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# Turkish Foreign Policy towards the Balkans:

## The influence of traditional determinants on Davutoğlu's conception of Turkey - Balkan Relations

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# Turkish Foreign Policy towards the Balkans:

## The influence of traditional determinants on Davutoğlu's conception of Turkey - Balkan relations

MARIJA MITROVIC

Das Ziel dieser Arbeit ist die strukturellen Determinanten der türkischen Politik auf dem Balkan in der letzten Zeit zu erklären. Es wird versucht, mit einem konstruktivistischen Ansatz der internationalen Beziehungen und Alexander Wendts Auffassung über die Agentur-Struktur-Beziehungen in der internationalen Politik folgende Fragen zu beantworten: Ob und inwieweit werden das traditionelle Verständnis der Außenpolitik, die Identität und das Verhalten der neuen Akteure in der türkischen Außenpolitik beeinflusst?; Welche Elemente der "alten" idealistischen Struktur können in den aktuellen Beziehungen zwischen der Türkei und dem Balkan beobachtet werden? Ich benutze die außenpolitischen Grundsätze der Türkei, welche aus der Zeit der Gründung der Republik bis zum Ende des Kalten Krieges wahrnehmbar sind, als eine gegebene Struktur und versuche zu zeigen, wie sie die Gestaltung der sogenannten neuen türkischen Außenpolitik und das Verhalten der Türkei auf dem Balkan in der Zeit von 2009, als Ahmet Davutoğlu das Amt des Außenministers nahm, beeinflussen. Ich bin der Meinung, dass diese traditionellen Prinzipien ein grundlegender Teil Davutoğlus Vorstellung über die türkischen Beziehungen mit dem Balkan bilden und dass sie in den außenpolitischen Beziehungen zu den Balkan-Ländern sogar noch sichtbarer sind. In diesem Sinne unterstütze ich das Argument, dass keine große Veränderung in der ideellen Struktur der Außenpolitik der Türkei seit dem Amtsantritt Davutoğlus passiert ist und dass die seit langem etablierten Prinzipien der türkischen Außenpolitik noch immer nachvollziehbar in der AKP - Ära liegen.

**Stichworte:** Türkische Außenpolitik, Ahmet Davutoğlu, Balkan, internationale Beziehungen, Konstruktivismus, Agentur-Struktur

The aim of this thesis is to use the constructivist approach to international relations and Alexander Wendt's conception of agency-structure relationships in international politics to explain structural determinants of Turkey's policy towards the Balkans in the recent period. I'll try to answer the question of how and to what extent the traditional foreign policy understanding influences the identity and behavior of new actors in Turkey's foreign policy and which are the elements of the "old" ideational structure that could be observed in the current relations between Turkey and the Balkans. I take Turkey's foreign policy principles, observable from the period of founding of the Republic till the end of the Cold War as a given structure, and try to show how they influence the formulation of what is called Turkey's new foreign policy and the behavior of Turkey towards the Balkans in the period from 2009, when Ahmet Davutoğlu took office of Minister of Foreign Affairs. I argue that traditional principles constitutively participate in Davutoğlu's imagination of Turkey's relation with the Balkans and are even more observable in its foreign policy behavior towards Balkan countries. In that sense I support the argument that there was no great shift in the ideational structure of Turkey's foreign policy since Davutoğlu took office and that long-established principles of Turkish foreign policy are still traceable in the AKP Era.

**Keywords:** Turkish foreign policy, Ahmet Davutoğlu, the Balkans, international relations, constructivism, agency-structure

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## List of Abbreviations

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| AKP      | Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (English: Justice and Development Party)  |
| EC       | European Community, 1967-1993  |
| EU       | European Union, since 1993   |
| EUPM     | European Union Police Mission (in Bosni and Bosnia and Herze-govina) |
| EULEX    | European Union Rule of Law Mission                                   |
| FDI      | Foreign Direct Investments   |
| IFOR     | The Implementation Force   |
| IR       | International Relations  |
| KFOR     | The Kosovo Force   |
| NATO     | North Atlantic Treaty Organisation                                   |
| OIC      | Organization of Islamic Cooperation                                  |
| RCC      | Regional Cooperation Council   |
| RPP      | Republican People's Party  |
| SEDM     | Southeastern Europe Defense Ministerial Process                      |
| SEEBRIG  | South Eastern Europe Brigade   |
| SEECF    | Southeast European Cooperation Process                               |
| SETA     | The Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research           |
| SFOR     | The Stabilization Force  |
| TIKA     | Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency             |
| UNPROFOR | United Nation Protection Forces                                      |
| US       | United states  |

## 1. Introduction

From the founding of the Republic of Turkey until the end of the Cold War, Turkey's foreign policy was usually described with the similar features and principles. It was considered to be largely constructed based on the late 19th century Ottoman heritage, great trauma from the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire and need to fight for territorial integrity and legitimization of the newly founded Republic (Hale 2000: 37). At the same time it was strongly shaped by the Western positivist and rationalist orientation of young republican elite and by the process of elite led formation of secular, modern and democratic nation state (Aydin 1999: 159; Hale 2000: 39). These factors influenced Mustafa Kemal (later called Atatürk)<sup>1</sup> and governing circles around him to formulate the external relations of the newly established Republic to be predominately security oriented, with the sovereignty and territorial integrity as the main foreign policy concerns. The principles of geopolitics, defensive and cautious realpolitik diplomacy<sup>2</sup> aimed at the preservation of the status quo and firm Western-orientation became known as the traditional determinants of Turkish foreign policy in the 20th century (Aydin 1999; Hale 2000; Karaosmanoğlu 2000; Larrabee/ Lesser 2003).

During the most of the 20th century Turkey's relations with the countries in the Balkans seemed to follow the general pattern of the Turkish foreign policy and were dominated by these traditional principles. After the establishment of the Republic, Turkey's policy towards the Balkan region was in the line with preserving status quo and avoiding escalation of any possible conflicts that could lead to the change of regional borders and would endanger hard won sovereignty of the Turkish Republic. Turkey led defensive and realpolitik diplomacy and through multilateral arrangements tried to balance great powers' influence in the region. It actively engaged in the forming of the Balkan Entente and tried to materialize its interests by relying on collective security arrangements and power balance (Barlas 2005: 449). In the

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1 Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (19 May 1881 – 10 November 1938) was an Ottoman and Turkish army officer, revolutionary statesman and the leading figure in Turkey's War for Independence. He is credited with being the founder of the Republic of Turkey and was its first president. His surname, Atatürk (meaning "Father of the Turks") was granted to him and forbidden to any other person in 1934 by the Turkish parliament.

2 Defensive non-involvement diplomacy emerged in the Ottoman Empire by the end of the 17th Century and as part of the cultural environment it was inherited by Republic of Turkey within its foreign policy behavior. It was based on the fear from the lost of territory, the fear of abandonment and for that reason emphasized cautious, non-involvement diplomacy and balance of power (Karaosmanoğlu, 2000: 201, 215).

interwar period countries of Balkans were of the considerable geostrategic importance for Turkey. The outbreak of the Second World War changed international and regional geopolitical structure. By the end of the War constellation of power in the international system has changed considerably and most parts of the Balkans lost previous relevance for Turkey's geostrategic calculations. During the course of the Cold War, Turkey became a prominent actor of the Western bloc in that region. Most of the Balkan countries at that time were socialist countries and Turkey did not develop closer cooperation with them during this period (Barlas 1999: 73).

Following the end of the Cold War changes took place. Another transformation of the international system occurred, this time from the bipolar to the multipolar structure. Turkey found itself in a great uncertainty and for the first time its traditional foreign policy approach was being seriously questioned. The dismemberment of Yugoslavia and wars which followed forced Turkey to strongly reconsider its policy towards the Balkans. Turkey tried to find a proper response to these regional developments and position itself in this new geopolitical constellation. Till the end of the Cold War Turkey's foreign policy was usually characterized as being passive and reactive but at the beginning of 1990s Turkey started developing more assertive and multi-directional foreign policy, especially towards its neighborhood.

For Turkey wars in the Balkans in the 1990s were of major security concern and Turkey actively reacted to the crisis, especially to the war in Bosnia and towards solving Bosnian question. But by the end of the 90s its focus changed and Turkey was again less visible in the region.

This started changing after November elections in 2002 and coming on power of the Justice and Development Party (Turkish: Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi abbreviated most often as AKP). After AKP formed its first government, Turkish foreign policy was presented with a new vision and gained new momentum. The main intellectual architect of what was named Turkey's new foreign policy was consider to be Prof. Dr. Ahmet Davutoğlu, who after AKP formed the government in 2002 became chief foreign policy advisor of the Turkish Prime Minister and then from 2009 Turkey's Minister of Foreign Affairs. His book *Strategic Depth: Turkey's International Position* (Stratejik derinlik: Türkiye'nin uluslararası konumu. Davutoğlu 2001) was the basis for defining the principles and objectives of Turkey's new foreign policy and it has greatly influenced Turkey's relations with the outside world in the AKP period.



Based on the classical postulates of geopolitics and strategic studies Davutoğlu argued that only through active and multidirectional foreign policy Turkey can find its position in the emerging multi-polar world. After he took office as Minister of Foreign Affairs in 2009, Turkey started expressing greater self-confidence in relations with other countries, especially neighboring ones. Number of analysis emerged that talked about the profound structural changes in Turkey's foreign policy identity and behavior. Turkey's foreign policy was now described as being pro-active and as showing greater readiness to take the risk. Features like "zero-problems with neighbors" and "win-win" politics were now emphasizes as characteristics of this new politics, features opposite to the classical Turkish approach of defensive realpolitik and status quo (Kirişçi 2006; Larrabee 2010).

What seemed particularly new about Davutoğlu's doctrine was that besides taking geography as a determinant of the foreign policy, determinant which was continuously present in Turkish foreign policy, Davutoğlu also took history as the second one. He believes that Turkey's strategic depth is defined by its geographical position and historical legacy and that based on that, Turkey should formulate its foreign policy. "Ottoman history, and also our Republican history, the former bi-polar world, these are permanent parameters that cannot be changed" (Davutoğlu; speech at SETA Foundation Washington, 2009). Even though Davutoğlu openly rejected the concept of Neo-Ottomanism<sup>3</sup>, he believes that historical heritage of the Ottoman period should be considered as one of the central elements in organizing Turkey's foreign policy (Davutoğlu 2008; 2010). Since Davutoğlu became Minister, Turkey actively engaged in the Middle East, the Balkans and the Caucasus region. This activism was coming from what was perceived as common cultural and historical heritage, which Turkey shares with these regions and which come from Ottoman period. The impression was that Turkey's traditional foreign policy principles of strict Western orientation and defensive diplomacy are being replaced with an active foreign policy and new identity based on the Ottoman legacy (Murinson 2006: 953).

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<sup>3</sup> Neo-Ottomanism (Turkish: Yeni Osmanlılık) is a Turkish political ideology created during the Turgut Özal period. In Turkey's foreign policy it was used for creating a wider identity abroad, Ottoman rather than Turkish covering all neighboring Muslim peoples and all minorities in Turkey. Neo-Ottomanism placed great importance in the cultural similarities of Turkey to the Middle East, the Balkans and the Central Asia and argued that based on that Turkey was natural economic and political partner of the countries in these regions (Laçiner 2009: 164, 202).

Referring to the constructivist theory much of the literature emerged arguing that this shift that happened with the AKP government serves as the confirmation of constructivist's main argument that identity structure plays a decisive impact on the foreign policy formation. Coming to power of one moderate Islamic party and the turn in the foreign policy of Turkey towards the neighboring countries, with similar religious and cultural particularities, was seen as an evident proof of this constructivist thesis (Ulusoy 2005; Warning 2010). It was perceived as realism, which dominated international relations theory during the Cold War period, was exceeded. Identity politics rooted in the social norms, beliefs and culture has got a greater input (Bush, Keyman 1997; MacSweeney 1999). After the collapse of the bipolar structure in the power relations, conflicts could not be anymore so easily explained with the main postulates of the realists' theory of power, concepts of alliances and material capabilities. The constructivists came to the scene arguing that identity is a next main crucial element and bone of contention in international system.<sup>4</sup>

In her dissertation Martina Warning following the constructivist theory argued that the change in Turkish state identity happened starting from the Motherland Party (1990-1993), over Welfare Party (1996-1997) and culminating with the Justice and Development Party. It brought a transformation in foreign policy identity of Turkey from the traditional Kemalist, European one, independent and neutral, Western-aligned, to the more religion and culture oriented foreign policy (Warning 2010: 4, 9). Using the same theoretical framework in his dissertation Hasan Ulusoy claims that in the post-Cold war era there was no greater identity shift and that there is continuity in Turkish foreign and security policy. He argues that there are multiple identities traceable in Turkey's foreign policy but as sub-identities that exist under the guidance of one upper-state identity which stayed predominately unchanged. The existence of more of these sub-identities can then, depending on the composition of ideational and material factors, explain variations and multi-dimensionality in the Turkey's new foreign policy (Ulusoy 2005).

After Davutoğlu took office as Foreign Minister, began what became known as "Turkey's return to Balkans" (Poulain/ Sakellariou 2011; Petrović/ Reljić 2011; Somun

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<sup>4</sup> Theory on Clash of Civilizations proposed by Samuel Huntington as the most famous among those theories (Huntington 1993).

2011, 2012; Tanasković 2010; Türbedar 2011). As a former part of Ottoman Empire, with the large Muslim population, countries of the Balkans became an important field for the exercise of Davutoğlu's Strategic Depth doctrine and were often presented as its big success. It seemed that Turkey's new activism in the Balkan region was giving significant results. It was supported by examples of signing the Istanbul Declaration in 2010, Ankara and Belgrade free trade and visa agreements, opening of new schools and universities in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo.

Turkey's new engagement in the Balkans was followed by a new, intensive discourse of Turkish officials that relied on Ottoman legacy in the Balkans, its cultural and religious closeness. This revived interest for the Balkans, followed by the discourse of Ottoman heritage was by many scholars interpreted as the Neo-Ottoman imperialism, as a way for Turkey to strengthen Islamic ties and create the "Green Corridor" through the Balkans. Number of literature emerged, which tried to explain the Turkey's restored activism in the Balkans and Davutoğlu's Strategic Depth doctrine based on the Islamic background of AKP party and the concept of Neo-Ottomanism (Marković 2011; Öktem 2010; Rüma 2010; Tanasković 2011). Not as many authors tried to take the step back and see to what extent the traditional principles of Turkey's foreign policy are included in Turkey's current behavior and according to that make the final conclusion on what is actually new in Turkey-Balkan relations and how Turkey's approach to the Balkans has changed.

Taking aforementioned studies on traditional principles of Turkey's foreign policy, in this thesis I aim to explain the Turkey's foreign policy towards the Balkan countries in the recent period. In this thesis I begin from the main feature of constructivism but expand my analysis around another aspect of constructivist's theory and that is its perception of agency-structure relationship developed in Alexander Wendt's theory (Wendt 1995, 1999). Coming from Alexander Wendt definition of agency, structure and their correlation I take traditional determinants of Turkish foreign policy as a certain macro-structure, as socially shared knowledge or over the time established common culture on Turkey's position in world affairs. The theoretical assumption is that as a macro-structure these "old" or traditional principles of Turkey's foreign policy supervene on the agents and influence Turkey's current foreign policy identity and behavior. Following that position I'll try to answer the question of how and to what extent the traditional foreign policy understanding influenced the identity and behavior

of new actors in Turkey's foreign policy and which are the elements of the "old" ideational structure that could be observed in the current relations between Turkey and the Balkans. I take Turkey's foreign policy principles observable from the period of founding of the Republic till the end of the Cold War as a given structure and independent variable. In my analysis I try to show how this traditional ideational structure influenced the formulation of what is called Turkey's new foreign policy and the behavior of Turkey towards the Balkans countries since 2009 as my main dependent variable. I argue that these traditional principles constitutively participate in new foreign policy of Turkey towards the Balkans, much more that it is perceived. Certain change in the micro-structure did happen (change of agents which occurred with the elite and government change after AKP won the elections), which brought new formulation and changed strategies of the foreign policy implementation. Regardless, traditional principles like geopolitics, realpolitik, West-allied orientation and nonassertive approach, stayed embedded and critically influenced the foreign policy behavior of Turkey in AKP period. I will try to show that even though there was an evident shift in the formulation of the policy towards the Balkan countries in the discourse of Turkish officials, since the traditional features stayed embedded in Turkey's foreign policy, the current behavior of Turkey toward this region demonstrated much more continuity than change. I argue that what is perceived to be Turkey's new foreign policy in the Balkans is not so new.

This thesis is composed of seven chapters. Following the introduction in the next chapter theoretical framework and methodology used in the research is more closely explained. In this chapter a better clarification of Alexander Wendt theory on agency-structure relations is given, especially explanations related to the elements that are particularly used in the analysis. The third chapter is composed of the literature overview on traditional principles and determinants of Turkish foreign policy, while the fourth chapter includes the outline of the Turkey's foreign policy toward the Balkan countries from the founding of the Republic till AKP coming on power. In this fourth chapter goal is to provide a clear picture on how Turkey-Balkan relations were organized prior to AKP so we could see what has changed after Davutoğlu's doctrine became a leading concept in Turkey's external relations. For that reason, in the fifth chapter Davutoğlu's Strategic Depth doctrine is better explained so as which principles Turkey's new foreign policy is based on. This provides an introduction to the sixth

chapter where Davutoğlu's vision for the Balkans and Turkey's relations with the Balkan countries is given. Sixth chapter contains the analysis of the Turkey's foreign policy behavior toward Balkans countries in the period from 2009 and in this chapter I try to answer the research question by underlining which elements of Turkey's traditional foreign policy could be seen in Turkey recent relations with the Balkans. Eighth chapter is dedicated to the concluding remarks and findings.

## 2. Theoretical Framework and Methodology

With the aim of explaining agents or states behavior in international relations based on agent-structure dichotomy, Alexander Wendt argues that neither agents nor structure should be approached as ontologically primitive units and that is false to form the explanation of agents behavior as either purely state-agent centric or based plainly on the structural properties (Wendt 1987, 1995, 1999). Wendt agrees that the properties of agents and of the social structures are both relevant to the explanations of agent's behavior. But relying solely on the properties of one or the other is not enough because the interaction between those makes an autonomous effect on the behavior. Interaction produces an intersubjective relation, an independent outcome which influences both properties of the structure and the behavior of agents.

In his explanation of the actors behavior Wendt borrows certain notions from the structuration theory. According to the structuration theory social structures are real entities (despite being unobservable) that generate agents, but that are ontologically dependent upon (although they are not reducible to) their elements (Wendt 1987: 359). Structuration theory tries to overcome the negative consequences of classical individualism and structuralism. Individualism explains social behavior based on the characteristics of the actor, while structuralism takes properties of structure as a main explaining variable for the agents' behavior. These theories perceive either the actor or the structure as given and their relationship as causal, where the structure is an outcome of the agent or the agent is produced by the structure. First one then neglects the influence of the structural conditions to the behavior of agents, while the other overlooks the consequences of the interaction between the structure and the actor.

Structuration theory gives agents and structures equal ontological status and creates a "dialectical synthesis" that overcomes the subordination of one to the other. It makes agents and structures as ontologically distinct yet "mutually constituted" entities

(Wendt 1987: 339; 356). Social structures in structuration theory are inseparable from the reasons and self-understandings that agents bring to their actions (Wendt 1987: 359). On the other hand also real interests of agents are dependent upon and thus explainable by the external or social structural context in which they are embedded (Wendt 1987: 360).

## 2.1 Agents and structure or the relationship between micro and macro-structure

To make his perception on agents and structures more clear Wendt uses another concepts, micro- and macro-structure for explaining the dichotomy of agents-structure relationship in international relations (Wendt 1999).

According to Wendt micro-structure is the structure of interaction and it refers to relationship of agents with structure and other system parts (Wendt 1999: 148). Wendt believes that looking at just agent's attributes alone cannot explain the outcome and that only through taking the interaction level into the analysis we can come to the relevant explanation of agent's identity and behavior. This interaction is structured by the configuration of desires, beliefs, strategies and capabilities of agents. Although attributes help constitute the nature of interaction, the interaction is a determinant of certain factors that are above and beyond the actors attributes, bringing new independent systemic dimension, which he calls micro-structure (Wendt 1999: 149).

On the other hand under the macro-structure level of analysis Wendt refers to the structural explanation of the outcomes. The macro-structure is an autonomous level but dependent on micro-structures. For understanding of macro-level the knowledge of micro-levels is necessary but not sufficient. Macro-level present a structural effect of the properties and interactions of actors and emerges into the structural regularities of its own. To explain better the relationship between the micro- and macro-structures Wendt uses the concept of supervenience. By supervenience he means a non-causal, non-reducible relationship or ontological dependency of one class of facts on another. Social structures supervene on agents because there can be no difference between those structure without a difference among the agents who constitute them. However this relationship is not causal but constitutive (Wendt 1999: 156). Structures are constituted by the practices and self-understandings of agents. At the same time interests of those agents and their behavior are constituted and therefore explained by structures.

Still agency is taken as separated and irreducible. It is characterized by consciousness and power of choice or the ability to interpret and the power to choose among different behavioral options. At the same time it is under the influence of interests, identities, decision-making procedures, etc. (Friedmann/ Starr, 1997: 11). For that reason when analyzing any state policy agency is usually represented by responsible decision makers or in the case of foreign policy by individual international political elite (Friedman/ Starr, 1997: 18). As representatives of these elite Foreign Minister, Ministry high officials, the Prime Minister and the President are usually taken.

In this thesis I will look at the AKP party and its officials, who were in power in the specified period, as agents whose foreign policy behavior, identity and interest was constituted by the existing traditional foreign policy structures. In addition, I will also try to see how they, as actors, by bringing the new identity and discourse into the foreign policy, reproduced and altered the same structures. AKP as a party is characterized by a strong centrality and authority that leadership in the party has. In that sense Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu have particular roles in the formulation of Turkish foreign policy and are usually taken as main actors in Turkey's relations with outside world. For that reason in analyzing relations between Turkey and countries of the Balkans, it seems highly relevant to concentrate on these two figures.

In his definition of the structure Wendt makes clear the differentiation between the three constitutional elements of every system structure: material structure, structure of interest and ideational one (Wendt 1999: 139). According to Wendt they are all equally important for explain the outcome.

Neorealism is at present the dominant structural theory which concentrates on the material structure of international politics and defines other two structures, ideational and interests one based on the material factors. Wendt argues that Constructivist should contribute to international relations theories with an explanation on how the ideational structure as ontologically independent feature relates to the interest one (Wendt, 1999: 140). For Wendt constructivists look from a macro-level into the constitutive effects of the identity structure on agents' properties: identity and interest (Wendt 1999: 144).

Referring to Wendt's position I will look at how the traditional foreign policy perception in Turkey influenced the formation of identity and interest of new governing actors,

AKP and their officials and how this ideational structure formulated Turkey's interest in the Balkans in the recent period.

Wendt believes that as much as the material conditions that Neorealists take as the main explanatory variable (properties of the state, resources that it poses, distribution of capabilities, power relations and interest of certain class of agents) are essential part of the structure of the social system, alone they explain very little. Actors behavior toward certain objects is usually based on the meanings those object have for them. These meanings and ideas are at least relatively autonomous from material conditions. Wendt defines these beliefs about material factor that actor take to be true as "knowledge" and argues that relevant "knowledge" for analyzing social structure is socially shared knowledge or "culture", that is both common and connects individuals (Wendt 1999: 144). Constructivists believe that material resources and capabilities only acquire meaning for human action through the ideational structure or shared knowledge in which they are embedded (Wendt 1995: 73). In that sense these material structures or factors that Neorealists perceive as main structural determinants are actually socially constructed. This ideational structure or socially shared knowledge influences actors' behavior, formation of its identity and interests (Wendt 1995: 72).

By the ideational structure Wendt takes actors' beliefs about other actors as well as about states and each other's rationality, strategies, preferences, beliefs of the external world as certain micro-structure (Wendt 1999: 159). These actors' beliefs generate and in macro level make something that he conceptualizes under the term of collective knowledge (Wendt 1999: 161). Collective knowledge is a type of socially shared knowledge held by groups. It is not reducible to the individual beliefs but it supervenes on them. Structures of collective knowledge depend on actors believing something that induces them to engage in practices that reproduce those structure; which make them to be produced and reproduced in the same time (Wendt 1999: 162). Collective knowledge cannot exist nor has an effect apart from the unit and interaction level (without agents and processes there is no structure) but effects of the collective knowledge produce reality that is sui generis (Wendt 1999: 162). Wendt gives examples of collective memory as a collective type of reproduction of knowledge.

### **2.1.1 Agency and structure in the Turkey's policy towards the Balkans**

Following the constructivist's perspective in exploring Turkey-Balkan relations, the focus of my analysis is on the ideational structure of Turkey's foreign policy. I look at,



what are considered to be traditional foreign policy principles of Turkey, as a type of collective knowledge, as a macro-structure that was created over time and now has structural effects of its own. I take these traditional determinants of Turkey's foreign policy as a type of generated social beliefs about Turkey's position in international system and Turkey's way of conducting international relations. This foreign policy culture, which was generated from the founding of the Republic, now becomes a macro-structure that has constitutive effects on identity and interests of new agents, in this case the AKP leaders and its foreign policy behavior.

According to Wendt, an explanation of both how certain behavior was possible and why that possibility was actualized in a particular form at a given moment, has to include historical or methodological "bracketing". This historical bracketing is actually taking social structures and agents in turn as temporarily given in order to examine the explanatory effects of the other (Wendt 1987: 364). Friedmann and Starr also emphasize the necessity to decide if the analysis will start from agent or structure point of view. The agency and structure are mutually influential, constitutive and co-dependent but for the purpose of the analysis we need to exogenize one variable and make it independent (Friedmann/ Starr 1997).

In that sense I will conduct this methodological bracketing and look at Turkey's foreign policy principles developed in the period from the formation of the Republic and prior to AKP government as a given structure and independent variable. Further in my analysis, I will try to see how this established collective knowledge has influenced the formulation of what is called Turkey's new foreign policy and in that sense how it has influenced the behavior of Turkey towards the Balkan countries which would be the main dependent variable.

Additional independent variables that need to be considered are the impact of the US and NATO policy on the formulation of Turkey's position and its behavior in the Balkans. Although this could be count as a part of the Western alliance, as one of the traditional principles of Turkey's foreign policy, it creates a factor of its own. Next to that, there is also the influence of the EU and process of EU enlargement in the Balkans, including Turkey as a second important factor to be considered.

Wendt criticizes the mainstream IR scholars for always using the language of causal interaction to describe the agent-structure relationship. Instead he argues that constructivist should try to show that ideational structure or collective culture not only

causes but also constitutes agents and to emphasize its constitutive effects on the behavior and the properties of agents (Wendt 1999: 165, 166). "The difference that culture makes is in part a causal difference and social theories associated with methodological individualism, like rational choice theory, have much to tell us about its effects and thus the agent-structure relationship... I argue that culture can also have constitutive effects... If such effects are present, then there is at least some sense in which the relationship between agency and structure is not one of "interaction" but of "mutual constitution" instead" (Wendt 1999: 171).

Coming from this position, I will try to find which are the traditional cultural elements and organizational principles that constitutionally participate in the formation of what is perceived as Turkey's new identity and Turkey's new approach in the Balkans. I'll try to answer the question of which are the elements of the "old" ideational structure that could be observed in the current relations between Turkey and the Balkans and to what extent these traditional foreign policy principles supervene on actors and influence formation of AKP foreign policy identity and its behavior towards the Balkans, in the period after Davutoğlu took the office as Foreign Minister. Since actors from micro level of analysis interact and reproduce the structure I will also try to extract what could be then the structural changes produced by new actors coming to power and in the case of the Balkans what could be actual changes and novelty elements in their relations.

I will argue that the culture of the Turkey's foreign policy based on the defensive realpolitik, strategic studies and geopolitics, presents a knowledge structures which generated macro-level patterns in Turkey's foreign policy behavior over time. Turkey's way of knowing the world and conceptualizing external relations was for a long period and is still so, formulated within the notions of security, geopolitics, balancing of global and regional power relations and based on nonassertive and defensive strategies. Even though there was a certain change in micro-structure (elite change, new doctrine and new proclaimed principles) the present patterns of the macro-structure persisted and influenced Turkey's new foreign policy identity presented by Davutoğlu's Strategic Depth doctrine more that it is usually emphasized.

## 2.2 Methods

When conducting the analysis I will look at the official political relations between Turkey and countries of the Balkans. In official language Turkey does not uses term

Western Balkans, which is currently common denominator in international community for countries of former Yugoslavia excluding Slovenia but together with Albania. Turkey defines its official policy toward these countries in all: the political, economic, military and cultural segments in common terms as the relations with the Balkan countries. As the Balkans, at the political level and by the cultural relations, beside former Yugoslavia countries and Albania, Turkey also includes Bulgaria and sometimes Romania. But when it comes to economy and military relations Bulgaria is normally considered under the relations with the EU or NATO. Relations with Greece in history had a great influence on Turkey's Balkan policy and even nowadays Greece as a factor is included when it comes to the discussion on division of the power and influence in the region. But because of the special relationship between these countries concerning the Cyprus issue Turkey develops its relations with Greece usually independently and outside of the common Balkan approach. For that reason in my analysis I will use the term Balkans and include the countries which are in general terms (given all together political, military, economic and cultural relations) understood under this term in Turkey's official language. That means that I will concentrate on the countries of former Yugoslavia and Albania, with the reference to Bulgaria and Greece when they are from the side of Turkey considered to be relevant part of its Balkan policy.

To answer my research questions, in my study I will employ qualitative methods. Based on the constructivist theory, I will try to interpret and describe how structure influenced the agency or how traditional principles shaped new foreign policy and Turkey's current relations with the Balkans.

I use the secondary literature on Turkey's foreign and security policy to describe the general view on what are considered to be traditional principles of Turkey's foreign policy and what will be the structure that I begin from. Agency will be presented dominantly through Ahmet Davutoğlu, who is considered to be main intellectual creator of Turkey's new foreign policy and who is considered to have brought new identity into the traditional foreign policy culture and behavior. For that reason his Strategic Depth doctrine will be specifically analyzed and in more detail, part of the book which refers to relation of Turkey with the Balkans. For explaining clearly how Turkey-Balkans relations from 2009 are imagined from the ideational point of view the discourse analysis of the important speeches and interviews with AKP officials is conducted. I will specially refer to the two Davutoğlu's speeches, first that was

delivered in October 2009 at the opening ceremony of the conference "Ottoman legacy and Balkan Muslim Communities today" in Sarajevo and the second one given during the Turkey's presidency over South East European Cooperation Process (SEEC) at the Ministerial meeting in Istanbul in June 2010. These two seem relevant to provide a better picture on how Davutoğlu conceptualizes Turkey-Balkan relations and how the discourse concerning Turkey's relations with Balkans changed. Also articles wrote by Davutoğlu in which he explains his vision for the Balkans will be analyzed for the same purpose (Davutoğlu 2007; 2011). The analysis of the official Ministry policy papers, implemented project and the project reports is then further on applied in order to show to what extent the old traditional elements are actually embedded in the actor's behavior and in what way they constitute and influence what is perceived to be this new approach. At the same time this could show us what are actual structural changes that could be observed in Turkey's relations to Balkans beyond the new discourse.

### **3. Traditional Determinants of Turkish Foreign Policy**

There are certain patterns in Turkey's foreign policy behavior that could be observed, which seem to have structural basis and make long lasting principles of the Turkish foreign policy. Mustafa Aydin in his analysis of the factors that shape Turkish foreign policy suggests that there are certain structural and conjunctural variables that influence the foreign policy formulation of any country including Turkey (Aydin 1999). The structural variables he describes as continuous and static, not directly influenced by the daily happenings of foreign politics. Aydin considers geographical position, historical experiences, cultural background together with the national stereotypes and images of other nations, so as long term economic necessities as the major structural variables. The other, conjunctural variables are dynamic and subject to change under interrelated developments in domestic politics and international relations (Aydin, 1999: 155).

Aydin further suggests that when it comes to extracting the main structural determinants in Turkey's foreign policy, three dominant factors could be distinguished: Ottoman experience and its long-lasting legacy; the geopolitical realities of Turkey; and the ideological foundations defined under the leadership of Atatürk (Aydin 1999). Ali Karaosmanoğlu also conducted an analysis on certain aspects of Turkey's foreign and security policy that have persisted across different historical periods, different

internal and external context and have been transferred into the post-Cold War era (Karaosmanoğlu 2000: 200). Karaosmanoğlu suggests that there are three important elements that can be observable as a consistent determinants in Turkey's foreign and security policy: relatively consistent security culture of *realpolitik*, which evolved from an offensive to dominant defensive one, then Western orientation that introduced liberal and internationalist elements into foreign policy and finally the role of the military in the making of foreign and security policy as the third factor, which he argues, has been diminished gradually. (Karaosmanoğlu 2000: 200). In the line with these conclusions on the main elements of the ideational structure of Turkey's foreign policy Yücel Bozdağlıoğlu emphasizes the Western orientation or the Kemalists ideology of Westernization as the dominant identity that influenced Turkey's foreign policy in the period from the founding of the Republic till the end of the Cold War (Bozdağlıoğlu 2003).

These authors relate to the mentioned determinants as factors that made the critical influence on the formulation of the Turkey's foreign policy and became structural elements of collective culture on how Turkey should conduct its relations with other countries. As such factors following features are usually emphasized: influence of the Ottoman heritage, dominance of geopolitics in imagining international relations, influence of the principles of Kemalist ideology on inner state organization and its relations with outside world, strong Western orientation, strong security culture of *realpolitik*, defensive and cautious diplomacy directed towards maintaining balance of power and status quo, conservative and reactive approach to foreign policy issues, so as elite and military domination in running foreign relations.

### 3.1 Ottoman heritage and the formation of Turkish foreign policy identity

Ottoman experience, but at the same time the wish to departure from the Ottoman legacy, is the most commonly presented as a factor, which had a deep and significant impact on the conceptualization of foreign policy of the new Turkish republic. The Republic was created with the wish to dismantle the old system of the Sultanate and Empire and to establish new political institutions, social structures, values and norms. There are two important legacies coming from the Empire's experience that influenced the behavior of Turkish Republic in international affairs in the years of its founding, first one is the experiences of being reduced from a vast empire to the medium nation

state and second having to struggle to save the national homeland and its independence (Aydin 2004: 11).

End of the First World War brought the collapse of Ottoman Empire and very harsh conditions of its capitulation under the Sèvres Treaty. This treaty led to the formation of what is named as Sèvres-phobia or Sèvres Syndrome, referring to the creation of the distrust sentiment toward other countries and domination of territorial integrity as a main security issue, caused by the severe dismemberment of the territory of the Empire by the European powers according to the propositions of this Treaty. On the other hand the dissatisfaction with the Treaty led to the unification of Turkish national movement and encouraged outbreak of the uprising against what was perceived as the occupation of Turkish territory. The War for Independence lasted until 1923 when the Treaty of Lausanne was signed. Under this Treaty future Republic of Turkey brought back most of the lost Anatolian territory. This experience of nearly four years long struggle for independence and territory, made new national republican elite, led by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, to in the years after founding of the Republic take cautious, deliberate and non-aggressive foreign policy.

As Karaosmanoğlu and other authors argue, the Ottoman legacy has highly influenced the Turkish republic to embrace the principle of defensive, non-involvement realpolitik and balance-of-power diplomacy (Karaosmanoğlu 2000: 201). The partition of the Ottoman territories by the European powers after the First World War and the struggle for these territories from Treaty of Sevres to Treaty of Lausanne created the fear for the loss of territory and abandonment from the others. This caused for the state security to gets priority and for the Turkish policy-makers to adopt realist's security axioms. Turkish state and the military elite at that time have put much emphasis on the balance of power considerations and geopolitical calculations (Ulusoy 2005: 165, 166).

The transformation of the Ottoman Empire into the Republic, from theocracy to parliamentary democracy, presented a profound structural change of the state system. At the same time it was supposed to create one Turkish nation from multinational, multiracial and multireligious society of the Empire.

Even though Turkish state experienced such tremendous changes in this period, it has also inherited some of the fundamental features of the Ottoman Empire. The new state

relied greatly on the bureaucratic elite of the Empire. The late 19th century Empire's experiment with modernization and Westernization produced elite group of administrators who had Western education and different views on how the Empire should function. Led by Atatürk these people later formed the nucleus of the Republic's modernizing elite, gathered around the Republican People's Party (Turkish: Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, CHP) (Aydin 1999: 159). These elites firmly believed that Western civilizations or European one is the leading and progressive one. Despite the fact that Turkey had fought against the Western powers during the First World War, after independence Western orientation became one of the leading features of Turkish foreign policy. This was expressed first in cultural and after the Second World War in political and military terms (Aydin 1999: 160).

### 3.2 Geopolitics in Turkish foreign policy

Second important feature of Turkish foreign policy is geography. Geopolitical determinism or the idea that Turkey's geographical position determines its foreign and security policies became a constant element of the foreign policy culture of the Republic of Turkey. Its geographical location and the fact that it is extending from the Balkans to the Middle East and from the Caucasus to the Persian Gulf, influence the perception that threats are coming from all sides, with the great emphasis on the Turkish Straits as a main security concern and strategic point. Turkey was perceived as being at the crossroads of major air, land and sea routes of modern times, connecting the industrially advanced lands of Europe with the petroleum rich lands of the Middle East and by that deeply determined by its geostrategic position (Aydin 2004: 24).

The geopolitics gained significance especially during the Cold War. In the Cold War period Turkey as a member of the Western bloc became a border state with the leader of the opposite bloc and was in geopolitical terms in was in the first line against the main enemy. It was also the country which had control over the only seaway linking the Black Sea with the Mediterranean, area of a great strategic significance in the Cold War bipolar division. The perception of insecurity that came from the fact that it was sharing the border with Soviet Union but also with highly unstable region such as the Middle East, pushed Turkey even more to the West and firmed their alliance. The context of the Cold War placed the national security to be the prevailing factor in foreign policy considerations.

### 3.3 Kemalist's legacy and Western orientation of Turkish foreign policy

Kemalist's ideology that emerged from the Atatürk's theory and practice became one of the most entrenched heritages and deeply rooted elements of collective knowledge in Turkish politics in general. Its basis was in forming and preserving a nation state with complete independence, promotion of Turkey to the level of contemporary civilization (which meant European civilization) by means of by Kemalist proclaimed ground principles and attachment to realistic and peaceful means in foreign policy actions (Aydin 1999: 171). Kemalist's ideology was declared at the 1931 Congress of the Republican People's Party (RPP) and then institutionalized by entering the Constitution in 1937. It was composed of the six pillars: nationalism, secularism, republicanism, populism, etatism, and revolutionism. These six principles for Atatürk were the basis for breaking with the imperialistic past and revisionism. To achieve these goals, he put the foreign policy in the service of the domestic one. Countered with the disruption of the international system after the First World War, collapse of the Empire, long lasting War for Independence, hard won sovereignty over the territory and with the assignment to create a new state and society, Atatürk had no other option than to pursue a peaceful and allied foreign policy. He focused on developing good neighborly relations and participation in the creation of the collective systems for security and peace.

Atatürk foreign policy was led by the motto peace at home, peace in the world, aiming at preserving the status quo. He was aware that only with the peaceful foreign policy he would be able to perform all the necessary and wanted domestic reforms. In order to create a new republican Turkish nation, from the Empire with Muslim population strongly identified with its religion, Kemalists pursue a goal of distancing themselves from Ottoman imperialism, pan-Turanism and pan-Islamism and were dedicated to establishing an open way for peaceful relations with Western Christian countries (Aydin 1999: 172).

Ideology of peace and alliances with the West soon became the most outstanding characteristics of Kemalism and later on evolved into the wide known principle of Turkish foreign policy.

As described earlier, the Westernization movement emerged first during the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century. After Empire began to decline and experienced several



defeats from European forces in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, Ottoman governing elite decided to open up more toward the West in order to understand its superiority. They decided to send missions to Europe and opened embassies in various Western capitals and soon started to bring the new technology into the country by establishing engineering, medical, military and civil service schools with secular and positivist curricula (Bozdağlıoğlu 2003: 4). Atatürk and his fellows were educated in these schools and they embraced firmly positivist and rationalist ideas of the Europe of that time. When they took over the power and started up the revolution, process of modernization was perceived as embracing and implementing the European model in terms of state and institution structures, rule of law but also society and cultural transformation. Such a comprehensive Western oriented reformation and firm alliance with the Western security organizations was necessary for the total elimination of Ottoman legacies and full transformation of the society. But also for avoiding the potential of threat and interference by the Western powers in domestic issues (Aktaş 2010: 4). In that sense Turkey insisted on joining these "civilized" nations Turkey and pursuit policy of peace and friendship with them.

Failure of the Ottoman Empire to create proper alliances prior to First World War resulted in devastating conditions of Sèvres treaty. This contributed for the question of alliances to become highly important for the new leaders of the Turkish Republic (Davidson in Çarkoğlu/ Hale 2008: 63). Creating political and military agreements with other countries was necessary for Kemalists to establish and maintain Turkey's independence and secure support for the unhampered transformation of the state.

### 3.4 Balance of power and realpolitik diplomacy as principles of Turkish foreign policy

The Turkish Republic started pursuing a moderate, rationalistic politics in which the principles of alliances, international peace and maintaining the status quo became one of the main elements. As a small power at that time, Turkey followed a realistic policy which, while aware of international pressures and the global balance of power, remained rooted in her own, national self-interest (Kuniholm in Çarkoğlu/ Hale 2008: 72). Treaties of friendship and neutrality were signed with Soviet Union, Albania, Yugoslavia, France, Persia and Afghanistan, Britain and Iraq, Hungary, Italy, Bulgaria and Greece. Turkey established the Balkan Pact in 1934, the Saadabad Pact in 1937 and accepted economic aid from the Soviet Union. During the Second World War

Turkey managed to negotiate a qualified alliance with the Western Allies, while maintaining precarious neutrality (Kuniholm in Çarkoğlu/ Hale 2008: 75). Balancing of power and realpolitik diplomacy combined with deterrence through alliance with reassurance became constant features of Turkish foreign policy, particularly developed during the Cold War (Karaosmanoğlu 2000: 204).

It was the context of the Cold War that pushed Turkey even closer to the West and made it so that the power struggle politics is always on its mind. It started with signing first a number of bilateral treaties with the United States and then joining NATO in 1952. It was followed by the membership in the other European organizations and entering the process of joining the European Community (EC), later the European Union (EU). The period of economic crises and political instability in 50s and 60s, increased Turkey's military but also financial dependence on the West. The political, social, and economic stability that emerged in Western Europe during the Cold War especially in comparison to the Middle East was a great motivation for Turkey to remain close to the West. Alliance with the West at that time occupied the center of Turkish foreign policy (Bozdağlıoğlu 2003:15).

### 3.5 The role of the military in Turkey's foreign policy making

Constitution of the Turkish Republic, its institutions and principles was an elite led top-down process. It was carried out by the bureaucratic-authoritarian political elite and military officers gathered around Kemalist's principles. Policy-making was conducted by restricted elite circle including president, prime minister, foreign minister and his senior officials (Hale in Çarkoğlu/ Hale 1996: 126). The project of Westernization and integration to the European state system was led by Atatürk's Republican elite and supported by the military. Atatürk aimed at replacing the traditional beliefs of Turkish people with the new national values and national interest. The military took the role of the guardian of the Republic, its territorial integrity, national unity, secularism and republican values. According to these given assignments, military had three direct interventions (in 1960, 1971 and 1980) and played decisive role in the political decision making concerning both international and domestic issues (Karaosmanoğlu 2000: 213). It was in the 80s that the role of the military started to diminish. With the democratization reforms under the Constitution from 1982 and process of liberalization carried out by Turgut Özal, the space was open for broader layers of society, the civic and entrepreneurial class to enter to the foreign policy decision-making.

## 4. Turkey's Relation with the Balkans

### 4.1 Early Republican period and the relations with the Balkan countries

From the 16th century till the end of the Balkan Wars in 1913, Ottoman Empire ruled over most of the territories of the Balkans, where prior to Ottoman conquest used to be several independent Slavic feudal kingdoms. After falling under the Ottoman authority, the region became known as European territories of the Ottoman Empire and had particular significance in the Ottoman system and politics. For the Empire the Balkans was the way towards Europe, the way to spread its power and influence in Europe and at the same time to become part of it and claim the title of a great European power. It was also the place where in the 19th century decline of the Empire has started. Although the emergence of the nationalistic movements in the Balkans contributed to the process of dissolution of the Empire, it also brought the model of nationalistic upheaval for the Ottomans' reformist elite and in that sense contributed to the foundation of the Turkish nation state. The Balkan Wars which brought final independence for the Balkan countries from the Ottoman Empire, followed by the First World War, caused vast instability in the whole region. At the same time the dissolution of the Empire and the need to fight over its territories made the situation for the Turkish Republic in the process of its founding quite difficult. As emphasized before, following the signing of the Treaty of Lausanne and declaration of the Republic in 1923, Atatürk had internal stabilization and reforms as prioritized objective, next to the maintenance of sovereignty and territorial integrity as a main foreign policy goal. For that reason Turkish Republic distanced itself from any aspirations or territorial claims toward the former parts of the Ottoman territory and sought to establish the relations with the Balkan neighbors based on respect of the territorial integrity, friendship and cooperation. The treaty of friendship was first signed with Albania in 1923 and then with Yugoslavia in 1925. Signing the treaties of neutrality and conciliation and arranging the population exchange with Greece and Bulgaria in 1929 and 1930, two Balkan countries that shared the most unsolved issues with Turkey, was the greatest step toward the reconciliation and building stable relations in the region (Öksüz 2007: 132).

Even though Turkey at that time had limited capabilities and was not an economic power, it made a great diplomatic effort and was able to play a significant geopolitical

role at the international level and successfully developed a regional policy toward Balkans independent of the great powers. Thanks to its diplomatic tradition and service, but also to the fact that at the time of great economic crisis in 1929 there was a power vacuum in the Balkans, Turkey managed to present itself as a regional power (Barlas 2005: 442-443). From 1930 four Balkan Conferences were organized and the development of regional cooperation reached its highest point with the creation of the Balkan Entente in 1934. This was a military alliance between Greece, Romania, Turkey and Yugoslavia aimed to guarantee the security of several Balkan frontiers against any aggression on the part of any Balkan state. The alliance was clearly directed towards retaining further expansion of Italy from pulling Bulgaria and possibly Yugoslavia on its side against other Balkan states (Öksüz 2007: 135). Although Turkey signed a treaty of neutrality with Italy, it gave preference to the greater multilateral cooperation with the Balkan countries instead of bilateral one with Italy (Barlas 2005: 447). In this way, Turkey was according to its foreign policy principles, trying to balance the power between the smaller countries and the great powers in the region by relying on multilateral mechanisms of cooperation.

With joining the Balkan Entente, Republic of Turkey did step away from the principle of neutrality. On the other hand, through the policy of alliance Atatürk gave preference to the principles of maintaining peace and status quo in the region and in that way preserving the territorial integrity of the country intact. Its geostrategic location and the historical role of being a bridge that connects Europe and Asia influenced foreign policy thinking of Turkish leaders to avoid polarization in international relations and try to promote stability in the neighboring regions through collective security regimes and multilateral cooperation. This will become an important element in Turkish foreign policy and especially in its approach toward the Balkans.

Up to the beginning of the Second World War Turkey managed relatively successfully to balance the great powers' influence in the region. The permanent council of Balkan Entente met in February 1940 and passed a resolution which committed themselves to a common policy of neutrality in the War and to "maintaining peace, order and security in South-Eastern Europe" (Bishku 2000: 23). However, Republic of Turkey was the only one from the members of the Entente that managed to keep the neutrality position during the course of the Second World War.

## 4.2 Turkey and the Balkans during the Cold War period

It was the Cold War period and the emergence of the bloc politics that finally pushed Turkey to renounce the neutrality, which it kept during the Second World War. The territorial claims that Soviets showed toward Turkey's eastern borders and especially towards taking the control over the Straits reinforced Turkey's principle of Western determinacy. Turkey became one of the prominent representatives of the Western bloc in the Cold War division. After it joined NATO in 1952, Turkey's policy toward the countries in Balkans was closely tied to the NATO's approach to the region. As its Western allies, Turkey also had the negative stance towards the spread of the communism and Soviet influence among Balkan countries and refused any cooperation with them. Yugoslavia also became communist republic but after the disagreement with Soviets in 1948 it decided to pursue its own form of socialism and maintained a form of neutrality within the bloc rivalry. Encouraged by the US, which decided to try to keep Yugoslavia as closer to Western camp as it can, in 1953 Turkey signed the treaty of friendship and cooperation with Greece and Yugoslavia. After the meeting in Bled in 1954, the military alliance was created between these three countries. As a part of this defense pact, three members obliged to consider any armed aggression against one of them as an aggression against all and to assist the party or parties attacked in efficient defense including the use of arm force (Bishku 2000: 27).

This treaty lost its significance after the Yugoslav-Soviet rapprochement in 1955 and even more after Cyprus conflict erupted in the same year. In the 50s and 60s Cyprus issue and relations with Greece became the dominant track in Turkey's Balkans policy. Relations with other Balkan neighbors were put on bilateral track and were mostly marginalized. By the end of the 1960s and in early 1970s the détente between East and West bloc started and together with other NATO countries Turkey also began to open itself up to Soviet Bloc. It expanded its trade and cultural contacts with the Communist regimes in the Balkans. However, in 1970 the Balkans accounted for only 1.8 percent of Turkey's total imports and 3.5 percent of its total exports (Bishku 2000: 30). The focus of the relations with the region was still on the disagreement with Greece over Cyprus and the minority rights issue with Bulgaria. The relations with Yugoslavia were good but not particularly intensive or from the greater significance for Turkey in that period. During the late 1980s Prime Minister and later President Turgut Özal pursued a policy of economic liberalization in the country, with focus on

broadening the economic opportunities through foreign policy, in the Balkan region too. In 1988 the Balkan Conference was organized by Yugoslavia, as an attempt to revive regional multilateral cooperation (Bishku 2000: 34). But it stayed in the shadow of the vast events which followed: the end of the Cold War, the dissolution of the Soviet Republic and the conflicts in the Balkans. Until the 90s Turkey's relations with the countries in the Balkans were dominated by strategic calculations and issues of political and economic security. The issue of ethnicity and religious came out for the first time in the relations with Yugoslavia after the Yugoslavian republics declared independence and the War broke out.

With the end of the Cold War and the change in global and regional environment Turkey started reconsidering its traditional foreign policy principles and took more of an active and assertive stance in foreign policy. Turkey feared that after the collapse of the "great enemy", Soviet Union, it will lose its strategic importance for its Western allies. But the Gulf War and the conflicts in the Caucasus and the Balkans have showed that especially for the US, Turkey will maintain high geostrategic importance.

During the Cold War period, as a country that did not belong to the Soviet bloc but also not the West either, Yugoslavia did not play such an important role for Turkish geostrategic calculations. It was after the collapse of the bipolar division that the geopolitical constellation of power changed and forced Turkey to approach Yugoslavia with a more consciousness. Wars on the territories of former Yugoslavia in the 90s made Turkey more concerned with the Balkans.

#### 4.3 Turkey's respond to the conflicts in Yugoslavia

When Slovenia and Croatia declared independence in 1991, Turkey was worried about the peace and stability in the region. It opposed the secession of the Yugoslav republics and was mainly relying on the European Community and the UN to find a proper solution for the crisis. When at the beginning of 1992, European countries and the US recognize independence of these two countries, Turkey decided to follow. But when the question of Bosnia and Herzegovina came out, especially after the war in Bosnia broke, Turkey decided to take more active and assertive role in this matter. Even though Bosnian War did not pose a direct threat to the security of Turkey, it did become an important issue of the "soft security" mainly through the question of identity and migration (Coşkun 2011: 6). Significant number of Bosnian Muslims flew to Turkey and together with a great number of Turkish citizens with the Balkan origin

created a pressure on Turkish policymakers to provide greater support for the Muslim population in Bosnia and its independence. For Turkey it was also an opportunity to confirm its relevance for the European security and its affiliation to its long lasting allies. Turkey started diplomatically engaging on behalf of the Bosnian Muslims in international organization. It organized a special meeting dedicated to the conflict in the Organization of the Islamic Conference during Turkey's presidency in 1992. It also presenting its own "Action Plan" for Bosnia to the UN Security Council and participated in the London Conference in August 1992 organized by the EC regarding the situation in the Balkans (Coşkun 2011: 7-8). In November 1992 Turkey organized a Balkan Conference for neighboring and regional countries regarding the conflict. Since these initiatives didn't give any significant results Turkey decided, in spite of the UN embargo, to support Bosnian Muslims with arms. Turkey also participated in establishing no fly zone by NATO in 1993 and later participated with its troops in the United Nation Protection Forces (UNPROFOR) stationed in Croatia and in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the Yugoslav wars. Even though Turkey showed great interest and bilateral activity in the issue, it was strongly supporting multilateral approach and closely cooperating with its main Western ally, the US, in responding to issues in the Balkans (Sayari 2000: 177).

After the outbreak of the conflict in Kosovo, Turkey pursued a more cautious and restrained policy than in the case of the Bosnian War. One of the reasons for that was the presence of a big Turkish minority in Kosovo<sup>5</sup> that feared of greater repression from Albanian majority. Turkey showed less bilateral interest in this issue but complied with its strategic partners and participated in the NATO's air campaign against Yugoslavia in 1999, so as in the UN peacekeeping forces in the Kosovo afterwards.

The dissolution of Yugoslavia and conflict in the Balkans brought back the Turkish-Greek rivalry over the influence in the region, which also had important effect on the level of Turkish activism in the Balkans. Turkey showed a great support for Macedonian independence and was second country to recognize Macedonia in 1992 and the first one to open an embassy in Skopje (Sayari 2000: 178). This was clearly due to the

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<sup>5</sup> "This Turkish minority numbers around 12 000 according to the 1991 census (0,6 % of the total population of the Kosovo province), but the Kosovo Turks claim that they number at least 60 000." (Gangloff 2004: 117).

competition with the Greece who objected Macedonia's independence because of the name and the flag issue.

When it comes to the main principles which dominated Turkey's position towards the Balkan countries in the 90s, they were in the line with its geostrategic calculations. Turkey tried to maintain regional stability and its geo-strategic importance in the region and based on that in the global politics, all the time closely cooperating with its Western allies. At first, following its traditional principles, Turkey reacted cautiously to the events in the Balkans and tried to preserve status quo. When European countries and the US determined to support the territorial changes in the Balkans, Turkey decided to follow this decision, still keeping out of the direct involvement in the issue. It was the Bosnian War that changed this pattern and made Turkey become more of an active player in the region. Still, Turkey firmly stimulated multilateral solutions and was careful in balancing its bilateral activism with other powers interests, staying always in the line with the US approach. European countries and especially the US feared of greater involvement of radical Islam communities and countries in the Bosnian War, especially from Iran. Support that was provided for Bosniaks from a moderate Islamic country like Turkey was perceived as much better option. For that reason, cooperation in the case of Bosnia was beneficial for all sides and by that strengthening of their alliance was for sure one of the motives for Turkey's activism (Sayari 2000: 177).

## **5. Davutoğlu's Doctrine and Turkey's New Foreign Policy**

### **5.1 Davutoğlu's vision of post-Cold War order and the Strategic Depth doctrine**

As a university professor at that time, Dr. Ahmet Davutoğlu, tried to respond to conceptual uncertainty about how the structure of international system will develop after the end of the Cold War and what will be Turkey's role in this changed environment. Turkey found itself unsure of its further strategic importance for Western allies and about its future position in the international community, especially in its neighborhood. Turkey's leaders and scholars realized that, in order to become relevant power in the region and beyond, Turkey needs to reconsider its previous strategy. Davutoğlu proposed its own concept of Turkey's new foreign policy imagination, its role



in the neighboring regions and international arena and principles on which it should be formulated. This concept became known as Davutoğlu's Strategic Depth doctrine and gained greater significance after Davutoğlu's party AKP came on power after the 2002 elections. Davutoğlu began his career as University Professor in 1990 at the International Islamic University of Malaysia. From 1995 he worked at Marmara University and Beykent University in Istanbul where he served as Head of the Department of International Relations. He also worked as a visiting lecturer at the Military Academy and the War Academy in Turkey. Following November 2002 elections he was appointed Chief Adviser to the Prime Minister and Ambassador at large by the 58th Government of the Republic of Turkey. He continued to serve in the 59th and 60th Governments and in May 2009 he became Minister of Foreign Affairs in the second government of the AK Party.

In his essay, published in second half of the 90s, Davutoğlu criticized dominant theories on how the international structure will be re-shaped after the collapse of the Cold War order (Davutoğlu 1998). There, Davutoğlu argues that the collapse of the Soviet system brought the dissolution of the identities existing within bipolar system but also the end of strategic stability and balance, which characterized bipolar world. Davutoğlu opposes at that time dominant theory of clash of civilizations presented by Samuel Huntington and the idea that problem of different identities will be a future main incentive for conflicts (Davutoğlu 1998: 2). He claims that it is actually a strategic, geopolitical, intra-civilizational and intra-systemic competition over the control of power that is behind emerging clashes. Davutoğlu believes that there are particular determinants in the structure of the international system, like global geopolitical parameters, which present realities for its own. These geopolitical areas are of permanent importance for the power configuration in the international system and are in that sense strategically more sensitive. He emphasized that there are certain corridors in the Balkans, Caucasia and the Middle East which are the basic problematic strategic areas (Davutoğlu 1998: 6). Davutoğlu further explains that in a period following the end of the Cold War, because of the structural transition from bipolar strategic stability to a multi-polar balance of power, a geopolitical and geo-economic vacuum emerged in these strategic zones and turned these areas into the zones of clashes and power struggle. But besides being a source of instability, Davutoğlu believes that this could also be seen as an opportunity for country like

Turkey, who poses strategic depth in all these three regions, to re-establish its influence in these regions and by that in the global system.

In his famous book *Strategic Depth: Turkey's International Position*, Davutoğlu develops the strategy for Turkey on how to make the most out of this geopolitical vacuum existing in its neighborhood (Davutoğlu 2001). This book became a leading doctrine of Turkish foreign policy in the period of AKP government.

Davutoğlu's Strategic Depth doctrine was theoretically based on the previously explained geopolitical understanding of configuration of international system and politically developed on the roots of the Turgut Özal's politics, his Neo-Ottomanist approach and 'the multi-dimensional' foreign policy of the Erbakan's government (Murinson 2006: 947). As a president of Turkey from 1989 Turgut Özal responded to the emergence of independent Turkic republics in Central Asia and Caucasus, so as conflicts in the Balkans, with an active and diversified foreign policy in these regions based on the Ottoman historical heritage. This politics was named Neo-Ottomanism. His program of economic liberalization, employed during his time as prime minister of Turkey in 80s, produced a new generation of free entrepreneurs who very welcomed the spreading of Turkish economic influence outside of Turkey's borders, especially in the Turkic speaking territories of Central Asia and Caucasus after their independence (Laçiner 2009: 163). With his Strategic Depth doctrine, Davutoğlu aimed at producing a more structured and conceptually based strategy to the continuation of active foreign policy that was developed during Özal era.

What Davutoğlu presented is a new geographic imagination based on the geopolitical position and the role of historical and cultural heritage which he refers to as geographical and historical depth. Turkey, due to its legacy of the Ottoman Empire, possesses a great geographical depth but in the same time the historical depth. Thanks to this legacy Turkey can expand its power by utilizing its geographical and cultural closeness with the surrounding countries (Aras 2009: 5). In that sense, Davutoğlu argues, Turkey holds a privileged position by being at the center of several regions (Davutoğlu defines Turkey as at the same time a Middle Eastern, Balkan, Caucasian, Central Asian, Caspian, Mediterranean, Gulf and Black Sea country) and by sharing a cultural and historical heritage with most of these regions due to the common Ottoman past (Davutoğlu 2008: 79). Instead of being a frontier country, like during the Cold War, or a bridge country, as it was usually described in the post-Cold

War period, in the new era Turkey should redefine its position on both geographical and ideational basis, renounce its defensive character and take the role of a central power. Because of its multiple regional identities that cannot be reduced to one unified character, Turkey cannot be explained geographically or culturally by associating it with one single region. Turkey's diverse regional composition provides the country with the capability of maneuvering in several regions simultaneously; in this sense, it controls an area of influence in its immediate environs (Davutoğlu 2008: 77-78). Relying on this, Turkey should build its own security and stability by taking on a more active, constructive role to provide order, stability and security in its surroundings. Turkey should do that by minimizing the problems with the neighboring countries, strategy which he named "zero problem policy", while avoiding involvement in international confrontations also. In this way Turkey can become a central power and pave the way for becoming a global actor in international system (Grigoriadis 2010: 5).

Davutoğlu emphasizes geography and history as two permanent axes of Turkish foreign policy, which you cannot change but you can redefine and reinterpret them. For Davutoğlu, bringing back the Ottoman heritage, historical and cultural affinities as a key factor in the approach to the neighbors, is closely connected to the Özal's Neo-Ottomanism but does not conceptualize an imperialist motives or hegemonic role of Turkey (Davutoğlu, Speech December 2009: 4). For Davutoğlu reference to the Ottoman times is relevant due to the possibility to build multidirectional and multidimensional foreign policy. Based on the Ottoman heritage Turkey can develop an active and rhythmic diplomacy as a main mediator and facilitator with the goal of establishing security and stability in bordering regions. Due to the increased globalization, advanced communications, economic and social interdependency, Turkey got new opportunity, based on its historical responsibilities' towards the Balkans, Caucasus and the Middle East, to engage in these regions (Murinson 2006: 952).

Here we can see that besides geography and geopolitics, which traditionally have been the part of Turkey's foreign policy formulation, Davutoğlu brings in the historical reference as a factor. Though Ottoman heritage did play an important role in the creation of the long-established Turkish foreign policy identity, Davutoğlu gives a different interpretation to the Ottoman legacy. He tries to, in the period when international and regional context is changing and Cold War identities are being dissolved, restore old historical and cultural identities from Ottoman period as a tool

for mobilization and strategy of Turkey to spread its influence in the neighboring regions (Davutoğlu 1998: 2). But as we will see in the analysis of Turkey's foreign policy in the Balkans, Ottoman history and heritage, is mainly used as an instrument for the achievement of Turkey's main foreign policy goals which are defined based on geopolitical, security and strategic calculations. Neo-Ottoman identity in that sense is still not playing a role of an independent variable and autonomous principle in the Turkish foreign policy.

## 5.2 Principles of Turkey's new foreign policy

From May 2009, since Davutoğlu was appointed Foreign Minister of Turkey, he moved from intellectual formulation of the policies to the actual involvement in the conduction of the Turkey's external relations. As a Minister he decided to set up Turkish foreign policy on the three methodological and five operational principles (Davutoğlu Speech, December 2009).

First methodological principle is a vision-based approach instead of crisis-oriented approach which dominated policy making in Turkey during the Cold War period. For Davutoğlu Turkey needs to approach its neighborhood with a vision and build the relations on the mutual respect, stability, peace and prosperity (Davutoğlu Speech, December 2009: 6). Second methodological principle is connected to the first one and it assumes a consistency and continuity in the established visions, where approach to the Middle East is complementary to the one in the Balkans, Caucasus and other regions. The third methodological principle is relying on the instruments of soft power, balancing them with the hard ones and trying to create new discourse and diplomatic approach that prioritizes Turkey's civil-economic power (Davutoğlu 2010: 3). In this regard certain key instruments should be prioritized among policy makers: engaging with all political actors, supporting democratic processes, economic integration and fostering cultural and people to people contacts.

When it comes to the operative principles of Turkey's foreign policy, they should start with establishing the domestic legitimacy for the regime and its foreign policy, concentrating on providing security to all its citizens together with the respect of freedom and human rights and full support for the democracy in the country. There has to be established balance between security and democracy if country wants to expend its legitimate influence in its surroundings.

Second principle is known as a “zero problem policy towards Turkey’s neighbors”. It bears a utopian title but it assumes a very pragmatic approach. Turkey should maximize its cooperation with all its neighbors, bring the relations to the highest possible level, through bilateral and multilateral cooperation, and be active at the same time in political, military, economic, cultural and social fields (Pope 2010: 3). Davutoğlu believes that Turkey should finally overcome a traditional psychology of insecurity and the idea that Turkey is encircled by hostile countries. Neighborhood should be perceived as an opportunity not as a threat. The new closeness should be established based on the common history, culture and religion. That is what a strategic depth is all about, overcoming the old animosities and deepening and widening a strategic horizon through new geopolitical imagination (Kalin 2011: 52). Turkey’s neighborhood policy is to a great extent facilitated through the soft power instruments and largely organized around deepening political dialogue with the neighbors, especially through increased high-level contacts, together with people-to-people contacts, improvement of trade and energy relations with neighbors (Kınıklıoğlu 2011: 65).

According to the third principle Turkey should develop proactive and pre-emptive peace diplomacy and try to respond to the emerging crisis before it escalates. Active engagement in mediations, high-level political dialogs and economic integration would help Turkey to become an important player in the surrounding regions. Turkey’s regional policy included mediation between Israel and Syria, Lebanon and Palestine, Sunni and Shiite groups in Iraq so as involvement in Bosnia-Serbia reconciliation in the Balkans (Pope 2010: 4).

The fourth principle is based on the consistent implementation of a multi-dimensional foreign policy. Turkey’s relations with the global actors should be complemented, not in competition. Turkey’s strategic relations with the United States should be considered in the framework of two countries’ bilateral ties and NATO. Multi-dimensional foreign policy takes Turkey’s EU accession process, its good neighborhood policy with Russia and its synchronization policy in Eurasia as integral parts of a consistent policy that serves to complete each other (Davutoğlu 2010: 4). Turkey develops its neighborhood policy in the line with the EU’s neighborhood policy but also in compliance with its strategic partnership with Washington and the new established cooperation with Russia.

The fifth principle in this framework is rhythmic diplomacy that implies active involvement in all relevant international issues, mainly through international platforms and multilateral cooperation. Turkey's serious and sustained involvement in the field of diplomacy becomes evident if we look at the international meetings and organizations this country has hosted since 2003. Although Turkey develops an active bilateral network, it still puts a great emphasis on more institutionalized channel of consultation and cooperation (Davutoğlu 2008: 89).

Though it implies greater pro-activeness than Turkey had showed in the past, it is clear that by giving the priority to the multilateral cooperation and collective security arrangements, elements of Turkish traditional foreign policy approach like alliances and balancing of power, are in the ground of this fifth principle. Here we can see how existing ideational structure of Turkey's traditional foreign policy constitutively participates in the formation of the foreign policy identity of the new actors.

The traditional principle of peace and alliance is also in the basis of Turkey's new principle of "zero problem policy with neighbors". Turkey traditionally led defensive and non-aggressive policy. In the current context Turkey approaches its neighborhood with more activism but still very cautious. Its main objective is to preserve regional stability by maintaining status quo.

As Davutoğlu explains in the fourth principle, Turkey's policy needs to be flexible and multi-dimensional and in that sense balanced between all important international actors. This was also a key strategy of Atatürk and governing circles around him during the interwar period. In the context of Cold War, cooperation with the US and other members of NATO gained priority. And even with the new rapprochement to the neighbors in recent times, establishing close relation with them does not present an alternative to Turkey's Western alliance and is again led by compliance with its main allies (Bağcı 2009: 3). The close cooperation and accession to the EU, stayed as important goal but was extended with the "opening" to the other regions, especially when it comes to broadening its economic and to less extent political partners (Rüma 2010: 137).

The need for creation of a new foreign policy strategy and formulation of new principles came from the necessities of post-Cold War environment. Based on the Wendt's argument on how structure supervene on agents, we can see that Davutoğlu's

reaction to the changed circumstances, though in its form seems new is actually founded on the traditional determinants of Turkish foreign policy. The first operational principle that connects security and freedom, can be linked to the Atatürk principle of “peace at home, peace in the world” and the need to maintain domestic stability for the sake of having the open way to peaceful relations with the outside world. In this case Davutoğlu considers that by enlarging democracy and freedoms in the country, Turkey will be able to stabilize its position in the region and have the legitimacy for equal cooperation with other powers.

Even with the reference to the Ottoman identity Turkey never gave up on the clear realpolitik diplomacy. According to the changed circumstances in international environment Turkey decided to use another strategy and employs more historical and cultural ties in establishing its regional influence. Its new activeness based on the usage of its soft power capacities, seemed to be giving good results if we look at the Turkey’s relations with the Balkans from 2009.

## **6. Davutoğlu’s Era in the Balkans**

### **6.1 Davutoğlu’s geopolitical imagination of the Balkans**

In his book *Strategic Depth: Turkey’s International Position* published first in 2001, in the chapter dedicated to the strategic transformation of the Balkans, Davutoğlu explains again how, as a consequence of post-Cold War instability, geopolitical vacuum emerged in the region which brought back regional and international power struggles in the Balkans (Davutoğlu 2008: 189). Ethnic and religious diversity in the region created a space for geocultural confrontation and contributed to the outbreak of conflicts.

According to Davutoğlu, there are two basic axes that define the geopolitics of the Balkan: area around Drava and Sava rivers, which divides Bosniaks, Croatian and Serbian geopolitical and geocultural area. The second one is the line that follows Morava-Vardar rivers and which divides Albanian, Macedonian and Serbian geopolitical and geocultural zones. He believes that conflicts aroused in the Balkans between regional and global actors with the goal to establish control over these crucial lines.

Davutoğlu believes that three main global structural oppositions contributed to the outbreak of the crisis in Bosnia and Kosovo: first is competing interest on a global level between the US on the one side and Europe on the other; second antagonisms is

between Anglo-French axis plus Germany and Russia; and third are conflicts caused by this power struggle transferred to the level of international organizations and in the sphere of international law (Davutoğlu 2008: 191). After “giving” Eastern Europe to the EU or Germany, the US decided to strengthen its position in the Balkans. Since European Community did not manage to independently solve problems, which emerged in the Balkans, the US took advantage of this situation to reinforce its influence. During the NATO intervention in Kosovo, Davutoğlu claims, the goal for the US wasn't just to stop ethnical cleansing and prevent humanitarian crisis, but at the same time to, over NATO, strengthen its own influence in the Balkans and create new balance of power in the Central and East Europe (Davutoğlu 2008: 196).

The conflicting interests between, on the one side the EU in process of creating European security identity and the role of NATO in Europe, especially in the Balkans, is going to directly influence position of Turkey in regional affairs and in the NATO at the same time (Davutoğlu 2008: 197).

By analyzing this part it becomes clear that, beyond the strategic depth discourse and reference to the geographical and historical depth, there are clear geopolitical calculations in Davutoğlu's vision of Turkey's position in the Balkans. Geopolitics and balance of power were traditionally the core of the Turkey's foreign policy. At the time of the creation of the Balkan Entente, Turkey tried to, through regional engagement and alliances, influences great power relations in the Balkans and regional constellation of power, same approach that Davutoğlu takes now.

Since Davutoğlu believes that in the Balkans new regional power balance is at the moment in the process of formation, Turkey needs to stay actively present in the area. He believes that the Balkan region is still highly sensitive and shows great instability especially in the earlier mentioned critical geopolitical lines of Drava-Sava and Morava-Vardar rivers. Dayton agreement, which ended Bosnian war, for Davutoğlu presents just a temporary solution and does not address the causes of the conflict. Since also Albanian question stayed unsolved, he believes that the Balkans will continue to be an area of conflicting interest and power struggle in finalization of constitution of European security and defense zone (Davutoğlu 2008: 193).

Dynamic changes, which characterize post-Cold War period, produce global rivalries that directly influence sensitive regions. For that reason Turkey's regional politics



should be developed on flexible grounds but with the long term goals, which are occasionally modified. Davutoğlu gives example of how a stalemate in the relations with the EU has pushed Turkey more towards the US and Israel, which inevitably affected Middle East and Balkan policy of Turkey. Davutoğlu believes that countries with greater strategic flexibility have better conjuncture in foreign affairs. The dynamic of international relations in the post-Cold War world asks for the flexibility and intensive contact with all actors, even the ones which have conflicting interests with ours (Davutoğlu 2008: 208).

To respond to the post-Cold War global rivalry which took its course in the Balkans, we need to look at the previous historical experience of division of spheres of influence in that region. There are three important legacies, coming from the 19th century great power politics in the Balkans. First one is an actively present German interest in the region, expanded through Austria and Hungary till Slovenia, Croatia and Adriatic Sea. Second one is an Orthodox-Christian Slavic tradition, with Russia as a main actor in it, spreading its influence over Bulgaria and Serbia all the way to Greece, Aegean and Adriatic Sea. And the third one is Ottoman legacy, which is deeply relying on the ethnical groups in the Balkans who identified themselves closely with the Ottoman culture. (Davutoğlu 2008: 209).

Unfortunately, Davutoğlu concludes, in the 20th century Turkey's influence has diminished compared to the ones of Germany and Russia, which stayed still highly present in the region. That is why during the Balkan crisis in the 90s, there was a great risk of the total elimination of Islam and Ottoman identity from the Balkans and by that full suppression of Turkey from regional affairs. Then a new, decisive player came into play. The US has its own interest in the region, independent and often conflicting with the other two dominant one, German and Russian. For that reason the US needed to side with Bosniaks and Albanians during the crisis in the Balkans, so it would expand its own influence and move regional balance in its own good. And that is why it is in Turkey's interest to closely follow US's Balkan policy, while staying in the same time in good relation with other powers who have interests in the region, as a way of exercising previous mentioned flexibility (Davutoğlu 2008: 209).

Especially interests of Christian-Orthodox Slavs, represented by Serbia and Greece, most often go contrary to the Turkish ones and are to a large extent responsible for Turkey's negative image in the region. Existing negative stance toward the Ottoman

legacy in these countries and other parts of the region make it hard for Turkey to position itself better in the Balkans (Davutoğlu 2008: 210). To secure its success in the Balkans and in global power politics, Turkey needs to establish a balance between domestic political culture (by keeping the image of moderate Islam country as positive example for the region and compatible with the universal human rights, liberties, principles of democracy and freedoms) and foreign affairs (when clearly supporting Islamic option or working on restoring Ottoman heritage).

For Turkey to establish its influence in the Balkans it needs to strengthen its Ottoman legacy in the region. In that sense main elements of Turkey's policy in the Balkans should be: relying on the Ottoman heritage and Islamic and Ottoman elements, which are still present in the geoculture of the modern Balkan; relying on the regional interdependence, which could be highly beneficial for Turkey and maintaining internal regional balance, between interest of global powers and their regional counterparts (Davutoğlu 2008: 212).

Based on the certain historical perception of interest division and the notion of geoculture Davutoğlu brings in a novelty element in the Balkan policy, the Ottoman heritage, as an instrument of expanding Turkey's influence. As mentioned before this strategy was employed for the first time during the Özal's period but in the different way. While Özal's foreign policy had been to a great extent dominated by the economy and it used Ottoman legacy mostly for the economic purposes, AKP foreign policy has strong security and geopolitical dimension, particularly visible in its interests in the Balkans. Even though AKP applies new instruments in its foreign policy behavior, final goal stays similar compared to the ones at the time of the creation of Balkan Entente or Balkan Pact. Turkey again tries to, through participation in the regional initiatives secure regional interdependence, balance global powers' interests in the region and secure regional stability.

Bosniaks and Albanians are two ethnical communities that have preserved the most of the Ottoman heritage within their contemporary cultural and religious patterns. Turkey can secure its interests in the region by contributing to the secure position of these communities, which carry on Ottoman legacy and who feel themselves politically, economically and culturally dependent from the Turkey's power and its influence in the Balkans. This should be the main instrument of Turkey's Balkan policy. Fact that these two groups got an opportunity to strengthen their position within independent nation

states, presents a chance for Turkey to also reinforce its influence in the region. In that sense supporting Muslim population in the Balkans is the imperative for Turkey to achieve its foreign policy goals (Davutoğlu 2008: 210).

In that sense for Turkey it is important that Sandzak, Kosovo and Bosnia, areas in the Balkans with large Muslim population, stay connected. To secure their undisturbed connectivity, Turkey and the World Islamic community need to support Muslims in Bosnia and Serbia, especially through economic and infrastructural investments. Stability of the territories with Albanian and Bosniaks population are of prime concern for Turkey. For Davutoğlu Bosnia and Herzegovina represents political, economic and cultural guardian of Turkey toward the Central Europe and Albania plays a key role in Turkey's policy toward Eastern Mediterranean and Adriatic region. From geopolitical and geocultural point of view, future of the whole region depends on the future of Bosniaks and Albanians (Davutoğlu 2008: 211).

The line that goes from Middle Bosnia, over East Bosnia, Sandzak, Kosovo, Albania, Macedonia, Kirdzali in Bulgaria and then ends in West and East Thrace, for Turkey represents a geopolitical and geocultural vein in the Balkans (Davutoğlu 2008: 211). That is why Turkey needs to secure that this line stays unbroken, supporting Albanians in Kosovo and its unbroken connection with other Albanians in the region. If Muslims get divided they would continue to be marginalized, which would lead to the disappearance of the Ottoman legacy in the region and would decrease possibilities for Turkish influence. Maintaining inner stability, cultural identity, strengthening economic and social connections and communications between Muslim communities in this zone, will secure Turkey's position in the Balkans (Davutoğlu 2008: 211).

The problem of Kosovo for Davutoğlu also has important implication for the security of the region. Albanians in Kosovo keep intensive and close contacts with Albanians living in Macedonia, Albania, and Montenegro. Contrary to Bosnian crisis that was localized mainly to Bosnia and Herzegovina problem of Albanians in the Balkans can have much wider effects and can spread out across the whole region. It could easily spread to Macedonia and raise an issue in Albania (Davutoğlu 2008: 213). In that sense problem of Macedonia, because of its highly sensitive ethnic and religious structure, is also important regional issue for Turkey. Fact that there is a great Albanian population in Kosovo and Macedonia can make Serbia and Greece highly involved in the crisis concerning Albanian question. Since Serbia, Greece and Bulgaria have interests that

are opposite to Turkey's ones in solving this question, Turkey should support Albanian communities in Kosovo and Macedonia in claiming their rights and resisting the pressure of mentioned countries. Creation of broader anti-Turkish regional alliance needs to be prevented (Davutoğlu 2008: 213).

If alliance between Serbia, Greece and Bulgaria is created, Turkey's interests in the Balkans can be seriously jeopardized. It would contribute to the cutting off the important strategic corridor for Turkey and breaking its connection with Bosnia and Albania. Turkey's interest is in that sense to support territorial integrity of Macedonia, because any division of this country could cut, for Turkey important geostrategic vein that goes through Balkans.

According to Davutoğlu, Turkey has to conduct active and dynamic diplomacy with all actors in the region, paying attention to the global powers relations and position in the region. For securing its interest zone, Turkey needs to, while utilizing regional interdependency and taking care of global balance of power, at the same time prioritizes its support for Albanian and Bosniaks communities (Davutoğlu 2008: 212).

The best way to achieve this for Turkey is to support regional initiatives and strengthens cooperation and the interconnectedness in the region. In that sense, Turkey needs to take active and leading role in the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe and Southeast European Cooperation Process (Davutoğlu 2008: 214). For Davutoğlu cultural cooperation and protection of Ottoman and Turkish legacy in the Balkans are crucial Turkish goals. Turkey should support all regional initiatives that protect cultural and educational rights of different ethnical communities and contribute to the wellbeing of different cultural identities. In that sense economic cooperation is also important. Investments that would connect different regions in the Balkans and would support regional interconnectedness are needed and Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation should be more included into this (Davutoğlu 2008: 214).

Further analysis will show how regional interconnectedness and strengthening of regional initiatives is one of the main instruments used by Turkey in its current relations with the Balkans. Through regional cooperation Davutoğlu promotes the principle of "zero problem policy with neighbors" and develops its multidirectional and multidimensional diplomacy. These principles and chosen instruments are in compliance with the Kemalists' ideology of peace and instruments of alliance utilized by

Kemalist elite. As we could see from the early Republican period till now, securing good neighborly relations through the collective security systems was important element of Turkey's regional policy.

When it comes to the international instruments Davutoğlu emphasizes two main strategic tools which Turkey can rely on in its relations to the Balkans. First one is systemic and that is Turkey's membership in NATO and second one is the alternative one, related to the possible spreading of influence over the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Turkey can influence situation in the Balkans much more through NATO, then if Balkan question is in the hands of the EU or UN. Contrary to possible Turkey's engagement in the Middle East through NATO, which seems to be quite risky for Turkish interests, involvement in the Balkans and Eastern Europe can benefit for Turkey (Davutoğlu 2008: 214). Turkey's interests in the Balkans go very close to the American ones, and their cooperation and involvement through NATO could help greatly to achieve interest of both countries.

Alternative international tool could be OIC, which could help Turkey in protection of Islamic and Ottoman identity in the region, by internationalizing the Islamic issue in the Balkan. Cultural identity and political position of Bosniaks and Albanians must be secured. Davutoğlu underlines that it must not be forgotten that the destiny of Ottoman Empire was decided in the Balkans (Davutoğlu 2008: 215). Without forming its own sphere of influence in the region, Turkey cannot become important regional actor and therefore not the central actor in the world politics. Based on its strategic position in the Balkans, Turkey's role in the new world order will be formulated. Turkey has to be permanently active in areas and issues that could influence the establishment of a new structure in international system.

Even before the Second World War and establishing NATO, for Turkey sustaining security through collective engagements and close cooperation with the Western countries was a primary instrument. During the Cold War, membership in NATO became one of the main factors in security and foreign policy calculations; in the relations with the Balkans also. According to Davutoğlu NATO for Turkey still plays a key role for spreading its influence in the Balkans. Western alliance has undisputable priority and usage of Ottoman legacy and OIC can be just an alternative way.

On the other hand here Davutoğlu openly stresses out that Turkey's interest in the Balkans is in a way competing with the EU and the main EU actors. Although Turkey

supports EU enlargements in the Balkans and is candidate country itself, its foreign policy interest is to develop its influence in the region beyond and outside of the EU system.

## 6.2 Davutoğlu and the discourse of Ottoman legacy in the Balkans

Davutoğlu's speech at the opening ceremony of the conference "Ottoman legacy and Balkan Muslim Communities today" conducted in Sarajevo in October 2009 became widely used in the literature for underlining the change in the Turkey's foreign policy identity and for confirming Neo-Ottomanist stances of AKP government (Öktem 2010; Tanasković 2011; Türbedar 2011).

In the line with his geopolitical approach, in this speech Davutoğlu defines Balkan region in geopolitical, geoeconomic and geocultural terms (Davutoğlu, Speech October 2009). In geopolitical terms the Balkans is a buffer zone. From the standpoint of geoeconomics the region presents a transaction area, from sea to inside, land corridor from East to West. In the geocultural sense it experiences an interaction of several cultures and is highly influenced by this cultural diversity. Based on these characteristics Balkan region has two options, to be a periphery, where great powers will be the one deciding about its destiny or to take a central role and becomes a strategic center of Afro-Euro-Asia (Davutoğlu, Speech October 2009: 1). Davutoğlu claims that during the most of ancient history, in Alexandrian, then Roman Empire, this region had a peripheral role. It was only during the Ottoman time that Balkans had a central role in the world's politics (Davutoğlu, Speech October 2009: 3). The countries in the Balkans could escape the destiny of being periphery or a victim of geostrategic competition of great powers, by reestablishing its success from Ottoman period. In that sense, Empire's model is seen as a positive example and the solution for ethnic and religious conflicts. In modern context this success could be enabled through intensive political dialog, stronger multicultural coexistence and integrated economic zone within the region. Turkey's historical legacy in the region and the fact that great number of its citizens has roots in the Balkans or comes from the Balkans, makes Turkey responsible for the state of affairs in the region. Turkey has to establish order, peace and stability in the region and make the Balkans, the Caucasus and the Middle East the center of world politics (Davutoğlu, Speech October 2009: 5).

In his speech, given at the opening ceremony of the Ministerial meeting of the Southeast European Cooperation Process (SEECP) in Istanbul in June 2010, Davutoğlu

defines the Balkans as a common home. Ministers from Balkan countries should feel like at home in Istanbul, as he feels when he visits countries in the Balkans. Davutoğlu underlines integration into European and Euro-Atlantic structures as a primary objective of the region. For him the Balkans should become a new dynamic driving force of Europe and a hub for infrastructure, transportation and energy projects (Davutoğlu, Speech June 2010: 2). He emphasizes common historical and cultural heritage as a best asset in this endeavor. Davutoğlu defines Turkey as a natural actor in this region and kinsmen relations that exist between Turkish citizens and Balkan ones as a focal point.

In these speeches Davutoğlu once again brings a positive interpretation of the Ottoman history and emphasizes the multicultural structure of the Empire. Davutoğlu believes that Ottoman experience can be a positive example for the establishment of the inter-religious and inter-ethnic relations in the region (Davutoğlu, Speech June 2010: 2).

Through the strong Ottoman discourse Turkey tries to recall historical and cultural ties and creates a sense of togetherness and closeness with the citizens in the Balkans. But their interpretation of a common history mainly communicates with the Muslim population in the Balkans. It evokes not so positive sentiments among Christian-Orthodox and other religious groups. On the other hand, Turkey tries to overcome this through intensive bilateral communication with all actors and states, by taking the role of regional mediator in the regional affairs and by emphasizing regional cooperation.

### 6.3 Davutoğlu's vision of Turkey's Balkan policy in practice

From 2009, official approach, of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the relations with the Balkans, is formulated very closely to the Davutoğlu's vision of Turkey's-Balkan relations.

The Balkans is considered to be from great importance because of geography, economy and culture. It is special for its historic role in shaping the Turkish nation and because of the human bonds that exist across the region (Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Relations with the Balkan region). Balkan countries are also highly important for Turkey because of the EU accession objectives of the region. For Turkey the Balkans are the bridge which leads them to the European inland and is in that

sense of strategic value (Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Economy, Balkans Regional Information).

In the 90s, following the end of the Balkan conflicts, Turkey supported and is still active in all international initiatives and mechanisms that were created to secure permanent peace, stability and welfare in the region. Regional stability was considered to be the priority in Turkish foreign policy. After Kosovo declared independence in 2008, Turkey believes that borders of the newly independent states in the region have become definite and it supports mutual respect for independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. However, Turkey believes that the international presence in Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina is still necessary both for the strengthening of the state structures in these countries and for managing regional stability (Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Relations with the Balkan region).

Turkey's Balkan policy is shaped by the principles of "regional ownership" and "inclusiveness" and based on the four main axes: high level political dialogue, security for all, utmost economic integration and the preservation of the multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious social structures in the region (Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Relations with the Balkan region). Turkey shows special interest in the development of autonomous cooperation mechanisms in the Balkans and the promotion of regional internal dynamics in the line with created "common areas of interest". In that respect, the Southeast European Cooperation Process (SEECP) bears special importance as the only homegrown initiative in the region.

The official policy papers put special emphasis on the trilateral consultation mechanisms as the significant example of Turkey's contribution to good neighborly relations and regional cooperation. The trilateral consultation mechanisms were founded upon Turkish initiative between Turkey, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia and also Turkey, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. Turkey is very proud on Trilateral Balkan Summit, held in Istanbul in April 2010, with the participation of the Heads of State of Turkey, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia. The Istanbul Declaration, adopted after this Summit, brought together the Presidents of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia for the first time since the War (Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Relations with the Balkan region). The Second Meeting of the Trilateral Balkan Summit was held in Karadjordjevo, Serbia on 26 April 2011.



After Davutoğlu became Minister of Foreign Affairs Turkey showed greater activism in the Balkans. As seen during the 90s for Turkish citizens, Balkan countries take high positions at the scale of the importance in Turkey's foreign policy. By some estimation there are around 10 million Turks with Balkan origin and from 4 to 10 million people from Balkan countries living in Turkey (Gangloff 2005: 10; Southeast European Times, 29/11/11). "Whenever there is a crisis in the Balkans, victims of those crises, like Bosnians, Albanians, Turks in Bulgaria, they all look to Istanbul" (Davutoğlu, Speech October 2009: 4). For Turkish leaders the success of the foreign policy in the Balkans is also important for domestic reasons. That was obvious in the years towards the elections scheduled for June 2011. The discourse of closeness and familiarity with emotional references, which can be traced in the period from 2009 was largely directed to the domestic audience.

According to the principles of "zero problem policy with the neighborhood" deepening of the political cooperation and political influence in the region was developed through proactive and pre-emptive diplomacy based on mediation, high level political dialog, economic integration and interdependence.

### **6.3.1 Turkey's security initiatives in the Balkans**

In the line with the Davutoğlu's strategic conception, Turkey relies significantly on NATO and OIC for maintaining its influence in the Balkans. For Turkey, security of the Balkans became high priority after the Wars in 90s. Turkey got involved in establishing peace and security in the region through NATO mechanism and has participated in all operations led by NATO in the Balkans since 1995. It contributed to the Implementation Force (IFOR) and the Stabilization Force (SFOR) in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Kosovo Force (KFOR) in Kosovo and Operations Essential Harvest, Amber Fox and Allied Harmony in Macedonia. Turkey is currently taking part in NATO operation KFOR in Kosovo with 350 military personnel (Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Turkey's International Security Initiatives and Contributions to NATO and EU Operations).

Turkey also contributes to the peace keeping operations and missions led by the EU such as EUFOR ALTHEA and the EU's first civilian crises management operation called European Union Police Mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina (EUPM). As of August 2011, Turkey is the second largest force contributor to nearly 1650 man for EUFOR ALTHEA

Operation in Bosnia (Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Turkey's International Security Initiatives and Contributions to NATO and EU Operations).

Turkey also participates in European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX). Turkey currently contributes to this mission with around 91 personnel and it is the second biggest contributor to the mission among non-EU countries after the USA (Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

In recent period Turkey gave a significant support to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia and Montenegro to become members of NATO and integrate their military and political structures into the Alliance.

This intensive cooperation through multilateral arrangements closely relates to the Turkey's traditional approach to the region. During the Cold War, membership in NATO determined Turkey's policy toward the Balkan to the great extent. For Davutoğlu NATO is still a key instrument for Turkey to spread its regional influence and in practice Turkey is using it to a great extent. On the other hand, the changes that occurred in post-Cold War Period, followed by the September 11 and events around it, placed at the forefront the question of how to cope with the issue of peaceful co-existence of the different cultures and civilizations. Turkey responded by including deeper Islam into the domestic politics and with more positive Islamic regional diplomacy (Aktaş 2010: 187). Even though Davutoğlu named OIC as a second instrument which Turkey should utilize for strengthening its influence in the region, the Organization was not significantly present in the region after the end of the Wars in 90s and Turkey stayed firmly loyal to its Western alliances.

Beyond the international involvement Turkey also actively participates in the regional initiatives. "In order to prevent the geopolitical buffer zone characteristics of the Balkans, which makes the Balkans a victim of conflicts, we have to create a new sense of unity in our region. We have to strengthen the regional ownership and foster regional common sense." (Davutoğlu, Speech October 2009). Following that goal Turkey has participated in the Southeastern Europe Defense Ministerial Process (SEDM), which was launched in 1996 (Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Turkey's International Security Initiatives). Among SEDM initiatives, the South Eastern Europe Brigade (SEEBRIG) was established in 1998. SEEBRIG was set up to support peace keeping and humanitarian aid operations conducted by NATO or EU under UN or

OSCE auspices. Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Romania, Macedonia and Turkey are participants in SEEBRIG (Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Turkey's International Security Initiatives).

In addition, Turkey is bilaterally engaged in the military cooperation with the countries from Balkans. The cooperation goes from training programs to modernization of military infrastructure. This type of cooperation constitutes a strong dimension in Turkish-Albanian bilateral relations. Turkey has its own troops in Vlora in Albania and has participated in the reconstruction of military airport in Kucova (Petrović; Reljić 2011: 3). Teams assigned by the Turkish Land, Naval and Air Forces have been training Albanian Armed Forces and supporting them in logistics and modernization aspects, while Albanian soldiers assigned to Afghanistan under the framework of NATO are serving their mandate within the Turkish troops.

But beside Albania which represents its important strategic ally in the Balkans, Turkey also expand military cooperation with Montenegro and Serbia. With Montenegro the cooperation is mainly toward the support for Montenegro membership in NATO and integration of Montenegro military forces to the NATO structures through Turkish military forces. In Serbia Turkey invested 10 million Euros in reconstruction of the military airport Morava (Republic of Serbia, Ministry of Defence, News 28.04.2012). Since 2008 Serbia and Turkey are signing annual bilateral military cooperation plans.

### **6.3.2 Political cooperation between Turkey and the Balkans**

As a political actor, from 2009 Turkey has intensified bilateral high level contacts with Balkan officials. The activism in the Balkans was encouraged by the fact that only two months after Davutoğlu was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs, Turkey took over one year chairmanship in the South East European Cooperation Process (SEECP). This helped Turkey to, in the line with its main axes in the Balkans politics, conducts a great number of high level political meetings and organize many regional events (Türbedar 2011: 142). For Turkey SEECP was significant as an authentic regional project, an important instrument, which corresponded to some previous Balkan initiatives in which Turkey took part also.

Beyond the regional mechanisms, Turkey put a great emphasis on bilateral and trilateral initiatives in the Balkans. It took the mediation role in some of the unsolved questions between Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Croatia and initiated high level

meetings between these countries. Based on its strategic depth and by emphasizing the historical closeness and cultural understanding, Turkey tried to present itself as an important political player in the region, as moderator and arbiter in the regional issues and conflict resolutions (Türbedar 2011: 143). Turkey stepped up as a mediator between officials who were representing Bosniaks from Bosnia and Herzegovina and officials from Serbia. It also mediated between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. Turkey started organizing trilateral consultation meetings with the purpose of reinforcing dialogue between these ethnic communities with the final goal of enhancing peace and stability in the region and for the support of territorial integrity, multi-ethnic and multi-cultural Bosnia. This is in the line with the proclaimed interest of supporting Bosniaks community and Ottoman heritage in the region for the purpose of strengthening Turkey's regional influence.

Till the end of 2012 there were six meetings of Foreign Ministers of Turkey, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia and five of Foreign Ministers of Turkey, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia (Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Relations with the Balkan region). Through these meetings Turkey managed to influence Serbia to approve the appointment of ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina after three years of deadlock and for Serbian Parliament to adopt the resolution on Srebrenica in April 2010 (Türbedar 2011: 148). This for sure improved the relation between Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, though it provoked negative reaction in Republika Srpska. Serbian entity in Bosnia and Herzegovina was from the beginning opposing to Turkey's involvement in the matters of Bosnia accusing it for supporting only the interests of Bosniak entity and at the same time accusing Serbia for betray (Somun 2011: 36). After the Istanbul Summit in April 2010, Istanbul Declaration was signed between Turkey, Bosnia and Serbia, which Turkey praised as its great success because it brought together president of Serbia and Bosnia for the first time since the War in 90s. Nevertheless Serbian member of Bosnia and Herzegovina Presidency refused to validate this agreement. Republika Srpska and its leader Milorad Dodik are of the belief that Turkey is working on the abolition of this entity (Türbedar 2011: 148). Still an official visit of Davutoğlu to Milorad Dodik in Banja Luka was organized in January 2011. However during the same visit Davutoğlu did not managed to meet with Nebojša Radmanović, Serbian member of Bosnia and Herzegovina Presidency, although this meeting was planned.

Turkey emphasized special relations with Bosnia and Herzegovina and pointed out its firm support for territorial integrity of this country. Turkey with the great interest participated in the "Butmir process". It was a joint United States and European Union-led endeavor to generate an agreement between key domestic political stakeholders on the proposals related to the constitutional reform, as well as to the issues of apportionment of state and defence property. But the leaders of the main Bosniak, Serb and Croat parties rejected the proposed package of reforms and process was stopped.

In this period Turkey has also intensified its contacts with Serbia. It tried to implement its flexible foreign policy and to develop close relations with all regional players, despite their possible conflicting interest. This presents an attempt to implement a win-win strategy based on its principles of "zero problem policy with neighbors" and multi-dimensional diplomacy. Turkey in its official paper defined Serbia as its neighbor despite the fact that they don't share the common border. According to its principle to maintain good relations with all neighbors, Turkey made a significant effort to develop stable and close relations with Serbia (Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Relations between Turkey and Serbia). Conflicts in Bosnia and NATO intervention in Kosovo in 1999 negatively influenced relations between Serbia and Turkey but since the democratic changes in Serbia in October 2000 and after AKP government active engagement in the Balkans, the relations between these two countries improved significantly. There were many steps in that direction. Serbian president at that time Boris Tadić visited Turkey in 2007 and 2010 and its Prime Minister Mirko Cvetković visited Turkey in 2011. Turkish President Abdullah Gül visited Serbia in 2009 and that was the first Turkish president to visit Serbia since 1986. Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan made a visit to Serbia in July 2010, when visa free agreement between two countries was signed. (Türbedar 2011: 144). During this period tripartite consultation meetings between Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Turkey were carried out, followed by a number of visits on a ministerial level. In number of occasions Turkish officials emphasized that for Turkey Serbia is a key country for peace and stability in the Balkans. Although Turkey was one of the first countries to recognize Kosovo declaration of independence in February 2008, it is clear that this issue did not contribute to the deterioration of the relations between these two countries to a greater extent. Turkey and Serbia signed free trade agreement in June 2009. Besides offering its good service in mediating with Bosniaks in Bosnia, Turkey has also

mediated between divided blocs of Muslims in Sandzak region of Serbia. During the Erdoğan's visit to Serbia in November 2011 he brought together local representatives of Bosniak community who were in a year's long conflict. What is also significant is that during the same visit Erdoğan showed significant distance from the Mufti Zukorlić who is known by his radical stances on the position and the role of Bosniak community in Serbia.

Turkey supports Macedonia in its name dispute with Greece and is the first country to recognize the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name, national identity and to assign an Ambassador to Skopje. Turkey also supports the preservation of Macedonia's multi-ethnic and multi-cultural composition, as well as its unitary state structure. Turkey believes that Macedonia has fulfilled all the criteria to become member of NATO and will continue to support its membership to the European and Euro-Atlantic institutions, which is delayed due to the name issue (Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Relations between Turkey and Macedonia).

### **6.3.3 Economic relations between Turkey and Balkan countries**

One of the incentives for Turkey's activism in the Balkans was for sure Turkey's economic success and its emergence into the 16th economy of the World in 2010 and 18th in 2011 (International Monetary Fund, World Economic Database 2010 and 2011). In that sense Turkey embraced economic expansion as one of the main foreign policy motives, also in the Balkans.

Turkey's foreign trade with the Balkan countries has increased notably in the post-2000 period. Turkey's export to most of the Balkan countries grew couple of hundred percent. In 1999, Macedonia became the first country in the Balkans that Turkey signed Free Trade Agreement with. Meanwhile it had signed Free Trade Agreements with the all other countries, last one with Serbia in 2009 (Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Economy, Countries and Regions, Balkans). This for sure contributed to the increase in the economic cooperation between Turkey and the Balkan region. Turkish direct investments also increased in the same period from just 30 million dollars in 2002 to 189 million dollars in 2011 (Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Economy, Countries and Regions, Balkans). The Turkish investments in the Balkans usually prefer the communications, banking, construction, mining and retail sectors.

Still, Balkans' share in the total foreign trade of Turkey is modest. EU is Turkey's biggest trading partner and in that sense EU member states from the region: Romania, Bulgaria and Greece represent the most attractive economic destination for Turkey. Taken together with these three EU member states, share of the Balkans in Turkey's trade is 6-7% in exports and 3- 4% in imports, of which 77% of Turkish Balkan exports and 91% of imports goes to the three EU countries (Szigetvári 2012: 10).

When it comes to the other Balkan countries, it seems that trade is no directly following the strategic and political interests, since Serbia is the largest goods export market for Turkey. By the official statistic of Turkish Ministry of Economy Turkish goods exports to Serbia in 2011 were 355 million \$, up 16% from 2010, and up 27% from 2006. In the same period Serbia has increased its export to Turkey even more, up 95% from 2010 and up 335% from 2006. Turkish goods imports from Serbia now totaled 213 million \$ in 2011. "Agreement on Cooperation on Infrastructure Projects between Turkey and Serbia" was signed in Belgrade on 26 October 2009, during the formal visit of President of the Republic of Turkey, H.E. Abdullah Gül. Up until now, there is only one project held by Turkish firm in Serbia with a total value of 120 million dollars. Turkish foreign direct investment (FDI) stock in Serbia is 32 million \$ between 2002 and 2011 (Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Economy, Countries and Regions, Balkans, Serbia).

After Serbia, Macedonia is the next largest export market for Turkish goods in the Balkans. Turkish goods exports to Macedonia in 2011 were 299 million \$, up 13.6% from 2010 and up 232% from 2001 (Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Economy, Countries and Regions, Balkans, Macedonia). Macedonia also increased its export to Turkey from 2001 up 922% with the total value in 2011 of 92 million \$. Turkish firms held and are holding 21 projects in Macedonia with a total value of 832 million dollars up until now. Turkish foreign direct investment stock in Macedonia in 2011 was 69 million \$ (Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Economy, Countries and Regions, Balkans, Macedonia). Turkish direct investment in Macedonia is led by the constructing and banking sector and the operating the airports.

Albania is for Turkey 70th largest goods export market with the value of 271 million \$ in 2011. Turkish contracting and consultancy firms held and are holding 19 projects in Albania with a total value of 717 million dollars up until now. Turkish foreign direct investment stock in Albania are relatively small and at about 6 million \$ in 2011

(between 2002 and 2011 was 41 million \$), mostly led by the telecommunication, banking and constructing sectors (Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Economy, Countries and Regions, Balkans, Albania).

Bosnia and Herzegovina is just little behind Albania when it comes to Turkey's export markets with the 269 million \$ in 2011. Here also there was a great progress from 2001 with 875% increase. Turkish foreign direct investment (FDI) stock in Bosnia and Herzegovina is significantly higher than in Serbia, Macedonia or Albania and are 138 million \$ for the period between 2002 and 2011. Reported Turkish direct investment in Bosnia and Herzegovina is led by the banking, airline and education sectors. Turkish contracting and consultancy firms held and are holding 9 projects in Bosnia and Herzegovina with a total value of 80 million dollars up until now (Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Economy, Countries and Regions, Balkans, Bosnia and Herzegovina).

Kosovo has the highest Turkish foreign direct investment (FDI) stock in the Balkans, which was by the end of 2011 1 billion \$. Turkish direct investment in Kosovo is led by the banking and mining sectors. Value of Turkey's goods export there is close to the one of Bosnia and Herzegovina with the 265.9 million \$ in 2011. There are 4 projects in Kosovo led by Turkish firms, with a total value of 502 million dollars up until now (Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Economy, Countries and Regions, Balkans, Kosovo).

Croatia is relatively small market for Turkish goods and Turkish export there was worth 241.8 million \$ in 2011. On the other hand Croatia is the biggest exporter from Balkan countries to Turkish market with totaled 311 million \$ in 2011. There were 3 big projects in Croatia conducted by Turkish contracting and consultancy firms with a total value of 787 million dollars, which is the highest in the Balkans (Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Economy, Countries and Regions, Balkans, Croatia).

Turkey did expand the number of trade agreements, agreements on infrastructure, transport, free-trade deals but it seems that the foreign trade with Balkan countries has limited value for Turkey. At the same time, Balkan countries did increased significantly their export to Turkey. From this economic data it is evident that when it comes to trade, market conditions dictate the size of trade way more than the strategic affinities. On the other hand foreign direct investments stocks have the highest value in Kosovo, then Bosnia followed by Macedonia. Still significantly high FDI stock in Kosovo could be explained by mining resources and potentials in this area.



Nevertheless compared with the overall numbers of Turkish foreign trade the Balkans for Turkey does not represent highly significant market and it is the other way around also. The Balkans is not among priorities for Turkey when it comes to investments and it represents just around 7% of Turkey's total investments abroad. Taken all together trade and investments of Turkey in the region are modest compared with the Western Europe and other neighboring regions.

#### **6.3.4 Exercise of Turkey's soft power influence in the Balkans**

Turkey was also active in the Balkans through the Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA). TIKA has Programme Coordination Offices in almost all the countries in the Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia). TIKA spent a good number of its resources in the Balkans on education and health sector and most of Turkey's development cooperation projects between 2005 and 2010 mainly focused on the development of social infrastructure sector. Important is to emphasize that TIKA has been active mainly in the areas of Balkans with the Muslim population (Öktem 2010: 29). Turkey made a significant effort at the level of spreading its soft power influence to broaden its presence among Muslim communities in the Balkans. For exercising its soft power, Turkey relied on non-conventional foreign policy actors of the Turkish state such as the TIKA and the Presidency of Religious Affairs (Diyanet), Islamic grassroots organizations, such as the Gülen movement<sup>6</sup> and Islamic brotherhoods. While these organizations often compete over resources and audiences in their home country, they seem to be more united in the Balkans, at least on first sight (Öktem 2010: 25).

In Albania TIKA has financed the restoration of Parruce Mosuque, organization of a weaving course for impoverished women from Muslim families that migrated to Tirana and renovation of a school (Republic of Turkey, Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency). In Montenegro it contributed to the reparation of several schools and preschools. In Kosovo it helped the establishment of the first Turkish TV channel in the Balkans, called Yeni Dönem (New Era) with the aim to support Turkish community in Kosovo in preserving its culture, language and tradition. It also

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<sup>6</sup> The Gülen movement is a transnational civic society movement inspired by the teachings of Turkish Islamic scholar Fethullah Gülen. His teachings about hizmet (altruistic service to the "common good") have attracted a large number of supporters in Turkey, Central Asia and other parts of the World. The movement is mainly active in education, however has also aid initiatives and investments on media, finance, and health.

supported the building of water reservoir in the town Mamusha which has large population of Turkish origin. In Bosnia and Herzegovina it financed refurbishment of Gorazde Hospital Emergency Service and also contributed to the restoration of the famous Drina Bridge and also Konjic Bridge, both which have great significance for the Ottoman history in the Balkans. In Macedonia it mainly hold projects on repairing and refurbishing schools, so as some agriculture development projects (Republic of Turkey, Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency).

Gülen movement was very active in the Balkans in recent period. In Bosnia and Herzegovina there are 15 educational institutions (preschools, primary schools, high schools, colleges and one university) led by Bosna Sema Educational Institutions family, a group founded in 1998 by the members of the Gülen movement. In the period from 2009, when the AKP came into power, 7 out of these 15 education institutions were opened. Gülen movement also runs certain number of schools in Albania (1 university, 4 collages and 5 madrassas operated co-jointly with the Muslim community), in Macedonia (2 primary schools and 6 collages) and in Kosovo (2 collages and 1 educational centre) (Öktem 2010: 38). These were all founded in the period from 1993 till 2006.

Following its soft power principle and by using historical legacy as a way of connecting with the population in the Balkans, Turkey also officially approached the region with the new cultural and educational services. In Albania Turkish schools are considered to be among better ones and have around 3000 students. (Petrović, Reljić 2011: 5). Also a great number of Albanians go to Turkey to study. Turkey had expended its programs of scholarships in Albania, Bosnia and Kosovo. In summer 2010 Turkey opened a Kemal Atatürk Cultural Centre in Novi Pazar, city that is center of Bosniak population in Serbia. From 2011 Turkey also developed a new scholarship programs for students from Serbia. Turkish state-run TV network TRT Avaz, beside having Greek, Bulgarian, Macedonian, Romanian, in the beginning of 2010 added Bosnian and Albanian to its new broadcasting languages and soon after that also Serbian and Croatian. It now offers internet news and radio programs in all languages in the Balkans. Various Turkish soap operas broadcast throughout the Balkans, gained huge popularity and influence societies' views and opinions on Turkish lifestyle and society.

According to the Gallup Balkan Monitor Survey from 2010, 75.1 percent of the population of Albania, 60.2 of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 93.2 of Kosovo and 76.6 of

Macedonia considers Turkey as a friendly country. On the other hand in the Balkan countries that don't have large or dominant Muslim population situation is a bit different. In Croatia 26.7 percent of the population considers Turkey as a friendly country, while in Montenegro that percentage is 33.5 and in Serbia 18.2. (Balkan Monitor: Turkey friendly/hostile-Public opinion survey, 2010). In comparison to the results from 2006 there was a significant increase among the Muslim countries in the Balkans in the fondness of Turkey but especially among Albanians in both Albania and Kosovo probably as a result of Turkey's support for Kosovo independence.

## 7. Conclusion

The analysis of Turkey's relations with the Balkans since the coming of Davutoğlu to the position of Foreign Minister, shows that there was an intensified activism of Turkey in the Balkan affairs since the 2009. Question that comes out is: was this shift related to the change in the Turkey's foreign policy identity and if it was, what kind of shift was it? Which are the structural elements and organizational principles in Turkey's new approach in the Balkans and to what extent do they defer from Turkey's traditional foreign policy determinants? How in that sense this recent behavior in the Balkans defers from the prior Turkey's behavior in the region?

In the period from the founding of the Republic, security concerns dominated Turkey's relations with the Balkans. Turkey traditionally formulated its foreign policy based on the geopolitical and security calculations. As a former part of the Ottoman Empire and later as Turkey's neighbors, countries of the Balkans were of the major security concern for the Republic of Turkey.

The Balkans was Turkey's way towards Europe and in that sense it was important for Turkey not to lose its sphere of influence and to manage to balance great power involvement in the region. Between First and the Second World War, when power vacuum occurred in the Balkans, Turkey tried to, through multilateral security arrangements, secure a better position in the Balkans. In that sense Balkan Entente was especially significant as an autonomous regional initiative for cooperation. Important here to emphasize is that Turkey never tried to regain its position in the Balkans through more aggressive or individualistic approach. Turkey developed its relations with the Balkan neighbors according to the Atatürk's main foreign policy principle „peace at home, peace in the world“. Turkey was dedicated to the ideology of

peace and alliance and tried to, mainly through multilateral, global or regional initiatives, establish good neighborly relations. It pursued realistic nonassertive diplomacy, focused on preserving status quo. At the same time it showed strong commitment to the Kemalist's Western orientation.

The context of the Cold War strengthened Turkey's alignment with the West. It made Turkey's relation with the Balkans highly dependent on the interests of its Western allies, especially the US interest in the region.

The analysis of Turkey's currently proclaimed interests and its foreign policy behavior toward the Balkans in the period from 2009, shows us that, beyond greater change in the discourse, there is actually significant continuity in Turkey's formulation of its relations with this region. Since Davutoğlu came to power, Turkey did approach the region with the better structured vision, greater pro-activeness, significant exercise of its soft power capabilities, especially in the cultural relations and people to people's contacts. It has showed greater flexibility in communicating with different actors in the region, so as flexibility in communicating between different power interests. Turkey implemented new instruments for spreading its influence and that is by referring to common Ottoman history of the Balkans. It started using cultural and religious commonalities coming from the Ottoman legacy, so as close kinship relations between the people of the Balkans, for positioning itself stronger in the Balkan affairs and balancing great power influence in the region.

New rhetoric made it so that Turkey's new activism in the Balkans was seen as a form of a Turkey's return to the Balkans in the Ottoman and imperialistic way. This was perceived as a confirmation of the great shift which happened in Turkey's ideational foreign policy structure. It was argued that new, Islamic and Ottoman foreign policy identity is now on the stage.

Based on the Wendt's conception of how actors and structures are in the relation and how they influence each other, we could see that actually traditional principles of Turkey's foreign policy, to a large extent, stayed embedded in the current foreign policy of Turkey. Coming from Wendt's explanation on how structures supervene on agents, I aimed to show that traditional Turkey's foreign policy identity supervened on AKP officials and their believes on how Turkey's relations with external world should be organized. In that sense, I argued that this traditional features constitutively

participate in what is formed as Turkey's new foreign policy and that for that reason there is a much greater continuity in Turkey's foreign policy behavior in the Balkans that it is to the first glance observable.

Davutoğlu vision of the Turkey-Balkan relations is also formulated on the clear geopolitical and strategic calculations, which is the basis of Turkey's traditional understanding of foreign policy. He emphasizes geography as key determinant of Turkey's foreign policy but also adds history as the second one. Nevertheless his historical axis relies deeply on the geography and is expressed in the form of geoculture, making cultural relations in the service of geostrategic interests, as it can be seen from his conceptualization of Turkey-Balkan relations.

Despite the fact that security discourse was replaced with historical and cultural one, security stayed of primary concern in the current Turkey's behavior to the Balkans. Although Davutoğlu emphasizes soft power as one of the main methodological principles in its foreign policy, from its relations with the Balkans, we can clearly observe that security arrangements, especially multilateral one, stayed the main instrument in the approach to the region.

Since Turkey does not have greater economic interest in the Balkans, it can hardly balance its strategic interests and security priorities through greater economic activism and investments. The Ottoman legacy did become the significant instrument utilized by Turkey. But Turkey's interpretation of Ottoman history and the way Turkish officials use it in the discourse related to the Balkans, is not seen positively by all nations in the region. In that sense principles of win-win solution and "zero problem policy with neighbors" lose its relevance and credibility, which brings Turkey back to the classical power struggle game.

Davutoğlu and AKP officials have adopted to the large degree realpolitik diplomacy as an element of foreign policy culture and their perception of foreign relations. They are aware of the power positioning in the region and do not seem to, beyond the aggressive discourse, step out in the region with too assertive bilateral initiatives, which could potentially disturb great power interests in the Balkans, especially interests of the US.

Balkan region stays seen in Turkey as its bridge to the West. For that reason Turkey's interest in the Balkans has been a constant throughout the history of the Republic

(Türbedar 2011: 140). Balancing regional power and great power influence in the region for the purpose of securing its way to Europe stayed as a main strategic goal of Turkey in the Balkans.

When the Balkan Entente was created there was a power vacuum in the region and great powers were mainly occupied with larger international events and with the economic crisis in 1929. This situation could be easily compared to the vacuum which emerged from 2008 with the world economic crisis and the stagnation in the EU enlargement process. We can see that Turkey reacted in the similar way as it did back then. It tried to take advantage of this situation and strengthen its regional influence relying mostly on the collective security arrangements and regional initiatives. Turkey tried to secure its interest by pushing for greater regional interdependence in the current case beyond the EU regional initiatives.

The idea of becoming a central power, instead of being a bridge, is a new goal placed in front of Turkey by Davutoğlu. His doctrine of Strategic Depth and use of geopolitical and historic depth as an instrument to achieve Turkish security and foreign policy goals, is a new momentum in Turkey's foreign policy. At the same time, this novelty element is a clear product of geostrategic repositioning in the international and regional system and comes from the necessity of Turkey to react to it. Turkey felt that in order to stay a relevant player in international arena it had to renounce its defensive diplomacy. This was visible from the end of the Cold War. Since AKP coming to power, Turkey even more took the pro-active stance and followed more flexible and multi-dimensional foreign policy approach. But this type of activism was mainly visible in the field of soft power. Turkey initiated great number of political dialogs and intensified initiatives for people to people contacts. It also tried to reinforce its influence acting as an agent of mediation between its clashing neighboring countries (Türbedar 2011: 140). Development of new soft power capacities which to a great extent relied on Ottoman legacy was especially evident in Turkey's approach to the Balkans.

But beyond using these new strategies, which for sure made presence of Turkey more visible in the region, it seems that Turkey's interests and behavior toward the Balkans did not change much compared to how the relations were organized throughout the most of the 20th century. The question remains if these new instruments will make Turkey to position itself better in the Balkan affairs. The new goal of becoming a

central power just based on the exercise of the soft power instruments is also in that sense under the question.

Why Turkey's foreign policy identity did not change to a greater extent even after new actors with the new vision came, can be explained with the Wendt's conception on how and to what extent already existing ideational structure influences the formation of identity and behavior of new actors. Since the existing structure constitutively participates in shaping beliefs and behavior of agents, long-established traditional determinants of Turkey's foreign policy stayed visibly embedded in Davutoğlu perception of Turkey-Balkan relations and its approach to the Balkans.

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