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Turkish National Identity and the EU under the AKP: A Discursive Approach

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In a broadly constructivist context, the article uses Foreign Policy Discourse Analysis, a form of analysis based on Foucault's conception of discourse, in order to examine the discourse of the ruling AKP (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi - Justice and Home Affairs Party) on the Turkish accession process to the EU in the context of broader discourses on state and nation and on discourses of self and other vis a vis Europe.

Introduction

Turkey's attempt to become a full member of the European Union (EU), dating back to its first membership application for European Economic Community (EEC) membership in 1959, has been compared to the myth of Sisyphus, condemned eternally to rolling a boulder up a hill only to see it roll back down again (Çakır, 2011: 166). While, in the early years of the governing Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*- AKP), progress to accession seemed promising, enabling the opening of accession negotiations in 2006, it has since been almost stalled for a variety of reasons, originating both from EU countries and institutions and from Turkey iself, including calls for a 'privileged partnership' among sectors of the EU public and politicians, the freezing of several of the negotiations chapters, and increasing cherry-picking of reforms and even 'de-Europeanisation' on the Turkish side.

In this context, this paper aims to analyse the discourse of the AKP on the EU using Foreign Policy Discourse Analysis (FPDA). According to FPDA, discourse on Europe, and consequently on specific EU policies, is constrained by the dominant discourse on state and nation. In Kemalist discourse, for instance, Europe was defined both as a threat to the Turkish state and nation, and as a model of civilisation to be emulated. However, the arrival of the AKP in power in 2002 has provoked a fundamental change – a critical juncture – in the discourse on state and nation, resulting in a conception of 'Turkishness' that is both more inclusive, in that it is less uniquely bound to Turkish language and ethnicity, and more determined by religious affiliation, in that the Muslim aspect of Turkish identity is emphasised. This has also affected attitudes to foreign policy, and to European integration. As this paper explores, then, AKP discourse tends to depict the EU as potentially enncompassing countries from different civlisational/religious backgrounds, and portrays the relations between Turkey and the EU as one of equals, or even, as is explored in the finals section of the paper, reverses the traditional view of an 'inferior' candidate country trying to 'improve' itself to join a 'superior' EU.

Theoretical Framework: Foreign Policy Discourse Analysis

FPDA is a form of discourse analysis developed by authors including Wæver (2002, 2005] and Larsen (1997, 1999) on the basis of Foucault's approach to discourse. For Foucault, discourses organise knowledge systematically and delimit what can be said and what cannot; the aim of discourse analysis based on Foucault is, therefore, to look for these rules (Wæver, 2002: 29). Thus, discourse analysis 'does not try to get to the thoughts and motives of the actors, their hidden motives or secret plans' (Wæver, 2002: 26); instead 'our investigation into meaning has to take place at the level of the language' (Larsen, 1997: 13).

Following Foucault, therefore, discourse is seen as forming a system which is made up of a layered constellation of key concepts. They are related in a hierarchical way, 'like a tree with roots, trunks and branches' (Larsen, 1997: 17). In the context of foreign policy, then, the underlying national discourse on state and nation acts as 'a constraint that shapes the foreign policy of this state, a kind of framework within which the foreign policy of a particular country can take place' (Larsen, 1997: 21). When discussing a Member State's discursive attitude towards a specific EU policy, then, the analysis needs to explore three levels of discourse. Firstly, the dominant discourse on state and nation is examined. Here, questions such as the basic conceptual constellation of state and nation, the perceived connection between the two and the attachment to state and nation, as well as the state's projection of itself onto the world are examined. The issue of how and if one can become a member of the nation in question is also dealt with at this level (Wæver 2002: 33-36).

Secondly, the relational position of the state/nation *vis-a-vis* Europe is examined. Basically, the constellation of state and nation constrains how Europe can be thought of (Wæver, 2005: 37). Thus, political discourse should, in its narrative, present a logic of Europe which is compatible with the

state/nation construction. Here, very general concepts of the EU are examined, such as whether the EU is primarily constructed as an intergovernmental organisation composed of sovereign states, a single market or a supranational entity (Wæver, 2002: 37-38). For instance, the EU may be primarily viewed as a *problem-solving entity*, a *rights-based postnational union* or a *value-based community*. In the first view, the EU's legitimacy is seen as lying in its ability to provide pragmatic benefits, particularly economic and security advantages to its members. The second and third views are norm based in that they go beyond pragmatism and see the EU as founded on norms or values; the understanding of the EU as a rights-based postnational union, for instance, sees the EU as a union based on 'universal rights' such as democracy, the rule of law and human rights. The view of the EU as a value-based community, in contrast, perceives the EU as a community necessarily underscored by a deeper cultural identity, perhaps based on a common history and religious tradition (Sjursen, 2002, 2008) (Schmidt, 2009). In this sense, Europe, and hence the EU, may also be viewed as the Other of the state/nation, albeit a friendly Other, as has been the case in British discourse.

The ways that Europe/the EU may be depicted as Other in national discourse may be informed by an analysis of Othering in International Relations carried out by Diez (2005: 628). For Diez, the Other may be represented in the following ways;

1. As an existential threat. Thus, it may be securitised, in the sense used by the Copenhagen school, through a speech act of securitisation, legitimising extraordinary measures outside the 'normal realm' of politics .

2. As inferior. In this case the Self is constructed as superior to the Other as, for instance, in the case of Orientalism which views the 'Orient' as exotic but ultimately inferior to the West (Said, 1978).

3. As violating universal principles. Here the standards of the Self are not only seen as superior, but as universally valid. In this view, then, the Other should be brought to accept the principles of the Self.

4. As simply different. In this case there is no obvious value judgement placed on the Other; while not being completely innocent it is thus the least harmful form of Othering.

Finally, at the third level, FPDA focuses on concrete policies pursued by specific groups of actors, particularly political parties, who argue their positions with reference to levels 1 and 2. Thus, actors might contest each other at level 1 by arguing that their opponents do not offer an appropriate construction of state and nation, or at level 2 by arguing that their construction of Europe will pose a threat to the state/nation constellation, or by pointing out that they have fundamentally misunderstood the realities of the European integration project (Wæver, 2002: 37-41).

State Nation and Europe in Kemalist Discourse: Westernisation Without the West?

The Kemalist discursive construction of state and nation has its roots in the foundation of the Turkish republic in 1923, and was heavily based on the French idea of state and nation as an organic whole. In this context, Kemalism aimed at 'state autonomy from domestic and international forces with the goal of creating a modern, secular and homogenous nation state (Yavuz, 2009: 27). This 'homogenisation' was to be achieved by the crafting of a new state-determined and regimented Turkish nationalism out of diverse ethnic and religious groups (MacMillan, 2013a: 138); in particular, this involved the exclusion of non-Muslims from the new Turkish nation, and by considering all remaining Muslims to be 'Turks'(Yanık, 2011: 81).

Meanwhile, the young Republic sought to sever its historical and cultural ties with the Middle East and turn its face to the West. In this sense, Europe was seen as the the 'lighthouse' guiding modernisation (Yaka, 2016: 157), the final stage of civilisation, a model 'against which Ottoman and Turkish modernizers measured their efforts to reform their political, educational and military systems' (Bardakçı, 2010: 27)., Thus, although Atatürk generally emphasised that he wanted to modernise his country, thus making his people part of a universal civilisation, he recognised that what he was undertaking was in fact Westernisation (Mango, 2005: 18). However, Atatürk argued that he would have to carry out his Westernising reforms despite the West rather than with its help. In his own words, 'The West has always been prejudiced against the Turks. But we Turks have consistently moved towards the West … in order to be a civilized nation, there is no alternative' (cited in Morris, 2005: 30). Thus, Turkey has since become a long-standing member of several important European and other Western organisations, and its desire for relations with the EEC/EU can also be viewed in this context.

The sovereignty of the Turkish republic, however, was viewed as absolute and indivisible by the Kemalists; in Atatürk's view, sovereignty 'does not accept sharing in any meaning, form, colour and appearance' (cited in Kösebalaban, 2007: 93). The main perceived threats to this hard-won sovereignty were both external and internal in nature; specifically Europe and ethnic minorities within Turkey.

Externally, the Turkish republic suspected the European powers of having a 'hidden agenda'; that of carving up Turkey, which would then be ruled by European countries and/or Christian minorities in Turkey. Internally, ethnic minorities were seen as potential collaborators with the West in undermining the Turkish state. These fears are referred to, respectively, as the 'Sevres' and 'Tanzimat' syndromes[1].

Thus, while Europe, and thus the EU, has been represented as a model of civilisation to be emulated in Kemalist discourse, it has also been presented as a threat to Turkish sovereignty. Therefore, Kemalists, and the main Kemalist Party the CHP, have supported both Turkey's adaptation to the values and institutions of the West and its economic and political independence from the West (Celep, 2011: 423). As Dösemeci argues, for instance, between 1967 and 1980, 'the Turkish opposition perceived and presented integration as a threat to the Turkish nation, allowing the latter to be conceptualised and imagined in different ways' (2012: 92). According to Kösebalaban, 'the image of the West in the Kemalist mentality continues to represent the Other' (2002: 131); therefore, 'on one side of the coin lies the perpetual domestic threat, *irtica*, and on the other lies the perpetual external enemy, Europe' (Kösebalaban, 2007: 90). In other words, the EU is not only the symbol of contemporary civilisation in Kemalist discourse, but is also 'the enemy, the colonizer, the imperialist, the occupier' (Yaka, 2016: 157).

The AKP Era: A Fundamental Break in the Dominant Discourse on State, Nation and Europe ?

The roots of the AKP, in government since 2002, can be found in the development of political Islam in Turkey in the 1990s, which arguably developed in the more relaxed political atmosphere engendered by Turgut Özal, Prime Minister between 1983-1993. Özal's premiership resulted both in the fostering of neoliberal economic policies and in the development of a new political language about human rights and civil society (Yavuz, 2009: 45). By the late 1990s, the Islamist *Refah* (Welfare) Party participated in the coalition government of the time. Meanwhile, the declaration of the Turkish candidacy for EU accession in 1999 provoked expectations among the general public that a deep, sustained process of democratic reform would begin (Johansson-Nogues and Jonasson, 2011: 117). In this context, Kurdish and Alevi groups also gained in confidence and desired to express their identities in the public sphere (Yavuz, 2009: 29). In addition, the major economic crisis of 2000-2001 led to the 'severe electoral punishment' of the coalition government, and contributed to the victory of the AKP in the 2002 general elections with a 34% share of the vote and 66% of the seats in Parliament[2] (Kemahlıoğlu, 2015: 446).

In this context, during its time in power, the AKP has arguably consolidated an alternative national identity construction to Kemalism. Thus, the AKP has sought to redefine the meanings of state, nation, political community and secularism, and has done a great deal in dethroning the players, venues, and areas previously under the control of Turkey's hegemonic Kemalist regime' (Cizre, 2011: iii), including the army, the judiciary and the Higher Education Council (Çınar, 2011: 112-113). As Saraçoğlu and Demirkol argue, for instance, nationalism remains at the centre of AKP ideology; however, it is a qualitatively different form of nationalism to the Kemalist version discussed above. In their view, the most striking change in the AKP's discourse on nationalism is the central role attributed to Islamic identity as a cornerstone of national identity (2015: 306-308). As Yaka argues, then, in contrast to early Republican discourse that attempted to re-constitute Turkish identity on the basis of modernisation/Westernisation, the AKP government 'is now attempting to resolve the same crisis in reference to the religious and traditional identity, interpellating the nation as a 'Muslim' one after 80 years of effort to be Western and secular' (Yaka, 2016: 162). This is evident, for instance, in certain controversial statements by President Erdoğan, such as 'We will raise a religious generation', or 'We have four red lines: One state, one nation, one flag, and one religion' (cited in Saraçoğlu and Demirkol, 2015: 306-308).

In Yaka's view, this image of Turkey as a Muslim country with cultural ties to the Middle East can be understood in terms of the 'return of the repressed' in Kemalist identity, and resonates with 'certain cultural elements of Turkish common sense that have been ignored and overlooked for a long time' (Yaka,

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[1] The Sevres syndrome refers to the 1920 Treaty of Sevres signed between the Entente powers and the moribund Ottoman Empire, which effectively carved uo the latter among the European powers. The Tanzimat syndrome, on the other hand, is derived from the 19th century 'Europeanisation' process of the same name, which was intended to regain the allegiance of the Empire's Christian subjects as well as to appease the European Great Powers of the time. The reforms eventually contributed to the decline of the Empire through the weakening of centre/periphery relations (MacMillan, 2013a: 143).

[2] This discrepancy between the proportion of votes and seats in Parliament, in spite of Turkey's system of proportional representation, can be explained by the high 10% threshold that is required to win parliamentary seats in Turkey (Kemahlıoğlu, 2015: 446).

2016: 162). In contrast to more traditional Islamist parties, however, such as the *Refah* Party or its successor the *Saadet* (Felicity) Party, which saw EU membership as incompatible with Islamic cultural values, the AKP was strongly in favour of EU accession perhaps, as Yavuz argues, because it saw the EU as a source of protection from the Kemalist state and a source of external support for democratisation and economic development in Turkey (2009: 215-216).

On this basis, then, in its first few years in government the AKP carried out 'momentous' reforms, in the form of six constitutional reform packages and a new penal code between 2002-2004 (Yaka, 2016: 154), which included previously 'taboo' areas such as the extension of minority rights to the Kurds, the abolishment of the death penalty and a broader definition of freedom of association and expression (Avcı, 2011: 145). As Yılmaz, for instance, notes, strong and credible conditionality enabled the empowerment of pro-EU actors, and established a consesus among domestic elites in favour of EU-accession oriented reforms (Yılmaz, 2016: 90).

In contrast to the more traditional Islamist parties, which tended to view the EU as a 'Christian club', and EU accession as equivalent to assimilation into 'Western civilisation' (Yılmaz, 2011: 5), according to AKP discourse, Turkey did not need to give up its Islamic identity in order to 'integrate' into the EU. This is also starkly in contrast to the Kemalist view that EU accession involved a part of a Westernisation process which would require Turkey to give up its traditional identity and legacy (Yavuz, 2009: 203).

The AKP's attitude towards the EU can be understood in the broader context of its foreign policy. In particular, the AKP's reidentification of Turkey as mainly a Muslim country has also affected its identity at the international level (Yaka, 2016: 156). In this context, the AKP's foreign policy has been described as a 'soft Euro-Asianism', stressing Turkey's 'hybrid' identity as Islamic/Asian in addition to Western/European (Avcı, 2011: 415) (Rumelili, 2011: 241), or even as 'neo-Ottomanism', as it seeks to consolidate and maintain power in the territory of the former Ottoman Empire, namely the Middle East, the Balkans and North Africa (Yaka, 2016: 156).

Regarding EU accession, then, the AKP regards Turkey's Islamic and European identities as complimentary, and Turkey as a 'bridge' between the European and Islamic 'civilisations'. In this view, AKP discourse on the EU has been described as 'syncretist', in that, drawing on a tradition dating back to the late Ottoman empire, it attempts 'to embed in Islamic idiom western ideas and practices deemed useful in a Muslim context' (Fisher Onar, 2011: 469). According to Erdoğan, then, 'the cultures of Islam and democracy have merged together' (Castle, 2004). Such an approach can also be noted, for instance, in the following speech made by Erdoğan to a gathering of MHP conservatives;

> The achievements of Western civilisation in technology, culture, democracy and human rights are irrefutable and universal ... all of these things, regardless of who first created them, are our patrimony ... But we also have values beyond these, values with deep roots shaped by faith and morality ...Turkey is therefore at the centre of the world's attention because ... it stands to combine the achievements of Western modernity with 'authentic' Turco-Muslim values (cited in Fisher Onar, 2011: 469).

In this role, in AKP discourse, Turkey has been depicted as a potential peacemaker or mediator between East and West, and thus as the best antidote to the 'clash of civilisations' predicted by Huntington (1993) (1997). As Erdoğan argued in 2002, for instance, 'when we enter the EU, we are not going to represent the 'clash of civilisations' and cultures, instead, Turkey by being the 'bridge' will help to achieve the merger of different cultures and civilisations' (Hürriyet, 2002, cited in Öner, 2009: 253).

AKP Attitudes to the EU Since 2005: Europeanisation or De-Europeanisation?

Despite the opening of accession negotiations in 2005, EU accession for Turkey became less credible due to the call for a 'privileged partnership' rather than full membership for Turkey from several Member States, most notably France, Germany and Austria. In addition, the Commission also stressed the open-ended nature of the negotiations (Yılmaz, 2015: 90). Moreover, another important cause of the impasse in the accession negotiations is the freezing of 8 out of 35 of the negotiation chapters in response to Turkey's refusal to open its ports to Cyprus. By 2012, Turkey had opened 13 of the 35 chapters and closed just one, while 18 chapters remain frozen because of vetoes by Cyprus, France, Germany or the European Council as a whole (Paul, 2012: 26).

According to Yaka, however, the Cyprus Referendum of April 2014, in which 65% of Turkish Cypriots voted in favour of the Annan Plan while 76% of Greek Cypriots rejected it may have already signalled a shift in Turkish public opinion against EU accession (2016: 152). Another factor which may have 'cooled' the AKP's attitude to EU accession was the European Court of Human Rights' rejection of

Leyla Şahin's appeal in 2005, on the basis that the headscarf ban in Turkish universities was justified based on the constitutional principle of secularism and equality. This, therefore, confounded the expectations of the AKP from EU accession (Yaka, 2016: 154).

Thus, while the AKP still declares itself in favour of EU accession, it has became increasingly critical of the EU, and its reform record since 2005 has become much more scanty, with increasing 'cherry-picking' of reforms, particularly in controversial areas, such as minority rights, civil-military relations and the rule of law (Yılmaz, 2016: 90) (Paul, 2012: 26). While there were some attempts to tackle such issues, most notably the 2009 Kurdish initiative, which sought to extend cultural and linguistic rights to the Kurdish minority (Avcı, 2011: 417), or the 2010 Constitutional reform package, which focused on the judicial system and civil-military relations, these were piecemeal in nature rather than following a comprehensive map for reforms (Yılmaz, 2016: 90).

From 2011 onwards, the AKP continued to undertake Europeanising reforms, particularly in the judicial area, and adopted four judicial reform packages, while corruption was also another focus of reform (Yılmaz, 2015: 94). Importantly, reform continued in the area of civil-military relations, resulting in the reduction or even elimination of the military's role in Turkish politics and hence contributing to democratisation in Turkey (Öniş, 2013).

However, as Yılmaz points out, there are also instances of de-Europeanisation during this period. Importantly, there has been increasing backsliding in fundamental rights and freedoms, especially in the areas of freedom of speech and of assembly. Most notably, there are considerable restrictions on media freedom, with the media now categorised as 'non free' by Freedom House. Self-censorship and formal restrictions on reporting certain issues can both be noted, as well as the imprisonment of journalists, reaching 40 in 2013. Moreover, considerable violations of the freedom of assembly have also been noted, dating back to before the Gezi Park protests (Paul, 2012: 269) (Kemahlıoğlu, 2015: 446). In particular, the most recent EU report on Turkey's progress towards accession has been highly critical, arguing that the government's reform efforts were offset by 'the adoption of key legislation in the area of the rule of law, freedom of expression and freedom of assembly that ran against European standards' (European Commission, 2015: 4).

AKP Discourse on the EU: The 'Inferior Other?'

As has been noted, AKP discourse has tended to contrast with Kemalist discourse, which has tended to portray Europe and the EU as both a threatening and superior Other. While Kemalist discourse has emphasised the need for Turkey to adapt to Western civilisation in order to modernise, AKP discourse has tended to view Muslim values and the 'universal' norms (supposedly) represented by the EU as compatible. However, in its most recent discourse, in the context of increased disillusionment with EU accession and, to a certain extent, 'de-Europeanisation', the AKP has increasingly depicted the EU as an inferior Other which violates universal principles. Thus, AKP discourse has often attempted to undermine the stereotypical notion that the EU accession process involves an inferior, backward candidate country desperately knocking at the door of an economically, strategically and politically superior EU 'club' in the hope of a better future (MacMillan, 2016: 123).

From 2004 onwards, a particular target of AKP discourse has been those in Europe who oppose Turkish full membership on identity or 'civilisational' grounds, instead preferring a more limited 'privileged partnership' between Turkey and the EU. In particular, advocates of a 'privileged partnership' are characterised as inferior Others who are backward and 'medieval' in their emphasis on a Christian identity, in contrast to the modern, secular and civilised Turks. As Erdoğan argued, for instance, 'The idea of "Christian Europe" belongs to the Middle Ages. It should stay there.' (Castle, 2004). Similarly, in a more recent dispute with German president Gauck, Erdoğan disparaged him as a 'pastor', referring to his past as a cleric (Neukirch et al, 2014).

Regarding the 'Privileged Partnership' idea, AKP discourse has also framed the EU as violating universal principles, and has emphasised the unfairness and arbitrariness of the 'Privileged Partnership' as a substitute for Turkish full membership; in this case it is the EU that is accused of not playing by the rules; in other words it is not living up to the concept of *pacta sunt servanda*[10.] Turkey's former EU envoy Egemen Bağış, for instance, has argued that it is wrong to single out Turkey for 'privileged partnership' when the other member states would never accept such an agreement for themselves (Karabat, 2010).

The economic crisis in the EU has also been another focus of AKP discourse on the EU; in particular, AKP discourse has attempted to reject and even reverse the Orientalist image of the Turk as the 'sick man of Europe', a stereotype that dates back to the declining years of the Ottoman Empire. Notably, it has argued that Turkish accession will not be a drain on EU resources but will rather benefit the EU (Hürriyet Daily News, 2010). As Erdoğan argued in 2010, for instance, 'Turkey does not want to be a burden on the

EU, but rather it wants to help share the difficulties the union has confronted' (Hürriyet Daily News, 2010). Similarly, Bağış stressed that 'Turkey will be an honourable member of the EU and not the sick man of Europe.' (Bağış, 2009).

On the contrary, Turkey is portrayed as being of significant benefit to the EU in economic and security terms; its economic and demographic vitality are juxtaposed with Europe's ageing population and crisis-ridden economy. In a 2011 *Newsweek* article, for instance, then Prime Minister Erdoğan took the 'sick man' metaphor further by describing Europe's employment and social security sectors as being 'comatose', its economy as 'stagnant' and its population as 'near geriatric', in contrast to Turkey, which he dubbed 'the Robust Man of Europe' (Newsweek, 2011).

The image of the EU as the 'sick man of Europe' continues to appear in more recent AKP discourse. In 2013, Bağış, for instance, implied that Turkey, far from being the 'sick man of Europe' would soon be the 'doctor' treating Europe's maladies;

> Yesterday's 'sick man' is now standing and will be writing today's prescriptions for Europe in order to find solutions to the illnesses in Europe and has now become powerful enough to have the capacity and capability to be able to take this burden off of the EU and not become one itself (Daily Sabah, 2013).

Similarly, Erdoğan's chief advisor Yiğit Bulut argued that 'those European countries which label Turkey as the 'Sick Man of Europe' are now moving fast towards breathing their last breath' (*Today's Zaman*, 2013). Bulut had also emphasised the construction of the EU as Europe's 'sick man' by commenting that 'If there were a referendum in Greece today, 51 percent of Greeks would vote to exit the EU and join Turkey' (*Today's Zaman*, 2013). Such images have also persisted in Erdoğan's more recent discourse on the EU. In 2014, for instance, he argued that, 'The financial crisis, the global crisis, the Arab spring and events in Syria and Egypt have shown that the European Union needs Turkey more than Turkey needs the EU' (Euronews, 2014).

More generally, and especially in the last few years, the AKP has increasingly framed the EU as violating universal principles, particularly as a response to EU criticism of Turkey's record in democracy, freedom or human rights. In the face of criticism of the AKP's tough reaction to the Gezi Park protests of June 2013, for example, Erdoğan reversed the traditional European discourse in this regard, positing Turkey as freer than certain EU Member States;

> Turkey is almost more free than some states of the European Union. When you refer to the Gezi Park events why do you not see the events in Frankfurt, Hamburg? Have you seen what the police did there? Why do you not see what happens in England. Hundreds of people were injured in anti-austerity riots in Hamburg and Frankfurt. In London in 2011, riot police put down unrest sparked by the shooting of an unarmed man. Many rioters prosecuted were handed the most severe punishment allowed by law (*Al Jazeera,* 2014).

The AKP's decision to prepare its own progress report on accession in December 2012 can also be understood in this context. In particular, the AKP report responds to criticisms made in the EU report, which it views as biased and unfair (MacMillan, 2016). Referring to the report, Egemen Bağış tweeted that 'We wrote Turkey's own progress report when [we] saw the skewed nature of the text that was prepared by the EU' (Hürriyet Daily News, 2012). He argued that the EU's reports were, for Turkey, '…the mirror that we hold up to ourselves. However this year's report, seen through the EU's broken mirrror, has been far from instructive' (Daily Motion 2013). In contrast to the EU's critical view of political reform in Turkey, Bağış added that in the area of individual freedoms and freedom of expression the country was living 'the freest and most transparent atmosphere in history' (Daily Motion, 2013).

Similar discourse has also been used by President Erdoğan in a recent response to EU criticism of raids on 27 journalists and scriptwriters connected to the Gülen movemennt. His speech also makes use of the 'school' and 'mirror' metaphors discussed above in the discourse of Bağış (MacMillan, 2016: 126-127). Comparing the EU to a stern governess, Erdoğan argued that, 'They say they will give a democracy lesson to Turkey. Take the trouble to come here, so that Turkey can give you a lesson in democracy' (Hürriyet Daily News, 2014). He told the EU to 'look in the mirror' regarding its own record on freedom and democracy;

> they say they will give Turkey a lesson in freedoms. You first go and give an account of rising racism, Islamophobia and discrimination in Europe. Those who close their eyes to what happens in Syria, who turn their back on the massacres in Palestine, cannot preach to us about freedom, democracy and human rights (Hürriyet Daily News, 2014).

Moreover, the recent rise of radical right parties across Europe has also been brought up in AKP discourse in order to depict the EU as violating universal principles. Following the 2014 EP elections, for

instance, which the rise of extreme right and hard Eurosceptic parties caused a 'political earthquake', Turkish EU Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu argued that the rise of parties with 'marginal political ideas' threatened the 'universal values' which underly the EU. In his view;

> The European Union, which was born as a peace project from the ashes of the Second World War, has made the fight against racism, discrimination and xenophobia one of its principles. The current political trend in this union, which was founded on the shared values and ideals of humanity, threatens the very values around which Europeans united. This situation is a worry for the entire world (Milliyet, 2014).

Here, then, Europe is depicted as a place where, despite its best efforts to adopt 'universal values' with the founding of the EU, such values remain extremely fragile in the face of the rise of the extreme right. Thus, in stark contrast to the views of many (moderate and extreme) right-wing European politicians, values such as democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights are not seen as an *inherent* feature of European civilisation (MacMillan, 2016: 126). On the other hand, Çavuşoğlu argues that Turkey's full membership is 'vital for the future and peace of the continent' because of 'the historical and cultural values of tolerance which Turkey represents' (Milliyet, 2014). In this sense, then, tolerance is seen as an *inherent* part of Turkish cultural heritage, whereas Çavuşoğlu's speech suggests that Europe naturally tends towards intolerance, particularly in times of economic crisis (MacMillan, 2016: 126-127).

This emphasis on Europe's intolerant and undemocratic past can already be seen in Bağış's discourse as early as 2011. During a ceremony to commemorate the Holocaust at Auschwitz, he argued that 'the EU …is today under the risk of being overtaken by a racist mentality that cannot internalize its own values and emulates the fascist methods of the 1930s' (cited in Nas, 2012: 36).

Similarly, and more recently, the 2015 refugee crisis has also been a target of AKP discourse on the EU. Erdoğan's advisor Osman Sert, for instance, compared the historical treatment of Jews in the context of the 2015 migration crisis, again contrasting a Turkish tradition of tolerance with an intolerant Europe;

> In Turkey, throughout our history, and I am not talking about the republican period, in the very first ages, in the 15th century, we opened our borders to Jewish migrants. There is no Jewish massacre in Turkey. I don't want to compare Turkish history with European history. No-one can question Turkey exploiting the refugees issue (Barigazzi, 2015).

Prime Minister Davutoğlu also alluded to Holocaust imagery when, referring to EU pressure on Turkey to cooperate with it on stopping the flow of refugees and to accept the return of those rejected by the EU, he accused the EU of trying to turn Turkey into a concentration camp. Following talks with Angela Merkel, then, he argued that;

> We cannot accept an understanding like 'give us the money and they stay in Turkey'. Turkey is not a concentration camp. I said this to Merkel too. No one should expect Turkey to turn into a concentration camp where all the refugees stay in (Aljazeera, 2015).

Conclusion

From the point of view of FPDA, the arrival of the AKP in power in 2002 arguably represents a 'critical juncture' in Turkish discourse on state and nation. There is evidence of a break with Kemalist discourse, notably on the conception of national identity. Most notably, in AKP discourse belonging to the Muslim religion is an integral part of national identity, while identification with the Turkish ethnicity and language is less central than in Kemalist discourse. The importance of the Islamic aspect of national identity is also reflected in the AKP's foreign policy, which is less uniquely focused on Westernisation than traditional Kemalist discourse. This has also been evident in the AKP's discourse towards the EU, which indicates a break from Kemalist discourse, which viewed the EU, and Europe in general, with a combination of suspicion and admiration; the EU was perceived simultaneously as a threat to Turkish sovereignty and as the epitome of modern civilisation to be emulated.

The AKP, in contrast, does not view EU accession as incompatible with a Muslim identity; on the contrary, it views the values underscored in the EU treaties as universal rather than narrowly Western, and it views Turkey's Muslim heritage as enhancing these values rather than contrasting with them. In this sense, the AKP has portrayed Turkey as a valuable future member of the EU in that it can demonstrate how 'Universal' and 'Muslim' values can coexist. In recent years, however, with Turkey's EU accession appearing stalled due to both reluctance from the EU side and increasing de-Europeanisation and growing authoritarianism in Turkey, AKP discourse has attempted to counter EU criticisms by depicting the EU as inferior to Turkey in economic, geopolitical and demographic terms, and, increasingly, as portraying the

EU itself as being unable to live up to the 'universal values' it professes. Here, then, in AKP discourse Europe, due to its 'dark' history, is framed as unable to cast off its past of authoritarianism and intolerance, in contrast to an inherently freer, fairer Turkey with a heritage of tolerance.

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