkey's trade with Arab countries reached considerable levels. In this regard, Turkish business sectors needed stability in the region more than anything else. Moreover, a clear and understandable rule of law would contribute to the fertile trading environment in the region. To begin with, Turkey tried to create a predictable trading environment by sharing experience and practical training with its partners in the ME. Turkey also decided to support the protestors to create a long term stable environment in the region, as in the Turkish point of view, opposing people who demanded change was fruitless.

⁷⁴ Graye R. Olsen, Europe and the Promotion of Democracy in Post-Cold War Africa: How Serious is Europe and for What Reason?, *African Affairs*, 97/388: 366, 1998.

Another crucial dimension of Turkish democracy promotion was related to the alliances Turkey had built before and in the course of the Arab Spring. The election of the Muslim Brotherhood to power in Egypt and Tunisia, and the Hamas rule in Palestine strengthened the Turkish role in the region. In Libya, the Muslim Brotherhood, gaining 17 seats, ran second in the national election. Turkey supported the opposition in Syria so that a Turkish-friendly government would come to power there, serving its long term strategic interests. In the states bordering Mediterranean Sea, a strong Islamist network emerged. When the military coup d'état took place in Egypt, Turkey strongly condemned it and downgraded its diplomatic relations with Egypt as Turkey lost its closest Arab ally, Morsi. In this regard, Turkey's support for democratization—from supporting the opposition groups to opposing the military coup d'état, and from there to providing support for Tahrir Square—has been a matter of defending its strategic alliances. Turkey also considered such an alliance to be beneficial for the region as a whole.

Most importantly, when Turkey's strategic interests were being threatened, Turkey tried very hard to reconcile its interests with its ideals. However, when Turkey realizes the impossibility of such reconciliation, Turkey gives priority to protecting its strategic interests.

CHAPTER V: STRATEGIES (1): TURKEY'S DEMOCRACY PROMOTION THROUGH OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

Since the AKP came to power, Turkey has engaged with the ME more assertively. One of the ways of engagement has been through the promotion of democracy. Turkish official democracy promotion in the ME started in 2004 through the BMENA (Broader Middle East and North African) initiative. This project was initially launched by the US to promote democracy and open market in the ME. Turkey under the AKP strongly supported the idea of democratization of the ME due to a number of significant identity-based and strategic considerations, explained in the previous chapters comprehensively.

In this chapter, my goal is to explain the strategies and projects through which Turkey promotes democracy in the BMENA region. My findings indicate that Turkey has promoted democracy through a number of channels, such as enlargement, experience sharing, providing a good role model, military intervention, normative pressure, and “Official Development Assistance” (ODA). In this chapter, I will focus on ODA alone.

The reason is that by examining ODA in a time series manner, I will be able to indicate the map of Turkey's foreign aid, how much Turkey invests in a country, why Turkey invests in some countries more than the others, and how Turkey channels its ODA into the target states. The other aforementioned strategies of democracy promotion will be explained in the following chapter.

Since the beginning of the Arab Spring Turkey's support to the democratization in the ME has gained a more strategic orientation. In the last three years, Turkish financial assistance (as a part of its ODA) to the region has skyrocketed. Furthermore, this chapter also confirms that Turkey's humanitarian considerations have been overridden by its strategic interests when the strategic interests were being threatened. The financial assistance to the like-minded Islamic parties in Egypt, Tunisia, and Palestine in this regard are the practices to form strategic alliances in the ME. Turkey's engagement with Syria and Iraq through supporting democratization is a result of its desire to ensure its survival. Turkey's engagement with Libya is a result of Turkey's economic interests. In Iraq, Syria, and Libya, Turkey does want to form strategic alliances, but this motivation is secondary to Turkey's security and economic interests in these countries. Moreover, Turkey's strategic calculations are being articulated within Turkey's cultural context by the AKP, which claims a regional power role for Turkey and which has deep roots in political Islam.

In this chapter, I consider ODA as a part of Turkey's democracy promotion strategies. There are substantial reasons for this. Turkey does not have well-designed democracy promoter institutions, such as USAID and NED. Turkey categorizes all of its official aid, such as humanitarian, technical, and democracy assistance, under its ODA. TIKA (Turkish Development and Cooperation Agency) performs its development and

democratization activities in coordination with the Turkish Republic's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Therefore, I will try to contextualize Turkish ODA to the BMENA region within the framework of democracy promotion. While doing this, I will provide examples from the other parts of the world to better comprehend Turkish democracy assistance initiatives.

Turkey has a long history of ODA provision. Turkey is a founding member of OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development), and has been proposed by the OECD to become a member of DAC (Development Assistance Committee)⁷⁵ in 2012. The OECD was founded to discuss matters related to sustainable economic development in the member countries. The DAC coordinates relations with and economic assistance for developing world. The members of the DAC are well-known with the high amount of humanitarian aid they deliver to the developing world. Not yet a member of DAC, Turkey has been reporting its assistance to the DAC since 1990. The financial aid delivered to the developing world by the OECD through the contributions of the member states is called "Official Development Assistance" (ODA). "Official Humanitarian Assistance" (OHA) is a component of ODA. (Global Humanitarian Assistance 2014) The largest recipients of Turkey's ODA were, in order of magnitude, Syria, Egypt, Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Somalia, Sudan, Tunisia, Palestine, Kazakhstan and Bosnia-Herzegovina in 2012. (TIKA 2012)

In the following section, I will try to explain the Turkish ODA in more detail. I will start with the official institutions through which Turkey channels its ODA, and then I will explain the development and geographic distribution (region-base and country-base) of the

⁷⁵ DAC is a prestigious club of the developed nations that provide official humanitarian aid to the countries in need. In this regard, the practice of giving and receiving subordinates the needy nations to the donors.

Turkish ODA under the AKP administration. Afterwards, I will examine the status of Official Humanitarian Assistance (OHA) within Turkey's ODA.

Official Institutions and the Provision of ODA

Turkey's Ministry of Foreign Affairs oversees Turkey's institutions that deal with development, humanitarian assistance and Turkey's policy priorities. TIKA, Turkey's International Cooperation and Development Agency⁷⁶, is the primary institution responsible for channeling ODA to the target states through a number of mechanisms. These mechanisms include the governmental institutions, national or international CSOs, public and private partnership, and multilateral international organizations.⁷⁷ Turkey's "Disaster and Emergency Management Office (AFAD) and Turkish Red Crescent (Kizilay) are the two sub-governmental institutions that help TIKA to deliver Turkey's ODA to the target states. Targets are determined by TIKA in coordination with Turkish Republic Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the basis of Turkey's foreign policy priorities. However, TIKA is responsible to the Turkish Prime Ministry.⁷⁸ TIKA has 33 coordination offices in 30 countries globally. However, TIKA's helping hand has extended to over 100 countries in different regions of the world. (TIKA 2014)

⁷⁶ TIKA official webpage defines TIKAs role like this: TIKA (Turkish Development and Cooperation Agency) "carries out the task of being a cooperating mechanism for the state institutions and organizations, universities, non-profit organizations and the private sector. In addition it functions as a platform for these actors to come together and it records the development aid carried out by Turkey."

⁷⁷ TIKA Development Report 2012.

⁷⁸ For further information, see TIKA webpage, <http://www.tika.gov.tr/en/about-us/1>; Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs webpage, http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-development-cooperation.en.mfa; Global Humanitarian Assistance Report, 2013.

As TIKA is the umbrella organization that coordinates the ODA among the Turkish governmental and non-governmental institutions, TIKA needs a detailed examination. TIKA was established in 1992, after the collapse of the Soviet Union. It was initially designed to coordinate the Turkish development aid to the newly independent Central Asian Republics.⁷⁹ To begin with, TIKA focused on helping build a sufficient state structure in Central Asia. Later, TIKA started to get involved in cultural, social, and economic cooperation with newly independent Central Asian countries. By 2000, TIKA had gained substantial experience in the field of development assistance. Parallel to globalization, TIKA expanded its reach to the global level as well. TIKA started to operate in regions as diverse as the ME, Balkans, Southeast Asia, Americas, and Africa. However, Turkey is interested particularly in culturally identical areas or regions where Turkey has substantial strategic interests when delivering its ODA.

As Turkey expanded its reach worldwide, it also increased the amount of its development assistance considerably to respond to its global level development agenda. Turkey's development aid consisted of about USD 85 million in 2002. This amount went up to USD 1 billion 273 million in 2011. Currently, Turkish ODA goes well beyond USD 4 billion. (TIKA 2012) "TIKA is ranked amongst the Turkish organizations that carry out most technical co-operations."⁸⁰ TIKA is involved in the areas of education, economy,

⁷⁹ Central Asian Turkic Republics are Azerbaijan, Kirgizstan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

⁸⁰ TIKA webpage, <http://www.tika.gov.tr/en/about-us/1>; TIKA experts define technical assistance like this: "Technical cooperation refers to strengthening the capacities and effectiveness of individuals, organizations and institutions through transfer of ideas, technologies, knowledge and skills to foster development in partner countries." TIKA Development Report 2012, p. 18.

social and physical infrastructures, security, capacity building, culture, construction, health, (TIKA 2014) and politics.

A number of Turkish official institutions are involved in the ODA. The top governmental institutions that contribute to the Turkey's ODA are Office for Coordinating the Syrian Guest Affairs, Turkish Armed Force, Turkish National Police, Manas University, Under Secreteriat of Treasury, Higher Education Loans and Dormitories Agency, TOKI (Turkey's Official Construction Development Agency), Ahmet Yesevi University, Ministry of Health, TRT (Turkey's official TV channel), Presidency of Turks Living Abroad, Turkish Red Crescent, and AFAD (Turkey's Emergency Management Office). (TIKA 2012)

In the following section I will explain the Turkish ODA in more detail.

Official Development Assistance (ODA) in Detail

Turkey accepts the OECD definition of ODA (Official Development Assistance). According to OECD, ODA is “a loan or grant from an official source to a developing country or a multilateral agency for the promotion of economic development and welfare. It is reported by the members of the DAC along with several other government donors and institutions according to strict criteria each year. It includes sustainable and poverty reducing development assistance for sectors such as governance and security, growth, social services, education, health, and water and sanitation.” (Global Humanitarian Assistance 2014) Development assistance is considered ODA if three conditions are met: The first one is that public sector should be providing it. The second is that the goal should

be fostering economic development and welfare; and, finally, it should contain at least 25% of grant element, and this is concessional. (TIKA 2012)

Turkey, since 1950s, has been providing ODA to the developing and underdeveloped nations in different parts of the world. However, Turkey's development aid has gone through substantial transformations since then. Two crucial factors played a role in these transformations: Turkey's new economic dynamics and Turkey's increasing sense of regional responsibility towards its neighbors. Previously, Turkey tried to influence the Central Asian Turkic Republics after the collapse of the Soviet Russia. The establishment of TIKA was a natural result of this intention. In the 2000s, Turkey under the AKP rule turned its face to the BMENA region. In this process, the amount of ODA provided for the surrounding countries has substantially increased. This also indicated the two foreign policy priorities of Turkey: Central Asia between 1990 and 2002 and BMENA between 2002 and 2014. (Turkey Foreign Affairs Ministry 2014) As a result of Turkey's extended activities in these areas, Turkey emerged as a forceful actor in the international development and cooperation field. (Turkey Foreign Affairs Ministry 2014)

Turkey launched its ODA policy on June 5, 1985 by delivering aid to a number of impoverished African countries, such as Gambia, Somalia, and Sudan. The collapse of the Soviet Union provided the right context for Turkey to provide assistance for the Central Asian Turkic Republics. In the minds of the Turkish administration, Turkey shared a common ethnic origin and language with the Turkic Republics.⁸¹ Within the context of this

⁸¹ I intentionally use "in the Turkish Administration Psyche," as I do not believe the ethnic origins of the Turkish nation and people in Central Asia are the same. It is true that there has been substantial immigration from Central Asia to Turkey. However, Turkey is also the land of various groups, such as Kurds, Arabs, Greeks, Lazs, Cerkezs, etc. Therefore, Turkish state probably utilized the common identity to

new foreign policy formulation, Turkey designed TIKA to help the politically and economically troubled Central Asian republics. TIKA would help these post-Soviet states to build a working state infrastructure. In 2002, after obtaining power, this time Turkey, under the AKP rule, turned its attention towards the ME. The identity-based and strategic factors, explained in the previous chapters, were the main driving reasons. The AKP's willing participation in BMENA⁸² initiative provided evidence for the AKP's intentions to contribute to the democratization in BMENA countries. Turkey's new policy orientation towards BMENA considerably increased the amount of Turkish aid to the region.

However, what makes Turkey an interesting case is that Turkey has been a recipient and simultaneously, a donor of ODA for a long time. For example, "in 2011 gross ODA to Turkey increased to US\$3.7 billion making it the sixth largest recipient globally. Prior to 2009, Turkey had not even been amongst the world's top 20 recipients of aid since 1991, which was the year when aid was given to help to recover the country from the Van Earthquake." (Global Humanitarian Assistance 2014) Also, for years Turkey has been a hot spot for democracy promoters. American and European democracy assistance groups have been very active in Turkey. (Karakas 2010) Interestingly, Turkey under the AKP rule has emerged as a respectable actor in the area of ODA. At present, Turkey has an active

advance its economic interests in the region. In fact, in TIKA's official webpage, it is claimed that Turkish Development Aid is provided to the regions where Turkey has substantial economic interests.

⁸² BMENA is the abbreviation of Broader Middle East and North African Initiative. It includes the whole Arabic speaking countries in the ME and North Africa. Although it was proposed to Include Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, due to substantial criticisms from the EU, Pakistan and Afghanistan were removed from the list. See Chapter III for further information.

role in promoting development and democracy in different parts of the world, particularly in BMENA. (Bagci and Sinkaya 2006)

I consider ODA as a part of democracy promotion if it is done by democratic states. States might provide assistance to target states as a way to transform their regimes. However, ODA might have an indirect impact over the democratic transformation of the target states as well. For example, the US supported the Latin American states with ODA to help build their capacity, for a long period of time. (Carothers, Elusive Synthesis 2010) During this interaction, the US naturally transferred its democratic mechanisms and process to these countries, providing a good example for ODA's indirect impact on limited democratization. States have clear interests in helping other states organize themselves in similar lines. (Smith 2010) Furthermore, both the EU and the US stipulated democratic reform to the countries that demanded financial assistance from them. (Borzal and Risse 2009) In this regard, ODA could be a part of democracy promotion policy.

However, conditioning the provision of ODA to stimulate political, economic, and social change within the target state undermines its sovereignty. Sovereignty emerged a significant norm in the post-Westphalian international order after 1648. (McFaul 2004-2005) Although powerful states often disrupted this norm by conquering other states, it nevertheless remained as an important norm between them until the First World War. At the beginning of the 20th century, when the big empires were being destroyed, this norm lost some of its value. Nevertheless, after the Second World War, in the process of decolonization, this norm gained global attention again. In the last several decades, an interesting development took place: some other significant norms have become accepted

by the international society. (McFaul 2004-2005) These are the norms of human rights, democracy, and open market economy.

McFaul (2004-2005) argues that “norms protecting the sovereignty of states still trump norms protecting the rights of individuals, but the balance is shifting. Currently, global organizations, such as the UN and World Bank, the CSOs, and a significant number of democratic states, mainly in the West, promote human rights and democracy. (McFaul 2004-2005) Increasingly states abusing human rights at home need to give an account for its violations to the international society of their conducts. However, states might take advantage of the human rights abuses in another country to intervene in that state’s domestic affairs for their strategic concerns. In other words, they disguise their strategic concerns and try to make their intervention appear as if they were acting for the benefit of that state.

ODA has been created to help develop target states’ administrative, economic, security, social, educational, and health sectors. It also helps with water and sanitation, crucial for survival of individuals. (Global Humanitarian Assistance 2014) However, I find it important to add one more variable to this list, which is the “political sector.” The Turkish case indicates that states are involved in a modest exercise of power competition when promoting democracy. The donor states determine the targets on the basis of a calculation of their strategic interests⁸³ articulated within their respective cultural environments. Nurdun, a top TIKA official, reiterates that the delivery of the Turkish ODA is determined

⁸³ I make this assertion on the basis of the Turkish case. For example, see Kulaklikaya and Nurdun, Turkey as a new player in development cooperation, 2010. Turkey has been engaging with Iraq and Syria to ensure its national security and maintain economic interests. In this regard, for example, the largest amount of ODA in 2012 was being delivered to Syria, where conflict has escalated due to the Arab Spring.

on the basis of Turkey's strategic calculations. (Kulaklikaya and Nurdun, Turkey as a New Player in Development Cooperation 2010) It is not a coincidence that Turkey delivers the largest portion of its ODA to Central Asian republics, Turkey's eastern neighbors, and the Middle Eastern states, which are Turkey's southern neighbors. All these states possess substantial natural resources, making them important for the strategic interests of the Turkish state. Similarly, it is not a coincidence that the US started to promote democracy in Latin America, the southern neighborhood, where it fought against the expansion of Soviet Russia (Carothers, Elusive Synthesis 2010) and worked to open the Latin American markets to its products.⁸⁴

While the Western world has progressively separated democracy assistance from development aid since 1980s, (Carothers, Elusive Synthesis 2010) Turkey still considers assisting a target state to transit to democracy as a part of its ODA strategy. Turkey categorizes all the official aid targeting the outside world under the category of ODA. Turkey classifies the sum of its official and unofficial aid under the category of TDA (Total Development Aid). (TIKA 2012) For example, Turkey considers its humanitarian assistance which has amounted to USD 2.5 billion to Syrian guests⁸⁵ within Turkey between 2012 and 2014 (Hurriyet 2014) and its financial assistance which has amounted to USD 1 billion to the Islamist government in Egypt as a part of its 2012 ODA. (TIKA 2012) In both cases, Turkey's intention has been to help the opposition forces to achieve the democratic transformation in the BMENA region. This transformation is considered to

⁸⁴ Also, see William Robinson Cox. *Promoting Polyarchy: Globalization, the US Intervention, and Hegemony*. Cambridge University Press, 1996.

⁸⁵ Turkey officially refers to Syrian Refugees as "Syrian Guests."

strengthen the Turkish economic and security interests as Turkey is seen as a role model by the oppositional forces in BMENA. (Akgun and Gundogar, The Perception of Turkey in the ME in 2013 2014)

The original rationale behind promoting democracy through development aid was the modernization theory of Lipset.⁸⁶ Lipset treated urbanization, economic development, and improving literacy rates as the indicators of modernization. In Lipset's mindset, democratization was the natural result of modernization. In the modernization process, industrialization would foster economic development, resulting in the expansion of the middle class. The growing middle class, recognized for their habits of consumerism, would demand freedoms to live the life style they prefer. This required minimum government intervention in civic life. Therefore, in Lipset's viewpoint, the growing demands of the middle class would finally foster democratization. This happened in the West, and there was no reason why it would not happen elsewhere.

Yet theory of modernization was challenged by major scholars, such as Huntington. (Huntington 1968) According to Huntington, in a country where socioeconomic standards of people rapidly grow, the process could actually result in de-modernization, if the process is not rightly managed by the political apparatus. The government in such cases should respond to the growing demand of people for equality, justice, rights and freedoms. Huntington's de-modernization thesis would create vivid debates among the American policy makers and scholars over the utility of democracy promotion for the US interests and over the strategies to promote democracy.

⁸⁶ See Carothers, *Elusive Synthesis*, 2010; Packenham, *Liberal America and the Third World*, 1973.

The process in which the theory of modernization was being challenged would result in the creation of specific programs, called democracy assistance. (Carothers, *Aiding Democracy Abroad: Learning Curve* 1999) These programs were designed with a clear focus on elections, political parties, civil society, business associations or trade unions, rule of law, media, and the parliament in the target states. (Carothers, *Assessing Democracy Assistance: the Case of Romania* 1996) They would be carried out by state organizations, such as the USAID and CSOs in coordination with the USAID. (Carothers, *Aiding Democracy Abroad: Learning Curve* 1999)

There were also strategic calculations behind the utilization of the ODA by the US government. The ODA was used as a tool to prevent or to reverse the spread of communism in Latin American and Eastern European countries. (Carothers, *Assessing Democracy Assistance: the Case of Romania* 1996) From the American point of view, the needy people were the most vulnerable among the others, and communism could respond to their demand for social justice. (Carothers, *Aiding Democracy Abroad: Learning Curve* 1999) In this regard, the US had to help the needy states to strengthen their capacities to serve their people in a more efficient and effective manner. Furthermore, if democratization was achieved in target states, the US would gain victory against the Soviet influence. Democratization in this sense meant the victory of pro-US parties in target states, and surely, they would make better partners in trade and international politics for the US.⁸⁷ (Carothers, *Aiding Democracy Abroad: Learning Curve* 1999)

⁸⁷ Also, see McFaul, *Ukraine Imports Democracy: External Influences in the Orange Revolution*, 2007.

Most importantly, states have clear interest in helping other states organize themselves in similar ways. (Smith 2010) This facilitates the economic, social, educational, bureaucratic, and political interaction between them. However, the most sizeable share in this interaction goes to the state that transfers its norms and institutions to the target states. For example, after the Latin American countries institutionalized the neo-liberal economic policies, their economies were dominated by the American goods. Similarly, after Iraq and Syria liberalized their market rules, their markets were dominated by the Turkish goods. In this regard, the biggest beneficiaries in these cases are the countries with greater economies.

Similar to the US, Turkey has supported democracy in the ME for a number of strategic interests as well. Turkey's shared identity with ME states facilitated Turkey's interaction with the region. At times, Turkey had to act on the basis of the shared identity as well. This happened particularly when the human rights were being profoundly abused, such as in Palestine and recently in Syria.

The Turkish case indicates that Turkey has been involved in a modest provision of development aid to developing states in Balkans, Africa and Asia, since 1980s. Within the context of technical assistance, Turkey transferred its democratic experiences to a number of countries, such as Syria, Tunisia, Palestine, and Iraq. Turkey has built physical infrastructure necessary for a functioning democracy, such as building a parliament in Somalia. Consequently, I think ODA plays an important role in democratic transformation of the target states. Needless to say, a functioning bureaucratic apparatus that ensures the minimum enforcement of rule of law and that provides a certain degree of societal services is a precondition for democracy. Linz and Stepan, further stipulate the existence of an

economic, political, and civil society, an efficient bureaucracy, and a functioning rule of law as the preconditions of democracy. (Linz and Stepan 1996)

Table 6 indicates Turkey’s Total (official and governmental) Development Assistance (TDA) and “Official Development Assistance” (ODA) to the developing world between 2003 and 2012. The statistics display a steady increase in the amount of TDA Turkey provided to the developing world. Although between 2003 and 2011, Turkish TDA increased in a parallel fashion (almost equal), in 2012 Turkish Official Aid suddenly increased, doubling the private aid flowing from Turkey into the developing world. While Turkish private aid remained at USD 903.18 million, Turkey’s ODA went up to USD 2533.3 million. By 2011, the Turkish OHA has reached to 1.0 billion USD, making up 40% of Turkey’s ODA. (Global Humanitarian Assistance 2013)

Table 6. Turkey's Development and Humanitarian Assistance

Turkey's Development and Humanitarian Assistance based on Years in Million USD										
Aid type	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
TOTAL OFF&PRI	107.52	1128.2	1051.9	1663	1337	1576.8	1519.65	1718.2	2363.5	3436.48
OFFDEV ASSIST	66.63	339.16	601.04	714.3	602	780.36	707.17	967.42	1273	2533.3

Source: OECD <http://stats.oecd.org/#>

***TOTALOFFPRI**: Total Official and Private Aid

***OFFDEVASSIST**: Official Development Assistance

This has ranked Turkey as the fourth largest donor globally; the US being the first, the EU institutions being the second, the UK being the third, and Turkey being the fourth largest donor. Turkish Private Assistance includes the “Other Official Flows” (OOF)⁸⁸ and

⁸⁸ This includes assistance, such as debt relief.

“Direct Investment” by private sector (DI) to the target countries. The Turkish OOF amounted to 56.53 million USD in the form of loan facilities in 2012. Turkey included DI within its ODA since it stimulated economic development in the target states. Turkish DI in target countries in 2012 amounted to 735 million USD. (TIKA 2012) Another source of TDA was the Turkish CSOs’ own resources. Turkish CSOs’ development assistance in 2012 amounted to 111.65 million USD.

Table 7. TDA Components for 2012

Aid	TDA	DI	NGOA	OOF
Amount Million USD	3436.48	735	111.65	56.53

***Source:** TIKa Development Report 2012.

Turkish ODA and Democratization in the BMENA Region

In 2012, “46.6% of Turkish assistance was delivered to the Middle East, 31% to Africa, 18% to South and Central Asia, and 3% to Balkans and East Europe.” (TIKA 2012)

Table 8 indicates the region-base Turkish Official Development Assistance. Turkey delivered development aid to a diverse set of nations in the world, including all existing continents. The table examines the period between 2003 and 2012. As data on Turkish ODA for 2013 and 2014 is not available yet, I could not include it in this table. On the other hand, the largest amount of aid (USD 1,694.21 million) is being provided to the BMENA countries, which consist of North Sahara and the ME countries, in 2012. BMENA is followed by the Central and South Asia in terms of amount of provision of the Turkish ODA (USD 436.08 Million).

Although provision of the Turkish ODA to the Central and South Asian countries is not specified in the **Table 9**, the OECD statistics indicate that Afghanistan was the largest recipient of the Turkey’s ODA among the Central and South Asian countries. Turkey has built health clinics, schools, mosques, and roads, and has been training Afghani civil and military bureaucrats as well as providing technical aid to build a working state infrastructure in Afghanistan. (TIKA 2012) Afghanistan is not an official BMENA country, yet Turkey has had substantial assistance there.

Table 8. Total Amount of Turkish ODA by Regions, 2003-2012, in Million USD

The Total Amount of Turkish ODA by Regions for the years 2003-2012 in Million USD										
Regions	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Europe	4.52	30.19	96.59	81.64	80.88	97.24	105.74	139.84	77.18	87.83
North of Sahara	0.1	0.59	8.37	3.33	2.91	6.4	3.23	3.64	58.48	569.97
South of Sahara	0.08	3.25	3.39	21.53	28.08	45.33	43.73	34.44	211.3	179.5
North & Central	..	0.03	0.01	0.05	0.89	2.12	0.81	7.83	0.82	1.02
South America	..	0.15	0.03	0.1	0.23	0.48	2.09	2.89	0.75	1.4
Far East Asia	5.25	11.01	46.01	35.65	13.43	13.74	13.9	9.95	12.18	10.79
South & Central Asia	14.04	130.68	332.49	397.45	308.06	433.32	355.44	492.27	565.87	436.08
Middle East	2.44	53.77	43.99	102.96	109.17	116.4	139.44	222.37	292.64	1124.24
Oceania	1.59	..	1.39	3.6	0.12	0.66	0.51	0.06

Source: OECD Database

Turkish ODA to BMENA increased from USD 2.45 million to USD 1,694.21 million between 2003 and 2012. (See **Table 8**) Turkey’s ODA to BMENA had been going upward gradually until 2011. In 2012, one year after the beginning of the Arab Spring, Turkish ODA leaped to astronomic levels in BMENA. While Turkish ODA to BMENA was USD 351.12 million in 2011, it had gone up to USD 1,694.21 million by 2012. On the other hand, Turkish ODA to the Central and South Asia had been steadily increasing. Even the 2008 global financial crisis did not diminish the Turkish ODA to these two regions. Although data about 2013 and 2014 is not included in these tables, it is safe to assert that

the Turkish ODA has increased to a much larger amount in 2014. This is a result of Turkey's substantial aid to war-torn Syria, and the other Arab states that have been experiencing a regime transition, such as Tunisia and Libya. For example, AFAD indicated that since 2012, Turkey has spent USD 2.5 billion on Syrians alone. (AFAD 2014)

TIKA determines the target of development aid through the guidance of the Turkish Foreign Affairs Ministry on the basis of the Turkish foreign policy priorities. (Kulaklikaya and Nurdun, Turkey as a New Player in Development Cooperation 2010) As it could be seen in **Table 8**, the amount of ODA Turkey spends on different regions indicates Turkey's foreign policy priorities. Until 2011, Turkey has prioritized Central and South Asia, delivering the highest amount of aid. Although, in this process (2003-2011) Turkish ODA to the BMENA countries has increased substantially, it has not exceeded the ODA to the Central and South Asia. However, after the Arab Spring, Turkish ODA to the BMENA region increased astronomically. This means that Turkish foreign policy priorities have shifted from Central and South Asia to the BMENA in the course of Arab Spring. Turkey established strong relations with the Islamic actors, such as the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas, in BMENA before the Arab Spring. Turkey increased the amount of ODA to the transitioning BMENA countries to help sustain the newly elected friendly Islamist governments and to finalize the struggle in Syria.

The Country-Based distribution of the ODA in the BMENA

Turkish ODA to the BMENA has followed an increasing trend since 2003 under the AKP rule. However, there is a positive relationship between the regional developments and Turkish ODA. It is clear that Turkey uses ODA as an instrument to engage in the

troubled countries where it has substantial strategic interests. For example, following the 2003 American intervention in Iraq, Turkish aid jumped from USD 1,25 million in 2003 to USD 24,57 million in 2004. It continued to increase until 2009 (USD 51,33 million). However, it is seen that the financial crisis of 2008 affected the Turkish ODA to Iraq as well, causing a decline to USD 39.31 million in 2010. Due to the emergence of Arab Spring, Turkey started to reallocate its ODA to a different set of countries.

Table 9. Turkey's ODA to the BMENA Countries for 2003-2012 in USD Million

Countries	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Algeria	0.07	0.05	1.05	0.75	0.18	0.19	0.22	0.51	0.49	1.1
Egypt	0.03	0.26	1.2	0.62	0.72	0.95	0.91	1.3	3.5	503.92
Libya	3.77	1.05	1.07	1.71	0.91	1.01	53.11	3.1
Morocco	..	0.26	1.06	0.35	0.38	0.49	0.49	0.45	0.75	1.44
Tunisia	..	0.02	1.29	0.56	0.56	1.29	0.7	0.34	0.6	60.39
Iran	1.02	12.23	3.91	5.15	7.44	15.45	14.8	16.62	11.34	12.8
Iraq	1.25	24.57	12.92	18.85	46.68	47.68	51.33	39.31	27.83	19.39
Jordan	0.03	0.44	0.62	1.04	1.1	1.4	0.93	1.75	1.58	3.53
Lebanon	0.02	0.34	0.3	36.1	15.7	26.59	11.53	26.82	7.06	7.95
Syria	0.1	1.93	4.56	3.62	5.69	4.11	4.62	9.52	162.03	1019.93
Palestine	0.01	4.49	11.16	20.34	14.22	20.18	48.2	27.83	25.92	51.23
Yemen	0.01	0.03	0.1	0.04	0.08	0.44	1.24	6.01	0.45	4.52
Afghanistan	0.7	8.74	28.56	57.65	71.61	141.96	96.46	107.32	130.89	151.75

*Source: OECD Statextracts, <http://stats.oecd.org/#>

*DAD: Development Assistance Database

* **Afghanistan** is not a BMENA country

Egypt

The impact of Arab Spring on the distribution of the Turkish ODA is very obvious (TIKA 2012) in **Table 9**. For example, Turkish development assistance to Egypt was insignificant when Mubarak was still in power. In 2011, when the Egyptian democratic elections were being held, the Turkish ODA to Egypt increased to USD 3.51 million. After

the election of Islamist Justice and Freedom Party to power, Turkish ODA to Egypt skyrocketed. Turkey delivered USD 503,92 million to Egypt. This was almost 500 times more than the aid provided to Egypt in 2010. Turkey provided this assistance to Egypt in the form of concessional loan within the framework of an agreement between the Turkish Under Secretariat of Treasury and Egyptian Ministry of Finance. The actual loan amounted to over USD 1 billion. The first trench, USD 500 million, was delivered to Egypt in 2012, and the second trench, 500 million USD, was decided to be delivered in 2013. The cited goal was to foster economic development and welfare in Egypt through financing public infrastructure projects. (TIKA 2012) This was the first time Turkey lent a loan to a target state at this extent. (TIKA 2012)

There have been a number of projects aiming to strengthen Egyptian state infrastructure. For example, in 2012, Turkey brought several Egyptian students to train them in transportation infrastructure. Nevertheless, the crucial point was that The AKP wanted to support its partner, the newly elected Egyptian Islamist Justice and Freedom Party by giving this loan. The 2013 Egyptian military coup d'état probably had detrimental effects over the Turkish ODA to Egypt afterwards, as Turkey called back its ambassador in Egypt. By acting in such a manner, Turkey indicated its disapproval of the direction that the new Egyptian leadership was taking.

Libya

There is a similar pattern in Libya as well. Before the Arab Spring in 2010, Turkish ODA to Libya was USD 1,01 million. In 2011, the Turkish ODA, displaying a dramatic increase, went up to USD 53,11 million. Interestingly, the OECD statistics did not include the USD 300 million given to the Libyan rebels by Turkey in 2011 before they entered

Tripoli. However, the election of Liberal (non-Islamist) “National Alliance Forces” to power resulted in a decrease in Turkish ODA, delivering only USD 3,1 million to Libya in 2012. However, as I discussed in the previous chapter, Turkey continued to develop excellent economic relations with Libya after the Arab Spring. Surely, the financial assistance, totaled to USD 300 million, provided to the rebels in July 2011 positively affected the relations between Turkey and post-Gaddafi Libyan regime. On the other hand, the decline in Turkey’s foreign aid to Libya could be a result of Libya’s high returns from its natural resources, such as oil and natural gas. Although the Turkish foreign aid to Libya declined in 2012, Turkey continued to train the Libyan officials. For example, in 2014, 850 Libyan police officers were trained in Turkey. (Bloomberg 2013)

Tunisia

Tunisia displays similar patterns as well. Between 2003 and 2011, Turkish ODA to Tunisia was insignificant, only around USD 1 million. After the election of the Islamist “Justice and Development Party” to power, the Turkish ODA to Tunisia suddenly increased to dramatic levels, USD 60,39 million. High level of cooperation between Turkey and Tunisia since the election, marked by 32 agreements in the areas of society concerning politics, security, and economy, (Ihlas Haber Ajansi 2014) had probably taken this number to a much upper level by 2014.

TIKA supports Tunisia in social, economic, vocational, technical, political, and industrial areas. TIKA also tried to help Tunisia build a strong administrative and civic infrastructure. This way Turkey tried to contribute to the development in Tunisia. Turkey increased its assistance to Tunisia, particularly after the Jasmine Revolution in 2011. TIKA projects, starting with supporting the social and administrative infrastructure in Tunisia in 2012,

expanded to fields as diverse as politics, tourism, security, health, capacity building, and agriculture.

TIKA has initiated 32 projects since the Jasmine revolution. TIKA, for example, supported the establishment of an efficient fishery sector and textile workshops, opened date processing centers, and provided technical assistance in a number of other fields. Turkey also donated 522 vehicles, including ambulances, fire engines, and garbage collection trucks, to the new government in Tunisia. Turkey helped Tunisia create regional and sectoral development strategies and a mechanism for attracting investment. TIKA was also involved in various social projects in collaboration with the Tunisian government, such as providing food and bread to the most impoverished sectors of the Tunisian society on daily basis.

In political terms, the Turkish AKP established tight relations with the Tunisian Islamist Justice and Development Party (Al-Nahda); Turkey provided Al-Nahda officials with training in political campaigning, party organization, election monitoring, the inclusion of women, etc. In the administrative fields, Tunisian diplomats were given vocational training in Turkey. TIKA facilitated the training of Tunisian governmental statisticians by experts from the Turkish Statistical Institute. Turkish police provided practical training to 581 police staff from Tunisia within the framework of the Modernization of Justice Department and Security Cooperation Agreement; and this took place both in Turkey and Tunisia. Turkey also has helped Tunisia develop policies to support women and the disabled participation in economic, social, and political life. (Ihlas Haber Ajansi 2014) Through all these mechanisms and services, Turkey transferred its

democratic values to Tunisia. As it could be seen, this mostly happened through experience-sharing.

Syria

Turkish ODA to Syria followed the same pattern with the other Arab Spring countries. Turkish ODA to Syria initially increased from USD 0,1 million in 2003 to USD 5,69 million in 2007. As a result of Global financial crisis, it goes down to around USD 4 million in 2008 and 2009. It went up to USD 9.52 million again in 2010. After the arrival of Arab Spring to Syria, the Turkish ODA went up to USD 162,03 million in 2011. It continued to increase up to 1,019.93 billion USD in 2012. As the conflict continued in Syria, Turkey allowed over 1 million Syrians pass its borders. Some of them stay in refugee camps. Turkey provided those staying in Turkey's refugee camps with food, formal education, recreation areas, and vocational training. The other Syrians have been trying to make a living in Turkish cities by working unofficially for Turkish companies.⁸⁹ (See **Table 10**) The AFAD just revealed that Turkey's aid to Syrians has reached to USD 2.5 billion. (AFAD 2014)

⁸⁹ In Gaziantep thousands of Syrians work for private companies without a governmental approval. However, an official representing the Turkish state told me that the government needs to turn a blind eye to this. If the Syrians do not find a source of income in Turkish cities, they will fall into crime, more harmful for the Turkish society. Furthermore, he reiterated that (many Turkish industrialists and businessmen told me the same thing) *"we needed to bring immigrants to our cities. Our industrialists were not able to find enough work-force due to the rapid development of economy. The available workforce did not accept the proposed salaries or prices. Therefore, the coming of the Syrian refugees to Turkey greatly benefitted the Turkish economy by providing cheap labor and work-force."* (the interview took place in Fall 2013 in Gaziantep) I can easily argue that the contribution of the Syrian refugees to the Turkish economy is greater than the cost that Turkey spends on them.

Turkey has assigned officials from the Turkish Foreign and Turkish Domestic Affairs Ministries to coordinate issues concerning Syrian guests. Turkey created an institution called the Office for Coordinating Syrian Guest Affairs. (TIKA 2012) For example, in Gaziantep, Turkey assigned a coordinator to help the Syrian refugees to integrate into the local society. (Interview with a number of Syrians living in Gaziantep 2013) Syrians became more organized among themselves as a result, opening Syrian schools, work places, and cultural associations. (Interview with Ahmed Al-Bandery, a Syrian Businessman in Gaziantep 2013) Furthermore, the Syrian refugees living in Turkish cities are being provided with material support, such as food, shelter, and money on regular bases by the provincial governments. (Interview with a Top Governmental Official in Gaziantep 2013) Considering all these, it is clear that Turkish ODA in addition to humanitarian aid has increased to way higher levels than the government has reported. For example, TIKa did not include the assistance provided by the local municipalities and by local ordinary people within its TDA. If these were being added to the statistics, surely the numbers would go well beyond USD 1 billion for Syria.

Table 10. Turkish Official OHA to the Syrian Guests in Eight Major Cities, in USD Million

Provinces	Aid (USD)
Malatya	4
Adana	20
K. Maras	43
S. Urfa	295
Gaziantep	128
Osmaniye	25
Hatay	296
Adiyaman	27
Kilis	164
Total	979

***Source:** TIKA Development Report 2012

Finally, as the Syrian conflict is yet to be resolved, Turkey has been providing full support to the Syrian opposition to win the war against Assad. As it was argued in the previous chapter, this has become an existential issue for Turkey. According to many sources, Turkey has provided military aid to Syrian opposition as well. However, Turkey rejects the provision of military aid to the Syrian rebels, and there is no official data to support the Turkish military assistance to Syria. Taking these factors into consideration, it is clear that Turkish support to the Syrian opposition will continue to increase, until a Turkish friendly administration comes to power or until Turkey reaches the certain conclusion that the Syria opposition does not promise any future to bring Assad down.

Palestine

Turkish ODA to Palestine has been steadily increasing since 2003. In 2009 it went up to around USD 49 million, it dropped to around USD 25 million in 2010 and 2011, and then went up to around USD 51 million in 2012. Probably, the decline in 2010 and 2011 was partly caused by the global financial crisis that also affected Turkey, and partly by uncompromising behavior of different political parties in Palestine, preventing them from acting as a united force against Israel, extremely angering Recep Tayyip Erdogan. In this regard, the decrease in the amount of aid in 2010 and 2011 could be perceived as a type of punishment to Hamas rule by Turkey. However, later, Turkey changed its policy, re-increasing its support to Palestine to USD 51 million. The post-Arab Spring environment that brought Turkish friendly groups to power in a number of Arab countries, such as Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt, probably stimulated the idea that Turkey should support its

newly elected allies in the ME more forcefully. As a result, we witness an increasing trend in the Turkish ODA to Palestine, Egypt, and Tunisia.

Yemen

As Turkey has very little strategic interests in Yemen, even after the Arab Spring, the ODA to Yemen remains in insignificant levels, USD 4,53 million in 2012. However, as I discussed in the previous chapters, Yemen has been one of the co-chairs of DAD (Democracy Assistance Dialog) along with Turkey and Italy, launched within the BMENA's Forum for the Future Program in 2004. In this regard, Turkey has carried out projects to support democratization in the BMENA region, particularly in the areas of women's rights. However, Emrullah Isler, an MP of AKP, reiterated that "we are not concerned with Yemen as much as Syria. Syria is our next door. Whatever happens in Syria directly impacts Turkey. Therefore we need to engage in Syria." (Interview with Emrullah Isler 2012) This clearly explains the reason behind the low amounts of the Turkish ODA to Yemen.

The Other BMENA Countries

The Arab countries which had no or very little uprisings received the least development aid. For example, Morocco, Algeria, and Jordan received very little aid from Turkey under the AKP rule between 2012 and 2013. Until 2006, Turkey provided an insignificant amount of ODA to Lebanon, but in 2006 the amount of the Turkish ODA to Lebanon increased to over USD 36 million. Lebanon had been provided around USD 26 million for each year between 2006 and 2010. In 2011 and 2012, the ODA to Lebanon decreased to around USD 7 million. After 2010, Turkey redistributed the amount of ODA

between the countries in the ME, sending the most to the transitioning Arab Spring countries.

Although Turkish ODA to Iran has been was insignificant, Iran needs to be contextualized differently from the other ME states. First of all, Turkey does not feel the cultural, political, historical, and geographic affinity towards Iran, as it feels for the Arab ME. While the Arab ME was a part of Ottoman Empire—Turkey thinks of itself as the heir of the Ottoman Empire—, Iran has been perceived as a rival or an alternative Muslim civilization in Turkish mindset. The aforementioned statistics clearly indicate the areas that Turkey prioritized in it foreign affairs. These are Central Asia and the Arab ME. Also, Iran already has had a functioning self-sufficient political system, which actually operated based on elections and a clear and effective rule of law. In this regard, Turkey does not feel the need to further support development of Iran, at least officially. Moreover, the target state has to be open to the delivery of ODA as well. From our previous analysis in this dissertation, we know that a number of Arab states approached Turkey for experience sharing. It has been suggested by TIKA experts that the distribution of a large part of Turkish aid depends upon the demands of the target nations. (TIKA 2014) In this regard, the Iranian demand for the Turkish ODA has not been as significant as of the other states from BMENA, Central Asia, and Balkans.

Turkey's Official Humanitarian Aid (OHA)

Turkish OHA is a subcategory of the Turkish ODA. Turkey has a long history of responding to international humanitarian crisis. For example, when Pakistan was devastated by a mortal earthquake in 2005, Turkey was the largest government donor that

delivered aid to what it called the brotherly nation of Pakistan, with USD 141 million. By 2012, Turkish governmental humanitarian aid had dramatically increased to USD 775 million. This way, Turkish humanitarian assistance had exceeded 1 billion USD by 2012. This made Turkey the 4th largest global donor of OHA. (Global Humanitarian Assistance 2014) The amount of Turkey's humanitarian assistance within its ODA exceeded 41.4% of its aggregate ODA in 2012. In 2012, Turkey became the 15th largest donor of ODA in OECD.⁹⁰ According to Global Humanitarian Assistance Reports, Turkish humanitarian assistance was mostly delivered to the surrounding regions.⁹¹ The OECD data indicates that the Turkish ODA was channeled to Arab Spring countries such as Syria, Egypt, and Tunisia,⁹² as a way of supporting friendly political forces in the region in 2011 and 2012.

Table 11 indicates the amount of Turkey's Official Humanitarian Assistance (OHA) within its ODA. The statistics show that there has been a substantial increase in OHA since 2001. While Turkey's OHA was USD 3 million out of its USD 151 million ODA, the amount of Turkish OHA increased to USD 233 million in 2005, while the total Turkish ODA went up to 759 million USD in 2005. Between 2005 and 2009, the amount of OHA within ODA substantially decreased due to the global financial crisis. However, starting from 2010, Turkish ODA re-increased. While in 2010, Turkish OHA went up to 264, the total ODA had increased to USD 1,273 million by 2011. As indicated in the

⁹⁰ OECD Official Website, Turkey.

⁹¹ Global Humanitarian Assistance, Turkey

⁹² OECD Statextracts, <http://stats.oecd.org/#>

previous section, the total amount of the Turkish ODA had increased to USD 2533.3 million by 2012, due to people’s uprisings in the Arab ME.

According to TIKA, OHA helps the target country in the form of food, shelter, water and sanitation, economic recovery, infrastructure, education, and other types of aid. However, the Turkish OHA has been generally processed to the target states to provide educational aid, food, multi-sectoral assistance, health related assistance, shelter and non-food items, and other services or aid unspecified by the donor. The unspecified items probably include the political aid which states were reluctant to report. The amount of Turkish OHA targeting only Syrian refugees in Turkey has exceeded USD 1 billion. (TIKA 2012) As Turkey has followed an open door policy towards the Syrian refugees, a large portion of the Turkish OHA went to the expenses of the Syrian refugees. (Global Humanitarian Assistance 2013) Although Turkey reported 350 thousand registered refugees in 2013, (Global Humanitarian Assistance 2013) the unofficial number has gone way beyond 1 million due to Turkey’s open door policy towards them hitherto.

Table 11. OHA and ODA in Million USD 2001-2011

	Total OHA	Other ODA	ODA
2001	3	148	151
2002	3	152	154
2003	5	109	113
2004	66	424	490
2005	233	527	759
2006	150	669	819
2007	52	583	635
2008	31	709	740
2009	55	698	752
2010	146	799	944
2011	264	1,009	1,273

*Source: Global Humanitarian Assistance
 *Other ODA: Example, debt relief

***Source:** Global Humanitarian Assistance

Turkish OHA was concentrated on a small number of states between 2006 and 2014. While until 2011, Turkish humanitarian assistance had been provided to Pakistan, Iraq, and Somalia for the most part (67%), (Global Humanitarian Assistance 2013) since the beginning of the Arab Spring, the large portion of the Turkish OHA has been delivered to Syria.

To conclude, it can be said that Turkey's democracy promotion has been carried out mostly within the context of its ODA. Arab Spring compelled Turkey to redistribute its assistance between countries, allocating the biggest portion to the countries in transition. Turkish ODA has indicated substantial increase in the last three years as a result of its over-involvement in Arab Spring countries. For example, around USD 1.5 billion of USD, 3.5 billion Turkish TDA was delivered to the Egyptian Justice and Freedom Party and the Syrian refugees in 2012. In this regard, Turkey has shifted its focus from Central Asian republics primarily to the Arab countries in transition under the AKP administration. As I discussed in the previous chapter, Turkey's identity and strategic interests have played a major role in Turkey's involvement in the Arab Spring countries.

The statistics also provide us with very interesting findings regarding the regions prioritized by Turkey. After the collapse of the Soviet Russia, Turkey started to engage with the Central Asian republics through TIKA and Turkish civil society. Since the AKP came to power, Turkey turned its focus towards the BMENA. The Turkish case also indicate that once a TIKA-like institution is created for a particular reason under a particular government, it continues to perform the tasks it is created for even after the removal of the government that created it. However, its capabilities and goals could change

based on the available resources and the policy priorities of the time. While TIKA was created to perform development assistance in Central Asia in 1990s, it adopted a global agenda parallel to rapid economic growth under the Islamic AKP government in 2000s.

It is crucial to realize that both in 1990s and 2000s, Turkish foreign policy agendas are highly impacted by the US. After the dissolution of the USSR, the US tried to expand its influence over the Central Asian republics. The US motivated one of its closest allies, Turkey, to play a greater role in Central Asia. Turkey would find an easy acceptance by the newly found Turkik republics due to the shared identity in race and language. Motivated by the US, Turkey, under the leadership of Nationalist leader Turgut Ozal, started to engage with the republics.

Similarly, after the 9-11 terrorist attack, the US launched BMENA initiative to bring democracy to the ME as the US considered lack of democratization in the region as the root cause of radicalization. This time, Turkey under the leadership Recep Tayyip Erdogan, found the idea of playing a leadership role in bringing democratization to the region highly appealing. For Erdogan, democratization, open market economy, and the rule of law were good for people in the region, including Turkey. As a result, in both cases, the Turkish foreign policies were being highly influenced by the American foreign policy priorities.

However, the difference was that although the US trackbacked from promoting democracy in the ME, the AKP, on the contrary, increased its assistance to the opposition forces that wanted democratization in the ME at the expense of its relations with the US. The provision of USD 1 billion to the Justice and Freedom Party in Egypt and USD 1 billion to the Syrian refugees by Turkey in 2012 is a good example for this case. The US

felt threatened by the empowerment of the Islamic parties in the ME as they were highly critical of the Western role in the region. However, Turkey as a Muslim power, did not feel the way the US felt. Therefore, Turkey did not see any reason for why to trackback from supporting democratization in the region.

Generally, democracy promoter Western states have well-designed institutions to implement democracy assistance programs. The USAID, NED, NDI, and NRI are good examples of this, but Turkey does not have a well-designed institution founded solely to promote democracy in the target states. This has a deeper reason: Turkey does not define its activities in BMENA as the promotion of democracy although it has been a part of BMENA initiative since 2004.⁹³ Therefore, Turkey's democracy assistance is delivered to the target countries within the scope of its TDA. In this regard, TIKA, as the primary governmental institution, delivers ODA to the target states. However, parallel to Turkey's economic growth, TIKA's progressive transformation into an institution like USAID has been inevitable.

Turkish support for democratization of the BMENA has been driven by its strategic interests and values. Although before the Arab Spring, values and the strategic interests were in harmony, in the course of Arab Spring, strategic interests have become more dominant in Turkey's democratic assistance to the region. Parallel to this, Turkey has increasingly adopted more coercive means, such as the military intervention in Libya to collapse the Gaddafi regime. In this regard, it is safe to assert that in the course of Arab Spring, promotion of democracy via supporting the opposition groups has turned into a

⁹³ BMENA initiative is launched by the US to promote democracy in the ME.

matter of survival and power competition for Turkey; and progressive employment of force in this regard is a natural result of this change in policy orientation of Turkey in the ME.

CHAPTER VI: STRATEGIES (2): TURKISH DEMOCRACY PROMOTION THROUGH MENTORING, NORMATIVE PRESSURE, AND DEMONSTRATIVE EFFECT

In the previous chapters, I explained Turkey's promotion of democracy through its Official Development Assistance and through utilization of military power in the ME. In this chapter, my goal is to examine mentoring, demonstrative effect, normative pressure, conditionality, enlargement, and humanitarian assistance by CSOs as the other ways through which Turkey promotes democracy in the ME. I explain the Turkish mentorship in the ME in more detail in this chapter. However, Turkey's mentorship is directly linked to the Turkish ODA. The money spent on technical assistance and experience sharing comes from Turkey's ODA budget. However, in order to give a more specific account of this factor, I also included it in this chapter.

1-Mentoring

One of the ways Turkey promotes democracy is through mentoring the state officials and political party members of the other countries. Turkey has been providing assistance to surrounding countries to help build their capacities. (TIKA 2012) When the

AKP came to power, Turkey started to prioritize the ME in its foreign policy agenda. Therefore, under the AKP administration, Turkey progressively supported the creation of similar political and economic frameworks between Turkey and corresponding states to facilitate the political and economic interactions. Turkey also trained the officials of the target states in a number of areas, such as security, economy, and politics. In this section, my goal is to examine Turkey's democracy promotion by mentoring. In this regard, experts representing Turkish Armed Forces, Ministry of Education, Turkish Police, Turkish Statistical Institute, Turkish Undersecretariat of Treasury, and the AKP mentor the officials of the target states.

Training provided by Turkish security forces is a significant source of institutionalization of democratic values in the target states. Turkish Armed Forces, which is a NATO army, engages "in activities of programme assistance and technical cooperation in training, transport, energy, cultural cooperation, administrative and civil infrastructure sectors," as well as serving in "peace-building operations". (TIKA 2012) Turkish Armed Forces were also involved in peace building efforts in countries, such as Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Lebanon. Turkey's contribution to peace-building efforts has steadily been increasing; and this was estimated around USD 36 million in 2006, USD 51 million in 2009, USD 77 million in 2011, and USD 87 million in 2012. (TIKA 2012)

However, activities of the Turkish Armed Forces are not confined to the technical areas. For example, Turkish Armed Forces organize various courses to promote the participation of women in public life in Balkans and Southeast Asia. Turkish Armed Forces have also been involved in a number of educational activities in the countries they have operated, such as supporting the schools of those countries. (TIKA 2012) Within the

framework of Partnership for Peace Training Center, Turkish Armed Forces trained the personnel from the armed forces of countries as diverse as Lebanon, Tunisia, Libya, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, and Albania in 2012. Turkish Armed Forces also support Turkey's policies towards the Syrian guests with its available resources. (TIKA 2012)

In addition to the Turkish Armed Forces, Turkish National Police have been training police officers of countries, such as Tunisia, Macedonia, Bangladesh and Somalia. (TIKA 2012) The goal has been to exchange experience between the national police organizations of the attendee countries. The training program aimed to create a "common understanding in fighting crimes and to harmonize professional terminology" (TIKA 2012) among the attendee countries. However, the fact is that the security forces of the attendee countries emulate Turkish system while receiving training in Turkey.

It is also important to note that Turkish security forces provide training quite similar to that provided in the West. There are substantial relations between the US and the Turkish security forces. The top Turkish police officials are being trained in several top US universities.⁹⁴ They are being taught how to deal with crime in a democratic setting. Turkey's recent democratization was strongly influenced by these well-educated officers. Through the aforementioned programs, Turkish security apparatuses transfer their experiences and knowledge to their counterparts in the Balkans, ME, Africa, and Central Asia. In this regard, Turkey significantly contributes to human infrastructure and the

⁹⁴ I met several top level Turkish Police officers who were obtaining their doctoral degrees in a number of US universities, such as Kent State University and University of Cincinnati, in political science, sociology, and justice studies areas.

reorganization of the security sector of the target countries on the basis of democratic credentials.

Education is another way through which Turkish values are being spread in Turkey's neighborhood. Educational aspect of Turkish foreign policy is particularly helpful in improving human infrastructure in the target states (Kirisci 2012) In terms of education, Turkey has various programs, such as awarding successful students and providing them with the opportunity to obtain their higher educations in Turkish universities and the Turkish Military and Police academies. The TIKA statistics indicate that between 1990 and 2011, 40 thousand international students received their higher education in Turkey. This has happened within the framework of Turkey's "Grand Student Project", launched in 1990. (TIKA 2012)

To provide some details, Turkey provided assistance to 354 Iraqi students in the form of scholarship and other types of aid, such as clothing. Turkey also enabled 24 doctoral students with scholarships from Gaza Islam University under the Academic Support Program. (TIKA 2012) As a part of "Research and Doctoral Scholarship for Foreigners" project carried out by the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TUBITAK), Turkey brought 9 Palestinian, 3 Iraqi, 58 Iranian, and 1 Syrian student, in addition to students representing a number of other countries for their post-graduate studies. Turkey also provided assistance to 174 Syrian, 232 Palestinian, 504 Iraqi, and 660 Sudani college students in 2010. In addition, Turkey organized awards and scholarship programs for the master students to continue their educations in Turkish universities. (TIKA 2012)

Another aspect of Turkey's educational program concerns the deployment of teachers to the other countries. For example, "322 teachers were deployed to 13 countries including Tunisia, Iran, Lebanon, Libya, Afghanistan, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Moldova and Tajikistan" (TIKA 2012) as a part of an educational project implemented by The Ministry of National Education and the Presidency of Turks Living Abroad and Relative Communities. These teachers promote Turkish art, culture, language, and literature in target countries. This way Turkey has been diffusing its values in the surrounding countries.

Exchange programs have proved quite useful in promoting democracy. For instance, Morningstar, former United States ambassador to European Union, reiterated that "exchange programs have been especially successful" in terms of successful democracy promotion. According to Morningstar, thousands of high-school and college students that came from the former-Soviet countries returned to their countries with highly positive views of the US, having acquired democratic values. They influenced their surroundings (family, friend, and coworkers) in their countries. This created a multiple effect according to Morningstar. (Morningstar 2009)

Exchange students in Turkey get the chance to recognize an imperfect democracy with its strengths and weaknesses. Generally, international students that receive their education in Turkey come from closed, undemocratic regimes. Therefore, during their residence and education in Turkey, they get the chance to get to know a democratic system still in the making. When they return to their countries, they carry with them the values they have acquired in Turkey. (Kirisci 2012) I cannot forget a conversation with one of my Kazakh friend in this regard. He reiterated that when they go back to their countries, the

Kazakh state thinks that they are being overly Turkified, antithetical to Kazakh state's interests. Therefore, he added that the Kazakh state might terminate the educational cooperation program with Turkey.⁹⁵ On the other hand, these students could very well play a bridge role between Turkey and their countries of origin.

In this regard, similar to what Morningstar stated for the US, students that graduate from the Turkish universities become volunteer consulates of Turkey as they absorb the Turkish cultural and political values. When they leave, they leave with the love of Turkey inside, and they promote Turkey in their countries. Turkey is trying to find ways to increase the number of international students in the Turkish universities. (TIKA 2012)

Another way that Turkey promotes democracy in the surrounding countries is by mentoring the officials of the target states about economic matters. For example, Turkey's Undersecretariat of Treasury trains the surrounding countries' officials in the areas of Private pension system, capacity building for supervisory authority, financial services, exchange regime and OECD liberalization codes, public debt and risk management, insurance, and establishing a single treasury account system. This program included countries as diverse as Iran, China, South Africa, Colombia, Macedonia, and Tunisia. (TIKA 2012)

Nevertheless, it is important to realize that Turkish economic and financial systems operate according to the neo-liberal economic policies and open market rules and regulations. Within the framework of these types of training programs, Turkey basically teaches the officials of these countries how to organize their economy according to open

⁹⁵ Conversation with a Kazakh friend during my college education in Ankara in 2005.

market rules. This is not an intentional move to promote democracy by Turkey. (Kirisici 2011) The promotion of democratic values happens automatically in the course of practical training and implementation. In this context, Turkey just teaches the targets how to set a successful system.

However, this is in Turkey's interests: if the target states organize their economic and political systems similar to those of Turkey, the economic and political interactions between them become much smoother. Harmonization of the rules creates a greater clarity and predictability in both the Turkish and targets' markets. This is particularly helpful for businessmen who have investment in more than one country in these countries. Just as how the European businessmen ask the Turkish authorities to facilitate their investments in Turkey by making legal changes, the Turkish businessmen ask the other countries in the region, such as Iraq, Syria, Libya, and Egypt, to make changes in their legal frameworks to create a more conducive atmosphere for their FDI. For this reason, they also put pressure on the Turkish government to do its part.

As I denoted earlier, (non-educational) consultancy and know-how transfer is a significant part of Turkish democracy promotion. However, similar to the aforementioned cases, Turkey does not help to build the capacity of the target states to promote democracy. The diffusion of democratic values happens in the process of interaction. Also, Turkey's mentoring indicates Turkey's foreign policy priorities. After the Arab Spring, Turkey would turn its attention, and reallocate the biggest part of resources to the BMENA region. (TIKA 2012)

For example, Turkey provided consultancy services in sectors, such as health, finance, and security to a number of countries in 2010.⁹⁶ 123 Turkish experts provided Syria with consultation and know-how services. Also, Turkey assigned 111 Experts to Palestine, 100 to Afghanistan, 99 to Lebanon, and 72 to Iraq in 2010. (TIKA 2014) Hundreds of experts were also assigned to help a number of other countries, such as Kazakhstan and Kosovo. The total number of Turkish experts assigned to train the officials of the target countries was 1795 in 2010. The number of officials of the target states who were provided in-service training by Turkish experts in 2010 was 12143. (TIKA 2014)

Finally, Turkey is also involved in political training. Political training is carried out by the AKP. Over 20 political parties mainly from Asia and Africa ask the AKP to train them in areas, such as political campaigning, party organization, and party out reaching. The parties that ask for training come from very diverse backgrounds. For example, there are Muslim, non-Muslim, Islamic, conservative, nationalist, and liberal parties among those who demand such training. These parties come from diverse countries, such as the Kurdish Regional Government, Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, and some other countries from Africa and Asia. The AKP provides them with political party training by organizing workshops, conferences, and panels.

For example, an Islamic party from the Arab world asked the AKP for political party training.⁹⁷ The AKP accepted the offer, and organized a one week long workshop. Throughout the workshop, the AKP trained the representatives of that political party about

⁹⁶ As Turkey's assistance in education area is the largest, the education unit is examined as a different category by TIKa.

⁹⁷ I am not able to disclose the name of this party due to the ethical research conduct rules.

how to organize a successful party, carry out election campaigns, connect to youths and women, deal with authoritarian governments, and maintain grassroots campaigns. Furthermore, the AKP took them to different party buildings and state institutions (such as the Turkish Parliament) to show them the Turkish democratic setting, and how they functioned within this framework. Moreover, the AKP has developed tight relations with the trained parties due to these types of interactions.

The AKP has successfully transformed these conservative parties in some areas. Among its counterparts, parties with deep roots in political Islam, the AKP is the most progressive in terms of women's rights. More importantly, the Arab counterparts of The AKP do not have any concern for the involvement of women in politics. My interview with an expert from the AKP Foreign Affairs Commission sheds light on this point. She reiterated that a number of political parties from the Middle East asked them for political party training, most of whom being the conservative parties. She complained about the lack of women participants in the committees, which is quite surprising for Turks.

When they came for training, the lack of women within the participant group attracted our attention, and we had to explain them how important the women participation in politics was, by telling them that we received 54% of our votes from women. I asked them to bring female members with them for the next time. Although, they initially found the idea of the necessity of women participation in politics strange, in the next training session, they included women members within their groups. It is really strange for us to see a political understanding that excludes women. (Interview with an expert from the AKP's Foreign Affairs Commission 2003)

An important way that the AKP interacts with the ME is through panels. For example, an Ankara-based think tank, called Institute of Strategic Thinking which is also close to the AKP, organized a panel to discuss the Turkish-Egyptian relations after the military coup in Egypt, in Spring 2014. The participants included some well-known Turkish and Egyptian scholars, an Egyptian Journalist, and a top official from the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, who was a former minister of the Morsi Cabinet. The speakers discussed democratization in Egypt in comparison to the democratization in Turkey. They tried to draw lessons from the Turkish experience of democratization.

However, one important point was that the Turkish scholars emphasized the importance of non-violent way of maintaining their democratic struggles within Egypt. According to them, the military rule in Egypt already announced the Muslim Brothers as a terrorist group, and any act of violence, even from a distant member of the movement, could help the military rule to reinforce its claims. In this regard, they warned the Muslim Brotherhood to be careful about this, and to stay away from violence. This idea received a lot of support from the Egyptian speakers. In this regard, the AKP plays a highly constructive role, by its emphasis on peaceful ways of democratic struggle, in the process of change in the ME.

2-Demonstrative Effect

Huntington argues that democratization in a country can provide a positive example to the surrounding countries about the achievability of democratization and the way to initiate and maintain it. Huntington calls this the demonstrative effect. (Huntington 1991) For Huntington, the most successful case of democratization through demonstrative effect

happens in regions. Kirisci argues that transformation in the surrounding countries is strongly influenced by Turkey’s demonstrative effect. (Kirisci 2012) In this sense, Turkey does not intend to promote democracy, but Turkish values are diffused to the countries that it interacts with, automatically. Turkey only provides a successful model that they can emulate. In this regard, in the following part, I examine demonstrative effect as an important source of Turkey’s democracy promotion.

One way the positive Turkish model is channeled to the BMENA is through tourism. **Table 12** indicates that in the last ten years, the number of tourists from the surrounding countries to Turkey has been increasing due to the relaxed visa regime enforced by the AKP government with the other countries in the BMENA. For example, when the AKP came to power, the number of the tourists from the ME was around 780 thousand. However, this number went up to around 2.5 million in 2012.

Table 12. The Number of Tourists from the BMENA to Turkey

2002	2004	2008	2011
780.431	1.031.226	1.917.329	2.438.206

***Source:** Turkish Statistical Institute

Furthermore, Turkish model has found its way into the ME through a number of other channels. The most important channel is the regional and global media, which brought the Turkish economic success, Turkey’s democratization pains, and peaceful foreign policy in the past ten years to the attention of millions of viewers in the region. Furthermore, highly popular Turkish TV series created a positive image of Turkey in the

ME.⁹⁸ The aforementioned channels, such as experience sharing and educational opportunities, also provided the top officials and students from the region to see and emulate the Turkish model. As a result, people who came to Turkey saw how Turks maintained their lives. When they returned, they wanted to have the same system. In regard to Turkey's demonstrative effect, democratic values find their ways to the target states during socialization.

3-Normative Pressure

Normative Pressure (such as criticizing anti-democracy leaders and praising pro-democracy ones) is often used by international or supranational organizations, such as NATO and the EU as a way to promote democracy. This entails the “incorporation of new member states into an existing system of values, roles, and behaviors” (Kentmen 2012) In this new environment, the new member states are pressured to adhere to the shared norms and values. Normative pressure also includes openly announcing the democratic deficit of a state, calling the leader of a country during important decision making that affects its democracy to put pressure, promoting democratic norms in panels and conferences to make them more salient, monitoring elections, publishing reports on human right records of the states, and creating links between civil society organizations of the target and the donor countries. (Borzel and Risse 2009)

⁹⁸ For the Impact of the Turkish Soap Operas, also see Youtube Video. *Arab World is transfixed by Turkish Soap Operas*. World Focus Video Podcast, April 22, 2009. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ptJedfuGJtM>; Al-Arabiya News, Turkish Soap Star Sparks Divorces in the Arab World, 29 June 2008. <http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2008/06/29/52291.html>

Turkey, in many instances, has used a diverse set of normative pressure to open up a target country to democratic development. For example, Erdogan openly declared the need for democratic transformation in 2003 while delivering a speech in Harvard. (Erdogan, Democracy in the Middle East, Pluralism in Europe: Turkish View 2003) Also, before the fall of Mubarak, the prime minister of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan called on him to initiate a process of democratic reform, strongly demanded by his people. (Today's Zaman 2011) Furthermore, Erdogan called on the Muslim leaders to reform the political systems of their countries in Cidde Saudi Arabia in 2005. "Abdullah Gül, President of Turkey, was the first head of state who visited Egypt on 3 March 2011 in the aftermath of the Tahrir Revolution. Then, President Gül paid another visit to Egypt on 7-8 February 2013 and reiterated, on that occasion, Turkey's messages of solidarity and cooperation with the friendly and brotherly Egyptian people." (Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2014)

Abdullah Gul emphasized the need for democratization in the ME in ICO (Islamic Conference Organization) in Tehran, Iran in 2003. (Gul 2003) Furthermore, Erdogan tried to convince Syria's Assad to leave the power and transfer to democracy when the Arab Spring hit Syria for about six months. (A. Sahin 2012) Finally, while Turkish leadership strongly condemned the 2013 military coup d'état in Egypt, which ended the rule of Freedom and Justice Party, they motivated the Tahrir square, the supporters of Freedom and Justice Party, to continue their resistance to get their democratic rights back. (Bugun Gazetesi 2013)

Turkey, as a part of its democracy promotion policy, has monitored elections in a number of countries. For example, Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs appointed a group of ten representatives, called "Turkish National Observers Committee" (TNOC), to

monitor the election in Tunisia. (Ulutas 2011) Turkey also sent TNOC to observe the July 7, 2012 national elections in Libya. (Turkish Embassy in Trablus 2012) The TNOC which consisted on a diverse body of individuals, such as scholars, MPs, experts of Turkish Foreign Mission, also monitored the 2006 national elections in Palestine. (Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2014) Turkey also sent the TNOC to observe elections in diverse countries, such as Azerbaijan and Egypt.

Moreover, Turkey started to promote the Muslim rights through the establishment of Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Within this context, Turkish Ambassador Omur Orhun started to prepare reports on the conditions of Muslims in different EU countries, such as Sweden. With the election of Turkish candidate, Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu as the Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Turkey strengthened its role as the promoter of the Muslim rights. However, this also indicates Turkey's aspirations to represent and lead the Muslim world.

4-Conditionality

Conditionality is another effective democracy promotion instrument. It is also called the “carrots and sticks”⁹⁹ strategy. It can be positive or negative in nature. Conditionality entails that states making progress in democratization are rewarded while states regressing in democratic development are punished. “This method rests upon the assumption that countries are rational actors that value benefits over costs. (Kentmen 2012)

⁹⁹ For example, economic pressure, such as sanctions against governments abusing human rights or economic rewards, such as trade benefits and balance of payments for governments that support democratization.

For, example, in the past the US Congress stipulated assistance to the Ukraine to encourage it to progress in its democracy and to pressure Ukraine to solve its trade disputes with the US. (Morningstar 2009)

Turkey has recently started to employ this strategy so as to promote democracy in the region. For example, USD 1 billion ODA was delivered to Egyptian Justice and Freedom Party under Morsi leadership. This could easily be called as the carrot that Turkey provided Egypt for strengthening its government's capacity, necessary for a working democracy. Furthermore, Turkey downgraded its diplomatic relations with Egypt under the interim government after the 2013 military coup d'état. This could easily be regarded as Turkey's stick strategy for promoting democracy in Egypt.

5-Peace Building

Peace building is another way through which states promote democracy. For example, in Ukraine, Bosnia, Palestine, Caucasus, and Sudan, the EU has launched twenty-one missions on the basis of the European Security and Defense Policy. This tool is often utilized in Post-Conflict states and regions with the purpose of reconstruction, stabilization, and peace-building. Peace keeping operations, aiding security reforms, policing and border control, and supporting the rule of law are some of the activities carried out within this context. (Borzel and Risse 2009) Turkey has been involved in peacebuilding activities in a wide range of countries, such as Afghanistan, Bosnia, Kosovo, and Lebanon. (TIKA 2012) In this regard, Turkey has been supporting peace and stability in unstable democratizing countries.

6-Enlargement

Democracy is also being promoted through enlargement. Enlargement is often discussed within the EU expansion context. (Everts 2004) The EU, in the enlargement process, makes use of “carrots and sticks.” These positive and negative incentives motivate the candidate states to democratize. Interestingly, Turkey initiated a regionalization project by creating a visa free zone with Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon. It is called Shamgen, intentionally named this way to associate it with the EU’s Schengen agreement. Although democratization was not a stipulation for membership to this regional formation, Turkey’s democratic norms were diffused to these countries through Turkey’s socialization with them. For example, Turkey was able to transfer its experience regarding open market economy to Syria successfully. This substantially transformed the legal framework of the Syrian economic system. (Interview with A Young Syrian Scholar in Miami 2012) However, the Shamgen regionalization experiment failed in the course of Arab Spring. The member states had to make a strategic choice. Turkey’s pro-democracy policies started to threaten the undemocratic members of Shamgen, resulting in its failure.

In conclusion, this chapter attempts to explain the strategies through which Turkey promotes democracy in the ME. I argued that Turkey promotes democracy or diffuses its democratic values in the ME through at least six channels. These are mentoring, demonstrative effect, normative pressure, conditionality, hard power, and enlargement. As I have already given a detailed account of the Turkish ODA as a strategy to promote democracy in the region, I did not mention it in this chapter. Furthermore, as I broadly discussed the conditions under which Turkish democracy promotion becomes militarized in the fourth chapter, I did not include it in this chapter.

CHAPTER VII: STRATEGIES (3): TURKISH DEMOCRACY PROMOTION BY TURKISH CIVIL SOCIETY

In the previous chapters, I examined the Turkish state's promotion of democracy under the AKP rule in the last 12 years. However, the Turkish civil society is also involved in a modest exercise of democracy promotion. In fact, some of the major and most organized projects in this regard are carried out by the Turkish civil society. In this regard, I would like to explain the contribution of the Turkish civil society organizations (CSOs) to Turkey's democracy promotion policy in the ME. In this chapter, initially I determine the major CSOs that are involved in democracy promotion. Next, I explain the activities of these CSOs. Further, I expand on the weaknesses and the strengths of the Turkish CSOs that do the most in the ME in terms of the promotion of humanitarian and democratic values. Finally, I explain how independent the Turkish CSOs are from the Turkish government.

I develop my arguments in this chapter based on face to face interviews with CSO representatives and statistical data from the Turkish Statistical Institute. I determined the most relevant CSOs on the basis of the scale and nature of their activities outside Turkey. TIKA Development Reports and my interviews with CSO members helped me

substantially in this regard. It must be kept in mind that the Turkish CSOs are involved in a wide range of activities, ranging from opening educational and health institutions to orphanages and from providing emergency aid to the crisis hit areas to the direct promotion of democracy.

The democratic institutionalization on the basis of European harmonization packages provided the Turkish civil society with a fertile ground to flourish both in number and in influence. The 1980 constitutional changes resulted in the closure of around 20.000 CSOs, which almost consisted of the half of the total number of CSOs that time. (Park 2012) In the past 10 years, a wide range of CSOs were being established in Turkey representing a highly diverse set of people, such as Kurdish, religious, secular, and women groups as well as sport clubs. The governmental statistics indicate that the number of CSOs in Turkey has increased by 44% in the last decade. In 2000, there were 60,931 CSOs, and this number increased to 88,210 in 2011. (Saglam, Today's Zaman 2011) Moreover some of the CSOs started to expand their activities to the international level, which contributed greatly to non-governmental support of Turkey to democratization.

Parallel to rapid economic growth and democratization in Turkey, Turkish CSOs started to get involved in larger projects with greater numbers, such as building schools, hospitals, orphanages, and mosques in the target countries, such as Somalia and Afghanistan. (Dogan, Unofficial Interview with Ali Dogan 2013) While, in 2002, GDP per capita was \$3,500 in Turkey, it increased to over \$12,000 in 2012, in 10 years. Individuals who gained more wealth started to contribute to the budget of the Islamic humanitarian CSOs in a greater extend. Islamic CSOs in Turkey do not accept funds of

foreign origin; (Interview with Ahmet Unsal 2012) their resources are confined to the aid from individuals living in Turkey, and rarely to wealthy Muslims living abroad. In this regard, the freedom environment fostered in the process of the EU membership and economic development benefitted the Turkish CSOs greatly. In this new environment, the CSOs started to act more independently, carrying out some of the global-scale humanitarian projects.

TIKA rightly describes the role of the Turkish CSOs as: “In line with the recent Turkish foreign policy, Turkish CSOs, deeply rooted in centuries of charitable foundations tradition, play a significant role in Turkish development assistance in a multitude of geographies across the globe. Turkish CSOs engage in assistance activities of accommodation, health, clothing, food in situations of humanitarian crisis as well as post-crisis activities of education, vocational training, cultural and health aid etc. to heal disaster victims.” (TIKA 2012) (See **Table 13** for the change in the amount of civil humanitarian assistance between 2005 and 2012)

**Table 13. Turkish Humanitarian Assistance by CSOs between 2009 and 2012
Million USD**

Date	2005	2006	2009	2010	2011	2012
Amount	\$56.70	\$78.25	\$109.00	\$105.68	\$199.52	\$151.08

***Source:** TIKA Development Reports 2005-2012

TIKA’s reports indicate that a number of Turkish CSOs actively partake in the provision of humanitarian assistance. These are TOBB, Adana Dosteller (Adana Friendly

Hands), Beshir Social Society of Aid and Solidarity, Dost Eli (Friend's Hand), Sadaka Tasi Society, Turkish World Research Foundation, Turkish Religious Foundation, Yardimeli (Helping Hands) Society, Doctors Worldwide, Turkemeneli Foundation, and a number of other small CSOs. (TIKA 2012) However, the most notable CSOs in terms of promotion of democracy are TESEV (Turkish Economic and Social Research Foundation), IHH, Kimse Yokmu, MAZLUMDER, Doctors Worldwide, Gulen Group, and Deniz Feneri. In the following section, I would like to give a detailed account of the activities of the major Turkish CSOs with regard to their contribution to Turkey's democracy promotion agenda.

1-TESEV

TESEV, a partner of DAD (Democracy Assistance Dialog), promotes democratization in Turkey and the wider Muslim world. TESEV organizes panels, conferences, and roundtable meetings to discuss democratization of the BMENA. TESEV prepares a fertile platform for the exchange of ideas between governmental officials and significant civil society leaders. Through this way, TESEV has helped dissemination of information regarding the democratic transformation of Turkey and the BMENA. (TESEV 2014) This aspect of TESEV has also helped develop a civil society dimension of democracy and democracy promotion in BMENA region.

TESEV has three particular interest areas, which are Democratization Program, Foreign Politics Program, and Good Governance. (TESEV 2014) For example, some of the previous activities of TESEV include, but are not restricted to, disseminating information on reforming the institutions of justice, the new democratic constitutional process, the basic principles of a democratic constitution, democratic reform of police,

intelligence, and military in Turkey, democratic solution of the Kurdish issue, establishment of regional governance in Turkey, and finally freedom of the media and freedom of expression. Furthermore, within the scope of its DAD role, TESEV has produced knowledge on Turkish-Israeli relations, Armenian Diaspora, Turkish perception in the ME over the years, and how to improve the Turkish role in the region. (TESEV 2013) Most importantly, TESEV has played a particular role in helping improve the social, economic, and political conditions of women in the ME in cooperation with its Western and Middle Eastern counterparts. (TESEV 2005-2006)

While the AKP has promoted democracy in Turkey and BMENA, TESEV has performed democracy promotion as a CSO. TESEV has significant partnerships with western institutions, such as National Democratic Institutes (NDI), No Peace Without Justice (NPWJ, Italy), and National Endowment for Democracy (NED), and the Middle Eastern CSOs, such as the Human Rights Information and Training Centre (HRITC, Yemen). TESEV, a significant partner CSO representing Turkey in DAD, has provided a great platform for the exchange of ideas between the CSOs and the governments in the region.¹⁰⁰

2-The Gulen Community

In addition to TESEV, the Gulen group significantly contributes to the diffusion of democratic values as a civil society actor in areas they operate. The Gulen group is well-known for its efforts in starting up educational institutions globally. The Gulen community

¹⁰⁰ For further information, please visit TESEV Website at <http://www.tesev.org.tr/Eng/>

opens primary and high schools, college prep-schools, universities, language courses, cultural centers, residential homes, dormitories, and student houses almost in all countries.

The leader of the group is Fethullah Gulen. He is being recognized as an important religious scholar, public intellectual, and an Imam. He currently lives in a remote area in Pennsylvania, the US. According to Bilefski and Arsu, Gulen “has long advocated tolerance, peace and interfaith dialogue, drawing on the traditions of Sufism, a mystical strain of Islam generally viewed as being moderate.” (Bilefsky and Arsu 2012) However, many in Turkey accuse him for trying to infiltrate into the state apparatus. (Bilefsky and Arsu 2012) Despite the accusations, the Turkish courts have pronounced Gulen not guilty.

Educational activities of the Gulen group are important in the sense that they diffuse the Turkish values through their educational activities, emphasizing the culture of tolerance and cohabitation, deeply rooted in Turkey’s Sufi background. When the importance of tolerance and multi-culturalism are considered for a functioning democracy, importance of the activities of the Gulen schools could be realized in a better way. For example, Gulen schools in Bosnia contain a diverse body of students, such as Serbs, Croats, and the Muslim Bosnians. These are three groups that fought severely after the resolution of Former Yugoslavia. The same case could be witnessed in Sudan and Afghanistan as well.¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹ The Author’s interview with a number of key movement members in different time periods and locations between 2010 and 2014.

The Gulen group also possesses a large media network consisting of national and international newspapers and TV channels. For example, the Zaman Press that is owned by the Gulen Group is circulated in the EU and Central Asian republics in addition to Turkey. The Hira journal that disseminates knowledge on culture, religion, and science, is published in Arabic, and has been gradually gaining popularity. The Hira is the Arabic addition of the Sizinti in Turkish and the Fountain in English. The publishing companies close to the Gulen movement translate the books on the Turkish understanding of Islam into Arabic. (Kirisici 2012) This is important in terms of the promotion of democracy, as Turkish culture and religious understanding rooted in Sufism is transferred to the target countries by these channels. It is needless to mention that Sufism, which emphasizes tolerance and kindness towards the creation of God, is quite compatible with Western democratic values; and it is being diffused to Turkey's neighborhood partly by Gulen schools.

Although the number of Gulen schools per country is very small, their effects should not be underestimated. The graduates of the Turkish colleges and private schools are being appointed to the key bureaucratic positions in their countries.¹⁰² There are two significant reasons for this: Firstly, students are accepted to these schools after they take competitive exams, so the students accepted are generally among the smartest. Students

¹⁰² Gulen schools teach multiple languages in the target countries. In addition to the official languages of the target countries, they teach English, Turkish, and sometimes Russian, French, German, and Arabic according to the rules of the target country. Furthermore, the students of Gulen schools are among the best in academic performance in their countries. Naturally they come to important positions after completing their degrees. One thing to keep in mind is that these students are also raised admiring Turkey and Turkish culture. Therefore, they take Turkey as a role model. **Source:** Multiple conversations with teachers working in Gulen schools in different countries between 2010 and 2014.

receiving the top scores in the entrance exams of these schools are awarded with scholarships; secondly, students need to pay tuition. Therefore, only the children of rich families and the smartest kids have the chance to be accepted to these schools in impoverished states of Asia, Africa, and Balkans; and these schools are generally being established in the cultural, economic and political centers of host countries. In this regard, Gulen schools can easily be regarded as elite raising schools. Children graduating from these elite schools are placed in the best possible positions in their home countries. The graduates of these schools get a great chance to lead their countries based on the professional and life experiences they acquire in Gulen schools.¹⁰³

Gulen community carries out its humanitarian activities to the crisis areas through Kimse Yokmu (Is Anyone There) organization. Kimse Yokmu focuses on providing aid, such as food, clean water, shelter, and medication to needy people, particularly during crisis times. (Kimse Yokmu 2014) Kimse Yokmu also builds schools, hospitals, temporary houses, tents, and orphanages in areas hit by natural disasters. For example, Kimse Yokmu opened an orphanage, health clinic, school, and a place to provide hot meal on daily basis in Haiti after the recent earthquake. (Kimse Yokmu 2014) Similar services were provided to Pakistan after the earthquake of 2005 and flood of 2010. Kimse Yokmu has also provided humanitarian assistance to countries as diverse as Somalia, Palestine, Bangladesh, Azerbaijan, and Bosnia. (Kimse Yokmu 2014)

¹⁰³ The Author's interview with a number of key movement members in different time periods and locations between 2010 and 2014.

3-MAZLUMDER

Another significant CSO that contributes to Turkey's democracy promotion agenda is MAZLUMDER (Organization of Human Rights and Solidarity for Oppressed People). It prepares reports on human rights issues in the Muslim world. For example, MAZLUMDER published reports on human rights in Turkey, Arakan, Bahrein, and Bangladesh. MAZLUMDER has also been organizing conferences, panels, round table meetings, demonstrations, and human rights awareness sessions. This way, MAZLUMDER contributes to Turkey's democracy promotion agenda by creating awareness about the place of human rights within the Islamic context and human right abuses within the Muslim world. In this regard, MAZLUMDER is the conservative Muslim voice of universal values in the Muslim world representing Turkey.

On the other hand, it is quite clear that MAZLUMDER is particularly interested in the human rights problems in the Muslim world. As a result of this profound interest in the Muslim affairs, MAZLUMDER has developed strong relations with Islamic civil society and political actors in the region. (MAZLUMDER 2014) A key member of MAZLUMDER reiterated that "we have a lot of credibility in the ME. Sometimes the officials ask help from us when they need to address an issue in the ME." (Key Member of MAZLUMDER 2012) Different from Gulen group, MAZLUMDER obviously and solely focuses on the Muslim world. While carrying out its human rights campaigns, MAZLUMDER has successfully utilized and is motivated by its Muslim identity.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ I inferred this from our conversation with my interviewees from MAZLUMDER and from examining the materials on their websites.

4-Doctors Worldwide

Doctors Worldwide (Yeryuzu Doktorlari) is another significant CSO that provides humanitarian aid in the form of health assistance in countries with diverse identities and locations in the world. Doctors Worldwide are involved in a wide range of humanitarian activities. Initially, the Doctors was started by volunteer doctors performing free surgical operations in impoverished countries of Africa and Asia several times a year. Later, the Doctors got involved in building health clinics, hospitals, and educational centers in failed states, such as Somalia. Somalia does not have a working state system that could provide its people with the most basic services they need. Considering this desperate situation, the importance of the assistance of CSOs, as that of the Doctors, could be understood better. The Doctors bring Somalia the system it needs through health sector. It brings well educated doctors to train the doctors and technicians in Somalia. The Doctors have also opened hospitals in Yemen and Palestine. (Interview with a Doctors Worldwide Official 2013) In the following section, I would like to explain the type of relationship these major CSOs have with the AKP government.

Dependent or Independent

Turkish CSOs play an important role in disseminating knowledge, raising human capital, building relations with the civil and governmental actors in the target countries via networking, and providing humanitarian aid. All of these are important factors of knowledge-based society and important components of democracy and its promotion. Turkish CSOs have also expanded their reach to a global scale in the last few years as a

result of the freedom environment provided by the EU membership process and economic development in Turkey.

The AKP's coming into power in Turkey has accelerated and strengthened the position of the Islamic CSOs performing humanitarian activities. Until then, the Islamic CSOs and political forces had functioned sporadically. Therefore, the accurate description of what happened was the mobilization of the political and civic forces that shared the same world view around the same ideals, humanitarian activities and the promotion of human rights. (Yanik 2013) Soon the state under the AKP leadership coalesced with these CSOs, and started to work with them in a more coordinated manner in conjunction with the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Turkish Red Crescent. (Interview with a Doctors Worldwide Official 2013)

For CSOs to do their job effectively, they need to have a certain level of independence from the government. To empower their democracy, the CSOs need to play a balancing role against the government.¹⁰⁵ Independent CSOs also constrain government abuse of state power. In the last 12 years, all of the aforementioned CSOs have developed close relations with the AKP government. However, this does not mean that they are being controlled by the Turkish state in any way. These CSOs were conducting humanitarian works long before the AKP government came to power. Turkish CSOs have been performing their activities despite the restrictions of the Turkish state for a long period of

¹⁰⁵ Ketola, EU Democracy Promotion in Turkey, 2011

time. However, as most of these CSOs are Islamic in nature, the election of the AKP to power empowered their roles both domestically and internationally.

For example, by using its influence in police and civilian bureaucracy, the Gulen community helped the AKP government to take the military under the civilian control. Recently, the Gulen movement has severely criticized the Turkish government for partaking in corruption, which came to the public attention on December 17, 2013. The Gulen community also criticized the AKP government and unconstitutional firing and reassigning thousands of police officers to undermine the 17 December corruption scandal in which several members of the AKP cabinet was involved, including the Turkish PM. However, as it could be seen in the Gulen movement case, despite a successful cooperation in the last several years, the AKP government and the Gulen movement are now at the loggerheads. This is a good example of CSOs' independence from the government in Turkey.

To give another example, according to MAZLUMDER, the AKP has done better than the previous governments in terms of the democratization of Turkey. However, MAZLUMDER, a Kurdish Islamic CSO, does not think that the AKP has done enough in terms of institutionalizing democratic values regarding the protection of the rights of the underdog groups, such as Kurds and devoted Muslims. (Unsal 2012)

On the other hand, Doctors Worldwide does not have a political orientation as much as the Gulen movement and MAZLUMDER. Therefore, although they are not controlled by the state, they have not been confronting the state either. TESEV is a secular organization. Therefore, there is no ideological tie between TESEV and the AKP

government. Finally, it is clear that Turkish democracy promoting CSOs are highly independent from the Turkish government in their activities. When the policies of the government oppose their agendas, they take a highly critical stance towards the government. In the following section, I would like to discuss the contributions and the limitations of the Turkish CSO activities on the basis of interviews with CSO practitioners.

However, the greatest weakness of the Turkish CSOs is that only when a governmental policy harms their interest, do they raise their voices. They do not unite their resources to fight for the rights and freedoms of the civilians as a whole. For example, as Ketola successfully indicates, secular Turkish women groups have quite an uncompromising approach against the rights of religious women to cover. In this regard, unfortunately, in Turkey, the role Turkish CSOs play, as a whole, is far from where it is supposed to be so as to strengthen Turkish democracy.

The Strengths and Limitations of the CSOs

It is crucial to realize that humanitarian involvement can simultaneously be a strategic investment to serve Turkish interests. For example, one of the interviewees from Doctors Worldwide CSO that did not want his name to be disclosed suggested that “Turkish nation started humanitarian aid in Somalia without any consideration of strategic calculations, only for humanitarian reasons. However, the humanitarian aid to Somalia created a strong bond between Somalia and Turkey beneficial for Turkish interests. Turkey has become the most trusted ally of Somalia, and we have influence over the government of Somalia... It is important in terms of having a foot in mid-Africa. Once (North) Somalia was controlled by Ottomans, and the government surely, as a part of its historical mission,

finds it necessary to partake in resolving the crisis that Somalia is going through at the moment.” (Interview with a Doctors Worldwide Official 2013)

When I asked where Turkey stood in comparison with the US and the EU in terms of influence over Somalia, he told me that “we are not even close to them. They have big budgets for such works, and they make well-designed long term consistent plans. Our resources are much smaller; the way we work is not consistent; we do not work on the basis of well-structured long time plans like the West. What brings us the added value is that we deliver aid to crisis hit areas ourselves. The aid we provide is concrete and it directly meets people’s immediate needs, such as food, shelter, and larger projects, such as constructing orphanages, hospitals, roads, parliament, schools, water wells, and airports. People see these, and they have great impact on people’s daily lives and facilitate the functioning of the Somalia government. On the other hand, the aid delivered to Somalia for example, through the UN institutions, reaches people in need really late. When it reaches, often the crises are already over. In this regard, the timely delivery of UN humanitarian aid in crisis hit areas is inefficient and less effective.” (Interview with a Doctors Worldwide Official 2013)

Another interviewee gave some additional information about the way Turkish CSOs work providing humanitarian aid. He started with criticizing the UN by telling me that “the UN staff is afraid to interact with people in crisis areas. For example, in Haiti, after the last (2010) earthquake, because of security reasons, the UN delayed the delivery of the items for the urgent needs, such as food and shelter. People started to get violent because of hunger. On the other hand, we started to deliver the aid that we brought from

Turkey immediately. We established our tents to distribute food, clothes, and shelter, and we constructed a tent health clinic and a place for orphans immediately. Furthermore, we recruited Haitians to work with us for the delivery of the humanitarian aid. Fortunately, we were not faced with any dangerous situation there. The UN approach to people in crisis areas is biased. They see these people as dangerous.” (Interview with a member of Kimse Yokmu 2012)

On the other hand, Ahmet Unsal’s remarks, gives us important clues in terms of the influence of the Turkish Islamic CSOs in the ME. According to Unsal, “MAZLUMDER has a considerable level of credibility in the Muslim world. Using this credibility, we try to bring the conflicting Islamic groups together to facilitate the settlement of their problems.” (Unsal 2012) Although Unsal made these claims on the basis of his own experience as a top official in MAZLUMDER, the other major CSOs, which have Islamic sensitivities, are perceived the same way. For example, the Gulen group and Doctors Worldwide have a highly positive image in the ME as a result of their humanitarian activities.

Although in terms of the provision of humanitarian assistance, the Turkish groups are not as professional as the Western groups, in some other areas the Turkish civil society could be doing an equally good, if not a better job. For example, TESEV publishes high quality reports about different issues in the ME. Moreover, the Gulen schools, most of which are among the top schools wherever they have been started up, have become a brand that represents Turkey worldwide.

In conclusion, the Turkish civil society has recently emerged as an important actor in Turkey's relations with the other countries. The Turkish civil society has deep roots of charitable foundations. The Turkish CSOs function in the area of humanitarian assistance, education, health, politics, and economy. The major Turkish groups to be named are TESEV, the Gulen Community, MAZLUMDER, and Doctors Worldwide. While these civil society actors contribute to the democratic development and transformation of the target states, they also create strong bonds between the people in target states and the Turkish people. Although these groups cooperate with the government in the areas where they have common goals, they focus on their own agendas when it diverges or conflicts with that of the government.

Turkish CSOs have important weaknesses, but their strengths in some other areas compensate for their weaknesses. One important weakness of the Turkish CSOs is that they lack a long term and well-designed plan for their activities. In this regard, the strategic benefit of their activities might disappear in a short period of time. The strength of the Turkish CSOs originates from their direct interaction with people, particularly in crisis hit areas. Furthermore, some civil organizations have become successful in creating global brands. The Turkish Islamic CSOs are in a more advantaged position when it comes to establishing firm relations with the groups in the region. Their shared identity with region plays a facilitative role in this regard.

CHAPTER VIII: THE LIMITATIONS, STRENGTHS, AND SPECIFICITIES OF TURKEY'S DEMOCRATIC ACTIVISM IN THE ME

Hitherto, I have explained the domestic and international contexts in which Turkey launched its official democracy promotion policy in the ME, Turkey's motivations for promoting democracy, the conditions under which Turkey's democracy promotion policy is being militarized, the strategies through which Turkey has promoted democracy, and the role of the Turkish civil society in Turkey's democracy promotion policy. However, without explaining the limits of Turkey's democratic activism in the ME, this research remains incomplete. Furthermore, as I stated at the very beginning of this dissertation, I would also like to explain how Turkey's democracy promotion policy differ from that of the West.

In this chapter, I will first explain the perception of BMENA region about Turkey. The perceptions are important particularly as they tell how receptive the ME is to the regional power role that Turkey claims. Next, I will examine whether Turkey's democratic

activism is effective, if not, what the reasons are for that. Finally, I will introduce the specificities of Turkey’s democracy promotion policy in the ME.

BMENA’s Perception of Democracy and the Turkish Role

In terms of democracy, as in the rest of the world, people in the ME had a highly favorable opinion of democracy. As McFaul argues, democracy has a near-universal appeal. (McFaul 2004-2005) This is also the case in the ME. Moreover, according to the Pew-Research Global Attitudes Project Survey, people in the ME find Turkey as a sincere promoter of democracy in the region, unlike the promotion of the US and Israel. Not surprisingly, countries, such as Egypt and Tunisia, where Turkey did not have urgent security interests at stake and where Turkey quickly called on their dictators to leave power when the protests started, were the ones that had the most favorable opinion of Turkish democratic activism in the region in 2011 and 2012. However, the Egyptian and Syrian public opinions towards Turkey changed between 2012 and 2013.

Table 14. Continuing Desire for Democracy

Continuing Desire for Democracy			
Countries	2011	2012	Change
Lebanon	81%	84%	3
Turkey	66%	71%	5
Egypt	71%	67%	-4
Tunisia	-	63%	-
Jordan	72%	61%	-11
Pakistan	42%	42%	0

***Source:** Pew-Research Global Attitudes Project, 2012.

Although key Turkish policy makers relate the new interests in the Middle East towards Turkey to Turkey’s EU accession process, the polls show that “Turkey’s vastly improved image in the Middle East over the last decade is often attributed to its new active foreign policy in the region, its economy and popular culture.” (Levack and Percinoglu 2012)

A public opinion poll conducted by TESEV in 2012 indicates that the average positive perception towards Turkey in the BMENA was 75%. While in North Africa and the Arab peninsula, around 84% of people had positive perceptions towards Turkey, in Levant, it was 66% and in Iran 71%.¹⁰⁶ However, the popularity of Turkey dropped to 59% in 2013, the sharpest decline being in Egypt and Syria, where Turkey has had acted highly partisan during the Arab Spring.

Table 15. People Think That Turkey Favors Democracy in the ME

People think, Turkey favors Democracy in the ME (%)	
Lebanon	49
Turkey	58
Egypt	78
Tunisia	74
Jordan	70
Pakistan	38

*Source: Pew-Research Global Attitudes Project, 2012.

Table 16. I totally agree that Turkey can become a model for BMENA region countries

¹⁰⁶ North Africa includes Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt; the Arab Peninsula includes Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Kuwait, Iraq, Bahrain, the UAE, Qatar, and Oman.

Egypt	42%
Jordan	66%
Lebanon	49%
Palestine	72%
S. Arabia	65%
Syria	21%
Iraq	62%
Tunisia	74%
Gulf	58%
Yemen	70%
Libya	67%

***Source:** TESEV 2013 Public Opinion Poll Survey in BMENA Region (Akgun and Gundogar, The Perception of Turkey in the Middle East in 2013 2014)

Table 16 indicates that Turkey is still seen as a model in the region by 51%. People who think that Turkey could become a model do so for Turkey’s growing economy (34%), democracy (24%), secular political system (19%), Muslim background (20%), and its strategic value (6%). Although the polls show that only 20% of people in the BMENA think that Turkey’s Muslim identity is what makes Turkey a model, if this religious component was not there, presenting Turkey as a model to the region would be quite meaningless; one of the European countries could pretty well play that role.

Table 17. Turkey’s Role in the ME

Turkey’s Role in the Middle East				
Date	Influence	Model	Cohabitation	Bigger Role
2011	70%	61%	67%	71%
2012	61%	53%	58%	66%
2013	64%	51%	55%	60%

***Influence:** Turkey has become more and more influential in BMENA Region politics in the recent years.

***Model:** Turkey can be a model for BMENA Region countries.

***Cohabitation:** Turkey is a successful example of coherence of Islam and democracy.

***Bigger Role:** Turkey should play a bigger role in the BMENA Region.

***Source:** TESEV 2013 BMENA Public Opinion Poll (Akgun and Gundogar, The Perception of Turkey in the Middle East in 2013 2014)

Table 17 indicates interesting facts about how people perceive Turkey in the ME. On one hand, belief for Turkey's playing a model role dropped from 61% in 2011 to 51% in 2013. On the other hand, people still think that Turkey is an influential actor in the BMENA region. While in 2011, the rate of people who thought this way was 70%, this rate decreased to 61% in 2012, and then climbed up to 64% in 2013, a period where Turkish policies are the most questioned in the ME. Finally, the rate of people who think that Turkey should play a greater role in the ME has dropped from 71% in 2011 to 66% in 2012, and then to 60% in 2013 in the BMENA region. However, most of people still think that Turkey should play a role, despite the troubles that Turkey has faced in Egypt (the removal of its closest ally, Morsi, from office) and Syria (Turkey's support for anti-Assad groups has made Turkey an unpopular actor there).

One of the questionnaires tried to measure the positive influence of external actors on the process of Arab Spring in people's perception. While in 2011, 56% of people considered Turkey to have a positive influence over the Arab Spring, this number declined

to 42% in 2012, and then to 37 in 2013. In this regard, Turkey had the highest ratio compared to the other actors, such as the US (24%), France (28%), Germany (27%), the UK (26%), Russia (29% in 2012, 38% in 2013) and China (29% in 2012, 38% in 2013) for the year 2013. However, an interesting fact is that the perception about the Russian and Chinese role has improved. (Akgun and Gundogar, The Perception of Turkey in the Middle East in 2013 2014) This is a bad news as the democratic states are losing credibility in the region. This could lead people to imitate Russia and China instead of the democratic world.

To sum up, there is a favorable environment towards Turkish role in the BMENA region. Only in Egypt and Syria, perceptions towards Turkey have sharply declined. Nevertheless, even in these two countries, substantial segments of the population support the Turkish role. These are the groups that Turkey has supported in these two countries during the Arab Spring. It can clearly be seen that perceptions change quite rapidly, meaning that a country can transform the perception in the target countries by following the right policies. In these regard, Turkey can improve the way people perceive it in Egypt and Syria in the long run by moderating the aspects of its policies towards these countries that people find unattractive.

Moreover, people in the ME believe in the sincerity of the Turkish leadership in their support for democratization of the region. This is a big plus for Turkey. This means that Turkey still has credibility and soft power in the BMENA region. Turkey has the potential to make BMENA states do what it wants them to do by its attraction and credibility rather than by hard power tools. In this regard, Turkey should be very careful not to further damage its credibility in the region.

However, one point that needs to be paid serious attention is that the perception towards positive role that the democratic world, including Turkey, played during the Arab Spring has been declining while Russia's and China's roles has gained more credibility. In this regard, this is an alarming situation as people might prefer authoritarianism instead of democracy as a result of the inconsistent behaviors of the well-established democracies. However, an equally important issue is whether Turkey has the capacity to turn these positive perceptions into strategic gains in the region. In the following section, I will try to find an answer for this question.

The Effectiveness of the Turkish Democracy Promotion

As it has been indicated in the previous chapters, Turkey has substantially invested in its ties with the ME. Among the other things, one substantial goal of Turkey is to become a regional hegemon in the ME. This goal does not contradict Turkey's other goals, such as promoting stability and democracy in the region. However, the question is whether Turkey is able to play such a role. If it is not, what is the reason for that?

Statistics about Turkey's economy and politics indicate that Turkey can actually play a major role in the ME if its shortages are being addressed. To give some detailed information, Turkey possesses the second largest NATO army. Turkey has also been building its high-tech weaponry systems progressively.¹⁰⁷ Turkish economy is the 16th largest globally and 6th largest in the EU. (CIA World Facts Book 2013) While Turkey's

¹⁰⁷ For detailed information about Turkey's military power, see Sabah Gazetesi, Rakamlarla Turkiye ve Suriye Ordulari, February 28, 2013. <http://www.sabah.com.tr/fotohaber/dunya/rakamlarla-turkiye-ve-suriye-ordulari?albumId=42823&tc=18&page=8>

GDP was USD 232 billion when the AKP obtained power in 2002, it went up to USD 1125 billion in 2012. Parallel to this, GDP per capita went from USD 3.500 in 2002 to over USD 12.000 in 2012. (Webpage n.d.) Turkey's export to the ME went from around USD 4.5 billion in 2002 to around USD 33.3 billion in 2012. Turkey's import from the ME jumped from around USD 3.1 billion in 2002 to around USD 24 billion in 2011. (Turkish Statistical Institute 2013) No other country in the region has the military and economic power at this magnitude. Turkey's imperial experience in the region also sets it apart from the other states.

The same positive trend has been observed in the support that Turkey provides for democratic transformation in the ME. To provide some details, Turkish ODA to the ME increased from USD 2.45 million in 2003 to USD 1.7 billion in 2012. (TIKA 2012) Turkey took part in a limited NATO military campaign against Gaddafi in Libya; Turkey opened its doors to Syrian refugees, and assisted the Syrian opposition in their fight against Assad. Turkey strongly supported the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Tunisia after their election to power. Turkey provided them with financial assistance, consultation, know-how transfer, and technical assistance in the areas of security, democracy, society, and economy. Turkey's Islamic CSOs, most of which has global humanitarian agendas with a special focus on the Muslim World, also increased their engagement with the ME. (TIKA 2012)

Although Turkey increased the amount of its aid that it provided for democratization and development of the states in the ME, Turkey's human structure that could effectively and efficiently turn this investment into long term strategic benefits is missing. Turkish Foreign Mission is the primary institution that is responsible for

establishing the infrastructure for the realization of Turkey’s regional and global goals. (Kutluay and Dincer 2012) The human infrastructure could entail the low number of employees representing the Turkish Foreign Mission in the ME. It could also refer to the insufficient expertise on the ME in Turkey. In fact, Turkey’s failed Syrian and Egyptian policies well indicate Turkey’s urgent need for experts on the ME.

In order to clarify this point, let me provide some details. Turkey has 25 foreign missions in the Arab ME. The total number of career staff working in the Arab ME is 135 (See **Table 18**), and this means that Turkey is represented by 5 diplomatic staff in each Arab state. Only 6 employees out of 135 can speak Arabic. The 2011 statistics indicate that a sum of 26 employees can speak Arabic in Turkish Foreign Mission. This was 10 in 1990. Turkish Foreign Mission has traditionally complained about the heavy workload because of the insufficient employees that confined its operational capabilities. However, this problem has worsened as a result of Turkey’s increased engagement with the ME.

Table 18. Institutional Infrastructure of the Turkish Foreign Affairs Ministry

	1990	2000	2011
Embassies	73	91	114
Consulates	53	59	71
Permanent Missions	8	11	11
Total Number of Personnel	3.957	4.574	5.744

***Source:** Data in this table is obtained from the Turkish Foreign Affairs Ministry by Osman Bahadir Dincer and Mustafa Kutlay.

Although Turkey has increased the number of employees in its Foreign Mission in the ME, this number is far from being sufficient. This becomes obvious particularly when we compare it with the foreign missions of the other major countries. For example, in 2011, the US had 66591 employees, and it allocated Euro 39336 million to its foreign mission. The number of employees working for the Turkish foreign Mission was 5533 for 2011. This number was 4574 in 2000 and 3957 in 1990. In 2011, Turkey allocated around Euro 437 million to its Foreign Mission. Germany on the other hand allocated Euro 3194 million to its Foreign Mission in 2011. For the same year, the number of employees working for the German Foreign Mission was 12437. For 2011, Brazil allocated Euro 986 million to its Foreign Mission. The number of employees working for the Brazilian Foreign Mission was 4150. (Kutluay and Dincer 2012) Other major EU countries, such as the UK, France, and Italy allocate much more resources to their Foreign Missions compared to Turkey.

As the statistics indicate, Turkey is way below the US and Germany in terms of resources that it allocates to its Foreign Mission. Although Turkey's human infrastructure is better than Brazil's, Brazil allocates more budget to its Foreign Mission than Turkey. In this regard, in order for Turkey to be able to compete against the EU countries and the US, it needs to further improve its operational capabilities. (Kutluay and Dincer 2012) Only after the human infrastructure that carries out the projects is sufficient, can Turkey increase the effectiveness and the efficiency of the Turkish foreign mission in realizing Turkey's regional ambitions. Turkey will achieve better results if it can pool its resources with that

of the EU and the US in the ME. However, because of differences in their identities which strongly impact their cost-benefit calculations, such cooperation in the area of supporting democratization in the ME does not seem to be a viable method.

Turkey's engagement with the ME is through many channels. As indicated in the previous chapters, TIKA, Turkish CSOs, Turkish Government, and the other Turkish governmental institutions provide assistance to the ME in their respective fields. However, despite such a large amount of investment, Turkish Foreign Mission remains weak as a result of its shortages in human infrastructure. This affects all other institutions as the Turkish Foreign Affairs Ministry is the head institution that coordinates all the aid on the basis of Turkey's foreign policy priorities. In this regard, Turkey's democratic and humanitarian projects in the ME remain haphazard, short-term, on-demand, and without a meaningful long term strategic calculation by the Turkish officials. Even if Turkey formulates a long term strategic plan for its investment in the ME, the inadequate human infrastructure of Turkish Foreign Mission would not correspond to this long term plan.

On the other hand, Turkey is perceived quite positively in the ME. (Akgun and Gundogar, The Perception of Turkey in the ME in 2013 2014) However, this positive perception of Turkey, as the developments in Syria and Egypt have indicated, could wane away in a short period of time, if the right decisions are not made by politicians. Under the AKP administration, Turkey has tried to maintain its strategic relations with states in the ME over official institutions and mechanisms. Inter-cabinet meetings that indicated strategic alliances and free trade zone agreements were good practices of this

institutionalization. Again the lack of experts that would be responsible for maintaining these relations on a regular basis has not been adequate as indicated above.

Interestingly, lack of a well-structured plan and institution to support democratization in the ME has still had some positive implications. (Kirisci 2012) Turkey's democracy is still in the making. What Turkey does most of the time in the ME is to share its experience. Parallel to Turkey's democratization and economic development, its relations with the ME in areas of trade, tourism, media, entertainment, education, and bureaucracy have also substantially improved. The region witnessed the pains of democratic and economic growth in Turkey, and the global media, such as Al-Jazeera and CNN, played a role in informing people about this change. In fact, without the impact of the global media, as an intervening variable in this process, the transformations in Turkey would not produce the results witnessed at the present. Next, the democratic transformation in Turkey motivated groups in the ME to achieve the same outcomes. (Ulgen 2011) This is Turkey's demonstrative effect. Turkey has achieved success through its demonstrative impact by becoming a source of inspiration for people in the region, which brought about the Arab spring. (Kirisci 2012)

Positive public opinion about Turkey in the ME has placed Turkey in a more advantageous position over the Western states. According to 2013 SETA public opinion poll in the BMENA region, despite Turkey's over-engagement with some countries in the region which caused a severe decline in positive perception towards it, such as in Syria and Egypt, over 50% of people still perceive Turkey positively, and want Turkey to play a greater role in the ME. In this regard, the ME has the good will that Turkey needs to

materialize on. (Akgun and Gundogar, The Perception of Turkey in the ME in 2013 2014)
However, Turkey does not have the necessary human infrastructure and experience to materialize on this good will. (Dincer and Kutluay 2012)

Furthermore, Turkey needs to be careful not to harm this positive perception in the region. Currently, there is a gap between Turkey's aspirations and capabilities. Therefore, Turkey needs to follow a low profile in the region in line with its organizational capabilities. Once its organizational capabilities reach a meaningful level, then Turkey should try to realize more ambitious goals, such as the order giving role. At the moment, the only way to shape the political order in the ME for Turkey is to work as closely as possible with the international society, particularly the EU, the US, and the regional powers.

One important question concerns, how Turkey differs from the US in terms of its activism in the ME. Moreover, what are some futures of the Turkish democracy promotion that are absent in the West? In the following section, I will try to answer these questions.

The Specificities of the Turkish Democracy Promotion

There are a couple of points that need to be distinguished about Turkey's democracy promotion. Firstly, Turkey still does not have an official democracy promoter institute. Although TIKA is progressively transforming into such an institution, it is not there yet. (Kirisci 2012) Secondly, Turkish officials do not call what they do in the ME as democracy promotion. The reason is that democracy promotion has a negative connotation in Turkey. The rhetoric of democracy promotion is seen as a tool to exploit the natural

resources in the ME. Therefore, Turkish officials name what they do as supporting welfare, human rights, and stability in the ME.

Moreover, the dominant view among the Western scholars is that states promote democracy in the target countries when their short-term strategic interests are not threatened or when democratization of the target states serve promoters long term strategic interests.¹⁰⁸ (Smith 2010) The Turkish case is the case of a medium power which has no control over crucial political developments in its immediate neighbors. Simultaneously, Turkey partly promotes democracy to preserve its short-term security/survival as well as long term economic and security/alliances interests.

To specify this point, Turkey's engagement with Iraq under the American occupation and currently with Syria hit by the Arab Spring is a result of its concerns for its territorial integrity and national unity. Turkey, as a medium power, does not have the ability to oppose the US, which aimed to install democracy in Iraq after its occupation. In order for Iraq, which is heterogeneous in terms of ethnicity and sect, to maintain its territorial integrity, Iraq needed to have a working state after the occupation. Thus, democracy promotion has become a useful tool for Turkey to ensure its survival by building a working Iraqi state. Otherwise, the divisions on the basis of ethnic or sectarian lines in Iraq could threaten Turkey's territorial integrity.

Turkish democracy promotion serves its long term strategic interests for three reasons: Firstly, Turkey believes that only democracy could create a long term stable

¹⁰⁸ See also Robinson, *Promoting Polyarchy*, 1996.

environment, conducive to investment and sustainable peace in the ME; secondly, Turkey wants the states in the ME to organize themselves in the same manner so that economic and political interactions between Turkey and these states become easier; and thirdly, democratization in the Middle Eastern states helps bring the friendly, like-minded governments to power. Turkey does promote democracy for humanitarian reasons. However, this happens only when its strategic interests are not at stake. Therefore, regardless of their power capabilities, primary concern of states is their survival, and the humanitarian concerns have a secondary importance for them. (Waltz 1979)

Furthermore, Turkey has the leverage of being a Muslim nation in the ME. Unlike the West, Turkey does not feel threatened by the empowerment of the Islamic groups in the ME. However, this is not the case for the US and the EU. For example, when in 2005 and 2006, Islamic groups gained more power in the ME, both the US and the EU withdrew their support for democratization of the region. The reason was that they thought the election of these Islamic groups, strong critics of the Western policies towards the ME, was antithetical to the Western interests. (Youngs and Wittes 2009) On the other hand, Turkey did not think the way the West thought. Furthermore, Turkey called the backtracking of the West as double standards against the elected devoted Muslims. Suddenly, Turkey found itself at the loggerheads with the West as it continued to support democratically elected Islamic forces in the ME. Therefore, values of statesmen can strongly influence their policies towards the target states.

Moreover, the AKP's role conception towards the ME strongly influences its subsequent policies. The AKP perceives Turkey as the heir of the Ottomans. It also

conceives Turkey as a regional power in the ME. As a result, the AKP necessarily attributes the leadership and the role of being the organizer in the region to Turkey. Therefore, in the AKP psyche, democratization of the ME would help people to emancipate themselves from the dictators who are the remnants of the Western imperial past. Democracy would also help bring the like-minded governments to power in the ME. Then, long missed regional integration in the ME could be realized.

The motivation for bringing like-minded governments to power seems to be the common point regardless of global power statuses of the states when promoting democracy. It is generally agreed that the US has many flaws and inconsistencies in its democracy promotion. Moreover, it has also been stated that the US support of democracy has been to serve the purpose of bringing American-friendly groups to power in target states. Similarly, Turkey has helped substantially the elected Islamic parties in Arab Spring countries as a matter of strategic alliance building. Often though, it is the harmony between states' aspirations and power capabilities that mostly determines the chances that such policies will have to succeed.

Hitherto, I have explained the limits of Turkey's role and the differences between Turkey's and the West's democracy promotion policies. In the following section, I would like to explain the type of democracy Turkey promotes in the ME.

The Type of Democracy Turkey Promotes in the ME

As I argued in the previous chapters, Turkey promotes democracy in a number of ways, including regionalization, military intervention, experience sharing, political party

training, and demonstrative effect. Therefore, the nature of Turkey's democracy promotion should be examined from a number of dimensions.

To begin with, one way Turkey promotes democracy in the ME is by sharing its experience. Turkey transfers its democratic procedures, norms, institutions, and mechanism in the process of experience sharing to the states in the ME. Ikenberry argues that "a common identity among states facilitates the establishment of a stable and durable order. Values and a sense of community matter as a source of order—not just power and interests... States with similar political values and social purposes will be more likely to understand each other, which facilitates cooperation. If the common values are liberal and democratic, substantive norms exist that specify expectations about how conflicts are to be resolved." (Ikenberry 2000)

In this regard, the more neighbors around Turkey organize themselves in a fashion similar to Turkey, the easier it becomes to interact with its neighbors for Turkey. Turkey generally shares experience and transfers know-how in areas, such as finance, security, banking, border regimes, social services, and building physical and human infrastructures essential to the functioning of a state. Because Turkey's democracy is far from perfect, it transfers its experience in democratic functioning of the states to the ME with all its flaws and weaknesses.

In other words, Turkey promotes democracy in the ME through political party training. The AKP has been providing Islamic parties in the ME with training. Political party training entails how to run an affective election campaign, to set the party structure, to frame discussions, to set agendas, to connect with people, to outreach the youths and

women, and how to act in post-conflict settings. The AKP basically teaches the Islamic parties how to achieve success in their respective countries.

The AKP has an Anglo-Saxon understanding of secularism that promotes the freedom of religious practices, a highly liberal political conception of women that stresses the participation of women in all sectors of life, a populist understanding of democracy that places the main emphasis on elections despite the pluralist rhetoric, and a conservative understanding of social issues, such as the alcohol consumption, mixed male-female student houses, and abortion. In this regard, these are the values that the AKP transfers to the participant political parties via training.

Nevertheless, it does not mean that the participants automatically accept the promoted values. For example, the Egyptian Justice and Freedom Party opposed the idea of secular state promoted by Erdogan right away. Unlike the Egyptian Islamists, Tunisian Justice and Development Party embraced the idea of secular rule more readily.

Turkey's demonstrative impact has been one of the most influential ways to promote democracy in the ME. The reason is two folds. Firstly, Turkey diffuses its values to the surrounding countries via socialization through trade, tourism, cultural and educational exchanges. Secondly, global media has also effectively presented Turkey as a model to the ME. This was in line with the role ascribed to Turkey by BMENA initiative. In this regard, democratic and economic growth of Turkey was being presented to the ME via media networks, such as Al-Jazeera and CNN on regular basis. Without the endorsement of these media networks, even if Turkey achieved an impressive success, its impact in the ME would not be as powerful. Since Turkey had similar economic and

political problems with the Middle Eastern states, the positive developments in Turkey under the AKP rule, presented by powerful global media networks, created a substantial amount of interest towards Turkey. This paved the way for emulation of the Turkish values in a greater extend in the ME.

In conclusion, this chapter indicates that the ME is still highly receptive to the role that Turkey wants to play in the ME. However, Turkey has some shortages that make its democratic activism and any other policy towards the region less effective. Turkey does not have the adequate human infrastructure to realize its goals in the ME. Furthermore, Turkey's democracy promotion differs from that of the US firstly because of its strategic choices articulated within its respective cultural environment, its power capabilities as a medium power, its claim of regional power role in the ME, and its lack of an institution designed so as to promote democracy. The type of democracy Turkey promotes is similar to that of the West when the Turkish state shares its experience with the other states to develop human infrastructure and legal framework. Furthermore, the AKP plays a constructive role by mentoring the Islamic parties about how to adopt and achieve success in the authoritarian settings of their states and how to act in post-conflict political environment of their societies (such as the 2013 military coup d'état in Egypt).

When the ME is examined, it is seen that the Arab world, despite what has happened, has a favorable opinion of Turkey and still thinks that Turkey could and should play a greater role in the ME. Only in Egypt and Syria, where Turkey has overly being involved, there is low support for the Turkish activism in the region (Egypt around 25% and Syria around 30%). Also, the Turkish promotion of democracy is considered sincere

as opposed to the Western promotion, which is being dismissed as hypocrisy. In this regard, Turkey has credibility, and people still think the Turkish stance matters. In this context, Turkey could actually play an important role in institutionalization of the democratic principles in the ME more than any other state.

CHAPTER IX: CONCLUSION

When the AKP was founded, Turkey was going through substantial social, political and economic processes. Among other things Turkey was devastated by the 1999 Istanbul earthquake, 2001 political crisis, economic devastations, and terrorism problem. Within this environment, the divide between the Islamists and the seculars as well as between Kurds and Turks sharply exacerbated. The Islamist Salvation Party government was removed from power by the pressure from the Turkish military in 1997. In this psychological context, some Turkish Islamists took a decision to establish the AKP.

The AKP would be different from the Islamist party (National Salvation Party) in a number of ways. The AKP adopted a pro-Western, pro-democracy, and pro-open market economic system attitude. In this regard, the AKP was founded as a globalization friendly political party. Furthermore, the AKP accepted the main pillars of the Turkish system, such as democracy and secularism. However, later the AKP would revise the Turkish secularism which had previously taken the American Anglo-Saxon understanding as a role model. The AKP would start prioritizing the urgent needs of people on its party list. This way, the AKP managed to stay away from ideological confrontations for a long period of time until 2008.

On the other hand, the AKP would try to retain the Western support to secure its existence within the unfriendly domestic political conditions of Turkey. In fact, without the Western support, the AKP would not be able to subordinate the Kemalist status quo in Turkey; and without the subordination of the Kemalists, the AKP would not be able to play the independent domestic and international roles it has been playing since 2008.

The AKP's leading members consisted of devoted Muslims who wanted to develop strong relations among the Muslim nations in all areas, such as politics, culture, and trade. Turkey's identity as the heir of the Ottoman Empire had a prominent place in the psyche of the Turkish Islamists, which the AKP was a part of. The reason was that Ottomans represented the unification of a large segment of Muslims under the same political entity, providing them with security and stability for about 400 years. Therefore, in addition to leadership aspirations, the AKP also felt responsible for the nations the Ottomans governed once. The AKP was affected by some sort of anti-Westernism as well: the AKP found the Western imperial past to be the root cause of many significant problems in the Muslim world at the present.

On the other hand, the AKP was well-aware that, its primary responsibility was to provide security for its people. The AKP also had to further Turkey's wealth by finding new markets for the rapidly growing Turkish industry. The efforts of the AKP in both areas proved fruitful in a short period of time. The growing wealth in Turkey contributed to the resources of the Turkish state. Therefore, the AKP started to engage in the countries that Turkey has had substantial interests, particularly the ME, more assertively. The successful utilization of shared identity by the Islamic AKP government facilitated Turkey's engagement with the ME.

The AKP engaged with the ME for many strategic and identity-based reasons. To begin with, Turkey's survival was being threatened by American intervention in Iraq. Turkey also had interests in the region regarding economy and security. Secondly, it would be easier to develop mutually beneficial trade ties with the people in the ME because of the shared identity. However, for this to happen, the region needed an atmosphere of cooperation, peace and stability. An EU-like regional integration in the ME would provide the region with the long-missed stability. However, the realization of this goal was difficult when the dictators were still in power in the ME. Democracy would provide the people of the region with the chance to reflect their national will in decision making mechanisms of their countries. As the people of the region have a strong concept of being the members of the same Ummah (religious community), they would be willing to integrate with the other Muslims in the region. Therefore, democracy promotion would become a tool for Turkey to engage with the ME to realize these goals.

When the US intervened in Iraq, Turkey's national security was severely being threatened. The US intervention in Iraq initiated a process of regime change. Turkey as a regional power under the AKP leadership did not have enough power to prevent the US intervention in Iraq. Therefore, the AKP tried to influence the Iraqi government taking into consideration the new legal and political conditions which were in the making. The integrity and unity of Iraq became the primary security interest of Turkey. The partition of Iraq on the basis of ethnic and sectarian lines could have a spill-over effect on Turkey. In this regard, the AKP tried to push different ethnic and sectarian groups to participate in the democratic processes of Iraq by the utilization of diplomacy and rarely hard power. The goal was to increase the legitimacy of the new Iraqi authority by the participation of all

elements of the Iraqi society in the reestablishment of their country. Similarly, the AKP transferred Turkey's democratic experience to Iraq to help create a functioning state and democracy there. Otherwise, Iraq would end in partition, which would be detrimental for Turkey's territorial integrity.

The US' BMENA initiative, launched in 2004, created a significant incentive for the AKP to realize its goals. The AKP was able to retain the leadership position in the initiative since it was assigned as a co-chair of BMENA along with the US. The BMENA aimed to democratize the ME and North African Arabic speaking countries in addition to Iran and Turkey. Turkey as the most democratic Muslim state would be a positive role model for these nations. Therefore, the constructive Turkish role in the ME was supported by the US. Turkey was also backed to minimize the influence of Iran in the region. The BMENA anticipated regionalization in the ME, similar to that of the EU. The AKP strongly supported this; the BMENA would also provide the AKP with the opportunity to improve its relations with the Muslim nations.

However, the AKP would raise several objections to the American way of promoting democracy. The AKP stressed a long-term, consistent, internally driven, and multilateral process of democratic transformation in the ME. This opposed the US' liberal interventionist, instant, and externally pressed approach of democratization. Nevertheless, both the US and Turkey accepted the necessity of democratization in the region, which was beneficial for all parties involved. The EU had a stance similar to that of Turkey regarding the democratization of the ME. However, the EU would act similarly to the US when the Islamic groups gained power in the ME in 2005 and 2006 elections.

On the other hand, the engagement with Iraq proved quite useful for Turkey. The trade between Turkey and Iraq substantially developed in favor of Turkey. The Turkish private sector flew into Iraq to sell their products. The Iraqi economy was being progressively dominated by the Turkish goods. Then, the business groups demanded Turkey to develop similar ties with the other neighbors as well. The increased separatist Kurdish threat, triggered by the formation of Kurdish Regional Government in North Iraq, also compelled Turkey to work hard to coordinate their efforts on the Kurdish problem with the states that contained substantial Kurdish populations, such as Iran, Iraq, and Syria.

As Turkey started to cooperate with these countries on the basis of security, it also developed strong trade ties. Trade became the most substantial way to diffuse the democratic experiences of Turkey to the surrounding countries. To provide an example, Turkey transferred its economic regulations to create a harmony between the Turkish and Syrian markets and border control rules. The experience was later extended to Lebanon and Jordan as well. Turkey was progressively being seen as a role model by the countries in BMENA. Both the AKP experiment and the Turkish economy received substantial attention. Islamic parties from all over the Muslim world wanted training from the AKP, such as from Tunisia, Palestine, North Iraq, and Egypt. Correspondingly, many countries asked Turkey for technical training and experience sharing in the areas, such as banking, finance, FDI regulations, and trade tariffs. The AKP also shared its experience on how it dealt with the Kurdish problem. It shared its Kurdish Opening reform packages with Syria. This way, Turkey's values were being progressively diffused to the surrounding countries. Increased trade between countries paved the way for increasing tourism and cultural exchange.

However, the AKP started to worry about keeping and maintaining these newly acquired strategic gains in the ME. The stability of the region was the most important condition for the continuity of this mutually beneficial process between the countries in the region. When the Arab Spring arrived, although it could have a destabilizing impact over the region, the AKP welcomed it. The reason was threefold: the feelings about Turkey's historical and religious responsibilities towards people in the region, the pressure from the Turkish society, and the desire to maintain long term stability in the region. Long term stability was a requirement for Turkey's survival, alliances, and economic interests. However, the demand of people for freedom and justice should not have been overlooked. Therefore, Turkey started to support the movements in Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that Turkey did not have the type of strategic interests in these countries that Turkey had in its neighbors: the developments in neighboring countries could risk the very survival of the Turkish state. On the other hand, Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt were seen as important markets and strategic allies in the ME. These countries successfully replaced dictators with democratically elected leaders in 2011 and 2012. The AKP developed strong relations with the Islamic actors in the BMENA before the Arab Spring. The Arab Spring opened the way for these Islamic actors to come to the leadership positions in their respective countries. Therefore, the previously established friendship ties between the Islamic actors in BMENA, including Turkey, turned into a strategic alliance, empowering all groups within this network. However, lack of the Western support to the Islamists in Egypt and the mistakes of the Egyptian Islamist government would fail this new geopolitical alliance formation. Erdogan's strong pro-

Morsi attitude after his removal from power would damage the relations between Turkey and Egypt under the new Egyptian administration.

When the wave arrived to Syria, the AKP took a stance supportive of the forces demanding political change for a number of reasons. Firstly, the previous reaction of the AKP to the protests in Egypt, Tunisia, and Lebanon compelled it to act in the same normative lines. If it did not do so, it would be accused of hypocrisy, damaging its credibility and its role as a positive model in the region. Secondly, the AKP thought that similar to the previous cases, Syria would transit to democracy in no time, and Turkey would reap the rewards when the new friendly groups were elected. Thirdly, Turkey thought that the only way to maintain the long term stability in Syria, a country where Turkey has substantial security and economic interests, was to support the opposition. Fourthly, the AKP thought that people demanded and deserved to live in a democratic setting where they are being taken seriously for the decision they make about the future of their children.

However, the conflict in Syria continued way longer than the AKP expected. Turkey's national security started to be threatened again, similar to the situation after the American intervention in Iraq. Kurds in Syria demanded independence, in alliance with the PKK in Turkey. Radical Islamists also started to settle in Syria and Iraq under the name of ISIS. Terrorists from Syria launched some attacks within the Turkish territory, leaving many deaths and injured behind and creating a substantial amount of public pressure in Turkey. The AKP burned all the bridges with Syrian regime—once its closest ally in the region and provided full support to the opposition. This was a wrong step as the AKP did not really know much about the ethnic and religious combination, the ideological

background, and the goals of the opposition it supported in Syria. As a result, the AKP had to confront the crude reality. A Kurdish and radical Islamic formations have been in the making in Syria, and Turkey's closest Western allies do not want Assad to leave as a result of their doubts about a possible radical religious empowerment in Syria.

Syrian conflict has been very costly for Turkey. The developments compelled the AKP to be accountable for its actions and ideology. Many Muslims escaped from the conflicts in Syria. They sought refuge in Turkey. The AKP opened camps for them, providing them with education, vocational training, food, and shelter. When the AKP realized that camps were not enough for the refugees, it decided to let the refugees settle in the Turkish cities. Then the refugees started to work unofficially for the Turkish companies.

Soon Turkey started to think more strategically regarding the refugees. It started to teach them the Turkish language. Turkey started to treat the Syrian refugees as the future allies of Turkey after the resolution of the conflict in Syria. They would bring the Turkish influence to their countries. This also meant that Syria would become a significant market for the Turkish industry. The Syrian refugees would prefer to buy Turkish products instead of the goods of the other countries, as a result of habits they acquired in Turkey. Since 2012, Turkey has spent around USD 2.5 billion on the Syrian refugees. Considering that the USD 1.5 billion American aid, given to the Egyptian government annually, the extent of Turkey's, as a regional power, investment in Syrian refugees could better be understood.

On the other hand, the business sector in Turkey was in need of urgent workforce before the Arab Spring. The workforce in Turkey was shrinking as a result of the rapid growth of industry. Further, the available workforce was not willing to work with the salary or price the private sector offered to them. As a result, Turkish companies started to recruit

the Syrian refugees unofficially. This brought relaxation to the markets in highly industrialized Turkish cities, such as Gaziantep, Istanbul, and Izmir. This meant that the Turkish government turned a blind eye to the unofficial involvement of the Syrian refugees in work life in Turkey. In other words, the Syrian refugees have substantially contributed to rapidly growing Turkish industry by providing the cheap workforce it needed. Turkish economy grew by 4% in 2013, (Milliyet Gazetesi 2014), 1% more than the estimated results.

The TDA (Total Development Assistance) statistics of Turkey indicate that before the AKP administration, between 1990 and 2002, Central and South Asia had the prominent place in Turkish Foreign Policy. The largest share of the Turkish ODA (Official Development Assistance) was delivered to this region. However, the AKP administration reallocated the amount of ODA to the recipient countries, allocating the greatest share to the BMENA region. The statistics indicate that in the course of Arab Spring the Turkish ODA to the transitioning Arab states, such as Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, and Libya increased substantially. For example, USD 1 billion was provided to the Egyptian Islamist Justice and Freedom Party. Similar increases happened in Syria, Libya, and Tunisia as well. This provided a strong evidence for the AKP's intentional support for the Islamic forces in the ME because of Turkey's concerns for strategic alliances.

Turkey's own democratization process during the AKP administration gives important ideas about its motivation for promoting democracy in the ME. The AKP started to promote a liberal democracy at home. Meanwhile, the AKP changed the checks and balances in the Turkish political system in favor of the elected civilians through the

assistance provided by the EU and the US. However, this marked the beginning of the AKP's conservative policies.

On the other hand, the Arab Spring created an insecure political atmosphere for the AKP at home and in the region. The AKP started to perceive the developments that challenged its authority in Turkey, such as the Gezi Park protests, through conspiracy lenses. For the AKP, some global socio-economic forces were aiming to overthrow the government through such developments. From that point on, the AKP started to act more authoritarian, deviating from standards, provided by the Copenhagen Criteria of the EU membership. Parallel to this, the Turkish democracy promotion gained a more strategic dimension. Supporting democracy in countries such as Syria and Iraq has turned into efforts to ensure the very survival of Turkey. Similarly supporting democratization in Egypt and Tunisia has progressively meant supporting strategic alliances with the Islamic groups.

On the other hand, considering the extent of the Turkish investment in political change in the Arab Spring countries, the question becomes: “what are the limits of Turkey's impact?” Turkey possessed all power instruments to play the regional power role in the region. Turkey does a substantial amount of work in the field, such as mentoring and financing allies. Furthermore, there is a highly positive perception about Turkey in the ME. People in the ME believe in Turkey's sincerity towards the region, and they want Turkey to play a greater role in the region. However, Turkey lacks the human infrastructure in its foreign mission to turn its investments into strategic gains in a highly receptive region. In this regard, Turkey needs to improve its human infrastructure to play a more assertive role in the ME.

Moreover, as Turkey articulates its policies within its own respective culture, its strategic choices might differ from the choices of the well-established Western democracies. For example, the West is bothered by the election of the Islamic groups to power, due to their highly critical stance towards the role the West and Israel have played in the region. Turkey, on the other hand, finds the election of Islamic groups to power as a natural outcome of people's choice in the ME. Furthermore, due to similarities between the ideals of the AKP and Muslim Brotherhood in the region, the election of moderate Islamic groups empowers Turkey's role in the region. As a result, Turkey and the West have diverging interests when it comes to the empowerment of the Islamic groups.

The type of democracy Turkey, as a state, promotes in the region is very similar to that of the West in many aspects. For example, Turkey trains the Middle Eastern officials on how to run a successful state by teaching them the Turkish system, which is strongly influenced by Turkey's membership to the Western institutions and Turkey's historical ties with the West. Clearly, Turkey processes the values and experiences that it has gained in its interaction with the West to people in the ME.

The AKP, as a political party rooted in political Islam, mentors the Islamic groups substantially by teaching them how to function in the authoritarian settings of their states, on the basis of its own experience in Turkey. In this regard, the AKP trains them on how to organize their parties, how to do political campaigning, how to survive in post-conflict political environment, such as after the military coup d'état in Egypt, and how to do grassroots outreach. In this regard, the AKP plays a highly constructive role in democratization of the ME.

Finally, Turkish CSOs are also involved in democracy promotion abroad. The Gulen group, TESEV, Doctors Worldwide and MAZLUMDER are the most significant groups that promote democratic values in the ME. The Gulen group is interested in the provision of humanitarian aid, educational activities, business, and press. MAZLUMDER is interested in human rights issues in the Muslim world. TESEV is an official democracy promoter think-tank, similar to NDI. Doctors Worldwide provides assistance regarding health to the target countries. The Turkish CSOs work independently from the government. When their interests converge with the interests of the Turkish government, they cooperate. However, when their interests diverge, they focus on their own agendas.

To sum up, Turkey, under the AKP rule, has been involved in a modest exercise of democracy promotion. Despite all its flaws, Turkey has been significantly contributing to the process of positive change in the region. However, whether Turkey will continue to support democracy in the ME or not is partly related to the sincerity of the Western world in supporting democratization in the ME without discriminating between groups on the basis of their ideological orientations. Otherwise, if some groups, such as Islamists, feel that they are being forced out of the political systems by the support of the West, they might turn their faces towards more authoritarian models, such as those in China and Russia.

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