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**Turkey and European Union Relations at the
Critical Crossroad:
Socio-Political Analysis of the last two Decades
of Shifting Perspectives**

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ABSTRACT

This Master Thesis titled as: “*Turkey and European Union Relations at the Critical Crossroad: Socio-Political Analysis of the last two Decades of Shifting Perspectives*”, emerges from the necessity to understand and clarify the steps undertaken by the European Union and Turkey in the last two decades of turbulent socio-political background.

The most important indicator that inspired me to conduct this research, emerges from the necessity to contribute in any form, as much as possible in understanding the unique relations between the European Union and Turkey.

This research is a Social and Political interpretation of the challenging relationship between Turkey and the European Union during the last two decades, it does so by using the comparative methodology. Beginning with the importance of culture and religion as the emerging point of the social and political diversity, we analyze why Turkey has become a buffer-zone for the European Union, adding the combination of three political theories to better understand and contrast the Socio-Political implications of the last two decades.

Key words: *culture, religion, identity, nationalism, demography, integration and political-theories.*

ABSTRAKT

Ky punim me titull “*Marrëdhëniet mes Bashkimit Evropian dhe Turqisë në udhëkryqin kritik: “Analizë Socio-Politike e dy dekadave të fundit të perspektivave ndryshuese”*”, buron nga nevoja për të kuptuar dhe qartësuar hapat e ndërmarra nga Bashkimi Evropian dhe Turqia, në një ambient të turbullt socio-politik.

Një ndër indikatorët kryesorë që më ka shtyrë të hulumtoj këtë çështje është nevoja për të kontribuar dhe qartësuar marrëdhëniet e veçanta në mes Bashkimit Evropian dhe Turqisë.

Ky punim fokusohet në një analizë të interpretimeve politike dhe sociale kundrejt marrëdhënieve të komplikuarra dhe sfiduese në mes Turqisë dhe Bashkimit Evropian në dy dekadat e fundit, duke shfrytëzuar metodën krahasuese. Fillimisht, analiza zhvillohet duke studiuar rëndësinë e kulturës dhe religjionit si pika fillestare të diversitetit politik dhe social, analizojmë përse Turqia është bërë një zonë neutrale e cila ndan dy civilizime të ndryshme, duke e pasuruar këtë çështje me gërshetimin e tre teorive politike mundohemi që më mirë t’i kuptojmë dhe dallojmë aktivitetet socio-politike në mes këtyre dy blloqeve shtetërore.

Fjalët kyçe: *kultura, religjioni, identiteti, nacionalizmi, demografia, integrimi dhe teoritë politike.*

АБСТРАКТ

Овој Магистерски труд под наслов *Односите помеѓу Европската Унија и Турција во критична раскрсница: Социо-Политичка анализа на двете последни променливи децении*, произлегува од вистинската потреба за да се разберат и разјаснуват чекорите што ги превземаа Европската Унија и Турција во последните две децении на социо-политичкиот *background*.

Најважниот показател што ме инспирираше да го споведам ова истражување произлегува од потребата да се придонесе и да се разјаснат што е можно повеќе уникатните односи меѓу Европската Унија и Турција.

Ова истражување е социо-политичко толкување на предизвикувачкиот однос помеѓу Турција и Европската Унија во последните две децении, и овој процес се реализира користејќи ја компаративната методологија.

Тргувајќи со важноста на културата и религијата како појава на социалната и политичката разновидност, анализираме зошто Турција стана тампон зона за Европската Унија, додавајќи комбинација на три политички теории за подобар контраст и разбирање на социо-политичките импликации на последните две децении.

Клучните Зборови: *култура, религија, идентитет, национализам, демографија, интеграција и политички-теории.*

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INTRODUCTION

Is the Republic of Turkey crucial part of the European Union? If yes, why does the road seem so complicated and what are the social and political transitions that Turkey must undergo in order to define this crossroad? Understanding the roots of these challenges is crucial, do they come as result of cultural and civilizational differences or from broader and strategically important global socio-political and economic policies?

Analyzing the problem from its core, offers us the opportunity to tackle until a certain extent the misunderstandings that have emerged during the last two decades.

This produces the necessary grounds to clarify the important historical facts in order to filter as much as we can the narrations of the global media machinery and verify the actual conditions by considering the opinions of the most prominent scholars whose ideas have established the foundations of the current socio-political systems and have shaped the economic and political thinking of the last two centuries of the global policy making.

During the last two decades, if we adhere to the interpretations of various Western and Eastern media channels and scholars, we can understand that they have proved to be unable in producing the optimal conditions for establishing the required neutral grounds for stronger cultural and political between Turkey and the European Union. In the contrary, some of them have been the source of polarizing the perspectives and understandings of the society in general, therefore we analyze these complex issues in order to better understand the past, current and to a certain extent enrich our thinking and understandings in general, for the last two decades of policy making in Europe and Turkey.

This research paper offers us a channel to better understand the dynamics of social, economic and political thinking of the European Union and Turkey, the factors that brought the current circumstances in the last two decades of policy making.

The main aim of this research paper is to analyze through the comparative method the discourse and interpretations of the socio-political relations between Turkey

and the European Union, by considering the perceptions the states have for each other domestically and internationally.

Additionally, this master thesis titled as: *“Turkey and European Union Relations at the Critical Crossroad: Scio-Political Analysis of the last two Decades of Shifting Perspectives”*, aims to use the various important theoretical approaches in understanding and interpreting the relations between states, focusing in short and long-term analysis of socio-political relations.

This research is based on the comparative methodology of study, it is divided into four main chapters:

- a) In the first chapter, we analyze a brief history of Turkey and European Union Relations, focusing in concepts like culture, mutual-political perceptions, major turning points and identity. Through these elements we analyze the foundations that shaped the socio-political relations between Turkey and EU in the last two decades of their socio-political relations.
- b) In the second chapter, we analyze the role of Turkey as “Buffer Zone” for European Union security by focusing predominantly on the geographical importance of the Republic of Turkey in relation to the European Union. Through analyzing concepts like geo-politics, immigration, economic integration and national interest we try to understand the requirements of the European Union and its standards. In this context, we focus on factors that put the national interest first among all the other challenges.
- c) In the third chapter, we try to understand and interpret the state relations in the perspectives of three major theories in international relations. The Liberalist, Realist and Constructivist approaches to the international relations are analyzed as important backgrounds in trying to interpret the political relations between Turkey and the European Union.

d) In the last chapter we analyze the relations of Turkey and European Union in regard of the actions and reactions they produced for each other, this is analyzed in the form of “Political Chess”.

The role of laic regime and their transitions, the political parties and increasing populism offer us solid grounds for interpreting the positive and negative effects in the relations of Turkey and European Union.

From the bibliography that we have used, we have concluded that the relations between Turkey and the European Union are treated and interpreted in accordance to political strategies and national interests. The resources that have been used in this research are multilingual, trying to enrich this text to take the adequate shape of a scientific research but also keeping in view the ethical integrity of the research.

I would like to point out my sincere gratitude and appreciation to my mentor, Prof. Dr. Ali Pajaziti for continuous support, patience, immense knowledge and guidance during the research period. His ideas and critiques, have been vital in shaping the final form of this scientific research, without his support this dissertation would not have been possible.

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Chapter I

Short History of Turkey-EU Relations

The European Union represents a module of success in financial, social, political terms but most importantly it has encouraged different countries to implement common political, economic also to certain extend shared cultural identity.

As in many political habitats, it is arguable whether this model is entirely inclusive rather than exclusive, in terms of political and cultural dominance, this is what will be one of the core points in this research.

On the other hand, we have countries like The Republic of Turkey who currently feel distanced as much as they are close to the European Union and also prefer to maintain their ambiguity in regard to the conditional requirements of the European Union. In the European Union and especially in the Republic of Turkey, we have witnessed dramatic political shifts in the last two decades. Keeping in mind the historical context and other important factors, we can elaborate on some of the elements that affect the blurred political relations between these two countries.

1.1. Culture as Important Indicator of Turkey – European Union Relations

The meaning of culture cannot be defined in a singular and definitive context, this gap provides the opportunity for the countries to use culture as a mechanism for their own political intentions, in this view, one has to distinguish what does culture means in social terms and how and why it can manifest itself as power for unification or separation between the nations and states.

Many scholars tend to develop varieties of solutions that can contribute to the general transformations in society, however the challenges come in many forms and dimensions, therefore it is up to the human mind to recognize, develop and resolve these social complications (Ali Pajaziti, 2013)¹.

Tradition and culture have always been very important elements of state foundation and relations, especially in the case of the European Union and Turkey, because it represents the first significant imaginative border between Turkey and the EU policymakers.

Turkey is a state with old tradition and strong culture, but in the case of Europe although the member states have very old cultures and traditions, the European Union itself does not because it is newly constructed entity, this is of particular importance because it has allowed the new policymakers in the European Union to make it as convenient as possible for their own social, political and economic goals, while always remaining depended on the powers of their own national-states.

The policymakers of the European Union were able to ‘invent’ the new European culture. “The technical, legal and economic aspects of the integration process, has come to occupy a strategic place in the thinking of EU policy-makers and supporters” (Cris, 2000)². The evolution of the European Union is the result of economic, political also most importantly cultural integration. Throughout the years, the European Union has demonstrated itself to be one of the best if not, the most

¹ Ali Pajaziti. (2013). *Socio-Political Insights: Towards Debalkanization*. Germany, LAP Lambert Academic Publishing.

²Cris Shore. (2000). *Building Europe: The Cultural Politics of European Integration*. London, 2000 Routledge, p. 40.

successful model in the history of humanity in regard to economic cooperation and integration. When it comes to culture and religion, it directly clashes with some nation-state traditions and cultures, which initiates a counter effect that pressures the leaders of those states to re-consider their perceptions towards the EU and evaluate if the membership in the EU would weaken their strategic, cultural and religious sovereignty as is the case of Turkey.

Beyond the pragmatic salience of security and economic interests, the contemporary phase of Asia-Europe relations is also understood by broad historical and ‘civilizational’ issues (Preston, Gilson and Lawson, 2001).³ Lawson describes the important elements that brought the European Union together but these elements can be exclusive by nature.

The case of Turkey’s integration in the EU reflects a perfect example of such debatable outcomes. Turkey geographically is part of the European Union, but the current political establishment in Europe has left the Turkish society incapable of joining the predominantly secular and Christian culture of the countries constituting the European Union who demand that Turkey further improves its human rights record and democratic consolidation efforts, considering these developments we notice that besides the economical and ideological modernizations, the EU also requires deeper changes in the behaviors of non-member states. Turkey however, has always kept strong cultural ties with any region it has interacted historically (Brdljavac, 2011)⁴.

Consolidation of democracy in a country that was established in the ruins of the Ottoman Empire ruled by authoritative Sultans is not an easy thing to do, especially considering the roots of religion and culture in the Ottoman Empire but since the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, things have developed drastically making most of us optimistic that these inspirational changes are reachable.

“The early republican elites distanced themselves from the cultural and ideological heritage of the Ottoman Empire and laid the foundational elements of modernization and westernization” (Davison, 1998, pp. 87-107)⁵. The elites followed a

³ Stephanie Lawson. (2001). *The cultural politics of contemporary Asia-Europe relations*, Chapters: The European Union and East Asia, chapter 2 Edward Elgar publishing, p. 29.

⁴ Bedrudin Brdljavac. (2011). Turkey Entering the European Union through the Balkan doors: In the style of a great power? Romanian Journal of European affairs.

⁵ Andrew Davison. (1998). *Secularism and Revivalism in Turkey: A Hermeneutic Reconsideration*. Armenian Research Centre Collection. Yale University publishing.

top-down approach in establishing the new and modern Turkey but this left out the emotional, cultural and religious attachment of their society to the Ottoman identity.

This approach has created many problems resulting in a turbulent political and cultural environment for Turkish society because they were not represented properly and the elites could get away with anything that they intended.

The social representation by the people of different ideologies and beliefs has always created strong resistance in the more conservative parts of the society who are unwilling to give up their historical identity because for them to give up their Ottoman Identity, means to give up their faith and tradition in exchange for western culture and economic benefits.

The entire structure of the European Union is very unique because it can be governed equally by multiple nations and cultures, regardless of their size and power.

This complexity although creates a buffer zone among the nations that are member states in the EU, it also provides the opportunity for each member to represent itself and its concerns. This merging of different powers and states, has increased the strength and the importance of the European Union in the world affairs.

The European Union is made from many institutions. However, I will try to elaborate on the most important bodies that have the authority to take decisions and shape the domestic and foreign policy of the European Union, particularly the ones that affect the enlargement process of the European Union.

Additionally, compare the elements that have prolonged the membership of Turkey in the European Union, in this regard I will discuss the role of four crucial European institutions: The European Commission, The European Council, The Council of Ministers and the European Parliament.

The European Union itself was created on the idea of economic interdependence, that later was able to express itself politically and to further consolidate its role as a world power with strong institutions but predominantly with cultures that share the same religion and to a greater extent have managed to merge into each other. Although the development seemed exciting, some member states constantly pushed for reforms in the European institutions.

When it comes to enlargement of the European Union, not all states have the same orientation, some of them try to distance themselves from Turkey and other are more optimistic towards enlargement, believing that Turkey does not threaten their

historic understanding of Europe (Staab, 2010)⁶. Through Staab's perspective we can understand that the nature of requirements it is not solely based on regulated economic or political platforms, the nature of requirements has adjusted in time.

I believe that in contemporary times it requires nations-states to also change their domestic attitudes culturally and religiously.

Religion is very important factor in determining the ideological and political outcomes and many states base their bilateral relationships on those premises but in the case of Europe and Turkey importance of religion plays a central role in the current political establishment of both states.

To be able to understand the role of religion we must start by understanding what does it mean to talk about it in Turkey and in the European Union because the perceptions greatly differ especially considering the political liberalist establishment in the European Union. In Turkey, the individual experience differs from the collective attitude of the state in regard to the role of religion in the political sphere because for the Turks to embrace a political change required from the European Union it means to change their cultural identity that has its roots on their Muslim faith. Like democracy, the term of Islam has different meaning itself and Bernard Lewis describes it as "It means the whole civilization that has grown up under the aegis of that religion: something like what is meant by the once-common term "Christendom","(Lewis, 1995)⁷.

It is understandable why religion is important especially when your historical and cultural roots derive from a political system with religion as the main foundation for the shape of the state institutions, as is the case of Turkey.

The social structure comes in many varieties but predominantly with religions as a very important element that acts as a crucially important and integrated component in the broader understanding of culture itself (Pajaziti, 2013)⁸.

Nationalism and other political systems must be compatible with each other because they come together and shape the outcome of the individuals and play important role in the stability and transformations of culture which consists religion but

⁶Andreas Staab. (2010). *The European Union Explained: Institutions, Actors, Global Impact*. Indiana University Press, Bloomington.

⁷ Bernard Lewis. (1995). *Islam and Liberal Democracy: A Historical Overview*. International Forum for Democratic Studies, Washington. D.C 1960.

⁸ Ali Pajaziti, (2013). "Über Mazedonische: Challenging Multicultural Spirit via Culture." *Revue des Science Politiques*. N.O. 37-38.

in some cases when the cultures are different with each other, combined with the above mentioned transformative elements, they can reach in broader social and political interpretations. It is no coincidence that the current borders of Europe exist, even though the vision of the founding states have predominantly been to eradicate the physical borders within the geographical territory of the European Union.

The borders vary in the way we perceive them, therefore we can expect from each individual to take responsibility for its own territory but also in the cases when it affects domestic features the states tend to reshape the meaning of the existing borders, they can become cultural, political and economic. In these circumstances, we can witness the increasing role of religion in Turkey and the manifestation of religion in the Turkish society and politics has made many European states skeptic in believing that a proper and consolidated democracy can be established in the Republic of Turkey, adding to this the fear of further immigration and complex world and regional politics.

The European countries have increasingly pushed for more conservative approaches and regulations, while in the perception of the Turkish society the fading hope of joining the European Union has led to dramatic changes in the political system and it has even reduced the symbolic strength of the European Union.

Considering these roots, we can understand the transformative powers they carry within, the changes in perceptions, and the transformation of worldviews. From this comparison we can understand that to a certain extent the shifting atmosphere contributes to gravitating more restrictive and isolative discourses from both sides, therefore a greater amount of political will remains the only hope that can inspire further liberal reforms and cultural integration for both.

1.2. The Mutual Political Perceptions and Discourse

It is important to understand that the political perceptions of the society are shaped from early stages, the young children absorb the ideas and information from their parents, schools, and universities in later stages of their lives they can reflect their ideas into their working institutions, aiming at the highest point of reflecting their political orientations in elections and other state related affairs.

When it comes to the European Union, we can firmly classify its strong role in the International world order politically, economically, and culturally although it has its own domestic problems. However, we cannot say the same for Turkey because it is a country followed by drastic shifts and transitions, the mechanisms and strategies used by the great world powers influence the perceptions that shape the relations between the European Union and Turkey. Turkey is also important because it contains a historical background in the Balkans therefore their relationship plays important role in shaping the relationships in the region (Pajaziti, 2012)⁹. The European Union is created by many states therefore it is important to analyze the domestic and regional political perceptions bearing that in mind.

The European Union has always had conflicting views and problematic outcomes and these problems mostly come as a result of the governance system being labeled to a network of states that are always more complicated than being one single state as is the case with Turkey.

“The Euro-Zone is seen as much closer to a Kantian than a Hobbesian model of co-operation and moving, with difficulty, beyond a Lockean model. Its key actors continue to be motivated by power and interests.” (Kenneth Dyson, 2000)¹⁰. Kenneth offers us an understanding of the different levels that are pursued in order for the European states to achieve a collective outcome, especially if it is political it must come as a result of moral, cultural, and economic cooperation.

In his explanation of how the states behave he firstly analyzes the Kantian model of governance where the states are based on mutually constructed beliefs and

⁹ Pajaziti Ali. (2012). “Turk and Turkey perception at Albanians in the beginning of 21st century.” Skopje, Dauti Foundation & Institute for Political and International Studies, p. 2.

¹⁰ Kenneth Dyson. (2000). *The Politics of the Euro-Zone: Stability or Breakdown*. Oxford University Press, New York, p. 195.

institutions that most probably define their expectations on one another and lead to more expectable economic and political outcomes.

Secondly, he explains the Hobbesian model of governance assuming that the states must always focus on their own state principal interests rather than collective, Hobbes considers the conflict as a continuous and never-ending probability.

The third level of governance and cooperation focuses on the economic benefits and their role in being able to create and sustain the normative behaviors of the European States this adheres to the Lockean view of governance.

We can see that the politics of the European Union is affected a lot by the principal decision-makers. Although it has strong institutions that throughout history have been able to establish the norms of cooperation among the states, this is still inefficient in totally avoiding a clash of interests between the actors, but so far we have seen that economic cooperation has managed to keep the European countries out of conflict, thus the Hobbesian and Locke's theories contrast on this point although they share the same realist views in regard to the main interests of cooperation among the states. To this example, the European Union states make no exceptions.

The society of the European Union must first address the ways through which their state operates in the European Union and this can be frustrating and confusing.

Their perceptions about the others are definitely affected because they must undergo a two-step calculation, unlike the Turkish society that has more simplified way of understanding the otherness, therefore when it comes to the policies of enlargement the society of Europe can see Turkey as a friend but also as a potential competition from the economic point of view. These issues have not blurred the role of the European Union as one of the key leaders in the existing world order.

The European Union has increased its political role in the world and this intensity has grown with the collapse of other big powers in the region (Serkan, 2016)¹¹. Serkan argues that the European Union was able to fulfill the vacuum left by the Soviet Union in world affairs, this helped to improve the political unity domestically and ensured strong symbolic figure of the European Union that was later reflected in economic affairs and it also generally improved the perceptions on the European Union in the World considering that the Union itself was not directly involved in world affairs,

¹¹Serkan, Guzel. (2016). The Role and Importance of Republic of Turkey within European Union Network. ZfWT, Vol. 8. No.1. 2016, p.174.

unlike the United States. This left them with the opportunity to represent themselves as more neutral and acceptable in all parts of the world.

The continuity to keep its symbolic political power in the highest standards has managed the EU to affect the global governance system in many ways, therefore the EU does not want any changes to be made in this system currently as long as the member states approve of the current international institutions. There are states like Turkey whose status and position in the world politics is in a continuous change, besides the fact that Turkey has managed to grow economically in recent years its attitude and aspirations in the global affairs have changed too.

Turkey wants to represent its cultural, economic and political power to the world, in the last years its government has continually pushed towards reforms into the world institutions however the current world leaders especially from the United States and the European Union have perceived these aspirations as a threat towards the existing world order and have been unable to exactly understand these political shifts. “Turkey’s complaints about the current international order are not informed by an anti-Western attitude or Third- Worldist Ideology, but clearly fall into the framework of a within system-challenge” (Emel Parlar Dal and Gonca Oguz Gok, 2014)¹².

Emel and Gonca analyze the causes of this emerging shift they do not see it as a reaction rather than as something that has come as the result of continuous cultural and economic growth, through these views the perceptions toward Turkey become clearer if we understand it as result of better economic conditions lead to the better judicial system and by combining all these elements together we have more demanding political system that requires to change the current status of Turkey in the international institutions.

¹²Emel Parlar Dal and Gonca Oguz Gok. (2014). *Locating Turkey as a “Rising Power” in the Changing International Order: An Introduction*. Perceptions, Journal of International Affairs Volume XIX. No. 4.

1.3. The Major Turning Points

The continuously changing political discourse on the Turkish belongingness on the European Union over time has undergone major shifts, the European Union has maintained the Copenhagen criteria, however there are some domestic shifting points in Turkey that have incredibly increased or decreased its aspirations to join the European Union.

For the western world, the re-emergence of Islam in Turkish politics has predominantly been perceived as a threat to the democratic and liberalist values, while in Turkey their concerns became stronger in 1997 when the Welfare party came to power. “The NSP rose quickly during a period of political change that saw the creation of a Turkish civil society in which organizations possessed an unprecedented level of autonomy from state interference. Asserting a strong anti-Western viewpoint while espousing the modern goal of rapid industrialization” (Lombardi, 1997)¹³.

Lombardi gives attention to this period of time not only because religion indeed introduced itself in the political sphere, for the first time since the Kemalist era but he was able to make parallelism with previous military interventions in Turkey, assuming that “Many of the conditions that prevailed at the time of the three coups appear to have returned. Turkey is likely to be confronted by these issues, direct intervention by the armed forces remains a possibility” (Lombardi, 1997)¹⁴. The author prescribed the importance of the army in political affairs. “Even though Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, founder of the modern, secular state, had separated the military from politics, the armed forces continued to think of themselves as the guardians of secular, reformist and democratic goals proclaimed by Ataturk” (N. Momayezi, 1998)¹⁵.

The involvement of the army in political affairs has played a key role in totally transforming the standing of the governments towards the European Union, Momayezi’s argument relates to the democratic principles that the army tried to protect but this fact opens a new discourse because the army represents the hard-power of the

¹³ Lombardi, B. (1997). Turkey-The Return of the Reluctant Generals? Political Science Quarterly, 112(2), p. 192.

¹⁴ Lombardi, B. (1997). Turkey-The Return of the Reluctant Generals? Political Science Quarterly, 112(2), p. 191.

¹⁵ Naser, Momayezi. (1998). *CIVIL-MILITRAY RELATIONS IN TURKEY*. International Journal on World Peace, 15(3).

Turkish state, therefore it did not follow ‘the bottom-up’ approach to the contrary, they follow a ‘top-down’ approach and this means that “Authors are often tempted to select cases which fit their theories”¹⁶. This method of manifestation on the political domain raises questions about the violation of the democratic principles while according to Momayezi, the army tried to protect the democratic principles that arguably brought Turkey closer to the European Union.

“The European Union granted the status of candidate country to Turkey in December 1999 and accession negotiations were opened in 2005” (European Commission, 2018)¹⁷. This drastic political orientation shift did not come solely as a result of the Turkish army’s indirect-interference in the governmental affairs, it came because of existing political patterns who were willing to moderate themselves in order to adjust their institutional, legal even social perceptions to the requirements of the European Union. The Turkish society historically has given importance to the figures of their political leaders, this can be traced in their cultural and religious roots but besides these elements the nation has not only experienced political transitions, but they also managed to overcome ideological barriers. “These political and ideological divisions became more pronounced after Erbakan’s ill-fated tenure as prime minister (1996-1997) and eventually resulted in the split of the movement in 2001 that gave rise to the AKP” (Rabasa & Larrabee, 2008)¹⁸. Obviously, the previous governing principles failed because of their clash with the required democratic standards required by the European Union.

According to Rabasa and Lararbe (2008), beside the weak political establishment the society also had blurred ideological principles, these are the reasons that besides a political shift we also had an ideological shift, moving away from strict religious principles to the new conservative promises that to a greater extend consolidated the democratic principles required by the Union. However, we must also consider the ongoing economic, social circumstances because the Turkey of today was not the same as two decades ago.

¹⁶ Sabatier, P. (1986). Top-down and Bottom-up Approaches to Implementation Research: *A Critical Analysis and Suggested Synthesis*. *Journal of Public Policy*, 6(1).

¹⁷Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, Brussels, 7 2018, Com (2018) 153, p. 3.

¹⁸Rabasa, A., & Larrabee, F. (2008). *The Rise of Political Islam in Turkey*. Santa Monica, CA; Arlington, VA; Pittsburgh, PA: RAND Corporation, p. 41.

At the beginning of the new establishment the improved economic situation contributed a lot in re-establishing faith in the political system, this positive attitude contributed to implementing reforms in all spheres of the Turkish social structure, unlike the other non-member countries of the European Union that are predominantly smaller than Turkey demographically and economically. “After the September 11 attacks, the concerns in Europe about Islam and Muslims have become more vocal than at any time since Turkey first applied to the EU” (Elver, 2005)¹⁹.

The changing global views on Islam affected the European Union in many ways, especially considering its predominantly Christian population. This event affected the states with Muslim population worldwide but in the case of Turkey, it regenerated the anti-Ottoman feelings and fears in the European society, Elver gives special attention to whether the European social values can be threatened from accepting such a big Muslim country in the Union. Turkey historically has been seen as a big challenge for the European Union, the unwillingness of the European Union to fully accept Turkey can affect its own identity issues because the democratic principles and economic requirements cannot last forever under these circumstances.

Acknowledging it from this perspective may lead us to understand other political policies such as containment and when it comes to undertaking this sort of policies usually the countries become not only economical competitors that are totally acceptable in the liberal systems but we can also expect political competition, the risk of these developments affects whole regions especially the countries responsible for it.

“The European Council decided in its December 2004 summit to open accession negotiations with Turkey on October 3, 2005. This was a historical turning point for the European Union and Turkish relations” (Meltem, 2004)²⁰. The significance of this agreement represents the highest point of recognition in the new era for the Turkish and European Union relations.

According to Meltem, this would represent a new challenge for the member countries of Europe, the size and power of Turkey would predominantly affect the smaller countries and even require a change in the functioning institutions of the

¹⁹Elver, H. (2005). *Reluctant Partners: Turkey and the European Union*. Middle East Report. NO. 235, p. 27.

²⁰Meltem Müftüleri Baç. (2004). *Turkey's Accession to the European Union: Institutional and Security Challenges*. Perceptions. 9(3), p. 29.

European Union. Turkey has always improved its humanitarian rights record but still there is work remaining to be done in this regard (Marthoz, 2010)²¹

These ambitions faded to some extent when the European Union accepted (Southern) Cyprus as a member state. If considered by the European Union perspective the inclusion of (Southern) Cyprus as member state solved their problem with Greece but not with (Southern) Cyprus and Turkey, that not only was unable to consolidate its membership, the acceptance of (Southern) Cyprus in the Union further complicated the process and faded the hopes of Turkish citizens from ever being part of the European Union family. Beside the (Southern) Cyprus issue, the political ambiguity in Turkey was further developed in 2007 when “The Chief Public Prosecutor applied to the constitutional court to close the governing party for anti-secular activities” (COM, 2008)²².

This event exposed the complicated relationship between religion and the existing political system, showing a polarized social background supported by few elites of the Turkish judiciary system but fortunately this event did not trigger any massive counter-response from the people of Turkey.

²¹ Jean-Paul Marthoz. (2010). The “new” Turkish foreign policy and its implications for Norwegian peacebuilding. Noref working paper, p. 9.

²²Commission of the European Communities, Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, Brussels, 05.11.2008.COM, 674 Final. P. 5.

1.4. The role of National Identity

The continuous enlargement of the European Union has brought into the surface the identity crisis in the Union. Ahmet Davutoglu a prominent Turkish scholar and diplomat suggested that the nations must firstly discover themselves and reinvent their political thinking before seeking pluralism and multiculturalism (Pajaziti, 2012)²³

These issues have been followed by a variety of political responses and restrictions from the member states of the European Union. “This has influenced a raising problem (religion and cultural) in the relation of Europe and Turkey’s – accession has played a central role in the development of this debate” (Kanbur & Bernat, 2013)²⁴.

The identity crisis is a long-standing problem in the European Union. Many member states of the European Union still have their doubts about whether this common European union identity is acceptable and violates their national inters. Although the principle under which the European Union is created is mainly economical aspiring to become political the case of Britain leaving the European Union showed that national inters still triumphed above any other objectives. “As long as European citizens consider Brussels as a threat to their constitutional, political or cultural identity the Union will remain in murky waters”, (Middelaar, 2018)²⁵. Middelaar sees the impact the European Union has on the nation-states, he argues that it impacts their culture and identity, considering these circumstances the nation-states are not willing to give up their constitutions for the sake of wider common good. Capitalism itself focuses on the individual rather than general understanding of life therefore we can see the ambiguity in the future of the European Union and the nation-states that are based on this ideological system. “I show that while there are groups of people across Europe who frequently interact, the vast majority of Europeans still remain tied firmly to the nation” (Fligstein, 2008)²⁶. According to Flegstein, the vast

²³ Ali Pajaziti. (2012). “Davutoglu: Thinking Depth and Global Political Activism as a new Grand Strategy.” *Contemporary issues*. 5(1), p. 46.

²⁴ Mehmet Kanbur and Tomasz Bernat. (2013). *Europeanization in Turkey and accession process to the European Union*. *Journal of International Studies*, 6(3), p. 82.

²⁵ Van Middelaar, L. (2018). Seven Brexit propositions: Towards a Union that protects. In Martill B. & Staiger U. (Eds.), *Brexit and Beyond: Rethinking the Futures of Europe*. London: UCL Press, p.86.

²⁶ Neil Fligstein. (2008). *Euroclash. The EU, European Identity and the Future of Europe*. USA, Oxford University Press INC, New York, p. 138.

majority does not support what the elite society support, the professional people are more likely to support the idea of the European Union because they can link themselves to it economically which can be easily transformed into a more emotional and political relationship. In the other hand, the vast majority of people who are unable to benefit from the opportunities offered by the European Union institutions prefer to remain tied to their own nation-state, their perception of the European Union is different from the elites because to them the Union does not represent an opportunity, on the contrary, they can perceive it as too costly or solely beneficial for the strongest companies and politicians of their state.

This uncertainty differs from state to state. The poorer states like the Balkans perceive the European Union as a new opportunity and beneficial.

The European Identity represents something modern and attractive for their interest, while the rich states and their societies are afraid that their national identity is being used for the interest of other poor states thus they prefer to put their strong national identity in the first place than any other general interests, as was the case with BREXIT.

Turkey belongs to the group of states that consider the European promise modern and stable. “In many ways, the present Republic of Turkey serves as a testament to this European influence, to which it has explicitly opened itself since the foundation of the modern state” (Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy, 2004)²⁷.

The European Union has historically been a strong pillar of hope for the Turkish society in fulfilling themselves with the promise of secularism and democratic values, this is important especially for the supporters of the Kemalist views for construction of the Turkish state, the inspiration of Turkish society has shifted many times but is a strong factor in shaping the domestic and foreign policies of the Turkish Republic.

Taking all into consideration the impact of the European Identity on the nation-states is very strong, regardless if it influences the elites or the vast majority of the population. It shows that it has the tendency to affect mostly the economically less developed states rather than the developed ones but still represents a stronghold of common promises for mutual economic and political benefits for nation-states.

²⁷Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy. (2004). *The European Union, Turkey and Islam. Turkish Islam and The European Union*. Amsterdam University Press, p. 46.

Chapter II

Turkey as Security Challenge or “Buffer Zone” for the European Union Security

The definition of a buffer zone depends on the way each individual or entity tries to define it. For instance, currently we have the immigration crisis in the whole Europe therefore the state of Turkey can be considered a buffer zone for the European Union regarding this specific problem but this does not necessarily mean that the applicability of the concept is not broader.

In the broader definition we can add the political elements that can also define this concept. For the European Union, this phenomenon is not something new, it has faced the same problem when the war was in the dissolved Yugoslavian state and this required from them to undertake drastic actions that tried to contain the refugees from migrating in the European Union states, this system has left consequences even in contemporary times because it still requires visas from some countries in order to filter who is able to come and who is not (BÜRSTROM, E. 2015)²⁸.

The current situation is not different it can also prove to be costly to avoid the acceptance and the integration of the refugees because even though the countries create buffer zones they cannot last forever and must provide the basic humanitarian needs in order to not violate the international norms and regulations.

²⁸ BURSTRÖM, E. (2015). (Rep.). Global Political Trends Center (GPoT).

2.1. The Role of Geo-Politics

Historically geo-strategy has remained a key-factor in determining the rationale and strategical positioning of the states in terms of the economic and political realm. Geo-Politics has also its own characteristics, depending on perceptions it can be defined in many ways, however, I prefer to rely on the political perceptions as the primary filter of analysis, to later understand the other possible dimensions. “If we want to make a preliminary statement in characterizing geopolitics, we may say that it belongs more to the realm of political science or political sociology than to the field of geography proper” (Cahnman, 1943)²⁹.

There are two sides to each story, the characteristics of the geopolitical theories are no exception, there are people who might argue that the fundamentals of each political establishment have their roots on the real geographical realm but for me considering the in the contexts offered by Cahnman we can see the possibility of inclusion of other elements such as moral and traditional values having their impact and I do not believe that we can solely provide a proper geopolitical explanation if we totally exclude the social actors, in the case of the European Union as mentioned above, religious and cultural establishments have played an active role on shaping the contemporary borders of the nation-states.

Many civilizations have come and gone but their sustainability and power have predominantly depended on their geographical position, many times it has determined their existence. In contemporary times nothing has changed. Still, geographic locations play a very important role in the social, political, and economic benefits of the state especially with the increasing role of globalization, the nation-states are trying by any means to establish themselves as crucial reference points on the global map. The discourse of geo-politics is always related to the international and most powerful political actors because it is their primary inters to achieve an advantage over other competing actors therefore many states have been given power or destroyed depending on the inters served to the bigger political actors. For instance, “Yugoslavia was seen as a buffer state between the Soviet Union and its allies to the east and the United states

²⁹Cahnman, W. (1943). *Concepts of Geopolitics*. American Sociological Review, 8(3), p. 55.

and its allies to the West” (Agnew, 2003)³⁰. Agnew provides us an explanation of the bigger picture but we can also consider the fundamental elements that lead to these outcomes.

First, we can argue that the geographical interests of one great power combines the interests of other smaller states that are willing to contribute in determining the general outcomes. In the Yugoslavian case, we can include other states like France and Germany that all together contributed to the U.S strategies for determining the outcome of Yugoslavia.

Secondly, we could notice how the destruction of Yugoslavia contributed to weakening the Soviet allies and vice-versa. The fates of both these states were strongly related to each other although indirectly they both represented the weakening of the Communist Ideology and state systems.

Thirdly, after the demise of the Soviet Union the role of the geopolitical-importance of Yugoslavia is not like it was before, in our times its role in international politics has weakened altogether with the economy and political standards. Clearly geopolitics had something to do with that.

In the case of the European Union and Turkey geography is also a very important element for both states. In one domain, we have the European continent combined with the political and economic interests of many states who historically have strong ties with the rest of the world and in the other hand we have Turkey also a big state with crucial geographic importance because it represents the bridge that connects the European Continent with Asia, understandably there we have strong political and economic external interests.

The role of geography has always contributed to the Turks on their counter-weight requirements to the European Union and offered them a unique opportunity to materialize these circumstances for their own but also for the benefit of the European Union.

There is a continuous discourse in the Union whether Turkey belongs to the European family or not but one thing is for sure, Turkey definitely plays a very important role for the security and economy of the European Union because it is the route of the sources that are crucial for the economic and political stability of the Union.

³⁰ John Agnew. (2003). *Geopolitics. Re-visioning World Politics*. Second Edition, Routledge, New York, p. 7.

This importance has been manifested in many ways, “Member states, notably France and Germany, have become increasingly adamant that Turkey, which in certain ways already attained this status by signing the 1995 agreement, accept an ambiguously defined and mutably benchmarked ‘privileged partnership’ with the EU in lieu of full membership” (Tekin & Williams, 2011)³¹.

This special relationship cannot come out of the blue sky, it refers to many other elements that provide both states with the necessary power to require and balance their own interests, the geostrategic role of Turkey especially makes very important in the perceptions of the European Union to be a stable and serious partner for economic and political ties. The international events such as wars in Syria and the Middle Eastern region have tremendously increased the bargaining weight for Turkey because it represents the bridge through which the immigrants are trying to avoid the massacres and brutality in their own states in hope of reaching a better life in Turkey but mostly in the European Union. This external event has played an important role in shaping the current political relations between the states.

³¹ Ali Tekin and Paul Andrew Williams. (2011). *Geo-Politics of the Euro-Asia Energy Nexus. The European Union, Russia and Turkey*. Palgrave Macmillan, p. 2.

2.2. The Immigration Crisis

“Western European societies through their common history share some basic characteristics, and their rapid modernization since the economic boom years of the 1950s and 1960s, brought them closer to each other, thereby creating the common features of what may be called ‘European Social Model’ (Kohli & Novak, 2001)”³².

But this ‘European Social Model’ in this understanding implies that the immigrants must firstly establish their economic independence in order for them to continue to integrate socially and politically. This for many people is a long road considering that they can come from third world countries that are far from the EU’s standards, especially in industry and other technological fields.

Demography represents one of the key elements of establishing and ensuring the productivity and continuity of the state. The higher the number of people is, the stronger are the chances that the state remains powerful and influential on the international stage, of course, there are other elements like culture and language that can be considered as very important mechanisms in influence projections however, demography still remains one of the most realistic component of the state.

For many years the European Union has been seen as the role model of the demographic organization but the individual economic perceptions have played a key role in the current numbers of the population in the EU. The economy fluctuates and demography does so but not always they go hand in hand, because sometimes the demographics keeps trends that can threaten the very existence of the nation-states and in order to reduce such outcomes states especially in the European Union have managed to implement a certain mechanism to keep their demographic balance in proportion with requirements.

“The trend foreseen after 2010 toward a contracting active population and an expanding retirement population will intensify the need to reform economic and social policies” (Lutz, Richter, Wilson, 2003)³³.

³² Martin Kohli, Mojica Novak. (2001). *Will Europe Work? Integration, employment and the social order*. Routledge, p.4.

³³Wolfgang Lutz, Rudolf Richter and Chris Wilson. (2006). *The New Generations of Europeans. Demography and Families in the Enlarged European Union*. Earthscan, p. 20.

It must be noted that the fear of another 2008 crisis laid the grounds of further demographic insecurity in the European Union, although economic interdependence contributes in maintaining peace and stability among states it does not guarantee the economic well-being of the people and this element manifest themselves in other social dimensions especially in reducing the desire of taking more responsibilities regardless if they are social or economic.

“The current problems for Britain and Europe are to cope with the integration of new populations which immigration has produced and to limit the new inflows of asylum seekers and illegal immigrants” (Coleman, D, 1995)³⁴. Coleman represents the current problems in the European Union especially focusing on the problems that emerge from immigrants that come from completely different backgrounds and are used to different traditions, religions and worldviews.

The reason of the rising numbers of immigrants also matters, the people that immigrate to the EU predominantly come from harsh backgrounds and places where huge human atrocities have been committed, these sudden events have not left the opportunity and time needed nor for the European Union society or the political elites to prepare their agendas for such outcomes while the same is valid for the Turkish state.

Turkey has its own immigrant in the EU but they predominantly are economical immigrants. Turkey in the other hand deals also with a lot of immigrants and in this sense, it bears the same responsibilities as the European Union but in this crisis considering the religious and cultural similarities of Turkey with its neighbors in the region, Turkey has been able to accept and accommodate a lot of them without facing the same resistance as they do in the European Union so in this sense Turkey has the upper hand. Being able to control the influx of immigrants in the European Union gives to Turkey important political advantage towards the European Union.

The problem of immigration between the European Union and Turkey is not something that can be framed either controlled by these countries; the regional and international events have pressured and to a certain level shaped the economic and political relations between the EU and Turkey.

³⁴Coleman, D. A. (1995). *“International Migration: Demographic and Socioeconomic Consequences in the United Kingdom and Europe.”* The International Migration Review. 29(1), p.156.

2.3. The Economic Integration

The idea of economic cooperation did not come to the European Union suddenly, on the contrary, it was a long process of harsh historical developments especially World War I and II. After the Second World War, European society started to realize the importance and benefits of economic cooperation. The monetary integration also did not come simply as a result of the flourishing economies of the western world, it included a reformative social and political mindset that contributed to establishing more complex processes of the integration in the European Union.

It is important to highlight the broader social and political manifestations that brought to existence the monetary integration in order to be able to understand how the European Union manages to politically use this structure to include or exclude non-member states like Turkey, depending on the economic and political circumstances of the region. Hefeker developed two main pillars in analyzing the monetary integration of the countries and their behaviors.

First, “International monetary relations are closely connected with the trading systems” and second, “The connection between domestic politics and international economics” (Hefeker, 1997)³⁵.

In the European Union case, both these theories are implemented, it is most important to understand that nation-states in democratic societies represent the will of their population and they tend to execute that will when the experiences have proven to be successful in practice therefore before being able to execute their plans the governments have already a filtered state of the element that can indicate their further programs, but this does not necessarily mean that they ought to be successful considering what happened to Greece from the economic perspective and Brexit from both economic and political realms.

It is understandable that the economic activities tend to rely mainly on the political guarantors of the existing patterns, but these guarantors must consider the international political will and appropriate their power to open or close ways to further integration of the nation-states. The unstable international monetary system greatly

³⁵Carsten Hefeker. (1997). Interest Groups and Monetary Integration. *The Political Economy of Exchange Regime choice*. Westview Press, pp. 3-4.

contributed to increasing the dynamics of establishing common exchange rates and further economic integration even though this paved the way for regionalism and credibility dependence on the strongest European member states (Henning, 1997)³⁶.

This dependence on power and actors leads to further political and economic ambiguity, it roots fear to the weaker states that as response tend to focus on monetary regionalism and isolation from the international monetary system. The regional focus on trade, common goods and balanced custom unions is central in the political-economic relations of the European Union and Turkey because the avoidance of the European Union to include a country like Turkey under its frames explains a lot in regard to the non-member states standing towards this issue.

The Turkish state must first win the sympathy of the European society but considering that they are excluded of such opportunity as far they tend to follow reciprocal approaches towards the EU therefore here the main question remains whether these two actors will be able to overcome regionalism and avoid international pressures in establishing their complete autonomous political and economic relations.

Turkey in the other hand, does not have the same circumstances as countries that are members in the European Union therefore in this regard is able to operate more independently politically and economically within its borders, but it lacks the benefits of being a member-state and to freely operate economically in the European Union zone.

It is obvious that Europe is greatly concerned regarding Turkey's monetary progress and remains divided whether Turkey has managed to fulfill its obligations towards the standards set by the Copenhagen Criteria, in the European Commission report on Turkey they focus on the autonomy of the monetary system from the political agendas of the state of Turkey explaining that Turkey has to a certain extent shifted away from its economical responsibilities (European Commission, 2018)³⁷. For the EU the division of power has always been the core requirement of stable governing, although Turkey has developed a lot in this regard it remains to be seen whether they will find a common language in the near future.

³⁶Henning, C. (1998). *Systemic Conflict and Regional Monetary Integration: The Case of Europe*. International Organization, 52(3), pp. 537-538.

³⁷ European Commission. (2018). *Turkey 2018 Report*. Communication on EU Enlargement Policy. Strasburg, SWD. 153. Final.

2.4. The National Interest

When it comes to the European Union and Turkey, this is the component that many times has pushed them away as much as it has brought them together.

If we consider Turkey from the European perspective it is clear that it has a lot to offer because is one of the biggest states in the region and especially in the unstable region the big powers need strong and stable allies. Turkey has a powerful military that has been to great use to NATO and with that to the European Union itself.

The turbulences in the region near Turkey, especially after the revolutionary events in that region have grown to dangerous proportions, with Syria facing the most horrific and devastating event that showed another humanitarian failure on a global scale in the world of diplomacy.

The war brought disturbance to the people and unfortunately, most of the immigrants were forced to leave their homes for a stable life and under these circumstances they use Turkey as a channel to the economically developed European Union.

Although the European Union has managed to accept many immigrants it is impossible to accommodate properly all of them, therefore it is in their core inters to convince Turkey to reduce the flux of immigrants to reduce the short and long-term consequences.

Chapter III

Understanding-Interpreting the European Union and Turkey Relations Through the Theories of International Relations

Every state and nation have managed to shape its values and identity through shifting and turbulent periods of their history hence the ideas are created to enable a way of life that is common and accepted from a group of people.

In contemporary times we can witness that these ideas do not necessarily thrive from the roots of every single nation-state.

The ideas sometimes can be implemented from foreign powerful actors, most importantly this does not necessarily depend on the willingness of the nation they can either be enforced or can be accepted as such by the people that hope that ideological change can bring them a better future and prosperous life.

This is why I will try to interpret the role of these ideas in the case of Turkey and EU relations and understand their importance in constructing stronger social, political and economic ties among these nations.

Theories play a key role in the current international system. Their influence has managed to increase or decrease the relations between states therefore the three major theories of international relations can be instrumental in describing the socio-political relations between Turkey and the European Union in the last two decades.

3.1. The Liberalist Theory Approach

In contemporary time is obvious that the Liberalist ideas are more commonly accepted and treasured worldwide, especially after the fall of the Berlin wall it produced the triumphal moment in which the United States as the leading actor of such ideology was able to achieve great political and economic stability with a way of life ‘envied’ by the most of the world. The European Union was also able to absorb the liberalist views that now are identifying factors of most of the western world carrying with it the social tolerance and various economic benefits.

Somehow the term of liberalism and the name of Adam Smith go hand in hand for many reasons, one of which is that he definitely can be considered as one of the founding fathers of this ideology and his books especially the “Wealth of Nations” have contributed greatly on interpreting the reasons why liberalism is of greater benefit to the society than any other ideology of our era. In his book the philosopher gives great importance to division of labor, a free economy and the “hidden hand”. (Smith, A & Cannan, E, 2000)³⁸.

Smith gave great importance to each subject meaning that he believed that each individual by pursuing its own interest can contribute to the greater good in the society therefore the stability of economic institutions must greatly depend on the social decisions rather than governmental ones. It is debatable whether is the best to leave the economy to completely regulate itself without any intervention since greed is deeply rooted in the construction of human beings therefore it has tendencies to create gaps that can be unfair and irreparable without state intervention.

The division of labor plays a central role in Smith’s approach, but the interpretations of this element are different in other countries because not all of them are ready to accept it as such, depending on the regimes they have previously experienced. The division of labor firstly needs a proven and a successful organizational structure that does not carry corruption and other harmful components that can threaten its existence in the first place, after that we can try to manage Smith’s economic policies that can increase the growth and professionalism in one nation.

³⁸Smith, A & Cannan, E. (2000). *The Wealth of Nations*. New York, Modern Library.

In the European Union, the idea of liberalism achieves its height when a strong middle-class is present that is free to pursue its economic and social freedoms in radical proportions but this does not mean that liberalism is necessarily in conflict with the economic freedoms pursued by the individuals to some extent is different from the ideas of Marxism and collectivism, it removed the mass security and reliance on the state and made the society to control its economical outcome at their own risk.

In this way the radical forms of liberalism contrasted the strong influence of the state and the people who benefited from its freedoms (Smith, G & E. Kirchner, 1988)³⁹. Smith's ideas of liberalism reflect another side of it in the meaning that although the promise of liberalism is reflected by human freedoms to pursue its own goals at the same time the same liberties can manifest themselves as pressure and isolate the scope of influence of any higher form of organization, regardless if that from is in the context of culture, religion or the state.

These forms of contradictions are evident in today's Turkey because the European Union requires that the state provide institutional liberties and tries to avoid any significant cultural and religious influence but not every society has the same priorities and expectations. In Turkey, the conservatism plays an important role in the creation of family and broader formal or non-formal organizations.

The society there have always been fond of a father-like figure, especially having the example of 'Ataturk' that in English means 'father of Turkey', this interpretation is deeply rooted in all the national dimensions of the country.

The individuals are given greater importance and responsibilities when it comes to the public functions that they hold.

There is a strong debate in the international politics over the version of liberalism and democracy that is currently implemented in Turkey, especially in the last decades, a contradiction of traditional religious scholars and modern ones have come to surface. The traditional viewers are criticized over the role of religion in the political establishment in Turkey, while the new ones have their own views in regard to the implementation of religion in democracy⁴⁰. This brings the debate of the importance of moral values in the arena of social, economic and political establishments.

³⁹Smith, G. (1988). *Between Left and Right: The ambivalence of European liberalism*. In E. Kirchner. (ED.), *Liberal Parties in Western Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 17.

⁴⁰William Hale & Ergun Ozbudun. (2010). *Islamism, Democracy and Liberalism in Turkey. The case of AKP*. Routledge, Routledge Studies in Middle Eastern politics.

Religious values are of utmost importance in the Turkish social domain but these values seem to be missing in the liberalist approach when the social and economic structures are represented, the pursuit of individual interest rather than collective one, has different outcomes in different societies. The Turkish political organization itself as integrated and reformist in the balance of moral and political spheres.

This comes mostly because of the mass beliefs and the importance of religion in the social domain, this automatically pressures the elites to conduct the political promises in a certain integrated way upon which both the secularist and the religious people can find themselves, so far no one except AKP (Justice and Development Party) has managed to do so, therefore new ideas of integration have come to sight enabling the balance of radical liberalist ideas and traditional believes to come together and express themselves in the political platforms.

The discourse of religion and politics is something unique to Turkish politics because the connection of politics and churches in the European Union does not have the same intensity as it does in Turkey this represents a future challenge that needs to be seriously considered specifically when it comes to social and economic development that root the foundation of ideological and political manifestations.

3.2. The Realist Theory Approach

This theory is essential in understanding the true nature of the relations between the European Union and Turkey. Both of these states have common elements shared their struggle to maintain their independence and to secure any foreign intervention that would put their sovereignty at risk.

It is understandable that they tended to use different mechanisms to secure themselves from the predatory intentions of other big powers, in this sense the European Union has evolved a lot in securing itself by coming together and letting new approaches to further financial and institutional cooperation.

We can say the same until some extent applies to Turkey, who at the moment is at a critical crossroad with the EU especially when it comes to trade and being a member of it therefore in this regard I will try to interpret this complicated nature of relations through the realist theory, specifically according to the views of one of the biggest contributors of the defensive realist approach, Robert Jervis and his ideas upon which we can create a module according to which we can compare the two sides.

The EU represents a module that can be interpreted in the elements that do comply with elements like the desire to establish, broader belief in each other's policies, belief in expansion and the fear of economic collapse. (Jervis, R, 1982)⁴¹.

Firstly, in its essence the European Union is comparable with the components that are required to establish a security regime. In order to prevent the repetition of their harsh history, the most powerful founding states expressed the desire to establish a collective interdependence and also wanted to maintain their neutrality, this gave them the opportunity to create a more stable and organized political environment.

Secondly, the founding members were able to understand the devastating historical events and started to believe that they share common views toward each other, adding to this the absence of a dominant powerful state the total transformation of their political and economic environment started to change, the security and financial areas were able to flourish.

⁴¹Jervis, R. (1982). *Security Regimes*. International Organization, 36(2), 357-378.

Thirdly, the European states went above their aspirations for more geographical and political dominance their prudence resolved the war threatening issues therefore none of the founding states manifested security problems nor they tended to materialize each other's economic or political turbulences.

Lastly, the European nations were able to think in a rational way, they simply considered war as too costly and devastating for their economies therefore the economic priority played a very important role in maintaining the peace in Europe. "Tariff wars can be seen as analogues to arms race" (Jervis, R, 1982)⁴², this comparison made by Jervis enlightens us about the importance of economic sanctions, he considers them the elements that lay the basis of a probable repetition of European history this was his way of noticing the establishment of the security regimes, although the absence these components made the European Union functional domestically, they were as important in establishing strong and unified European Union in the International Political arena.

However, this did not mean that the European Union is completely immune to any domestic and international challenges. We can make a comparison in the case of Turkey and the way trade barriers can contribute to raising the tension between the actors.

Turkey like any other state relies on its economy for further developing its institutional and social status. Being geographically in a position that gives a tremendous advantage to the states that are in a common financial platform, which is able to limit its export and increase the pressure domestically to balance what is unbalanced in the international market. This uncertainty can lead the state to further depend on itself and bring the 'security-dilemma' into existence where the states tend to achieve the ultimate power in order to not feel pressured and exposed to the other's will. (Hertz, J, 1950)⁴³

The European Union was established on the promises that nationality and other personal sentiments of the nation-states would go away and would open the road to the new dangerous sentiments. In contemporary times "there are substantial country differences in popular support for European Unification". (Arts & Halman, 2005)⁴⁴.

⁴²Jervis, R. (1982). *Security Regimes*. International Organization, 36(2), p. 358.

⁴³Hertz, J. (1950). *Idealist Internationalism and the Security Dilemma*. World Politics, 2(2), 157-180.

⁴⁴WIL ARTS & LOEK HALMAN. (2005). *National Identity in Europe Today: What the People Feel and Think*. International Journal of Sociology, 35(4). 69-93.

Countries like the United Kingdom have explicitly stated that they want out of the European Union, this means that although the European Union ideologically and demographically can embrace all of its members, this does not necessarily lead to the complete de-personalization of the member states. On the other hand, the European Union is in itself insecure about the debate if they are exclusive or inclusive concerning other identities and cultures, an example of this is Turkey. The debate, if they should or shouldn't join the EU, is continuous and this clashes with the norms thrived in the western world, especially when it comes to giving the opportunity by not limiting each other to achieve its highest goal, without it becoming a dangerous and financial war threatening component for the member states.

Turkey needs the same treatment the EU countries had when they established their cooperation but in contemporary times with the current institutional structure it seems to be harder to pave the road for expansion, we must consider that in the European Union there are countries such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Albania, Kosovo, who have common European geography and cultures in their traditions and they are at the heart of Europe but adding to this the willingness of UK to leave the European Union increases the danger to blur the wonderful understandings and cooperation among states, it is impossible to be definitive on any outcome because the EU member states have proven that they can rise from the ashes and establish new expansionist platforms that will be able to embrace states like Turkey, but especially in the last two decades we cannot see any possible short-term solution of their nature of relations financially or politically.

The common political interest plays a key role on the fragile relations among states, Samuel Huntington predicted that "Nation-states will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs". (Huntington, 1993)⁴⁵.

The ideas of Huntington have not remained unchallenged, the principality of states as main actors and the anti-western sentiment contributes to increasing the frictions among East and West. Important scholars in the field of sociology like Ali Pajaziti, offer us analysis of this context, in his article regarding the civilization and social impacts in contemporary world he represents Ahmet Davutoglu's objections towards Huntington and Fukuyama, he regards the clash of civilizations as very

⁴⁵Huntington, S. (1993). *The Clash of Civilizations?* ForeignAffairs, 72(3), 22-49.

exclusive and dangerous concept that roots confrontations that ultimately lead to anti-American and anti-Western sentiments (Pajaziti, 2012)⁴⁶

If this debate continues to gain momentum the European Union could be at existential risk in case the emergence of any polarization among nation-states. In theory, the nation-states at any given moment could change their priorities and try to benefit from each other's fragility, in our case it can be Turkey or vice-versa, if the second mentioned becomes part of the European Union.

According to this realist understanding the states of the European Union by pursuing their interest at any higher level without considering the interest of the other states, they could violate their common interests and the tariff competition can quickly convert to arms competition. This is why the 2008 crisis is a period that will remain deeply rooted in the European Union and world history, it could unbalance existing financial patterns, this even shows that fragility on the financial domain brings concerns to the socio-political agenda of the nation-state. In this view, we can consider Turkey, it has the opportunity to analyze both sides of the European Union and make its proper arrangements before joining the Union.

In the last decade it seems that the number of Turkish scholars tends to analyze whether the European Union has selective agenda, especially considering the circumstances upon which Turkey stands, a country surrounded by the war in Syria, the Russian presence and the influx of immigrants reaching the European borders.

These elements make the scholars skeptic whether it is in the European intentions to further enlarge its borders and become prone to more unforeseen challenges. (Baç, M, 2016)⁴⁷.

When it comes to following examples, there always exist certain roads one can follow but the United States represents a perfect example of how to manage intern affairs.

The European Union is still far away from reaching the same political and economic unity as in the USA because of the following reasons:

⁴⁶ Ali Pajaziti. (2012). Davutuoglu: *Thinking Depth and Global Political Activism as new Grand Strategy*. Contemporary Issues, 5(1).

⁴⁷Müftüler Baç, M. (2016). *Turkey's Ambivalent Relationship with the European Union: To Accede or Not to Accede*. Uluslararası İlişkiler | International Relations, 13(52), 89-103.

Firstly, the European Union countries unlike the US do not share the same language and traditions this requires more complex and time-consuming strategies in order to overcome the challenges.

Secondly, the European Union has been unable to establish a common stable currency that can benefit all states equally. Establishing euro is a step forward that needs to be harmonized because it led countries like Italy, Spain and especially Greece into economic turbulence.

The economic fragility is very important for the European Union because it has shown us that nation-states can abandon the European dream if to them feels threatening to be part of it, as is the case with the UK in the worst-case scenario remains war but that is no exception.

Thirdly, the US have already established strong and common national, political union whereas in the European case that still remains the dream of the founder states and the enlargement process is still continuing. The deficiencies of the ECC lead to trade wars among the European states and nationalism is always present to put more gas into the fire. “Unless its form is changed ECC is not going to contribute to the spread of international harmony either within Europe itself or within larger Atlantic world” (Bolles, B, 1963)⁴⁸.

Moreover, besides the fact that nationalism has not perished from Europe and has managed to survive strongly and decisively until the last decades, shows that nationalism has many open channels and dimensions, these can threaten the peaceful co-existence of the European Union itself. As long as the nationalism is present and strong, we can expect it to manifest itself in the economic affairs, political and cultural formation, all of these are the imminent threats to the existence of the European Union shared and collective identity (BAUN, M, 2003)⁴⁹.

Although nationalism can have a different meaning in different countries, its presence and strong resistance to surrender to a collective Union, represents the everlasting threat to its existence. It remains to be seen and evaluated in which form the nationalism will manifest itself in the future in deciding the forms and strategies that either country needs to pursue.

⁴⁸Bolles, B. (1963). *Residual Nationalism: A Rising Threat to Projected European Union*. The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 348, pp. 102-109.

⁴⁹ BAUN, M. (2003). *The Implications of EU Enlargement for the United States*. Perspectives, (21), 27-38.

3.3. The Constructivist Theory Approach

Liberal and Realist theories are considered to be the most dominant theories in international relations, this does not necessarily mean that there is no place for other theoretical views.

The idea of constructivism differs from other theories from the core, it shakes the foundations of what we take for granted as such and offers a different philosophical understanding of the social apprehending, This theory is deeply concerned with the way our realities are created, Nicholas Onuf is one of the greatest contributors of this perspective and he is among the first to use the term “constructivism” and debate that we cannot definitely extinguish the material, social and individual because they all constitute each other (Onuf, N.G, 1989)⁵⁰.

If we analyze the relationship between Turkey and the European Union in this context one must give great importance to the ways they are constructing their own political relationship. In order to have a healthy system of relations both these countries must be given greater importance to their individual and social backgrounds. It seems as they are the only factor that can truly contribute in building a set of norms that can greatly ease the process of integration.

In the case of Turkey, considering the different culture and historical context upon the which the foundations of the new Turkish state are made, we can see an opportunity for the future generations if necessary to create a new set of ideas that are important to be positive in understanding the culture and tradition of the others.

The same is valid for the European Union, it can produce new grounds that should not predominantly focus on the material requirements, this theory gives another channel that enlightens us about the importance of social reforms in advancing the financial and political standards of other countries. This should not be taken as the final definition on the contrary it can give a great contribution to the methods that can be followed to bring Turkey closer in the European Union.

The foundations upon which the states operate are not the same in domestic politics and international relations. Domestic politics tends to rely on traditions and the

⁵⁰Onuf, N.G. (1989). *World of our making: Rules and rule in social theory and international relations*. Columbia, S.C: University of South Carolina Press.

rule of law while the international environment is not as forgiving, even the international institutions operate in lower intensity with greater restrictions (Wendt, 1999)⁵¹. According to this idea, the states must be enormously committed to fulfill their goals and to do that the international institutions play a key role in overcoming the fear of insecurity and inability to pave new forms of political relations. For the states aspiring to be members of the European Union they must mutually-construct their relationship because their relations are dependent on the fundamentals upon which the relations will be established.

Firstly, it is important to believe that international institutions are equivalent to credibility as the domestic institutions. This pillar establishes the basis of any further social, political or financial establishment of relations. The financial and political stability of the European Union has proven to be attractive for many states, it proves that the institutions are healthy and well-constructed, after all the Union itself is mutually-constructed by its founder states.

Secondly, the nation-state must give up its sovereignty in order to pave the way for a greater cause and it must be reasoned that the concept of state authority is something that the individuals and society construct together, even if it includes normative elements founded on traditions. In this sense, it seems that the society itself seeks a center of gravity and authority that it can relate, in our case the European Union has to be the center towards which the Turkish institutions can relate accordingly. It is not enough for the nation-states to simply rely on pragmatic views and try to make their calculations only on those terms they must have a leap of faith in this regard, the credibility and sovereignty must be left to self-evolve to the point that strengthened the bonds between the states are insuperable even depended on each other.

Thirdly, the nation-states must understand the importance of political and financial stability as an element of their own national security. We have many examples where anarchy has left the room for war and other atrocities, as is the case with the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the hole it left in the Balkan history (Banac, 1992)⁵².

Moreover, there are some critiques of the constructivist approach that especially focus on the complications that can arise by being unable to absolutely divide materialism and society, it leaves room for more complications in the international

⁵¹ Wendt, A. (1999). *Social theory of International Politics* (Cambridge studies in International Relations). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

⁵²Banac, I. (1992). *Yugoslavia*. *The American Historical Review*, 97(4), 1084-1104.

relations. If the understanding of anarchy is completely left on the hands of subjective nations it can reproduce itself, it leaves room for different ideas and interpretations that do not contribute to solving the problems but on the contrary, it prolongs and further complicates the situation (Hopf, 1998)⁵³.

The argument Hopf makes seems not only to be important to analyze the international agenda, it also gives importance to the ways domestic politics is shaped and transformed it contributes to clearing the fog between requirements, ambitions and reality. For one to prosper it must first understand the gravity of the situation he is currently in, it is well known that “Men do not wield to anything except power and authority “(Hinsley, 1967)⁵⁴, but they can if the causes are well understood and seen as beneficial rather than harmful to their heritage and financial well-being.

In the last two decades, the international environment on the regions surrounding Turkey is unstable, it has constantly produced the fog that blockades aspirations and damages the emotions of subjects, that in turn are able to transmit it to further social and institutional organizations and constructed their own modified identity that changes the views of the nation-states and their aspirations in joining the European Union itself.

⁵³Hopf, T. (1998). *The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory*. *International Security*, 23(1), 171-200.

⁵⁴Hinsley, F. (1967). *The Concept of Sovereignty and Relations Between States*. *Journal of International Affairs*, 21(2), 242-252.

Chapter IV

Two Decades of “Political Chess” (2002-2019): Turkey and The European Union Relations

Turkey and the European Union are both very active in pursuing their political ambitions, this means that they persistently follow their agendas in trying to combine the best interest for themselves.

The political parties are the energy that pushes towards all these movements and reforms, sometimes these actions can be perceived as harmful towards the other counterpart. Their platforms make the states pursue agendas that in the international relations have long-lasting impacts, in the case of Turkey and the European Union the socio-political dimension has not remained immune in regard to the influence of political parties.

This has become obvious in the last two decades of relations, the emergence of right-wing oriented groups has put greater pressure on the relations among for all states that are not a member of the European Union, this has culminated in producing elements of populism and intolerance towards diversity in the territory of the European Union.

The field of analysis is based on the dilemma of whether this increase in right-wing parties emerges as a result of the financial pressure that the states are undergoing or from the religious and cultural diversity (Gandesha, 2018)⁵⁵.

The policies have had a great impact on society, it has affected the expectations and the perceptions of the others in producing positive and negative effects that are important in shaping the mindset of the people.

⁵⁵ Gandesha, S. (2018). Understanding Right and Left Populism. In Morelock J. (Ed.), *Critical Theory and Authoritarian Populism*. London: University of Westminster Press, p.51.

4.1. 2002: From Laic-Etatist Regime to New Approach

The international events have certainly influenced Turkey and the ways Turkish society have perceived their contemporary state. In order to understand the current establishment in Turkey, we must understand its origins and the structures that have shaped the Ottoman Empire on its early stages and why the political elites promoted the laic understanding of the state including the causes that lead to new approaches that the Turkish society required in order to bring political and financial stability.

The emergence of the new Turkish state from the ashes of the Ottoman Empire consisted of a new form of national identity. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was one of the leading generals that greatly contributed in directing Turkey during its most turbulent period, especially after the WWI. He firmly established a new ideological orientation for the Turkish society that would later lead to a new Kemalist ideology with secularist elements and nation-building at its core.

This particular orientation was mostly focused on territorial and nation-building operations rather than welfare and financial stability, this led to the emergence of étatism in the reform planning, meaning that the state would control the economy and with that the ownership of the biggest companies (Kili, 1980)⁵⁶.

After Justice and Development Party won the election of 2002, they sought to put Turkey's priority the financial stability and protect its cultural and religious values but this new establishment at the same time it distanced Turkey from its firstly established secular understanding of the state and gave hope to the people of religious beliefs and minorities to whom the elements of conservatism and financial stability mattered the most. AKP also brought in the scene a different view of the military establishment in the country and many believed that it would strip the army of the powers that have traditionally possessed (Abramowitz & Barkey, 2009)⁵⁷.

⁵⁶Kili, S. (1980). *Kemalism in Contemporary Turkey*. International Political Science Review | Revue Internationale De Science Politique, 1(3).

⁵⁷ Abramowitz, M. & Barkey, H. (2009). *Turkey's Transformers: The AKP Sees Big*. Foreign Affairs, 88(6).

On one hand it seemed, as AKP was the only party that finally managed to stabilize the relations between the government and the military establishment especially considering the new ideology that gave importance to democratic values while at the same time protecting the traditional elements that have great importance in the Turkish society, AKP with its charismatic leader Recep Tayyip Erdoğan were the leading forces behind these developments.

Turkey has always remained a secular state since its establishment even though the society gave importance to religion in the political sphere, the Turkish state has managed to keep its constitution unchanged and at the same time preserve its uniqueness in the whole region. Each time the parties have threatened the constitution they have been sanctioned by the constitutional court, but utterly it offered a channel of redefinition of the political party's motives toward the constitutional court.

Greece and (Southern) Cyprus have to a certain extent discouraged the Turkish road toward the European Union. If we consider the importance of being a member state in the EU and the ability to veto any new upcoming member in the union it is obvious that Turkey firstly has to completely eradicate the problems with its neighbor states, but what I want to highlight here is the fact that it is very unlikely that in the near future the (Southern) Cyprus conflict with Turkey will be resolved and with it the road of Turkey towards the European Union. In the other hand the European Union has accepted (Southern) Cyprus as a member state in 2004, this does that mean that it chose one member over another, simply by keeping in view the facts that (Southern) Cypriots did not entirely resolve the problems with their neighbors in this case, Turkey and by being a member state of the Union definitely gave (Southern) Cyprus the upper hand in politics and towards relations to the European Union.

It would be even better if Greece, (Southern) Cyprus and Turkey followed their parallel process toward their road in the European Union, in the meaning that none of the above mentioned would be able to block the process of new member states and with it offering a great opportunity for conflict resolution and prosperity in the region. This prosperity could be kept intact by following a greater common good, the ability to join the EU and becoming politically and economically interdependent.

Additionally, the removal of customs and other tariffs would greatly encourage the free market economy and also can affect the perceptions of the society towards the European Union but also if the opposite happens it discourages the people and increases the skepticism of believing that the European Union is equal for all.

There are mechanisms like the customs that can greatly contribute to releasing the tensions and avoiding any direct clashes between the two countries. When it comes to financial and customs although the European Union has the upper hand considering the development and the number of states that operate under their regulations it is important to not underestimate Turkey's ability to contribute in paving the way towards Asia.

It is a fact that Turkey has more in common with some countries in the Middle Eastern region than the EU does, from the European Union perspective we can consider the cultural and historical ties of Turkey in the region as an opportunity to further enlarge the trade of the Union at geographic locations that previously wouldn't be considered as much.

4.2. The Importance of Political Parties

In the case of EU and Turkey relations it is important to understand the factors that determine their domestic and international policies, their roots and the ability to influence the society in supporting their intended political platforms. The political parties are powerful organizations who unlike specific interest groups have a broader scope of influence and offer the possibility to embrace even the candidates who do not share the exact ideology with the party, this gives them an edge compared to any other sort of organizations as long the electorate is willing to support their chosen candidates.

These organizations besides representing diversity and solutions to the people they also are one of the most important mechanisms that channel the information to the society although the information varies according to the interest and platform of the political organizations. The interest groups are also important in shaping the policies of the state but their influence is limited not only because they are not directly elected by the electorate but mainly because they have to project their policies through political parties who in return can limit them and their requests but this is not valid for political activists and important political party members because they are considered to be inside the decision making body therefore, the responsibility lies with them not the non-party members.(Snyder, James & Ting, 2002)⁵⁸.

This is not to say that the political parties themselves have no limitations at all on the contrary they are created based on their locations and ideologies that characterize them during their existence. For this issue the Cleavage theory offers an interesting explanation, the political parties cannot redefine themselves nor their ideologies their policies are shaped accordingly to the environment in which they operate therefore even in the European Union we can notice a combination of national interests that stands in harmony with the institutions and policies of the European Union especially when it comes to its enlargement strategies and important decision making strategies (Marks, Wilson & Ray, 2002) ⁵⁹.

⁵⁸Snyder, J., & Ting, M. (2002). *An Informational Rationale for Political Parties*. *American Journal of Political Science*, 46(1).

⁵⁹Marks, G., Wilson, C., & Ray, L. (2002). National Political Parties and European Integration. *American Journal of Political Science*, 46(3), 585-594. doi:10.2307/3088401 (586).

If we consider these parameters it is obvious that the further enlargement policies are the reflections of this complex mixture of the European Union nation-states but this also means that the non-member states are pressured to completely resolve their disputes with each member state to gain the sympathy to ultimately join the union.

Turkey is currently at this position for it to pursue this trajectory it must fulfill the vacuums of other member states but this would also mean a total resolution with (Southern) Cyprus that can lead to unpredictable reactions at home, the smaller political parties unlike the larger ones are more willing to put themselves into extreme positions to join the competition because these opportunities are what they can channel and inform the electorate to make pressure on existing political structures. This means that the Turkish government must also calculate the whole dimensions of reforming the policies that are required to join the European Union and this is why sometimes the political parties are bound to make shifts to avoid further complications in their domestic agendas, the same is valid for the European Union because they also need to balance the interest of each member state to avoid a climate of uncertainty that can ruin their credibility within and outside their existing borders.

4.3. The Increasing Populism in Europe

The European Union is formed by many states and ethnicities that have many different perceptions about the socio-political organizations within their states. It is not easy in contemporary times to avoid the manifestations of globalism, especially for the states of the European Union that must be able to exceed their national expectations in order to embrace what multiculturalism and economic diversity bring to the nation-state.

It is very important to understand that the role of nationalism has not yet faded on the contrary it still represents one of the most important fundamentals of the current states and if is put into comparison with globalism there is little doubt of who claims the victory in this comparison.

The increasing role of globalism, has to some extent forced the nation-states to accept what is foreign and even replace it with domestic state productions because this phenomenon offers little choice but to accept what is more rational and realistic in political and economic branches. These elements contribute in further complicating the existing organizational order in the European Union especially after the economic crisis that the member states are currently undergoing.

Furthermore, a counter-argument to the more conservative approaches would be that isolation leads to further complications for the economy, social acceptance and this in fact clashes with the democratic principles that generated so much wealth and prosperity for the European nations so far.

There are scholars like John Mearsheimer that criticize the liberalist theory and consider it unable to fulfill the basic promises that it offers and for this reason he offers three main arguments:

First, the existing state affairs are very tightened to efficiency and time, they try to be effective in producing their policies.

Secondly, the distribution of power has changed drastically from traditional times.

Thirdly, Mearsheimer argues about the existing unipolar political system that unlike other political systems plays a key role in the policies of the domestic states (Mearsheimer, 2019)⁶⁰.

In the first argument, he provides the argument that the existing global system is actually harming itself by continuously raising the pressure on efficiency and time, these two elements are very important in understanding the pressure that the nation-states have to face into becoming something they are not or cannot because the existing economic policies of one state do not necessarily offer the same benefits for the other states, my view on this is reflected in arguments that contain fewer elements but offer the same logic, for instance: If there are two stores in a mall do not necessarily produce not gain the same amount of money even though they are both parts of one street with the same consumers.

This pressure on non-member states can transform in disbelief for Turkish society because it is simply requiring them to replace what is domestic with foreign and this is not easily accepted when it does not come with the proportionate understanding between the actors. These examples also make sense in the geographical understanding, on one hand it encourages the nationalist factors of the existing economical systems where eventually the domestic actor can provide better security reliance therefore, would be able to take the primary importance and provide the society with its requirements in better efficiency and timing.

Secondly, he focuses on power distribution and how this situation affects the actors that are at play. In modern times we are witnessing the pressure on domestic elements to be replaced with international centers of power. The existing national elements naturally tend to oppose such influences in order to give greater importance to what is domestic and more profitable for the nation rather than the region or the globe, in this case, the social response is usually leaning towards more conservative approaches that predominantly target and blame the minorities of different ethnicities and beliefs.

To avoid such outcomes in the existing economical systems the states must have a developed and competitive economy within themselves in order not to fall behind

⁶⁰ John, Mearsheimer. (2019). *Bound to Fail: The Rise and Fall of the Liberal International Order*. International Security, (43), pp. 7-8.

when faced with greater competition. These expectations although firstly emerge as economical manifestations in the longer period they are able to also project their presence in the social dimension by triggering certain expectations and ways of life that not every society is able to accomplish. This makes us understand that the struggle to achieve certain goals is not strictly economic or political rather than it becomes a social agenda that diversifies the centers of power struggle within the nation-states. These elements also contribute in further strengthening the role of the nationalistic led rhetoric that pushes forward their conservative policies. This in return produces further divisions between the governments and the people, who unlike their governments do not necessarily understand the existing political and economic circumstances.

Thirdly, the unipolar political system represents a challenge on itself because it offers no real solution to globalization and the ways the main actor tries to promote itself as a leader of the liberal and democratic world. The international political system is large enough therefore his critics on the democratic manifestation of the world shifts from being productive into becoming unproductive even undergoing reversible political results of what the unipolar actor desires. The economic problems combined with factors such as population decline in the European Union showcase the problems with the existing political patterns however this cannot be said to be a huge problem in the relations between the European Union and Turkey because these two actors have yet to resolve crucial divisive conjectures like the (Southern) Cyprus problems in order to become one in facing international problems.

The European Union has already transitioned to many historical periods that have given the experience and enabled the member states to solely focus on the political and economic competition but there can be consequences for non-member states because at the same time they are seen as a foreign competitor for the EU agenda and the continuous economical restrictions make it harder for non-member states to become part of the family simply because of time and competition increase daily on the dynamic and unstable international political systems. This gap in time also leaves the opportunity for the non-member states to be affected by events in their own regions and force them to seek other resolutions in the ongoing processes are not resolved for a long time with the European Union means that the unipolar political system can also lose the influence on countries who do not integrate at a reasonable period of time to the desired global political projections.

4.4. The Negative and Positive Effects

Considering that both Turkey and the European Union represent huge proportions of demography, economy, and politics in the contemporary world, it becomes of high priority to understand the implications of their cooperation and non-cooperation in their regions and further. It is impossible for anyone to clearly classify the outcomes of their activities however a general separation between the positive and negative outcomes of their interaction can be made.

When considering the positive effects of their cooperation we can make parallelisms between the foundation of the European Union and Turkey. Clearly, the creation of the European Union came as a result of necessity in order to avoid further separation among nation-states but also to make an economic interdependence that would benefit all the actors included.

Firstly, economic cooperation has proved that it can lay the grounds for further integrations because even when the political relations denigrate the increased economic relations can pressure the political elites do not necessarily harm the benefits of their states and with this move forward to greater social cooperation.

Secondly, as result of economic interdependence, the European Union became closer and removed the barriers that lead to greater social understanding and admiration among nations, in other words, it becomes clear that through economic cooperation we can reach to stronger social integrations by which it becomes easier to push forward the necessary reforms that improve the institutional functions of each state this is exactly what the European Union achieved.

Thirdly, this bottom-up approach contributes on filling the void of political cooperation among the states, because the states are rational-actors and act accordingly and determinately to protect their own inters therefore as long as these states increase the inters between themselves the greater the chances of political conjectures in the future.

Conclusions

Taking all into consideration, over the past two decades Turkey has distanced itself from the traditional policies towards the European Union because of the shift in the international environment since 2001.

The current institutional establishment of Turkey will further distance itself from cooperating with the European Union predominantly because of change in the domestic perceptions.

The European Union and Turkey represent significant importance in the Western and Eastern hemisphere, their cooperation or non-cooperation determines the policies of their states and regions but it is also vital to understand that Turkey's membership would further strengthen the economic and political power of Europe in general because this is the way the European Union historically increased its strength, only through cooperation and integration.

The relations between Turkey and the European Union have always been and will continue to remain heated and sensitive by nature, as long as Turkey does not become a full member state of the European Union. The context of these relations is broader than political because it underlies the social and cultural dimensions that emerged from very important historical events that are also rooted in the history of the European Union. Additionally, the membership of Greece and (Southern) Cyprus further distances Turkey from becoming a full member state in the short-term period and this is why we have focused on three main premises:

- a) Analyzing the genesis of the relations between Turkey and the European Union and how it shaped their social and political relations in the last two decades, we have offered historical facts and scientific opinions on this specific matter.
- b) Understanding the geopolitical importance of Turkey, interpreting through the main theories of international relations to better understand how it affects the relations with the European Union.

- c) The changes that occurred after 2001 in Turkey, the shifted perceptions, and the increase of populism. The positive and negative consequences of becoming part of the European Union and how it influenced the dynamics of relations between Turkey and the European Union during the last two decades.

The socio-political relations among Turkey and the European Union have historically undergone many stages but the last two decades have been of crucial importance in testing the already challengeable relationship.

The global affairs have certainly influenced this relationship especially in Turkey that borders with states like Iraq and Syria have constantly put pressure in Ankara to undertake harsher policies for security purposes.

Still, the European Union also is affected by these policies especially when it comes to immigration and integration of communities within its borders therefore a common language with Turkey many times proven that it can positively influence the region and produce the best outcome in socio-political and economic frameworks.

It is of crucial importance that the collaboration between Turkey and the European Union continues in order to provide peace, security, and prosperity for the whole Western and Eastern hemispheres and whole world and humanity in general.

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