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**DISCURSIVE CHANGE IN TURKISH STRATEGIC CULTURE:
CHANGING NARRATIVES, ROLES AND VALUES**

By

KADRI KAAAN RENDA

Thesis Submitted to the Department of European and
International Studies for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

King's College London

June 2013

Abstract

This thesis is devoted to analysing change in Turkish strategic culture, which is conceptualized as change in narratives. In the mainstream literature it has been customary to provide explanations about the change in Turkish foreign policy by applying existing theories which focus on the ideological differences between Kemalism, Islamism and Liberalism or the implications of democratization and globalization for Turkish society, economy and politics. This thesis proposes a different framework based on the discursive practices of the Turkish foreign policy elite in the form of narratives. The main research question is: What sorts of narratives regarding national defence and security have been produced by the AKP elite to challenge the dominant national security state narratives? It is the overarching argument in this thesis that within the emerging Turkish strategic culture the Ottoman past is neither seen as a distant past nor a temporal other; Turkey's geography and neighbourhood is neither a liability nor a spatial other; and concepts and values such as soft power and the promotion of democratic values is no longer considered as naïve nor alien by the Turkish state elite. This thesis suggests that three contested narratives can be found within Turkish strategic culture. Among these narratives, the thesis identifies the emergence of two new narratives which challenge a hitherto dominant master narrative, i.e. the national security state master narrative. These two counter-narratives are i) Turkey as a "great country" that is able to address foreign policy issues with a renewed self-esteem that stems from the nostalgic utilization of its historical and cultural assets; and ii) Turkey as an "internationally active player" that aspires to contribute to the international system by playing a new international role and by aligning itself with universal norms and values. By extending the analysis of Turkish strategic culture to the field of narratives and narrative analysis this study demonstrates that Turkish strategic culture is no longer a strategic culture of a national security state or a flank state or a middle power, it is rather constructed within the narratives of the Turkish state elite, which is primarily built upon the overarching narratives of great country and internationally active player. Contrary to the ideology-centred explanations and paradigm shift arguments about the change in Turkish foreign policy, the approach suggested in this thesis provides rather complex, yet arguably more nuanced and comprehensive explanation than the ones on offer in the literature. Lastly, by taking master narratives and counter narratives as the units of analysis to understand the cultural change, this thesis also contributes to the literature on strategic culture by illustrating the role of agency and their practices of challenging dominant narratives by producing counter-narratives.

Key words: Turkish foreign policy, strategic culture, narrative analysis, discursive change, master narratives, counter-narratives.

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

| | |
|-------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| ABGS | Secretariat General for EU Affairs |
| AKP | Justice and Development Party |
| ANAP | Motherland Party |
| CEECs | Central and East European Countries |
| CHP | Republican People's Party |
| CU | Customs Union |
| DSP | Democratic Left Party |
| EC | European Community |
| EU | European Union |
| GC | Great Country |
| IAP | Internationally Active Player |
| IR | International Relations |
| MFA | Ministry of Foreign Affairs |
| MGK | National Security Council |
| MHP | Nationalist Action Party |
| MIT | National Intelligence Organization |
| MND | Ministry of National Defence |
| NATO | North Atlantic Treaty Organization |
| NPAA | National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis |
| NSS | National Security State |
| OIC | Organization of the Islamic Conference |
| OSCE | Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe |
| PKK | Kurdistan Worker's Party |
| RP | Welfare Party |
| SAREN | Strategic Research Institute |
| TGNA | Turkish Grand National Assembly |
| TRT | Turkish Radio and Television Corporation |
| TSC | Turkish strategic culture |
| UK | United Kingdom |
| USA | United States of America |
| USAK | International Strategic Research Organization |

Chapter One

Introduction

Turkish foreign policy has always been a fertile area of inquiry for students of comparative studies, history and international relations. The demise of the bipolar system boosted the research on understanding continuity and change in Turkish foreign policy as the questions about Turkey's relations with the West as a staunch ally of the United States of America (USA) and a long-standing member of the Western security structures were raised by many experts. Accommodating Turkey's new role as a rising "pivotal state" (Holbrooke 1995 cited in Çandar 2004: 51) into Western institutions on the one hand, while coping with its identity crisis as a "torn country" (Huntington 1996: 149), that is fraught with political instabilities and embroiled in internal and external tensions, have puzzled the minds of several experts and politicians alike. In addition to a myriad of publications replete with the analyses of the implications of the end of the Cold War for Turkish foreign policy (Bazoğlu-Sezer 1992; Fuller and Lesser 1994; Kirişci 1995; Mastny and Nation 1996; Müftüler and Yüksel 1997; Özcan and Kut 1998; Çelik 1999; Makovsky 1999), other studies highlighting the changing characteristics of Turkish foreign policy and Turkey's role in the post-Cold War era converge on the argument that Turkey has been emerging as a regional power (Kramer 2000; Makovsky and Sayari 2000; Rubin and Kirişci 2001; Ismael and Aydın 2003; Bal 2004; Martin and Keridis 2004).

Comprehensive historical analyses of Turkish foreign policy have produced extensive scholarly knowledge on Turkey in general and particularly about its foreign relations throughout the Cold War and the 1990s (Hale 2002; Robins 2003). The common argument found in these comprehensive studies of Turkish foreign policy is that the persistence of Turkey's Western orientation, its unabated quest for recognition by Western powers as well as its unyielding efforts to maintain the status quo inside and outside of Turkey are principal motivating factors influencing Turkish foreign policy (Hale 2002: 27; Robins 2003: 6-7). Both Hale and Robins are of the same opinion that rather than identity or ideology, traditional/conventional concerns about existing

territorial status quo and security interests are determining factors behind Turkey's relations with other countries.

Nonetheless, there used to be a remarkable lacuna in the literature concerning the role of ideational factors in Turkish foreign policy. As the Cold War receded, experts on Turkey began to undertake research on the hitherto neglected effects of state identity on foreign policy-making by analysing the predominance of two main ideologies, namely Kemalism and nationalism within the Turkish state. The question posed by many scholars was how the state elite who were adhered to the principles of Kemalism constructed and maintained the state identity of new Republic since its foundation. The conceptualization of the nation, state and society based on a strong condemnation of the Ottoman era, exclusion of ethnic minorities from the political life and a patriarchal notion of the state had consequences for Turkey's foreign relations (e.g. Aral 1997; Çalış 2001). The initial research agenda set out to demonstrate the existence of the influence of identity, be it national or state identity, in the process of foreign policy-making (Çalış 1996). The focus shifted to the political struggles between different political groups which re-emerged with the demise of Cold War politics. Under the challenging circumstances of the post-Cold War the traditional state elite aimed to consolidate the state identity and preserve their control over the process of foreign policy-making. The main contention of this strand of research was that deep-seated insecurities within Turkish state identity quickly resurfaced because of an identity crisis in which the Turkish elite found themselves in the post-Cold War world (Bozdağlıoğlu 2003). The proliferation of internal and external threats, aggravating uncertainty about the regional status quo and ambiguity about Turkey's Western vocation were all contributing factors to the identity-crisis of the Turkish state elite in the 1990s.

Turning to the political contestation among domestic actors from different ideological backgrounds such as Kemalism, liberalism and Islamism, some scholars have associated ideas with different forms of ideological orientations by tracing them back to the intellectual and political efforts to save the Ottoman Empire in the late 19th century (Yavuz 1998; Laçiner 2001; Onar 2007; Robins 2007). The rise of neo-Ottomanism coupled with the repercussions of economic liberalization, as well as enhanced political and military entanglements with the neighbourhood, found its way

into the scholarly discussions on the change in Turkish foreign policy (e.g. Tunander 1995; Constantinides 1996; Aral 2001; Laçiner 2003). Neo-Ottomanism, which was cultivated during the leadership of Turgut Özal in the late 1980s with his internationalist foreign policy approach centred on the idea of economic liberalization alongside a rekindled interest in the Ottoman past, brought a new foreign policy discourse that added economic, commercial and cultural dimensions to Turkish foreign policy. There were some other studies that also elaborated on the dynamics of domestic politics and its implications on foreign policy. These new dynamics in domestic arena stimulated the rise of pro-Islamic political groups under the banner of the Welfare Party with their political goals to forge new relations with the Islamic World in general and the Arabs in particular (see Robins 1997).

Taking it to the next level, the constructivist research on Turkish foreign policy has explored the effects of Turkey's constructed Western identity by the state elite on its somewhat pathologic relationships with its Western allies as well as the countries in Central Asia and the Middle East (Bozdağlıoğlu 2003). Bozdağlıoğlu (2003: 31-32) argues that Turkish state identity has been in a crisis due to the abrupt systematic changes, menacing behaviours of foreign countries and domestic political struggles since the end of the Cold War. Drawing heavily on foreign policy analysis, Binnur Özkeçeci-Taner (2005), on the other hand, puts forth an explanation based on ideas as world views and institutionalized beliefs in order to unfold the impact of ideational elements on the coalition foreign policy-making process for the period between 1991 and 2002. She makes a strong case for how different political parties which were clustered around several ideologies spanning from Internationalism to Islamism, Kemalism, Nationalism and Westernism used political ideas and institutionalized beliefs as a leverage in the game of foreign policy-making within the coalition governments (ibid.: 262). Her analysis of the impact of different ideological orientations on the foreign policymaking process in Turkey categorises several political parties along the lines of pre-defined ideological categories. Thus, Bozdağlıoğlu and Özkeçeci-Taner's analyses lean towards a positivist approach that sees ideas and ideologies as essentialist and fixed features of political actors.

Hasan Kösebalaban (2011) writes a rich historical analysis of contemporary Turkish foreign policy through a careful examination of the confrontation between Kemalism and Islamism. Kösebalaban (2011: 4) offers a slightly new typology for understanding the responses of Kemalism and Islamism to the ascent of globalization. In contrast to previous typologies, he distinguishes between secular nationalism and Islamic nationalism as well as between secular liberalism and Islamic liberalism. The author contends that whereas Kemalists champion an assertive secularism with a passive/defensive foreign policy approach, Islamists and liberals advocate an active and integrationist foreign policy in Turkey's neighbourhood (ibid.: 9).

While Turkey has been mired in domestic conflicts and regional tensions since the demise of the Soviet Union, there also has been an undercurrent process of "soul-searching" which has prompted the Turkish political elite to re-write Turkey's "life story" by telling new narratives about Turkey's past, geography and its role in the international system. The rise of a pro-activist narrative about Turkish foreign policy in accordance with the implementation of the "Strategic Depth Doctrine" of Ahmet Davutoğlu, during the governments of the Justice and Development Party (henceforth AKP¹) have captured the close attention of many experts under the circumstances of world-wide repercussions of America's war on terror. The 9/11 attacks and subsequent US-led military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq and increasing American engagements in the vicinity of Turkey have resulted in a divergence and a rift between Turkish narratives and America's narratives on the Middle East and the Islamic world (Murinson 2006; Aras and Polat 2007; Abramowitz and Barkey 2009; Kardaş 2010; Larrabee 2010; Sözen 2010; Altunışık and Martin 2011).

In this context, some authors argue for a paradigmatic change in Turkish foreign policy pointing to the rise of Eurasianism in its Kemalist version (Akçalı and Perinçek 2009) or AKP version of "soft Euro-Asianism" (Öniş and Yılmaz 2009) or Turkey's orientation towards Islamic countries, particularly towards the Middle East (Larrabee 2007; Altunışık 2008; Oğuzlu 2008; Aras 2009). Contrary to the surge of studies on the paradigmatic shift in Turkish foreign policy, some other scholars underscore the

¹ While acknowledging that the official acronym used by members of the Justice and Development Party is "AK Party", throughout this thesis the acronym "AKP" is used for the sake of convenience and consistency unless the former acronym is used in a direct quotation.

strategic adaptation and pragmatic utilization of Turkey's economic interests as a result of which Turkey has acquired a "soft power" (Oğuzlu 2007; Fotiou and Triantaphyllou 2010) and a "trading state" role owing to the liberalization of the Turkish economy (Kirişci 2009).

Most of the research on Turkish foreign policy refers to exogenous structural explanations in order to shed light on the changing and constant aspects of Turkish foreign policy. The efforts to Westernize or Europeanize Turkey, liberalize its economy and democratize its domestic politics are assumed to be the main causes of change in addition to the changes in international and regional dynamics. Furthermore, despite their attention to cultural elements and identity and their laudable contributions to unravelling the impact of ideational elements in Turkish foreign policy early constructivist studies have failed to go beyond ideology-centred analyses.

This thesis falls into the field of social constructivist studies and the literature on strategic culture in particular. With its objective to present an alternative framework drawing on narrative analysis, this thesis introduces narratives to the literature on Turkish strategic culture. By focusing on narratives, this thesis aims to put forward a conceptual framework that goes beyond the existing arguments in the literature based on the ideological divides. In this way, this thesis illustrates that rather than ideology-centred explanations of Turkish foreign policy, we can now generate discursive explanations in the form of narratives which give rather a complex, yet much dynamic argument about the cultural change in Turkish foreign policy. With its focus on narratives this thesis is built upon the research done on the impact of, discourses, metaphors, ontological insecurities and discursive representations on foreign policies. This strand of research takes discourses as constitutive parts of Turkish foreign policy, Turkey's national identity, its geopolitical exceptionalism and its promoted role as bridge between the East and the West (Bilgin 2005; Yılmaz and Bilgin 2005; Bilgin 2007a; Bilgin 2009; Yanık 2009; Yanık 2011).

1.1. The Literature on Turkish Strategic/Security Culture²

Amidst all these debates and controversies about the nature and direction of Turkish foreign policy in the post-Cold War, literature on the transformation of Turkish strategic culture (TSC), which is inspired by the new wave of studies on Turkey by constructivism-leaning scholars, has flourished too. Early examples of this burgeoning research area explored the general characteristics of Turkish strategic/security culture by looking into its fixed and pre-determined traits of Turkish identity (Mufti 1998; Karaosmanoğlu 2000; Mufti 2009).

A conventional argument about the foundational parameters of Turkish strategic culture stresses the widespread praise for geopolitics and the dominance of *realpolitik* in the strategic mentality of the Turkish state elite. Put another way, Turkish strategic culture is one of “parabellum strategic culture”³ (Johnston 1996: 219) that highly values “independent statehood” and “military invincibility” (Aktürk 2007: 352). This kind of strategic culture securitizes everything and anything about the state, its history, geography and political regime (Aydın 2003a; Bilgin 2004). In other words, rationalist calculations made by the state elite in line with national interests and geopolitical concerns, which are regarded as part and parcel of Turkish strategic culture, have been believed to shape and determine national security and defence policies of Turkey since its foundation. Ali L. Karaosmanoğlu (2000: 200-201) traces back the roots of such a *realpolitik* approach fervently adhered by the Turkish state elite to the prolonged demise of the Ottoman Empire. He, then, contends that the founders of the Turkish Republic inherited a defensive realist approach rather than an offensive one from the Empire. According to Karaosmanoğlu, the historical experiences of the Turkish elite during the late Ottoman period and the First World War evoked three deeply ingrained fears that have been haunting the Turkish state elite since then (Karaosmanoğlu 2000; 2009: 29-

² In the literature, authors use concepts of strategic culture and security culture interchangeably without giving reasons for their preference. My principal focus in this thesis is foreign policy and external relations rather than internal/domestic aspects of security such as policing, law enforcement and threats emanating inside the country. This is why, the term strategic culture is preferred over security culture.

³ Alastair Iain Johnston describes parabellum strategic culture or hard *realpolitik* as a paradigm “which generally places offensive strategies before static defense and accommodationist strategies; [...] reflects a set of characterizations of the external environment as dangerous, adversaries as dispositionally threatening, and conflict as zero-sum, in which application of violence is ultimately required to deal with threats” (Johnston 1996: 219).

30). The first insecurity is called “the fear of abandonment”, which implies that the Turkish state elite are always insecure and suspicious about the intentions of external actors and their policies in the vicinity of Turkey and therefore they aim to take side of one Western power against another. The second one is called “the fear of encirclement and loss of territory”, which goes back to the prolonged collapse of the Empire through separatist movements of ethnic communities and the division of the country among Western powers according to the Treaty of Sèvres. The last one rests on the dominance of defensive realpolitik and geographical determinism.

Even if the changing environment of Turkey and the new security challenges compel policy-makers to revise their set of preferences, deep-rooted fears, traumatic experiences with the past and the influence of geopolitics continuously manifest themselves in the national security policies of Turkey. A plethora of research has been devoted to elucidating the impact of conflicts between different ideologies on Turkish strategic culture. For instance, Malik Mufti (1998; 2009) makes a distinction between a cautious defensive approach championed by the Republican paradigm and an adventurous assertive approach championed by the Imperial counter-paradigm in order to account for the vacillation of Turkish foreign policy between insecurities and grandeurs throughout the 1990s. According to Mufti (2009: 3), Republican strategic culture is associated with a widespread distrust about foreign countries and their policies regarding Turkey and its vicinity, a perception of neighbours as threats, concerns about national unity and homogeneity, a strong conviction to refrain from and object to any intervention that would result in the change of status quo. On the other hand, the Imperial paradigm is described by Mufti as a mixture of “restless and acquisitive posture vis-à-vis the outside world” and “a broader more resonant neo-Ottomanist vision that embraced the newly mobilized identities (religious and ethnic) in Turkish society as a source of strategic power rather than vulnerability” (ibid.: 5).

In addition to these observations about the enduring elements of Turkish strategic culture, academics also argued for the influence of the modernization process and the political objective of the Turkish political elite to westernize their country (Karaosmanoğlu 2000: 204; Bozdağlıoğlu 2003) and to rebrand the Turkish state and its

western orientations (Tank 2006: 464; Bilgin 2009: 107). Hence, the argument is that aspirations to be accepted as Western and be part of Western institutions have been one of the constant characteristics of Turkish strategic culture that has prevailed over contextual dynamics and structural changes.

On the other hand, some other scholars have examined the changing dynamics of Turkish strategic culture by looking into the effects of globalization, the transformation of Turkish society, the democratization of Turkish politics, the civilianization of the foreign policy-making process and the liberalization of the economy owing to the rise of economic interdependence and the proliferation of international trade. For instance, referring to Karaosmanoğlu, Bilgin (2005: 183) argues that the main parameters of traditional Turkish security discourse have been challenged as a result of the on-going debate between Eurosceptics, who have raised security concerns about the EU accession process and pro-Europeans, who favour a de-securitized discourse which refrains from overemphasising threats and risks and thereby considering the use of force as a last resort. Consequently, the more room for different domestic actors was found within the political debates about security and defence, the more different ideas had the opportunity to be heard, which in turn challenged the dominant securitized discourse.

Having said that, “being European required opening up to the west politically and economically, but doing so also revealed the aspects of Turkish [strategic] culture, which were not suitable to Europe” (Bozdağlıoğlu 2003: 164). During the EU accession process not only Turkey’s political regime and state identity have been questioned, but also it is widely believed that an extremely securitized and militaristic approach regarding national security is in confrontation with EU policies as it is incompatible with European strategic culture (Oğuzlu 2002; Kösebalaban 2002; Bilgin 2004; Oğuzlu and Kibaroglu 2008). For some analysts, EU efforts to promote Kantian ideals across the world do not match with Turkey’s *realpolitik* perspective dictated by the military concerns of the state elite about national security (Bilgin 2004: 26; Oğuzlu and Kibaroglu 2008: 958). Therefore, identity related issues and Turkish strategic culture are viewed as a stumbling block on the road to EU membership. On the other hand, some other scholars (Özcan 2008; Terzi 2010; Üstün 2010) have shed light on the increasing

similarities between Turkish and European approaches to security and defence owing to the implications of globalization and the changing threat environment of Turkey in the last decade.

1.2. Limitations of the Literature on Turkish Strategic Culture

Similar to the research on Turkish foreign policy in the post-Cold War era, the debates on Turkish strategic culture have primarily revolved around political confrontation between Kemalists, Islamists and Liberals and the power struggles between civilians and the military. Therefore, the conclusion drawn by these studies on Turkish strategic culture is that rather than change in Turkish strategic culture one can observe continuity due to overriding security concerns and insecurities of Turkey and even if there is any change in Turkish strategic culture it is due to the impact of globalization and economic liberalization or due to the structural changes in Turkey's vicinity. As one prominent Turkish scholar succinctly put it:

Turkey's security culture has been constructed and reconstructed under the impact of dichotomous trends such as offensive *realpolitik*/defensive *realpolitik*, tradition/modernity, cosmopolitanism/nationalism, national unity/pluralism, and secular republicanism/democracy. The evolution of this security culture in the Ottoman and republican periods is characterised by successive attempts to reconcile and adapt to these dichotomies (Karaosmanoğlu 2009: 42).

This thesis suggests that we need to break free of dichotomous explanations by going beyond primordial and ideological properties of Turkish strategic culture in order to explicate the different outcomes of the transformation in Turkish foreign policy. The fundamental argument put forth by realist scholars to account for the change in Turkish strategic culture is that Turkey's geography defines its threat environment; material capabilities determine the scope and range of use of force; and lessons learnt from the past dictate a *realpolitik* approach. As a result, Turkish strategic culture, if there is such thing, possesses trans-historical, law-like elements imposed by the realities of the international system, the fixed characteristics of Turkey's geography and its history. This is why, no significant transformation in Turkish strategic culture is considered plausible, unless the context and external circumstances are altered. Hinging on a static

and monolithic understanding of Turkey's history and its geography, the discursive practices behind the re-conceptualization of Turkey's history, its geography and threats to its national security are ignored by realist scholars to say the least, the worst they are vilified as marginal ideological debates that prudent policy-makers should avoid. Consequently, realist explanations fall into the trap of "transhistorical complacency (nothing is new)" (Halliday 1996 quoted in Sterling-Folker 2002: 74).

This thesis argues that this realist approach is misleading. In this thesis, such a highly generalized treatment of Turkish strategic culture is viewed as a hegemonic discourse, or rather a master narrative, which implies the discourse of hard *realpolitik* of a national security state. This thesis contends that experiences and perceptions about geography and neighbourhood are malleable and hence different interpretations of the past, geography and security exist among various political actors, which can eventually facilitate the cultural change.

The liberal school in International Relations (IR), on the other hand, puts emphasis on the democratization of Turkish domestic politics and underlines the influence of economic liberalization and globalization on Turkish foreign policy. The first strand of liberal thought juxtaposes economic incentives with the redefinition of national interests through increasing lucrative commercial ventures in a globalized world. From the vantage point of a political economy approach, it has been contended that the Turkish economy, which was devastated by the twin crises of November 2000 and February 2001, urgently needed an economic and political anchor in order to rapidly recover from economic crisis (Öniş and Bakır 2007; Ataç and Grünwald 2008). Given the severe economic problems, elites in Turkey have sought new ways to diversify its trade partners and to venture into new markets. This is why, the twin financial crises have transformed Turkey's foreign policy outlook and boosted the new activism in its environs due to an urgent need for economic development through regional cooperation and integration. This way, Turkish strategic culture has become a culture of a "trading state" (Kirişçi 2009) motivated by economic interests and entrepreneurship of its businessmen that not only helped Turkish businessmen to accumulate material benefits and wealth but also it forged a new strategic outlook for the state elite and enhanced Turkey's political influence in its neighbourhood.

The second group of liberal scholars converge on the explanations derived from the changing dynamics of civil-military relations due to the EU-demanded reforms and the replacement of one group of political actors with another group, to account for the change in strategic culture (Oğuzlu 2004; Keyman 2007; Müftüler-Baç 2008). These scholars are of the opinion that the development of democratic structures and the redistribution of power among several political groups are the outcomes of incentives generated by external opportunities and domestic pressure. According to liberals, the very fundamental outcome of the democratization of foreign policy is to be the emergence of de-securitized, civilianized and de-militarized state. Nonetheless, liberal scholars fall into the trap of inference that there is a shift from highly securitized, undemocratic, militaristic and non-European Turkish strategic culture to a newer and better strategic culture that is de-securitized, democratic, civilian and pro-European.

Such a linear single-outcome approach is limited, if not flawed. Thus, most studies which claim that democratization is the key for understanding change in Turkish foreign policy are not well equipped to grasp the variation in discourses about how Turkey can/should maintain its national security and defence in a globalized world. The argumentation of this thesis is in line with the liberal conviction that democratization in politics and liberalization of the Turkish economy are necessary conditions to undermine the hegemonic discourse of national security state; however, where this thesis differs from abovementioned studies is that democratization in the field of foreign policy can produce divergent outcomes. This thesis further claims that the upshot of democratization hinges on what de-securitized, democratic, modern and European Turkey means to the Turkish elite and how they use concepts like soft power, economic interdependence and multilateralism to narrate new stories to re-define Turkey's foreign and security policy.

On the other hand, the research that takes ideologies and state identity seriously is laudable, as it offers new insights about the identity dimension in Turkish foreign policy. Despite their focus on identity, most analyses have offered nothing more than a historical account of the political struggles between different ideologies, rather than treating them as discursive practices. In other words, most of them actually operate on a snapshot view of identity that is taken as an exogenous factor. To a certain extent, such

culturalist and ideology-centred research (Çalış 1996; Bozdağlıoğlu 2003; Özkeçeci-Taner 2005; Mufti 2009; Kösebalaban 2011; Uzer 2011) is stifled by a narrow essentialist focus that lacks an analytical toolkit to account for the political contestations which produce and reproduce political discourses regarding security and defence. Thereby, this thesis is purported to explain how and in which sense Kemalist concepts such as “Peace at home peace in the world” or liberal concepts such as “soft power” are used by the AKP, a right-wing conservative party, alongside references to Turkey’s Islamic credentials and Ottoman heritage in their foreign policy discourse.

1.3. Aim of the Thesis and Contributions to the Field

Here, an alternative approach to Turkish strategic culture is advocated that is cognizant of the realm of discourse and particularly narratives. This thesis is devoted to understanding the change in Turkish strategic culture through elaborating the discursive practices of the foreign policy elite in the form of narratives about history, geography and their country’s role in the international system. The period under investigation starts with the November 2002 election and ends with the July 2011 election in Turkey. In that period, Turkey was governed by three single-party governments⁴ formed by the AKP.

The main research question is:

What sorts of counter-narratives have been produced by the AKP elite to challenge the traditional dominant narratives about Turkish foreign policy?

This research aims to identify the variation in narratives about Turkey’s past, its geography and its role in the international system. To this end, this thesis looks into the discursive practices of the AKP elite in order to reveal narratives that constitute Turkish strategic culture. One can extract the elements of strategic culture by probing into strategic policy or strategic behaviour of the state. This thesis probes into strategic policy of Turkey, meaning texts, speeches, doctrines and official documents that form

⁴ Between 2002 and 2007 there were two AKP governments. The first one was short-lived, only ruled between November 2002 and March 2003 under the premiership of Abdullah Gül and then the second government was formed in March 2003 after Recep Tayyip Erdoğan became prime minister. Nonetheless, the party programmes of two AKP governments were virtually word for word the same.

the policy, rather than Turkey's strategic behaviours, meaning actions during a crisis or interactions with other countries and in international organizations (for the distinction between strategic policy and strategic behaviour see Bloomfield 2012: 439). Nevertheless, this distinction between strategic policy and strategic behaviour is made for the sake of analytical convenience. The theoretical approach of this thesis in fact refutes a words/deeds dichotomy and argues that strategic behaviour is constituted through and by strategic policy, or rather strategic discourse.

In this thesis, strategic culture is not so much about “organizational, technical and operational aspects of the conduct of war”; rather it is the meanings of security and defence for a political community and the discursive means to justify actions while striving to maintain security (Lord 1985: 271). In this study, strategic culture is conceived of as public narratives about history, geography and international position of the state. However, this thesis primarily concentrates on “political narratives” (Shenhav 2005; 2006) that are produced by the AKP elite. Depending on the political regime and administrative model, the foreign policy elite may consist of the members of government, president, parliamentarians, military officers, the civilian bureaucracy as well as academics, experts and public opinion leaders. Although the terms foreign policy elite and state elite are used interchangeably throughout this research, this thesis concentrates principally upon political narratives produced by top-level statesmen, i.e. prime ministers, foreign ministers, defence ministers, presidents, members of the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA) and chiefs of the general staff.⁵

Instead of listing and describing the changing and constant elements of Turkish strategic culture, with its focus on narratives this thesis attempts to extract *repeated themes and changing storylines* used in discourses when the Turkish state elite talk about Turkey's past, its environment and its role in the international system. The

⁵ Because this thesis primarily focuses on the narratives of the AKP in the field of foreign and security policy the terms “AKP elite” and “AKP politicians” are also frequently used throughout the thesis. The AKP elite consist of prime minister, foreign minister, ministers in the cabinet, AKP deputies in the Turkish Grand National Assembly as well as President Gül. Despite the fact that according to Turkish constitution presidents must have no allegiance to or affiliation with any political party, President Gül is considered as a member of the AKP elite as it appears that there is a consistency in his narratives about Turkish foreign policy that were produced during his service as foreign minister between 2003 and 2007 and as the president of Turkey since August 2007.

following closely interrelated questions are analytically derived from the preceding main research question:

Secondary Research Questions:

- 1) What are the new narratives about the Ottoman Empire?
- 2) What are the new narratives about Turkey's neighbourhood?
- 3) What are the new narratives about Turkey's international role?

With these questions in mind, this thesis differs from abovementioned historical, identity-centred culturalist and early constructivist studies, as it refrains from taking identity and culture for granted. In fact, it tries to explore the discursive practices and political struggles among the political elite to shape and change identity. Drawing on a discourse-centred social constructivism and critical studies, this thesis suggests that it is not the influence of national identity or the variation in military capabilities or the existence of threats, but it is rather how certain concepts such as national security, national identity and threats, are perceived and constructed within and through narratives and thereby, how meaning and purpose are ascribed by the elite of a particular political community to events, actions and actors of international politics.

Conceptualizations of security – from which follow policy and practice – are to be found in discourses of security. These are neither strictly objective assessments nor analytical constructs of threat, but rather the products of historical structures and processes, of struggles for power within the state, of conflicts between the societal groupings that inhabit states and the interests that besiege them. Hence, there are not only struggles over security among *nations*, but also struggles over security among *notions* (Lipschutz 1995: 8, emphasis in original).

Mindful of the rigidity of ideologies and the limitations of ideology-based explanations of Turkish foreign policy, in this thesis, discursive practices are my departure point. The thesis focuses on narratives and narration as a distinct type of discursive practice to understand the change in Turkish strategic culture through the

practice of narrating past experiences, experiences with geography and with other actors in the international system. Narrative is, generally speaking, defined as “stories about human cognition, actions (and their consequences), events and descriptions of circumstances in which those events occur” (Baker and Ellece 2011: 73). This is how narratives are conceived of in this thesis and thus narrative analysis is employed to account for the cultural change in Turkish foreign policy.

This thesis conceptualizes narratives as discursive practices that arrange and link meanings given to social facts within a plot/storyline in order to make sense of events, actions and their consequences in the realm of foreign and security policy. Therefore, it casts doubts on the essentialist assumptions of cultural realists by claiming that it is neither the national character nor historical instances nor geographical location that determines the strategic culture of a political community. Rather, it is the narratives told by elites about who they were/are/will be and what they did/do/will do in the realm of foreign and security policy.

Ultimately, this thesis is a discursive study of change in Turkish strategic culture because it primarily deals with not only the meanings attached to certain concepts, ideas and national interests, but also it elaborates on the counter-narratives used by the AKP elite to assemble Turkey’s past experiences, present actions and future preferences into a meaningful and causal set of events, actions and dispositions. Cultural change understood as an outcome of the contestation between dominant narrative and its counter-narratives helps discern the role of agents and their narratives.

The focus of this thesis is purposefully narrowed down to narratives as they are more agent-centred while maintaining theoretical assumptions of discourse analysis. What is more, the argumentation of this thesis stresses the constitutive effects of stories and storylines in the process of identity formation without embracing a structuralist/naturalist social constructivism. This thesis starts with an assumption that every identity is a “narrative identity” which can only be produced by and expressed in a storyline or a plot. There is no (personal/social/collective) identity without a story.

In this thesis, it is argued that change in Turkish strategic culture can be observed, provided that narratives of political actors are unpacked and the emergence of different counter-narratives, namely narratives of “great country” and “internationally

active player” as opposed to the old dominant master narrative of “national security state” is explored. Taking elite narratives as the units of analysis to understand the cultural change, I hope to contribute to strategic culture literature by illustrating the role of agency and the effects of their narratives in the change of culture. A narrative-based approach expands strategic culture literature by elucidating the change through agent-centred discursive practices rather than external shocks, war and generational change. Narrative analysis demonstrates that the way/plot of assembling events and actions provide different descriptions of history, geography and international politics which, in turn, alters the cognitive/discursive setting within which the state action is framed and the state identity is forged.

1.4. The Outline of the Study

This thesis is composed of two main parts and eight chapters including the introduction and conclusion. After the introduction, Part I lays out the theoretical framework and outlines the research design in chapters 2, 3 and 4. Chapter 2 is a theoretical chapter in which the overall argument is given and situated in the academic debates on social constructivism, discourse analysis and narratives. The chapter begins with an account of the main premises and varieties of social constructivism in International Relations. Then, a critique of social constructivism is provided to the reader. The chapter proceeds with a discussion on the similarities and differences between discourse and narrative analysis with reference to the notions of narrativity and narrative identity.

Chapter 3 initially reviews different strands of research on strategic culture. This chapter problematizes different applications of strategic culture and lays out the basis for a narrative approach to strategic culture. The chapter closes with a framework built on agents’ intentions to facilitate cultural change. This chapter underlines the influence of narrative entrepreneurs and counter-narratives in cultural change.

Chapter 4 outlines the research design. It focuses on the methodological issues and practicalities of doing a research based on narrative analysis. Chapter 4 also addresses the methods and primary sources collected throughout this research project.

Shortcomings of narrative analysis and difficulties encountered during data collection are discussed in detail.

Part II presents the empirical analysis in three chapters. First, the development and main storyline of the dominant master narrative in Turkish strategic culture is explained. Then, counter-narratives that are found in the discourses of the AKP elite are discussed in subsequent two chapters.

Chapter 5 mainly discusses the development of the national security state master narrative how it became dominant throughout the Cold War and persisted even after the collapse of the bipolar order. An analysis of the role of the military in producing and inculcating this master narrative is provided prior to expounding on the narratives about the demise of the Ottoman Empire and the early Republican years. The chapter then proceeds with a discussion on the implications of the Cold War and its aftermath by looking into how the national security state master narrative had become dominant by way of creating its own institutions and strategic culture. In the last section, Turkey's Western orientation and its impact on Turkish foreign policy are explained.

Chapter 6 initially investigates the narratives underpinned by the great country counter-narrative. In this chapter, Turkish elite's attempts to create a new historical self and spatial identity are explored. First, narratives that praise the Ottoman era are scrutinized. Following that and closely linked to it, changing narratives about Turkey's neighbourhood are analysed to disclose the discursive ways of justifying Turkey's new activism in its neighbourhood. The last section explores narratives on Turkey's new role as the co-founder and promoter of alliance of civilizations and thus narratives that highlight Turkey's role in the West-East reconciliation.

Chapter 7 delves into narratives produced within the internationally active player counter-narrative. The implications of the demise of the Ottoman Empire and the early formative years of the Republic are elaborated to elucidate whether Turkey's deep-seated mistrust and fears manifested in the Sèvres Syndrome have withered away. Then, in addition to the change in narratives about threats to Turkey's security, the surge of narratives that promote regional cooperation is discussed. The last section probes a question of how the AKP elite have carved out an international role for Turkey by

incorporating the term soft power into their narratives about Turkey in the international system.

In the concluding chapter, the future form of Turkish strategic culture and its possible effects on the direction/nature of Turkish foreign policy are discussed. Moreover, the conclusion includes a discussion on the shortcomings of narrative approach to analyse strategic culture and some suggestions to address those shortcomings in future research.

Part I: Theoretical Framework and Research Design

Chapter Two

Social Constructivism, Discourse Analysis and Narratives

The main source of guidance and inspiration behind this thesis is social constructivism, the assumptions of which profoundly influence discussions regarding strategic culture, identity and cultural change. Social constructivism “makes claims about the nature of social life and social change” (Finnemore and Sikkink 2001: 393). Social constructivism provides a theoretical key for understanding the influence of culture on state behaviour on the one hand and the dynamics of cultural change on the other.

The first section delineates the main tenets of social constructivism and includes a nonexhaustive discussion of the theoretical and methodological pros and cons of a social constructivist approach in International Relations (IR). It should be noted that even though a comprehensive review of social constructivism is given in the first section it is not intended to encapsulate the decades old constructivist research in IR in its entirety. The chapter, then, proceeds with an overview of discourse analysis in order to discuss the missing elements in Wendtian form of social constructivism.

Discourse analysis views politics as a discursive practice that constitutes rather than causes human behaviour. By attributing meaning to social facts discourses not only “systematically form the objects of which they speak” (Foucault 1972 quoted in Mills 1997: 17) but also they act as a way of forming the domain of politics by expelling other meanings from the social (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002: 36; Torfing 2005: 11-12). The remainder of the chapter focuses on narrative theory and narration as an agent-centred kind of discourse analysis. The objective of this section is to explain how agency can be incorporated into social constructivism by focusing on narratives and the narrated nature of social life. A narrative-based understanding of human action enables us to give an answer to how agents have the abilities to transform structures understood as the cultural elements in/with which they live.

2.1. Social Constructivism in International Relations

Social constructivism in IR refers to a set of arguments and assumptions about the study of the international system, international security and interstate relations. Adler defines social constructivism as *“the manner in which the material world shapes and is shaped by human action and interaction depends on dynamic normative and epistemic interpretations of the material world”* (1997: 322, emphasis in original). The overall significance of social constructivism is perhaps best expressed with its challenge against the self-interested rational actor principal promoted by rationalism. Social constructivism takes issue with the taken-for-granted interests of “self-interested utility maximizers” (Price and Reus-Smit 1998: 283; Guzzini 2000: 163) and thus, it replaces the principle of rational action based on pre-given interests with the argument that human action, whether it is goal-oriented and interests-based, is constituted by ideas, norms and identities found at the international and domestic levels (Ruggie 1998: 864).

2.1.1. Main premises of social constructivism

For a long time, ideational elements had been anathema to International Relations. Most researchers have treated them as too “vague, amorphous, and constantly evolving” (Berman 1998: 16; Berman 2001) to be observed and measured, let alone applied as an explanatory variable (also see chapter 4 in Parsons 2007; Belànd and Cox 2010). Despite the initial studies on ideational elements, the rise of constructivism in IR was fostered by the substantial contributions of sociological, linguistic and post-modern approaches in the late 1980s and 1990s (Cox 1981; Ashley 1987; Kratochwil 1989; Onuf 1989; Wendt 1992; Wendt 1999; also see Adler 2002: 98-100). The crucial difference between the early research on ideational elements and the constructivist era is that the former was an attempt to revise and refine the rationalist material-based explanations on epistemological and methodological grounds without directly and seriously challenging the ontological foundations of rationalism. In contrast, social constructivism objects to the ontological foundations of International Relations that is centred upon a positivist ontology and an empiricist epistemology backed by the logic of the self-centred rational actor model. This section elaborates on the main premises of social constructivism.

There are four main premises of social constructivism as a philosophical approach: First, social constructivism asserts that unobservable things exist in the world. Thus, it has a lineage with idealism. Second, knowledge about reality – including material and ideational elements – can only be found in images and meanings attributed to them. Third, drawing on its sociological origins, social constructivism postulates that these images and meanings are socially constructed during socio-linguistic interactions between individual entities. The last assumption of social constructivism is that the effects of socially constructed and socially recognized ideational factors, i.e. norms, collective ideas and identities, on human behaviour exhibit, first and foremost, constitutive effects rather than causal ones (Adler 1997; Checkel 1998; Hopf 1998; Wendt 1999; Guzzini 2000; Adler 2002; Pouliot 2008). Summed up in Guzzini's words social constructivism can be understood "*in terms both of a social construction of meaning (including knowledge), and of the construction of social reality*" (Guzzini 2000: 149, emphasis in original).

After a group of scholars took the "constructivist turn", a new research agenda emerged in IR in the 1990s (e.g. Wendt 1992; Katzenstein 1996; Adler and Barnett 1998; Checkel 1998). By and large, these scholars contend that international politics is not conducted in isolation from ideas and norms at the international level and culture at the domestic level. For them, the "building blocks of international reality are ideational as well as material" (Ruggie 1998: 879). What are ideas, or rather ideational factors, then? Ideational factors include "practices, symbols, norms, grammars, models, beliefs, ideas and/or identities that carry meanings about the world" (Parsons 2007: 96). Material things are out there and it is easy to identify them when we see one. Whereas ideas are intangible and not easily identifiable. It is, thus, hard to measure their effects on behaviour. Yet, they need not to be dismissed outright as their impact can be more substantial than the effect of material elements (ibid.: 48).

Ideational factors are important not just because they provide "a road-map" which helps decision-makers to choose the best possible policy option among a rationally ranked set of preferences (cf. Goldstein and Keohane 1993). Nor should ideas simply be treated as "ex post frames" used by elites to justify their choices in order to

channel public support for their policies (Schmidt 2010: 7). What is more important than these assumptions is that ideas constantly condition human behaviour by producing and reproducing the ways an individual interprets her/his self, her/his environment as well as her/his interaction with other individuals. It is in this context that ideational factors “constitute social situations and the meaning of material forces” (Wendt 1999: 78). Ideas initially constitute behaviour by defining it. The task of definition is performed by assigning images and meanings to brute facts and individual actions, thereby translating them into social facts (Adler 1997: 325).

Social facts are “intersubjective understandings” derived from social relations between individuals (Wendt 1999: 160). While ideas can be held privately, social constructivism focuses on ideas produced and expressed during and through social relations (Finnemore 1996: 22). When an idea or a belief is recognized and shared by other members of a group, it eventually turns into a collective identity, a social norm or a culture. Rather than privately held ideas, social constructivism is generally concerned with the social aspect of intersubjective understandings. It is the “inter-” prefix to which social constructivism draws attention (ibid.).

Actions and choices of political actors cannot be judged on the basis of the logic of rational choice because meanings attributed to the reality in the external world vary between individuals and from one context to another (Guzzini 2000: 161-162). The premises of a social theory of international politics are, thus, underpinned by the difference between the rationalist logic and social constructivist logic, i.e. between the “logic of expected consequences” and the “logic of appropriateness”. March and Olsen (1998: 949-951) make a distinction between the two logics and they argue that human action cannot solely be the upshot of cost-benefit calculations made by rational actors. Individuals shape their preferences in accordance with their identity while the socio-cultural setting rules out some preferences and some discursive practices to translate preferences into policies. Therefore, individuals are deprived of some options and are compelled to choose the most appropriate and reasonable option in that particular socio-cultural circumstance. The novelty of social constructivism is that it unveils the role of identities in accounting for state action by “assum[ing] a priori, that identities are

potentially part of the constitutive practices of the state, and so, productive of its actions at home and abroad” (Hopf 1998: 193).

The intersubjective, socially constructed notion of reality, when applied to international politics, draws a conclusion that the international system is how the states understand it or as Wendt (1992) astutely puts it “what the states make of it.” Wendt (1995: 71-72) expresses the main idea behind the notion of socially constructed international politics as such: “the fundamental structures of international politics are social rather than strictly material (a claim that opposes materialism), and that these structures shape actors’ identities and interests, rather than just their behavior (a claim that opposes rationalism).” Social constructivism tends to see state identity and state action as indivisible and structure (international system) and agency (states) as mutually constitutive. To social constructivists, the loci of research on international politics are the social construction of objects such as nuclear missiles or chemical weapons, events/episodes such as the Cold War, geographical elements such as country and territory and taken-for-granted concepts of IR such as sovereignty, national interests and security (Price and Reus-Smit 1998: 270). Rather than the sheer existence of anarchy in the international system or the uneven distribution of material capabilities, questions as to how state elites describe the international system as anarchical, construct their national identity; how they define their national interests, construct (in-)securities by imagining their neighbourhood as being fraught with problems or abundant with opportunities; how they perceive their neighbours as threats or friends and how they accommodate international norms and values into their political culture forms the heart of social constructivist research in IR.

While some constructivism-oriented researchers have drawn our attention to norms defined as “collective expectations about proper behavior for a given identity” (Finnemore 1996: 22; Jepperson *et al.* 1996: 54), some others have highlighted the constitutive effect of national identities and national cultures (e.g. Katzenstein 1996; Lapid and Kratochwil 1996; Hopf 2002).

2.1.2. What is missing in Wendtian social constructivism and how does this thesis address them?

Constructivism in its modern, or rather Wendtian form, is not immune to criticism. Of these sophisticated critiques, three criticisms, two of which are offered by Checkel (1998) and the last criticism made by discourse analysts (Diez 1999; 2001; Milliken 1999; Fierke 2002; Wæver 2005; 2009; Wiener 2009) are of great value for our analysis. These criticisms are: i) an over-socialized understanding of international politics, ii) the reification of the state by attributing human-like essentialist features and iii) the lack of attention to language and discourse in the process of the social construction of intersubjective knowledge. The first criticism stresses the missing role of agency whereas the second one emphasizes the role of non-systemic sources and domestic politics. The third critique, on the other hand, draws attention to the role of discourse in linking structure and agency in the process of identity formation.

2.1.2.1. Where is agency in social constructivism?

Checkel (1998: 340) underlines that an over-socialized view of human behaviour limits social constructivism's contribution to understanding international politics. Owing to a lack of attention to humans' biological and cognitive boundaries in social constructivist research there is little room for exploring how social norms, values and identities are used by agents (for a discussion see: Sterling-Folker 2002; Houghton 2007). Having agreed with Checkel that agency needs to be brought back into social constructivism, Wendt (1999: 134), himself, also points to a "fruitful dialogue between cognitive theories of foreign policy and cultural theories of structure, perhaps organized around the concept of foreign policy 'role'." Welcoming Checkel's plea for a middle-range theories and agent-oriented mechanisms, Houghton (2007: 30) also makes a strong case for the conjunction of social constructivism and foreign policy analysis through the application of cognitive and social-psychological middle-range theories.

Nonetheless, drawing on psychological models that are revolving around concepts like perceptions, emotions and schemata provides limited accounts for identity formation, because humans are, first of all, communicative beings that can transform

their own identity through discourses. The discourse-oriented social constructivism employed in this thesis opposes psychological models.

Rather than analysis of a-cultural and a-historical cognitive categories and patterns of human cognition per se, we need to build our explanations of culture and human behaviour on communicative patterns produced by discursive practices (Diez 2001: 9; Schmidt 2010, 2011). Cognitive patterns and categories are a-cultural and a-historical as “they are never framed with respect to a particular historical group of people” (Parsons 2007: 102). As quoted at length from Jørgensen and Phillips below, the so-called universally existing mental processes are, in the first place, socially constructed during social interaction.

Social constructionism rejects the cognitivist attempt to explain attitudes and behaviour in terms of underlying mental states or processes. Instead of understanding psychological processes – including processes of social categorisation – as private, mental activities produced by individual information processing, social constructionists understand them as social activities. Furthermore, they do not view attitudes as stable, mental dispositions (that the individual ‘owns’) but as products of social interaction (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002: 102).

Cognitive processes hinge on relational and normative patterns. Without social interactions the influence of psychological elements such as perceptions, emotions and desires and mental processes such as thinking, reasoning, categorizing and drawing analogies on human behaviour offers a very limited understanding of international politics.

2.1.2.2. Where is domestic politics?

The social constructivism of Wendt also has been criticized for being biased towards structure due to its treatment of the state and identity as unitary, uncontested phenomena to the detriment of the primacy of politics in identity formation (Smith S. 2000: 162; Zehfuss 2001: 341). Price and Reus-Smit (1998: 268) distinguish between Wendt’s “systemic constructivism” and “holistic constructivism” as “the former accepts the neorealist penchant for systemic theory, while the latter adopts a more encompassing perspective that seeks to incorporate domestic and international phenomena.” An

anthropomorphic concept of the state with an identity dictated by the international system leaves no room for the politics of power relations among several actors (Zehfuss 2001: 335). This is why, “without introducing non-systemic sources of state identity such as domestic political culture at some point in the structuration process, systemic constructivism offers an overly static conception of the state and the international system, providing no clue as to how agents or structures change” (Price and Reus-Smit 1998: 268).

Despite his emphasis on social identity and role identities constructed during inter-state relations, Wendt’s negligence of the production and reproduction of corporate identities demonstrates the extent to which Wendtian social constructivism is biased toward the effects of the structures of international politics. Wendt, himself conceded that “[T]he constructivist concern with identity-formation has typically focused on the construction of variation within a given actor class (type or role identities), rather than explaining how organizational actors come into being in the first place (corporate identities)” (Fearon and Wendt 2002: 63).

For Wendt, a key distinction is between the corporate and social identity of states, with the former deemphasized because “its roots [are] in domestic politics.” Since he assumes a unitary state, corporate identity includes and subsumes that of the individual. The result is that social construction at the level of individual agents or, more generally, at any domestic level is neglected. While several theorists have criticized Wendt for this stance, no clear understanding of how to rectify it has emerged (Checkel 1998: 341).

Even though Wendt depicts a broader spectrum of the international system based on three different intersubjective understandings about international politics, namely the Hobbesian anarchical system, the Lockean and the Kantian systems, his categorization of different types of international system emanating from different logics of inter-state relations falls short in explaining the construction and variation of corporate identities. Cederman and Daase (2003: 11) criticize the reified treatment of the state by both rationalist approaches and modernist systemic constructivism. For the authors, social constructivism, first of all, has to focus on the formation of corporate identities by different groups within the state. Only then the relationship between corporate and social

identities of a state can be unravelled, because both identities are co-evolving at different pace from a macro-historical vantage point (ibid.). Put differently, state identity, whether corporate identity or role identity, is not exogenously given by systemic factors. It is rather a continuous process made up of discursive practices and shaped by the political contestation among several actors.

2.1.2.3. Where is language?

The last criticism of modernist social constructivism comes from discourse analysts. Despite social constructivist claims on the construction of intersubjective meanings, norms and identities have long been the locus of social constructivist research in IR. As is alluded to above, social constructivism assumes “material resources only acquire meaning for human action through the structure of shared knowledge in which they are embedded” (Wendt 1995: 73). Therefore, social constructivism posits that interests are not pre-given and fixed, rather, they are constructed by “socially *shared* knowledge” (Wendt 1999: 141) which originates from social understandings about brute and social facts. Put differently, the meaning of any fact, brute or social, is constructed by intersubjective understandings. Irrespective of where beliefs and ideas are located, in the minds or man-made institutions, they are all intersubjective understandings constructed through social practices. Nevertheless, modernist social constructivists have attended to the influence of norms and identities on political decisions. The scope of social practice is confined to social interaction understood as “gestures”, transactions, institutional rules and norms (Diez 1999: 601; Wiener 2009: 176). As pointed out by Diez (1999: 601), the scope of political interaction should not be limited to the acts of signalling one’s motives. International politics is also about the “linguistically mediated practices in terms of speech, writing, images, and gestures that social actors draw upon in their production and interpretation of meaning” (Torfing 2005: 7). Political actors construct and manipulate the knowledge about the external world through their discourses. Therefore, discourse-centred social constructivist research proposes a framework that is built on the use of language and the construction of identities and norms through speech acts and language games (Adler 2002: 113; Fierke 2002: 341).

2.2. Taking Discourse Seriously: Agents, Language and Culture

To subvert structural assumptions of Wendtian constructivism we need a model that incorporates agency with its cognitive and communicative abilities (Schmidt and Radaelli 2004; Schmidt 2008, 2010, 2011). As long as the human mind cannot be separated from its linguistic abilities, human action is the result of an interaction between the practices of cognition and communication. And as long as cognition and communication are mutually constitutive, more attention has to be given to agents and their discursive practices. Before elaborating on discourse and the relationship between language and political action, the following two sections shed light on the question of what is politics and how agency is understood in this thesis.

2.2.1. What is politics?

Society is neither composed of individual actions nor based on pre-determined social functions nor social institutions underpinned by economic structures. In fact, society is assumed to be the outcome of discourses, particular rules of discursive practices and power struggles to put social realities into particular categories by gaining the authority (political, social, cultural) to define the meanings of social realities (Howarth 2000: 27). Within this kind of theorizing of the social realm, politics is, first of all, a process of interpretation or rather a meaning-making activity (Laclau and Mouffe 1985; Howarth 2000: 8-11; Wedeen 2002: 720; Bevir 2011: 187). Without human agency there is no society and without society there is no politics (Béland and Cox 2010: 14). A constructivist understanding of politics, thus, highlights that politics is a process of “creat[ing] and confirm[ing] interpretations of life” rather than making the best choices to achieve certain goals (March and Olsen 1984: 741). In addition to the interpretivist understanding of politics, discourse analysis proposes that while political actors interpret social, economic and cultural events they also struggle with other actors for the control of knowledge and discourse. Hence, politics as a discursive practice

is not a mechanical process whereby actors formulate an interest or a goal, devise a strategy to achieve the goal, and struggle with others as they employ their strategy. Rather, drawing on existing cultural and ideological symbols, actors

develop a set of ideas and share them with others, who may challenge these ideas and provide some alternatives. The discursive interactions prompt them to refine, reframe, and reinterpret these ideas (Béland and Cox 2010: 11).

2.2.2. What is the role of agency?

The structure-agency debate has been invoked by many social constructivists as well as scholars working with critical realist ontology (Wendt 1987; Dessler 1989; Carlnaes 1992; Doty 1997; Wight 1999). It is almost impossible to do justice to the views expressed by several scholars on the relationship between structure and agency. This section only aims to clarify why the approach of this thesis is more agent-centred.

Structure can be defined in two ways. According to the narrow definition of structure, it is a physical context that includes “the material conditions” and brute facts of our world (McAnulla 2002: 271). Thus, this definition only encompasses “objective, physical and material landscape” (Parsons 2007: 51) and the realities of nature such as natural resources, climate, natural disasters and geographical constraints. In its broader definition, structure refers to institutional and cultural elements created by the actions of agents at some point in time (McAnulla 2002: 284). Even though structures, in its broader definition, are created by agents through the meanings attached to material and social facts, structures cannot be reduced to “other people” and their ideas (ibid.: 285-286). Structures take on a life of their own, distinct from the intentions of agents who created them in the first place. Hence, structures turn into factors that can constrain and enable human action (Hays 1994). Scholars subscribed to poststructuralist discourse theory contend that structures are never complete and never permanently defined (Howarth 2000: 129; Jørgensen and Phillips 2002: 29).

In this thesis, states are not viewed as agents on their own. Agents are human beings because “only human beings can create identities, only human beings can change identities, only human beings can act on the basis of identity” (Hudson 2007: 10). This thesis’s understanding of agency is not based on a model of a rationally acting individual with “strong human autonomy, which do away with any form of structural constraint or empowerment” (Glynos and Howarth 2008: 159-160). The lack of strong autonomy does not render agents passive actors who wait for something to happen to them. Agents

can act in a purposeful way within the constraints of structural elements. While the outcomes of their actions may or may not be what is intended by them, because agents are not in full control of the external world; however, they are able to create new ideas about the new situations in the external world (Hay 2011: 178; Schmidt 2011).

Agency explains the creation, recreation, and transformation of social structures; agency is made possible by the enabling features of social structures at the same time as it is limited within the bounds of structural constraint; and the capacity of agents to affect social structures varies with the accessibility, power, and durability of the structure in question (Hays 1994: 62).

This thesis is set out to analyse the role of “sentient agency”, which has the cognitive faculties to think as well as the social and discursive faculties to speak. Sentient agents are able to articulate abstract ideas into arguments and convey them to other agents (Schmidt 2008: 314-318; Schmidt 2010: 4). Sentient agents can reflect on their self, their environment and their past (Schmidt 2010: 17). Sentient agents are not only the bearers of structures but also they are able to transform structures by developing different responses to them. Unlike the individualism of the rational actor model, sentient agents do not independently exist “without their linguistic, institutional, and practical relations with others” (Wedeen 2002: 717).

Drawing on these assumptions about the relationship between agency and structure, the approach of this thesis is not anti-structuralist. It does not privilege agency over structures. Ontologically, they are not the same but both are important. Nonetheless, this thesis, analytically, places more emphasis on the role of agency in cultural change. Structure is understood as the system of cultural elements, discourse is the link between structure as cultural elements and agency as sentient agents. In turn, narratives are presumed to be a kind of discourse that weaves experiences and ideas of agents with cultural elements. Narratives are able to this by virtue of the mechanism of narration and emplotment.

Change in structures, or rather change in culture, is made possible if discourse as a way of articulating, juxtaposing, coupling different ideas and re-arranging meanings turns into a transformative factor that challenges dominant structures rather than reproducing them (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002: 76; Hay 2011: 178). As Roland Barthes

once said, “peoples are both masters and slaves of language” (quoted in Jørgensen and Phillips 2002: 17). Subjective understandings are the products of socio-linguistic interaction among individuals (Milliken 1999: 229; Weldes *et al.* 1999: 16-17). Although agents are engulfed by structural elements and are imbued with a dominant discourse, as long as they are not annihilated by structures they can transcend the determinacy of structures and challenge the dominance of a particular discourse. Being able to transcend structures does not mean surpassing them nor does it imply being absolutely independent of structures. It solely refers to the existence of agency which can think and act beyond structures. As a cautionary note, it should be kept in mind that the transformative and innovative abilities of agents are confined to existing discourses which define the range of discursive practices (Schmidt and Radaelli 2004: 192-193; Jørgensen and Phillips 2002: 74).

Unravelling discursive practices contributes to our understanding of how institutional and cultural structures can change. Discourse is viewed as a source of “continuity and change” (Fairclough 1993: 38; Adler 2002: 103; Torfing 2005: 23; Schmidt 2010: 14). Change happens not because of agents’ self-interpretations or their idiosyncratic free will, change happens because of the change in how agents think, speak and deliberate about the reality (Schmidt 2011). Therefore, if we want to include agency in our analysis of cultural change, we need to take into account discursive practices during social interactions.

Not only is identity formation inevitably enmeshed in discursive practices, but also strategic action cannot be analysed outside the discourse-inscribed cultural setting. A social constructivist perspective based on the notion of intentionality indeed “presume[s] that people are at least partially capable of perceiving and assessing the structures within which they act” (Klotz and Lynch 2007: 60). Therefore, as much as agents are constrained by structures, they also can reproduce structures by consuming them. What makes agents and their discourses more important for our analysis is that agents have the ability to transform structures in/with which they live by questioning and challenging them (Hays 1994: 62).

2.2.3. What is language?

Parsons (2007: 113) stresses that if we, as researchers, want to “explain today’s actions we must study not just immediate decision-making but how people became embedded in a certain man-made framework.” Language is a, and arguably the most important, man-made framework which acts as more than a tool for communication and dissemination of ideas but also is itself a form of social practice. Language is “a way of doing things” through “speech acts” (Austin 1962; Searle 1969) and a way of constituting self and identity through discourse (Wood and Kroeger 2000: 4; Torfing 2005: 14). According to the poststructuralist approach to language, meanings attached to social facts by using linguistic symbols are not fixed and stable. Meanings can only be found in social settings (Macdonell 1986: 12; Larsen 1997: 11-12). Social and political contexts render some meanings acceptable while others are excluded. In this sense, “Language, then, is not merely a channel through which information about underlying mental states and behaviour or facts about the world are communicated. On the contrary, language is a ‘machine’ that generates, and as a result constitutes, the social world” (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002: 9). This understanding of language as constitutive is the very fundamental assumption on which discourse analysis is built.

Communication is the very basis of politics, thus language and discourse are the constitutive elements of political action (Chilton 2004: 4). However, discourse analysis is neither limited to examining the ways of communication. Nor is discourse analysis concerned with the linguistic skills of a speaker and the content of the text. The principal purpose of discourse analysis is indeed to go beyond such contextual and textual aspects, because discourse does not solely refer to ideational elements (Hansen 2006: 17). Although discourse analysis starts with a text, because text is the primary source to find the residuals of discourse, where discourse analysis differs from a textual (content) analysis is that the former aims to unveil the ways in which discourse constructs the reality through representational elements and conceptual/language games (Schmidt 2011: 6; Adler 2002: 110; Fierke 2002). In discourse analysis, language is no longer an instrumental tool for agents to communicate their ideas and knowledge about the reality to other agents; language, in essence, is a social and performative practice that constitutes the very nature of society and for our analysis the realm of politics (Hansen

2006: 18). Language is never just a medium of culture and communication; it is rather a medium of power that constitutes the realm of social (Mills 1997; Larsen 1997; Milliken 1999; Jørgensen and Phillips 2002).

2.2.4. How to conceptualize culture?

Rational choice theorists view culture as “conditions under which individuals make choices” (Wedeen 2002: 718). In this sense, culture is defined as “common knowledge” (Wendt 1999: 143; Wedeen 2002: 718). Common knowledge is a piece of information or a background condition (Wedeen 2002: 718) about “actors’ beliefs about each other’s rationality, strategies, preferences, and beliefs, as well as about states of the external world” (Wendt 1999: 159). From a social constructivist viewpoint, Wendt argues that collective knowledge is built on common knowledge, yet it takes on a life of its own and thus it “is not reducible to common knowledge” (ibid.). Wedeen (2002: 718) criticizes the rationalist account of culture as common knowledge by stressing that “the concept tends to assume the shared quality or commonness of knowledge rather than to question how – or the extent to which – such understandings are, in fact, tacitly understood or consensually shared.”

Social constructivism not only challenges the reductionist claims of rational choice theory about human behaviour and reductionist claims of cognitive psychology on human mind. But it also questions essentialist claims about identity and culture employed by some students of comparative politics (Cederman 2002: 413). Wendt points out the problem of essentialist theorizing about human behaviour and state action:

When we account for a thing by referring to its internal morphology we are engaged in what might be called ‘reductionism’ or ‘essentialism’. We are hypothesizing an internal core or essence to which a thing’s outward properties can in some sense be reduced (Wendt 1998: 112).

According to social constructivism neither individuals on their own nor groups of individuals possess objective and essence-like cultural traits. Cultural traits of a group are considered as part of intersubjective understandings and social practices. Consequently, in their attempts to overcome reductionism and essentialism, social

constructivist researchers have placed more emphasis on collective identities, shared norms and culture.

Similar to social constructivist researchers, for the students of discourse analysis, culture is not made up of primordial and essentialist properties akin to “disembodied structure of ideas that sets clear limits to the beliefs and agency of individuals by fixing the ways they experience the world” (Bevir and Rhodes 2006: 75). Wæver (2005: 34) duly warns against using culture as if it is essence like. The essentialist treatment of culture results in “cultural truism” which in turn offers stereotypes as a way of explaining only “unacceptable ad hoc” and irrational behaviours (ibid.). Culture, be it civic, political or strategic, is constructed by the nexus of power and discursive practices (Larsen 1997: 22). A discourse-based understanding of culture highlights the importance of practices of meaning-making as well as the manifestations of power struggles while using particular meanings in discourses.

The theoretical approach of this thesis on culture is based on anti-essentialism which means that cultural traits and identity are “not pre-determined or pre-given, and that people do not have inner ‘essences’ – a set of genuine, authentic and immutable characteristics” (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002: 102). Stuart Hall defines culture as “a way of constructing meanings which influences and organises both our actions and our conception of ourselves” (Hall 1996 quoted in Wodak 1999: 23). (Strategic) culture is, thus, neither made up of essence-like cultural traits nor is it a common knowledge about other people’s beliefs. First of all, culture is not really shared nor is it common. Rather, culture is believed to be shared and common as it is constructed by a dominant discourse (Neumann 2010: 96). Second, in line with the first assumption culture becomes a collective thing in society only through discourses (Wedeen 2002). Lastly, culture is contested (Lapid 1996) as agents are able to generate different meanings. Once culture is associated with meanings then the residues of culture can be found in discursive practices (Wedeen 2002: 722).

2.2.4.1. What is discourse?

First and foremost, discourse is a linguistic practice. Attributing meanings to things and communicating information and ideas are only possible through language. Second, drawing on the assumption that language constitutes the realm of the social, discourse is viewed as not only the representation of cultural and social practices but also the manifestation of socio-political power relations. A very broad definition of discourse includes

all kinds of linguistically mediated practices in terms of speech, writing, images, and gestures that social actors draw upon in their production and interpretation of meaning, [...] a wider set of social practices, [...] the rules governing the production of such statements and practices [as well as] the power struggles that shape and reshape particular discursive formations (Torfing 2005: 7).

Discourse not only creates representations of reality but it constructs reality by imposing certain social and political meanings onto it while excluding others (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002: 9). Furthermore, discourse supplies an analytical tool to “organise knowledge systematically” and approach the reality in a particular manner (Adler 2002: 103, Wæver 2005: 36). Fairclough maintains that

Discourse contributes first of all to the construction of what are variously referred to as ‘social identities’ and ‘subject positions’ for social ‘subject’ and types of ‘self’. [...] Secondly, discourse helps construct social relationships between people. And thirdly, discourse contributes to the construction of systems of knowledge and belief (Fairclough 1993: 64).

In a similar vein, Milliken (1999: 237) underscores the role of discourse by stating that “discourses produce the common sense(s) of societies, limiting possible resistance among a broader public to a given course of action, legitimating the state as a political unit, and creating reasonable and warranted relations of domination.” In this context, discourse contributes to the construction of social identities, defines social roles and positions, delineates the rules of social relationships and ultimately produces power hierarchies within society. From a social perspective, discourse represents and reproduces identity through multiple meanings about reality created by the use of language. From a political perspective, discourse represents and reproduces power

relations and social hierarchies by excluding some meanings through a limited use of language.

2.2.4.2. Why not ideology?

Ideology divides people along the lines of social classes and categorizes their actions within the parameters and limitations of an economic order (Mills 1997: 36). Swidler (1986: 279) defines ideology as “a highly articulated, self-conscious belief and ritual system, aspiring to offer a unified answer to problems of social action.” Usually associated with Marxist scholarship ideology maintains the false consciousness within society that is organized by the principles of economic production (Macdonell 1986: 30, Purvis and Hunt 1993: 474). For post-Marxists like Gramsci, ideology is associated with meaning-making activities as a way of creating “hegemony” without resorting to violence and coercion (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002: 32). Ideology-centred explanations views ideational elements as instrumental tools used to propagate political propaganda and hence culture is the product of political propaganda. No different from rational choice theory, ideological models take ideational elements as exogenous knowledge imposed on political actors as a result of economic and political divisions. Therefore, ideational elements are likened to a “superstructure built on a material base: they serve a regulative function, helping actors with given interests maximize utility” (Checkel 1998: 327). Political actors engage in politics with a particular ideology and their interests are pre-determined by that specific ideology to which they are exposed. Culture, thus, can be extracted from the economic, social and political conditions established by a dominant ideology. When ideology-based models engage with culture their explanations are centred on an image of uniform and homogenous culture. Any approach based on ideological models is, therefore, detrimental to our analysis of cultural change because “If individuals arrive at beliefs by a fixed and disembodied ideology, they lack the capacity to change that ideology” (Bevir and Rhodes 2006: 72).

Unlike ideology discourse is not reducible to “false consciousness” (Mills 1997: 36) or “distorted beliefs” about reality (Bevir 1996). Discourses do not describe an external world “out there” as is argued by psychological approaches with their analysis drawn on mental schemata that are the products of universal cognitive patterns (see

Parsons 2007). Nor is culture associated with a uniform belief system motivated by an ideology as is suggested by ideology-centred explanations. Contrary to these alternative conceptualizations, discourse renders *a* reality about the world “real or true for the speaker” (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002: 103). In this sense, culture viewed through the prism of discourse analysis is not a homogenous entity consisting of fixed traits. In discourse-centred approach towards culture, the questions of “what a group has – beliefs, values, or a symbolic system” and “what a group is” (Wedeen 2002: 716) are replaced with the questions of “in what ways a group is discursively constituted and represented” and thus “what a group is becoming during its interaction with other groups.”

As a “relational system of signification” discourse implies that

Whatever we say, think, or do is conditioned by a more or less sedimented discourse which is constantly modified and transformed by what we are saying, thinking, and doing. At an abstract level, discourse can be defined as a relational ensemble of signifying sequences that weaves together semantic aspects of language and pragmatic aspects of action (Torfing 2005: 14).

For Laclau and Mouffe, discourse as a practice of signification and articulation refers to “any practice establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice” (Laclau and Mouffe 1985 quoted in Howarth 2005: 326). Weldes defines articulation as a “process through which meaning is produced out of extant cultural raw materials or linguistic resources. Meaning is created and temporarily fixed by establishing chains of connotations among different linguistic elements” (Weldes 1996: 284). Articulation is thus “a continuous and contested process of meaning creation” (ibid.: 307 fn.24). Chains of connotations established among different linguistic elements can be “constructed both through the assertion of difference and the articulation of chains of equivalence” (Torfing 2005: 14). Narration is also an “articulatory practice” in which meanings attributed to events and characters assigned to social actors mould social relations and eventually transform social identities. The next section explains the similarities and differences between discourse and narrative through the distinction between the concepts of “articulation” and “emplotment”.

2.2.4.3. What is narrative?

Narrative is a way of telling a story in its very broad literary meaning and a narrator is somebody who tells a story from her/his own perspective. Narrative is, generally speaking, defined as “stories about human cognition, actions (and their consequences), events, and descriptions of circumstances in which those events occur” (Baker and Ellece 2011: 73).

Narratives refer to stories told by agents about themselves and others, their actions and their experiences. A narrative is a specific kind of discourse “with a clear sequential order that connect events in a meaningful way for definite audience and thus offers insights about the world and/or people’s experiences of it” (Elliott 2005: 3). Narratives come in different forms. Margaret Somers (1994: 617-620) elaborates on four abstract formulations of narratives, i.e. ontological, public, conceptual and metanarrativities. Elliott (2005: 12-13) suggests that there are first-order narratives which mainly refer to individual stories and second-order narratives which imply rigorous analyses of certain instances, or rather scientific explanations, produced by researchers. On the other hand, Czarniawska (2010: 59) proposes three types of narrative, i.e. narrative as a form of knowledge, a form of social life and a form of communication. This thesis focuses on the latter two forms of narrative and asks to what extent social reality (international relations) is a narrated reality and how agents (political actors) produce and use narratives to wield power on the meanings of events happening in world politics and thereby disseminating their ideas through narratives.

Narratives as discursive practices situate a particular group of people in time and space address the questions of what the group is like and what it is becoming. Because narratives weave the past, the present and possibly the future of a social group together to depict a coherent picture of what a group is and to tell an intelligible story about what a group has become or is becoming, narrative analysis focuses on the process of narration in which beliefs and values are linked to certain experiences through stories.

2.2.4.4. What is the difference between discourse and narrative?

What differs narratives from discourse is that in narratives, meanings are not created in isolation from the past, or rather former events, actions and social experiences (Weldes 1999: 307 fn.24). Narratives draw our attention to the “historicity” and “relationality” of concepts, ideas and terms created and used by agents in the realm of social (Somers 1994: 620). Meanings are established within a plot that assembles and signifies a set of events, actions and experiences. And emplotment is “the process by which situations and actions are linked together to produce a plot” (Herman 2009: 184).

It is through emplotment that meaning is assigned to events, action and actors. And it is the plot which temporarily fixes these meanings in narratives. And it is the narration that produces narratives. Narration is, thus, i) a process of producing a plot (emplotment), by which meanings are created at the story level, and ii) a process of telling a story to an audience, by which the meanings of situations, events, actions and actors included in a story are conveyed to an audience and consequently they are either re-produced or transformed at the communicative level (Herman 2009: 189). Narration, thus, (re-)produces as well as conveys meanings of a set of events. By virtue of these functions of narration, narratives are a, and arguably the most influential, way of “temporally and relationally forming” social relations between individuals, constituting the social identity of individuals, constructing social organizations and eventually shaping the social life itself (Somers 1994: 620). The relationship between discourse and social experiences cannot be comprehended unless the dynamics of time and past experiences are included in our analysis. It is past experiences that condition present day discourses, yet it is also present day discourses in which the past experiences, events and actions are assembled in a meaningful way in accordance with a plot.

2.3. Narratives and Narrative Theory

Narrative theory, or rather narratology, introduced by Tzvetan Todorov as the study of narratives initially emerged as a form of cultural theory for criticizing literary works and analysing different kinds of art forms and cultural artefacts. Literary studies concentrates on the structural and universal features of narratives and narrative skills of story-tellers (Labov and Waletzky 1967; Barthes 1975). The structural analysis of narratives is

conducted to find a common logic of storytelling that shapes and determines the structure of every narrative. Hence, literary and linguistic studies generally pose questions regarding the process of creating narratives, how narrative is structured and whether its structure changes before different audiences on different occasions and lastly, why a narrative is told in just that particular way (Patterson and Monroe 1998: 317-319). In contrast to literary studies, narrative analysis is employed by ethnographical, sociological and psychological research to offer narrative explanations for social relations, culture in society, historical instances as well as mental states of human beings. Apart from its frequent use by historians (e.g. White 1987; Roth 1988) interchangeably as an heuristic tool to create a rigorous story as to how history unfolds, sociologists (e.g. Sommers 1994) and psychologists (e.g. Sarbin 1986; Burner 1991; Polkinghorne 1991) also have benefitted from narrative analysis in their endeavours to account for collective narratives and individual stories (for a comprehensive review of the development of narrative theory see Elliott 2005; Herman 2009; Bold 2012; de Fina and Georgakopoulou 2012).

A positivist approach to narrative analysis considers narration as a process of framing and agenda-setting. Narratives as frames have been used in the policy analysis research to analyse politicians' ability of conveying different ideas, selling their policies through defining political problems, setting agendas and forming advocacy-coalitions (e.g. Stone 1989; Roe 1994; McBeth 2007). For some others, narratives are applied as an independent variable to address the issue of temporality (Büthe 2002) or "an approach to the quantitative analysis of sequence data which attempts to identify and describe common patterns within sequences" (Elliott 2005: 202; see Abbott 1992). In essence, narrative analysis in its positivist form has connotations with an analytical-historical explanation (Roe 1994; Bates *et al.* 1999).

Owing to the linguistic turn in the humanities and invigorating constructivist input into ontological and epistemological debates of the 1970s and 1980s in the social sciences, social research has turned into a scholarly endeavour to analyse social processes, to probe into the dynamics of social identity formation and more importantly to explore abstract representations and intersubjective meanings ascribed to social facts.

Contrary to the positivist application of narrative analysis as a way of providing analytical explanations, the narrative paradigm in the social sciences is associated with “the constructivist paradigm, with its phenomenological and hermeneutic foundations, and the poststructuralist paradigm which conceives of social reality as constructed, fluid and multifaceted” (Spector-Mersel 2010: 211). In the late 1980s and 1990s, narratives gained currency in sociological and psychological theories because it has been contended that “social life itself is storied and that narrative is an ontological condition of social life” (Somers 1994: 613-614, emphasis in original). As discussed in the chapter on social constructivism, reality about the social world is constituted by intersubjective understandings and according to narrative theory intersubjective knowledge is “primarily a narrative reality” (Spector-Mersel 2010: 211). This depiction of social life portrays the self and its identity within narratives. Thus, narrativity becomes part of social interaction. As a result, social identity is assumed to be forged by the stories told by individuals about their self and their personal experiences (Wodak *et al.* 1999).

2.3.1.1. Narrativity in social life

As discussed earlier, social constructivism revolves around the relational and intersubjective nature of human behaviour. Mark Bevir identifies social life with practices of meaning production in order to make sense of the world.

[L]inguistic constructivism implies that social concepts are pragmatic. This constructivist ontology undermines attempts to treat social objects as natural kinds and to ascribe to social objects an essence that determines their other properties or the effects they have. Linguistic constructivism implies, in other words, that institutions are merely the aggregate products of activity. Social life consists of meaningful activity (Bevir 2011: 189).

In a similar vein, Somers underscores the principle of narrativity in constructing the self and the place of narratives in the maintenance of society and social relations. Thus, narratives are seen as the products of social interactions within a particular context. Scholars working with narratives hold the view that

Narrativity and relationality are conditions of social being, social consciousness, social action, institutions, structures, even society itself; the self and the purposes of self are constructed and reconstructed in the context of internal and external

relations of time and place and power that are constantly in flux (Somers 1994: 621).

The locus of narrative analysis is not the events or actions per se but how those events and actions are recounted socially by attributing meanings to them through the process of emplotment (de Fina and Georgakopoulou 2012: 8). Narrative analysis is aimed to elicit the cultural ways of accounting for different experiences. Analytically, narrative analysis starts with questions of what different experiences imply for the present and the future rather than questions about what really happened at the time and to what extent those events can be recalled as they actually happened. Narration is, therefore, a sense-making and a meaning-making practice in which the past become a specific kind of social reality in the present through story-telling (Georgakopoulou and Goutsos 2004: 45).

2.3.1.2. Human cognition, memory and narrated experiences

A narrative memory is not a static memory. Rather, it is a constructed memory (Georgakopoulou and Goutsos 2004: 46). Human cognition is patterned; therefore, individual memory is organized by establishing temporal and causal links between different events and individual experiences. Although human cognition is patterned, cognitive patterns are neither fixed nor objective. They, in fact, are the products of social interactions and story-telling practices (Bamberg 2005a: 215). Furthermore, memory as remembered experiences is conveyed to other people in the form of narratives. In turn, while narrating stories individuals also produce their social identity understood as discursive practices. Memory is a cultural and social element rather than a cognitive one. Thus, cognition should be studied in conjunction with an analysis of narratives and storytelling.

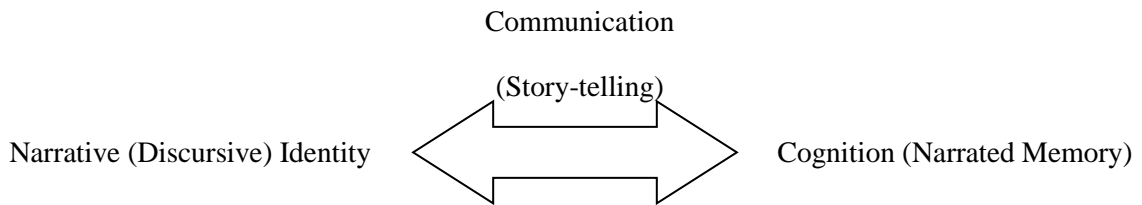
People carry a large baggage of past experiences. However, experiences are not just composed of what really happened. Rather than actual lived experiences, remembered experiences do play a crucial role in constructing and re-constructing the self. Browning (2008: 54) notes that “narrative is more concerned with elucidating what is meaningful and pertinent to people in the present than with what was meaningful and motivational for people in the past.” Narratives are not always “accurate representations

of past events” (Georgakopoulou and Goutsos 2004: 45). What narratives do is to give us a sense of where we stand in the present vis-à-vis the past. A narrator aims to produce a coherent narrative by highlighting some historical events while ignoring or dismissing some others (Carr 1986: 59). This tendency to produce a coherent narrative does not mean that a narrator makes up stories *ex nihilo* and creates a fictional story (Spector-Mersel 2010: 211). On the contrary, narratives are not necessarily fictional, there can be non-fictional narratives since individuals need narratives about their “life-story,” in other words, things they have done and places they have been so far (Carr 1986: 74).

Narratives give explanations for that particular events or actions by not taking them as isolated phenomena but in relation with other purposefully selected events. Story-telling is a cognitive process of assigning meanings to past experiences, present events and future actions (Polkinghorne 1991: 136). Story-telling is also a social practice that helps to perceive agency and its intentional actions within the network of social relations where power relations determine what is storied, how a story is told, whose story is accepted.

Power comes into play when an individual narrative strives for social recognition. Power is an indication of increasing acceptance of individual memory. Owing to power struggles between different narratives, individual memory turns into a collective memory. Forgetting, concealing or renouncing some events is as much an essential element of narratives as remembering, disclosing or overemphasizing some others past events. Such ways of narrating are used frequently by politicians to tell different stories about the past so that they can reconstruct a different identity for their state. Drawing on narratives political agents envisage a different future, or rather a different strategy for their country in international politics because “narrative can ‘raise consciousness,’ create a shared history and a shared group identity, and preserve and transmit culture” (Smith C. 2000: 329, emphasis in original). A collective memory of the state engenders a collective identity for the state.

Figure 2-1 The interaction between identity, cognition and communication through the lens of a narrative approach.



Source: Author's own figure.

Figure 2-1 illustrates the relationship between narratives, narrative identity and memory. While telling stories an individual memory turns into a social activity. If a story of a particular individual or a group of individuals is recognized by others it becomes social. And if this narrated memory is adopted by institutions or if it is told by other people then it becomes a collective and cultural practice which can in turn influence personal and social identities of whoever telling the story. Ultimately, this change in identity and cultural practice leads to a change in the way an individual thinks and in the way an individual recalls particular memories but not others.

2.3.1.3. The identity constitutive function of narratives

Narratives do not function as a transmission belt between the past and present but they are constitutive parts of the present and a possible future. Constructing a coherent narrative about the past clarifies agents' stance in the present which, in turn, enables them to make "possible and intelligible" (Browning 2008: 46) projections about the future. Narrating ourselves as distinct agents with peculiar characteristics and specific orientations vis-à-vis other people, results in different behaviours in the real world.

In narrative analysis, an "abstracted, free-standing self is ruled out" (Whitebrook 2001: 136). An autonomous, free-will, a-historicized and a-social individual is disputed by narrative analysis. Self-identity is constructed upon a particular past as "the individual's self-understanding of himself [sic.] passes through history" (Carr 1986: 115). As noted earlier, social constructivism contends that in order to define their interests, actors, first of all, need to define their identities by giving an answer to the question of "who they are" (Jepperson *et al.* 1996: 60). However, the answer to "who

they are” is inextricably tied to *who they were like* in the past and *who they want to be like* in the future (Ringmar 1996: 75). Giving an answer to “What am I to do?” necessitates a preceding answer to “Of what story or stories do I find myself a part?” (Carr 1986: 92). Additionally, *where* they have been, are now or are going to be are other key questions that draw our attention to the nexus of time, space and identity. Hence, interests are determined by present identity and present identity is defined by narratives about the past and the future.

Narratives mediate the distinction between self-identity and social identity. As is suggested by Ricœur “Narrative identity is coherent but fluid and changeable, historically grounded but “fictively” reinterpreted, constructed by an individual but constructed in interaction and dialogue with other people” (cited in Ezzy 1998: 246). Therefore, during the process of narration story-telling agents not only situate themselves in a particular time and context but also associate themselves with a particular identity (Whitebrook 2001: 136). Narrative identity fills the gap between the idiosyncratic features of self-identity with the structure-given generic features of social identity by virtue of emplotment. “With the perspective of narrative as communicative practice, one can see self and social identity as emergent in interaction, rather than as an internal psychological essence or substratum” (Miller *et al.* 2012: 192). Put differently, narrative identity tends to emphasise narrativity and the role acted by the bearers of identity. A role is neither given nor does it exist without social interactions. A role of an agent is defined during social interactions within the constraints of existing narratives. Wodak and her colleagues have underlined the utility of narrative identity for understanding the dynamic interplay between identity and subject:

Narrative identity allows various, different, partly contradictory circumstances and experiences to be integrated into a coherent temporal structure, thus making it possible to sketch a person’s identity against the background of a dynamic constancy model which does justice to the coherence of a human life. Thus the concept of narrative identity can go beyond the one-sided model of an invariant, self-identical thing. It can take into account the idea that the self can never be grasped without the other, without change (Wodak *et al.* 1999: 14).

By and large, studies on social psychology aim to measure the level of attachment to a group identity. Nevertheless, the assumptions of social psychology on group behaviour is too reductionist and misses the whole picture. It is neither the existence of a group identity, nor the salience of the identity, nor the level of attachment that has to be examined. It is rather the meaning of a group to its members and the degree to which those meanings resonate with the meanings ascribed to a group by third parties (see Abdelal *et al.* 2006: 701-702). Social identity theories characterised by self/other categorization and cognitive psychological models based on hard-wired schemata fail to capture the whole story about what is actually going on in the social life and in the domain of politics. Many social constructivists drawing on the assumptions of social psychologism while theorizing the formation of social identity as a process of identification concentrate mainly upon the dynamics of exclusion/inclusion that separates an in-group from an out-group on the basis of group dynamics and interaction between groups (see Tajfel 1982; Hogg *et al.* 1995; Stets and Burke 2000; Huddy 2001; Flockhart 2006). Even though social life is designed through categories and processes of identifications “it is the language and symbolisations that are utilised in specific narratives which are able to create across a group of people a feeling of a shared national experience and common identity” (Browning 2008: 52). The ingroup-outgroup distinction does not always translate into a conflict between the self and other that automatically generates “outgroup hatred” (Hymans 2010: 465). Without coherent narratives about the self and others it is difficult to account for temporal and imaginative others that exist only in narratives not in real life, yet their influence can be similar to and in some cases stronger than the actual existing others (for an application of self/other dichotomy in IR, see: Neumann 1996; Wæver 1996; Diez 2004, 2005).

An analysis of generic identity categories based on essentialist features of a given group does not provide comprehensive explanation about individual and group behaviours. Citing Polkinghorne, Somers (1994: 616) has voiced a similar criticism by contending that “social actions should not be viewed as a result of categorizing oneself (“I am 40 years old; I should buy life insurance”) but should be seen to emerge in the context of a life-story with episodes (“I felt out of breath last week, I really should start thinking about life insurance”)”. This is, in many instances, what one can find in the

realm of international politics. Of course, people can see a doctor on a regular basis even if there is no symptom of illness or people can buy life insurance irrespective of their age or health conditions. Nevertheless, in international relations, where the access to accurate information about other countries' intentions is limited and oftentimes do result in either an exaggeration or an understatement, not only delayed but also hasty actions can have serious consequences. This is why political actors do not buy a "life insurance", i.e. build up their military, mobilize their army or sign alliances with other countries, just because their country sits on a vast amount of natural resources or because their country possesses excessive material wealth or because their country is located in a disadvantageous geography or because their political regime is described as democracy or dictatorship. Political actors would consider buying a "life insurance" when a sequence of events in world politics is plotted in accordance with past experiences and the flow of world politics in such a manner that a sense of necessity and urgency to have a "life insurance" is created.

As in the above example, in international relations political actors not only construct their discourses around a generic self and group categorisations but they also interweave such categories with stories, because categorisation without story-telling creates a weak justification for state actions. A strong line of argument has to be re-contextualized within time and space. That obviously entails generating coherent narratives in order to illustrate the point a political actor is making (de Fina and Georgakopoulou 2012: 97-98) thereby justifying later choices. A de-contextualized and a-historical argument based on generic categories fails to provide a necessary justification for further actions as it is emplotment that makes the future "possible and intelligible" (Browning 2008: 46). Thus, narratives play a major role in what political actors consider urgent and necessary and what kind of "life insurance" they would like to get, hence the scholarly interest in exploring the strategic culture of a given political community through their political narratives.

2.4. Conclusion

In this chapter, the main tenets of social constructivism as a philosophical approach as well as a theory of International Relations have been discussed. Three underdeveloped

elements in social constructivism have been identified. These are the under-theorized role of agency in cultural change, the lack of the influence of domestic politics and the missing link between identity construction and the constitutive role of language in social life. The last criticism has opened up the possibility of incorporating the assumptions of poststructuralist discourse analysis into our analysis of cultural change. The major assumption of discourse analysis in IR is that the notions of national interests and national security are the products of discursive practices of dominant political actors whose identities determine their political position within the foreign policy making process. Drawing on discourse analysis enables us to distinguish differing ways of the articulation of national interests and the description of national security by looking into the socially produced meanings of history, geography, security and international politics and how those meanings change over time. Since truth-production is considered so essential in poststructuralist discourse analysis that narratives as a way of producing self-portrayed truths, or rather stories, about self-identity, connect the past, the present and the future identities lie at the very heart of discursive construction of identity.

In addition to the storied characteristics of social life, i.e. socio-cultural role of narratives and the narrative aspect of social identity, i.e. socio-psychological role of narratives, the added value of narrative analysis is its introduction of the notion of emplotment and the dimension of temporality to discourse analysis. On the one hand, emplotment highlights the importance of agency and its role in constructing narratives. On the other hand, the emphasis on emplotment is the primary added value of narrative analysis as it has shifted the locus of discourse analysis from the creation of generic truths in discourses to the sequential and causal recounting of particular events.

The next chapter elucidates the interaction between narratives and culture and it suggests a framework for the use of narratives by political actors in their efforts to challenge dominant narratives found in strategic culture.

Chapter Three

A Narrative Approach to Strategic Culture

There has been a surge of academic interest in the impact of culture on state behaviour owing to the cultural turn in International Relations in the early 1990s. Most notably with the scholarly exchange between Colin S. Gray and Alastair I. Johnston, the concept of strategic culture staged a comeback with a new research focus on organizational culture, military doctrine and national security identities. There appears to be a consensus among the students of strategic culture on the assumption that since rationality is “context dependent”, national security strategy is formed and shaped by cultural factors and conducted within a milieu of cultural elements (Gray 1999: 53). The concept of strategic culture bears similarities to Max Weber’s contention that “a strategy is never rational in itself, but only from a particular point of view, from some conception of a valued end to be served by military means” (cited in Barkawi 1998: 181). As Finnemore (1996: 146) underlines, “the interest of actors cannot be just anything; they must be patterned and follow prevailing understandings of the culture in which actor acts.” Any policy that is lacking a cultural base is deprived of coherence and consistency (Macmillan *et al.* 1999: 10). Hence, culture sets the grounds for statesmen to choose the most appropriate and coherent policy among others in accordance with prevalent beliefs and values of a particular political community.

Taking these assumptions as its starting point, this chapter, initially, elucidates definitions and uses of the term strategic culture in the literature. Of several debates in the literature on strategic culture, this chapter is concerned with the identification of cultural elements which make up the strategic culture of a political community and poses questions of how and under what conditions strategic culture changes. In the first section, a discussion on the differences and similarities of the three generations of research on strategic culture is offered. The discussion revolves around the three different conceptualizations of (strategic) culture as toolkit, form and meaning. The chapter, then, proceeds with an introduction of a narrative approach to strategic culture. As discussed at length in the previous chapter, the approach of this thesis tilts towards a

social constructivist understanding of narratives as not only transmitters of meanings but also constitutive of identity. Narratives are discursive practices as well as cultural artefacts where one can find residuals of strategic culture. Furthermore, a narrative-centred definition of strategic culture shifts our focus to sentient agents and their role in cultural change by challenging master narratives with their counter-narratives. In the last section, existing explanations about how strategic culture change are scrutinized and then an explanation based on the influence of narrative entrepreneurs and the role of counter-narratives in cultural change is proposed.

3.1. Definitions of Strategic Culture: What is it and what is not?

Since the ancient times thinkers and military strategist such as Sun Tzu and Clausewitz there has been an intellectual and political interest in war and military strategy. After the Second World War, in the 1940s and 1950s research on national character was undertaken to understand the differing and converging ways of war-fighting and national styles in the conduct of military strategy. These studies are regarded as the harbinger of the strategic culture research (Lantis 2002: 91; Uz Zaman 2009: 70). Subjective factors, i.e. beliefs and values, which shape the decisions on use of force and military strategy have been the main research focus in national character studies (Klein 1991: 4). In these studies, national characters and national styles are treated as cultural elements bequeathed from one generation to the next (Sondhaus 2006: 1).

One of the early studies that were devoted to conceptualizing the influence of cultural factors in the making of military strategy was Jack Snyder's seminal work on the Soviet military strategy. Snyder, writing in the late 1970s, coined the term "strategic culture" to account for the differences between the Soviet and American military strategies. As defined by Snyder (1977: 8), strategic culture is "the sum total of ideas, conditioned emotional responses and patterns of habitual behavior that members of a national strategic community have acquired through instruction or imitation and share with each other with regard to nuclear strategy." Given his definition, the concept of strategic culture resembles a relatively more specialized version of political culture which was introduced by Almond and Verba in 1963. Nevertheless, Snyder's work was a fruitful attempt to present a culture-centred criticism against the game theoretical

deterrence model (e.g. Schelling 1960) that had been the only scientific explanation on offer in the field of strategic studies during the Cold War (Glenn 2009: 533).

Alastair Johnston proposes a typology of strategic culture literature and he argues for the evolution of research from descriptive studies to normative and positivist approaches. According to Johnston, the first generation research suffers several empirical problems due to its definition of culture as an all-encompassing concept that is everywhere and everything (Johnston 1995: 37). In his criticism of earlier strategic culture research Johnston questions the explanatory value of strategic culture as an independent variable on strategic behaviour. Colin Gray (1999: 50-51), in response, stresses that strategic culture is a context which not only creates a milieu or surrounding in which strategic decisions are taken, but also it interweaves different strategic behaviours by giving meanings to them. He defines strategic culture as “the persisting (though not eternal) socially transmitted ideas, attitudes, traditions, habits of mind, and preferred methods of operation that are more or less specific to a particular geographically based security community that has had a necessarily unique historical experience” (ibid.: 51). Gray clarifies his approach by highlighting that strategic culture is an all-encompassing phenomenon that cannot be fully grasped with a positivist perspective, because for Gray strategic culture is “within us; we, our institutions, and our behaviour, are the context” (ibid.: 53).

Since the early 1980s, critical theories and discourse analysis also have found their way into security studies, forcing many students of security studies to get involved with ontological and epistemological debates. In an attempt to disclose the underlying ideological motives that (re-)produce national military strategy the second generation research, as named by Johnston, draws on the arguments of poststructuralism. Subscribed to poststructuralism and deconstructionist theories of Foucault and Derrida second generation researchers pose questions about the intellectual and political tendency to reproduce hegemony of militaristic thinking and security-oriented mind among the circles of the national security elite. It has been contended by second generation researchers that the national security elite maintain their power in the policy-making process regarding national security issues by excluding other discourses from the realm of national security (Klein 1988).

Looking through the prism of critical theories, Bradley S. Klein, whose understanding of strategic culture is considered to be the quintessential example for the second generation literature, has studied the “cultural hegemony of organised state violence” (Klein 1988: 136). Klein has questioned the taken-for-granted notions of state hegemony on military strategy and the ways the real political objectives of a group of elite are concealed in the concept of national security and national interests. For Klein, military strategy is a cultural and discursive practice which produces and reproduces state’s hegemony on matters of national security by creating an exclusive language only for the people who are accepted into the circles of the national security elite. Hence, by articulating a professionalized and highly technical language a janus-faced strategic culture emerges, which, in most instances, distorts the truth about national security policies and hinders the accession of other domestic groups to the policy-making process.

Critical accounts of strategic culture set out to elucidate the uneven relationship between the state and civil society in the process of foreign policy-making (Klein 1988: 136). Therefore, the second generation research elaborates on “the communicative practices of those involved in the politics of strategy” (Lock 2010: 699) and the ways the national security elite claim the ultimate knowledge about national security. The second generation analysis of strategic culture problematizes the Weberian definition of the state as an entity claiming monopoly on the legitimate use of violence. To the second generation, strategic culture appears to be a sheer pretext disguised in elite discourses for enhancing state intervention and dominance at the domestic level (Poore 2004: 55). After all, strategic culture is viewed as a blindfold or a screen, so to speak, to restrict our vision of what actually national security policy looks like and what the real intentions of policy-makers are (Johnston 1995: 39-40). As we are only exposed to the “declaratory” face of strategic culture a researcher has to read between the lines whatever politicians express in public in order to find out what is in fact hidden from the public (Klein 1988: 138).

The 1990s witnessed a resurgence of scholarly debates about the role of culture owing to the failure of rational-materialist theories to explain state behaviour in a rapidly changing world politics. Studies on the organizational culture (Legro 1996), military

doctrines (Kier 1997) and cultural realist conceptualization of strategic culture (Johnston 1995) epitomize the third generation approach. Johnston is arguably the most prominent member of the third generation, whose work on Chinese strategic culture is oftentimes referred to by other scholars. To start with, Johnston defines strategic culture as an

integrated system of symbols (e.g., argumentation structures, languages, analogies, metaphors) which acts to establish pervasive and long-lasting strategic preferences by formulating concepts of the role and efficacy of military force in interstate political affairs, and by clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the strategic preferences seem uniquely realistic and efficacious (Johnston 1995: 46).

Johnston conceives of symbols, metaphors, language and analogies as part of strategic culture. In his model, strategic culture establishes deeply-ingrained patterns, which are so resistant to day-to-day fluctuations that culture helps policy-makers to put their preferences in a ranked order. Thus, policy-makers can frame their strategic actions as the only available realistic option out there. The arguments made by the third generation invoke the notion of rational actor that is “culturally shaped or enculturated” (Poore 2003: 280). Rationality is, thus, culturally bounded and change in culture is path-dependent (Neumann and Heikka 2005: 7). Notwithstanding Johnston’s serious challenge to the logic of rational-materialist models, for him culture only narrows down the options (Johnston 1995: 45). Put it this way, “Culture enables choices to be made by predisposing people to interpret situations in a limited number of ways. Screening out other options makes action possible by reducing the otherwise bewildering range of alternatives to a more manageable number from which a ‘rational’ choice can be made” (Wilson 2008: 14). Johnston’s arguments about the role of cultural elements on state behaviour are more or less decision-making centred. Hence, Johnston pays more attention to the processes of preference ranking rather than the substance and content of the chosen policy. In this sense, cultural traits of a political community are simply another explanatory variable that may or may not change the result of cost-benefit calculations during the decision-making process.

Such a reductionist understanding of strategic culture, at best, resembles a rationalist account of the role of ideas as instrumental and regulative factors akin to the notions of “road maps”, “focal points”, “institutionalized causal beliefs” and “world views” as proposed by Goldstein and Keohane (1993). The third generation studies are, however, laudable for their corroborating research which has underscored that culture matters. Moreover, their praiseworthy attempt to operationalize strategic culture by unpacking it has demonstrated that cultural explanations can be pitted against a “pure materialist power maximizing realist model” (Johnston 1999: 520).

3.1.1. Strategic culture as toolkit, form or meaning

The term culture has long been an enormous challenge for social scientists to work with. In this section, a typology of (strategic) culture is offered. The typology of (strategic) culture should be viewed as a heuristic tool to clarify the differences and similarities between three generations of research. This typology heavily draws on Glenn’s (2009) four categories of strategic culture research, i.e. epiphenomenal approaches, conventional constructivist, poststructuralist and interpretivist approaches. Table 3-1 illustrates the differences between three types of strategic culture.

Table 3-1: Typology of Strategic Culture

| | Toolkit | Form | Meaning |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| Logic | Bounded Rationality | Appropriateness | Communication |
| Agency | Strategic users | Rule follower | Sentient/situated agents |
| Language | Instrumental | Structural-representative | Performative-productive |
| Function of culture | Problem-solving | Regulative/Constitutive | Deliberative/Constitutive |
| Sources of culture | Existing cultural repertoires | Institutional norms | Discourses, meanings attributed to social and material world |
| Mechanism | Preference ranking | Rule formation and rule following | Meaning making |

Source: Author’s compilation heavily drawn on Glenn’s typology (2009).

3.1.1.1. Strategic culture as toolkit

Ann Swidler's (1986: 273) oft-cited definition describes culture as a "toolkit of symbols, stories, rituals and world-views, which people may use in varying configurations to solve different kinds of problems." Her definition rests on an understanding of politics as a problem-solving process where policy-makers have to utilize everything and anything at their disposal. Culture as toolkit provides agents with a necessary ideational leverage. Political actors, who can effectively employ cultural factors, gain an advantageous position vis-à-vis other actors (Longhurst 2004: 20-21; Glenn 2009: 532; Lantis and Charlton 2011: 296). Culture is useful as long as it helps policy-makers to frame their preferences and justify their choices. One of the problems of conceptualizing culture as toolkit is that agents are viewed as opportunist utility maximizers who enjoy almost unchallenged autonomy on their decisions. Hence, culture becomes a social vehicle existing out there in order for policy-makers to exploit it to achieve their goals. As a matter of fact, scholars treating culture as toolkit are more concerned with the instrumental functions of culture than its constitutive functions.

3.1.1.2. Strategic culture as form

On the other hand, culture as form "resembles institutionalized formal norms without any meaning that rule out some kind of forms and imposes a kind of form within that institutional setting" (Anderson 1978 quoted in Rose 1991: 11). Culture gives form to agents' interests and shapes actions. In this sense, culture functions as a reference point or a model for agents to act accordingly. This conceptualization of culture through institutionalized norms is, by and large, applied by conventional constructivists. In the edited book by Peter J. Katzenstein (1996), norms are conceived of as socially constructed institutionalized forms that shape and give form to strategic behaviour while they can also change form due to feedback effects coming from external circumstances (Jepperson *et al.* 1996: 52-53). Within the conventional constructivist research programme, norms are defined as "collective expectations about proper behaviour for a given identity" (*ibid.*: 54). Where strategic culture as form differs from strategic culture as toolkit is the former's emphasis on appropriate behaviour and its identity-related endogenous reasons for state action. For conventional constructivists, norms, first and

foremost, alter the rationale policy-makers operate with. Norms tell actors who they are and what they can/should do in a particular circumstance and institutional setting (Duffield *et al.* 1999: 161; Hopf 2002: 12). Norms are not mere tools to frame some policies so that they look more realistic and rational than other options. Norms give form to action, set the cultural and social limits for policy-makers and stress the social significance of acting in line with normative structures rather than acting in accordance with self-interests. Thus, norms do not only regulate behaviour by ranking several options, what more importantly norms do is to rule out some of those choices prior to ranking.

Theo Farrell (2002) reckons that culturalist and conventional constructivist research can collaborate and merge into one big research programme. For him, the fundamental difference between culturalism and conventional constructivism is primarily the result of different levels of analysis. While culturalists focus on domestic norms and their effects in the variation of state behaviour, constructivists address norms at the international level and they look into the process of norm diffusion among states and effects of international norms on state behaviour (Farrell 2002: 54).

Similarities between conventional constructivism and cultural realist programmes notwithstanding (Farrell 2002; Glenn 2009: 533), it is erroneous to reduce the difference between conventional constructivism and cultural realism to the levels of analysis problem. The difference between the two is not one of levels but one of different ontological perspective with regard to norms and culture. Conventional constructivism differs from cultural realism in the sense that the former aims to understand the constitutive role of ideas, norms and identities of socially interacting agents operating by the logic of appropriateness, whereas for the latter culture is either a dependent variable that begs for an explanation by other explanatory factors or culture is just a strategic instrument utilized by political actors whenever they need it.

Conventional constructivism has come under some criticism for its application of norms as free-standing ideational elements which inherently possess some kind of form. Therefore, conventional constructivism is incapable of accounting for the different meanings of norms. Conventional constructivists do pay attention to the variation in the

meanings of norms. However, most scholars have opted for offering analysis that aims to shed light on the existence and effects of norms as institutionalized forms. The failure of conventional constructivists to explore how norms arise in the first place consequently impedes them in identifying meanings of norms for different people in different settings. Recent research indicates that norms are contested and their meanings vary across time and space (Wiener 2009), hence different interpretations of norms need to be investigated in order to discern the relationship between behaviour and culture.

Johnston's model is of value only because it has familiarized students of rational choice theories by naturalizing culture as one of the causes of strategic action. However, his introduction of culture as a causal factor is limited in the sense that it does not reflect on the politics of strategic culture as meaning-making practices. On the other hand, culture as form broadens our analysis because the effects of cultural factors are not limited to their functions. Their existence and their forms shape state behaviour on their own. Political actors persuaded by norms change their logic of action from rationality to appropriateness. This shift, in turn, precludes policy-makers from exploiting cultural factors, refuting them out of hand or violating them without facing any consequences. For policy-makers, it becomes difficult to break free of cultural forms and the ties imposed upon them, although they might enjoy some flexibility depending on the resilience and resonance of norms (Cortell and Davis 2000). Nevertheless, explanations based on culture as form suffer an analytical incapability to open up the black-box of norms and explore the meanings attributed to them.

3.1.1.3. Strategic culture as meaning

The third conceptualization of culture focuses on meanings. Culture, in this sense, is described as a contested and emergent variable and never eternally stable (Lapid 1996: 8). Thus, culture is viewed as a dynamic interplay between practice and discourse (Neumann and Heikka 2005: 10), because "a focus on discourses, or on 'semiotic codes' permits attention to meaning without having to focus on whether particular actors believe, think, or act on any specific ideas" (Swidler 2001 quoted in Neumann and Heikka 2005: 10; Wedeen 2002: 720). Poststructuralism and interpretivism as described in Glenn (2009) take meaning-making activities and interpretations of policy-makers

more seriously than conventional constructivists. For conventional constructivists, norms as institutionalized forms of beliefs are the focal points. For interpretivists, on the other hand, form only matters once one wants to explore different meanings ascribed to it. And form is the least important thing for poststructuralists, as they infer that the discursive production of state action is never restrained by norms because there is no single meaning but multiple meanings given to a particular norm. Therefore, what is considered to be a norm-complying behaviour is actually a constructed and contested practice.

Klein's analysis of American strategic culture laid the grounds for a fruitful dialogue between discourse analysis and the students of strategic culture by focusing on discourses in identity politics and strategy-making (Lock 2010: 697). As alluded to earlier, agents and their discursive practices have to be paid more attention in analysis of strategic culture and the politics of identity should be the locus of research in order to explain the continuity and change in strategic culture. However, according to Klein, rather than being constrained by strategic culture policy-makers enjoy an ample room to manipulate it to achieve their political goals. Klein's absolute autonomous agency assumption creates an ambiguity about the relationship between behaviour and culture (Johnston 1995: 40). Put differently, Klein claims that in the hands of political actors language and culture are turned into instrumental tools used to create a "false consciousness" or a "distorted image" of truths about national security policy. Yet, language is the site where struggles for meaning take place. Thus power struggles are not repressive but also productive in the sense that they strive to define knowledge about the real world rather than concealing it. This is why, Klein fails to capture the gradual transformation in strategic culture due to his separation of real strategic culture from the declaratory one (Neumann and Heikka 2005:10). Presumably, Klein would claim that change in real culture could only happen in the long-term with the replacement of an hegemonic ideology by another hegemonic one whilst declaratory culture could easily change in accordance with short-term political goals. In contrast, this thesis claims that rather than a result of an ideological shift, change in strategic culture can happen as a result of discursive practices. The argument put forth in this thesis differs from Klein's, because strategic culture is not considered just as declaratory in which language is just a

vehicle for elites to fulfil their political objectives. On the contrary, this thesis claims that we need to pay more attention to the constitutive role language and transformative role of agency not as ideologically-oriented demagogues, but as sentient agents who think, articulate, communicate and take action.

Gray's interpretivist approach, on the other hand, views culture as a milieu and a context which proscribes and prescribes everything and ultimately constitutes strategic behaviour. Gray asserts that mind and action, culture and behaviour cannot be analysed separately and thus a researcher needs a holistic approach to investigate strategic culture. Although Gray's argument contextualizes strategic behaviour and acknowledges the role of cultural factors in his writings on strategic culture, the national character of a country, its history and its geography are treated as essence-like eternally fixed cultural traits that generally impose certain regularities on strategic behaviour. This thesis raises a fundamental objection to the use of essence-like cultural factors such as ethnicity, religion or pre-given national identity in our analysis of culture. Gray's conceptualization of culture is bounded to peculiar historical experiences and geographical location of the state. However, meanings are not ultimate, fixed, eternally stable understandings (Larsen 1997: 12). Not only Johnston's but also Gray's operationalization of culture is thus based on a "reified concept of culture" (Neumann and Heikka 2005: 6), which is ultimately problematized in this thesis.

This thesis argues that sources of strategic culture can neither be discovered by investigating the original set of historical experiences during the formative years of a political community nor by illuminating its location on the map. Sources of strategic culture can only be found in the present day discursive practices, i.e. narratives of policy-makers about their history, geography and national identity. Therefore, strategic culture analysis should "go all the way down" (Poore 2003: 282) and should object to determinism of history, geography and national identity (Bloomfield and Nossal 2007: 289). One can wonder what use we can make of such an unstable conceptualization of strategic culture, if it is in flux all the time, if we are not able to know what cultural elements will mean tomorrow. This is a valid criticism. Describing strategic culture with a slippery term, i.e. meanings and narratives, may turn it into a more complex rather than a rigorous model. However, some narratives can be less contested and thus fixed

for a certain time and for a particular community, thus they become master narratives. Eventually, some meanings become more stable categories and “persisting though not eternal” forms in time. Thus, meanings and more generic categories are not mutually exclusive, yet this thesis concentrates on meanings in order to make a contribution to the underdeveloped discursive approaches to strategic culture with its focus on narratives and narrative analysis.

3.2. A Narrative Approach to Strategic Culture

There are a number of studies in IR literature that have applied narrative analysis. Erik Ringmar (1996) uses narratives as a way of proposing a non-essentialist cultural explanation for why Sweden joined the Thirty Years war in 1630. Michael Barnett (1999) employs narratives in his study of the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process in the 1990s as a way of demonstrating the influence of cultural representations of a collective memory on Israeli foreign policy. He probes into narratives about the origins and the development of Israeli national identity and their impact on Israeli politics. On the other hand, Hidemi Suganami (1997) underscores the importance of narratives in understanding and accounting for the causes of war. In his later writings, Suganami (1999, 2008) contends that narrative explanations supplement causal explanations by means of an epistemological basis for a dialogue between history and international relations. Therefore, his take on narratives depicts narrative analysis as not only an interpretivist method but also as a new opening and a venture for the theories of International Relations. Drawing on Lyotard’s work and subscribed to poststructuralist discourse theory, Janice Bially Mattern (2001) has employed a narrative-based research design to look into the social and discursive interactions among the members of a security community. In her analysis, narratives are viewed as statements made up of certain phrases and links. Mattern has demonstrated that how “representational force” of identity created in dominant narratives inculcates a sense of we-ness by tolerating, terrorizing or excluding certain phrases from being used in public.

Recently, narratives and narrative analysis have gained currency in security and strategic studies too (e.g. Freedman 2006; Ringmar 2006; Kuusisto 2009; Wibben 2011;

Flockhart 2012; Miskimmon *et al.* 2012). Some scholars like Ringmar, Kuusisto and Wibben maintain a poststructuralist approach in their analyses of the emergence and prevalence of some types of narratives, i.e. tragic, heroic, romantic and comic, in Western political discourse. Whereas Ringmar (2006) analyses narratives produced by the Western elite during the 2003 Iraqi War, Kuusisto (2009) makes a case for the importance of telling less deterministic and more flexible stories about world politics and inter-state relations in order to overcome crisis situations and settle conflicts between states. Wibben (2011), on the other hand, probes into the dominance of paternalistic and state-centred security narratives prevailed among the elite as well as the students of International Relations throughout the Cold War. She proposes a new model for talking about security and doing research in security studies that centres upon feminist narratives. In contrast to these critically-oriented research on narratives, Freedman (2006), Antoniadis *et al.* (2010), Flockhart (2012) and Miskimmon *et al.* (2012) employ “strategic narratives” to account for the relationship between rhetoric and national security through careful examinations of military strategies and defence policies of Western countries and NATO.

Lawrence Freedman (2006: 22) refers to narratives as strategic tools which “are designed or nurtured with the intention of structuring the responses of others to developing events. They are strategic because they do not arise spontaneously but are deliberately constructed or reinforced out of the ideas and thoughts that are already current.” Drawing on Freedman’s definition, for Antoniadis *et al.* (2010: 5) strategic narratives are “representations of a sequence of events and identities, a communicative tool through which political elites attempt to give determined meaning to past, present and future in order to achieve political objectives.” Adding an identity dimension to the functions of narratives, Miskimmon *et al.* (2012: 3-4) conceptualize strategic narratives as the “means for political actors to construct a shared meaning of international politics to shape the behaviour of domestic and international actors” and as “future-oriented identity claims that articulate a distinctive (national/regional) position on a specific issue or policy domain, or in general with regard to the place of an actor in world politics.”

The narrative-based approach promoted by Freedman, Antoniadis *et al.* and Miskimmon *et al.* is policy and issue centric because it mainly focuses on the purposeful usages of narratives as a “communicative tool” to justify policy objectives, to legitimize state actions, to form alliances and to rally people around a policy (Antoniades *et al.* 2010: 5). Nonetheless, narratives are not reducible to political rhetoric or policy-frames. A shared meaning of international politics for a particular political community cannot be explained on its own unless shared meanings given to that specific community’s place in time and space are taken into account. A state has to form a coherent history and associate itself with a specific geography in order to position itself vis-à-vis other states as well as to disseminate its own perspective on the events of international politics.

The remainder of the chapter gives a blueprint of a social constructivist model to implement narratives into the literature on strategic culture and cultural change.

3.2.1. Strategic culture and narratives

Communicating and interacting with others in order to convey your ideas and persuade others to cooperate with you or at least not to work against your interests, are vital practices in international politics.

What policy makers are doing in any particular situation goes beyond merely making choices among various policy options. They are performing according to a social script which is itself part of a larger social order. By virtue of this performance they are involved in a ritual reproduction (or repudiation) of that social order. Foreign policy thus becomes a practice that produces a social order as well as one through which individual and collective subjects themselves are produced and reproduced (Doty 1993: 301).

In such a social environment, narratives are one way of conveying views and selling policies to others. Narratives can be pure rhetoric if they are not backed by changes in policies. Nevertheless, narratives are not a type of political communication that aims to manipulate the public opinion so that a desired international order can be maintained (cf. Freeman 2006; Miskimmon *et al.* 2012). The rhetorical action criticism notwithstanding, in this thesis from a social constructivist perspective narratives are treated as identity related and constitutive stories. As is evident in the above quotation from Doty, foreign policy is pertained to the production of collective identities, which “makes ‘foreign’

certain events and actors” (Campbell 1992: 69). Thereby, narratives’ latent function, i.e. the production and reproduction of identity as a cultural process, becomes the very focal point of our narrative analysis. In this vein, Somers contends that

stories guide action; that people construct identities (however multiple and changing) by locating themselves or being located within a repertoire of emplotted stories; that “experience” is constituted through narratives; that people make sense of what has happened and is happening to them by attempting to assemble or in some way to integrate these happenings within one or more narratives; and people are guided to act in certain ways, and not others, on the basis of the projections, expectations, and memories derived from multiple but ultimately limited repertoire of available social, public, and cultural narratives (Somers 1994: 614).

Inasmuch as narration is a meaning-making activity, “meaning, in narrative, is a cultural phenomenon, partaking of cultural processes” (Bal 1997 quoted in Wibben 2011: 46). Bruner (1991: 18) also posits that narratives accrue over a period of time and “the accruals eventually create [...] a ‘culture’ or a ‘history’ or, more loosely, a ‘tradition’”. Residues of cultural elements are found in narratives while narratives themselves are indeed constitutive components of culture.

Johnson (2006: 5, emphasis added) describes strategic culture as a “set of shared beliefs, assumptions, and modes of behavior, *derived from common experiences and accepted narratives (both oral and written)*, that shape collective identity and relationships to other groups, and which determine appropriate ends and means for achieving security objective”. This definition helps us focus on the sources of strategic culture and the role of experiences and the way those experiences are told and re-told in a plot. Strategic culture defines and shapes the consciousness as well as the willingness and intentions of a political community as it gives meanings to material capabilities, opportunities on offer and challenges posed by the international system. Strategic culture is not solely end-oriented. Nor does it imply an instrumental use of values and ideas as a form of political/strategic communication. Strategic culture defines the content of policies and determines the range of meanings available for the political elite to comprehend events and episodes of international politics and actions of international

actors. Gray (2007) also associates strategic culture with narratives and master narratives. He defines master narratives as

the disarmingly elementary, even commonsensical, idea, that a security community is likely to think and behave in ways that are influenced by what it has taught itself about itself and its relevant contexts. And that education, to repeat, rests primarily upon the *interpretation of history* and *history's geography* (or should it be geography's history?) (Gray 2007: 5, emphases added).

In this thesis, strategic culture is defined *as socially-scripted and transmitted narratives that not only consist of meanings ascribed to social and physical realities of international politics, i.e. political actors, concepts, events, institutions, places and the nature of international system, but also arrange and link these meanings in a story-like way that renders policies and behaviours of a given political community meaningful, sequential and a (quasi-)causal set of actions.*

In addition to Gray's emphasis on narratives about history and history's geography, borrowing from Miskimmon *et al.* (2012: 4) in this thesis narratives about international politics and narratives about "the place of an actor in world politics" are also included as the third dimension of strategic culture. Therefore, this thesis focuses on narratives about history, geography and international politics. Narratives about history, geography and international politics construct and preserve the identity of the state because narratives not only organise actions but also forge our conceptions of ourselves in time, space and relations with others. Carr (1986: 87) asserts that narratives help individuals not to "lose track" of what and why they are doing while they are doing it. Strategic culture defined as political narratives about events and actions in the field of foreign and security policy keeps choices and actions of a political community in line with a master narrative that links the past, present and future actions. Furthermore, political narratives shape the understandings of international politics, attribute meanings to military campaigns and give reasons for state violence or inter-state cooperation. Narratives are more than empty rhetoric, because narrative theory problematizes the dualism prevalent in positivist approaches concerning the relationship between behaviour and belief as it "transgress[es] the practice/theory distinction of modern

science, investigates how acts and events are framed in the telling of narratives and are thus constructed through and by them” (Wibben 2011: 65).

This thesis is concerned with political narratives told by the state elite of a given country about their country’s past experiences, about their relations with its geography and neighbours and their country’s position and role in the international system as it is alluded to above that common experiences and narratives are the main sources of strategic culture. Narratives can be told by military and non-military actors (Johnson 2006: 14-15; Greathouse 2010: 68). For instance, stories of soldiers from the combat zone can be translated into political narratives if they are picked up and popularized by journalists, politicians and other experts. However, in this thesis our focus is on political narratives that are primarily produced by politicians and public officials.

The term political narrative is borrowed from Shenhav (2005; 2006). Shenhav posits that political narratives emerge “from a formal political forum, such as a parliament, a cabinet, party meetings or political demonstrations or as narrative produced by politicians and public officials in the course of their duties” (Shenhav 2006: 247). Broadly speaking, the political field encompasses any issue that becomes an object of power struggles and formal or informal collective decision making processes (Torfing 2005: 11; also see section 2.2.1 of this volume). On the other hand, a narrow definition of the political concentrates on the official status of narrators and the setting in which narratives are told. Political narratives imply the usage of a particular theme and storyline by politicians in the public sphere while talking about the events and actions in one policy domain. In this thesis, political narratives are the ones that account for the events of international politics and experiences of a political community in the field of security and defence policy.

In this thesis, political narratives encompass descriptions and evaluations of historical, geographical and international realities in a perspectival mode. Political narratives represent the views of politicians on their country’s history, its neighbourhood and its role in the international system. These views are built upon particular formulations, or rather emplotment of the relationship between national experiences and international events. In doing so, political narratives constitute and transform “identity

categories and conceptions about what it means to be” Turkey as a historical, geographical entity and an international actor (Wæver 2005: 43). In this context, the social identity of Turkey as an entity and an actor is determined by political narratives told by the Turkish state elite during their interactions with other domestic and international actors. Rather than a priori assumptions based on the national character of Turkey or the political stereotype of the Turkish nation, the social identity of Turkey as a member of the international community is “forged *only* in the context of ongoing relationships that exist in time, space, and emplotment” (Somers 1994: 622, emphasis in original).

To sum up the point so far, political narratives about past experiences are discursive practices that profoundly shape the present identity by narrating the past differently. In a similar vein, narratives about geography consisting elite discourses on country’s geopolitical location and its neighbours form a political basis for country’s engagements with its environs. In addition, narratives about international politics are built upon a repeated storyline in the discourses of politicians about their assessments of international order. Briefly, these three different types of political narratives involve particular interpretations about history, geography and international politics. A cautionary note should be made at this point that categorisation is done for analytical convenience; in fact these narratives cannot be separated from each other as they function in collaboration.

3.2.1.1. Narratives about the past

For constructivism, history matters (Wendt 1999: 109), because the present cannot be standing on its own without the past (Copeland 2000: 210). The past is not a mere historical background for the present. Interpreting the past constitutes the present by rendering it the only possible social reality (Adler 2002: 102). In general, constructivist researchers object to the rationalist assumption that history can be told objectively even if a researcher has access to all the evidence and facts about an historical event (Reus-Smit 2008: 401). For social constructivism history is not something out there waiting to be found; rather it is, in the words of Hayden White, as much “invented as found” (quoted in Freeman 1998: 37, emphasis in original). Thus, there is no one single history,

but there are several histories constructed by discursive practices of agents (Reus-Smit 2008).

A narrative approach places emphasis on the notion of narrative time and the mechanism of narration as a way of constructing subjective knowledge about the self in time and place (Ricoeur 1984; Carr 1986). Nothing, even the past, remains eternally stable and unchallenged. History is more disputed and contested than continuous and linear. Therefore, history can be re-arranged, re-narrated and punctuated, but it is never a “divisible entity” (Howlett and Rayner 2006: 1). The past cannot be grasped without the present whereas the present is already constituted by the past. Temporality and narrativity are inseparable, because the succession of events is relative and subjective as it needs a plot to be considered as a linear progression of past, present and future (Freeman 1998: 42). A sequence of historical instances makes sense if only those events are transposed to stories. The primary claim of narrative theory is, thus, that temporality, the notion of historical time, is not out there, it is constructed within narratives of agents (ibid.: 44).

Narratives about past experiences are not necessarily representations of truth about the past. They do not necessarily correspond to the actual experiences of states. What narratives about the past, in essence, do is to establish a reasonable link between the past and the present of a collective identity through writing a different plot or a life-story (Carr 1986: 74) so as to “provide an account of where they [nations] have been and where they [nations] should be going” (Barnett 1999: 8). “Narrative is thus not simply a re-presentation of some prior event; it is the means by which the status of reality is conferred on events. However, historical narratives also perform vital political functions in the present; they can be used as resources in contemporary political struggles” (Devetak 2005 quoted in Glenn 2009: 536). Linking present choices to the past is a contested practice because while some actors would aim to promote a positive image of the past, there are always some others who would challenge it with negative images. In narratives, the past can refer to a temporal other as well as a forgotten image of the self.

By virtue of being “sentient agents” (Schmidt 2008, 2010) actors can intentionally change their own history or interpret their experiences with/in time and

space differently. Narratives resembling historical representations “establish preconditions and parameters for the possibility of action rather than explaining why certain choices are made” (Dunn 2006: 372). By telling narratives the narrator “bring[s] the coordinates of time, space and personhood into a unitary frame so that the sources ‘behind’ these representations can be made empirically visible for further analytical scrutiny in the form of ‘identity analysis’” (de Fina and Georgakopoulou 2012: 159, emphasis in original). Nevertheless, as noted earlier narratives are not necessarily accurate representations of the past.

From a positivist perspective, an analogy (cf. Khong 1992), for instance, takes into consideration one single event found in history and draws parallels between the present and the past. Yet, recollecting and singling out one isolated incident, notwithstanding its resemblance with the present situation, accounts for only the one side of the story. Resting on an empiricist understanding of experience and a psychological analysis of behaviour, analogical reasoning in its positivist usage is fraught with problems owing to the treatment of two presumably similar events as isolated from their contexts. Furthermore, even if policy-makers search for analogies and cognitive short-cuts during the decision-making process, use of such analogies are conditioned by political struggles to define a particular historical instance. Thus, storytelling differs from analogical reasoning since narratives constitute identity by creating a meaningful and sequential link between the past and the present rather than by highlighting the similarities between a past event and a present situation. An analogy cannot be drawn on the basis of identifying similarities in the occurrence of two particular events. Rather, an analogy can only be drawn on basis of similarities between storylines used when people recount those two events.

The difference between trauma and historical narrative needs to be clarified too, so that we can shed light on the role of narratives in cultural change. The main difference between trauma and narrative is that trauma is a psychological disorder due to “exposure to catastrophic life events” (Weathers and Keane 2008: 657), which distorts the present day decision-making. Trauma refers to a rigid, monolithic and uncontested collective memory of past events (Fierke 2006). Fierke (2006: 121) distinguishes

traumatic narrative of the past from a non-traumatic narrative by the degree of linguistic clarity as well as the vocabulary people use when they recall their memories of severely distressing experiences. According to Fierke (ibid.) “the traumatized individual or group continues to live within the linguistic boundaries of a past world”, which suppresses new narratives to flourish and eventually trauma precludes healthy communication between societies. Instead of making the present moment subservient to the past, a non-traumatic narrative “reflexively identifies the past as past”(ibid.). Although traumatic and non-traumatic narratives are both constitutive of the present and present identities, the outcomes of telling non-traumatic narratives is different from telling a traumatic narrative. A non-traumatic narrative helps members of a particular community to relieve the distress caused by a traumatic experience and enables them to establish new links between their past, present and future.

Narratives about past experiences are not the only dimension of strategic culture. Working with narratives does not confine our analysis to the past, because identity is not only situated in time but also within space (Hansen 2006: 49). Ringmar (1996: 76) points at the mutually constitutive relationship between an agent and its environment, he writes: “Distance is not a natural, geometrical notion, but is instead always at the mercy of an anthropocentric and experiential definition. A thing is far away or close depending [...] on where we are ourselves.” Telling stories about our history and our geography is more than a cultural activity, by telling stories we actually locate ourselves in a certain time and associate ourselves with a particular place; we exist now and then as well as here and there (ibid.: 77). Our experiences with our environment depends on how and what kind of a relationship we conceive of between ourselves and space. This argument has been widely discussed and applied by critical geopolitical researchers.

3.2.1.2. Narratives about geography

The sense of where we stand in time by telling a coherent story about our past coalesces with the sense of where we locate ourselves in space. This is how the space-time nexus creates a narrative identity in the present and narrative identity in turn crafts a role to be played in the present and in the future.

The arguments of critical geopolitics are quite useful as they are also interested in the role of geopolitical narratives in the process of foreign and security policy making. Critical geopolitics bypasses the traditional geopolitical thinking which is centred upon pre-given features of a particular geography. The critical geopolitics literature has opened the black-box of geopolitics and has shed light on the construction of the geopolitical thinking through discourses and geopolitical narratives (e.g. Dalby 1991; O'Tuathail and Agnew 1992; Dodds 1994). According to the traditional conceptualization of geopolitics, geography plays a deterministic albeit a static role in foreign policy making. The traditional theories have been dominant for a long time due to their claims for offering scientific, objective and a-political analysis owing to their emphasis on the enduring advantages and disadvantages of geographical location and topographic features of a country. Of these advantages and disadvantages the lack or abundance of natural and human resources (population), the number of neighbours and being located in a naturally fortified terrain are believed to be the most notable factors that guide and shape foreign policy of states. For geopolitical thinkers, these are vital possessions of a country which can be a blessing or a curse, depending on the strategic capabilities of the statesmen to protect them against external threats and utilize them for their country's advantage in the international arena. O'Tuathail and Agnew have criticized such an a-political and static notion of geopolitics as they have contended that geopolitics is "a discursive practice by which intellectuals of statecraft 'spatialize' international politics in such a way as to represent it as a 'world' characterized by particular types of places, peoples and *dramas* [stories]" (1992: 192, italics added). The authors have asserted that a traditional understanding of geography is anti-geographical because it is one-dimensional and it disregards the cultural and historical dynamics that make geography a fluid, flexible and an organic factor whose meaning can change in time (ibid.: 191).

Colin Gray, in his treatment of geography as a crucial factor in foreign policy-making, comes closer to the arguments of critical geopolitics. Gray also raises a similar criticism and he argues that "geography does not determine national strategic culture in some simple and mechanistic fashion, but the geographical circumstances of all kinds of a community cannot help but play a large role in the course of that community's

historical experience” (Gray 1991: 313). Even though Gray does not propose a solution for the analysis of the influence of geographical circumstances in national strategic culture, he explicitly indicates that geography has to be studied in conjunction with past experiences.

Different meanings of geography and neighbourhood of a country make some policy options redundant or inappropriate, while opening up new possibilities. Drawing maps, demarcating borders, claiming sovereignty over a piece of land, crossing international borders are all different types of practices that are shaped and determined by narratives about geography and the location of the state in world politics (Ó Tuathail 1994; Eva 1998; Paasi 1998; Müller 2008). Geographical location, demarcating state boundaries and conflict over land are of great significance for understanding how the states act and interact with other states. Yet, one need to concentrate upon strategies for redefining the meanings of boundaries and “spaces of international politics” by telling different geopolitical narratives. In this regard, narratives enable us to comprehend the change in political actors’ understandings of their experiences with/within their own environment and the change in their geopolitical imaginations about the place of their country not only on geographical but also political and economic maps (for a recent analysis of discourse-based approach to geopolitics see Müller 2008, 2010).

For instance, Torfing (2005: 18) gives an example of discursive formation of space when he writes that “the construction of the land as a ‘business opportunity’ constructs certain people as urban developers.” Here, it suffices to say that resembling Torfing’s argument, Ahmet Davutoğlu, at the Ambassadors’ Conference in 2010, produced a narrative by highlighting that if Turkey wants to become a proactive global player Turkish diplomats have to give up the role of “fire-fighters” who are used to extinguish crisis whenever it is broke out, instead they should become “urban developers.” For him, diplomats as urban developers are able to create different visions about the future state of international politics. Only in this way, Turkish diplomats can prevent crises happening in the first place and consequently Turkey can become a contributor to as well as a creator of regional and international order.

3.2.1.3. Narratives about international politics

The last category of narratives to be explored in this thesis is narratives concerning elite understandings of international politics and the role of their country in the international system. These narratives include future projections and an interpretation of today's circumstances as well as a plausible and viable role that a country can play in the present day and possibly in the future. Narratives about international politics lay the foundations for tomorrow's foreign policy. However, these are neither strategic plans nor a grand strategy. They are more akin to scenarios produced by the state elite or experts. Scenarios are "descriptive narratives of plausible alternative projections of a specific part of the future" (Fahey and Randall 1998: 6). Scenarios are simulation-like thought experiments projected towards the future perhaps similar to counter-factual thought experiments (Booth *et al.* 2009). However, narrative differs from a scenario in its emphasis on the present meaning of international politics rather than its future meanings. Inasmuch as narratives are used for enhancing decision-making and improving forecasting abilities, narrating realities of world politics are discursive practices that construct present day identity of a state. A political community attributes meanings to what is going on in international politics depending on its vision on the future of international system and its expectations for a possible future status to acquire and a role to play in the international arena.

Based on their narratives, statesmen craft an international role for their countries. The literature on the role theory and role conceptions in IR dates back to Kal J. Holsti's article published in 1970 (also see Kohli *et al.* 1995). Students of European integration also have applied the role theory to their research on member states' role within European integration (e.g. Aggestam 1999; Elgström and Smith 2006). Roles are crafted by the political elite within their discursive practices. Rather than role-taking per se, role-making are of great value for our analysis of a country's narratives about the international system and its role and place as an actor within that system.

According to structural theories of social life, status determines the role and thus role comes with "fixed behaviors expected of persons occupying a status" (Stryker 2001: 217; Stryker 2008). Symbolic interactional theories and social constructivism, on the

other hand, argue for a social role which is not as much imposed and pre-given as structural theories claim, but is an outcome of social interactions among individuals (Wendt 1999; Rumelili 2004: 30). The dynamics of social interaction pave the way for the emergence of different role conceptions regardless of the status bestowed by society. Narrative analysis captures such role-crafting activities. Since identity is narrated and the society is built upon social experiences, social roles do not exist without narratives. The status occupied by a state in the international system must resonate with its narratives at the national level that characterise the role a state aspires to perform on the international stage.

According to narrative theory, an actor and her/his role “exist only in narratives they tell about themselves or that are told about them” (Ringmar 1996: 75). Ricœur’s definition of narrative identity as “an identity of a character (*personage*); [...] which executes the plot” (cited in Wodak *et al.* 1999: 14, emphasis in original) clarifies the dynamics of interplay between social interaction, narration and role conceptions. In a network of social relations people perform their role based on an interactive script that can be re-told/written during social interactions. People position themselves vis-à-vis others differently in different circumstances with different storylines (see Davies and Harré 1990; Harré *et al.* 2009). Therefore, there is no single and pre-given role played by a particular political community, role varies depending on the meanings attached to international politics and the ways in which a political community position itself vis-à-vis other communities within their narratives. In the empirical parts on Turkey’s international role the discursive practices in which the AKP elite have carved out multiple roles for Turkey to play in world politics are explained by and through narratives about the nature of the international system after the Cold War and Turkey’s changing role in regional and international politics.

3.2.2. Explaining change in strategic culture

The last point that needs to be explored is the tension between continuity and change in strategic culture. This section is devoted to addressing questions such as: What changes in strategic culture? Who/what fosters cultural change? How does strategic culture

change? Why does strategic culture change? What are the preconditions of cultural change?

3.2.2.1. What changes in strategic culture?

Strategic culture is assumed to create a sense of continuity rather than change since cultural elements tend to endure over time (Lantis 2002: 109). What makes a thing an element of culture is its persistence and endurance over time (Gray 2007: 14). Core cultural values and ideas are so deep-rooted within society that nullifying let alone challenging them is virtually impossible. People stick to those core beliefs even when those beliefs dictate an action at the expense of their interests because core beliefs are “sedimented in the collective consciousness of a society” (Lantis 2002: 109). Sedimented beliefs may turn into habits which are internalized to the point that nobody may even think of questioning them.

The reason for such strong adherence to some core cultural elements can particularly be found in people’s quests and desires for cognitive consistency about their identity and their environment (Lantis 2002: 112). Berger (1998: 24) also contends in a similar vein that any new information out of the existing culture is very much doubted as humans are psychologically consistency seekers. Mitzen (2006: 342) makes a strong case for the cognitive order argument as she underscores the importance of ontological security by arguing that “Individuals need to feel secure in who they are, as identities or selves.” For Mitzen (*ibid.*: 354), the need to feel not only physically but also mentally secure is one of the reasons why seemingly pathological practices become persistent behaviours and habits even for rational actors. However, it has been discussed that strategic culture can change over time depending on the impacts of traumatic events or socialization into international norms or learning from experiences (Meyer 2005; Neumann and Heikka 2005; Lantis and Charlton 2011; Bloomfield 2012).

Cultural change may refer to the use of new means to achieve pre-defined goals (Knopf 2003: 189), whereas a paradigmatic change happens when not only the strategy of achieving goals but also the rationale of foreign policy-making is transformed (cf. Hall 1993). Longhurst (2004) differentiates fundamental change from instrumental

adaptation. She asserts that as a result of an instrumental adaptation “a strategic culture is finely tuned, or adjusted, to match existing core values to new situations” (Longhurst 2004: 18). Core beliefs and values are maintained, but because of the changing circumstances there occurs a pressure for adaptation to the new environment by altering some of the secondary components of culture. Meyer (2012) also makes a distinction between the change in identity narratives and change in norms. He argues that identity narratives tend to change generally in the event of a crisis or a military defeat, whereas change in norms occurs more gradually through mechanisms of learning and socialization. This thesis looks into discursive change. Change in strategic culture is understood as change in narratives. Discursive change takes place when a master narrative is challenged by counter-narratives.

3.2.2.2. Under what conditions can strategic culture change?

Notwithstanding the continuity arguments, scholars have long argued that cultural change occurs under some circumstances (Farrell 2001; Lantis 2002; Longhurst 2004; Meyer 2006), because strategic culture is neither “monolithic” nor “immutable” (Meyer 2012). Cultural elements can change albeit slowly even when they seem to be stable (Gray 1999: 52). Cultural change can happen due to structural factors such as advancements in technology, variation in military capabilities and diffusion of international norms and best practices (Farrell 2001; Farrell and Terriff 2002: 5-8). Nevertheless, policy transfer and norm diffusion approaches tend to overplay the role of structural factors, i.e. the impact of geographical proximity and the pressure coming from international organizations (Alderson 2001). Furthermore, as discussed earlier in this chapter, meanings given to norms vary among states, thereby making norm diffusion research simply a search for similarities in form among different states rather a normative change in culture.

Generational change, personnel change and turnover in government are other conditions that can lead to cultural change. Policy failures of an incumbent government may result in a change in strategic culture if a new government not only aims to fix the old mistakes but also replaces the old ideas and values with new ones. Despite the repercussions of policy failures that result in the replacement of an old group of policy-

makers with a new one, turnover in government and personnel change do not necessarily precipitate a cultural change (Levy 1994: 299). Johnson (2006: 8) stresses the same point too: “The agendas of new administrations are important and must be considered for an accurate forecast of a country’s next moves on security policy. Such policy issues are not, however, “strategic culture”. Strategic culture is the medium through which those agenda items are processed.” In other words, change in policy does not necessarily imply a cultural change. Rather, policy change is an outcome of cultural change.

Generational change also gives some insights about the relationship between continuity and change in strategic culture. The generational change argument places emphasis on cultural clashes among different generations of policy-makers. However, what makes something cultural is its endurance over time. Culture transcends generational differences and imposes certain patterns of practices for different generations. Since culture is socially transmitted, new members of a community are supposed to internalize cultural elements through learning and socialization. Cultural elements and practices are inherited from one generation to the next, whereby they survive throughout generations. Despite the fact that culture endures over time from generation to generation, a new generation of group members can bring new and challenging ideas into the group in times of uncertainty and crisis.

Times of uncertainty, crisis situations, external shocks and dramatic events are listed as the primary conditions that precipitate change in strategic culture (Gray 1999; Lantis 2002; Farrell 2005; Gray 2007). An external shock may occur in the form of war, depression and revolution. External shocks are seen as a necessary condition for a radical cultural change. According to Farrell (2005: 14), “Shocks of such a profound nature are widely seen as necessary to undermine the legitimacy of existing norms, shifting power within communities, and enable cultural entrepreneurs to construct a new consensus around alternative norms.” A failure of existing culture precedes a change in strategic culture. That kind of change presents a cultural discontinuity or a wholesale change. According to Longhurst (2004: 18), abrupt events and traumas lead to fundamental change by “nullify[ing] the existing strategic culture, giving rise to the establishment of new core beliefs.” Although external shocks and crisis are of great

importance for comprehending why the influence of old culture diminishes and how cultural change is triggered, crisis-driven and failure-based arguments fall short of explaining the content of change (Finnemore and Sikkink 2001: 406; Schmidt 2011: 3). Therefore, one has to turn to the interpretations of a crisis situation offered by the agents of culture in order to have a better grasp of the cultural change which is triggered by a crisis or an external shock.

Contrary to external shocks, traumatic experiences, systemic dynamics and norm diffusion arguments, in this thesis an agent-centred approach to cultural change is proposed by focusing on the abilities and practices of bearers and users of culture to produce new narratives in order to absorb new experiences. The essence of cultural change is assumed to be produced by agents and inscribed in their discourses rather than dictated by external factors (Neumann and Heikka 2005; for a general discussion on the role of agents also see Béland and Cox 2010; Schmidt 2011). Constructivism “take[s] change less as the alteration in the positions of material things than as the emergence of new constitutive rules, the evolution and transformation of new social structures and the *agent-related* origins of social processes.” (Adler 2002: 102, emphasis added). Berger (1996: 328) has underlined that analysis of political-military culture must include an examination of “the original set of historical experiences” and “the interpretation of these events among different groups in the society.” As suggested by Berger in his book on German and Japanese political-military cultures, cultural change is “the product of new events and *efforts to interpret them*” (1998: 10, emphasis added).

Cultural change, thus, refers to the change in meanings and interpretations, or rather discourses. Such cultural change starts as a “conceptual game through the contested meanings attributed to reality by different groups” (Adler 2002: 110). It is at this point that discourse comes into play. Schmidt and Radaelli (2004: 188) explain how discourse analysis contributes to our analysis of cultural change: “Discourse helps create an opening to policy change by altering actors’ perceptions of the policy problems, policy legacies and ‘fit’, influencing their preferences, and, thereby, enhancing their political institutional capacity to change.” In her later writings, Schmidt alludes to the role of narratives when she argues that “once things happen and actors act, they do

develop ideas and *discourse about what happened and what they did*, which forms the basis of their explanations of change, whether crisis-driven or incremental” (Schmidt 2011: 3, emphasis added).

Drawing on these agent-centred assumptions about cultural change, this thesis contends that strategic culture changes when dominant narratives are challenged by counter-narratives. A crisis situation can precipitate political actors to counter-identify themselves with dominant narratives. Nevertheless, counter-narratives do not necessitate a crisis. Strategic culture can thus change in the absence of an external shock or a crisis, if narrative entrepreneurs propagate different interpretations of seemingly stable situation and static cultural elements by introducing new narratives about the history, geography and international role of their country. Put differently, meanings ascribed to historical experiences, events and episodes of international politics and actions of other countries might change over time with the rise of new narratives championed by a group of political actors who gather around a specific discourse regarding the foreign and security policy.

3.2.2.3. Agents of cultural change

Finnemore and Sikkink, in their article on the emergence of norms, put forth a norm-life cycle model based on the mechanism of norm entrepreneurship. According to the authors, norm entrepreneurs draw attention to issues and events “by using language that names, interprets, and *dramatizes* them” (1998: 897, emphasis added). In line with the norm entrepreneurship model, Farrell and Terriff (2002: 8-9) also note that change in military culture is executed by the military and political elite as entrepreneurs of change by introducing new norms and ideas into the making of security and defence policy.

Among several actors within a political community, military and state elite are primary entrepreneurs of cultural change (Klein 1991: 12; Lantis 2006: 20-21). They might either execute the change intentionally or they foster it even if the outcome is not what they expect. Farrell (2005: 9) cautions us that elites can be “skilled users of culture” and may seek to promote norms that confirm some material advantage.” As Longhurst (2004: 20-21) astutely puts it, politicians are neither “cultural dupes” nor

prisoners of culture. They are actually astute actors of politics who are cognizant of cultural and normative factors as well as material elements surrounding them. Despite the fact that cultural change can be “engineered to suit elite interests”, it is not necessarily a superficial change because even a superficial change reveals the ways of thinking and speaking about security and defence by the elite. Furthermore, elites may lose the full control of the cultural change once it is initiated as they may become entrapped by their own rhetoric in time (Snyder 1990: 4; Farrell and Terriff 2002: 8; for the rhetorical entrapment argument also see Schimmelfennig 2001: 72).

In this thesis, the concept of narrative entrepreneurs are employed drawing on the concept of discourse coalitions of Hajer (Hajer 2005; Rogers 2009) as part of our endeavour to demonstrate the link between cultural change and new (counter-) narratives created as a result of the narrative entrepreneurship of a discourse coalition. Discourse coalitions is comprised of “different actors from various backgrounds [who] form specific coalitions around specific story lines [in order to] impose their view of reality on others, suggest certain social positions and practices, and criticize alternative social arrangements” (Hajer 2005: 304). Discourse coalitions are a group of elites who seizes the political opportunities to challenge, circumvent and eventually replace dominant cultural practices by telling new stories about the history and geography and the role of their country in international politics. Discourse coalitions do not necessarily imply a single group of elite, there can be other discourses and discourse coalitions within a given political community.

3.2.2.4. Explaining change: Master narratives, Counter-narratives and narrative entrepreneurship

Berger (1998) claims that strategic culture is a “negotiated reality”. The negotiated reality argument of Berger, however, seems static to me and fails to capture the dynamics of cultural change from inside rather than outside of a political community. Dissenting voices of different actors facilitate change if they aim at curbing the influence of dominant narratives. The result tilts between the imposition of new narratives and the resistance and persistence of old ones. Therefore, this thesis suggests that strategic culture is a “contested reality” in the sense that various narratives compete with each

other to mould the security and defence policy of a country even when there appears to be a consensus over the meanings given to the realities of international politics. The contestation among the elite is the initial phase of change in strategic culture. Without challenging the credibility and legitimacy of existing dominant narratives, change may never occur. The process of contestation, then, is followed by either a negotiation between the groups of elite or a domination of one group and their narratives over the others'. However, this does not imply in any way that contestation is over. Even if one narrative prevails over others and claims its authority on the ways of thinking and speaking about the past, the present and the future of a country, it is highly likely that there will always be counter-narratives that test and challenge dominant narratives. This is why, contestation is better not seen as a phase but a continuous process.

In order to explain cultural change, strategies of narrative entrepreneurs to counter the official/dominant narratives within a given political community have to be scrutinized. New narratives emerge to challenge the cultural hegemony of old narratives thereby making narratives the “sites of cultural contestation” (Patterson and Monroe 1998: 321), where narrative entrepreneurs aim to circumvent certain themes, concepts and storylines dictated by the dominant master narrative within society.

Master narratives

There are several concepts used interchangeably by different authors to refer to master narrative. For instance, Lyotard describes grand narratives as “universal truths” in order to “provide a connection between sets of events and social systems such as capitalism and class struggle” (Baker and Ellece 2011: 73). For others, a grand narrative is a “regime of truth”, which “subjugates and marginalizes other discourses” (Brown 1991 cited in Boje 2001: 35). Drawing on this definition of grand narratives, Boje (2001: 36-37) identifies ten grand narratives of Enlightenment knowledge. Somers (1994: 619) also draws attention to “metanarratives” as master narratives that “usually operate at a presuppositional level of social-science epistemology or beyond our awareness.”

Lyotard’s criticism of grand narratives of modern times and Somers’ account of metanarratives notwithstanding, in this thesis, the term master narrative is employed.

Borrowing from Michael Bamberg, master narrative is defined as a “pre-existent socio-cultural forms of interpretation” (Bamberg 2005b: 287). For Michael Bamberg, master narratives refer to “legitimation strategies for the preservation of the status quo with regard to power relations and difference in general” (ibid.). A master narrative is better seen as an overarching narrative that subsumes other narratives and creates its own narratives regarding the past, present and future of a political community. Master narrative creates hegemony (Herman 2009: 187). Thus, master narrative is the dominant narrative of a particular social realm, in this thesis it is the realm of foreign and security policy.

Master narratives provide a blueprint for interpreting and evaluating the realities of social life. Master narratives are primary storylines that categorise events and actions. Other narratives have to be constructed according to the categorisations and exclusions of master narratives. Master narratives “become the vehicle in through which we comprehend not only the stories of others, but crucially of ourselves as well” (Andrews 2004: 1). Not only do master narratives constrain agency but also they enable agents to act in a certain manner that corresponds with the main storyline. Master narratives always entail a *normative framework* as “they offer people a way of identifying what is assumed to be a normative experience” (ibid.).

Master narratives in the realm of security and defence policy prompt elites to tell stories about history and geography of their country and to make different projections about the future of the state of affairs in international politics. A master narrative that establishes its own hegemony in the realm of security and defence defines national interests, the role of actors and institutions, and the way one can construct stories about inter-state relations as well as stories about the situations and events of international politics. A master narrative prioritizes some issues over others and creates its own concepts, ideas and institutions; therefore, it endures over time.

Master narratives have a lot in common with paradigms, yet master narratives in this thesis are more susceptible to change whereas paradigms are, as generally debated in the literature, replaced only by other paradigms that offers law-like general rules (cf. Hall 1993; Carstensen 2011a; Carstensen 2011b). Two paradigms cannot exist at the

same time. One paradigm will cease and be replaced by another paradigm. In contrast, master narratives can survive even in the presence of other master narratives and counter-narratives. Master narratives are not teleological in the sense that they design the future and the future unfolds as it is envisaged in a master narrative. Master narratives are normative frameworks but they do not offer law-like general rules that transcend time and space. Master narratives consist of lessons drawn from past experiences, reasons for current actions and normative constraints that enable and constrain agents in their efforts to make sense of their experiences and actions in social life.

Counter-narratives

In their co-edited book Michael Bamberg and Molly Andrews contemplating on counter-narratives and their usages in different cases underscore that counter-narratives cannot exist without a master narrative “which they are countering” (Bamberg and Andrews 2004: X). Counter-narratives challenge existing master narratives. They do that by “contest[ing] entrenched accounts of how the world is” (Herman 2009: 187).

A counter-narrative may bring a brand new idea or spark an interest in a forgotten idea or offer a re-interpretation of existing narratives in a new light (Andrews 2004: 3). Wibben notes that “Counternarratives work through and beyond existing narratives and transform them by drawing on events, ideas, and actions not usually heeded” (Wibben 2011: 56). Formerly unheeded events, past experiences and ideas are picked up by narrators to create counter-narratives when a dominant narrative becomes inadequate to make sense of social realities.

The narrative change starts with a problématique or a tension (Ringmar 1996: 73). For policymakers, there is always a problem that has to be solved through changes and readjustments. Lantis (2002: 112) argues that “cultures remain vital only if their core principles continue to generate solutions that satisfy human needs and makes sense of the world.” Solutions always require certain actions and actors to change their behaviours (Ringmar 1996: 73). When faced with crisis, the elite initially questions existing narratives by creating a necessity of change. When faced the absence of internally coherent and externally recognized narratives about what has just happened

and how they should respond to it, policy-makers are forced to search for new ideas and concepts to tell a coherent and an appealing story. The sense of necessity to challenge dominant narratives is evoked by not a crisis situation per se, rather, by the inability of dominant narratives to account for it. Therefore, “narrative necessity” facilitates the spread of counter-narratives among elites (Bruner 1991: 9). An intelligible and acceptable counter-narrative addresses the failure of the dominant narrative, defines the problem in a novel way, offers new political objectives and enables political actors to seize political opportunities. As a result, new narratives are produced by juxtaposing, combining and re-combining ideas and concepts that are historically and culturally available to use in order to challenge or circumvent the dominant narrative (see Carstensen 2011b; Hay 2011).

What are the preconditions of a successful narrative entrepreneurship? In other words, why are dominant narratives discredited?; How are new ideas advocated?; Why do some narratives, but not others achieve public resonance?

First, there must be a reason to challenge dominant narratives. The failure of existing dominant narrative to accommodate new events and social situations into its main storyline, which inevitably makes dominant narrative inconsistent with the new realities and unable to put forth sound arguments about the present and the future. Rather than the failure due to an exogenous crisis situation per se, political struggles to define the success and failure of a state action cause cultural dilemmas and an endogenous identity crisis. It is in this context that, according to Torfing (2005: 16), “a stable hegemonic discourse becomes dislocated when it is confronted by new events that it cannot explain, represent, or in other ways domesticate.”

A dominant narrative becomes politically challenged when it loses its coherence and validity to account for new realities. The failure of dominant narrative evokes doubts and uncertainty about the present situation and the future status of a political community. Sometimes it is not the failure of a dominant narrative to account for new realities but it is rather a sense of uncertainty about the coherence of dominant narrative diminishes the influence of a dominant narrative on policy-making. Doubts arise over the viability of present interpretations and future projections offered by existing

narratives. As a result, the ability of existing narratives to link the past, present and future is significantly impaired. This, of course, leads people to distance themselves from the dominant narrative and thereby a quest for new narratives begins.

Narrative entrepreneurs might find a necessity to distance themselves from dominant narratives whereby they start to question the coherence of existing narratives and their political resonance. The counter-identification with a dominant narrative, even in the absence of a brand-new narrative, is a precondition for cultural change (Fairclough 1993: 32). Dislocation and counter-identification pave the way for cognitive adaptation or surface change that might result in a deeper belief change (Wæver 2005: 37). Dilemmas and discourse dislocation are prerequisites for cultural change, yet the outcome of change is never pre-determined and thus lies in the heart of the question of “Who gets to impose meanings on material reality and thus to socially construct the situation in their own image” (Adler 2002: 110). Thus, power struggles among different political groups over the meanings of reality need to be included into our analysis of cultural change. In this sense, members of a discourse coalition do not only coalesce around new stories about their country’s security policy but also they employ certain discursive practices and strategies to categorically treat certain groups of people and their narratives and even in some cases to systematically exclude other political actors from public debates on foreign and security policy.

People counter-identify themselves with existing narratives and narrative entrepreneurs seize the opportunity to tell new stories by compiling several ideas, events and actors within one narrative. The source of new narratives can be found in the moral and philosophical reflections, interpretations of old ideas and concepts or other available international ideas and norms. Rhetorical innovation, coinage of new terms and adoption of new vocabulary are the ways in which narrative entrepreneurs ascribe new meanings in their narratives about events and actions (Torfing 2005: 5). Eventually, narrative entrepreneurs create new but not necessarily better stories.

Narratives are told by a particular group of elites within a given political community whose main purpose is to construct national security policy. Different factions of political elite, which aim to acquire the mastery of socially defined activity

(i.e. national security policy-making), first, have to be creative enough to tell new narratives and have to be free and able enough to advocate them in the public sphere. In addition to the internal coherence of narrative, the mastery of political actors in constructing a coherent narrative is of great value for evaluating the ways in which dominant narratives are challenged by counter-narratives. Given that no narrative is valid a priori, narrative entrepreneurs have to create coherent and consistent narratives to persuade other actors (Adler 2005: 76).

The context in which narratives are produced and consumed is of great importance too because the credibility and success of a counter-narrative in challenging the dominant narrative can only be gauged within the context in which a counter-narrative is produced and consumed (Shenhav 2006: 249). An external factor may contribute to cultural change by directly challenging dominant narratives, by providing new ideas and concepts to domestic actors to use in their discourses and by empowering narrative entrepreneurs to get access to the public sphere and state institutions.

3.3. Conclusion

Social constructivism lays the foundations for an agent-centred analysis of cultural change and it is a key for comprehending the long term changes in policy orientations and goals. By establishing a connection between social constructivism's claims on state identity and narrative identity introduced by students of narrative analysis, in this chapter a model for cultural change based on counter-narratives has been proposed. This chapter explained how strategic culture changes over time as a result of the initiatives of narrative entrepreneurs. The model illustrates that dominant narratives ensure the continuity of cultural practices while counter-narratives pave the way for change by opposing dominant narratives.

Building on the theoretical framework put forth in chapters 2 and 3, it is assumed that different political groups in Turkish politics have contested narratives with regard to security and defence. The traditional state elite stressing the influence of *realpolitik* and military might create narratives to support the conviction that Turkey should pay attention to its military power and should be ready to use force and whenever it faces a

threat. Their strategic thinking is shaped and determined by narratives that evoke fears and mistrust. On the other hand, there are other political actors who tell different stories to facilitate good relations with neighbours and to utilize Turkey's soft power rather than its military might. In part II, the findings of empirical analysis are presented. Chapter 5 elaborates on the dominant narratives that have shaped Turkish defence and security policies during the Cold War and in the 1990s. Chapters 6 and 7 address the question of how narrative entrepreneurs in Turkish politics challenge dominant narratives is given an answer through an analysis of counter-narratives found in discourses of the AKP elite. Prior to empirical analysis, chapter 4 outlines the research design and addresses the methodological issues in narrative analysis.

Chapter Four

Research Design and Data Collection

In this thesis, a narrative analysis is applied to understand change and continuity in Turkish strategic culture. Narrative analysis has been used widely in different fields of social research spanning from literary studies to cultural studies, psychological, ethnographical and historical research. This chapter surveys some of these research fields and explains the pros and cons of doing narrative analysis. The first part of the chapter is devoted to outlining the narrative method used for analysing the corpus of text that have been collected during research fieldworks in Ankara, Istanbul, Brussels and London. This section aims to give answers to questions such as: What makes text a narrative? How to distinguish narrative from other forms of text? What are the components and dimensions of narrative? What are master and counter-narratives?

Since this thesis is a single case study, a discussion on the significance of the Turkish case is also needed to substantiate the arguments of this thesis on the interplay between strategic culture and narratives. The section ‘Why Turkey?’ is written to identify the reasons for choosing Turkey as a single case study and its significance for our empirical analysis. Then, in the second part, the process of data collection and data analysis are explained in detail. The two methods of data collection are explained. Also the reasons for inclusion or exclusion some material from empirical analysis are given.

4.1. Narrative Analysis and Method

Ontologically, narratives are understood in a broad sense according to which stories are assumed to be the building blocks of social life. Thus, narration is the most crucial social practice that not only constitutes individual and collective identities but also maintain the relationship between different groups of people (e.g. Bruner 1991; Somers 1994). “As *homo significans* (meaning makers), the world is accessible to us only through interpretations. However, we are also *homo fabulans*⁶ because we interpret and tell

⁶ Whereas Wibben uses the concept *homo fabulans*, borrowing from Fischer (1987) Georgakopoulou and Goutsos use the concept *homo narrans* (Georgakopoulou and Goutsos 2000: 68). Both terms literally

stories about our experiences, about who we are or want to be, and what we believe. Narratives order our world” (Wibben 2011: 43, emphasis in original). In a narrow sense, narratives are, on the other hand, considered as genres or subunits of discourse which have certain patterns and are constrained by generic structures that distinguish narrative genre from other discourse genres such as scientific explanations, arguments, descriptions and dialogue (see chapter 4 in Fairclough 2003).

Argumentation is a principled debate “where actors try to persuade each other and are themselves open to being convinced” by “the better arguments” (Risse 2000: 10). Arguments and the practice of argumentation consist of claim, grounds, warrant and supporting elements (Fairclough 2003: 81). Baker and Ellece (2011: 8) suggest that “an argument differs from rhetoric in that arguments tend to appeal to people’s critical faculties, whereas rhetoric relies on the persuasive power of certain linguistic techniques to influence a person’s beliefs, desires or fears.” Argumentation is usually drawn on scientific explanations and logical inferences drawn from scientific data and normative claims. Thomas Risse (2000) has made a strong case for the application of Habermas’ theory of communicative action in IR by illustrating how logics of truth-seeking and arguing can transform inter-state relations. The communicative action and argumentation take place in an “idealized community of communication” which shares a “common lifeworld” consisting of “a shared culture, a common system of norms and rules perceived as legitimate, and the social identity of actors being capable of communicating and acting” (Risse 2000: 10).

mean “human beings as storytellers.” However, the concept *homo narrans* is more overarching and analytically useful than the concept *homo fabulans*. At this point a conceptual clarification is much needed in terms of the meanings and usages of fabula, story and narrative. Citing Bal, Fairclough draws attention to the distinction between fabula, story and narrative. “The fabula is the ‘material or content that is worked into a story’, a ‘series of logically and chronologically related events’. The story is a fabula that is ‘presented in a certain manner’ – this involves for instance the arrangement of events in a sequence which can be different from their actual chronological order, providing the social agents of actual events with ‘distinct traits’ which transform them into ‘characters’, and ‘focalizing’ the story in terms of a particular ‘point of view’” (Fairclough 2003: 83). Story, hence, is the fabula that is arranged by a plot. According to Fairclough, narrative text is a “text in which a narrator relates the story in a particular medium – for instance a story in conversation, a radio news story, a television news story, a documentary or a film” (ibid.). Narrative text tells, or rather narrates a story through several mediums such as “language, imagery, sound or buildings” (Bal 1997: 5). Narrative is not only the way or the medium a story is presented, but also it is the way a story is related to present day individuals and is associated with the present day.

Three shortcomings of the communicative action theory must be highlighted. First of all, the common lifeworld is first and foremost constructed by the discursive practices of truth-producing and meaning-making. Therefore, one needs to have a grasp of the common lifeworld before conducting an analysis of communicative action and argumentation. And narratives are, and arguably the most important, components of a shared culture as discussed earlier. Having said that, narratives are not only a cultural element of the common lifeworld but also grand/master narratives shape and determine the rules of communication/argumentation as well as they constitute the social identity of actors and the common system of norms and rules. Furthermore, narration is one type of communicative practice. From a broader perspective, communicative action encompasses several practices such as dialogue, description and argumentation, and narration is one of them (Fairclough 2003: 81). The second shortcoming is the presumption of an ideal setting for communication and deliberation. It is presumed that every party who takes part in the processes of deliberation and argumentation knows the rules of communicating, in other words they know how to argue (Risse 2000: 10-11). The idealized community of communication can be hardly observed in most instances. Third, argumentation rests on a “logico-scientific” mode of explanation (see Bruner 1991). However, scientific explanations and logical inferences, which are drawn from scientific data and taken-for-granted norms and rules, provide a very limited understanding of the practice of communication. Narration differs from argumentation in the way the former persuades, or rather lures people with stories about individual and collective experiences, i.e. a set of events and actions that are assembled together in a plot. Narration, therefore, produces truth about the past as well as the present by giving meaning to experiences, events and actions.

Narratives can be part of an argument and stories can be used as a way of presenting and supporting an argument. Nonetheless, when scientific data is not satisfactory and therefore, scientific explanations are disputed, when information received from the external world is limited or contradictory and when norms and rules of a social system are either vaguely defined or not well-established, narratives are the key for persuading others and justifying particular policy, position and action. Hence, narration prevails over argumentation in these circumstances. The truth-claims of

narratives do not have to be scientifically and logically valid and verifiable. Since “narrative ‘truth’ is judged by its verisimilitude rather than its verifiability”, the acceptability [of narratives] is governed by convention and ‘narrative necessity’ rather than by empirical verification and logical requiredness” (Bruner 1991: 4, 13).

4.1.1. Elements of narratives

Narrative requires a *plot*. Plot is defined “as being formed from a combination of *temporal succession* and *causality*” (Elliott 2005: 20, emphases added). Nonetheless, plot is manipulative because it is the emplotment that gives the sense of causality not the temporal succession of events in the real world (Herman 2009: 191). The difference between story and plot is that “the story is what happened in life, the plot is the way the author presents it to us” (Todorov 1988 quoted in Antoniadou *et al.* 2010: 4). Plot links and orders a set of events and experiences around a theme and a subjective evaluation of what happened in life. Somers (1994: 617) argues that plot entails a theme. She writes: “A plot must be thematic. The primacy of this narrative theme or competing themes determines how events are processed and what criteria will be used to prioritize events and render meaning to them.”

Narrative is usually triggered by a *disruption of the normal flow of life* and thus plot addresses a tension and a complicated action and event. Event is a change from one state to another. “Temporally extended processes, deliberately initiated actions, and happenings not brought about intentionally by any agent” are counted as event (Herman 2009: 185). Furthermore, narrative includes an evaluation of events, actions and it usually offers a solution for the problem, which is oftentimes shaped by the positions and the moral stance taken by a narrator within her/his narratives (Patterson and Monroe 1998: 316; Elliot 2005: 9; Bold 2012: 23; de Fina and Georgakopoulou 2012: 6).

Narratives have three functions. First, they describe past events and actions by producing a chronological account of them. This is the *descriptive function* of narratives. Second, narratives evaluate events and actions and assign meanings to them. Where narratives differ from chronological accounts is in fact its *evaluative function*. The evaluative function of narratives is crucial for “establishing the point or the meaning

of the story” for a specific audience (Elliott 2005: 9). The evaluative function of narratives justifies the purpose of telling narratives and increases its chance of acceptance by the audience as it “helps ward off the question that every storyteller dreads: ‘So what?’” (Herman 2009: 185).

The third and closely related to the first two is *positioning*. Every narrative assigns different positions to the self and others. Sometimes narratives position agents as the victims of others’ actions or circumstances. Alternatively, narratives position agents as actors who have control over their own actions as well as others’ (Wortham 2000: 158; Riessman 2001: 702). Positions exist only within discourses. Hence, positions are not based on pre-given, static and ritualistic roles (for the difference between position and role see Davies and Harré 1991: 43). It has been argued in studies on positioning theory that positions constructed for actors within narratives determine the accessibility and availability of certain social practices for individuals. Individuals are entitled to rights and duties in relation to how they position themselves vis-à-vis others in narratives (Harré *et al.* 2009: 6).

Evaluating social experiences and supplying a solution can only be achieved from a perspective with a storyline which is always thematic and normative. A narrative is thematic because storytellers cherry-pick from the pool of social experiences in accordance with the key theme or themes of a master narrative. A narrative can also possess normative elements and a moral stance because even though storytellers can evaluate a problem and position themselves and others without drawing on normative arguments, they can only justify the ideas and solutions that they propose on a normative basis. Bruner suggests that “narrative is centrally concerned with cultural legitimacy” (Bruner 1991: 15). Therefore, counter-narratives which lack moral stance and normative framework can neither challenge master narratives nor gain cultural legitimacy.

Somers (1994: 616) lists four key defining features that can be found in every narrative:

- i) relationality of its parts,
- ii) causal emplotment,

- iii) selective appropriation
- iv) temporality, sequence and place

Relationality indicates that narratives interweave seemingly isolated events within a story in order to create a justifiable and meaningful relationship between purposefully selected events that are deemed to be worthwhile to tell. Narratives create a relationship between past and present events. Any meaning of a single event emerges only within its “temporal and spatial relationship” with other preceding and succeeding events (Somers 1994: 616).

Closely related to the first dimension of narratives, causal emplotment suggests that narrators offer a storyline or a plot through which “narrative causality” between two events is established (Bruner 1991). Nevertheless, unlike causal explanations, narrative explanations aim to

trace the historical evolution of meanings (both subjective and intersubjective) in order to explain how they brought about, or made possible, a given social context. Causes are not ontological substances to be isolated ‘out there’ but heuristic focal points used by the researcher to make sense of social life. Explanatory narratives order variegated meanings and practices in time around a number of ‘plots’ or causal stories (Pouliot 2007: 367).

Suganami contends that explanation and understanding are actually storytelling practices. He writes: “Storytelling is a form of explaining just as much as story-following is a form of understanding. ‘Explaining’ and ‘understanding’ are two sides of the same ‘narrative’ coin” (Suganami 1997: 404).

A narrative is always for a purpose (Georgakopoulou and Goutsos 2004: 45) and never an “unsponsored text”, as noted by Bruner (1991: 10). Narrative theory puts more emphasis on the role of sentient agents and the storyline created to link their intentions to their actions and experiences (Patterson and Monroe 1998: 316). Bruner (1991: 7) stresses that “The loose link between intentional states and subsequent action is the reason why narrative accounts cannot provide causal explanations. What they supply instead is the basis for interpreting why a character acted as he or she did.”

By narration agents give legitimacy, purpose and meaning to their actions in the social world and their experiences with other members or institutions of society. (Whitebrook 2001: 141). Agents create socially acceptable narratives about their past actions in order to act “in the present toward a desirable or away from an undesirable future state of affairs” (Mishler 2006: 36).

4.1.2. Analysing text

In this thesis, narrative analysis is chosen to analyse narratives used by the AKP elite while re-designing Turkish foreign policy. Riessman (2005: 2-5) classifies narrative analysis into four models. These are: i) thematic analysis, ii) structural analysis, iii) interactional analysis and iv) performative analysis. While the first and second analyses focus on the content and the form of narratives, respectively (also see Elliott 2005: 38), the latter two analyses provide insights about narrator’s skill to tell a story and its interaction with listeners (Riessman 2005: 4-5). Narrative analysis in this thesis primarily is concerned with the content of narratives. Therefore, a thematic narrative analysis is undertaken in order to find out recurrent themes, concepts and specific storylines.

For instance, Ringmar (2006) and Kuusisto (2009) apply narrative analysis in their research to draw parallels between different narrative categories and genres discussed in literary studies, i.e. tragedy, drama and comedy, and non-fictional narratives told by political actors in the realm of international relations. In her narrative analysis Janice Bially Mattern (2001: 362-364) applies Lyotard’s exile-terror model to examine discursive practices that link different phrases together as a narrative in order to exert representational force on knowledge and reality. Bially Mattern’s use of narratives as a sequence of phrases and links connecting phrases is lacking the very basic element of narratives, that is plot. Also subscribed to a poststructuralist perspective, Dominika Biegoń (2013) analyses narratives about Europe and the nature of European integration offered by the European Commission to legitimize the policies and activities of the European Commission. Nonetheless, she primarily focuses on the structure of narratives as she applies a structural model that seeks for “narrative structures by identifying the organizing principles within a narrative” (Biegoń 2013: 199).

In this thesis, narrative analysis is applied to extract prevalent themes and storylines when the AKP elite talk about Turkey's past, its geography and its role in the international system. Therefore, in the empirical part, the content of narratives rather than the structure and the form are explored. This thesis is not interested in figuring out the resemblances between literary kinds of narrative and political narratives. Nor is it concerned with what politicians really think. It takes up the questions of what politicians talk about, how they talk about it, how they convey their ideas and how they present them as meaningful and culturally appropriate (Hays 1994: 68).

This thesis pays more attention to the content of narratives because its main research objective is to discover the main themes, key concepts and ideas that are primarily and frequently used by the AKP elite while creating counter-narratives about Turkey's historical, geographical experiences and realities of international relations. Therefore, while reading the corpus of texts, I looked for narratives in short sections of texts as my objective is to identify the common storylines and themes used by the AKP elite. A broad overview of the variety of narratives and themes is achieved through an extensive survey of speeches and interviews given by prime minister, foreign minister and president in English and in Turkish for the period of 2002-2011.

The empirical analysis proceeded in two steps. First, I read the corpus of text in order to find out the narratives of the AKP elite. While reading texts I focused on what is told regarding Turkey's past experiences, its relations with its neighbours and events occurring in world politics. At this stage, my main purpose was to get a broad overview of the AKP elite on Turkish foreign policy. I examined how the AKP elite recount Turkey's past experiences during the 1990s and the Cold War. I also explored the ways in which the AKP elite understand Turkey's neighbourhood and Turkey's relations with its neighbours; and lastly, I was also interested in the interpretations the events of international politics in the discourses of the AKP elite. This first reading gave me an idea about what I should concentrate on in a second reading in order to find out counter-narratives. In my first reading I noticed that when the AKP elite talk about Turkey's past experiences in the foreign policy they frequently mention the problems of the 1990s and the Cold War experiences while they also intend to tell positive stories about the Ottoman past. With regards to geography and Turkey's relations with its neighbours, the

AKP elite usually point out the protracted conflicts between Turkey and its neighbours. With regards to Turkey's international role, I noticed that the AKP elite find Turkey's Westernist foreign policy and its international image as problematic.

In the second reading, I tried to find out how the AKP elite offer solutions for the problems of Turkish foreign policy which they identify in their speeches. The evaluation and solutions offered by the AKP elite also position the AKP discourse vis-à-vis other discourses at the domestic level and international level. At this stage, my goal was to discover the ways in which the AKP elite counter-identify themselves from the dominant national security state master narrative. The analysis of evaluations and positions enabled me to see whether the narratives told by the AKP elite are counter-narratives. Every counter-narrative entails a claim that there is a problem that needs to be addressed. Counter-narratives challenge the consistency and coherence of dominant narratives as they indicate that things are going awry and the future is fraught with tensions and conflicts. To analyse counter-narratives, I initially looked at the ways the AKP elite describe and evaluate issues in Turkish foreign policy. Then, I explored what positions the AKP elite assume in their narratives. Do they repudiate previous positions used by the dominant master narrative? Do they produce counter-positions for themselves and their country? If they do so, what are those positions? Do they position their country as a victim of circumstances or as a self-confident actor with a control over the events and actions?

There are some methodological problems of narrative analysis. The first problem is related to the process of text selection. Where to start and how to choose texts are the very basic yet fundamental questions while doing a discourse analysis. The same problem exists in narrative analysis. In order to address the issue of text selection, Neumann (2008: 67) suggests that a researcher should find a "canonical text" or "monuments" and select other primary sources around these texts. There is of course no "bible" of Turkish foreign policy on which every narrative about Turkish national security and defence is rested. I, however, tackled this issue by consulting to three books written by the foreign ministers of Turkey in the 2000s. The first two books are Ismail Cem's compilation of his speeches given as foreign minister titled *Turkey in the New Century: Speeches and Texts Presented at International Fora (1995-2001)* and his two

volume analysis of Turkish foreign policy in his term written in Turkish titled *Türkiye, Avrupa, Avrasya: Avrupa'nın "Birliği" ve Türkiye* [Turkey, Europe, Eurasia: Europe's "Union" and Turkey] and *Türkiye, Avrupa, Avrasya: Strateji, Yunanistan, Kıbrıs* [Turkey, Europe, Eurasia: Strategy, Greece, Cyprus]. Even though the focus is on the AKP era of narratives, Cem's books gave me some insights about existing narratives in Turkish foreign policy before the AKP came to power. Cem was an important political figure in Turkish politics as he was elected MP from the Republican People's Party (CHP) and was in the parliament between 1987 and 1995 until when he joined the left wing Democratic Left Party (DSP⁷) in 1995. He then served as foreign minister between 1997 and 2002.

The other book is an academic work on Turkish foreign policy published in 2001 and written by Ahmet Davutoğlu, professor of International Relations, former chief advisor to the prime minister and current foreign minister since 2009. Although Davutoğlu's book *Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu* [Strategic Depth: Turkey's International Position] has been widely read by Turkish and international readers his book is neither a canonical nor a monumental text. All three books, however, provide a reference point to build my analysis around while analysing foreign policy debates in the Turkish parliament and within the speeches given by prime ministers, presidents and foreign ministers.

The second problem is knowing where to stop. How can a researcher know when she has enough data? Neumann (2008: 69) convincingly argues that researcher can stop reading "when one covers a maximum of eventualities by reading as much as possible from as many genres as possible." Milliken also argues for being more selective about texts:

In order to address issues of selection bias – and to enable better theorization – one might also more narrowly select texts by whether they take different positions on a relevant issue, ... and so could provide evidence of a discourse as a social background for meaningful disputes among speakers of the discourse (Milliken 1999: 233).

⁷ The Democratic Left (DSP) is a left-wing party with a nationalist and socialist ideology.

Milliken continues arguing that “An analysis can be said to be complete (validated) when upon adding new texts and comparing their object spaces, the researcher finds consistently that the theoretical categories she has generated work for those texts” (ibid.: 234). In order to tackle this problem, I consulted to the speeches given by high ranking statesmen, e.g. presidents, prime ministers, and foreign ministers, in order to illustrate the discursive representations and evaluations of realities of international politics within official and public narratives of the AKP elite. I also extensively read parliamentary debates to have a better grasp of narratives told by the Turkish elite regarding past experiences, geography and the role of their country in the international system. Parliamentary debates are of great value to understand the practices of the ruling party and opposition to force each other into certain conflicting positions that do not necessarily represent their opponent but doing so helps them to justify their narratives and legitimize their own positions.

4.2. Why Turkey?

Why is Turkey chosen as a single case study? The reasons are four-fold. First of all, despite maintaining a *realpolitik* and a defensive approach in its foreign and security policy, as Ian Lesser (2010: 261) highlights, Turkey “remains a place where historical images and geography retain their full force for both policymakers and the public.” Since Turkey is a nation-state descendant of an empire, there is an abundance of historical instances that can be cherry-picked by the Turkish political elite to tell different stories about Turkey’s past, its experiences with its neighbourhood and its role in the history of world politics. Therefore, a study of historical representations and geographical imaginations is much needed in order to have a better grasp of Turkish foreign policy. Studies on Turkish strategic culture with a focus on these interpretivist and discursive aspects of Turkish foreign policy are quite a few (e.g. Bilgin 2005; Yılmaz and Bilgin 2005; Bilgin 2007a; Bilgin 2009; Yanık 2009; Yanık 2011). Furthermore, to my knowledge, there is no study on both the narratives of Turkish strategic culture and the narrative construction of Turkish foreign policy. There is a need for an analysis of narratives of the Turkish political elite in order to conceptualize

Turkish strategic culture as an outcome of dynamic and interactive narratives rather than an outcome of fixed factors and constant principles of *realpolitik*.

The second reason is the existing debates on Turkish identity and its implications for Turkey's foreign policy. After the initial euphoria sparked by the demise of the Soviet Union, the Turkish political elite found themselves in a domestic and regional environment that did not allow them to enjoy the "peace dividend" of the post-Cold War era. It has been widely argued that Turkey is facing an identity-crisis since the end of the Cold War (e.g. Öniş 1995; Huntington 1996; Bozdağlıoğlu 2003; Ayoob 2004; Kösebalaban 2011). The identity-crisis of Turkey makes Turkish politics a site of identity clashes and political struggles where a "soul-searching process" (Bilgin 2001: 48; Oktav 2011: 3) has been undergoing among the Turkish elite since the end of the Cold War. The positive outcome of the soul-searching process is that it has stimulated the Turkish elite to tell new narratives. This storytelling process among the Turkish elite has yielded new stories about Turkey's history and its place in regional and international politics. This, of course, singles out Turkey as a fruitful case study where a researcher can observe different discursive practices in which new narratives emerge and the forms Turkish foreign policy takes.

Third, the Turkish case is unique in the sense that these new narratives emerged in the post-Cold War era are not actually new but their roots are found in history. These new narratives are primarily shaped by three contested ideological orientations, i.e. Republicanism, Liberalism and Islamism, each of which creates its own narratives about the past experiences and the future direction of Turkey. Each ideology cherry-picks different events and episodes of Turkish foreign policy and assembles those events in a plot to justify its own ideas and policies. These ideological narratives have roots in the deep historical contestations among domestic actors that can be traced back to the last decades of the Ottoman era when Ottoman statesmen and bureaucrats were debating on the survival of a decaying empire through four different perspectives, i.e. Islamism, Ottomanism, Turkism and Westernism. The implications of the contestation between these centuries-old ideologies are assumed to be the determining factors in Turkish strategic culture (e.g. Mufti 2009). In contrast, this thesis proposes a different kind of

model to explain Turkish strategic culture by probing into narratives rather than ideologies. Because what makes Turkey fascinating for researchers is not the way static and monolithic ideologies play out in Turkish politics. It is rather the way different narratives, major themes and several new concepts are constructed and used to transform Turkish strategic culture.

Lastly, elite narratives about Turkish foreign policy also have been influenced by international narratives. Because of a number of domestic and international crises the traditional state elite could not accommodate their narratives with emerging narratives in Europe in the post-Cold War era. Negative narratives about Turkey and its place in Europe widened the gap between Turkey and its European allies as both sides failed to accommodate each other in their own narratives. Hence, the Turkish case is of great value not only for the abundance of several competing narratives at the domestic level but also for the clash between the self-narratives, which are told by the Turkish state elite about their actions and Turkey's identity and the narratives of others, which are told by the third country elites about Turkey. This also makes Turkey a unique case where one can find that national narratives are not only prompted and cued but also eclipsed and challenged by international narratives.

4.3. Data Collection

The method of research employed in this thesis is a combination of narrative analysis and semi-structured interviews. The political narratives told by political actors who are at the highest level possible within the state are the main research focus, because their positions within the state structures provide them certain authority and influence on not only decision-making but also on the process of communicating those decisions to the public. After all, national security is the specialization of the state which exercises the authority to identify threats and securitize issues thereby the state enjoys the legitimacy to use extreme measures including brute force against any threat (Weldes *et al.* 1999: 18-19)

4.3.1. Primary sources

This thesis primarily focuses on political narratives produced by political actors. Who are political actors, then? Who is considered as a political actor and who is not depends on how broad the realm of political is described. In this thesis the political elite is narrowed down to elect or appointed state elites who speak for “us” when identifying threats and conducting national security policy in the name of their country (Weldes *et al.* 1999: 18-19). By virtue of that their statements are, in most instances, considered as the political manifestations of discursive practices. Being a member of the TGNA and being a state official can provide access to classified information and debates behind closed doors. Besides, it also means more media coverage and publicity (*ibid.*: 18). It is no wonder that a public statement by top level statesmen such as president, prime minister, ministers or chief of the general staff draws significantly more attention than a statement by a low-ranking civil bureaucrat or a military officer. However, there can be other narratives found in the media. Everyday narratives of the people can also have an impact on foreign policy in general. Unless these media narratives and everyday stories are translated into collective narratives their impact will, however, remain sporadic and trivial; therefore, this thesis only deals with narratives produced by politicians.

The source material for this thesis is drawn from political discourses produced by the Turkish state elite. The analysis is limited to parliamentary debates, speeches by politicians and ministers, party programmes and interviews with bureaucrats and experts due to practical reasons. Despite the fact that Turkish party politics is believed to be principally leader-centric, parliamentary debates on foreign policy issues, national defence and security are important to extract residues of discourses. However, it is better not to presume that speeches delivered by parliamentarians are extemporaneous and whatever is said arises naturally on the site of speaking. It is true that the process of delivery of narratives can be dynamic and interactive. The more heated debates become the more interruptions from other members of the parliament result in more impromptu remarks. Yet, similar to statements and speeches delivered by prime ministers, foreign ministers and presidents, parliamentary debates are usually written in advance and delivered on the site.

Rather than selecting texts on an a priori distinction between texts as narrative and texts as non-narrative (Shenhav 2006: 247), texts are selected according to three criteria: i) topic, ii) occasion and iii) authority of the narrator. Texts on foreign policy in general are the main concern of this thesis. This is why texts whose major topic is not foreign policy were excluded. Furthermore, some texts were eliminated so as to have a more focused data solely on security and defence. Second, this thesis primarily focuses on the speeches that are given on international occasions. Speeches given at domestic occasions were consulted too. The debates in the TGNA were included to have a comprehensive understanding of discursive practices at the domestic level. The only exception for this rule is the speeches given by the chiefs of the general staff at War Colleges since data on the military's discursive practices is quite limited. In addition, speeches are categorized in accordance with speaker's authority and position within state institutions. Is s/he a member of the governing party, member of the opposition party or a member of the bureaucracy? These categories mitigate the selection bias problem by providing more variation and thus generate a more reliable framework for a methodologically structured narrative analysis.

One caveat of data collection is that the role of audience as a criterion for text selection is omitted. The setting criterion should not be mistaken for audience. Oftentimes it is hard to identify the audience since rather than audience-present audience-absent can be the intended addressee of the speech/text. This creates an analytical handicap for any kind of discourse analysis as the intentions of speakers and perceptions of audience are affected by a myriad of other factors. However, neither does this thesis aim to find out real intentions nor is it interested in the reactions of audience to the text (Shenhav 2006: 251). Rather, the representations and lexicon used in the text and the repetition of the same themes and storylines by other political actors in their narratives are the main research focus. A speech delivered at an international forum may reach its target audience at the national level or vice versa. Furthermore, it may have reverberations on a global scale. This is why not only domestic texts such as parliamentary debates are included into the analysis but also speeches delivered at the international forums are examined. However, it should be noted that an international

forum is not necessarily located outside of Turkey; it can also be an international conference that takes place in Turkey.

The texts that can be counted as units of foreign policy discourses are numerous ranging from official speeches to interviews, press conferences, official reports and documents, parliamentary debates, newspaper op-eds, memoirs of politicians, diplomat and military officers, journal articles and academic publications. Data for this thesis has been collected from several primary sources. Table 4-1 depicts all types of primary sources collected during fieldworks in Turkey, Brussels and London. The minutes of debates in the TGNA on annual budgets of ministries and secretariat generals, namely Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), Ministry of National Defence (MND) and the Secretariat General for EU Affairs⁸ (ABGS), Secretariat General of the National Security Council (MGK); National Intelligence Organization (MIT) are the main primary sources. Although the period under study is between 2002 and 2011, minutes of parliamentary debates starting from 1990 were also consulted to a better grasp of political debates prior to the AKP. This extensive data on foreign policy debates serve to give a baseline assessment about narratives in domestic politics.

⁸ By law, the Secretariat General for EU Affairs became the Ministry for EU Affairs in June 2011.

Table 4-1 Primary sources

| Annual budget debates in the TGNA | Speeches | Official Documents | Published texts (Widely-circulated) | Personal Interviews |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ministry of Foreign Affairs | Presidents' annual addresses to the TGNA | Reports and official documents published by state institutions (Defence Papers) | Books; memoirs | Interviews with insiders, i.e. parliamentarians and diplomats |
| Ministry of National Defence | Speeches and interviews on by PM and FM at international forums | Government programmes | Articles written by policy-makers published in national and international news outlets | Interviews with outsiders, i.e. foreign policy experts, academics, retired state officials and military officers |
| Secretariat General for EU Affairs; Secretariat General of the National Security Council; National Intelligence Organization | Annual addresses of the Chiefs of General Staff at War Colleges and speeches delivered at other occasions | Party Manifestos | | |

The speeches delivered by presidents, prime ministers, foreign ministers and chiefs of the general staff are collected by scanning several official websites on the internet. I greatly benefitted from the Library of the TGNA and the National Library in Ankara to collect primary sources especially speeches given by the general staff at some international conferences held in the Military Academy and War Colleges. The official

websites of presidency, prime ministry and foreign ministry store most of the speeches and interviews given by the incumbents of the office.⁹

When studying the period of AKP governments from November 2002 to July 2011, I collected extensive source material drawn from the parliamentary debates as well as speeches given by prime ministers, foreign ministers and ministers responsible for EU affairs. Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's speeches between 2003 and 2007 at international events and conferences are found in two volumes published by the Justice and Development Party. These two volume were obtained from the library of the Justice and Development Party Headquarters. I limited my focus to speeches at international forums; however, Erdoğan's monthly addresses to the nation (*Ulusa Sesleniş*) were also consulted. These speeches are important not only because they include foreign policy issues but also Erdoğan addresses to the nation as prime minister. His weekly addresses to his party group, his addresses at the party conventions and his campaign speeches during elections are excluded as their contents are determined by the dynamics of party politics. For the period of 2008-2011, I searched the online archives on the official website of the Justice and Development Party and I also benefitted from the official website of Prime Minister's Press Office and the Directorate General of Press and Information. In addition to speeches, the source material is drawn on interviews given to foreign press by the prime minister, which I retrieved them from Prime Minister's Press Office and the online archives of international and national newspapers and journals.

Speeches of Abdullah Gül given in English and in Turkish¹⁰ as foreign minister between 2003 and 2007 are compiled in a book titled *Horizons of Turkish Foreign Policy in the New Century*. The book was retrieved from the official website of Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This book has been very useful as it categorises speeches

⁹ The official website of Presidency of the Republic of Turkey can be reached at <http://www.tccb.gov.tr/pages/>. The most current speeches of Turkish PM can be obtained from the Office of the Prime Minister, Directorate General of Press and Information at <http://www.byegm.gov.tr/>. The speeches and interviews of the current Foreign Minister can be found at <http://www.mfa.gov.tr>. The speeches delivered by the incumbent chief of the General Staff can be accessed online at <http://www.tsk.tr/>.

¹⁰ All the translations are mine. Translation is a major problem in discourse analysis. A lot can be lost in translation. Therefore, the meaning of a text can change while translating it. Bearing in mind that no translation can do justice to the original text, when choosing words I first try to find a literally equivalent word in English. However, as I am interested in meanings, I try to choose words depending on the idea and main point conveyed by the whole text.

chronologically as well as thematically. After Gül became president in July 2007, Ali Babacan, former chief negotiator for EU accession served as foreign minister until May 2009. Babacan's speeches during his term were accessed from the online archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Likewise speeches and interviews given by the incumbent minister Davutoğlu between 2009 and 2011 can be found on the official website of MFA. In addition to his speeches as foreign minister I also benefitted from his book *Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu [Strategic Depth: Turkey's International Position]* first published in 2001. Despite the debates on whether Davutoğlu's book is a canonical document that serves as the blueprint for Turkish foreign policy during AKP governments, Davutoğlu's book is important for my analysis because Davutoğlu served as chief advisor to the prime minister and foreign minister before he took his current position. Hence, his ideas were heard at the highest levels possible and following his appointment as foreign minister his narratives have been in the limelight since then.

I also collected speeches given by two presidents, namely Ahmet Necdet Sezer and Abdullah Gül and their addresses to the General Assembly at the opening session of the Turkish Grand National Assembly. The White Book published by the Ministry of National Defence in 2000 was also consulted as a primary source. Unfortunately, there has been no other defence paper published since then as of September 2012. The texts produced by the military are very hard to find or get access. I could only reach some speeches of chiefs of the general staff between 2004 and 2010. In order to have more variety on the military discourse I also consulted the proceedings of symposiums organized by the Turkish Military Academy, War College and the Strategic Research Institute (SAREN) under the Office of the Chief of the General Staff. The proceedings can be found in the National Library in Ankara.

The corpus of texts analysed in this thesis consists of speeches, interviews and articles by Prime Ministers (in total 138 by Erdoğan including addresses to the Nation), Foreign Ministers (in total 177 by Gül, Babacan and Davutoğlu), Presidents (in total 121 by Sezer and Gül), Chiefs of General Staff (in total 24 texts Özkök, Büyükanıt, Başbuğ and Koşaner) in addition to the minutes of parliamentary debates on the annual budgets of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of National Defence and Secretariat General for

European Union Affairs, Secretariat General of the National Security Council and National Intelligence Organization during the legislative years between November 2002 and July 2011. This source material is not in any way representative in the sense that it covers every speech given by every Turkish politician for the period under study. Nonetheless, this data captures the essence of debates and political narratives on national security and defence among high profile Turkish political actors.

The second method of data collection is semi-structured interviews. Interviews help me to cross-check the findings of empirical analysis so that a more thorough understanding of the change in Turkish strategic culture is given. In-depth interviews are semi-structured, but they are of course more structured than casual conversations. Interview questions were posed to interviewees to get an idea about how they interpret and evaluate Turkey's relations with its neighbours, the means of maintaining security and defence as well as Turkey's role as in the international system. I also asked questions regarding their thoughts about the demise of the Ottoman Empire and their views on Sèvres Syndrome and the Cold War. Semi-structured interviews give more ample room for interviewees to speak their mind and create particular narratives. Since the main purpose is to illuminate the common themes, ideas, concepts and storylines semi-structured interviews enabled me to collect face-to-face individual accounts of the change in Turkish foreign policy.

One of the main problems of the data collected by the method of elite interviewing is that it is not a representative of every discourses available at the time when this research was undertaken; therefore, it is difficult to generalize from this sample. Moreover, one must be aware of the shortcomings of collecting data by elite interviewing as the interviewers may tend to feed interviewer with the official line, in which case a researcher can end up with a distorted and hyperbolic information about the change in Turkish strategic culture (Berry 2002: 680). I acknowledge these problems but I am neither interested in what my interviewees did during a crisis nor am I interested in what they exactly remember about Turkish foreign policy of the 1990s and early 2000s. The main concern of this study is how they view, interpret and criticize foreign and security policy at the moment of interviewing by using particular concepts,

themes and storylines that either support or criticize contemporary Turkish foreign policy.

I interviewed two groups of elites. The first group includes members of the TGNA, who participate in the foreign affairs committee, the EU harmonization committee, the national defence committee, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) parliamentary assembly, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) parliamentary assembly, the Council of Europe parliamentary assembly and the EU-Turkey Joint Parliamentary committee. The population of MPs are 550 and 86 of them were participating in the committees listed above when I conducted my fieldwork in Ankara in 2010. The sampling frame for parliamentarians was easy to access via the official website of the TGNA. I found a membership list of parliamentarians and parliamentary committees on the official website of the TGNA. Then, I sent out emails to 86 parliamentarians without exception. The response ratio is 15 out of 86 and I was able to have interviews with 8 parliamentarians out of 15 responses due to the last minute changes in the schedules of interviewees. Interviews were carried out face-to-face, unless objected by the interviewee. One interviewee preferred to respond my questions via email. Finding diplomats and making appointment with them were a much more difficult task. I used snowball sampling technique because I could not reach an email list or a phone directory (for snowballing technique see Babbie 2010: 193). Diplomats whom I interviewed were mid-ranked diplomats, who have served in the foreign ministry for at least ten years. Interviews done with diplomats are anonymous and for this reason are not recorded.

In the second group academics and some national and international experts on Turkish foreign policy were interviewed. The snowball and convenience sampling techniques were employed to sample the second group (ibid.: 192-193). This sample of interviewees includes retired ambassadors, professors, experts in foreign policy think tanks and a couple of retired generals. This sample does not consist of the most important people who participated in the policy-making processes but because of their professional experiences they are worth interviewing as they can give valuable first-hand insights as well as hindsight about the state of Turkish foreign policy. Furthermore, these group of interviewees are of great value to have critical views on the present state of

Turkish foreign policy. In total I interviewed 32 people. The list of interviews can be found in the appendix.

Part II of this study analyses the data and expounds on the emergence of counter-narratives against the dominant/ traditional narratives about Turkish foreign policy. By drawing on secondary sources, Chapter 5 aims to delineate the main themes and storylines one can find in the dominant national security state narratives. Chapters 6 and 7, then, elaborate on narratives that circumvent and oppose the traditional narratives by touting new ideas, concepts and stories about Turkey's past, present and future.

Part II: Narratives and Change in Turkish Strategic Culture

Chapter Five

National Security State Narratives

The conventional argument is that Turkish foreign policy has been shaped by its historical experiences, its geographical location, its state tradition and the dynamics of international and domestic politics (Aydın 2003b: 307-308). Because the Republic of Turkey was established in the heartland of the Ottoman Empire, it has been widely discussed that the Ottoman Empire bequeathed numerous assets alongside historical liabilities to the new Republic (Aydın 1999; Aydın 2000; Hale 2002). The state-centric style of public administration, the historical conflicts with neighbouring countries – most of which began in the late Ottoman era – and the opportunities offered and risks posed by Turkey's geography are to name a few (Aydın 2003b: 309-318).

The implications of the Ottoman legacy for Turkish foreign policy have long been a major issue in several studies on Turkish strategic culture (Mufti 1998; Karaosmanoğlu 2000; Jung and Piccoli 2001; Kösebalaban 2002; Mufti 2009; Kösebalaban 2011). The collapse of the Ottoman Empire bore historical lessons for the founding fathers of the Turkish Republic (Karabelias 1999: 142). With the end of the First World War, elites in Turkey were caught in a dilemma. On the one hand, they wanted to abolish the Ottoman political system altogether with its institutions and its social and economic order. On the other hand, it was simply not possible to refute the fact that the new Republic inherited a past, geography and predominantly Muslim population from the Empire. The dilemma was solved when the founding fathers of Turkey touted new narratives from the perspective of a nation state about Turkey's history and geography and its place in international politics.

The national security state (NSS) master narrative tells *a* story about Turkey's past, its geography and its international role from the perspective of a national security state. Despite the fact that the NSS master narrative offers only *a* perspective on Turkey's history, geography and its role in international politics, one can notice through a careful reading of secondary sources that there is a consensus among the experts that

talking about Turkish foreign and security policy has long been conditioned and constrained by the recurrent themes, ideas, concepts and a plot that are derived from nationalism, statism, securitism and militarism (Karaosmanoğlu 2000; Kösebalaban 2002; Cizre 2003; Bilgin 2005; Drorian 2005). In the literature, this master narrative is defined by some scholars as the traditional discourse, security-first thinking or realpolitik approach. However, in this thesis in line with my narrative approach, I assume that this traditional discourse is a master narrative whose recurrent themes is centred around the idea of national security state. The term national security state is, thus, preferred to describe the traditional discourse in the Republican era as it encompasses all four sources, i.e. nationalism, statism, securitism and militarism, that shape political narratives of the Turkish state elite.

This chapter serves as a conceptual basis for the analysis of counter-narratives in chapters 6 and 7. A conceptual basis is analytically necessary to substantiate the main contention of this study, which argues that counter-narratives exist only in relation with a dominant master narrative. Counter-narratives are, thus, produced by the AKP elite to challenge and refute the main themes, storylines and the normative stance of the NSS master narrative. By extracting the recurrent motifs used by the NSS master narrative, this chapter lays the conceptual ground for a comparison of the main themes and storylines of counter-narratives with the ones offered by the NSS master narrative.

This chapter begins with an analysis of the sources and origins of the NSS master narrative. In the first section, the narrative construction of the Ottoman legacy and the formative years of the Republic in the image of the Turkish elite who took their cues from nationalism and statism are explained in details. That section looks into the stories about the demise of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the new Turkish state in the aftermath of the First World War. The main themes of these stories told by the Turkish elite about this specific episode in Turkish history are revolving around the failures of the Ottoman statesmen, the clandestine plans of Western states to divide Turkey and the role of the new nationalist/republican elite led by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in the transformation of Turkey from a declining empire to a fledgling nation-state. The next section is devoted to geopolitical narratives that were shaped by the insecurities about neighbourhood and the narrative construction of Turkey's neighbours

as threats. Not only did historical narratives of the Turkish elite about the belligerent relations between the Ottomans and the Russian Empire, Greece and the Arabs depict a hostile environment in which Turkey has to be vigilant and strong to survive. But also the dynamics of the bipolar world order inculcated a sense of insecurity about neighbouring countries and a *realpolitik* approach into the Turkish elite. The Cold War era is important not only because it is in this era that Turkey's geopolitical location and its strategic importance became leitmotifs running through the narratives about Turkey's geography. But also the Cold War helped the state establishment to spread militarism in society and institutionalize the security-first approach advanced by Cold War geopolitics owing to the conjunction of American narratives and Turkish geopolitical narratives. The American narratives about the Soviet Union corresponded well with Turkish narratives about the Soviet threat constructed on the erstwhile enmity between the Russian and Ottoman Empires (Coş and Bilgin 2010). The last section is concerned with the implications of these historical and geopolitical narratives on the meanings ascribed to international politics within the NSS master narrative by looking at the influence of Western orientation on Turkish foreign and security policy and the implications of globalization for Turkish economy and politics.

5.1. The Sources of the National Security State Master Narrative

Prior to exploring the main themes and storylines of the NSS master narrative, the origins and sources of these narratives are examined by elaborating on the ideals of Kemalism and the dynamics of civil-military relations in Turkish politics. An evaluation of the influence of Kemalism and the dynamics of civil-military relations in Turkey is imperative for discovering the sources and origins of the NSS master narrative. The main themes of the NSS master narrative are drawn from the set of ideas and ideals of Kemalism (see Zürcher 2004: 181-182). The state tradition based on the notion of “a strong state and a weak civil society” (Heper 1985: 16) and the agendas of the military and civil bureaucracy, which upholds national unity, territorial integrity, independent statehood and military invincibility (Bilgin 2005; Drorian 2005; Aktürk 2007), give a particular form to and dictate the content of the NSS narratives.

In Turkey, the state establishment, mainly the military and civilian bureaucracy, virtually exerted determining influence on the decision-making process (Cizre 1997: 151). Given this, it is no wonder that the state establishment and the military in particular have long been the producers and promoters of official narratives about Turkey's past, geography and its international role. Having said that, it should be noted that the NSS master narrative is not exclusively told by the Kemalist, laicist and statist military and civil bureaucracy. Nevertheless, the statist traditional bureaucracy and the military as "self-appointed guardians and guarantors of the Republic and its ideals" (Jacoby 2004: 178; Drorian 2005: 262) have created their own narratives in order to protect the territorial integrity, the national unity and the political regime of the Republic against internal threats such as separatism, terrorism and fundamentalism and against external enemies such as the Soviet Union and the threat of communism during the Cold War and hostile neighbouring countries.

The fundamental sources of the NSS master narrative can be found in the ideals of the founding- fathers of Turkey and the politics of Cold War. The basis of the NSS master narrative was and continues to be Atatürk's ideals defined under the label of Kemalism. But it is the *realpolitik* of the Cold War that made it a dominant narrative by re-defining the notions of national security and defence within the context of the bipolar world of the Cold War. In this regard, Cold War narratives of the US functioned as discursive anchors and reference points that helped the NSS master narrative to take root in Turkish strategic culture (Karaosmanoğlu 2009: 36). Exposed to and inspired by American narratives, the Turkish state elite adopted the Cold War lexicon, ideas, practices and institutions via Turkey's NATO membership (Çelik 1999: 19). In this context, the military and civilian bureaucracy became the sole narrators and authoritative figures of this master narrative by forming their own nomenclature within the state and in society owing to the establishment of the "military-industrial complex" in Turkey as a result of the coups in 1960, 1971 and 1980 (Karabelias 1999: 140; Jacoby 2004: 127). The national security state narrative embodied in the military-industrial complex not only resulted in massive military expenditures and excessive recruitment for the army, but also engendered militarism in society and laid the foundations of Turkish army's political clout (Jacoby 2003: 676-677). The Cold War context also facilitated the efforts

of the military to impose their own interpretations of the principles of Kemalism into Turkish politics (Göçek 2011: 106).

Kemalism “represents ‘Atatürk’s way’ which is generally attributed to the set of ideas that led the national independence war (1919-23) and the following reform measures carried out during Atatürk’s regime” (Bagdonas-Demirtaş 2008: 100). The principles of Kemalism were enshrined in the constitution in the mid-1930s; however, as Zürcher (2004: 181) underlines, Kemalist principles were never described in detail and Kemalism was flexible enough to be interpreted differently by different groups of elite with varying worldviews (also see Bagdonas-Demirtaş 2008; Göçek 2011: 106). The label Kemalism was possibly attached to Atatürk’s ideals by its opponents and critics rather than the followers and proponents of Kemalism (Fisher Onar and Evin 2011: 296). Putting aside this controversy over labelling the set of ideas and ideals of Atatürk, what is more important for our analysis is that Kemalism does not only provide an intellectual and ideological basis for the national security state master narrative but also the main storyline of the NSS narrative centres around the appreciation of Atatürk’s era and the wholehearted commitment and defence of his ideals. Kemalist ideals have been promulgated as the only catalysts for societal transformation and as the underpinning elements of solidarity between the state and the people (Kadıoğlu 1996; Drorian 2005).

There is no one unified interpretation of Kemalism though. Kemalism has evoked different meanings at different times and places. The diverse use of Kemalism depends on the occasion and the aim of the political actors who incorporate Kemalist ideas into their discourses. Bagdonas-Demirtaş expounds on this claim and puts forward a noteworthy argument that needs to be quoted at length:

[T]he socially acknowledged appeal of Atatürk’s charisma created a legitimate basis for justifying subsequent policy objectives in the name of Kemalism. However, it is also possible to attribute a charismatic characteristic to Atatürk’s vision to explain its continuity on the basis of its being revolutionary, not on its continual success or moderation... Looking at Kemalism from this perspective, it can be argued that its continuity does not depend on preserving all the elements of the initial discourse employed by Atatürk and his associates in the early 1920s. It continues through the capturing of some of its elements and giving new

meanings to them by various discourses. In this sense, Kemalism is not a unified system that drives the action in a consistent direction (2008: 101-105).

The military have been an authoritative figure and producer of the NSS narratives and thus their interpretation of Kemalism became dominant over time. Military officers have long played a crucial role in foreign policy-making as they describe themselves as the only actors who can exercise the authority to define the contours of national security and what is in the interest of Turkish nation. At first glance, it seems normal because, first of all, the army was the leading actor in the foundation of the Republic of Turkey. The reformation process during the Ottoman Empire initially started within the army and military officers were the first group of elites who embraced Western ideas and institutions. As a result of the developments of the 19th century, “The army became Ottoman society’s natural instrument for effecting regeneration” (Rustow 2004: 198). According to Rustow (ibid.: 166), “in its social ethos, the reformed officers corps thus was much closer to the Bonapartist tradition of middle-class revolution than to the agrarian-conservative tradition of the Prussian *Junkers*”, thereby rendering the military elite as a pseudo middle class capable of challenging old imperial structures even in the absence of a real middle class in Ottoman society. It also has been argued that had some of the military officers not taken the lead after the First World War, it might not have been possible to establish a new state after the collapse of the Empire. Owing to its historical role in the aftermath of the collapse of the Empire, the Turkish military had placed itself as the vanguards of the modernization and westernization of Turkey as well as the guardians of state ideology and political regime that is built on Kemalist ideals (Heper and Güney 2000: 635-638; Narlı 2000: 107-108; Güney and Karatekelioğlu 2005: 441-443).

Furthermore, the Turkish army have been enjoying great support from Turkish society since the armed forces are praised as the only “guardian of the national interests” and “national unity”. The military has long been the most respected and admired institution by the society owing to the fact that the army is seen as more responsible, stable, efficient, prudent and incorrupt actor compared to civilians (Cizre-Sakallıoğlu 1997: 114-116; Jenkins 2001: 11-14). Due to military coups in Turkey, the military

gained significant influence not only on the decision-making process but also on the production and dissemination of particular narratives about Turkish foreign and security policy (Narbone and Tocci 2007: 242). From a critical perspective, for example Jacoby (2003) argues that this social support is the inevitable outcome of the militaristic and semi-authoritarian elements of the political-military complex of the Turkish state. As noted by a prominent scholar, “the major factor contributing to the difficulty in establishing civilian control over the military [was] the failure of the civilian forces to question the prevailing power configuration” (Cizre-Sakallıoğlu 1997: 162). The indoctrination of male citizens as a result of mass conscription, the courses given in high schools on national security and a nationalistic discourse prevalent in society also facilitated the spread of militarism in Turkish society and politics (Satana 2008). As a result of this, dissenting voices and opposition to militarism and militarization are considered detrimental to the military invincibility of Turkey. Because the NSS master narrative associates the army with national pride and heroism, any opposition to the militarism is generally vilified. For instance, the then Chief of the General Staff Doğan Güreş claimed in 1992 that he was appointed to his post by the nation and added that “Turkey is a military state” (quoted in Özcan 2001: 16).

The roots of the political clout of military and civil bureaucracy can also be traced back to the state tradition of the Ottoman Empire (see Heper 1985). The state tradition in the Ottoman Empire “emphasized the exclusivity of the relationship between the ruler (and his servants) and the subjects” (Zürcher 2004: 13). The economic power of merchants and landowners could not challenge the authority of the Ottoman imperial structures since an “ethnic division of labour” within society persisted throughout the Ottoman rule (Özbudun 2000: 126-127). Therefore, it has been widely accepted that there was always a tension and uneasy relations between the centre and the periphery in the Ottoman Empire as well as in the Turkish Republic (Mardin 1969). This is why civil society and the middle class could not find a fertile ground to flourish in the Ottoman imperial system. This authoritarian and paternalistic state tradition is one of the reasons why military officers and civil bureaucracy took the lead in finding new ways to save the Ottoman state, while centrifugal forces such as the merchant class mostly comprised of

non-Muslim ethnic communities, sought for the support of Western powers against the Ottoman rule in the 19th century (Zürcher 2004: 12-13).

A paternalistic understanding of the state which was metaphorically attributed a “father-like” status is a recurrent theme in the NSS master narrative (Tachau 1984: 59). The inevitable outcome of such conceptualization of the state was a strong belief in the state apparatus and a reliance on the state. The state is considered to serve a vital function in establishing social order, acquiring economic welfare and maintaining national interests (ibid: 60). This strong state/weak civil society tradition passed on to the Republican elite (Heper 1985: 16). The state establishment, mainly the military and civilian bureaucracy, is privileged over other domestic actors in the NSS master narrative, thereby featuring a problematic relationship between the state and civil society.

The Turkish state identity formed in accordance with Kemalist ideals portrays an ethnically and religiously homogenous society. According to Kevin Robins, “The nation was imagined as the embodiment of civilized values. Defined in opposition to the Islamic past, it would be a secular and rational nation. Defined in opposition to the Ottoman Empire, it would have strictly national identity” (quoted in Kösebalaban 2002: 132). The governing style inspired by a laicist and state-centric approach, thus, advocates an elite-led transformation of society from above (Drorian 2005: 261; Hakkı 2006: 455). For the state elite of the Republic, “the principles of liberalism and democracy did not coincide with [...] [their interests] internally since they were constantly trying to tighten their grip on the periphery” (Kadıoğlu 1996: 188). Thus, the NSS master narrative constructs stories in which centrifugal forces in Turkish society are seen as usual suspects that aim to undermine the Republican regime and tend to collaborate with foreign countries (Karabelias 1999: 141-142).

In addition to the predominance of the state over individual, the two mottos of Turkish nationalism, namely “independent statehood” and “military invincibility” have been the leitmotifs of the NSS master narrative (Aktürk 2007: 352). An independent state that is not under any control of great powers whatsoever and a strong army that can deter any neighbour from initiating a military assault on Turkey have been rhetorically championed by the state elite alongside the ideals of Kemalism. In this sense, the NSS

master narrative portrays a picture in which national security is constantly under threat from internal and external forces. A broad definition of security with respect to different sectors and a narrow definition of measures to tackle the internal and external security threats stems from the rigid definition of the state identity constituted by the ideals of Kemalism, the ethnically described notion of citizenship and the influence of the military and civilian bureaucracy (Kösebalaban 2002; İçduygu and Kaygusuz 2004).

In the remainder of this chapter, the recurrent tensions of the national security state master narrative are unravelled by answering questions: How are the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the foundation of the Republic of Turkey told by the NSS master narrative?; How did the incorporation of the Cold War realpolitik consolidate the NSS master narrative? And how does the NSS master narrative position Turkey in the international system and ascribe meanings to international politics?

5.2. Traumatic Memory of the Collapse of the Empire and Formative Years of the Republic

History is of great importance for any strategic culture and Turkish strategic culture is no exception. Robins points at the ideological implications of history on Turkish politics:

History in Turkey is so much more than simply the disparate, collected views of the past. History helps to legitimise the creation and existence of the state; it helps ideologically to orientate the state; it tells a story which embodies the myths, ideas and values which give meaning to political life within the state (Robins 2003: 93).

Many studies on Turkish strategic culture claim that a static and monolithic interpretation of the Ottoman era and uniform lessons learned from the demise of the Empire in the early 20th century shape and determine Turkish strategic culture. In line with this assumption, the Republic of Turkey is believed to inherit a legacy from the Ottoman Empire. Echoing Hayden White, this thesis starts with a counter argument that the Ottoman legacy is much more constructed than it is inherited. The so-called historical and constant features of Turkish strategic culture are neither constituted by an enduring legacy of the past nor by uniform lessons drawn from past experiences. In fact,

legacies and lessons exist only in narratives that are constantly in a struggle with other narratives within a particular political context. Thus, the Ottoman legacy is produced and re-produced by the Turkish elite in their political narratives to construct different historical, geographical and international identity for their country. It is the narratives that translate historical experiences and the Ottoman legacy into constitutive elements of Turkish strategic culture. Meanings of this so-called Ottoman legacy vary from one master narrative to another. This section explores historical narratives about the Ottoman past told from the perspective of the NSS master narrative.

Severe lessons were learned by the founders of the Republic from their first-hand experience with the harsh realities of the power politics among Western powers. The brute facts of demographic and economic exhaustion owing to the continuous war-fighting starting with the Turco-Italian War in 1911 and ending with the Liberation War between 1919 and 1923, compounded by the socio-political decay within the Imperial structures, had profoundly affected Turkish strategic culture.

The Empire underwent an institutional and legal transformation in its imperial structures due to the reform process incepted in the early 19th century, which started with the Reorganization (*Tanzimat*) in 1839 and continued with the promulgation of the Imperial Edict of Reforms (*Islahat*) in 1856 and the adoption of first ever constitution in 1876 (Hale 2002: 14; Zürcher 2004 chapter 5). Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries the Ottoman Empire dealt with social turmoil owing to the spread of nationalism among different ethnic and religious communities (*millet*) in the empire. Moreover, the Empire witnessed vehement political struggles among different ideologies such as Westernism, Pan-Islamism, Ottomanism and Pan-Turkism (Laçiner 2001; Bozdağlıoğlu 2003: 40-44; Zürcher 2004: 128).

Against this backdrop of rapid transformation in every aspect of the Ottoman imperial system, the recurrent tension for those ideologies was to find a quick remedy to save the Ottoman Empire. For minorities, the Ottoman imperial system was withering away and the most convenient solution was to secede from the Empire and establish their own nation-states. On the other hand, Pan-Turkism, whose aim was to transform the Ottoman Empire into a Turkic one that would encompass Turkic groups in the Caucasus and Central Asia; Pan-Islamism, which emphasized the importance of the

caliphate and the power of Islamic brotherhood for the Ottoman imperial system; and Ottomanism that aimed at gathering different communities around the idea of the Ottoman throne; and lastly, Westernism and liberalism, which championed the reform process in the name of westernization, liberalization and decentralization to transform the Ottoman imperial system were all striving to impose their own solutions for saving the Empire. Most of these ideas purported to preserve the Ottoman imperial system and bring back the heydays of the Empire. Thus, despite the several dividing lines between these different ideologies, the main tension for all of them was centred on the scope and range of Westernization, the maintenance of Imperial structures and the future of Ottoman throne (Zürcher 2004: 127-128).

The Young Turks (*Jön Türkler*) movement, mostly comprised of Turkish nationalist and military officials, flourished among others and governed the state between 1908 and 1918 under the banner of the Committee of Union and Progress (*Ittihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti*). Zürcher (2004: 128) stressed that “many Young Turks rationally supported the idea of Ottomanism, were emotionally attached to a romantic pan-Turkish nationalism and were devout Muslims at the same time.” Ideas of Young Turks that praised a centralized state over plural society, the Turkish nation over other ethnic groups, secularism and positivism over religion and dogma, constitutionalism and constitutional monarchy over absolute monarchy (Hanioglu 2008: 151-161) also affected the founding fathers of the new Republic since most of them were one way or another affiliated with the movement or at least had sympathy for their ideals. For the Young Turks as well as for Mustafa Kemal Atatürk the main driver of change had to be the state.

Nonetheless, some of elites at the time realized that they were fighting a losing battle against the inevitable demise of the old decaying imperial institutions. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and his colleagues were one of those who advocated the idea of a nation-state based on a secular Western regime with a homogenous society in the heartland of the Ottoman Empire, known as Anatolia, where the Sunni Muslim-Turkish community had the highest population, despite the fact that they were educated in the imperial institutions and served for the Empire. As Feroz Ahmad (Ahmad 1993 quoted in Keyman 2005: 271) aptly states, the new Republic “was ‘made’ in the image of the

Kemalist elite which won the national struggle against foreign invaders and the old regime.”

The new Republic created its own narratives about the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in two forms. First, in their narratives they established a causal linkage between the decaying Ottoman imperial system, which was believed to be built upon Islamic rules, absolute authority of the Sultan and a seemingly multicultural but actually deeply divided Ottoman social model, and the demise of the Empire (Fisher Onar and Evin 2011: 302). Second, the Republican elite also concluded that the Empire collapsed because of the economic and political concessions given to Western powers and the schemes of dividing Ottoman Empire of non-Muslims minorities in collaboration with the West (Hale 2002: 38), which culminated in an experience of near-annihilation in the hands of the West after the First World War (Fisher Onar 2009: 233). In this context, their narratives about the Ottoman era carried the day and thus the new elite succeeded in founding a new Turkish state with a purportedly homogenous society in the Anatolian peninsula and Thrace, a larger territory than left to the Turks in the Sèvres Treaty but a smaller one compared to the homeland demarcated in the National Pact (*Misak-ı Milli*). The implications of these narratives can be found in the ways in which the NSS master narrative contrasts the Sèvres Treaty with the Lausanne Treaty.

The Lausanne Treaty, which was signed on 24th July 1923, describes the boundaries of the sovereignty, citizenship and territory of the new Turkish Republic (İçduygu and Kaygusuz 2004: 30). The treaty provides “precious political commodities of recognition, independence and sovereignty” (Robins 2003: 126). It also envisages the territorial integrity and cultural homogeneity of the Republic within a defensible territory that is virtually representative of the borders drawn in the National Pact adopted by the last Ottoman parliament in 1920. In this regard, the Treaty sets the legal basis, societal background and geographical setting in which the NSS master narrative functions as the dominant conceptual framework shaping the discourses of the Turkish elite.

For our analysis, the treaty is of great value because it brought mental normality to the Turks and a sense of relief by ending the eleven years of almost uninterrupted war-fighting – with Italy over Libya between 1911 and 1912; in the Balkans between

1912 and 1913; the First World War between 1914 and 1918, and finally the Greco-Turkish war between 1919 and 1922, known by the Turks as Liberation War (*Kurtuluş Savaşı*) (Hale 2002: 54-55). Therefore, the foundation of the new Republic was a turning point in many ways as it brought a closure to the imperial narrative and marked the beginning of a new era. According to the national security state master narrative this new era is a harbinger of a better future for the Turks as the new Republic represents a rupture between the misfortunes of a troublesome Ottoman era and the present day Republic. Put it this way, according to the NSS master narrative the Republic was literally built on the *ashes* of the Empire.

Despite Lausanne's significance as being the founding treaty, the Treaty of Sèvres, which, in fact, was not signed by Turkey and never came into force even after it was signed by Ottoman statesmen on 10th August 1920, arguably left its enigmatic mark on the Turkish state elite and became a leitmotif of the NSS master narrative. The Treaty of Sèvres had a paramount impact, albeit in a negative manner generating a sceptic if not paranoid attitude towards the West and Turkey's neighbours (Robins 2003: 103-105). The articles of the Treaty of Sèvres, which envisaged the dismemberment of the Ottoman territory among Britain, France, Greece, Italy and Armenia, were deemed unacceptable by many Turks at the time as the treaty left a "helpless and mutilated, a shadow state" for the Turks (Lewis 1967 quoted in Robins 2003: 103). For the Turks, the territory left to them was nothing but a territory of a besieged state by hostile enemies. Hence, any undesirable policies of foreign countries are associated with the Sèvres Treaty. Furthermore, the Treaty evokes a fear of losing what is won on the battlefield at the table. This fear is usually associated with the experiences of the late Ottomans, who were forced to withdraw and cede a territory even though they won the battle (Hale 2002: 38) In the NSS master narrative the tragic experience with the demise of the Ottoman Empire and the signature of the Sèvres Treaty translate into a trauma or a syndrome connoting "a timeless repository of emotion" (Göçek 2011: 121) of a nation that warded off a situation of near-extinction and humiliation.

The unpleasant experience with the dismemberment of the Empire by foreign forces manifests itself in the narratives of the Turkish elite as *Sèvres-phobia*, *Sèvres*

syndrome or Sèvres complex, which evokes a distrust of great powers and Turkey's neighbours. This distrust is generated by the conviction that "foreign-inspired plots [...] exist to implement the defunct Treaty of Sèvres" (Robins 2003: 162) so as to partition the Turkish country. The concept of *Sèvres-phobia* has connotations of

fear of Russian expansionism southwards, and frustration at the disappointing consequences of the Turkish expansionism northwards; concern about Armenian territorial ambitions in eastern Anatolia, and Greek territorial ambitions in western Anatolia; dismay at the Arabs for joining the anti-Turkish coalition during World War I; and for Syria's unsuccessful claim to the province of Hatay as well as Iraq's successful claim to Mosul; and suspicion that the western powers might at any point be ready to sacrifice Turkish interests in pursuit of their own strategic objectives (Mufti 1998: 41).

Those fears about foreign forces (*dış mihraklar*) have been haunting Turkish politics and casting doubt about the intentions of Western states and their policies in Turkey's near abroad for a long time (Robins 2003: 105). Even though in the literature the terms *Sèvres-phobia*, *Sèvres syndrome* or *Sèvres complex* are frequently used, this thesis argues that there can be different narratives about the Sèvres Treaty and the one offered by the NSS master narrative is a traumatic narrative about the Sèvres and its impact on the strategic thinking of the Turkish elite.

The historical experiences during the 19th century and the prolonged collapse of the Empire culminating with the Sèvres Treaty, fuelled suspicions about not only the West but also ethnic minorities resident in Anatolia, most of which founded their own states by separating from the Empire (Hale 2002: 38). The Treaty of Sèvres has been depicted in this master narrative as the ultimate epitome of Western countries' true intentions about Turkey and the zenith of the collaboration of non-Muslim minorities with imperial powers to divide Turkey. Generally speaking, the national security state master narrative depicts Turkey as a country permanently under threat because of the schemes of great powers whose major aim is to interfere in Turkey's domestic politics by inflating ethnic conflicts, religious and sectarian divides and because of the hostile neighbours who encircled Turkey (Jung 2003). Thus, the root causes of internal problems within Turkey are always sought outside and generally found within the

policies and intentions of foreign countries (Guida 2008: 38; Göçek 2011: 121). In the national security state master narrative, the Sèvres syndrome implies not only a traumatic memory about the end of the Ottoman Empire but also a heroic success story of a nation which was reborn by “dash[ing] the Sèvres, the treaty dictated by the imperialist Europe” (Göçek 2011: 103). The narratives about the Sèvres thus make discourses of the traditional state elite oscillating between an over-exaggerated trauma and an over-appreciated success story.

The term Sèvres Syndrome is introduced and generally used by scholars working on Turkish foreign policy in the post-Cold War era, rather than narrative entrepreneurs of the national security state master narrative.¹¹ However, in our analysis of political narratives about the demise of the Ottoman Empire, the Sèvres Treaty, whether it is a syndrome or a reality, remains a recurrent tension for the NSS master narrative as the Sèvres is used as a historical reference point in order to draw an analogy between the present day internal and external threats to the national unity and territorial integrity of Turkey and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire (Göçek 2011: 121). Furthermore, drawing an analogy between the Sèvres and the early 1990s or referring to the Sèvres Treaty to make a strong argument for advocating prudence and vigilance against foreign schemes has been a way of “mak[ing] sense of the new situations and events confronted by the state thus influencing the availability of possible foreign and security policy options (Drorian 2005: 258).

For instance, Mümtaz Soysal, a former foreign minister and a left-wing politician, once made a remark about the influence of the Sèvres Treaty. Soysal conceded that “We all have a Sèvres obsession. All of us, from those in the foreign ministry to those at the top echelons of the military, from our elementary school education, we have been introduced to the Sèvres map. We can never forget that map” (Soysal 2004: 41).

Take these quotes from a speech given by Süleyman Demirel, former president, at the opening session of the Turkish Grand National Assembly in 1994 and a speech given by Ibrahim Kumaş, an Islamist Welfare party (RP) deputy.

¹¹ Interview with Ercan Çitlioğlu, head of the Center for International Security and Strategic Research at Bahçeşehir University, İstanbul, 14.03.2011.

What is attempted to be achieved [by foreign countries]? Make no mistake [...] Turkey is an object of partition schemes. Both internal and external events indicate the revival of the Sèvres [Treaty]. Nobody can claim otherwise (Demirel 01/09/1994).

In these decisions [of the European Parliament], Turkey is seen as if it is a dominion of Europe. With their demands from us to democratize in two months, to stop human rights violations over a night, to negotiate with the PKK under their [Europe's] auspices, it has become obvious that the Sèvres is revived; they [Europeans] want to bring our domestic issues onto international platforms. [...] The decisions of the European Parliament clearly have demonstrated the intractable, always alive mind-set and goals of the West. As a nation we must never forget this. A Muslim Turk who forgets about the Sèvres, a disastrous document that shows us the real face of the West, only deceives himself (Kumaş (RP) 1995 v.86, s.109, p.140).

The interpretations of the Sèvres Treaty vary.¹² First and foremost, Sèvres refers to the capitulations given to the West by the Ottomans. It also invokes the historical experience with Western plans to invade and partition the Turkish land in collaboration with non-Muslim ethnic communities in the Ottoman Empire as well as the Western overt or covert support for other ethnic groups such Kurds and Arabs to revolt against the Ottoman state. In addition, Islamists perceive a threat of missionary and divisive activities pursued by Christians and Jews in Turkey, whose roots are traced back to the Crusades (for a comprehensive analysis see Guida 2008).

For instance, an Islamist interpretation of Sèvres implies a clash between Christians and Muslims. The below quote exemplifies the use of Sèvres by Islamist politicians. In a parliamentary debate about the Armenian-Azeri conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, Haluk Ipek, an AKP deputy, referred to the Sèvres Treaty as such:

If the confidential minutes of the Sèvres [conference] are examined, from these confidential meetings held among the conveners of the Sèvres [conference] ONE can notice that relations between Muslim Turks in Anatolia and Turks in Central

¹² One of my interviewees, Sabri Sayari, professor of International Relations, drew my attention to the variation of the meanings of the Sèvres Syndrome among different political groups. Interview was given on 14.03.2011.

Asia, particularly Turks in Azerbaijan, were cut off by a Christian state [Armenia] which was going to be established as a buffer zone between the two Turkic communities (Ipek (AKP) 2005 v.76, s.63, p.15).

A speech of the former Chief of the General Staff Yaşar Büyükanıt given at the handover ceremony of chieftain in 2006 and at a press conference after an official visit to Washington in February 2007 demonstrate the military's suspicion about foreign countries and exemplifies the narratives of the military regarding the Sèvres Treaty.

Some foreigners, even with good intentions, mention that the Turkish Republic will face a new Sèvres in the future. [...] even if there are external actors who have great hopes for resurrecting Sèvres and thus devote a great deal of efforts to realizing that, I don't think that there is and will ever be such power which can force Turkey to accept the Sèvres Treaty without subduing us, our national power and capabilities. The Turkish state together with its nation remains strong. I always stress that we should never see ourselves weak. There might be others with futile schemes and impossible dreams. However, we are strong and determined enough to shatter their dreams and defeat their hopes. Have no doubt about it! (Büyükanıt 28/08/2006).

Nobody can or will ever dare to divide Turkey. We'll do whatever it takes to stop them. Is there such a country [which plans to divide Turkey]? No. There are dreamers. There are collaborators. They were dreaming in the past too. We'll not allow anyone to divide Turkey (Büyükanıt 14/02/2007).

What is striking about these two quotes is that both of them employ references to the Sèvres Treaty as a political prism to look at the current political issues and problems Turkey faces. The AKP deputy traced back the origins of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict to the Sèvres Treaty whereas the chief of the general staff projected the Sèvres Treaty to Turkey's future visions. The Sèvres Treaty is a discursive nodal point to which the past, present and the future of Turkey is tied. Despite being used to rally people around national interests that are defined with reference to national security, a traumatic memory about Sèvres has dominated the political debate about foreign policy, if not determined decisions.

One can conclude that the Sèvres is seen in the national security state master narrative as a historical fact, not because it was signed between the Ottoman Empire and

the Allied powers. Rather because it is generally construed as the utmost codified text of Western plans on Turkey, which is reminiscent of the Eastern Question¹³ as well as the secret agreement of Sykes-Picot between the United Kingdom (UK) and France signed in 1916. Soysal's remarks and the three quotes suffice to demonstrate how widespread and deep the Sèvres penetrated into the discourses of the Turkish state elite. Thus, narratives about the Ottoman past and the Sèvres treaty have their impacts on how the Turkish elite see Turkey's environment and they ways they perceive neighbours as threats.

5.3. Geopolitical Narratives and the Implications of Cold War Politics

Inasmuch as narratives about Turkey's past rest on a paradoxical historical self, narratives about Turkey's environment rest on insecurities and threats that are featured in the NSS master narrative. This section elaborates on the impact of Cold War realpolitik on the development of a "geographically exceptional country" (see Yanık 2009) image of Turkey for the West during the Cold War and narratives whose main theme is survival in a hostile environment and the main plot features a strong Turkey who has to ready to defend itself against the military threats originating in the surroundings.

The maintenance of national unity, protection of territorial integrity and the idea of inviolability of borders are defining characteristics of geopolitical narratives told from the perspective of the NSS master narrative. A Turkish scholar contends that the Ottoman foreign policy until the 17th century resembled an "offensive *realpolitik*" approach whereas in the 19th century the Ottoman Empire adopted a defensive approach and pursued a balance of power strategy in its diplomatic and economic relations with the great powers of Europe, i.e. United Kingdom, France, Germany and Russia (Karaosmanoğlu 2000: 200; Karaosmanoğlu 2009: 29). This defensive approach was passed on to the Turkish Republic as well.

As a new-born state, Turkey was generally "inward-looking and avoided foreign entanglements whenever possible" (Rubin 2001: 1). In the early Republican period,

¹³ The Eastern question "describe[s] the inter-imperialist rivalry concerning the division of the legacy of the ailing Ottoman Empire, described as the "sick man of Europe." (Ahmad 2004: 9).

Turkey eschewed using aggression and force against its neighbours and it preferred to side with other status quo seeker states rather than revisionist ones in order to preserve the delicate “Lausanne settlement” (Aydın 2003b: 321). Unless a neighbour was suspected of aiding the secessionist groups in Turkey and harbouring them in their territory, Ankara opted for status quo and stability in its environs and pursued a strategy of non-interference into the domestic problems of its neighbours. Ankara’s attitude towards French Syria, which was believed to be providing a safe haven for the Armenians, Kurds and Circassians, in the post-World War One period exemplifies that kind of distrust among the state elite (Cağaptay 2006: 162).

One of the recurring themes in the NSS master narrative is the strong emphasis on Atatürk’s peaceful foreign policy approach, which is encapsulated in his idea of “peace at home and peace in the world”. Atatürk also dismissed all irredentist ideas such as imperial Ottomanism, Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turanism as well as an offensive nationalism (Hale 2002: 91; Aydın 2003b: 318-19). Sticking to this motto and primarily out of necessity due to the urgency to transform Turkish society into a western, secular nation-state through new reforms, Turkey under the rule of single party regime led by Atatürk further reconciled with Greece after the signature of the Lausanne Treaty and established amicable relations with the Soviet Union in spite of the centuries old Russian-Turkish enmity with the signature of friendship agreements in 1921 and 1935 (Ahmad 2004: 19; Zürcher 2004: 202).

In the 1930s, revisionist policies of Italy revived the concerns of Turkish state elite about their neighbourhood, especially the Balkans and Eastern Mediterranean, thus Turkey formed new pacts in the Balkans as well as the Middle East. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that the Turkish elite did not see any threat concerning the policies of the Nazi Germany (Zürcher 2004: 2002). The new Republic aligned itself with the Briand-Kellogg Pact in 1929 and joined the League of Nations in 1932 (Ahmad 2004: 18-19). In their endeavours to establish a ring of friends and protect their country against external threats Turkish politicians also signed multilateral agreements with Yugoslavia, Romania and Greece in 1934 (Balkan Pact); with Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan in 1937 (Saadabad Pact); with the United Kingdom and France in 1939 (Mutual Assistance Agreement) before the outbreak of the Second World War. Furthermore, Turkish

politicians worked hard towards a settlement of issues left from Lausanne such as the question of Turkish straits and the future of Alexandretta (*Hatay*) province in Syria. Turkey collected the fruits of its political efforts with signature of the Montreux Convention in 1936 and the accomplishment of the peaceful annexation of Hatay to Turkey in 1939 (Zürcher 2004: 202-203). Some scholars have been argued that Atatürk's era good neighbourly relations were motivated by security concerns rather than problem-solving approach and regional cooperation. The Saadabad and Balkan Pacts of the 1930s were seen more as pacts of non-aggression and non-interference rather than regional cooperation and integration (Criss and Bilgin 1997; Çağaptay 2006).

Those pacts and agreements were signed because of two main reasons. First of all, having good neighbourly relations was seen vital for the implementation of reforms. The Republican elite needed a breathing space and time to consolidate the new state and accomplish the total transformation of Turkish society. The second reason is the changing security environment in the Balkans and Mediterranean due to Italian and Bulgarian aggressive behaviours. The new policies of Italy were at odds with Turkish status-quo seeking foreign policy at the time (Hale 2002: 60-61). In the narratives of the new state elite, the Balkans and Eastern Mediterranean were constructed as the geographies to which significant attention had to be paid in order to protect the new born state (Ahmad 2004: 19). Such geopolitical concerns of the early Republic regarding the Balkans, Eastern Mediterranean and the sovereignty of Turkish straits were elevated to a new level with the Cold War as the Turkish foreign policy elite discovered the importance of their country's geopolitical location for the Western alliance against the Warsaw Pact.¹⁴ Hence, the geopolitical thinking and the Cold War *realpolitik* exerted its authority over the discourses of Turkish foreign policy elite (see Bilgin 2007a).

Atatürk's policies in the early years of the Turkish Republic is the core of the geopolitical narratives of the Turkish state elite, yet what made this narratives prevalent and dominant is in fact the adoption of the American narratives about the Cold War by the Turkish state elite. Having relinquished its imperial status and its central position, Turkey became a "small state" (see Weisband 1973) with a "secondary power status"

¹⁴ Interview with Dr. Nihat Ali Özcan, Director of Foreign Policy Studies in Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey, Ankara, 07.05.2010.

(Deringil 1992: 1), whose utmost objective was contained to safeguarding its national unity and territorial integrity and seeking stability and peace in its vicinity. The geopolitical narratives centred around the theme of external and internal threats posed by the spread of communism and the Soviet influence in Turkey's vicinity highlighted the geostrategic importance of Turkey and dictated a security-first approach. The Soviet threat was constructed by recalling the rivalry between the Ottoman and Russian Empires and describing Soviet actions as reminiscent of "Tsarist expansionist policies" in Turkish narratives (Coş and Bilgin 2010: 56).

Turkey did not participate in the Second World War, but pursued an "active neutrality" policy (Deringil 1989). However, its evasion from the war would have been very costly for Turkey when the war ended and the victorious powers sat around the table to design a new world order. Isolationism and non-alignment were ruled out by the Turkish policymakers at the time, because of the menacing Soviet demands on Turkish soil and the Turkish straits as well as the long-existing ideal of the Turkish state elite to be recognized as an equal member of the Western world since the Ottoman Empire's last decades (Karaosmanoğlu 2009: 30).

In the aftermath of the Second World War, Turkey became a member of the United Nations in 1945. Amidst differing perspectives between the US and the UK as to how Turkey could be supported against the Soviet Union (Park 2005: 131), in 1947 the US president Harry S. Truman declared that the United States would support the economic development and military modernization of Greece and Turkey and thereby preventing the spread of communism so that "the balance of power in the Near East" (Kuniholm 1996: 46) would be maintained in order to contain the Soviet expansion towards oil rich regions of Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East. Turkey joined the Council of Europe in 1949 and it was accepted into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization along with Greece in 1952 as a result of its participation in the Korean War.

Sending troops to Korea and becoming a NATO member were of historical significance for the consolidation and institutionalization of the national security state narrative. It was the first ever Turkish contribution to an international peacekeeping operation under the aegis of the UN. Although "Turkish officials did not believe the

invasion was the beginning of a global Soviet military offensive, they were worried that letting such aggression go unchecked could set a dangerous precedent” and Turkey also “wanted to prove its worth as an ally to the United States and other NATO members” (Brown 2008: 94-95). Therefore, this historical contribution of Turkey was an indication of willingness and solemn commitment of Turkish politicians to be on the same side with the West in order to ensure Turkey’s place within the Western institutions (Deringil 1992: 3). This, in turn, paved the way for the Cold War concepts, ideas and American narratives on geopolitics to penetrate deep into Turkish strategic culture. Furthermore, the heroic war-fighting of Turkish soldiers in Korea was considered as an impressive display of Turkish army’s military abilities (Vander Lippe 2000: 97).

In addition to the immediate economic and military benefits, Turkey’s NATO membership, in the long term, transformed the Turkish armed forces by redefining its military doctrine, modifying its institutional design and changing its organizational culture. The revival of militarization and militarism at the national level is the by-product of the institutional transformation and modernization of Turkish army. The Turkish military, taking advantage of the external justification for its domestic role, positioned itself above civilian politicians to protect the republican regime against any external and internal threats. Furthermore, Turkey’s entrance to NATO and its strategic role in the Western alliance against the Soviet threat was canonized and thus the NSS master narrative was consolidated with the emergence of geopolitical narratives that depicted a dangerous neighbourhood that is rife with threats and beset by conflicts. In this sense, these narratives described Turkey with metaphors that emphasize Turkey’s military prowess. Turkey as “bastion” or Turkey as “buffer” exemplifies such metaphors used in the geopolitical narratives of the Turkish elite (Yanık 2009: 532). Drawing on these observations one can conclude that the narrative validity and appeal of the national security state master narrative was substantiated by hegemonic narratives of the US, which prioritized security over democracy, the national security state over civil society and high politics over low politics.

With regard to relations with neighbours, the Turkish elite pursued a policy of non-entanglement into domestic policies of neighbouring countries and a defensive posture in order to deter military threats from neighbours. The new Turkish Republic

preferred to stay indifferent to Middle Eastern politics as the historical narratives renounced the Ottoman Islamic heritage and labelled Arabs as treacherous neighbours who “stabbed us [Turks] in the back” during the First World War (Robins 2003: 97). Jung (2005: 6) argues that Turkish narratives about the Arabs originate from “the First World War, the so-called Arab revolt, and the post-war redistribution of Ottoman territories eventually severed the political bonds between the Arabs and the Turks. [...] the new secular Turkish Republic became almost an antithesis to the Arab world.” The estrangement to the Middle East was also a strong driver for Turkey’s Western vocation (see Fisher Onar 2009, Bilgin 2009).

In spite of Atatürk’s indifferent and non-interventionist policy towards the Middle East, Turkey acted like a spearhead of the West throughout the 1950s. Turkey joined the Baghdad Pact in 1955 alongside Britain, Iran, Iraq and Pakistan, then politically supported with Britain and France during the Suez Crisis of 1956 and defended French atrocities in Algeria. Turkey’s unquestioning adherence to its Western allies aggravated Arabs’ suspicion and distrust of Turkey. Turkey was pictured in Arab narratives as the supporter of the western colonial rule and the “servant of the west” (Deringil 1992: 4; Jung 2005: 3) acting against the ambitions of independence movements in the region (Robins 2003: 99). The Turkish government under the premiership of Adnan Menderes between 1950 and 1960, motivated to garner the assistance of the West to his government, exaggerated the Western concerns about Arab countries falling into the sphere of communist influence so as to inflate the Turkish role in the Middle Eastern security. Despite Turkey’s pro-Western stance during the Menderes administrations, its hawkish approach towards the Middle eastern countries rang the alarm bells in Washington and London when Turkey threatened Syria by massing troops on the Syrian border in 1955 (Sever 1998: 76-77). This antagonistic and offensive approach towards the Middle East in the 1950s was replaced by the reimplementation of the policy of non-entanglement after the 1960 coup in Turkey. Hale summarizes Turkish approach towards the Middle East in the rest of the Cold War as such:

The shift in Turkish foreign policy in the mid-1960s was marked by a determined attempt to rebuild bridges with the Arab world. The most immediate reason for this was the aim of winning the Arab states away from their previous support for Makarios and, more broadly, to try to convince them that Turkey had abandoned the obviously futile approaches of the Baghdad Pact. [...] Essentially, Turkish policy towards the region tried to uncouple its regional policy from its alliance with the Western powers as far as possible, and to build up bilateral rather than multi-lateral linkages with the main states in the region. Above all, Turkish policy sought to avoid taking sides in regional disputes, either between states or within them (Hale 2002: 169-170).

Throughout the Cold War Turkey refrained from embroiling into the domestic politics of Arab countries and paid great attention to stay at an equal distance from each country in the Middle East (Hale 2002: 170-171). The relations with the Middle Eastern countries were never considered as a substitute to Turkey's relations with the West (Aykan 1993: 95). On the other hand, despite the emergence of public and elite support for the Arabs and Palestinians in the 1970s due to the severe effects of the oil shocks of early 1970s and due to the rise of anti-Westernism backed by several political movements, such as the new nationalist leftist rhetoric of Bülent Ecevit and the rising pro-Islamic political parties, i.e. the National Salvation Party of Necmettin Erbakan (*Milli Selamet Partisi*), Turkey, in general, kept itself at arm's length from the Middle East throughout the Cold War as well as the early 1990s (for a discussion see Criss and Bilgin 1997). Moreover, even though Turkey was one of the first states to recognize the state of Israel in 1949, Turkey-Israel relations did not flourish until the early 1990s when the Oslo Accords was signed between Israel and Palestine in 1993 (Bölükbaşı 1999: 22).

One last vital issue which has been a recurrent theme in the NSS master narrative is the Cyprus question. Cyprus became a major international problem in the mid-1950s, when Greek Cypriots rioted against the British rule in the island. Turkey's initial reaction was to maintain the British rule in the island (Zürcher 2004: 237). While "the Greek Cypriots would accept nothing less than *enosis* [...] the Turkish Cypriots had begun to agitate for the partition of the island between Greece and Turkey (*taksim*)" (Ker-Lindsay 2007: 16). For Turkish politicians, if Great Britain withdrew from the island, then Turkey, as the inheritor of the Ottoman Empire, would claim its sovereignty over Cyprus (Bahcheli 2003: 165). In 1959, Great Britain, Greece and Turkey signed

Treaties of Zurich and London. These treaties promulgated the independence of Cyprus and the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus based on bi-communal state under the guarantorship of Great Britain, Greece and Turkey. However, the social rift between the two communities in the island widened and deepened in 1960s starting with the political conflict over the constitutional amendments and ensuing tension and fighting between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, which culminated in Turkish military operation in Cyprus in 1974 (Ker-Lindsay 2007: 17-18).

Turkey has devoted significant amount of money, diplomatic capital and military force to protecting the Turkish community on the island since the mid-1950s. Even though Turkey was left alone by its western Allies and even it was embargoed by the US due to the Turkish military intervention of 1974 in Cyprus, Turkey never wavered in its support for Turkish Cypriots and ardently maintained its Cyprus policy at all costs, even if it meant deadlock on the issue throughout the 1980s and 1990s.

The Cyprus question has been one of the major tensions expressed with the national security state master narrative. Cyprus is depicted as a “national cause” due to the existence of the Turkish community on the island. For the national security state narrative, Cyprus is also important because of its geostrategic location and proximity to Turkey, hence Cyprus is prioritized as a vital security concern and geopolitical risk. The Cyprus question seizes a significant place in the consolidation of geopolitical truths narrated within the national security state master narrative. William Hale underlines the implications of the Cyprus dispute on Turkish strategic culture

Apart from considerations of national honour and prestige, it was also argued that enosis would fundamentally change the strategic balance Greece and Turkey in the Mediterranean, allowing Greece to surround Turkey on two sides. On these grounds, some Turks suggested that Turkey would have opposed enosis even if there had been ethnic Turks on the island (Hale 2002: 131).

The Cyprus dispute ended the good relations between Athens and Ankara (Ker-Lindsay 2007: 17). The stories about the friendly relationship between Greece and Turkey of Atatürk’s era were eclipsed by stories about the sufferings of Turkish Cypriots and the stories that invoked the policy of *Megali Idea*, which was pursued by Greek politicians in the 19th century (ibid: 13). Furthermore, for the first time in the history of

Turkish Republic, Mustafa Kemal's non-interference policy into domestic politics of Turkey's neighbours was abandoned. Turkey claimed historical and geographical rights over the fate of an island which not only falls out of its jurisdiction, but also Cyprus was neither included in the maps of the National Pact nor in the Lausanne Treaty since Cyprus was ruled by the British between 1881 and the mid-1950s. Lastly, the Cyprus dispute "has further strengthened the feeling in Turkish security circles that Turkey's security considerations may not be always paralleled by those of its allies" (Drorian 2005: 259) due to the fact that Turkey's allies did not lend any political support for Turkey with regard to the Cyprus dispute.

The national security master narrative grounded on the Cold War geopolitics and threat-centred security-first approach overemphasized security and defence. Therefore, a security-first, military dominant, geopolitically-oriented strategic approach pervaded the talking about Turkey's foreign and security policy and its relations with neighbouring countries. Consequently, "the problem with Cold War approaches to security was not only that the military dimension was prioritised to the neglect of other dimensions, but that even non-military dimensions were approached from a 'national security' perspective, and addressed through recourse to traditional means" (Bilgin 2004: 32). The NSS master narrative consolidated its dominance in Turkish politics by establishing its own state institutions such as the National Security Council (MGK) in 1962, the National Intelligence Organization (MIT) in 1963 and State Security Courts¹⁵ in 1973. In addition, the NSS master narrative also determined the narratives of history books and it permeated the high school education through a compulsory course titled "The Course on National Security Knowledge". The course was compulsory for the high school students.¹⁶ The course used to give an overview of the military service as a profession in the first term and in the second term the concepts of national security and national strategy were defined and Turkey's relations with third countries were discussed.

¹⁵ State Security Courts were established to try cases that are considered criminal acts against the security of the state such as terrorism, organized crime and acts against the political regime. These courts were abolished in 2004 in accordance with the EU reforms. Retrieved from http://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Devlet_G%C3%BCvenlik_Mahkemeleri (Accessed on 10 July 2012).

¹⁶ There have been courses on the military service and national security included in the secondary education curriculum since the 1930s (Altınay 2004, chapter 5). The Course of National Security Knowledge was dropped from the curriculum in January 2012.

This approach with its institutions was carried to the post-Cold War era. The collapse of the Warsaw Pact, civil wars in the Balkans and Caucasus, the military operations in Iraq, conflicts with Syria, Armenia and Greece as well as the separatist and fundamentalist terrorist activities inside Turkey compounded the insecurities and fears of Turkish state elite and eventually, helped the NSS narratives to survive even in the absence of a bipolar world order.

The end of the Cold War ushered a new era when Turkey found itself in the middle of a political and security vacuum that brought latent ethnic and religious hostilities into the political landscape. The sudden demise of the Soviet Union, without doubt, precipitated severe ethnic conflicts and civil wars especially in the Balkans and the Caucasus. The situation in the aftermath of the Cold War was, thus, a mixed blessing for Turkey (Aydın 2003a). On the one hand, Ankara gained more room to manoeuvre and more freedom in the making of foreign policy. On the other hand, Turkey was surrounded by a quagmire of ethno-religious violence which Turkish strategists had eschewed for a long time. In the developments of the 1990s, the narratives of the Turkish elite described Turkey as a country located at the “epicentre of a Bermuda Triangle” by Hikmet Sami Türk, a former Defence Minister in 1999 (quoted in Jung 2003), while a former ambassador (Elekdağ 1996), who was concerned about Turkey encircled with enemies, put forth a military strategy designed to address threats originating simultaneously from Greece and Syria while continuing the fight with the PKK in Northern Iraq. For instance, a retired general depicted a gruesome picture of Turkey’s neighbourhood:

If Turkey is famous for something, that is its tough neighbourhood. Indeed, Turkey is almost completely surrounded by present and potential instabilities and irredentism. This is mainly due to the somewhat painful and unhealthy dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. The modern Turkish Republic could not escape this inheritance (Ergüvenç 1998: 1).

These statements given in the late 1990s reflect the perceptions in some circles of the state elite towards Turkey’s geography and environment. Towards the end of the 1980s, threats were no longer stemming from the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact. It was the southern neighbours, namely Syria, Iraq and Iran as well as Greece in the West,

who posed serious threats to Turkey. In addition to such external threats, the Kurdish separatism was included as an existential threat into the discourse of traditional state elite. Turkey, trapped in the vicious circle of challenges and threats, redefined its national security in a booklet called National Security Policy Paper in the 1990s. For the first time, the General Staff put more emphasis on internal threats than external ones in 1989 (Özcan 2004: 3). This was followed by a decision taken by the National Security Council in March 1990 which promulgated that Turkish state would take every measure to fight against PKK-led separatism in south eastern Turkey and eventually internal threats were highly prioritized by the 1992 National Security Policy Paper, with which every government has to align their policies with no opposition whatsoever (ibid.). From then on, the Kurdish separatism replaced the Soviet threat of the Cold War.

Activities of militant Islamic groups and the Kurdish separatist movement were also deemed as threats to internal security and territorial integrity in the revised version of the NSSP (Aydın 2003a: 174). Furthermore, the NSPP, approved in 1997 and revised in 1999, listed two countries with which Turkey had open confrontations. These countries were Syria and Greece. It also named Russia and Iran as rival countries whose activities Turkey had to be vigilant about (NSSP 1997, cited in ibid.).

Threats originating in the immediate surroundings became much more acute as Turkish traditional policymakers cultivated a suspicious and cautious attitude towards their neighbours (Hale and Özbudun 2010: 120). The menacing Soviet demands on Turkish soil and Turkish straits at the very early years of the Cold War urged the Turks to re-design their defence strategy in accordance with the realities of the bipolar world. In the 1990s, however, the traditional state elite at the time were more concerned about the actions of their neighbours such as Bulgaria, Greece, Iraq and Syria. The Turkish state elite justified their defence spending on the basis that Turkey resembles an inland country surrounded by several unfriendly neighbours. This narrative of threats and risks lingered throughout the 1990s. For instance, in 1998, Sadi Ergüvenç, a retired general, stressed the existing opportunities as well as risks in Turkish geography.

Geographic disposition and military power constitute the essential elements of a country's military strategic value. [...] Turkey's geographic location can be considered an enviable strategic military asset. [...] Such geography might be

considered a privilege were it not to create a reciprocal sensitivity which in turn necessitates vigilance and obliges Turkey to keep a strong defense (Ergüvenç 1998: 2).

Such mistrust deepened as an outcome of the old convictions about neighbours as being the usual suspects who were not only giving political support to separatist and fundamentalist terrorist organizations in Turkey but also clandestinely supplying arms, hosting terrorist training camps and even providing refuge to militants. This mistrust about neighbours culminated in the escalation of tensions between Turkey and its neighbours, which brought Turkey to the edge of war with Greece over Kardak/Imia islets in 1996, with Greek Cypriots over the S-300 missiles, and Syria over the PKK in 1998.

One can conclude that the geopolitical narratives in the Cold War were predicated on the geopolitical truths fabricated with references to the bipolar world order and threat perceptions of Turkey (Bilgin 2007a: 742, 745). The Cold War experiences dictated certain types of themes, concepts and storylines. In the narratives of the Turkish elite Turkey is featured as surrounded by several enemies and facing menacing threats coming from its neighbours. The fear of the communist threat externally originated from the Soviet Union and internally posed by communist oriented political groups are the major themes in the national security state master narrative. The focal point of narratives told by the state elite are the inevitable conflicts between Turkey and its neighbours. Therefore, according to the NSS master narrative, Turkey has to be militarily strong and politically stable so that it can deter any threat emanating from inside and outside. The implications of geopolitical narratives are three-fold: First, it created “a stronger state, understood in military-focused terms [which] is in contrast to a people- and democracy-focused understanding favoured by those who have sought to strengthen the rule of law, democracy and the economy” (ibid.: 741). Second, they precipitated a shift in the interpretations of the Turkish elite about Turkey’s international position from a small state and newly established nation-state to a strategically important country and a reliable ally of the US in the international system within the narratives of the Turkish elite. Lastly, these narratives described the nature of international politics as the site of intractable military and political conflicts between the two hostile camps. Consequently,

realpolitik and security-first approach became the main storyline with which every other narrative has to comply.

5.4. Turkey's Western Orientation and Narratives about International Politics

The national security state master narrative places great importance on Turkey's Western orientation. This is usually told as a story of Turkey's modernization and the development of its Western identity since the early 19th century (Yılmaz and Bilgin 2005; Bilgin 2009: 120). For centuries, the Turks were considered in Europe but not of Europe with their cultural and institutional differences (Yurdusev 2003: 78). The Ottoman Empire did not take part in the Westphalian system until the Treaty of Paris was signed in 1856. Under the provisions of the treaty, the Empire was acknowledged as one of the participants "in the public law and concert of Europe" (Hale 2002: 27). Since then the continuous quest for recognition by European powers has been the main foreign policy goal for the Turks (Robins 2003: 6).

The Ottoman Empire had pursued a modernization process through the Westernization of its political, military and social structures. This centuries-long Westernization project is believed to be constitutive of Turkish state identity (see Bozdağlıoğlu 2003; Bilgin 2009). The implication of such a constructed identity for Turkish foreign policy has been the existence of continuous efforts on the side of the Turkish elite to identify their country as western and seek confirmation for its western credentials by aligning their national security policies with the policies of the Western countries (Yılmaz and Bilgin 2005: 39). Nonetheless, Kösebalaban (2011: 48) highlights the paradox of the Kemalist elite and he succinctly puts that "Kemalism aimed to Westernize Turkey, but at the same time many Kemalists continued to consider the West as a threat to its existence, often invoking the memory of Sèvres."

The Westernization project is an indispensable theme for the new Republic's narrative. As much as the memory of Sèvres did by exacerbating the fear and suspicion about the West the Westernization project furnishes the state elite with an ideal to rally people around their policies. The aim of becoming Western despite the West is a long cherished goal stressed in the NSS master narrative. The future of Turkish Republic is tied to its prospects of becoming Western and rising higher on the ladder of

contemporary civilization. Moreover, for the traditional Turkish elite “Westernization was a necessary process of empowerment against the West” (Kösebalaban 2011: 48). This, of course, paradoxically cultivated a love or hate relationship between Turkey and the West (Hale 2002: 39), which has been continuing since the late Ottoman era.¹⁷ Consequently, this West/non-West dichotomy became a national obsession with being recognized as Western despite the fact that Turkey has failed to act totally in line with the liberal and democratic ideals of the West and despite the fact that the Turkish elite have remained suspicious about the intentions of the West vis-à-vis non-western others in general and Turkey in particular (Kadıoğlu 1996: 188; Bilgin 2009: 114).

In the narratives of the Republican state elite, “modernization has been synonymous with westernization and the rejection of country’s cultural and historical roots in the Middle East” (Jung 2003). Hence, in national security state narratives the recurrent theme of Turkey’s western orientation goes hand in hand with the memory of the Ottoman past alongside the geopolitical narratives about neighbours of Turkey as threats and particularly Arabs as non-Western and uncivilized. This either/or tension between the West and non-West and the Sèvres syndrome determined relations not only with the Arab countries, but also with all other neighbours of Turkey. This also have implications for Turkish foreign policy as it shapes and determines the meanings ascribed to international politics and Turkey’s place in the international system.

Throughout the Cold War, Turkey was a small state in an important geostrategic location, which has a control over the Straits of Dardanelles and the Bosphorus. Therefore, Turkey was valued as “a base for military projection” (Bilgin 2004: 45) in the flanks of the American deterrence strategy against the Soviet expansionism. As a result of this new role for Turkey in the American grand strategy, Turkey’s international status ostensibly elevated to the middle power status as Turkey became a flank state and a staunch ally of the West, albeit at the periphery of the West. Despite being peripheral, this new status, to some extent, fulfilled the political goal of gaining recognition of the West. It seemingly brought Turkey closer to the political centre of world politics and at

¹⁷ Huge Pope highlighted that this love-hate relationship between Turkey and the West has been a catalyst as well as an obstacle for Turkish foreign policy. Interview with Hugh Pope, Project Director of International Crisis Group, Istanbul, 23.03.2011.

least helped the Turkish elite to re-position and re-define Turkey as a western state in their discourses (Denk 2009: 1210-11). Participating in the Western Alliance also did alleviate Turkish security concerns about the Soviet threat, but more importantly it gave Turkey a new status in the international system putting it into the same category with Western countries as if Turkey became western, democratic and liberal overnight.

The Turkish foreign policy elite, who were cognizant of their country's strategic importance, took advantage of security concerns of the West. They found a powerful partner at the international level when American concerns about the spread of communism and the expansion of Soviet influence to the Balkans and the Middle East coincided with Turkish concerns about Soviet threat as well as with Turkey's urgent need for economic development at the national level. Therefore, throughout the Cold War the state elite politically benefited from the security dilemma of the West by emphasizing the geostrategic importance of Turkey in order to gain international economic assistance for the development of Turkish economy and military assistance for the protection of Turkish security via American contributions to the security of Europe at the expense of an independent foreign policy.

After Turkey was accepted into NATO, the United States exerted significant political and economic influence on Turkish foreign policy as "Ankara enjoyed a more or less unequivocal security commitment by NATO – including the Western European allies – and received peacetime military and economic assistance, primarily from the United States" (Karaosmanoğlu 2001: 279). As a consequence of increasing American impact on Turkey, the Turkish state became a "garrison state" (Lasswell 1941) with its vast military-industrial complex established during the Cold War (Jacoby 2004).

Nevertheless, the relationship between Turkey and the US did not go smoothly throughout the Cold War. One Turkish scholar notes that "For the Turkish officer, NATO is very useful for Turkey's security, and it constitutes a valuable tie with the West. [...] He is well aware that his country's security options are not always compatible with those of the Alliance" (Karaosmanoğlu 1993: 31). There were two major incidents that shook the very foundations of Turkish allegiance to the Western camp, in particular to the US. The first incident is the infamous Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 (Kuniholm 1996: 51-55; Seydi 2010). The decision of President John F. Kennedy

to trade off the missiles in Turkey in a confrontation with the Soviet Union over the Soviet missiles in Cuba lurked among the Turkish elite as a reminder of untrustworthiness of great powers when it comes to Turkey's vital security interests (Seydi 2010: 451-452).

Another crisis in American-Turkish relations is the less-known but equally damaging the Johnson Letter. In June 1964 the US president Lyndon B. Johnson sent a cautionary letter on the issue of Cyprus and possible Turkish intervention written in an extraordinarily harsh and blunt tone to Ismet İnönü, the then prime minister of Turkey (Kuniholm 1996: 55). The US dictation on Turkey not to intervene in the island was perceived as "a solemn indication that the US controlled everything in Turkey and that it even directed Turkish foreign policy" (Bölükbaşı 1993: 505). Owing to the unpleasant encounters with "the asymmetrical nature of the Turkish-US alliance" (Robins 2003: 130), the deeply ingrained suspicion about Western powers resurfaced among the public. The two events triggered a political discussion on Turkey's place in NATO and its Western-oriented foreign policy. Starting with the mid-1960s the Turkish state elite sought new political and economic partnerships with non-aligned countries, the Muslim world and even with the Soviet Union. Notwithstanding the rise of anti-Americanism in Turkey (see Güney 2008), the national security state master narrative maintained its dominance throughout the Cold War and Turkey's western orientation and hard *realpolitik* approach towards its neighbourhood continued unabated even after the end of the Cold War. Despite the ups and downs in American-Turkish relations Turkey remained a staunch ally of the West and kept good relations with the US in the 1980s and early 1990s during Turgut Özal's premiership and presidency. Hale (2002: 179) sums up the relationship between Turkey and its allies as such: "Faced with the classic choice between alliance and neutrality, Turkey remained committed to the Western alliance."

The relationship between Turkey and the European Economic Community (EEC/EC) were also based on security concerns and Turkey's political objective to be involved in Western institutions. The fear of communism spreading across Western Europe, the instability of the Middle East and the US military assistance and nuclear umbrella for the protection of Europe were coincided with Turkey's security concerns

and its aspiration to become a European country (Kramer 1996; Arıkan 2003). The EEC was formed in 1957 and the Turkish government submitted its application in July 1959, a few weeks later than Greece. The Ankara Agreement with the European Economic Community was signed in 1963. The Ankara agreement is a turning point in the Turkish-European relationship for two reasons: First, the ratification of the agreement marked the beginning of a deeper transformation of Turkish economy as well as the beginning of a political process of incorporating Turkey into European structures (Müftüler-Baç 2000: 162). Second, and more important for our analysis, the agreement also helped to transform the ambivalent relationship between Turkey and Europe because in contrast to the suspicion about the West invoked by the treaty of Sèvres, the Ankara agreement was incorporated and used within the narratives of Turkish elite as the recognition of Turkey's Western credentials and its aspirations to become European (Müftüler-Baç 1997: 53; Aydın 2003b). Even though political motivations, i.e. Turkey's western orientation and foreign policy concerns, namely the Turkish-Greek rivalry, were the major reasons behind Turkey's application to the EEC, relations between Europe and Turkey remained economical rather than political. Political issues were accentuated when human rights violations in Turkey seized the political agenda of Europeans in the 1980s and 1990s and when cultural differences were highlighted especially after Turkey submitted its application for full membership into the EC in 1987 (Hale 2002: 175).

Turkey, having taken the side in the Western alliance, found a way to realize its Western identity through its wholehearted participation within Western institutions (Yılmaz and Bilgin 2005: 42). While "early Kemalist foreign policy was ...guided by détente without engagement, by a deliberate neutrality without being isolated" (Jung and Piccoli 2001: 136), Turkish foreign policy during the Cold War opted for a strong political, economic and military attachment to the Western camp against the Soviet threat at the expense of strict adherence to the notion of independent statehood in return for an economic and military support from the West.

The bipolar world order of the Cold War left its mark on the narratives of the Turkish elite by re-defining national interests and associating them with the concept of national security. In the bipolar world, threats were more obvious and allies were relatively more reliable; therefore, more power was concentrated in the hands of state

institutions and the state elite. For the most part of the Cold War, foreign policy was conducted by a small circle of foreign policy elite and seldom did public debate on foreign policy occur. While the Cold War *realpolitik* foregrounded the alliance politics and security-first approach in the narratives of Turkish state elite, it also created a uniform interpretation of international politics as well as the objectives of Turkish foreign policy. The increased political emphasis on national security resulted in the hegemony of the notion of *raison d'état* in the strategic culture of Turkey and hence, the hegemony of “Gaullist pursuit of narrowly focused national interests” (White 2007: 432) at the regional and international politics.

Inasmuch as international politics has been in flux since the 1990s, Turkey also has been preoccupied with rapid and multidimensional changes abroad as well as domestically. The disintegration of the Eastern bloc, the accession of Central and Eastern European countries into the European Union, the Gulf War in the early 1990s, the ethnic conflicts and civil wars in the Caucasus and in the Balkans throughout the 1990s, the rise of international terrorism and ensuing US-led military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq all happened or is still taking place in the vicinity of Turkey.

In the post-Cold War era the relaxation of Turkish close adherence to and deep embeddedness in the Western institutions provided a feeling of having more independence to grab the new opportunities that arose in the aftermath of the Cold War. The pursuit of an isolationist and neutral policy was also ruled out as an option for Turkey in the 1990s as it was not considered an attractive and a viable option in the Cold War. Turkish strategists embarked on new strategic planning that would serve two purposes: i) preserving territorial integrity and national unity and ii) reinforcing Turkey's strategic importance for the West while consolidating its power *vis-à-vis* other regional actors (Bazoğlu-Sezer 1999: 265). The quest of Turkish state elite for a new role and status in order to reaffirm the strategic importance of Turkey in the eyes of Western politicians continued in the post-Cold war era (Hale 2002: 223).

Nevertheless, Turkish policymakers also had great difficulty addressing the question of how to ensure Turkey's security in an era of tumultuous events without the firm and continuous support of the West. Because the Turkish state elite were concerned about the territorial integrity and national unity of Turkey, troubled with civil wars in the

Balkans and the Caucasus and alarmed by the rapid economic and political transformation as a result of globalization political discourses regarding Turkey's foreign and security policy were imbued with the themes, concepts and stories of the national security state master narrative. Consequently, meanings given to international politics in the 1990s were created at the point where the Turkish foreign policy elite aspirations to take advantage of the new environment and political opportunities in Turkey's neighbourhood met the lack of material capabilities and ideational innovation of the Turkish state elite whose narratives – that are reminiscent of the Cold War era – were featuring threats and enemies, invoking fears and insecurities, and advocating a security-first *realpolitik* approach as a solution.

The euphoria in the aftermath of the Cold War vanished quickly when it was ascertained that their grandiose and political romanticism to make Turkey a regional power was at best yet to be accomplished, at worst an illusion. Whereas Turkey had been considered militarily weak during the Cold War vis-a vis the Soviet Union, in the 1990s Turkey turned out as a regional power with a significant military force, which none of its neighbours would dare to attack but prefer to form alliances against or support secessionist and fundamentalist groups in Turkey. Turkey aimed to “carve out a role for itself as a regional power in the vacuum left by the collapse of communism” (Aybet 2006: 541). Nevertheless, Turkey's regional power status only derived from its military prowess made Turkey more not less vulnerable to threats. Ankara opted for deterrence and coercion through the utilization of conventional military force and alliances. Because of the myopic self-interests, the deep mistrust and the lack of effective communication any commitment by Ankara to an international cooperation waxed and waned quickly.

After the initial disappointment, the *realpolitik* and security-first approach touted within the national security state narratives exerted influence on Turkish strategic culture throughout the 1990s. Put differently, increasing sensitivities of Turkey to the environs forced Turkish policymakers not only to “regionalize” but also to “renationalize”¹⁸ the

¹⁸ I borrow the term “renationalization” from Honig (1992). Renationalization can be observed at two levels. The first level is the rise of nationalist movements in domestic politics. At the international level, renationalization implies that security and defence policies are no longer dictated by the dynamics of the

foreign and security policy of Turkey. Due to the security-first approach and distrustful attitudes of Turkish hardliners, good neighbourly relations could not be maintained even though there were political aspirations to establish amicable relations with neighbouring countries among some circles of Turkish elite. Any idea that somewhat deviated from the strictly cautious and extremely suspicious mind-set was either stifled or belittled as being naïve and incompatible with the priorities of Turkey at the time. Therefore, some scholars defined Ankara's attitude in the 1990s as acting like a "coercive regional power" (Öniş 2003b: 3) which was poised to confront its neighbours with unilateral and military measures, whenever necessary.

Due to numerous failed attempts to assert Turkey as regional power, uncertainties about the future of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the confusion about Turkey's role within the Western alliance distorted the images of Turkey in regional and international politics (Aydin 2003b: 324). This in turn culminated in the adoption of aggressive policies throughout the 1990s. Kramer (2000: 212), writing on Turkey of the 1990s, made a strong criticism of Ankara's attitudes and he asserted that "Inflexible persistence on what Ankara thinks is a rightful and legitimate position, often in combination with open or disguised military threat, conveys the image of a regional bully."

The political clout of the civil and military bureaucracy persisted and even strengthened due to security concerns in the aftermath of the Cold War. Whenever separatist terrorism, fundamental religious groups and conflicts with neighbouring countries undermined national security of Turkish state, the national security elite unwaveringly imposed its own narratives about the events of international politics. In their narratives, national interests are constructed in such a way that leaves ample room for the military and civilian bureaucracy to manoeuvre within domestic politics without being questioned since they cultivated and promulgated an image of Turkey as a besieged country in their narratives (Gordon and Taşpınar 2006 quoted in Aybet 2006: 542). This domestic sense of siege translated into a cautious and extremely defensive if

international system. It is rather the national and regional concerns about security and defence that determine foreign and security policy.

not aggressive policies touted with national security state narratives. For instance, writing in the mid-1990s, a former ambassador Şükrü Elekdağ (1996: 57) underlined that “no matter how capable a foreign policy might be, it cannot be stronger than the military might it relies on. Therefore, Turkey's ability to live in peace in her region and realise the welfare of her people depends on her possession of a strong and deterrent force.”

To sum up, the 1990s were the years when Turkish strategists were preoccupied with conflicts in its neighbourhood and social and economic turmoil in domestic politics. In the 1990s, because the coalition governments could not pursue well-established foreign policy objectives due to their short tenure, the military and civilian bureaucracy took the lead and their narratives dictated and determined Turkish foreign and security policy. The fight against terrorism and the mistrust of neighbours encroached on the political life and foreign policy of Turkey so severely that Turkey was *mentally* being governed in a state of emergency, not even to mention the state of emergency imposed in the cities of south eastern Turkey due to the secessionist terrorism throughout the 1990s. In these circumstances, the Turkish state immersed in regional threats and security issues produced narratives that justify the use of military instruments and coercive measures. The developments in the 1990s were interpreted from the lenses of the NSS master narrative and thus the main storyline and themes were reiterated throughout the 1990s. Hence, the national security state approach prevailed over a more liberal and internationalist outlook. The crises of the 1990s compounded by the persistence of (in-)security narratives originating in realpolitik approach also had a negative impact on Turkey's image in the international scene as European politicians viewed Turkey as a “security-consuming” country rather than a “security-providing” one towards the end of the 1990s (Bilgin 2001: 48 fn.1; also see Buzan and Diez 1999; Aybet and Müftüleri-Baç 2000).

5.5. Conclusion

This chapter elaborated on elite narratives whose main storyline and underlying themes are pertinent to the maintenance of national security and the protection of the national security state. The NSS master narrative centres upon deep-seated insecurities of the

Turkish state elite. In the NSS narratives efforts to safeguard the state and its secular republican regime were accentuated as vital national interests that had to be upheld by every group in society. The recurrent tension is that Turkey had been a victim of Western plots and is still threatened by external actors and their internal collaborators. Threats are permanent and conflicts are protracted and therefore intractable. The idea of “no solution is better than any solution” prevails since any solution to Turkey’s problems with its neighbours entails concessions to other countries. Even giving a minor concession to third countries evokes the memory of an era when capitulations were given by the Ottoman Empire to Western powers, which culminated in the collapse of the Empire. The tension in this master narrative is down to the National Security Syndrome or the infamous Sèvres Syndrome, which engenders a sense of insecurity about and ambivalence towards not only Western countries but also Turkey’s neighbours.

This narrative has been preoccupied with acting in accordance with predetermined, fixed and constant national interests, which is associated with a mentality that prioritizes national security. This master narrative is mostly concerned about losing what Turkey already has. As a result, preserving the status quo is highly praised and drifting away from well-established and tried ways of conducting foreign policy are dismissed as either naïve or adventurist. Furthermore, in this master narrative there is no room for a soft power role as it views the international system from a *realpolitik* perspective and privileges military power over soft power. This master narrative is a mixture of the sense of victimhood, prudence and vigilance which securitizes Turkish politics by supplying particular stories about Turkey’s past and geography. Table 5-1 illustrates the main characteristics of the national security state master narrative.

Table 5-1 The main features of the National Security State Master Narrative

| Narratives | Recurrent Themes | Evaluation | Positioning |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Narratives about the past | Fear, suspicion | Being vigilant; dissociating from the past | Victim v. Victor |
| Narratives about geography | Security-first, Enmity, survival | Being strong and ready for military threats from neighbours | Threatened, disengaged v. Exceptional, Strong |
| Narratives about international politics | Westernization, Bipolar world | Becoming Western despite the West | Independent v. Allied |

This master narrative primarily emphasises differences between Turkey and its neighbours, especially Arab countries in the Middle East. Turkey is alienated from its past as well as its geography. In these narratives, Turkey is featured as a country which has to distance itself from its environs and thereby should look for allies outside of its neighbourhood in order to deter the threats originating in neighbouring countries. However, the predicament of this master narrative is that while it fervently champions the establishment and advancement of social, political, cultural and institutional relations with the West, paradoxically, it remains ambivalent about Western democracy and suspicious about the policies of Western countries.

This master narrative, in general, dramatizes historical experiences and translates them into traumatic collective memories. It has a tragic perception of international relations and a propensity to exacerbate security concerns by describing them as the inevitable realities of power politics. Such a tragic depiction of international politics (re)produces negative stories about Turkey's history and geography, because it has been repetitively told in this master narrative that one can only draw a lesson from the misfortunes of Turkey's past and handicaps of its geography. Therefore, neighbours are considered hostile whereas others-but-neighbours tend to be allies. In this context, the past is traumatic, the present is dangerous and tragic and the future is doom and gloom. The Turkish state elite, according to this master narrative, have to be prudent, vigilant and cautious in their engagements with other countries and if possible remain

disengaged from neighbouring countries for the sake of maintaining its national interests.

In this chapter, origins, sources and main themes of the national security state master narrative are explored. This chapter started with a discussion of the sources and narrators of the NSS master narrative. The Cold War period was particularly important as it was when the NSS master narrative coincided with the American narratives about communism and bipolar world order at the international level. As a result, the state establishment as the prominent narrators of the NSS master narrative became authoritative figures whose ideas and concepts were used to define what is in the interests of Turkey with regard to its foreign and security policy.

The post-Cold War period has been examined to enhance our understanding as to how and under what conditions the national security state master narrative continued to determine national security policy even in the absence of hegemonic Cold War narratives of the West. In the new circumstances of the post-Cold War, the NSS master narrative acquired a pathological essence as the state elite established connections between the Sèvres Treaty and what was going on inside and outside Turkey during the 1990s. Turkey was caught in a dilemma due to the rapidly changing dynamics of regional and international politics in the 1990s. The Sèvres Syndrome was revived by translating the memory of the Sèvres Treaty into a pathological interpretation and a tragic narrative of the demise of the Ottoman Empire. Thus, the national security syndrome was aggravated by elite perceptions of existential threats to Turkey's political regime when narratives about the demise of the Empire compounded those perceptions of threats originating in neighbouring countries.

Despite the fact that different narratives were emerging in the political scene as early as the late 1980s, the NSS master narrative remained pervasive and significantly determining in Turkish national security policy throughout the 1990s. The following two chapters will elaborate on those counter narratives and will explore the way they challenge the ideas, concepts and storylines of the national security master narrative.

Chapter Six

Great Country Narratives: Countering the National Security State Master Narrative with References to Turkey’s Cultural and Historical Legacy

The preceding chapter shed light on the sources, tensions and recurrent themes of the national security state (NSS) master narrative. It also explained how it became possible for the NSS master narrative to dominate Turkish strategic culture throughout the Cold War and in the 1990s. This chapter and the following chapter delve into two counter-narratives, namely “great country” and “internationally active player”, which have been challenging the NSS master narrative since the end of the Cold War.

This chapter principally concentrates upon the great country (GC) counter-narrative and probes into the quest of narrative entrepreneurs to justify their stories by utilizing Turkey’s cultural and historical assets. This chapter demonstrates that the AKP elite speaking with the language of the great country narrative find the sources of their stories within Turkey’s past and in its specific cultural traits. The argument is based on the assumption that in order to revitalize Turkey’s relations with its neighbours and create a sphere of influence the AKP elite have been utilizing Turkey’s cultural ties and historical heritage in such a way that Turkey is conceived as a “great country” whose political power relies on its not so remote past and no longer alien cultural traits.

The sources of this counter-narrative are found in the historical and cultural legacies of Turkey. Turkish politicians, mainly the AKP elite, are doggedly determined to challenge the old establishment in the state and form a discourse coalition around their counter narratives by altering the domestic meanings of the Ottoman past, Turkey’s neighbourhood and Turkey’s role in the international system. The main purpose of narrative entrepreneurs is to coordinate different groups of people within Turkish society to gain the domestic support by revitalizing a sense of self-esteem and pride among the public.

The chapter begins with an analysis of the context that enabled and empowered new political actors to tell their own stories about Turkish foreign policy. The impact of the changing nature of EU-Turkey relations, the increasing civilian control over the military, the liberalization of Turkish economy are delved prior to elaborating the origins and sources of GC counter-narrative. Afterwards, the chapter turns to its main focus and looks into elite narratives. The first section elaborates on political narratives about the past and explains how AKP politicians have been constructing a new historical self by establishing a link between the present day Turkey and the glorious days of the Ottoman Empire. In the next section, the counter-narratives that have emerged as a result of counter-identification with the geopolitics of the national security state are examined. The last section expounds on the discursive practices of the AKP elite to elevate Turkey's international status and carve out a new role for Turkey as the promoter of the West-East reconciliation through the concept and institutions of the Alliance of Civilizations.

6.1. The Domestic and International Contexts

Counter-narratives occur in social conditions that promote change. Explaining the timing of when new narratives occur and are popularized provides a key for understanding the role of narrative entrepreneurs and the conditions they are operating in. This section explores domestic circumstances as well as the international context in which counter-narratives against the national security state master narrative have been created by new narrative entrepreneurs.

In the 1990s there were some debates on how to take advantage of Turkey's historical and cultural ties with its neighbours (Bazoğlu-Sezer 1992; Fuller and Lesser 1994). The sudden demise of the Soviet Union, without doubt, precipitated severe ethnic conflicts and civil wars, especially in the Balkans and the Caucasus. The public outburst to those appalling atrocities morally and politically compelled Turkey to intervene diplomatically and militarily in conflicts and civil wars happening in its vicinity, whereas many Turkish strategists were concerned about the imminent threats posed to the territorial integrity and national unity of Turkey (Kirişçi 1995). The protection of

Turkish minorities and the promotion of Turkish nationalism in the new born ex-Soviet Turkic states became the new strategic objectives of Turkish foreign policy alongside the increasing security concerns about regional peace (see Çelik 1999; Hale 2002). Furthermore, Turkish foreign policy became more region oriented while Turkish foreign policy-makers had to face the challenges of stretching Turkey's economic resources while aiming at spreading its political impact to multiple regions (see Sayari 2000). Therefore, those several attempts to embark on a new beginning for Turkey proved futile as most of them did not last long due to the domestic controversies and external suspicion about Turkey's intentions as a result of changing security environment in the early 1990s.

In these circumstances, throughout the 1990s, the state establishment were much more outspoken about national security policy as they redefined what constitutes as threats to national security. Three main reasons stand out for the dominance of the national security state master narrative in the aftermath of the Cold War. First of all, the 1990s witnessed a long period of uncertainty in the vicinity of Turkey. The growing mistrust between Turkey and its Eastern as well as Western neighbours added uncertainty to the already complicated situation in Turkey's neighbours which were mired in ethnic conflicts and civil wars. Since most of the neighbouring countries were unstable, undemocratic, and economically weak and struggling with social and ethnic problems, the channels of interaction between Turkey and its neighbours were quite limited. In the absence of social and political interactions between Turkey and its neighbouring countries the state elite in Turkey took their cues mostly from the Cold War *realpolitik*, which more or less dictated them to stick to the established ways of dealing with neighbours, such as avoiding from regional politics and deterring threats by either using military force or forming alliances. Therefore, the end of the Cold War amplified the underlying tension within the storyline of the national security state master narrative, i.e. territorial integrity, national unity, inviolability of borders and military invincibility. As a result, the national security state narrative did not disappear; instead it became more regionally focused.

Second, the Kurdish issue was one of the major social and political problem in Turkey in the 1990s. Turkey was fighting against a separatist terrorist organization

called the Kurdistan's Workers' Party (PKK). Fighting between the Turkish army and the PKK, which started in the early 1980s, was intensified and escalated in the 1990s (for a comprehensive analysis of the emergence of the Kurdish question and its implications for Turkish politics in the 1990s see Robins 1993; Olson 1996; Yeğen 1996; Beriker-Atiyas 1997; Barkey and Fuller 1998; Sakallıoğlu 1998). In this context, the state elite became extremely suspicious about dissenting voices and cautious about Turkey's neighbours and their policies, most of which were considered *usual suspects*, who were believed to be giving not only political support to the PKK but also clandestinely providing military equipment and training to the PKK. In this context, the dominant narrative of national security state pinned the blame on external forces as usual suspects for plotting against Turkey, whose main purpose was believed to be dragging Turkey into a civil war by fuelling terrorist activities of fundamental religious organizations and separatist movements.

The last reason for the dominance of the national security state master narrative in the aftermath of the Cold War is that due to social crises and ethnic conflicts within and outside Turkey the military imposed its own heavy-handed policies regarding foreign and security policy issues. Of some of those interesting examples as to how the military intervened in foreign policy, the Kardak crisis in 1995 and the military operations called "*Operation Provide Comfort*" launched between 1991 and 1996 in northern Iraq illustrate military's influence on the civil governments' policies (Özcan 2001). The military also took the lead in promoting the relations between Turkey and Israel after the Oslo Peace Process in 1993 (Altunışık 2000; Inbar 2002). In addition to its influence on civilian governments, the military also showed a deep-seated distrust of civilian governments when the chief of the Turkish general staff did not inform the coalition government about the military operation in northern Iraq in 1997 in order to prevent any leaks (Özcan 2001: 24).

Towards the end of the 1990s, the Turkish foreign policy elite tried to improve Turkey's image in the international stage by adopting a cooperative approach towards Turkey's neighbours such as Greece, Iraq and Syria. The capture of the leader of the PKK in February 1999, the influence of the European Union (EU) on Turkish domestic political structures since Turkey was granted candidate status in 1999, and the coming of

a new ruling elite to power are the key factors that initially eased the psychological state of emergency and the feeling of insecurity prevalent in Turkish foreign policy during the 1990s. This eventually rendered the Turkish state less vulnerable and subsequently paved the way for the emergence of new political actors and new narratives about Turkey's past and its geography.

The AKP won the elections in November 2002 in the context of i) the economic crisis in Turkey; ii) the international context of the world-wide controversy over the US-led war on terror after the September 11 attacks; iii) domestic and international debates on the prospect of Turkey's EU membership.

The AKP came to power in a time of economic turmoil and political instability. While at the economic level the AKP promoted neoliberal economic policies with its emphasis on free trade and privatization, at the political level the AKP was a coalition of several groups coalesced around EU membership for different reasons (see Doğan 2005; Usul 2008). The elite who founded the AKP were mainly coming from a pro-Islamist and a conservative background (Çarkoğlu 2002: 136). The core elite in the AKP were used to be members of the Welfare Party, a pro-Islamist party that was forced to resign by the military in 1997. For some scholars, the AKP elite drew their lessons from the 28 February process in 1997 and therefore, they aimed to cultivate a new image for themselves (Özbudun 2006: 547). Hence, AKP politicians define themselves as conservative democrats rather than pro-Islamist. It is also argued by some scholars that the difference between the AKP elite and its predecessor Islamist parties are "real and profound" (ibid.) as the AKP elite not only talks but also act like reformist in politics, liberal in economy and pro-EU in foreign policy (Özbudun 2006: 550).

Turkish economy was severely damaged due to the twin economic crisis happened in 2000 and 2001 during the coalition government of DSP-MHP-ANAP. The economic crisis started as a crisis of the banking system but then quickly spread to other sectors and eventually resulted in a total collapse of Turkish economy as the gross domestic product shrank by more than 9 % in 2001 (for a detailed analysis of the crisis see Öniş 2003a; Keyman and Koyuncu 2005).

The implications of the economic crisis for Turkish foreign policy are primarily twofold. First, the political elite in Turkey noticed that without a strong and stable economy Turkey neither could implement its own independent foreign policy nor it could be an influential actor in its neighbourhood. The crisis urged the state elite to re-orient Turkish foreign policy in accordance with economic priorities. In that context, the idea of economic development through an implementation of neoliberal policies gained significant support from the state elite (for the process of neoliberal restructuring in Turkish economy see Öniş 2009). It was actually Turgut Özal who first made economic priorities and commercial relations part of Turkey's foreign policy. Özal was an advocate of economic liberalization and a promoter of economic cooperation between Turkey and its neighbours (Hale 2002: 164-65). First and foremost, Özal was a proponent of American type of capitalism and the minimal state model of Reaganism and Thatcherism of the 1980s (see Öniş 2004). He also strove to establish closer relationship with the US and the EU. He applied for the full membership to the EU in 1987 and he supported the US intervention in Iraq in 1991 despite facing criticisms from the military and civilian bureaucracy about his single-handed style of conducting foreign policy.¹⁹ Özal is also known as the champion of the idea of Neo-Ottomanism in foreign policy and the supporter of the development of economic relations with the oil-rich Arab countries in order to enhance Turkey's political influence in the Middle East (see Yavuz 1998; Laçiner 2003).

The second implication of the economic crisis is that Turkish politicians, especially the AKP elite, reckoned that the economic development of Turkey hinged on the establishment of good relations with Turkey's neighbours. Even before the AKP came to power, during the RP-DYP coalition government there were some initiatives to promote regional cooperation and good relations with Middle Eastern countries and the Muslim world (see Robins 1997). The DSP-MHP-ANAP coalition also adopted a foreign policy approach that aimed to facilitate good neighbourly relations. For instance, one of the major achievements of the coalition government of DSP-MHP-ANAP was the Greek-Turkish rapprochement. Thanks to Ismail Cem and George Papanderou's

¹⁹ The, then, Chief of the General Staff, Necip Torumtay resigned as a result of his opposition to Ozal's decision to join the US forces in the First Gulf War (Brown 2007: 93; also see Hale 1992).

personal initiatives and mainly after the capture of Abdullah Öcalan, a period of amicable relations between the two countries began towards the end of the 1990s (Öniş 2001; Heraclides 2002; Loizides 2002; Ker-Lindsay 2007). The good relations between the two countries were also stimulated by the adoption of an accommodative and positive language by Greek and Turkish elites due to the impact of the EU on the resolution of conflicts over Cyprus and the Aegean Sea (see Aydin and Ifantis 2002; Oğuzlu 2004b; Economides 2005). Greek-Turkish relations entered a new phase with the lifting of the Greek veto over Turkey's EU bid at the Helsinki European Council in 1999. From then on, confidence-building measures between Turkey and Greece were taken, and interstate and societal relations between the two countries developed further. Building on the previous initiatives of the coalition governments the AKP's avowed political objective was to further develop relations with neighbours on the basis of a problem-solving mind-set. In order to achieve good neighbourly relations the AKP elite came to the conclusion that the protracted conflicts between Turkey and its neighbours had to be resolved. The AKP supported the Annan Plan for the solution of the Cyprus question (Çelenk 2007; Ulusoy 2008) while they also worked towards the expansion of trade between Turkey and its neighbours in the Middle East, the Balkans as well as the Caucasus (see Oğuzlu 2008; Altunışık and Martin 2011; Kirişçi and Kaptanoğlu 2011; Tür 2011).

The second main issue for the AKP elite was the repercussions of the September 11 terrorist attacks and the US-led war on terror. Since Turkey had to bear the economic burden and political consequences of the first Gulf War, the traditional state elite was cautious about the US-led military operation in Iraq even though Turkey contributed to NATO-led military operation in Afghanistan commenced in late 2001. After the AKP came to power they also found themselves in the middle of political debates on Iraq and the US-led military operation. Despite having the majority in the Turkish parliament, the AKP could not pass the motion that would allow the US to deploy troops in Turkey in order to open a northern front during the Iraq War. The failure of the AKP to pass a motion in the TGNA on 1 March 2003 is arguably a turning point where the credibility of Turkey as a reliable partner increased significantly in the eyes of its southern neighbours as well as Turkey was seen as aligned with the EU policy with regards to the

issue of Iraq (Gözen 2005; Öniş and Yılmaz 2005). The territorial integrity of Iraq and the terrorist activities in Northern Iraq were the main security concerns (see Çandar 2004; Park 2004; Müftüler-Bac 2005; Balcı and Yeşiltaş 2006). The AKP raised the issue of terrorist attacks from Northern Iraq and their concerns about the territorial integrity of Iraq before and after the Iraq War led by the US in 2003. Northern Iraq and the territorial integrity of Iraq were considered as the red lines at the heart of which the Turkish state elite used to think their national interests lie. Nonetheless, the development of economic and political relations with Iraq in general and Northern Iraq in particular has been high on the agenda of the AKP since the end of the Iraq War. Turkey signed several bilateral agreements with the Iraqi government as well as the Kurdish federal government in Northern Iraq. Furthermore, the AKP government also signed several agreements with Syria for the development of economic, social and political relations between Turkey and Syria.

The last major issue that shaped the domestic context of Turkish foreign policy in the 2000s is Turkey's EU bid. The EU impact was most notable after the Helsinki summit due to EU political conditionality regarding the civilian control of the military, the peaceful settlement of border disputes and the establishment of good neighbourly relations with neighbouring countries. It is believed that Turkey's EU bid accompanied by the process of democratization at home provided an environment that not only alter the precepts of Turkey's relations with the EU and its bilateral relations with EU member states, but also it transformed the way of foreign policy making and the language used by the Turkish state elite in their discourses about security and defence. The democratization through the EU accession process has brought about a change in how Turkey perceives its environment, how it interacts with its neighbours, and what kind of measures it applies to address the existing problems. Put differently, "the *process* (multi-actor or uni-actor), *style* (bullying or compromising), and *outcome* dimensions (pro-European union or anti-EU)" have been transformed as a result of EU political conditionality (Oğuzlu 2004a: 94, emphasis in original). One Turkish scholar aptly argues that "Turkey during this period, in line with the process of democratization at home, started to make a transition from a coercive to a benign regional power effectively

countering the criticisms that Turkey would be more of a security liability rather than a security asset for Europe, in the process” (Öniş 2006: 288).

The 1999 Helsinki summit represents a significant milestone in the relationship between Turkey and the EU. Nevertheless, Helsinki cannot be understood fully unless the ups and downs of Turkey-EU relations throughout the 1990s are taken into account. The Luxembourg decision to deny Turkey a candidacy status resulted in a “period of reflection”.²⁰ At the time, the Luxembourg Council decision sent shock waves to the Turkish political elite and caused an intense disappointment among the pro-EU elite at large, as they found the decision of the EU discriminatory and dissatisfactory. After all, for the Turkish elite Turkey was the only applicant state which agreed to establish the Customs Union (CU) with the EU in 1995. That was seemingly the main reason why a large group of elite in Turkey highly praised the CU as an important turning point in Turkey-EU relations. Since the CU was touted as a giant step that would lead Turkey to accession, Turkish politicians were outraged by the Luxembourg decision. This is mainly because the illusion that the CU would open the doors of Europe wide to Turkey was shattered at Luxembourg. The belief that no matter what Turkey does to become a full member, the intention of Europeans is and will be to keep relations at the economic level without giving any membership prospect gained a strong ground among Turks after the Luxembourg summit (Öniş 1999: 129).

Despite the prolonged relationships between Turkey and the EU, the EU was not able to exert strong pressure on Turkish domestic and foreign affairs up until the Helsinki Summit. This was mainly due to the reluctance of European elites to accept Turkey into the Union. European politicians preferred to keep Turkey on the doorstep of the EU (Hakkı 2006: 456; Öniş 2006: 281). Such an ambivalent and temporizing approach towards Turkey’s application for the full membership hindered the positive impact of the EU on Turkish foreign policy throughout the 1990s. Two years after Luxembourg, in Helsinki, Turkey turned a critical point on the road to full membership. The Council decision on Turkey’s candidacy status paved the way for the European Union to play a more influential role in the transformation of Turkish politics.

²⁰ The Luxembourg Council of December 1997 recognized Central and Eastern European countries (CEECs) and Cyprus as a candidate state, while excluding Turkey from the next enlargement by proposing a different strategy for Turkey’s accession to the Union.

The candidacy status was welcomed by a wider group of elite and the public. The adoption of EU reforms was boosted by the public support for the EU membership. Turkish governments enthusiastically started to work on the reforms that Turkey had to implement in order to start the accession negotiations as soon as possible. Although the former coalition government led by Bülent Ecevit (formed by the Democratic Left Party (DSP), Nationalist Action Party (MHP), Motherland Party (ANAP)) between 1999 and 2002 was criticized for being slow and reluctant to implement necessary reforms, the first National Programme for the adoption of the Acquis (NPAA) was accepted in 2001 and some crucial constitutional changes were approved by the Turkish parliament between 2000 and 2002.

The problem apparently was the lingering mistrust about Europeans and their demands from Turkey. Different political actors interpret EU demands differently depending on their views of the nature of Turkey-EU relations. First of all, some Turkish politicians believe that EU demands are concessions to Europeans that are reminiscent of the Ottoman era capitulations and the Sèvres Treaty. This argument usually is confined to the hardliner nationalists who maintain a conviction that Europeans pursue a hidden agenda which resembles Western policies during the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. In this nationalist understanding, Turkey's territorial integrity, national unity and independence are dignified and thus EU's political demands are considered as free concessions given to Europeans that will undermine Turkey's independence and national unity.

After a landslide win in the 2002 general election, the Justice and Development Party forged ahead with a programme of reforms that were demanded by the European Union. Several harmonization packages were passed in the Turkish parliament, a huge body of legislation was altered and essential institutional changes were implemented (see Tocci 2005; Özbudun 2007). Compared to previous Turkish governments, the AKP, in its first term, gave unconditional support for the implementation of EU reforms and fulfilment of the Copenhagen criteria.²¹ AKP politicians came to terms with the

²¹ "Turkey will fulfil the preconditions as demanded from other candidate countries by the EU without delay." quoted from the 2001 party programme of the Justice and Development Party, p.41. "EU membership is our primary objective to achieve an economic and democratic development." quoted from

Copenhagen criteria and dismissed suspicions that EU reforms are concessions. Consequently, Turkey collected the fruits of its industrious work at the European Council meeting in December 2004. The Council welcomed Turkey's efforts to meet the Copenhagen criteria and agreed on the start of accession negotiations "without delay", which officially opened in October 2005.

The EU helped the emergence of new narratives in Turkish foreign policy in two ways: i) the empowerment of new political actors and the increasing civilian control over the military; ii) the emergence of new narratives about Turkey's relations with its neighbours as well as its relations with the West in general and Europe in particular.

First, the change in institutional structures was brought by the democratization and pluralisation of domestic politics with the empowerment of new political actors. With its political conditionality the EU exerted influence on the transformation of the civil-military relations in favour of civilians. There is virtually an academic consensus that the accession process in the post-Helsinki era transformed civilian-military relations in Turkey in favour of civilians in conjunction with the EU demands on more civilian control over the military (Misrahi 2004; Güney and Karatekelioğlu 2005; Heper 2005; Cizre 2008; Satana 2008). According to Sarıgil (2007: 46), the EU played its enabling role by being an "external reference point" that legitimized and empowered the civilian actors and their discourses.

The EU reforms fostered the emergence of many new actors in the domestic arena such as civil society groups, business associations and think tanks (see Şimşek 2004; Diez et al. 2005; Kubicek 2005). These civilian actors became more influential than ever by conveying the ideas of civil society to Turkish and European policymakers and advocating Turkish full membership in Europe. Some of the NGOs gained international outlook, established long-term contacts and facilitated transnational

the government programme of the first cabinet of the Justice and Development Party (2002). Nevertheless, the strong emphasis on the EU membership cannot be found neither in the 2007 party programme nor in the second government programme of the AKP after their victory in the 2007 general elections. In the 2007 party programme as well as in the government programme the statement about the EU reads as follows: "The EU membership will help us to reach the universal norms and standards of democracy, human rights and freedoms and the rule of law." Besides, in both programmes EU-Turkey relations are not prioritised over the relations with other countries and regions as the AKP's approach towards the EU is justified as a strategic choice that facilitates Turkey's regional and global activism.

relations with other NGOs in Europe (Öniş and Türem 2001; Öniş and Türem 2002; Göksel and Güneş 2005). Some of them even became outspoken actors in public debates concerning not only domestic issues but also foreign affairs (Kirişci 2006: 38-48). Bilgin (2007b: 568) argues that because the EU as an external stimulus has encouraged civilians and non-governmental organizations to participate in the policy-making, different actors have been participating in foreign policy debates and their narratives gained popular support and approval. EU reforms created a more favourable public space where debate on foreign policy and opposition to existing narratives are welcomed. The EU, in other words, empowered a group of political actors whose ideas, values and narratives incorporate EU norms, ideas and values as to how international politics should be conducted in general and in particular how foreign policy of a candidate country should be formulated and pursued. The pluralisation and population of political space with new actors articulating their thoughts and preferences on foreign policy paved the way for the change in Turkish strategic culture as it provided the necessary impetus for new narratives to be told.

The very fundamental impact of the EU reforms can be observed on civil-military relations. Up until Helsinki, Turkish top brass enjoyed decisive influence on foreign policy making. Despite the fact that as every NATO member states' armed forces are subjected to civilian control Turkish military was implicitly exempted from NATO-demanded reforms in civil-military relations owing to Turkey's special conditions throughout the 1990s. Some sporadic opposition to military's heavy-handed approach in policy making has occurred in Turkish politics. For instance, Özal curtailed the authority of the military by rejecting the appointment of a general as the new chief of the general staff, who is traditionally appointed by the government in accordance with the recommendation of the military (Karabelias 1999: 137). Nonetheless, this embryonic opposition could not further develop until Turkey implemented EU reforms that curbed the power of the military.

The reforms adopted after the Helsinki summit were a watershed for the implementation of the civilian control on the military. The increased civilian control of the military resulted somewhat in the relegation of its clout in Turkish politics

(Müftüler-Baç 2005: 22). The political conditionality of the European Union made it clear that democratic structures of the society are to be protected from any military interventions. What is more, the EU demanded improvements in the civilian control of the armed forces and a greater public accountability for the economic transactions of the armed forces. As a part of the fulfilment of the Copenhagen political criteria, Turkish governments adopted several harmonization packages some of which also included reforms on civil-military relations and changed the role of the National Security Council (NSC) in internal and external affairs.²² The number of military members in the NSC was reduced and hence civilians gained a numerical superiority in the Council. Moreover, civilian officials have been appointed as the secretary general of the NSC since 2004, which used to be a post held by a high-ranking military officer. Apart from the change in the composition of the NSC, the council's advisory character was unambiguously stipulated by the constitutional amendments. Consequently, the council's and its secretary general's behind-the-scenes executive powers were weakened by reducing the scope of the authority of the Secretary General of the NSC (for the details of changes in civil-military relations see Özbudun 2007: 193-194; Cizre 2008: 137-140).

Having considered the retreat of the military from politics, some authors contend that the military has begun to favour the Europeanization process in principle as long as it is not a threat to the secular and unitary character of the Turkish state (Tank 2001; Heper 2005; Aydınli *et al.* 2006). Hilmi Özkök, Chief of the General Staff between 2002 and 2006, also played a constructive role in the reform process by stressing that the military respected the results of the 2002 election (Zucconi 2009: 28). The moderate stance of the military, especially General Özkök's views regarding the results of the elections and the democratization in Turkey paved the way for the opening of accession negotiations (Narbone and Tocci 2007: 244). According to Aydınli *et al.* (2006: 84), the “grand consensus” formed around the prospect of EU membership between civilians and

²² The National Security Council and its Secretariat was first established in 1962 in accordance with the new constitution adopted after the 1960 military coup. It is considered as the successor to the Secretariat General of the Supreme Defence Assembly (*Yüksek Müdafaa Meclisi Umumi Katipliği*) between 1933 and 1949 and the National Defence Supreme Council (*Milli Savunma Yüksek Kurulu*) between 1949 and 1962. The official history of the National Security Council can be accessed at its official website. http://www.mgk.gov.tr/Ingilizce/Tarihce/tarihce_en.htm. (Accessed on 10 July 2012).

the military before the Helsinki Summit maintained when the AKP came to power in 2002 with an avowed objective to open the accession negotiations. General Özkök and the military were wary of the AKP's Islamic background yet they did not consider the AKP as a threat to the political regime in Turkey as long as Turkey's EU membership prospect was not damaged (ibid.: 87). From a different angle, Sarıgil (2007: 41) makes a convincing argument that "it [the military] could not block them [the reforms] due to the likely damage such an action would cause to its legitimacy and credibility." In Sarıgil's word, the military was "rhetorically entrapped". During the accession process the military, which had positioned itself as the vanguard of the western ideals and modernization in Turkey for a long time, fell short of credible and legitimate argument against the transformation of civil-military relations at the expense of their power.

As a result of the changing dynamics within civil-military relations we have witnessed the emancipation of political parties from the traditional state-centric narratives. According to Ziya Öniş (2003b: 17), "the striking pattern in the pre-Helsinki era was that none of the major political parties on the right or left of the political spectrum actively pushed for the kind of reforms needed-notably in the political arena-to satisfy the conditions set by the EU. Indeed, none of the major political parties were able or willing to challenge the fundamental precepts of state ideology on key issues of concern such as 'cultural rights' or 'the Cyprus problem'- issues which appeared to lie beyond the parameters of the normal political debate." Thus, political parties were not able to put forward ideas and pursue policies that challenge the predominant state policies. Consequently, the enabling impact of the EU paved the way for a growing civilian influence, or rather "civilianisation" of foreign policy-making (Kirişçi 2006: 49). Some other researchers named this civilianisation process as "desecuritization" (Aras and Polat 2007; Cebeci 2007; Aras and Polat 2008) and "demilitarization" (Duman and Tsarouhas 2006). This new equilibrium between civilians and the military not only altered the dynamics of foreign policy making, but also contributed to the transmission of new, arguably European, concepts, ideas and values to the discourses of the Turkish elite.

The second influence of the EU is observed on the variation of narratives told by the AKP elite through their positive or negative responses to European narratives in

general and particularly European narratives about Turkey and its membership to the EU. On the one hand, this second impact of the EU caused the expansion of the foreign policy lexicon with the incorporation of concepts such as soft power, regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations. The new state elite in Turkey created new narratives that incorporate the principles of good neighbourly relations, the idea of regional cooperation and a problem-solving approach. In these new narratives, Turkey is depicted as a country free of fears and mistrust about the West, which aims to develop regional cooperation through problem-solving and an international role.

Nevertheless, on the other hand, we observe that the AKP elite produce counter-narratives as a response to the negative narratives about Turkey's membership told by some Europeans. These new narratives are a way of thwarting negative EU narratives about Turkey. Their purpose is to make sense of Turkey-EU relations by placing Turkey's bid for membership in a bigger picture. These narratives suggest that if Turkey embraces its history, its neighbourhood and its role as the promoter of civilizational dialogue Turkey will yield political influence and emerge stronger at the end of the accession negotiations regardless of the outcome. Hence, the political significance of becoming an EU member is balanced by an emphasis on Turkey's erstwhile forgotten history and alien geography in the narratives of Turkish elite.

These kind of new narratives about Turkey's relations with the EU emerged owing to the impasse in relations since 2006. Despite the opening of some chapters, since December 2006 nearly half of the chapters are blocked due to Turkey's failure to open its ports to Cypriot vessels and aircrafts. The EU influence on Turkey in general has steadily declined since then. As the spirit of the reform process has been hijacked by the domestic concerns of EU member states as well as Turkey's increasing overtures in the Middle East and North Africa the pace of the implementation of new reforms has slow down (Düzgit 2006; Patton 2007).

Europe's indecisiveness about Turkey's membership and the intensified debates on the idea of privileged partnership profoundly impaired the impact of EU political conditionality in Turkey. Especially in the second term of the AKP, the declining credibility and appeal of the EU membership was due to the ambiguity in EU narratives about Turkey created by the calls of French President Nicolas Sarkozy and German

Chancellor Angela Merkel for privileged partnership. In addition to the ambivalence about Turkey's place in the EU the shift of AKP's focus to regional problems has undermined the impact of the EU on Turkish foreign policy (Barysch 2010: 3). In this context, it seems that minimalist and selective approach of Turkey towards EU reforms resurrected in the second term of the AKP.

In these political, economic and social context the new political elite have produced new narratives about Turkey's past and its relations with neighbouring countries. The remainder of this chapter and the next chapter elaborate on the these new narratives produced and reproduced by the AKP elite within the flow of events at the domestic, regional and international levels.

6.2. Bridging Gaps between Turkey and the Ottoman Past

As is mentioned in the previous chapter, the national security state elite renounce the Ottoman era. In the national security state narratives, the Ottoman past was described as temporal other of the new born Turkish Republic. The *built upon the ashes* of the Ottoman Empire metaphor represents the rupture between the Ottoman Empire and the Republican era. The Ottoman Empire is considered as the anti-thesis of the Republic and thus any connection with the Ottomans is disregarded on the grounds that the new republic has nothing to learn from the Imperial history. If there is anything to learn it should be the grave lessons drawn from the mistakes of the Ottoman statesmen.

The alienation from the Ottoman past was not only the outcome of the official narratives about the deficiencies of the Ottoman state. Any emphasis on the Ottoman past and imperial geography was incompatible with Cold War geopolitics as the Balkans and Caucasus were within the Soviet sphere of influence. Hence, Turkey kept aloof from the Ottoman geography throughout the Cold War. As the Cold War receded domestic debates on the opportunities in the new circumstances increased (see the debates in TGNA in 1992 v.25, s.48; and 1993 v.48, s.50). In general, right-wing parties proposed the utilization of Ottoman history as a historical basis for Turkey's engagements with its environs. For Islamists and proponents of Neo-Ottomanism, re-establishing forgotten lineage between the present day Turkey and the Ottoman Empire is necessary in order to

rehabilitate the collective memory of the Republic (Fisher Onar 2009: 235). But also new narratives about the Ottoman past are reckoned to be vital for the success of Turkey's bid to become a regional power.

Despite the fact that left-wing politicians were wary of neo-Ottomanism and any reference to the glory of the Ottoman era, Ismail Cem points out the shallow appreciation of Turkey's historical experiences by the Turkish elite (Cem 2001: 5). He was concerned about pursuing a foreign policy

that was alienated from its own roots, cut off from its own assets, indeed divorced from the very elements that could nourish and sustain it. In this foreign policy's perception of the world and of itself, history was nonexistent. It was as if the historical experiences of centuries, as well as, their civilizational assets and relationships, had never existed (ibid.: 3).

For Cem, Turkey being in denial of its history is not suited with the necessary conceptual tools and historical arguments adapt to the new circumstances in the post-Cold War era. He raised this issue of being in denial of the Ottoman legacy on several occasions. In his address to the TGNA, Cem stated that: "We, as Turkey, are about to witness a new era of progress in Turkish foreign policy as long as we are able to embrace ourselves, our history, and our identity" (Cem (DSP) 1997 v.40, s.32, p.90). Cem reiterated his argument on the reconciliation of the Republic with the Ottoman history and cultural elements stemming from the Ottomans in several interviews and speeches. He proposed that Turkey needed to pursue a culturally-oriented foreign policy (Cem 2009: 45).

The positive narratives about the Ottoman Empire are also the main tenet of the AKP discourse. The AKP elite, some of whom have been active in politics since the late 1980s, are inclined to praise the Ottoman era. Their narratives about the Ottoman Empire can be grouped into two: The first group comprises of pragmatic references to the Ottoman Empire. Such instrumental narratives about the Ottoman Empire are by and large in line with Cem's arguments for strategic necessity to re-evaluate the Ottoman history in light of the new circumstances in the post-Cold War era. In the second group, we observe that the AKP elite tend to romanticize the Ottoman culture and glorify its legacy, usually seeing the Empire superior to the Republic. In this regard, their

narratives do not only aim to establish a link between the Republic and the Empire in the sense that the Republic reconciles with its Imperial past. More than that, in the narratives of the AKP elite Turkey is depicted as a “great country with a rich history and a remarkable culture” that can contribute to international politics if it acts as the true heir of the Ottoman Empire. Thus, the Ottoman era is considered as a catalyst, a model and a justification for Turkey’s new activism rather than just a new dimension in Turkish foreign policy and a necessary correction to the political anomaly of elite narratives.

Davutoğlu, in his book *Strategic Depth*, argues for the development of a history-conscious state identity. According to him, Turkey has been alienated from its own history. This alienation, for him, culminated in an identity-crisis which has had serious repercussions for Turkish foreign policy. Davutoğlu suggests that one of the determining factors of Turkey’s political power is its history. Davutoğlu, echoing Cem’s arguments, rebukes the official narratives and emphasised that

The alienation of societies from their own history and geography resembles an individual who is alienated from its own body and acquires a false identity. Let’s admit that despite history and geography classes given in our education system starting with the primary school we have been going through a process of de-historicization (Davutoğlu 2001: 59).

In the AKP narratives, the Republic of Turkey is actually built in the *heartland* of the Empire rather than on the ashes of the Empire. Like Davutoğlu, Prime Minister Erdoğan, in his speech before an international audience at the Forum Istanbul 2005, emphasised that Turkey should be valued with regards to “its historical status and geographical location, its civilizational properties and its cultural diversity.” He then described Turkey as such: “As is already known, with its objective to reach the contemporary civilization Turkey is built on the *core* of the Ottoman Empire. In this *central* position not just today but also in the past we established political orders even under difficult conditions” (Erdoğan 05/05/2005, emphases added).

Here, one can see the *built on the ashes* of the Empire metaphor is replaced by the *built in the heartland/core* of the Empire metaphor in which case it is believed that

the Ottoman Empire bequeathed a landmass to the new Republic that not only physically puts Turkey to the epicentre of the vast Ottoman territory but also culturally and politically renders Turkey significant if not superior to other countries.

AKP politicians also cite positive statements of their foreign counterparts about the Ottoman era and tell small stories about their experiences in the day-to-day politics as a way of backing up their arguments about the Ottoman era. These intertextual linkages serve as a justification mechanism in the form of third party narratives about the Ottoman rule told by other regional countries. In this way, they consolidate the narrative truth of their claims on the usefulness of appreciating and imitating the Ottoman rule. For instance take this short story from an AKP deputy about their official visit to Palestine:

On the third day of our visit, 21st May 2004, Friday, Salim Tamari, Palestinian minister, told exactly this when he welcomed us in Bethlehem: “The Ottoman administration had highly valued us and Palestine was of great importance for the Ottomans. Yet, we failed to appreciate the rule of the Ottoman Turks and we betrayed them. That betrayal costs us a lot and we still bear the consequences. Perhaps it is too late but we want to forget the past and start a new relationship. It is time to do that. Your visit means that you’re still our friends. Help us and together we turn a new page.” We heard similar statements from other officials and the ordinary people we met there (Tanrıverdi (AKP) 2004 v.50, s.92, p.19).

A similar storyline has reiterated in the narratives of the AKP elite. Fahri Keskin, another AKP deputy, gave a speech about Turkey-Yemen relations from a historical perspective when he put forth reasons to support the trade agreement between Turkey and Yemen. He contended that “As is true for all the nations separated from the Ottoman Empire, Yemenis are in a dire situation that therefore, they miss the Ottoman era. Sympathy for Turks in Yemen is left to us from our ancestors” (Keskin (AKP) 2003 v.27, s.6, p.56).

In a very similar vein, in his talk on the meeting of African Day in May 2011, President Abdullah Gül (26/05/2011) pointed out that “The Ottoman state always took the side of African people in their struggle against imperialist powers.” Regardless of

whether this argument is historically true, what is more important for our analysis is his glorification of the Ottoman history by producing a narrative that establishes a positive link between the Ottoman presence in North Africa, which ended with its withdrawal from Libya in 1911, and the 20th century struggles of the African nations for their independence. Moreover, the main point Gül aims to get across in his narrative is the cooperation between Ottomans and Africans against Western powers. Thus, a common historical link has been constructed by depicting the Ottoman Empire as one of the supporters of African uprising against western imperialism.

Davutoğlu speaking at the 100th anniversary of the Turkish Hearth Association²³ in March 2011 shared his own personal experience in a very similar storyline.

I want to share with you my personal experience. It was 2005. At the time I was chief advisor to the Prime Minister and I was able to travel freely and widely. I was on vacation with my family in the Balkans. But at the same time I was doing a bit of research about the situation in the Balkans. I wanted to see what was happening in the Balkans at first hand. There we found two Turkish villages named Alikoc and Kocali in Western Macedonia 15-20 km away from the city of Radovic. I have heard of them before and I knew that villagers have preserved their traditions and Turkish culture. I wanted to visit them with my family. It was a quite far and remote place. We went there. [...] When we arrived they welcomed us. I asked them “what do you need?” Among the villagers one respected man replied: “Mr., we were sent here 400 or 500 years ago, we were told to watch these mountains, and we have been doing that since then.” If any member of our nation, even in a remote forgotten village, firmly stands on guard for 500 years, our intellectuals and elites must deeply feel proud and confident. That is not just a mountain watch. We are watching over history. We have inherited not just a piece of territory but a state that was the last stronghold of an ancient (*kadim*²⁴) civilization, ancient cultures and the whole antiquity. Therefore we have to look at history with self-confidence (Davutoğlu 26/03/2011).

²³ The Turkish Hearth Association is a nationalist organization founded in 1912.

²⁴ Literally *kadim* is translated into English as ancient, however in his speeches Davutoğlu uses the word interchangeably as ancient and eternal (see editor’s note: Balci 2010). For instance, Davutoğlu referred to *kadim* civilizations and particularly the Ottoman civilization in his speech at the Ambassadors’ annual meeting organized by the ministry of foreign affairs in 2010 and 2011. Thus, if the word ancient is replaced by the word eternal one can notice that referring to ancient civilizations and a vaguely described past turns into a way of framing Turkey’s international role in the present and in the future by boosting Turkey’s self-image as not only the only heir of an ancient civilization but also the bearer and protector of transcendental and eternal traditions originating in ancient civilizations.

Leaving Davutoğlu's affectionate story-telling and powerful message aside, this quote from Davutoğlu and the previous quotes from several other AKP politicians represent the discursive practices of the AKP elite to justify their approach to the Ottoman past and Ottoman geography. We do not know how the audience reacted to such narratives and since Davutoğlu's speech addressed a predominantly nationalist audience it has to be handled cautiously. But, two things analytically can be deduced from these short life stories told by AKP politicians. First of all, such narratives mixed with real life experiences enable narrative entrepreneurs, in this case Davutoğlu, to generate a sense of urgency and responsibility for Turkey. Thus, it lays the discursive foundations of a policy that envisages the involvement of Turkey in its surroundings. These narratives also depict Turkey's vicinity as not only in need but also in demand of Turkish assistance and support. Second, the sense of responsibility is linked to the past in such a way that it is not just an ethical-normative thing to do but it is as if Turkey is obliged to, or rather it is chosen to commit its material, political and cultural resources to its neighbourhood.

Yaşar Büyükanıt, as the Chief of the General Staff at a conference on the Middle East, mentioned that "In the Middle East, various ethnic and religious groups lived under the reign of the Ottoman Empire. We should ask why there had not been any conflict between them for centuries" (Büyükanıt 2008: 8). He pointed out that the reason why the Middle East is fraught with conflicts is down to the imperial policies of Western countries before and after the First World War. When asked about his reference to the Ottoman Empire in his speech, Büyükanıt clarified his approach to the Ottoman history as such: "I just mentioned a historical reality. We don't have a neo-Ottomanist thinking. The Turkish Republic founded by Atatürk is our only ideal" (Büyükanıt 2008: 8-9).

During an interview with a Turkish diplomat in Ankara, he underlined that Turkish foreign policy has always been history-conscious. He was also of the opinion that "being at peace with our past enables Turkey to be more active in the region."²⁵ Nevertheless, diplomats who were interviewed by this author did not accept that Turkish

²⁵ Interview with a senior Turkish diplomat, Ankara, 30.04.2010.

foreign policy can be solely described as neo-Ottomanist. One diplomat told that “we think bigger, we think globally, our perspective is 360 degrees.”²⁶

The above quotes highlight that within the discourses of the Turkish foreign policy elite the Ottoman Empire is not seen as an imperial state rather it is considered as a victim of great power politics. A constructed narrative link between the demise of the Ottoman Empire and the colonial past in Africa and the Middle East as well as the Balkans provides leverage for the AKP elite to foster their relations with its neighbouring countries.

Positive references to the Ottoman past are criticized on four grounds. First, critics draw attention to the negative stories about the Ottoman past told by third countries. Positive stories associated with the Ottoman past are believed to be one-sided and romantic. Sabri Sayari, in an interview told the author that “there is a wide-spread opinion [among the AKP elite] that during the Ottoman era everyone was happy and at peace with the Ottoman rule. It was certainly not like that.”²⁷ On the other hand, some of interviewees raised their concerns about AKP’s use of Ottoman references frequently in their discourses because such references evoke fears in neighbouring countries about Turkey acquiring an imperial and interventionist posture in its relations with neighbours. Third, two former ambassadors stressed that romantic visions of the Ottoman era display a false sense of grandeur that may tilt Turkey away from its well-established course.²⁸ Furthermore, Oğuz Oyan, a CHP²⁹ deputy, expressed that “Neo-ottomanist tendencies are observed in AKP’s approach, but so-called Ottomanist policies are actually dictated by Americans. Turkish foreign policy [under the AKP] projects power onto the region while remaining within the axis of the US.”³⁰ Lastly, AKP’s narratives are rejected due to narrative inconsistency and the way they distort the realities about the traditional foreign policy of Turkey. Onur Öymen expressed his criticism of AKP narratives about

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Interview with Sabri Sayari, professor at Sabancı University, Istanbul, 14.03.2011.

²⁸ Interviews with Yalın Eralp, former ambassador and Murat Bilhan, former ambassador, Istanbul, 15.03.2011.

²⁹ The Republican People’s Party (CHP) has been the main opposition party in the Turkish Grand National Assembly since November 2002 general elections. The party was founded by Atatürk and it is positioned as a centre-left party with a Republican and secularist ideology by party ideologists.

³⁰ Interview with Oğuz Oyan, a CHP deputy, Ankara, 20.04.2010.

the Ottoman history to the author. He stressed that the perception of the early Republican foreign policy is flawed in AKP narratives. In the interview, Öymen underlined that the AKP elite overpraise the Ottoman era while Atatürk's era foreign policy is depicted as one dimensional and Westernist as the AKP elite tend to ignore the realities that the early Republic was deeply engaged with its neighbours through bilateral and multilateral agreements.³¹ Therefore, for Öymen, the AKP elite misrepresent the early Republican foreign policy in their discourses. A similar criticism was made by Şükrü Sina Gürel, a former foreign minister. He told to the author that "it was Atatürk's policy to establish amicable relations with neighbours such as Greece and it was Atatürk who contributed to the development of Afghanistan in the 1930s by sending military advisors and giving scholarships to Afghan students to study in Turkey."³²

To sum up, the Ottoman past is no longer seen as a remote past and temporal in great country counter narrative. When seen from the standpoint of greatness and glory, narratives about the Ottoman rule are more romantic rather than pragmatic. Yet, such romantic narratives about the Ottoman era were produced with a purpose in mind that is extending Turkey's political influence over its neighbourhood.

6.3. Re-imagining the Neighbourhood through Cultural and Historical Ties

The Ottoman geography has long been disregarded as an alien and desolate territory and was generally described within the national security state narratives as a "swamp" (Mufti 2009: 3), where only ill comes to Turkey. In the early Republican elite mind, neighbours, especially the Arabs and their culture were represented as "treacherous" (Robins 2003: 97; Jung 2005: 6) and "primitive, archaic and backward" (Aktürk 2010: 636). Hence, it has been contended that Turkey should never be part of the Middle East, let alone display any interest in the region. Although Turkey resides in the Ottoman geography it has drifted away from its own neighbourhood so that it can become part of the West. Yet, Turkey turned into a "peripheral country" within the Western geography

³¹ Interview with Onur Öymen, a CHP deputy, Ankara, 28.04.2010.

³² Interview with Şükrü Sina Gürel, professor of international relations and former foreign minister, Istanbul, 29.03.2011.

(Denk 2009: 1210). Put differently, Turkey preferred to be distant from its own periphery while it accepted to be a periphery state in the West.

Such negative depictions of Turkey's neighbourhood in general and the Middle East in particular have been rebuked by the Turkish state elite as early as the late 1960s and 1970s. As discussed in the previous chapter, the Turkish state elite were experimenting with a multi-dimensional foreign policy by improving Turkey's relations with the non-aligned countries and the oil-rich Middle Eastern countries. The 1980s added a trade dimension to Turkey's initiatives to foster good relations with Arabic and Islamic countries as a result of Turgut Özal's policy of economic liberalization.

The purpose of this section is to discuss as to how new narratives about the Middle East and Turkey's neighbourhood are different from the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s in the sense that the Turkish state elite produce new narratives about its neighbourhood as a response to the EU and a leverage to facilitate Turkey's EU accession process. For the analysis of the change in narratives about geography this chapter probes into the discursive practices of the AKP elite to justify their new narratives about Turkey's neighbourhood and its relations with neighbouring countries.

The indifference of Turkey to its environs during the Cold War and its heavy-handed security-first approach in the 1990s do not imply that Turkey never got involved in regional politics. It did involve but without making any effort to empathize and sympathize with the region. The traditional state elite were aware of the fact that they had Middle Eastern neighbours but they were not locating Turkey in the Middle East. Politically as well as mentally, Turkey was distant from its environs. According to Cem, Turkey was seen as a Western satellite in the Middle East or a "frontier outpost" of the West throughout the Cold War (Cem 2001: 32). İsmail Cem objected the traditional negative stories about the Middle East.

It was a foreign policy that turned its back on centuries of experience, a foreign policy that stubbornly persisted in regarding itself as an alien in its own historical context. This mind-set manifested itself in many ways. For example, the attitude of 'Oh let's do keep out of Arab affairs,' every time someone uttered the phrase

Middle East; together with fond hopes that the more Turkey distanced herself from Islamic societies or alienated herself from its own past, the more the West will 'like' it (Cem 2001: 4).

One way of re-narrating Turkey's past that is employed by some Turkish politicians is the counter-identification with the Cold War narratives by renouncing the bipolar order and the dominant logic of zero-sum game of the Cold War strategic thinking. Cem highlights that throughout the Cold War, Turkey's traditional foreign policy was alienated from its history and trapped into an a-historical container made of Cold War geopolitics and security concerns.

Turkey is not one of the major winners of the Cold War. On the contrary, it is a loser. Our strategic value during the Cold War was derived from our particularity of a rampart at the outskirts of Europe, blocking the way of the so-called 'evil force'... once that role was over; the strategic relevance of Turkey was lost. This was a trauma for Turkey. We had used to living in Cold War conditions. Our institutions, our mission, our self-esteem and our identity were all defined by the Cold War concepts and realities (Cem 2001: 3).

By describing traditional foreign policy with references to Turkey's experiences with the Cold War Cem not only condemns the traditional elite for being ignorant of Turkey's historical geography, but also he constructs his own narratives about Turkey's relations with its neighbours. In this way, narrative entrepreneurs like Cem, draw a line between their narratives and the traditional narratives in order to initially counter existing narratives and eventually to form a narrative that is meaningful, coherent and compatible with the present as well as a narrative that resonates with political objectives and future expectations.

Cem is not alone in criticizing the traditional meanings attached to Turkey's neighbourhood and the Middle East in particular. Similar arguments can be observed in the discourses of the AKP elite. Davutoğlu condemns the traditional policies which have held back Turkey from developing its relations with its environs. Davutoğlu describes such negative perceptions about Turkey's geography as risk-averse and short-sighted. According to Davutoğlu, the state establishment suffered an identity crisis, as they

thought of history as fraught with unpleasant lessons rather positive ones and geography as a valuable asset as long as its strategic importance is valued in the game of great powers (Davutoğlu 2001: 34).

In his book, Davutoğlu (2001: 47) claims that ideological preferences and geopolitical concerns of the Cold War era ruled out the strategic and dynamic application of Turkey's historical richness and geographical location. He argues that tied with the parameters of the Cold War, Turkey failed to utilize its political power to its fullest. Hence, Davutoğlu contends that the traditional Turkish state elite opting for distancing itself from Turkey's historical geography alienated Turkey from regional politics and in turn the Arabs perceived Turkey as the implementer of policies of Western powers in the region (ibid.: 57). For Davutoğlu, the Cold War dynamics and Turkey's decision to side with the West resulted in the loss of political influence of Turkey in its vicinity (ibid.: 71).

Throughout the Cold War, Turkey pursued a foreign policy that was resting on a military strategy that only aims to protect its borders rather than resting on a strategy that would realize the full potential of its international position. Turkey interpreted its international position within the narrow parameters of its defence strategy (Davutoğlu 2001: 73).

In one of his televised addresses to the Nation (*Ulusla Sesleniş*), Erdoğan criticized the opposition to AKP's policies by categorically labelling them as the camp of "no solution is the best solution". He, then, argued that as a great country Turkey had to be active in every sense and everywhere. For him, this is how Turkey re-gained its confidence in its abilities and capabilities as a great country.

Turkey, which, for quite some time, used to be isolated and insecure with a mind-set of "no solution is the best solution", has risen up, opened up to the world and started to behave like a *great country* owing to its active diplomacy. And most importantly, Turkey has re-gained its self-confidence (Erdoğan 30/12/2004).

In the discourses of AKP politicians, "historical responsibility" has been oftentimes used as a way of justification of Turkey's engagements in its neighbourhood.

Egemen Bağış, EU chief negotiator since 2009 and minister for EU affairs since 2011, described Turkey's participation in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) as a "historical responsibility". Bağış also created a link between Turkish contributions to the humanitarian operation of the UN and the Ottoman era. According to him, participating in the UN mission resonates well with the positive stories about the Ottoman rule in the region. He said:

Dear colleagues, Turkey has a historical responsibility. Wherever the Ottomans went they brought order, peace and tolerance there. Today, Turkey is a country which is taken seriously in the region. Unlike in the past, as in the previous administrations, Turkey is no longer an isolated country, which had no idea about what it was doing as if its head was buried in the sand (Bağış (AKP) 2008 v.24, s.107, p.308).

In his address to the Nation, while explaining why Turkey had to contribute to the UNIFIL mission in Lebanon, Erdoğan stressed that although the Middle East was beset by conflicts Turkey should not turn its back to the region and remain indifferent. He argued that contributing to the UNIFIL is part of Turkey's historical and moral responsibility to work towards a solution to outstanding regional problems (a similar justification based on historical and moral responsibility argument can be found in several other addresses to the nation e.g. May 2004; February 2005; August 2006; May 2007; June 2008).

True, we are living in a geography which is beset by instability and conflicts, and also true that we are living through difficult times. Unless peace and justice are established in the Middle East, the world will never become a stable and peaceful place. The peace and stability of the region is of paramount importance for Turkey's security and national interests. Even if we turn a blind eye to the conflicts at our next door, they will remain as immediate threats to us. In other words, since we live in this geography we cannot be indifferent to these conflicts in the region. Please do not assume that if we shut our doors, if we close our eyes and if we stay indifferent [to what is happening], we can protect ourselves from the fire [next door] and escape from this danger. Rather than being a mere spectator of what is going on, the only way to protect our interests is to get involved (Erdoğan 31/08/2006).

In his speech given at the International Strategic Research Organization (USAK), one of the Turkish think-tanks, Prime Minister Erdoğan reiterated the same criticism almost six years later once again before a domestic audience. This time, he gave a more detailed account and proposed several reasons for the necessity of changing Turkey's foreign policy in the Middle East.

For a long time, Turkey has been defined as a country that is “enclosed by three seas and surrounded by enemies.” I want to at this point share with you a dramatic example. After the end of the 1940s especially, Turkey's relations with the Middle East were cut with the extremely incorrect and improper slogan, “the Arabs betrayed us”. During the First World War, it was a real fact that some of the Arab tribes rebelled. This rebellion had repercussions in the wide masses due to the fact that the Istanbul Administration had some incorrect implementations. However, it is a remarkably poor mistake to shape the axis of foreign policy with such a slogan and it did not bring anything to Turkey. [...] Today, the ones that defined our enhancing relations with the Middle Eastern countries either internally or externally as shift of axis, are also the ones that have not yet demolished their prejudices. While it is very natural for us to have communication and cooperation with European countries, Balkan countries, the Caucasus, and Africa, it is also very natural to be in touch with Middle Eastern countries (Erdoğan 03/02/2010).

Gül, as the president of Turkey, gave a speech at Chatham House in 2010. He likened the old Turkish foreign policy approach to Cold War politics. He referred to the infamous “iron curtain” to draw an analogy between Cold War geopolitics and the foreign policy approach of previous Turkish governments.

In this context, the first thing we tried to overcome 8 years ago was to tear up a *self-imposed iron curtain* poisoning relations with our neighbours. Since then, rather than zero-sum game, we have been pursuing a zero problem policy vis-à-vis our neighbours. [...] Since then, through the various regional dialogue mechanisms we have set up, many free trade agreements we have signed, and the energy, communication and transportation projects we have initiated, we are building an overarching vision of stability, cooperation and welfare in areas surrounding Turkey. [...] The credibility of our message is strengthened by the fact that we have historical and cultural ties with many societies in our neighbourhood. [...] This is why, Turkey can draw upon its cross-cultural skills, soft power and influence in acting as an

interface that facilitates dialogue among parties in dispute (Gül 08/11/2010, emphasis added).

By denouncing Cold War geopolitics, Cem, Davutoğlu and Gül, as narrative entrepreneurs, distanced themselves from dominant national security state narratives. Also they used their criticisms as a discursive instrument to delegitimize the political authority of the national security state elite. Hence, the national security state narratives are renounced since a negative meaning is attributed to the Cold War in general and Turkish foreign policy during the Cold War in particular. In this sense, the Cold War is not just a temporal other. Because it is associated with the narratives of the state establishment the criticisms of the Cold War function as an argumentative tool and provide a political leverage against the proponents of national security state narratives. Such practices of linking temporal others with present day institutions and political actors also present another case of narrative entrepreneurship that aims at the formation of discourse coalitions around new narratives vis-à-vis the national security state master narrative. Thus, locating themselves and their narratives in opposition to Cold War narratives serves as a method of popularizing and disseminating their own ideas about Turkish foreign policy through new arguments and stories.

By criticizing the state establishment for being inefficient and failing to seize the opportunities due to their adherence to Cold War geopolitics, the AKP narrative entrepreneurs has outlined the parameters of their foreign policy outlook which envisages an active engagement with all regions, development of good neighbourly relations and a multi-dimensional foreign policy based on commercial, political and cultural relations with neighbours. It is against this background that AKP's narratives entail a different understanding of the concept of power and a new interpretation of history and geography. Therefore, Davutoğlu urges for a need to utterly eliminate taboos and biases against neighbours beginning with the metaphor of “stabbed-in-the-back”, which has been used to describe the attitudes of the Arabs towards the Ottoman Empire in the early decades of the 20th century (Davutoğlu 2001: 409). Only if Turkey gets rid of its deep-seated taboos, Davutoğlu contends that engagement with neighbours in a friendly fashion can have solid foundations. Abdullah Gül and Suat Kınıklıoğlu also emphasised this point in debates about foreign policy in the TGNA:

A *great country* is not only responsible for its own interests but also responsible to its region and neighbours. [...] In this sense, we put great importance to the stability, welfare and peace in our region and we, as a *great country*, are taking the lead in this direction (Gül (AKP) 2004 v.70, s.34, p.33).

The re-integration with our near abroad does actually mean treating an abnormality that is inherited from the Cold War and also it enhances Turkey's security (Kınıklıoğlu (AKP) 2008 v.36, s.35, p.93).

Discourses of the AKP elite go beyond renouncing traditional (mis)-perceptions about Turkey's environs and formulate a new geostrategy for Turkey through the re-conceptualization of Turkey's geopolitical location and its importance. Davutoğlu asserts that without relying on its history Turkey cannot develop a long-term defence strategy. According to him:

Historical factors force Turkey to develop a defence strategy that goes beyond the contextual influence of its current borders. It is impossible for a country like Turkey, which was founded on the historical and geopolitical basis of the Ottoman state and inherited a legacy from the Empire, to design a defence strategy that is confined to its current borders. This historical legacy can generate *de facto* situations which Turkey has to step in at any moment (Davutoğlu 2001: 41).

For Davutoğlu (2001: 117), the old conceptualization of geopolitics is ill-suited for comprehending new circumstances which Turkey is facing at regional and international politics. At the regional level, Davutoğlu reckons, there are geopolitical vacuums produced in the aftermath of the Cold War, while at the international level there is a quest for a new political order. In Davutoğlu's conceptualization, Turkey's geopolitical location is conceived as an asset that Turkey needs to take advantage of in order to enhance its activism at the regional level and consolidate its place within the international community. In other words, rather than being a valuable strategic asset at the game of great powers, Turkey's geopolitical location becomes a dynamic factor that shapes and determines the sphere of Turkey's political influence and hence its international role. Davutoğlu's geopolitical thinking underlines the fact that artificial

differences between boundaries of contemporary states and their centuries old geopolitical frontiers is the main factor that accounts for the conflicts in Turkey's neighbourhood (ibid.: 19). Insofar as Davutoğlu uses geopolitics and geopolitical thinking as main themes in his narratives, his evaluation of Turkey's relations with its neighbours rests on a distinction between *de jure* boundaries (*hukuki sınır*) and geopolitical frontiers (*jeopolitik hat*) (ibid.). In his book, Davutoğlu makes a strong case about a need to socially and economically transcend national borders because for him political maps of 19th and 20th centuries do not represent the economic, social and cultural maps of contemporary world politics.

The long-established idea of defending Turkey within its own territory along its borders dates back to the collapse of the Ottoman Empire when the Turks retreated from the imperial geography, which encompasses the Balkans, North Africa, the Caucasus and the Middle East, to the Anatolian peninsula. According to Davutoğlu, repercussions of this historical withdrawal from the imperial geography can be observed in Turkish strategic culture as it resulted in the emergence of a defensive attitude which rests on a strategy oscillating between two extreme ideas: These are “absolute sovereignty” over a country and “complete withdrawal” (Davutoğlu 2001: 52-53). With a strong *realpolitik* undertone, Davutoğlu further explains what should have been done instead of opting for one of these choices:

Whenever absolute sovereignty over a territory was forfeited [by the Ottomans], they also abandoned it immediately in a hurry to defend the rest of the country within its new borders. This practice [of complete withdrawal] hindered the development of auxiliary tactical strategies such as creating spheres of influence within remaining territories that are neither under absolute control nor abandoned totally; defending borders through trans-boundary diplomatic initiatives; forming coalitions centred around its own strategy; leaving behind collaborators in the lost territories; and exploiting the conflict of interests among great powers in order to gain more room for tactical manoeuvres (Davutoğlu 2001: 53).

Davutoğlu (2001: 41) suggests that Turkey, which was founded on the Ottoman legacy and the land left from the Empire, should not adopt a defensive strategy that is limited to the defence of its national boundaries. Turkish foreign policy in the Balkans,

the Caucasus and the Middle East has suffered the same dilemma of absolute sovereignty and complete withdrawal (ibid.: 56). Echoing a highly realist geopolitical thinking, for Davutoğlu, the defence of Turkey's borders must begin at Turkey's geopolitical and geocultural frontiers not at its national borders. In his own words, "The defence of Eastern Thrace and Istanbul begins at the Adriatic Sea and Sarajevo, the defence of Eastern Anatolia and Erzurum begins at North Caucasus and Grozny" (ibid.: 56).

In one of his addresses to the TGNA, Davutoğlu coined a new concept and described the communities in Turkey's vicinity as Turkey's *tarihdaş*, with whom the Turks had lived together throughout the history and thus shared common experiences. *Tarih* means history in Turkish and the suffix *-daş* is similar to the prefix *co-* in English implying partnership, togetherness and association. Thus, *tarihdaş* refers to the idea of living together throughout the history. Furthermore, the concept implies a historical friendship between Turkey and its environs or at least being associated in one way or another at one point in the past. The paragraph where Davutoğlu mentions the term reads as follows:

All these lands, all these regions are our *tarihdaş*. We, as the government of the Republic of Turkey, are obliged to protect the rights of our citizens; as a nation our historical mission is to preserve our historical ties with our *tarihdaş*. In this context, regardless of their ethnic and religious origins, we are determined to embrace all of our *tarihdaş* and eliminate all the existing barriers between us and our *tarihdaş*; this is why, we are pursuing region-wide policies; this is why, we are establishing trilateral and multilateral mechanisms; and this is why, we are in pursuit of new projects as part of bilateral relations (Davutoğlu (AKP) 2010 v.87, s.37, p.58, emphases added).

This quote, in my opinion, captures the essence of Davutoğlu's discursive practices to substantiate geography with history and history with geography. From the perspective of narrative analysis, coining such concepts knits history and geography together as a way of forming a link between experiences with time and experiences with space thereby transforming culture as well as identity of Turkey. Davutoğlu not only digs deep into history to discover old friendships but also he re-interprets history by (over-)

emphasizing commonalities rather than differences between Turkey and its neighbours. In this sense, neighbours are pictured as partners or friends. In addition to this and perhaps more significantly in Davutoğlu's narratives neighbours are perceived as Turkey's *tarihdaş*. Such narratives make bilateral relations between *tarihdaş* countries natural and inevitable owing to the assumption that *tarihdaş* countries share a common history and socio-cultural ties. For instance, in an interview, Davutoğlu explicitly emphasizes the importance of positive stories about the Ottoman era in the Balkans as he thinks that only positive stories can facilitate regional cooperation. He, thus, dismisses negative stories about the Ottoman era, which have haunted Balkan countries for quite a long time. His perspective about the Ottoman era is surely not impartial as he prioritizes the positive stories over negative ones. In this way, he not only counters allegations that AKP's foreign policy is neo-Ottomanist but also he counters the dominant nationalist narratives of the Balkan countries that are centred upon the image of Ottomans as oppressive rulers of the Balkans. He does that by highlighting the Ottoman investments in the region.

I am not a neo-Ottoman. Actually there is no such policy. We have a common history and cultural depth with the Balkan countries, which nobody can deny. We cannot act as if the Ottomans never existed in this region. My perception of history in the Balkans is that we have to focus on the positive aspects of our common past. We cannot create a better future by building on a negative view of history. [...] The Balkans had its golden age of peace during the Ottoman reign. This is a historical fact. Those who blame the Ottoman period for the region's economic backwardness and internecine fights are under the influence of historical prejudices and stereotypes (Davutoğlu 26/04/2011).

Coining new concepts, albeit arguably ambiguous, helps Davutoğlu to challenge the old concepts and traditional narratives that tell negative stories about the Ottoman era at the domestic as well as regional levels. Similar arguments and concepts are used at the domestic level against the traditional state elite and they are also employed at the international level against the nationalist elites of third countries. Such concepts give narrative entrepreneurs a discursive leverage in their struggle to gain the upper-hand vis-à-vis other contending discourses. Hence, looking at the neighbourhood through a

historical prism Davutoğlu aims to create a new discourse for Turkish foreign policy that paves the way for the spread of Turkish political influence in its vicinity (also see Davutoğlu 14/12/2009).

One can argue that in narratives about Turkey's geography, which features a hostile geography framed by strategic thinking based on the notion of hard power politics, have been replaced by a non-aggressive and integrative geopolitical narratives whose main theme centres around the revival of Turkey's historical and cultural ties with its neighbours. Turkey is, thus, positioned as a country that is ready to solve protracted conflicts with its neighbours. These narratives underpin AKP's "zero problem policy with neighbours". The denunciation of previous narratives of neighbours as threats and foes is considered essential to transform the threat-based security-first approach of the national security state master narratives, which is, in turn, believed to make Turkey more visible and active in its neighbourhood.

The idea that Turkey should be more visible and active in regional politics and should have good neighbourly relations also has reverberated in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. One diplomat in an interview underlined that Turkey prefers to "manage" its problems with its neighbours on the basis of dialogue and cooperation through applying confidence-building measures, which are not seen as concessions anymore.³³ A senior diplomat interviewed by this author also added that the zero problem with neighbours policy cannot intrinsically be flawed because its nature is peaceful and thus it aims to persuade every conflicting parties to meet in the middle. For the diplomat, the zero problem with neighbours policy is the "middle way", in his own words.³⁴ Ibrahim Kalın, chief advisor to the Prime Minister since 2009, describes AKP's foreign policy outlook by putting more emphasis on historical and cultural ties in an interview for an Arabic news magazine, *The Majalla*:

Turkey has a new confidence. As a state, we feel that we have a story, something to offer the region at a time when the West is confused about Iraq, Afghanistan, the Middle East, the Caucasus. In all these, we feel we have a good grasp of the issues because of our geographical proximity, our cultural ties, our history. As

³³ Interview with a senior diplomat, Ankara, 30.04.2010.

³⁴ Interview with a senior diplomat, Ankara, 30.04.2010.

politicians, therefore, we cannot remain indifferent. We cannot pretend we live in an island of peace (Kalin 26/11/2009).

For some politicians and experts alike, unless neighbours do not give up on their hostile policies Turkey should never make any positive moves and must stand firmly and sustain its hard-line policies.³⁵ On the other hand, for the AKP elite, problem solving is the key word and they aim to free Turkish foreign policy from its prolonged problems. For them, in order for Turkey to become a conflict-free state in international politics Turkey needs to be more initiative, flexible and keen to cooperate with its neighbours.

AKP's zero problem policy has been subjected to serious academic and political criticisms. For instance, CHP deputy Onur Öymen and MHP³⁶ deputy Ahmet Deniz Bölükbaşı criticized AKP's policies for being submissive to American interests and giving unnecessary unilateral concessions to solve problems. Öymen, a retired ambassador and CHP deputy, argued that one should not expect to solve problems by giving concessions. During a debate in the Turkish Grand National Assembly, he defined AKP's policies with regard to the Cyprus issue as such: "[T]his is not a solution at all. On the contrary, this kind of policy is called dissolution. Doesn't it mean that Turkish policy in Cyprus is dissolving?" (Öymen (CHP) 2004 v.70, s.34, p.21). In another parliamentary debate, Öymen raised his concerns by drawing an analogy between the Treaty of Versailles and the Treaty of Sèvres signed after the First World War: "Dear colleagues, is there such thing as unilateral concessions in international relations? Yes, there is. But how? When you lose a war, like in the case of Versailles and Sèvres. [...] Did we lose a war in Cyprus, which we never heard of?" (Öymen (CHP) 2005 v.05, s.38, p.18). In an interview with this author Öymen also underlined that softening one's own stance does not necessarily lead to long-lasting solutions, for him settlements of protracted conflicts can never survive if they are based on unilateral concessions and false promises.³⁷

³⁵ Interviews with Onur Öymen, Oğuz Oyan and Ercan Çitlioğlu.

³⁶ The Nationalist Action Party (MHP) has been the second largest opposition party in the Turkish Grand National Assembly since the 2007 general elections. The party is a right wing political party with a nationalist ideology.

³⁷ Interview Onur Öymen, CHP deputy, Ankara, 28.04.2010.

A very similar remark was made by another member of parliament in a session on the annual budget of the foreign ministry at the TGNA. Edip Safder Gaydalı, an ANAP³⁸ deputy, was concerned about the government policy in Cyprus and he was sceptical that the AKP undermined Turkey's position in Cyprus by giving unilateral concessions: "The Government must know that by giving concessions they will gain nothing; the things [they] concede will never be re-gained and there is no end for giving concessions" (Gaydalı (ANAP) 2005 v.105, s.38 p.11).

On a different topic, when raising criticisms for Turkey's rapprochement with Armenia, Ahmet Deniz Bölükbaşı, a deputy of Nationalist Action Party (MHP) condemned AKP's zero problem policy for being naïve and undermining national interests.

The main aspect of AKP's foreign policy is that it is built on clichés, thus substance and principles are sacrificed for appearance and rhetoric. No one can claim that the current situation of our foreign policy is a success of which we should be proud. This is because of a foreign policy approach that is only about saving the day and the face with nonsense slogans such as "win-win", "go beyond the ordinary" and "break taboos" (Bölükbaşı (MHP) 2008 v.36, s.35, p.82).

During interviews with two former Turkish ambassadors while they highlighted the importance of the zero problem policy as a declaration of good will to solve the problems they also stressed that the means to achieve those well-intentioned objectives of zero problem policy should neither rest on neo-Ottomanist ideals nor employ religious and sectarian-based elements. Such a way of settling problems might bring more harm than good as they have caused new problems instead of solving the existing ones.³⁹ This is why, in order for the zero problem policy to succeed, it needs to be embraced by Turkey's neighbours as well, according to another former ambassador.⁴⁰

³⁸The Motherland Party (ANAP), which was founded by Turgut Özal in the 1980s, was a right wing political party with a neo-conservativist and neo-liberal ideology.

³⁹ Interview with Murat Bilhan, retired ambassador, Istanbul, 15.03.2011.

⁴⁰ Interview with Yalım Eralp, retired ambassador, Istanbul, 15.03.2011.

On the other hand, AKP's defence for its zero problem policy is constructed along the line that it is not about choosing one policy over another one; it is about choosing AKP's zero problem policy over a conflict-driven and isolationist policy.

Since its foundation, Turkish Republic has been promoting peace and stability in its vicinity in accordance with the motto of *peace at home, peace in the world*. While maintaining the homeland security, we [AKP] also pay great attention to fostering good relations with our neighbours; we're not remaining indifferent to our problems, instead we are trying hard to solve them. (Dumanoğlu (AKP) 2004 v.70, s.34, p.11).

Dear colleagues, an active foreign policy, that aims at developing good neighbourly relations and solving problems with our neighbours, has been pursued by our government. Turkey knows that it has to live at peace with its neighbours and no one can benefit from conflicts and tensions. With this in mind and within the framework drawn by Atatürk's principle of *peace at home, peace in the world*, we have come thus far to solve problems with our neighbours (Alaboyun (AKP) 2007 v.9, s.35, p.30).

The AKP's use of the Kemalist motto of "peace at home, peace in world" does not necessarily mean that the AKP elite aspire to revive the foreign policy approach of Atatürk. The reasons behind AKP's frequent reference to "peace at home, peace in the world" vary. First and foremost, the motto is laden with ethical-normative meanings that nobody would openly object to. Thus, the AKP elite also embraced it with no hesitation. Second, one interviewee pointed out that "peace at home, peace in the world" is no longer a motto of the Kemalist elite it is rather a general principle upon which Turkish foreign policy is built.⁴¹

Lastly, the AKP elite embraced the Kemalist motto and they employed it as a way of criticizing the cautious and defensive approach advocated by the traditional state elite. In this case, the dominant narratives of the national security state were countered by associating AKP's zero problem policy with a Kemalist principle. Hasan Murat Mercan, an AKP deputy and the head of the foreign affairs committee in the TGNA,

⁴¹ Interview with Ruhi Açıkgöz, an AKP deputy, Ankara, 15.04.2010.

debated in the parliament that the peace at home peace in the world motto would sound rhetorical unless Turkey actually works for peace in the world.

If “peace at home, peace in the world” remains a fundamental principle and main characteristics of our foreign policy, none of us can only want peace at home but not for the world (Merican (AKP) 2006 v.141, s.39, p.815).

In his lecture at the International Strategic Research Organization, Turkey, Erdoğan condemns the practices of Cold War politics thereby implying that except for his governments no government in Turkey implemented Atatürk’s principle to its fullest extent.

The creation of imaginary threats domestically or abroad in order to be able to design the public policy and the perception of neighbors as enemies came to an end with the Cold War period. That’s why we act in a manner to gain friends – not to generate enemies – and we try to implement Atatürk’s principle of “peace at home, peace abroad” (Erdoğan 03/02/2010).

By doing this, the AKP elite have demonstrated that their policies were not in contradiction with Republican principles. It is unlikely that this is an attempt to reach a common ground between the AKP and the major opposition party CHP in the field of foreign policy. It is more likely that the AKP elite aim to establish a lineage between the zero problem with neighbours policy and the principle of “peace at home, peace in the world” so that they are well-equipped at the discursive level to fend off criticisms to their policies and subvert claims that their policy drifts away Turkey from the main principles of Turkish foreign policy. Thus, the AKP has been framing its policies as an epitome of the real and proper implementation of the Republican principle.

6.4. From Westernization to West-East Reconciliation: Narratives about the Alliance of Civilizations

It has been argued that Turkey’s Western orientation is the main objective of Turkish foreign policy to which other minor policy goals are attached. Turkey’s relations with

the Middle East, with countries in Central Asia and the Balkans are believed to be subordinated to Turkey's relations with the West. As discussed in chapter 5, the aspirations of the Turkish elite to make their country Western or at least to be regarded as a Western country produce a national ambivalence about the West while creating a national obsession with the idea of Westernization. Hence, in the national security state master narrative Turkey is featured as a country that aspires to "westernize despite the West."

In the early years of the Republic, the Westernization project of Turkey was defined through nation-state concerns and described as an objective to meet the standards of "contemporary civilization" (*muasır medeniyet*) by Atatürk himself. With the increasing dominance of the Cold War narratives, Turkey's westernization project became a project of Americanization resting on Turkey's strategic military and political relations with the US. In the 1990s, the traditional state elite lost track and sight of Turkey's centuries-old Westernization goal and sought new narratives that can help them to redefine the original purpose in such a way that an answer to the question of why Turkey has to be part of the West and why it has to be recognized as a European country by Europeans. Making sense of where Turkey stands in the relationship with the West, in particular Europe is the key for comprehending the change in narratives about Turkey's place in the international system and the meanings ascribed to international politics.

The argument that Turkey's membership to the EU is paramount for the West-East reconciliation is nothing new. It has been used by the Turkish elite since Turkey's application for full membership in 1987 (e.g. Özal 1991). However, new narratives on the civilizational aspect of Turkey's accession to the EU have been constructed to formulate a new role for Turkey in the international system rather than being just an instrumental argument to illustrate the benefits of Turkish membership for the EU. The latter argument remains in the discourses of the Turkish elite, yet Turkey's role and its strategic importance have been elevated to a global level as the alliance of civilizations is depicted as a civilizational mission.

Having come to terms with Turkey's history Cem contends that the Turkish elite should overcome its obsession with the West and put Turkey's Western orientation into a wider perspective that would be beneficial for Turkey and the EU.

For far too long, Turkey's own views and understandings of herself have misled the West in its assessments. We've become a country that deifies the West and thus becomes neurotic about it. Here, the psychological dimension is particularly relevant: 'The West is superior to us,' 'The West is better than we are,' 'We're no good,' etc. Turkey conditioned herself to believe this nonsense. At the same time, and again for far too long, Turkey has segregated its present from the past (Cem 2001: 27).

After the Helsinki Council, in a press conference, Cem evaluated the EU's decision to grant Turkey candidacy status and he contended that the decision of the EU was down to Turkey's distinct identity and the positive impact of differences between European and Turkish cultures.

Turkey is not an ordinary candidate country. First of all, we, ourselves, should be aware of this fact, only then others will pay attention. [...] Turkey is contributing to the EU with its unique identity. Of course, this won't make us a full member. We have to do our job and overcome our shortcomings. However, it must be never forgotten that Turkey is not an ordinary candidate. Turkey is entering the accession process with its very own synthesis of human values, civilizational traits and different aspects of the East and West, and Christianity and Islam. [...] We're different, therefore we have been given candidacy. Otherwise, a Turkey whose history is similar to member states or any other candidate country, whose identity resembles the identity of other candidate countries, whose culture is an imitation of another candidate could be also accepted as a candidate yet neither would it ever significantly contribute to the EU nor its membership would generate excitement and hope (Cem 2009: 213-214).

For Cem, being different is an asset which Turkey can utilize for its membership as long as differences between Europe and Turkey are not clashed with each other. In this regard, socialization into EU norms and values is not perceived as a top-down process. It is actually turned into a process of uploading Turkey's differences to the EU

by suggesting that it is the EU who needs to accommodate Turkey into its culture. Such a shift in narratives is not only a strategic instrument to give Turkey a conceptual power to balance EU demands. But also this new narratives are produced to counter negative European narratives about Turkey and Turkish membership. Thus, Turkey's Asian origins, Muslim identity and Turkic traditions are considered complimentary to its European identity. Eventually, the juxtaposition of Turkey's European and Asian credentials do no longer pose a political dilemma and an identity crisis but it becomes a discursive leverage to craft Turkey a new role on the international stage through narratives about the alliance of civilizations.

In his book *Strategic Depth*, Davutoğlu gives details of his own perception of Turkey-EU relations. The following quotes from his book shed light on his practices to re-conceptualize the relations:

Turkey needs to craft a new strategic position for itself in its relations with the EU, which should not be devoid of an Asian vision. Otherwise, Turkey can neither be a respectable country with its historical and geographical depth in the eyes of Europeans nor can Turkey be an Asian country whose words are taken seriously by other Asian countries (Davutoğlu 2001: 522-523).

Davutoğlu continues:

Unless Turkey redefines its place within continental Europe on a rational basis by embracing its historical and geographical assets, it can neither maintain its relations with the EU nor its general principles of foreign policy (Davutoğlu 2001: 539).

Turkey should not only get rid of its (mis-)conception of Europe as the centre of contemporary civilization to which it anchors itself at the expense of its very own geocultural depth in order to prevail over domestic opposition and challenges, but also it should overcome the recurring defensive reflex triggered by the image of Europe that wants to divide Turkey (Davutoğlu 2001: 547).

Turkey in the post-Cold war era, especially since the 9/11 attacks, has been spearheading the cooperation and dialogue between civilizations. The Turkish state elite have been inclined to feature Turkey's EU membership as the first step on the road to West-East reconciliation in the 21st century. For instance, as an initiative of the DSP-MHP-ANAP government Turkey held a conference between members of the EU and Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) in February 2002. Particularly, AKP governments have heavily invested in this civilizational narrative by promoting the Alliance of Civilizations project on several occasions.

The Alliance of Civilizations, co-sponsored by Spain and Turkey, epitomizes Turkey's efforts to enhance dialogue and cooperation between different cultures and religions. The primary aim of the Alliance is to "improve understanding and cooperative relations among nations and peoples across cultures and religions, and to help counter the forces that fuel polarization and extremism."⁴² To this end, the Alliance of Civilizations facilitates interaction among different social groups from different countries through several projects on civil society, youth, migration and media.

The following quotes from the current and former ministers of foreign affairs highlight how Turkey-EU relations were redefined and elevated to a higher civilizational level.

The EU-Turkey relationship is a significant test not only for the future of relations between different civilizations, but also for EU's renowned pluralistic character, and for Turkey's ability to utilize and capitalize on its immense historical experience (Davutoğlu 2001: 543-544).

Turkey's EU membership is not only a technical step, neither for EU [sic.], nor for Turkey. In fact, Turkey's mission is greater than itself. My Government is eager to prove that a Muslim society can be democratic, open, transparent, pluralistic and modern, while preserving its identity. In turn, Europe will have to prove that it is ready to admit a democratic Muslim society and that it will not fall to cultural introversion. And together we will prove that a clash of civilizations is not inevitable (Gül 2003: 2).

⁴² See the official website of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, <http://www.unaoc.org/>

The AKP elite prefer to describe Turkey with a special geographical and historical position that makes Turkey a central country. Turkey is believed to be entitled to a central country position owing to its geographical location as well as its history. Davutoğlu argues that Turkey “should be seen neither as a bridge country which only connects two points, nor a frontier country, nor indeed as an ordinary country, which sits at the edge of the Muslim world or the West” (Davutoğlu 2008: 78). He further contends that what gives a country central position is not only its geography but also its cultural and historical heritage (ibid.: 79).

In the narratives of the AKP elite Turkey is not touted as an aspiring country which wants to become part of European civilization. In fact, Turkey is featured as a country which has a historical responsibility and a missionary vision. Thus, the ultimate purpose of Turkey in the international system is to reconcile the West and the East in order to create a better world order. In this narrative, Turkey’s membership for the EU is not an end itself but it is perceived as the means for accomplishing a civilizational dialogue. AKP’s civilizational narratives have surpassed the previous modernization and Westernization narrative about Turkey-EU relations.

The EU is probably the most important peace project of the 20th century in the post-Second World War era. It started out with 6 members cooperating in steel and coal and enlarged to 27 members. And now Turkish membership is going to be a very big event, probably one of the most important events of the 21st century. Turkey’s membership will be a new peace project (Babacan 01/04/2008).

The fact that Turkey has a place in the EU's future prospects reflects an understanding that will reinforce the political, economic, and diplomatic power of Europe. This project also needs to be assessed in terms of its global impacts. The Europe of the future should and will become a center of peace and welfare, where concerns over clash of civilizations are eliminated (Gül 09/05/2008).

The river of history may fail to find its course. Europe may make an incorrect decision and, instead of facilitating a fruitful relationship with the rising powers of Asia, the end result may be detrimental. I think the role that Turkey will play is decisive at this stage. Turkey is in a central position to guarantee that the river

of history finds its correct course. I always say Turkey is the litmus test of globalization. Our success by means of the east-west, north-south relationship and by means of socio-cultural and economic crises will provide for the success of globalization. Our failure will drag globalization into a fault zone that may trigger a deep clash (Davutoğlu 01/11/2010).

The AKP elite have been concerned with the resurrection of the Cold War mentality in the 21st century in which two ideological camps were in conflict. This time the AKP elite believe that elites of different civilizations have to facilitate a civilizational dialogue in order to avoid polarisation among states in the future along the lines of cultural and religious differences. Erdoğan raised the issue at the UN General Assembly.

Distinguished representatives, the *culture of conflict* that has become a global plague in itself, is in my view, one of our priority concerns.[...] It is indeed a mistake to continue to present different traditions and cultures as sources of conflict, despite the many experiences we have been through and the ruinous conflicts that have cost the lives of millions of people (Erdoğan 15/09/2005, emphasis added).

Thus, in their narratives they have tried to negate Huntington's argument that conflicts between different civilizations would dominate international politics. On other occasion, Erdoğan drew an analogy between the Cold War mentality of bipolar camps and the post-cold War mentality of the clash of civilizations argument. He said "Building mental walls between different cultures and faiths is against the essence of the ideal of free world and therefore, this is the major threat for the free world" (Erdoğan 08/06/2006).

In a speech given at Ljubljana University just before the European Council in 2004, Gül put forth a similar argument along the lines of civilizational reconciliation by emphasising Turkey's role in providing cultural and political links between Western and Eastern civilizations.

Today, ethnic, cultural and religious prejudices are unfortunately more widespread than ever before. These are both reasons and products of political and socio-economic problems such as migration, poverty, organized crime and terrorism. The important task of overcoming these obstacles is a common challenge we face together. To this end, one of our objectives should be to bridge

the differences of all kind through solidarity, understanding, dialogue and harmony (Gül 01/12/2004).

One can observe that Islam and references to sacred values and faiths are included in the narratives of AKP. Especially, concerns about fundamentalism as well as xenophobia and Islamophobia have been increasingly expressed by the AKP elite. Prime Minister Erdoğan brings religious security and protection of faith to the forefront of human security at the opening of the Garden of Faiths in Turkey by underlining that “the religion and sacred values (*mukaddesat*) are indispensable for human beings as they attribute meaning to life. The protection and maintenance of the meaning of life is the most sacred human rights of all” (Erdoğan 09/12/2004). As this quote demonstrates, the protection of religion and faiths has become an important issue for human security. In their narratives, AKP politicians highlight the importance of faith for individuals. As a result, the protection of faiths and freedom to practice religion are prioritized as they are deemed indispensable for human security. The depiction of Islam’s prophet Muhammad in cartoon published in 2005 ignited protests in the Muslim World had its share in the narratives of AKP when they talked about the rise of Islamophobia in the West. Erdoğan speaking in Khartoum in March 2006, in Philadelphia in June 2006, at Georgetown University in October 2006 suffice to provide examples of AKP narrative about the repercussions of the rising Islamophobia and xenophobia in the West for international politics.

Furthermore, in the narratives of the AKP elite Muslims do neither need to adopt democracy nor imitate democratic regimes of the West. By depicting Islam as a democratic religion and arguing that democratic values are universal, the AKP elite try to portray themselves as politicians not only politically committed to democracy but also they are intrinsically democrats because Islam is democratic in principle.

In the 21st century, our societies will witness the efforts for the spread of governments, which are built on the principles of rule of law, transparency and accountability, protection of human rights particularly women and children’s rights [...]. I strongly believe that as much as these are the common values of the EU, in essence, these values are compatible with the common traditions and values of Muslim countries (Gül 28/06/2005).

In the above quote taken from Gül's speech at a ministerial meeting of Organization of the Islamic Conference in 2005, Gül starts with a projection about the 21st century politics and underscores the increasing significance of democratic values, good governance and human rights. In the second part of his statement, he justifies his plea for democratic reforms in the Muslim world by asserting that traditions and culture of Muslim societies do not contradict with Western norms. In fact, he goes on to imply that Muslims are naturally democrats because Islam is intrinsically a democratic religion. A quote from Erdoğan's speech at the World Economic Forum in Sharm El Sheikh does not just imply but explicitly states how the AKP associates Islam with democracy.

Today, we are able to see that democracy, transparency, human rights, rule of law and good governance, which have been considered European so far, have deep roots particularly in Islamic societies and all other cultures in general. We believe that these values are universal (Erdoğan 21/05/2006).

Generally speaking, the Turkish state elite described the tensions and dangers in the post-September 11 as "the clash between the proponents and opponents of a universal civilization" as in the speech given by Ahmet Necdet Sezer at War College in 2002 (Sezer 03/04/2002). Bülent Ecevit, while addressing the OIC-EU Forum as the prime minister in 2002, underscored the secular character of the Turkish state and its respect for different religions (Ecevit 12/02/2002). In contrast, the AKP narratives draw a different picture that depicts the debate along the lines of the nexus between democracy, tolerance and religion. For AKP politicians, the clash happens between the promoters of dialogue and harmony among different civilizations, cultures and faiths and the others who are xenophobic, intolerant, undemocratic and Islamophobic. This is why, in the narratives of the AKP elite protecting religion and defending the freedom of religion are highlighted as necessary for maintaining human security and global order.

Such religion-based interpretations of international politics have been criticized for three reasons. First, AKP narratives on the civilizational aspect of world politics has been in the spotlight as AKP politicians have been criticized for conflating local cultures and traditions with a universal civilization based on universal norms and values. Öymen's speech in the TGNA is a perfect example of this criticism. Onur Öymen directly questioned the AKP's civilizational rhetoric.

Turkey is the part of Western civilization. When you sit at the same table with Spain in the meetings of Alliance of Civilizations you sit there as the representative of another civilization. Which one is that? We have been a member of Western civilization since Atatürk. I kindly ask to Mr. Minister. When you sit with Spanish Prime Minister Mr. Zapatero, which civilization are you representing? Have you given up the Republican notion of civilization? The Republican understanding is that cultures are different but civilization is only one and Turkey is part of that civilization. You are clearly not of the same opinion (Öymen (CHP) 2008 v.36, s.35, p.422).

Faruk Loğoğlu, a CHP deputy and retired ambassador, raised a similar concern about the image and role of Turkey in the international system. He pointed out that under the AKP rule Turkey is now known by foreigners as a strong regional country in the Middle East with a predominantly Muslim population rather than as a democratic and secular country participating in the Euro-Atlantic community.⁴³ The second criticism raises concerns about overemphasizing religious differences and focusing only on the rapprochement between Christianity and Islam. One interviewee drew my attention to the lack of diversity in AKP's understanding of civilizations as the AKP elite regard Judeo-Christianity and Islam as the two big civilizations. There are certainly other civilizations in the world. When civilization is defined by its religious origins one can count as much civilizations as the number of faiths.⁴⁴ Lastly, from the perspective of a narrative analysis, as a result of embracing a civilization narrative the AKP elite see international politics through a lens of religion. Even though the AKP narratives are produced to facilitate cooperation and rapprochement between different faiths, they paradoxically create new categorisations and exclusions in international politics along the lines of religious differences.

6.5. Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of recurrent themes and reiterated storylines within the parameters of the great country counter-narrative. The main purpose of these

⁴³ Faruk Loğoğlu, "Türk dış politikası-derenin doğrultusu?"[Turkish foreign policy-course of the river?], *Radikal Daily*, 29.01.2010.

⁴⁴ Interview with Gareth Jenkins, an expert on Turkey, Istanbul, 23.03.2011.

narratives discussed in this chapter is to coordinate domestic discourse and cultivate domestic support for the redefinition of national interests in line with Turkey's cultural and historical ties that are drawn from its imperial past and its place and role in Western and Eastern civilizations.

The great country (GC) counter-narrative fosters a sense of self-esteem derived from the pride in Turkey's history and cultural traits. The great country counter-narrative rests on a romantic appreciation of Turkey's past experiences, including first and foremost the Ottoman era. Creating a sphere of influence by reviving the already forgotten symbols, rituals and ideals as well as cultural and social relations with countries and peoples with whom Turkey had some sort of cultural and social interactions at some point in the past is the central theme of the GC counter-narrative. The principle objective is the utilization of the forgotten or repressed memory of social, cultural and political ties with Turkey's surroundings. This counter-narrative glorifies old achievements, tells positive stories about Turkey's history and aims to enhance Turkey's relations with its neighbours. There appears to be a longing for a time of greatness in the past and much more amicable relations with neighbours. This counter-narrative, explicitly or implicitly, characterizes Turkey as the big brother or a regional leader for the Muslim world and for new-born Turkic countries in Central Asia. Turkey, once a great power, is seen as a "chosen country" that is destined to take its rightful status and its share in the international system owing to its imperial history and cultural ties with other countries. Table 6-1 illustrates how the AKP elite evaluate Turkey's history, its geography and Turkey's role in regional and international politics through references to Turkey's cultural traits and historical legacy. The evaluation entails some policy recommendations and positioning of Turkey vis-a vis other countries.

Table 6-1 Main Features of the Great Country Counter-Narrative

| Narratives | Recurrent Themes | Evaluation | Positioning |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Narratives about the past | Longing for the past, glory | Restoring what is lost, telling positive stories about the past | Self-ascribed heir of a glorious past |
| Narratives about geography | Cultural and historical ties | Spreading political influence in the neighbourhood | Regional Power, Central Country |
| Narratives about international politics | East-West civilizational clashes | Spreading the idea of Alliance of Civilizations | Global Partner, Emerging global actor |

On a global scale great country Turkey is depicted as an internationally respected actor on a par with other global powers, talking about global issues and even setting its own agenda at the regional level, owing to its “political wisdom” distilled from historical experiences and cultural ties. Hence, this counter-narrative, similar to the internationally active player counter-narrative, which is to be discussed in the next chapter, promotes a soft power role for Turkey. Yet, the soft power of Turkey stems from its cultural and historical legacy. Put differently, it rests on Turkey’s cultural and historical ties and its ability to capitalize on these unique elements that distinguishes Turkey from other countries. Eventually, according to this counter-narrative, Turkey will reclaim its long-lost status in the international system as the foremost heir of the Ottoman Empire.

In essence, a great country Turkey narrative is an outcome of the coupling of renewed self-esteem and the romantic utilization of the past. It purports to extend Turkey’s efforts on a global scale whilst geographical proximity and cultural propinquity remain to be the determining factors for Turkey’s new active foreign policy. The GC counter-narrative is driven by the stimulus of an enhanced national image and pride. This counter-narrative underlines that Turkey used to be a great country and revitalizing its old status can only be realized by embracing an active foreign policy approach in its vicinity. Turkey, thus, should be willing to accommodate change and take risks; after all, that is how a country like Turkey with its imperial legacy becomes a regional power and

a global player in the post-Cold war era. This is why, the idea of pro-active foreign policy and developing Turkey's relations with its environs is the main storyline and recurrent theme in political narratives underpinned by the GC counter-narrative.

How does this narrative challenge the traditional narratives? First of all, this counter-narrative confronts the NSS master narrative by renouncing the dominance of Cold War *realpolitik*. According to this counter-narrative, not only the Cold War era but also the 1990s are a "lost-decade" for Turkey. Second, it associates the NSS master narrative with the so-called state establishment and criticizes the traditional state elite for being elitist, not in touch with the rapidly changing realities in the post-Cold War era and extremely cautious and security-centred. It criticizes the state establishment for their reluctance to embrace the Ottoman past. In line with narratives about the past, narratives about Turkey's geography and its neighbourhood rest on the criticism of the state establishment for their policy of non-entanglement with Turkey's neighbourhood.

However, the GC counter-narrative has its own loopholes. First, this counter-narrative might cause a rift between Turkey and its Western partners as the AKP elite speak like the spokesperson of the East and the Muslim world in the West. This can be a valuable asset in some instances but it also makes Turkey look like more reluctant and ambivalent towards the West. Second, similar to the national security state master narrative but for different reasons, the GC counter-narrative can be pathological too, because it implicitly relies on self-ascribed cultural superiority, political wisdom and excessive pride with the past. The excessive pride and self-confidence may lead to hubristic visions and policies that can overstretch Turkey's material capabilities. Moreover, the Ottoman history invokes differing and sometimes negative stories for other countries such Armenia, Serbia and the Arabs. Hence, counter-narratives can be produced against the romantic narratives of the Ottoman era by third countries. Subsequently, the GC counter-narrative might be rejected as it is seen as a propaganda tool to disguise neo-imperialist policies of Turkey.

Chapter Seven

Internationally Active Player Narratives: Countering the National Security State Master Narrative with References to Universal Norms and Turkey's New International Image

In the previous chapter on the great country (GC) counter-narrative, it has been argued that the new foreign policy elite produced certain narratives about Turkey's history, its geography and its role in the international system through the utilization of Turkey's historical and cultural assets and its role in the reconciliation of the West and the East. These challenging narratives not only confront dominant national security state narratives but also they serve as conceptual basis on which Turkey's national security and defence policy is constructed.

This chapter delves into the narratives produced with references to universal norms, regional cooperation, free trade and soft power. The internationally active player (IAP) counter narrative finds its sources not in Turkey's past and its inherent cultural traits but in universal norms and concepts. The main purpose of this counter-narrative to cultivate a new international image for Turkey and hence a new global role in international politics. In the section on political narratives about the past, the discursive practices to re-conceptualize the Sèvres Treaty as a political lesson rather than a syndrome are identified. Put differently, how do elites in Turkey accommodate the Sèvres Treaty into their narratives without invoking a sense of fear or a traumatic memory? In this sense, Turkey's new international image and the AKP's aspiration to make Turkey active in its region and all around the world played a significant role in the change in narratives about the Sèvres. The section on narratives about neighbourhood probes into the new narratives that aim to facilitate regional cooperation. That section explores the translation of erstwhile threats and risks into partners and opportunities owing to the economic and political urge to enhance cooperation between Turkey and its neighbours. The last section is devoted to explaining the promotion of an international role for Turkey as a soft power that employs its economic, social and diplomatic powers in order to acquire the status of a global actor. The section elaborates on the practices of framing and conveying Turkey's international role as a global actor featured in the

narratives about international politics. In other words, the last section asks what it means for Turkey to be a soft power and act like a global actor.

7.1. Overcoming the Sèvres Syndrome and Old Fears

Despite the fact that Turkey was never colonized, the Sèvres Treaty representing the final blow that ended the more than six hundred years old Ottoman Empire has been a constant reminder of Western policies to economically exploit and politically control the Ottoman land since the early 19th century. As discussed in chapter 5, the Sèvres syndrome, or rather the national security syndrome, is generally associated with the Kemalist elite within the military and civilian bureaucracy (Jung 2003). Göçek (2011: 99) asserts that the Sèvres Syndrome has evolved to “a paradigm to sustain their [the state establishment] political power and control over the social and economic resources of the state. However, as another author maintains that the Sèvres Syndrome is a paranoia frequently used “to explain world events and to justify various Turkish national failures” (Guida 2008: 49). In this sense, the Sèvres syndrome cuts across ideological divides among the elite and manifests itself differently in several ideologies. These references to the Sèvres at the cognitive level, in turn, made the Sèvres Treaty a cognitive pattern and a paranoia that permeates elite narratives. Thus, exploring different manifestations of Sèvres in Turkish strategic culture and the changing meanings of the Sèvres Treaty are imperative for the analysis of changing narratives in Turkish foreign and security policy. Because any attempt to challenge the national security state narrative was stifled by the national security syndrome built upon the pathological narratives about the Sèvres Treaty and Turkey’s geography.

The Sèvres syndrome is not an outcome of one single isolated event, namely the Sèvres Treaty, it actually represents the final episode in a sequence of events that culminated in the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. In this regard, the Sèvres syndrome is a narrative through which the Turkish state elite create their own narratives about the Ottoman past. Hence, the Sèvres Syndrome is as much a traumatic memory as it is a way of imposing certain meanings onto the Ottoman history. Not only does this syndrome generate a sense of betrayal and distrust about Western powers and Turkey’s neighbours, it is also used to negate the Ottoman past and condemn the policies of the Ottoman

statesmen whose mistakes precipitated the signature of the Sèvres Treaty and the eventual collapse of the Empire. The signature of the Sèvres Treaty by Ottoman statesmen has been considered as the peak of external actors' plots to divide the Ottoman Empire while it also represents the nadir of the Ottoman Imperial system as the Ottoman government at the time agreed to sign such a treaty that would the country.

Drawing an analogy between what happened when the Sèvres Treaty was signed and the present day situation made the people whoever refer to this analogy more influential in deciding what is threat to Turkey or what is not. Establishing a link between the demise of the Ottoman Empire and the circumstances in which the traditional state elite found themselves in the aftermath of the Cold War served for the maintenance of the discursive dominance of the national security state master narrative in the post-Cold War era. It not only invoked a sense of fear to gather the support of the society it was also a way of disregarding policies that were in conflict with the established narratives.

One of the main concerns of the Turkish state elite had been finding a way to tackle the national security syndrome. Given the unfavourable conditions of the post-Cold War era it was not easy for narrative entrepreneurs to challenge the Sèvres Syndrome. A nation-wide discussion on the concept of national security occurred in relation with the developments in Turkish-EU relations towards the end of the 1990s. Political actors empowered by the EU became more outspoken critics of the state establishment and the national security state narrative.

Cem, in an interview given on 17th December 1999, drew attention to the possible repercussions that the Turks would have to face in the case of a failure of Atatürk's initiatives to found a nation-state:

As in many other revolutions and fundamental social transformations, such as the French Revolution, the Soviet Revolution, [our] Republic, too, had to split up with its past. Separating from the past is a necessary thing – at least for a brief period of time – for every revolution because otherwise no revolution can survive. The Republic is a significant transformation, it is a revolutionary change. [Therefore], it had to break up with its past for a certain period. Turkey and the republican regime left behind this phase and problems. [...] We need not stuck with the past. Atatürk did not separate our past from our present. This is an

incomplete way of describing and understanding him. The definitive characteristic of Atatürk's revolutionarism is that: Atatürk is the leader who thwarted Western Europeans attempts to open up an unwanted trajectory in Turkey's long journey in history and thereby causing an irreversible rupture in the history of Turkey. Ultimately, he is the leader who united Turkey's past and present. During and after the First World War, the primary objective of Western Europeans was to condemn Turkey to the dustbin of history by invading the Turkish land and imposing the Treaty of Sèvres [on us]. They aimed to create a gap between Turkey's past and present. [...] Because he was a revolutionarist, Atatürk drew a line between the past and the future in the circumstances of revolution; however, he did not let the rupture, which Western Europe strived to create, occur in [Turkish] history (Cem 2009: 247-248).

By pointing to an alternative past that Turkey would have lived through after the First World War, Cem, in fact, tries to justify the policies of early Republican politicians not only on the grounds of revolutionary necessities but also on the grounds of a danger of likely Western partition of Turkey. Narrating the history through 'what if' questions is one way of creating temporal others. Cem's narrative suggests an alternative trajectory in Turkish history that could have been opened up unless the founding fathers of Turkey had failed to establish the Republic. Temporal others such as an imaginary Turkey dismembered and colonialized by the West did and probably will never exist. However, such imaginary 'what if' type of others enabled Cem to fill the logical gaps in his approach to establish a coherent storyline within his narratives about the Ottoman history and the Republican era. Having said that, although Cem retrieves the Sèvres Syndrome to justify Atatürk's policies in the early years of the Republic, yet his reference to the Sèvres Treaty is different from traumatic narratives about the past in the way that he does not try to invoke a fear created by the Sèvres syndrome to justify his policies and actions in the present day.

In Cem's narratives, Sèvres is neither a syndrome nor a heuristic tool to interpret the present day politics. Rather, it is a linguistic tool that gives conceptual power and provides narrative consistency while explaining and justifying Atatürk's policies. This is why, Cem refrains from producing a narrative that would establish a link between the situations faced by the present day Turkey and the time when the Sèvres was signed.

Cem's narrative is not an attempt to resurrect the fears associated with the Sèvres. On the contrary, he condemns the Sèvres Syndrome and avoids any practices of associating contemporary Turkish foreign policy with the historical instances Turkey had to face in the aftermath of the First World War.

When talking about Turkey-EU relations, Cem denounces Euroscepticism and the Sèvres syndrome. He expressed his views as such: "Do not think that the EU is acting hostile and pursues a hidden agenda towards Turkey. Certainly not! In essence, the EU is friendly" (Cem 2009: 78). For Cem, the problem between the EU and Turkey is caused by the predominance of short-term interests of EU member states and the general principles of international politics, i.e. interests dictates behaviours. Cem further stresses that behaviours and policies of some EU member states should not be viewed as signs of hostility towards Turkey (ibid.: 79). Rather, their behaviours are the outcomes of rational calculations to maximize their own national interests. He contends that the main problem is the conflict of interests between Turkey and the West rather than the past experiences. Based on his diagnosis, Cem suggests that relations with the West must rely on common interests rather than a paranoia about or an obsession with the West (ibid.: 76-77). One can argue that Cem not only dismisses the Sèvres syndrome that aggravates mistrust about Europeans among the Turkish elite, he also purports to re-define Turkey-EU relations on mutual interests rather than mutual fears and distrust.

The public debate steered by the speech given by Mesut Yılmaz in August 2001, the then leader of Motherland party, exemplifies the early impact of the accession process on Turkish politics in the post-Helsinki era. In his unprecedented speech, Yılmaz referred to the "national security syndrome" and questioned the influence of the armed forces on domestic and foreign affairs and criticized their threat-conscious security-first approach (for a comprehensive analysis see Cizre 2003). Yılmaz underlined that in order for Turkey to continue on the path to EU membership the EU-demanded reforms had to be adopted by the TGNA as soon as possible.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ "ANAP lideri Mesut Yılmaz: Türkiye'nin durumundan biz sorumlu değiliz"[Leader of Motherland Party, Mesut Yılmaz: We're not responsible for the situation Turkey in today], Ntvmsnbc.com, 4 August 2001. Retrieved from <http://arsiv.ntvmsnbc.com/news/97935.asp>. (Accessed on 10 August 2012).

In a similar vein, Davutoğlu, in his book *Strategic Depth*, describes the Sèvres Treaty as a “bottleneck” which the founders of the Republic had to go through. According to Davutoğlu, this bottleneck occurred at one point in the past and had been overcome. Hence, for him there is no need to live with the paranoia of Sèvres, yet the Turkish elite should not forget severe lessons learned during the demise of the Ottoman Empire. He writes:

Remembering the Sèvres and *knowing* what happened at the time is meaningful, if it enables us to assess with a common sense our weaknesses and mistakes throughout the course of events that culminated in the signature of the Treaty of Sèvres. Otherwise, if it pacifies us and invokes a sense of mental submissiveness at the psychological level, which consequently causes a defensive attitude, it certainly hinders our power and paves the way for new Sèvres-like treaties in the future (Davutoğlu 2001:61, emphases added).

Davutoğlu considers the Sèvres Syndrome as a mental weakness that renders Turkey an introvert country with a low self-esteem. For him, present day Turkey can neither be defensive nor isolated. In his re-definition of the Sèvres Treaty, Sèvres is the end-product of an accumulation of weaknesses and mistakes done by the Ottomans before the Sèvres. Even though Davutoğlu did not explain what kind of mistakes that the Ottoman statesmen had done culminated in the collapse of the Empire, his interpretation is less traumatic than the ones offered by the national security state master narrative. In his narratives, the Sèvres Treaty and the demise of the Ottoman empire are not traumatic memories but they are historical lessons to be learned.

Davutoğlu (2001: 504) discusses that Turkey’s relations with the EU are profoundly affected by the Sèvres Syndrome to the point that any negative response from the EU is considered as the revival of schemes of the Western imperialism on Turkey, while any positive step from the EU creates euphoria among the Turkish elite about Turkey-EU relations. He then suggests that Turkey needs to find the right balance between the two extreme reactions to the EU. While Turkey should demonstrate its political will to democratize even in the absence of EU incentives, Europeans should be more considerate with regards to Turkey’s negative experiences with the Western powers (ibid.: 515).

Similar to Davutoğlu, yet much more bluntly, Gül stressed that Turkey has to get rid of fears and traumatic memories. In a speech given at the OIC meeting in Sana, Yemen, Gül defended reforms in Turkey and urged Middle Eastern countries to implement reforms. His main argument was that Middle Eastern societies were in urgent need of democratic reforms and the politicians should put aside their fears and biases about democracy, human rights and liberal values.

We no longer regard the calls for reform as an *ill-intentioned outside interference*, aiming at derailing our stability and security, nor do we approach them with fear and hesitation. Instead, we consider them a domestic necessity and a remedy to cure our domestic illnesses (Gül 28/06/2005, emphasis added).

However, Gül in one of his addresses to the TGNA as foreign minister employed the great country argument while suggesting that Turkey should not to be governed by fears and insecurities.

Surely, we have to be poised to act against the secret schemes on the destiny of our country. I'm not implying that we should ignore such schemes; but I would like to underline that it is unfair for Turkey as a great country to be forced to live with a syndrome like that (Gül (AKP) 2005 v.105, s.38, p.37).

The diplomats interviewed by this author have a common conviction that Sèvres and Lausanne are two sides of the same coin; however, they added that one should draw lessons from Sèvres but never let the past determine today's foreign policy.⁴⁶ When posed with a question on the implications of the Sèvres Treaty for the present day foreign policy, all diplomats whom this author interviewed reckoned that the influence of Sèvres in contemporary foreign policy making in Turkey is minimal, if not nil. For instance, a senior official, who was serving in Brussels at the time of interview, emphasised the lessons Turkish diplomacy draws from the Sèvres Treaty, but he also indicated that those lessons can in no way be associated with the Sèvres Syndrome, because even the Cold War mentality long disappeared from the corridors of the

⁴⁶ Interview with a senior official at the Secretariat General for EU Affairs, Ankara, 11.05.2010 and a senior diplomat at the Turkish Embassy in Belgium, Brussels, 13.09.2010.

Ministry as the circumstances change quite rapidly.⁴⁷ He added that the ministry is able and quick enough to adapt to the new circumstances while continuing to take lessons from history. For some AKP deputies, Turkey, under AKP governments, is more self-confident than ever to overcome such fears, thereby for them Turkey should not let unpleasant memories of the past tarnish Turkey's renewed international image.⁴⁸

Nevertheless, the Sèvres Syndrome is still alive among some circles of elite even though its influence seems lingering. One of my interviewees objected to the conceptualization of Sèvres as paranoia or syndrome. He said Sèvres was a "reality" rather than paranoia that has to be neither forgotten nor disparaged.⁴⁹ He also noted that when someone reads the minutes of the Lausanne Conference the traces of the Sèvres mentality can virtually be found in every remark and intervention made by Western delegates. Another interviewee raised similar arguments about the Sèvres Treaty.⁵⁰ Hasret Çomak, former military officer and professor in Kocaeli University, and Giray Saynur Bozkurt, associate professor at Sakarya University, reckoned that the Sèvres Syndrome has no impact on contemporary Turkish foreign policy, yet they added that there might be Europeans who still think that the signature of the Lausanne Treaty was a mistake.⁵¹

Another interviewee was of the same opinion that within the circles of Western elites there remains some opinion leaders and politicians who claim that the Lausanne Treaty was a mistake, which needs to be corrected and replaced by another international treaty. However, he also underlined that such kind of biased beliefs about the Lausanne Treaty have been articulated only by some marginal groups in the West and thus far they have failed to receive a firm support from mainstream politicians and the public in general.⁵² Hüseyin Pazarcı told this author that as long as the ideals of these marginal groups in the West are kept away from mainstream politics, the Sevres will not be able

⁴⁷ Interview with a senior official at the Turkish Embassy in Belgium, Brussels, 13.09.2010.

⁴⁸ Interviews with AKP deputies Ruhi Açıkgöz, Ankara, 15.04.2010, Mehmet Sayım Tekelioğlu, Ankara, 16.04.2010, Nursuna Memecan, Ankara, 04.05.2010.

⁴⁹ Interview with Ercan Çitlioğlu, head of the Center for International Security and Strategic Research at Bahçeşehir University, İstanbul, 14.03.2011.

⁵⁰ Interview with Oğuz Oyan, CHP deputy, Ankara, 20.04.2010.

⁵¹ Interview with Hasret Çomak, professor at Kocaeli University, Kocaeli, 09.03.2011. Interview with Giray Saynur Bozkurt, associate professor at Sakarya University, İstanbul, 25.03.2011.

⁵² Interview with Faruk Sönmezoglu, professor at İstanbul University, İstanbul, 11.03.2011.

to occupy the discourses of mainstream politicians or the intellectuals in Turkey.⁵³ Ali Engin Oba, a retired ambassador, pointed out the reason why the Sèvres Syndrome persists in Turkish politics:

I am a historically conscious person. I think that since the West couldn't get what they wanted in Lausanne, they still have an intention to carry through what was envisioned in the Sèvres Treaty. [...] The Sèvres Syndrome is actually fed by the conflicts in Turkey's neighbourhood. As long as these conflicts remain unsolved, we will always be concerned about them. [...] However, I think that the impact of the Sèvres Syndrome will eventually fade away if Turkey becomes stronger, develops its democracy and maintains peace and order at home.⁵⁴

The sense of fear prevalent in the narratives of the Turkish elite apparently lingers in Turkish politics. Since Sèvres is defined in opposition to Lausanne, it still possesses a high potential to evoke a sense of existential threat to Turkey. One CHP deputy highlighted that Turkey has to be vigilant about any initiatives that is against the "letter and spirit" of the Treaty of Lausanne given the fact that other post-World War One treaties such as the Treaty of Versailles had never been entirely implemented and abolished altogether by the Second World War, yet Lausanne is the only treaty that remains valid and still in force since the First World War.⁵⁵

The Sèvres syndrome is a reification of not only the fears, suspicion and dislike about Western great powers but also the sense of inferiority, defeat and submissiveness vis-à-vis Western superiority. As put by one of the interviewees, Turkish political culture has long been oscillating between two extreme types of Occidentalism: Euro-scepticism and pro-Europeanism.⁵⁶ The roots of Turkish Occidentalism stem from the dichotomy of admiration and loathing of everything about the West. According to another interviewee, the Sèvres trauma became embedded in Turkish politics due to the protracted collapse of the Ottoman Empire that lasted more than a century. The more lengthy the collapse the deeper and wider those fears ingrained into the strategic culture

⁵³Interview with independent deputy Hüseyin Pazarcı, Ankara, 16.04.2010. Note that Pazarcı joined the CHP in the summer of 2010.

⁵⁴ Interview with Ali Engin Oba, retired ambassador, Istanbul, 31.03.2011.

⁵⁵ Interview with CHP deputy Oğuz Oyan, Ankara, 20.04.2010.

⁵⁶ Interview with Çiğdem Tunç, an expert at The Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB), Ankara, 07.05.2010.

of Turkey.⁵⁷ Thus, it is not that the Sèvres Treaty on its own is a traumatic experience but it is rather creating narratives about the last century of the Ottoman Empire and its collapse at the end of the First World War through references to great power schemes on the Ottoman Empire and through a sequence of events that are believed and narrated to have culminated in the Sèvres Treaty.

On the other hand, a few interviewees stressed that the Sèvres Syndrome is an emotional reaction that hinders the development of a Turkish foreign policy that is cognizant of today's realities rather than being obsessed with the past.⁵⁸ An AKP deputy, Suat Kınıklıoğlu told this author that

Turkey's self-esteem has built up in the international arena and our view about such bad historical experiences has been changing. No one abroad approaches us with the Sèvres Treaty in their mind. Turkey will get rid of these fears as long as its self-confidence increases and it further integrates with the world.⁵⁹

For some of my interviewees the Sèvres Treaty is a politically-laden historical experience which is commonly used and continuously reproduced in domestic politics by certain elites to engulf the opposition to their actions and policies. By evoking the fears of Sèvres, the state establishment used to criticize the dissenting opinions for their allegedly submissive and naïve approach towards the West and Turkey's neighbours, which weakens Turkey's strong position and distorts its international image as an unyielding state against the demands of third countries in the international arena. This link between Sèvres and the contemporary issues in Turkish foreign policy functions as a securitizing and de-politicizing practice that silences the dissident voices.⁶⁰ The traditional elite used to look for reasons behind the failure of their policies or the causes of internal tensions outside Turkey. As one AKP deputy pointed out, this was the safest

⁵⁷ Interview with a senior official at the Secretariat General for EU affairs, Ankara, 11.05.2010.

⁵⁸ Interview with Hüseyin Pazarcı, Ankara, 16.04.2010 and interview with Faruk Sönmezoğlu, professor at Istanbul University, Istanbul, 11.03.2011.

⁵⁹ Interview with Suat Kınıklıoğlu, an AKP deputy, Ankara, 06.05.2010.

⁶⁰ Interviews with retired ambassador Yalım Eralp, İstanbul, 15.03.2011 and Suat Kınıklıoğlu, an AKP deputy, Ankara, 06.05.2010.

way to overcome the domestic opposition against and criticisms about security-oriented policies.⁶¹

AKP politicians have subverted the securitizing impact of the Sèvres Syndrome by attributing different meanings to it. New meanings of the Sèvres Treaty have paved the way for further de-securitization of Turkish foreign policy. For instance, the AKP elite denounce the Sèvres Syndrome to counter the opposition to their policies. Describing the Sèvres syndrome as a pathological memory has enabled them to insulate their policies from the criticisms of opposition parties. This, in turn, has harnessed the public support and has ensured the continuity of AKP policies. Take this quote from Hasan Murat Mercan, an AKP deputy and former head of parliamentary committee on foreign affairs:

They say we gave concessions on Cyprus. Dear Colleagues, I ask you now ‘What are those concessions?’, ‘What concessions have been given on Cyprus? [...] Nobody, on any occasion, told me that we had given concessions during the EU accession process. Will give, might give! Yeah Right! We have heard enough of them. Turkey cannot be governed with such fears. Turkey needs not to be shut to the outside world (Mercan (AKP) 2006 v.141, s.39, p.815).

In this quote, the AKP deputy counters the criticism that their government gave concessions to Europeans and Greek Cypriots in order to start the accession negotiations with the EU. He first argued that criticisms about their Cyprus policy are only originating from the opposition party. He then boldly underlined that nobody is of the same opinion with the opposition party. In this way, the AKP elite categorically deny criticisms to their policies because such criticisms are considered fear-driven and thus unfounded. He dismissed those fears on the basis that they are old-fashioned and threadbare excuses. What is more interesting is that Mercan dismissed such criticisms on two grounds. He argued that the criticisms offer nothing new, they had been uttered many times before and thus they are old-dated. He, thus, claimed that there is a narrative necessity to hear new stories. He also drew a thick line between their policies and the policies offered by the main opposition party by putting the two into opposing camps. While he likened CHP’s policy to the fear-driven and old-dated approach of the

⁶¹ Interview with Suat Kınıklıoğlu, an AKP deputy, Ankara, 06.05.2010.

traditional elite, he contended that AKP policies are more sustainable and in line with the circumstances of contemporary world politics.

In conclusion, one can argue that using fears and insecurities invoked by the Sèvres Syndrome does no longer give conceptual power to the opposition. On the contrary, the negative meanings attached to Sèvres have provided the AKP elite with a conceptual benchmark and a reference point to define their policies against it and help them to replace old policies with policies of the AKP. Put differently, narrative entrepreneurs of AKP governments discursively reversed engineered the Sèvres syndrome in order to challenge the clout of the state establishment and their traditional security-oriented narratives in general and narratives about Cyprus in particular. Eventually, these changing narratives about Turkey's past fears and insecurities also laid the foundations of Turkey's new approach to its neighbourhood, which aim to promote a problem-solving approach and regional cooperation.

7.2. Promoting Good Neighbourly Relations and Regional Cooperation

The idea that Turkey has to engage with its neighbours on the basis of amicable relations and mutual trust was nothing new. It has existed in elite discourses in one way or another since the foundation of Turkey, starting with Atatürk's policies and the signature of regional agreements and pacts between the new born Turkish Republic and its neighbours in the south, namely Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan and its neighbours in the Balkans, namely Greece, Romania and Yugoslavia.

There had been some political endeavours to promote economic cooperation and good neighbourly relations between Turkey and its neighbours starting from the late 1980s and in the 1990s. Turgut Özal and Süleyman Demirel, leaders of right-wing Motherland Party (ANAP) and True Path party (DYP), respectively, who both served as presidents of Turkey, championed deepening relations with Turkey's environs. Özal initiated the establishment of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) in 1992 whereas Demirel was supporting relations with the Turkic states in Central Asia and he was also an advocate of the Stability Pact for the Caucasus, which was signed in 2000.

İsmail Cem championed a new political and diplomatic strategy for Turkey in order to engage more with its neighbours. His strategy based on Bülent Ecevit's idea of adopting a region-centred foreign policy approach.⁶² After Cem became foreign minister in 1997, he implemented this new region-centred foreign policy. Cem listed the main principles of Turkey's multi-regional and multi-faceted foreign policy in an article published in 1997.

As a cornerstone of our multi-faceted foreign policy, we wish to further relations of friendship and co-operation with the Islamic world. Respect for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity and co-operation based on mutual interests constitute the bedrock of our policy towards our neighbours. Non-interference in internal affairs, border security and co-operation against terrorism are among the other criteria. It is in our tradition to respond generously to those who approach us in a friendly manner. It would be but natural that unfriendly behaviour should receive the response it deserves (Cem 1997: 3)

Cem's initiatives pioneered a new era of relations with Turkey's neighbours, especially with Greece. His first priority was to demonstrate Turkey's resolve to deal with the protracted problems between Turkey and Greece. Furthermore, even after the debacle with Syria over the PKK in 1998, Turkey tried to re-establish good relations with Syria. Despite Cem's efforts, due to the lack of strong government and Turkey's infamous reputation for resorting to military threat throughout the 1990s, the development of cooperation between Turkey and its neighbours proceeded at snail's pace. Most of those personal aspirations and initiatives vanished into air after a while due to the lukewarm attitudes of traditional foreign policy elite and especially the military. The inclination towards an economic cooperation in the early 1990s did not result in a shift from political and military concerns to economic objectives. Ankara backtracked from promoting economic relations in its vicinity whenever security was chosen over welfare (Çelik 1999: 157). Turkey's outlook remained security-oriented and Turkish governments, by and large, followed suit the military regarding issues pertinent to national security throughout the 1990s (Terzi 2010: 59). Due to Cold War geopolitics and the resurrection of the Sèvres Syndrome in the 1990s, the Turkish state elite put

⁶² Bülent Ecevit, "Bölge-Merkezli Dış politika [Region-Centred Foreign Policy]", *Yeni Türkiye Dergisi*, Mart-Nisan 1995.

security above good neighbourly relations, hence concepts like regional cooperation and positive narratives that could support Turkey's engagement with its environs never became overarching elements within Turkish strategic culture.

Turkish narratives about its neighbourhood were replete with threats and dangers stemming from its neighbours such as Armenia, Greece, Syria and Iraq in the 1990s. These countries were mentioned as main threats to Turkish national security in official documents such the National Security Strategy Paper (NSSP) in early 1990s. In contrast, in the latter revised versions of the NSSP published in 1999 and 2001, Turkey's neighbours were not named as threats anymore. Rather than neighbours, the Kurdish separatist movement and the fundamentalist ideologies were listed as existential threats to Turkey and its republican regime (Aydın 2003a: 174). By not naming any country as threats to the security of Turkey, the Turkish state elite laid the discursive foundations of Turkey's enhanced relations with neighbours. That said, the Turkish state elite remained suspicious about neighbouring countries that are believed to be harbouring and giving political and economic support for separatist and fundamentalist terrorist organizations.

According to the White Book⁶³ published by the Ministry of National Defence (MND) in 2000, the major security issues are "regional conflicts, ethnic conflicts, and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, religious fanaticism, and terrorism" (MND 2000). Moreover, unconventional threats such as organized crime, illegal arms trade, illegal immigration and drug smuggling are included for the first time in a defence document. The threats of the 1990s, i.e. threats stemming from neighbours and reactionary Islamic movements, were reported as being downgraded in the revised version of the National Security Policy Paper in 2010.⁶⁴ Owing to the confidentiality of the document, information about what is written in the document is scarce and it only relies on reports of several journalists. According to media reports, the new document, which was, by and large, written by the civilians, does not mention fundamentalist groups as threats to the national security. However, it is reported that a significant space

⁶³ To my knowledge, there has not been a revised White Book since 2000.

⁶⁴ A cursory search in the internet revealed that despite government's demands to revise the NSPP the government and the chief of the general staff could not agree on the revised parts of the NSPP in 2005 and due to the leaks to the media the revised version of the NSPP was reported to be shelved for a while. Mehmet Ali Kışlalı, "MGSB Çatlağı [Rift over the NSPP]," *Radikal Daily*, 09.07.2005.

was devoted to the analysis of the PKK and separatist movements. Of these reported revisions the most progressive and radical ones are cyber threats, global warming and climate change, natural disasters, aging population of Turkey and the emphasis on energy security. The new document is reported to underline the importance of human rights, democracy and cooperation with third countries on the basis of mutual respect and non-interference to domestic politics.⁶⁵

The importance of solving existing problems with neighbours were emphasised in the White Book published in 2000. Finding a solution to Turkey's protracted problems with neighbouring countries is considered vital for a peaceful environment from which Turkey can benefit. The quotation from the White Book published in 2000 summarizes Turkey's approach to relations with its neighbours, which needs to be quoted at length:

The preservation and protection of the vitally important values of the state formed by the constitutional order, national existence, integrity and national interests and contractual rights included in the definition of the concept of National Security against all kinds of internal and external threats directed to Turkey forms the legal parameters of Turkey's National Security Policy. The principle of "Peace at Home, Peace in the World" included in the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey, is an inheritance from the Atatürk period. With this principle, Turkey has determined her national goals as to establish peaceful principles, to provide stability and to realize socioeconomic development in an environment of peace in her region. Turkey aims to reach these goals by determining the policies within the framework of the principles of solving the existing problems with her neighbors in a peaceful environment and by mutual negotiations, with respect for the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and equality of rights and without interfering in the internal affairs of each other. Despite Turkey's peaceful approaches, the resolution and determination of Turkey to provide national security to prevent and repel all sorts of assaults directed at her by countries continuing their hostile attitude, is the accepted common denominator of all the governments in Turkey and her national security system has the resources and capabilities for providing this (MND 2000: 32-33).

⁶⁵ Lale Kemal, "MGSB'de Gül'ün yazdığı bölümler [Parts of the NSPP written by Gül]," *Taraf Daily*, 10.02.2010; "Religious communities, Iran are no longer top threats in 'Red Book'," *Today's Zaman*, 29.06.2010. Metehan Demir, "O gizli belge hazır [That secret document is ready]," *Hürriyet Daily*, 04.10.2010.

The White Book also lists the objectives of Turkish national defence policy as such:

To contribute to peace and security in the region and to spread this to large areas, to become a country producing strategy and security that could influence all the strategies aimed at its region and beyond, to become an element of power and balance in its region and to make use of every opportunity and take initiatives for cooperation, becoming closer and developing positive relations (MND 2000: 34).

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) describes the primary objective of Turkish foreign policy on its official website as such:

Turkey has in fact become a leading country that works to expand the sphere of peace and prosperity in its region; generate stability and security; help establish an order that paves the way for prosperity, human development and lasting stability. Rise of Turkey to such a prominent position is also a consequence of Turkey's solid stance that vigorously seeks legitimacy and of the belief that its own security and stability can only be achieved through the security and stability of the region. Behind this stance lies intensive efforts and major initiatives intended for the creation of an environment of sustainable peace, security and tranquillity in the region and beyond (MFA 2012).

A conflict averse and cooperative language in the discourses of elite gained a new momentum during the AKP governments. Deviations from old policy orientations with regards to neighbours have been justified by the AKP elite by pinpointing the significance of becoming the centre of attraction in the region for other countries. Gül highlighted this point:

We need to overcome the mental obsession that *we are surrounded by enemies*, and instead we must embrace a healthier mentality that rests on a belief that we are a major actor in *fostering cooperation and dialogue in our neighbourhood* (Gül (AKP) 2003 v.36, s.34, p.30).

In the past, Turkey was perceived as a part of the problems, but today without doubt Turkey has become a part of the solutions. [...] Turkey, which pursues policies in peace with its history, society and the world, and its positive stability-provider approach, [...] has become the centre of attraction (Gül (AKP) 2005 v.105, s.38, p.276).

In an interview given to *El Ahram*, an Egyptian daily, Gül answered a question about the probability of a rivalry between Ankara and Cairo in the Middle East. He outright objected to the question and stressed that even the slightest possibility of a rivalry between the two countries do not exist. What is more interesting for our analysis is that he raised his objection on the grounds that such a talk of rivalry between the two countries is the product of a lingering Cold War mind-set in the region (Gül 20/07/2010). In a televised interview broadcasted on a Turkish new channel, Gül expressed his opinion about the nature of regional politics and the need to purge the remnants of the Cold War strategic mentality.

We have to solve the problems if we desire to contribute to the happiness of the people living in this region. There are some countries whose mind-sets and behaviours are reminiscent of the Cold War. Turkey is not one of them. Turkey is the part of stability. Turkey generates stability and order. Everyone knows that. At first they were sceptical. They were asking what if this is just a Turkish propaganda, what if Turkey is just doing this to please them. However, after a while they understood that it is not the case. Turkey is not intended to take advantage of domestic problems of its neighbours. On the contrary, we help them to solve their problems (Gül 04/01/2010).

In an interview given to a Turkish periodical, Yaşar Yakış, former foreign minister and an AKP deputy, also underlined that Turkey is not a balancing actor in the Middle East anymore, it is rather a “stabilizing factor” and a “constitutive element of stability” in the region (Yakış 14/08/2006).

As discussed in the previous chapter, the AKP elite including president Gül have categorically rejected any criticism about their policies by ascribing negative meanings to the Cold War era and to the strategic thinking that hinges on the notion of zero-sum game power politics. The above quote from Gül illustrates the way the new state elite justify Turkey’s activism in the Middle East by rebuking the Cold War mentality. This is not only a rhetorical way of displaying good intentions by characterizing their policy outlook as anti-Cold War. But also this seemingly rhetorical stance on the issue of the lingering Cold War thinking in regional politics enables the AKP elite to craft a new role

for Turkey in regional politics, that is the provider of stability and centre of attraction. In a speech given at the Royal Institute of International Affairs, London in July 2003 and in an interview given to *Der Spiegel* as the president of Turkey in 2008, Gül underlined that Turkey's neighbourhood policy is built upon a problem-solving approach.

I believe that it is Turkey's responsibility to work towards the goal of a good future for the Middle East. This is not only based on economic and political interests. There is also a humanitarian and moral imperative rooted in history. We believe that time has come to start exploring multilateral regional cooperation projects in the Middle East. Regional cooperation would improve the functioning of free market economies, joint investments and initiatives. Removing obstacles to communication and transportation would help generate more trade and production for firms of all sizes (Gül 03/07/2003).

Our focus in foreign policy is problem-solving. We believe that we can solve both our problems and the regional issues. Turkey is able to contribute to peace and stability in the Middle East (Gül 19/10/2008).

In one of his televised addresses to the nation (*Ulusla Sesleniş*), Erdoğan made a case for Turkey new activism in the region by mixing normative elements with an emphasis on national security and interests of Turkey as such:

As a trustworthy actor in the region [the Middle East] Turkey will not shy away from playing a role in the development of a peaceful regional order. This is so vital not only for bringing back the peace to the region but also for the security of Turkey. To this end, we not only further develop relations in every field with our neighbours but we also want to be the facilitator of the peaceful resolution of long-standing regional disputes (Erdoğan 22/01/2004).

Erdoğan, first, indicated that Turkey is considered as a reliable and trustworthy actor by the Middle Eastern countries. By positioning Turkey as a trustworthy actor he made a normative argument. He then argued that Turkey must assume the role of facilitator and mediator in order to contribute to the solution of protracted conflicts of the region. As a result of positioning Turkey as a reliable actor, Turkey's facilitator role is positioned as something desired and demanded by conflicting parties, in addition to something vital for Turkey's security and interests.

Davutoğlu also puts emphasis on regional cooperation. For him, Turkey's responsibility to involve in the region is not only due to the need to preserve the status quo across the region for the sake of Turkey's security but also due to AKP's motive to develop economic and political relations with Turkey's neighbours. Davutoğlu, during a parliamentary debate, clarified his ideas about regional politics and integration. He stated that

We started with the 'zero problem policy'; from now on we have another concept, 'maximum integration.' We aim to achieve maximum integration with all our neighbours. To this end, we have designed new mechanisms and political structures that never been used before (Davutoğlu (AKP) 2009 v.56, s.35, p.116).

The idea of transcending national borders has been reframed as a way of re-establishing geographically natural and historically normal relationships.

We want to have a visa-free regime, the free movement of people and goods in the Balkans, Caucasus, Central Asia and the Middle East. This will provide new business opportunities for Turkish entrepreneurs and it is a process of *normalization of history* [in the region] (Davutoğlu (AKP) 2010 v.87, s.37, p.78, emphases added).

Apparently, Turkey has turned away from its reluctant attitude towards its neighbourhood and has assumed a responsible and a facilitator role in order to create solidarity with Turkey's neighbourhood. As a result of this, the AKP elite put more emphasis on regional cooperation that goes beyond initiative to improve state-to-state relations. In the traditional narratives, Turkey's bilateral relationships with its neighbours are always represented by dyadic metaphors of capital cities of the two countries, such as Ankara-Athens, Ankara-Damascus, Ankara-Tehran, Ankara-Baghdad or Ankara-Tbilisi. As the below quote from a speech given by Davutoğlu at Oxford University in 2010 illustrates, these metaphorical dyads do no longer represent the nature of bilateral relationships between Turkey and its neighbours. Ankara was replaced by Antep and Trabzon whereas Aleppo and Batumi became substitutes for Damascus and Tbilisi. Throughout the 1990s Turkish politicians, even Cem's multi-faceted and multi-regional foreign policy approach, failed to develop a discourse that

could transform bilateral state-to-state relations into city-to-city, region-to-region relations.

The Turkish-Syrian border is not natural at all. Throughout the centuries, there was not such a border between Turkey and Syria or between [Gazi]Antep and Aleppo. Antep and Aleppo, they were “twin cities” for thousands of years but suddenly there was a border. First, it was a national border between Turkey and Syria then it became a border of two poles during Cold War and we planted landmines to protect our borders. The Turkish-Georgian border is not a natural border either. Batumi and Trabzon had never been so alienated from each other except for the Cold War era. Mosul and Diyarbakır, Arbil and Mardin, they were never alienated from each other throughout centuries (Davutoğlu 01/05/2010).

The metaphorical shift from Ankara to Antep and from Damascus to Aleppo is a discursive innovation that helps narrative entrepreneurs like Davutoğlu to challenge traditional narratives, replace old practices and consequently, facilitate regional cooperation between Turkey and its neighbours. The question remains whether this discursive innovation has actually fostered new diplomatic practices at the sub-state level incorporating civil society and local administrations into diplomatic activities.

To sum up so far, new political narratives about history and geography have been produced by the AKP elite to gain support for their foreign policy. By producing new narratives, countering old narratives, the AKP exerted a discursive influence that not only made possible the establishment of new diplomatic practices and pro-active foreign policy approach but also empowered the AKP elite and their discourse coalition at the domestic and international levels.

7.3. Soft Power and Narratives about Turkey’s International Actorness

The recent literature on Turkish foreign policy abounds with discussions on Turkey’s changing international role (Oğuzlu 2007; Altınay 2008; Altunışık 2008; Aras and Görener 2010; Fotiou and Triantaphyllou 2010). In spite of the burgeoning scholarly attention to Turkey’s actorness and visibility on the international stage, the literature does not engage with the discursive construction of Turkey’s role among the foreign

policy elite because most of the authors begin their analysis with a predefined perception of the international role assumed by Turkey as a soft power. Thus, the literature on Turkey's actorness suffers from predefined conception of role as soft power. This thesis is purported to fill this gap in the literature by looking at the discursive practices of the AKP elite that have been constructing a so-called soft power role for Turkey to assume in regional and world politics.

Perceptions of third countries as to how Turkey is a soft power are of great importance for gaining legitimacy and credibility in the eyes of others (Oğuzlu 2007: 83-84). However, credibility does not only derive from being in possession of material capabilities, institutions and means to act like a soft power, but it also rests on the discursive practices of Turkish politicians to produce the necessary stories to define the contours of their soft power. Therefore, this section elaborates on the discursive construction of soft power in the narratives of the AKP elite.

As discussed earlier, during the Cold War Turkey was acting out a role of staunch ally in the Western alliance. The state identity, at the time, was more or less defined by its flank state role within the narratives of American grand strategy. As the Cold War receded, Turkey's international role had undergone two transformations. The first transformation was that the Turkish state elite saw a political vacuum in its vicinity created by the collapse of the Soviet Union. This political vacuum was considered a historic opportunity for Turkey to proclaim a regional leadership. The second transformation was pertinent to Turkey's role within the Western security structures. Turkey's Cold War role of flank state disappeared and its geopolitical importance in Western security structures was questioned by the West.

Turkey's international role based on its military power and its geopolitical location seemed to be incompatible with the realities of the 21st century and regional politics. In the 1990s, the dilemma was that even if the traditional state elite were willing to seize the regional opportunities and sell their model of state, society and economy to its environs, their efforts did not produce the results they wanted because the Turkish state elite fell short of adopting new concepts and ideas that would help them to carve out a new role in the post-Cold War era. The Turkish elite were much more concerned

about finding a way to remedy the declining geostrategic importance of Turkey in the eyes of the West. Moreover, despite numerous attempts to facilitate good neighbourly relations with their neighbours Turkey was seen as a coercive power, a security-consuming country in the region. In order to re-establish their country's geopolitical importance, some elites in Turkey dug deep into history and sought new narratives about Turkey's place and role in international politics and in its changing environment. In the post-Cold War era, self-awareness of its own history and cultural and ethnic ties with its environs created new roles for Turkey such as acting as if the big brother of the new born Turkic republics in Central Asia or as a model of democracy and liberal values for the regional countries to imitate.

During the 1990s, Turkey's main foreign policy objective was promoting stability in its environment, but after Turkey became a candidate for the EU membership and with the international attention drawn to the Middle East after the 9/11 incident in the US, Turkey embraced the initiatives to bring democracy and liberal values to the Middle East. In order to bolster Turkey's low prestige due to democratic deficiencies at home and due to bilateral conflicts with regional countries the Turkish state elite came to terms with the EU political conditionality and adopted several democratic reform packages between 1999 and 2005. This period also witnessed the face-lifting of Turkey on the international stage by assuming a soft power role built on the image of Turkey as an "emerging market economy" or a "trading state" (Kirişçi 2009) which required economic integration between Turkey and its environs as well as a stable and peaceful neighbourhood where economic growth and democratization can be pursued uninterruptedly (Oğuzlu and Kibaroglu 2009: 584).

Towards the end of 1990s, finding a new positive role that can accommodate Turkey into the emerging security structures of Europe turned out to be the main pillar of the multi-dimensional and multi-regional foreign policy of Turkey that was defined through its Asian as well as European identity (Cem 2001). Cem pioneered the idea of Turkey as becoming a "global actor" thanks to its political and economic connections with Europe and Asia.

In his speeches, Cem accentuated the term “world state” quite often in order to attribute an international character to Turkey and propose a global role to play accordingly. While answering the question of what Turkey would do to develop its relations with its neighbours, Cem underlined, in an interview given in the early days of his tenure as foreign minister, that Turkey would pursue a multidimensional foreign policy because “our purpose in foreign policy is to become an effective ‘world state’ within the regional and global orders” (Cem 2009: 20).

According to Cem, Turkey must become a country that “consumes, processes and with its added value exports” not only goods and raw material but also by virtue of being a “terminus” and a “destination” country Turkey must become the place where everyone comes, meets and exchanges goods, services and ideas, and where any goods and ideas can be found or produced (Cem 2002: 5). Cem’s multi-regional foreign policy outlook entails a role for Turkey not in Europe but in the new so-called Eurasian Order. He, thus, conceives of Turkey as a country where not only certain goods are produced and natural resources are transited through Turkey but also as a country that attracts ordinary people in foreign countries. The depictions of Turkey as an economic hub, terminus or a conduit country were also adopted by the AKP elite.

The EU accession process came into play at this point where the candidacy status of Turkey allayed third country concerns about Turkey’s activism in regional politics. At first glance, being a candidate country appears to be an obstacle for Turkey to pursue its own regional policy. This conviction is valid as the EU expects from candidate countries to align themselves with the EU policies. Furthermore, the EU demands good neighbourly relations. The use of military instruments and any hostile behaviour that triggers a tension between the member states and a candidate country as well as between a candidate country and its non-EU neighbours are condemned by the EU. Thus, for a candidate country some of its foreign policy instruments, i.e. the threat or use of force, are either ruled out or at least become high-cost options. On the other hand, candidacy status is regarded as a testament and an indication of the developments in Turkey’s domestic politics and its foreign policy. Furthermore, it is seen as a guarantee that Turkey cannot pursue an imperialist and aggressive foreign policy as long as the

accession process continues. Thus, the EU accession process not only compels Turkish foreign policy to adopt European principles and policies but also it indirectly bolsters Turkey's image in regional politics by virtue of its disciplining power.

Emphasis on Turkey's soft power did increase since Turkey was recognized as a democratic and liberal country whose prospect for becoming a full member of the EU was on the rise towards the end of 1990s. Crafting itself a soft power role also tilted Turkey to a more global approach with its increasing presence and activity in international organizations. The AKP elite embraced the liberal concept soft power and they have promoted Turkey as a soft power, which champions the principles of multilateralism, good neighbourly relations, free trade and international cooperation.

The AKP came to power with a foreign policy agenda to enhance regional cooperation and Turkey's presence in international organizations.⁶⁶ Most probably, Gül was the most active proponent of a soft power role for Turkey. The idea that Turkey's power can only be defined with references to the size of its army and its capability to use force and deter its opponents lost its grip on the discourses about foreign policy. Mehmet Dülger, an AKP deputy, underlined this point in his address to the TGNA. He said: "Within the new world order, Turkey can hardly find place on the basis of its geopolitical location but it can do that on the basis of its capabilities to design new policies" (Dülger (AKP) 2003 v.10, s. 56, p.15). In the parliamentary debates on the annual budget of the foreign ministry, foreign minister Gül defended the foreign policy of his government by arguing for the enhanced role of Turkey on a global scale.

In contemporary emerging world order, Turkey is perceived as one of the actors that can shape the dynamics of the 21st century. This [perception] does not only rest on our strategic and geographic location or our greatness and our military forces. Apart from these, the importance attributed by others to Turkey has increased owing to our success in blending traditional values with contemporary norms, our positive influence on spreading stability in our environment, in other words, owing to political initiatives to utilize our *soft power*, [which is] our great power. Up until now Turkey's image has been seen aggressive; now Turkey is a country whose power is acknowledged, who has a glorious past, who has a great

⁶⁶ The 2001 Party Programme of the Justice and Development Party, p.41.

potential and who aims to solve problems through communication and dialogue (Gül (AKP) 2004, v.70, s.39, p.442).

Turkey, which is at peace with its history, its people and the external world, can exert positive and stabilizing influence in a wider geography, this vividly demonstrates our soft power, by which I mean democracy and human rights, and this makes Turkey a centre of attraction. For instance, our country, owing to its initiatives and ideas such as the alliance of civilizations, has recently assumed a mediator and a facilitator role to play not only in its region but also on a global stage (Gül (AKP) 2005 v.105, s.38, p.276).

The idea of soft power is not only used at domestic politics. The changing perceptions of Turkey's place in the international system also facilitated the dissemination of soft power discourse and a more activist international role to play accordingly.

It is obvious that the international community has to better calibrate its responses, through a new balance of soft and hard power. And it is in light of these evolving parameters of the international system that Turkey feels itself well-poised to play an important role in addressing the challenges of the 21st century (Gül 07/06/2005).

Turkey's growing influences in the region, the variety of means and capabilities available to us, as well as our unique geographic location have increased our soft power substantially. And we are ready to project that soft power to help bring security, stability and prosperity to a multitude of geographies (Gül 08/02/2007).

Turkey's ever-increasing soft power is becoming one of its most significant traits, which we will continue to use to enhance regional and global peace. Turkey will continue to work toward a just and equitable global order in 2011 and beyond. This is a responsibility emanating from our history, geography, and the universal values that we hold (Erdoğan 2010).

The quotes above show us that the AKP elite associated Turkey's contribution to regional and international politics from the viewpoint of a soft power country whose designated objective is spreading security, democracy and economic development to "a multitude of geographies". Therefore, Turkey's soft power is not described as an asset for Turkey to maintain its national interests but the national interests are redefined through new narratives about the international system and Turkey's changing role. Gül complemented the great country narrative for Turkey with his emphasis on soft power in a speech given at Bosphorus University.

Turkish foreign policy is rapidly developing its *soft power* based on persuasion, incentives, leadership and being an example. As a matter of fact, our objective is to develop our soft power further. The ideal of a *great country* could only be met with such confidence (Gül 22/05/2004, emphases added).

The idea of mighty Turkey refashioned with a soft power has generated the discursive support needed for Turkey's new activism that hinges on the zero problem with neighbours policy. Gül has used this link between great country Turkey and a soft power Turkey quite often in his speeches especially before a national audience. It is not quite clear whether Gül places more importance on the ideal of great country or the development of Turkey's soft power. Put differently, is soft power used to justify the great country ideal or is the great country rhetoric a way of framing that helps him to tout Turkey's soft power policy at the national level? On the one hand, Gül's statement appears to be an instrumental use of the concept of soft power as a propaganda tool to overstate Turkey's power at the regional level. It helps narrative entrepreneurs to bolster the national esteem without building up military capabilities. On the other hand, Gül sounds as if he justifies the increasing use of soft power in Turkish foreign policy by rhetorically tying it to the ideal of great country. Soft power thus is not only a means for becoming great country but also an end in itself.

In the early years of AKP governments, AKP politicians were inspired by the EU and its global role as a civilian and soft power. On several international occasions, Gül as foreign minister, drew attention to the European integration project and named the EU as a global soft power. In his speech in the meeting of neighbouring countries of Iraq in

Kuwait, he underscored that regional cooperation in the Middle East similar to the EU is worth to work for.

Like Europe did after two world wars, we should draw our lessons from the successive conflicts and wars that constantly undermined our stability and well-being. With political resolve and inspiration, we can create our own multilateral framework for cooperation and security. We deserve prominent roles in these changing times, and are capable of assuming them (Gül 14/02/2004).

His speech at the 11th Europe Forum of BMW Herbert Quandt Foundation in Germany was also full of references to the EU's global responsibility and its "tactful" and "sensitive" diplomacy with regards to global issues. Gül praised the EU for being a centre of attraction for others and for being a source of inspiration.

Feelings of both continental and universal responsibility has dominated the process of European integration from the beginning. It should continue to be so. I think this has helped the European Union to acquire gradually and almost silently the quality of a soft power it is now operating with, both at home and abroad (Gül 18/11/2005).

In an article on the new Turkish foreign policy published in *Foreign Policy*, Davutoğlu named Turkey's soft power and civil-economic approach as the determining principles of Turkish foreign policy. According to him, a "visionary foreign policy", which is "consistent and systematic", needs to be complemented by a soft power.

The third methodological principle is the adoption of a new discourse and diplomatic style, which has resulted in the spread of Turkish soft power in the region. Although Turkey maintains a powerful military due to its insecure neighborhood, we do not make threats. Instead, Turkish diplomats and politicians have adopted a new language in regional and international politics that prioritizes Turkey's civil-economic power (Davutoğlu 2010).

What does soft power mean to the AKP elite in Turkey, then? In a speech given to the top brass and military cadets in Turkish War College, Gül highlighted the influence of strong economy, enhanced democratic standards and the role of cultural and social heritage alongside the advancements in technology and education as the indispensable elements of soft power (Gül 2010). In his address to the TGNA on the annual budget of foreign ministry,

Davutoğlu summed up Turkey's diplomatic, economic and cultural activities in the region as a way of displaying its soft power.

What are the fundamental strategic instruments to accomplish the global and regional peace? First, the most comprehensive way is enhancing the influence of our country, in other words our soft power, by resorting to diplomatic, economic and cultural means. In this context, Turkey recently has increased its influence, diplomatic, economic and cultural influence in the region (Davutoğlu (AKP) 2009, v.47, s.108, p.509).

The analysis of interviews done with parliamentarians and state officials indicates that there appears to be a consensus among the Turkish foreign policy elite, regardless of their ideological orientations, on the political objective to develop economic relations with neighbours.⁶⁷ In addition to the economic aspect of soft power, cultural and social relations in the form of tourism, sports and education were also highlighted by AKP deputies.⁶⁸ A senior diplomat noted that the popularity of Turkish soap operas and television shows is the simple but a very effective manifestation of Turkey's soft power in the Middle East. In addition, the Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT), a state-owned broadcasting corporation started to broadcast in Arabic. Another diplomat associated Turkey's rising influence in the Middle East with Turkey's enhancing cultural influence hence he described Turkey as a "producer of the popular culture"⁶⁹ in its vicinity.

İbrahim Kalın, advisor to the Prime Minister, underscored Turkey's objectives as a soft power in an interview by stating that "rather than state to state relations, it is more a question of improving people to people relations".⁷⁰ In line with this approach the visa exemption protocols signed between Turkey and Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Libya and Iran exhibit Turkey's resoluteness to facilitate transnational activities in the region. In order to increase the level of interaction among societies and between economies of the region new transportation projects were undertaken. For instance, the railway line built before

⁶⁷ Interviews with Hüseyin Pazarıcı (Independent-CHP), Oğuz Oyan (CHP), Onur Öymen (CHP), Ruhi Açıkgöz (AKP), Mehmet Tekelioğlu (AKP).

⁶⁸ Interviews with Suat Kınıklıoğlu, an AKP deputy 06.05.2010 and Nursuna Memecan, an AKP deputy 06.05.2010.

⁶⁹ Interview with a senior diplomat in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs 11.05.2010.

⁷⁰ Nicolas Birch, "A Neo-Ottomanism: Interview with İbrahim Kalın," *The Majalla*, 26 November 2009.

the First World War to connect Istanbul and Baghdad was re-opened in February 2010.⁷¹ Yaşar Yakış, in a newspaper article, defended the free visa regime with neighbours by arguing against the counter argument for the need to control national borders in order to stop terrorist attacks.⁷² Erdoğan, on the other hand, linked Turkey's new visa policy to historical realities and for him new visa policy was long awaited and thus it represents the normalization process between Turkey and its Middle Easter neighbours.

We [Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan] have not only lifted visas, we have eliminated the 100-year longing among our societies. Our people are embracing each other. Our businessmen are travelling freely. People of the region are benefiting altogether. The EU says 'Schengen'. Fine, why can we not do the same among ourselves? Why is this fear? It is inexplicable (Erdoğan 26/10/2010).

In 2011, Davutoğlu coined a new phrase at the third Annual Ambassadors' Conference of MFA. He defined Turkey's new role as "wise country". For him, Turkey is poised to act like a wise country whose voice is heard on the international stage, whose ideas are taken seriously and who acts proactively and produces alternative solutions (Davutoğlu 03/01/2011). He continues:

We are against any form of polarization, North-South or East-West. The essence of our visionary policy is that global order must be inclusive, participatory, equalitarian and all-encompassing. We are willing to be a spokesperson of such a global order (Davutoğlu 03/01/2011).

For Davutoğlu, Turkish foreign policy should no longer be a conflict-ridden and crisis-driven country. He then contended that Turkey would take its place as one of the planners/designers of the new world order (Davutoğlu 09/01/2010). He justified his vision by arguing that "people all around the world are expecting us to act like a wise country" (ibid.).

Davutoğlu, at the Ambassadors' Conference in 2010, produced a narrative by highlighting that if Turkey wants to become a proactive global player Turkish diplomats have to give up the role of "fire-fighters" who are used to extinguish crisis whenever it is

⁷¹ Jonathan Head, "Iraq-Turkey railway links re-opens," *BBC News*, 16 February 2010.

⁷² Yaşar Yakış, "Suriye ile vizesiz rejime nereden geldik?", *Radikal Daily*, 13.10.2009.

broke out, instead they should become “urban developers.” For him, diplomats as urban developers are able to create different visions about the future state of international politics. Only in this way, Turkey can prevent crises happening in the first place and consequently Turkey can become a contributor to as well as a creator of regional and international order. Davutoğlu also underlined that

Turkey, being in the centre of Afro-Eurasia (Afroavasya) of international politics, has been facing serious risks; nevertheless, it can gain much advantage from them if it finds way to benefit from its geography and historical legacy. Because our near abroad, i.e. the Balkans, the Caucasus and the Middle East, is fraught with crises it poses serious risk [to Turkey]. However, these crises can be turned into our advantage if we display an earnest aspiration – which we do – to contribute to the resolution of these crises (Davutoğlu (AKP) 2009 v.56, s.35, p.101).

This might sound too ambitious and an exaggeration of Turkey’s soft power which perhaps does not correspond to the realities in practice either, yet it sheds light on the discursive construction of Turkey’s international role by the AKP elite since such ambitious visions set the tone of discourse on national security policy throughout the AKP era.

Of course, one cannot help but wonder whether this rhetoric based on soft power has been embraced by other politicians and used in their discourses too. For an idea to take root in the discourse and eventually turn into an element of culture it has to be accepted widely and used by other political actors. To some extent one can find several usages of soft power by several high level statesmen such as Ahmet Necdet Sezer, former president between 2000 and 2007. In his speech to the cadets of Turkish War College, Sezer highlighted the significance of soft power.

September 11 attacks precipitated a new era. Since then, it has become obvious that brute force is not enough, winning the hearts and minds of [the people] is much more essential. The significance of soft power has increased (Sezer 12/04/2006).

The idea of utilizing Turkey’s soft power in order to solve the problems seems to spread to the military too. This indicates that the discursive construction of Turkey’s new role with references to its soft power capabilities has been permeated into the

discourse of the top brass. Yaşar Büyükanıt, a former chief of the general staff between 2006 and 2008, implied that Turkey can contribute to peace and stability in the Middle East through its cultural and social relations with neighbouring countries. He argued that “in order to reach a settlement for the problems in the Middle East, we need to utilize our emotional intelligence and put the humans before our policies” (Büyükanıt 2008: XVII). Büyükanıt was not the only chief of the general staff who stressed Turkey’s soft power. In a press conference given in Washington, İlker Başbuğ, a former chief of the general staff between 2008 and 2010, implied that Turkey’s soft power generates a fertile ground for cooperation between Turkey and the US in the Middle East:

The soft power of Turkey is certainly important for the Middle East. [...] Not only we are reckoning that Turkey’s soft power is a valuable asset that can contribute to the solutions of problems in the Middle East but also American officials are of the same opinion (Başbuğ 04/06/2009).

Başbuğ underscored the importance of soft power for the Western Alliance and NATO:

Wide spectrum of the newly emerging challenges could impose on the Alliance threats and risks, which are unusual to the military organizations. As NATO prepares to respond to such kind of threats and risks including social, economic, political and natural ones, it must recognize that it does not have the proper capacity to respond by itself to these challenges in an old fashioned way without having soft power (Başbuğ 21/06/2010).

As a matter of fact, the military has long been aware of the significance of socio-cultural relations and economic cooperation, yet the protection of Turkey’s independence and territorial integrity through deterrence and military force were predominant in their discourses (cf. Torumtay 1990; Güreş 1993). These two quotes from chiefs of the general staff notwithstanding, the military still prioritizes Turkey’s capabilities to deter any threats over the development of economic and social relations. For instance, in his speech at the Handover-Takeover Ceremony of the Chief of the General Staff, Işık Koşaner accentuated the paramount importance of acquiring military force to address the threats in case Turkey’s capabilities as a “smart power” fail to deter any threat (Koşaner 27/08/2010). It is highly likely that the idea of acting like a soft

power, i.e. facilitating cultural, social and economic relations, is no longer an alien concept for the military nor is it disregarded as being naïve. That said, due to the nature of their profession the military officers tend to emphasize the importance of military capabilities to protect Turkey's security and national interests.

Is Turkey's soft power free from criticisms? No. There are many scepticism about how Turkey actually applies its soft power. Criticisms can be grouped into three. In the first group, critics raise their concerns and doubts about AKP's application of soft power. For some, AKP's usage of soft power is built on religious motivations.⁷³ In my interviews with members of the main opposition party, they, too, highlighted the Islamization and Middle Easternization of Turkish foreign policy as a result of AKP's initiatives to enhance economic, social and political relations with the Muslim World and the Arabs. They also noted their doubts about solving problems that Turkey faces such as terrorist activity originating in Northern Iraq by relying on economic relations.⁷⁴ Öymen, for instance, concurred that developing economic relations with neighbouring countries is vital for Turkey, yet he stressed that one should not expect to fight against terrorism without resorting to military force. Another interviewee Edip Başer, a retired general, also highlighted a similar point. He told to this author that using soft power should never weaken Turkey's fight against terrorism.

What [measures] do you use as a soft power? Political [measures] are included, aren't they? Economic and social measures etc. You will of course take those measures. But if it means to accept all the demands of those people in the mountains, then [it means that] you are not actually fighting against terrorism. That means only one thing and that is you have already given up to the demands of a terrorist organization.⁷⁵

Ilker Başbuğ, in his address to cadets as the Commander of Land Forces in 2007, strongly criticized the views that Turkey should quit fighting against terrorism on the ground and should only take cultural, social and economic measures to address terrorism (cited in Çitlioğlu 2010: 107). One can conclude that when it comes to terrorism Turkish

⁷³ Faruk Loğoğlu, "Türk dış politikası-derenin doğrultusu?"[Turkish foreign policy-course of the river?], *Radikal Daily*, 29.01.2010.

⁷⁴ Interview with Oğuz Oyan, a CHP deputy, 20.04.2010; Interview with Onur Öymen, a CHP deputy, 28.04.2010.

⁷⁵ Interview with Edip Başer, 23.03.2011.

strategic culture is still dominated by a heavy-handed hard power approach. Its soft power capabilities are considered secondary importance or complementary to its use of force.

On the other hand, Şükrü Sina Gürel, a professor and former foreign minister, objected to labelling Turkey's soft power as a new element in Turkish strategic culture. He argued that soft power was used in the 1990s too. He also mentioned that Atatürk had sent assistance to Afghanistan and accepted Afghan students to receive higher education in Turkey even in such dire conditions.⁷⁶ In addition, a former ambassador underlined that Turkey was forced to apply soft power tactics since the developments in Iraq and the American presence there ruled out military options.⁷⁷ In other words, Turkey's soft power was instrumental in defending national interests and filling the regional vacuum with Turkey's political influence.

The last group of criticisms are clustered around the third country perceptions of Turkey's soft power. Oğuz Oyan indicated that Turkey's soft power might backfire if Turkey involves too much in the politics of the Middle East as the ruling elite in Arab countries are still wary of Turkish activism in the region.⁷⁸ According to Joost Lagendijk, former co-chairman of the Joint Turkish-EU Parliamentarians Committee, the use of soft power instead of hard power is welcomed by Europeans, yet domestic problems such as the Kurdish issue and the heavy-handed approach Turkey employs to address terrorist activities in its south eastern region are the litmus test for the credibility of Turkey's soft power. For him, Turkey, first and foremost, must settle its own domestic problems if it is to play a soft power role in the region.⁷⁹ In addition to these concerns, Dimitrios Triantaphyllou, a scholar in one of the universities in Istanbul, pointed out that the presence of Turkey's warships in the Aegean Sea and their patrolling in the Mediterranean Sea as well as the presence of Turkish troops in Cyprus are in contradiction with Turkey's soft power.⁸⁰ He argued that even a benign display of

⁷⁶ Interview with Şükrü Sina Gürel, 29.03.2011.

⁷⁷ Interview with Yalım Eralp, 15.03.2011.

⁷⁸ Interview with Oğuz Oyan, 20.04.2010.

⁷⁹ Interview with Joost Lagendijk, 17.03.2011.

⁸⁰ Interview with Dimitrios Triantaphyllou, 19.03.2011. I mentioned during the interview that those Turkish warships must be patrolling in the international waters, but Mr. Triantaphyllou insisted that

Turkey's military capabilities undermines Turkey's rhetoric of soft power. These last criticisms are pertinent to the application of soft power by Turkey rather than its rhetoric. Put differently, criticisms stress the gap between the words and deeds. Turkey is either accused of pretending to be soft power but in reality it does not act like a soft power. To sum up, the overall criticisms underline the mounting doubts over the nature and application of Turkey's soft power.

7.4. Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of recurrent themes and reiterated storylines within the parameters of the internationally active player counter-narrative. This third counter-narrative depicts Turkey as a global player. The adoption and promotion of universal values such as human rights, democracy and liberal market economy are supported in order to create an image of Turkey that actively supports and participates international organizations.

Table 7-1 Main Features of the Internationally Active Player Counter-Narrative

| Narratives | Recurrent Themes | Evaluation | Positioning |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Narratives about the past | Fears and insecurities | Overcoming fears | Self-confident |
| Narratives about geography | Economic development and regional cooperation | Integrating with neighbourhood | Stabilizer and problem-solver |
| Narratives about international politics | New world order, global peace and welfare | Being active and visible at the global level | Soft power, emerging global actor |

Table 7-1 illustrates the recurrent themes, the ways in which the AKP elite evaluate Turkey's foreign policy and the positions they create for Turkey in the international arena. The narratives about past experiences resemble lessons rather than a romantic longing and excessive praise for the past. This counter-narrative tells positive

Turkey should refrain from even patrolling in the Aegean Sea if it wants to live up to its new image of soft power.

stories about the Ottoman era though not as romantic as the great country counter-narrative. In the GC counter-narrative, history is romanticized and glorified, negative images about the past are suppressed so that a consistent narrative that is based on cultural superiority and historical lessons can be interwoven with national interests. The IAP counter-narrative, on the other hand, considers negative experiences as lessons-learned. As discussed in the first section, the traumatic experience with the demise of the Ottoman Empire is translated into a lesson that the Turkish foreign policy elite take into account but they are not taken hostage by that particular experience. Hence, the past is neither built on a romantic nor a traumatic understanding. As the narratives about the past are more pragmatic rather than traumatic, they are inclined to pursue a problem-solving approach. Therefore, first of all, Turkey is conceived as a country which avoids conflicts in the first place and aims to solve its own problems. Second, Turkey seems to be willing to assume a facilitator role in regional initiatives and ready to take part in humanitarian activities such as disaster relief assistance, economic assistance and contributions to peacekeeping operations. Lastly, projections about the future of Turkey are less bleak compared to the national security state master narrative while it is less hubristic compared to the great country counter-narrative.

New narratives about Turkey's geography are produced with references to regional cooperation and integration. In this regard, erstwhile enemies and rivals are depicted as Turkey's partners while Turkey's neighbourhood turns into a favourable place which offers plenty of political and economic opportunities. Because the IAP counter-narrative incorporates international norms and values, it is more comfortable with globalization, the idea of free trade and liberal market economy and the political objective of regional integration. In accordance with its globalist tendency, a soft power role for Turkey is crafted within elite narratives.

It should be noted that the great country counter-narrative and the internationally active player counter-narrative are so intertwined that it is sometimes difficult to distinguish them. Both of them challenge national security state narratives to foster new activism in Turkish foreign policy. Where the internationally active player differs from the great country is in its sources, its recurrent themes and the underlying justifications

for enhancing Turkey's role in regional and international politics. Internationally active player (IAP) narratives resemble GC narratives in the way they both challenge NSS narratives and the negative narratives about Turkey among the European elite. However, the internationally active player narrative is different from the great country narrative for Turkey as it incorporates universal norms and liberal ideas.

Conclusion

International relations cannot be reduced to maintaining national security, maximizing economic and military power, but it is also concerned with cultural differences, shared past experiences, mutual interests and common values. The articulation of national interests hinges on the ways in which history, geography and international politics are defined and constructed. Rather than taking the anarchic nature of the international system and the unequal distribution of material capabilities among states as the very essence of international politics, the recent literature places greater importance on the influence of international norms, differing imaginations of geography and perceptions of threats. The actions and policies of states cannot be understood without grasping the domestic meanings of “the international” and the ways of interactions of political actors with “the international” at the “international”, “domestic” and “regional” levels.

Departing from these arguments, this thesis is set out to identify changing narratives about international politics among the Turkish state elite. In this thesis, the changing characteristics of Turkish strategic culture were explored with the identification of and an analysis of the contestation between one master narrative, i.e. the national security state (NSS) master narrative and two counter-narratives, i.e. the great country (GC) and the internationally active player (IAP) counter-narratives. Throughout the thesis, the question of how discourses about security and defence have changed was addressed by applying a narrative analysis.

The literature on Turkish foreign policy abounds with discussions about how conflicting ideologies have been competing with each other. Ideologies such as Kemalism, Islamism and Westernism inculcate an inflexible closed-circuit of beliefs and ideas that compartmentalize political actors into different ideological camps. The puzzle was how we could explain the change and continuity in Turkish strategic culture without falling into the Kemalist/Islamist ideological divide. To solve the puzzle, I compared and contrasted different narratives and the dialectical relationship between the dominant master narrative and counter-narratives in the field of foreign and security policy. In this

way, instead of dichotomous explanations whose main premise rests on the idea of paradigm shift in Turkish foreign policy, I was able to analyse the usage of similar concepts with different meanings that evoke a sense of continuity with the old narratives while deep down producing new narratives. As alluded to in the theoretical chapter, working with narratives helps us to comprehend how politicians tell different stories even if they are coming from the same ideological background or how politicians recount particular events similarly even if they are seen as members of rival ideological camps. Unlike ideologies, narratives are more flexible and accommodative and thus different concepts, ideas and events can be used by political actors to create counter-narratives and tell more appealing stories. Because of these reasons this thesis maintains that narrative analysis helps us to solve the puzzle of how the Turkish state elite were able to tell new (counter-) narratives about Turkey's past, its geography and its place in the international system by referring to Turkey's cultural and historical heritage as well as using universal norms and liberal concepts in their discourses.

Research Questions and Findings:

How did this study address the research question put forth in the introduction? Going back to the main research question, this study traced the changing discourses of the Turkish foreign policy elite during the AKP era by looking at narratives told about the Ottoman past, Turkey's neighbourhood and Turkey's role as an emerging global actor in the international system. The main research question was "*What sorts of counter-narratives have been produced by the AKP elite to challenge the traditional dominant narratives about Turkish foreign policy?*" Throughout this study, it has been argued that the AKP elite in Turkey have produced new narratives in an effort to confront the old established narratives, which were dictated by the national security state master narrative. The dominant narratives of national security state were countered by two new narratives of the AKP elite, i.e. Turkey as "great country" and Turkey as "internationally active player". There can be other counter-narratives that are simply not wide-spread or influential enough to confront the NSS master narrative; however, my main intention in this thesis has been to identify counter-narratives produced by the AKP elite in opposition to the master narrative of national security state.

The great country counter-narrative romanticizes the past as it finds the present day disappointing and the Turkish state underachieving. In this great country narrative, Turkey's present and future are envisioned through positive narratives about the Ottoman era and its legacy for the Turkish republic. Eventually, this narrative objects negative stories about the Ottoman era and champions an idealized vision of the future; thereby it dictates a national mission to accomplish in the international arena. Furthermore, the empirical analysis showed that a positive link between present day Turkey and the Ottoman era has been also used by the AKP elite to spread Turkey's political, economic and social influence in its neighbourhood. The central tenet of the great country counter-narrative is that the AKP elite consider themselves as the implementers of a hitherto neglected role, namely the role of reconciling the Western civilization with Eastern civilizations, conferred upon their country by virtue of its historical and cultural ties with both sides. This role also helps the AKP elite to boost their country's self-esteem to act like a regional power which not only has a say on everyday regional issues but also it is able to exert a decisive impact on regional politics.

In the internationally active player narrative, Turkey aspires to be an internationally recognised and respected actor relying on its economic and diplomatic powers. The sources of this counter-narrative are found outside Turkey within a wide array of universal norms such as human rights, democracy and liberal ideas such as free trade, economic integration and international cooperation in addition to the efforts of the AKP elite to create a new international image for Turkey that will not only boost Turkey's self-esteem but also will make Turkey more visible and active in the international arena. The empirical analysis demonstrated that the IAP narrative counters the master narrative of national security state by constructing an identity for Turkey based on a collective memory which is free of fears and mistrust about the West; a geopolitical thinking which aims to develop regional cooperation through problem-solving; and an international role which is built upon the diplomatic, social and economic power of Turkey rather than its military prowess.

Why is the first counter-narrative called "great country" the second counter-narrative called "internationally active player"? This is mainly because both titles are the

most suitable titles for each counter-narrative. The title of “great country” is suitable for two reasons: First, this depiction of Turkey as great country has been frequently used by the AKP elite. Quotations from AKP politicians on pages 175 and 179 are two examples of how the AKP elite use the term great country. This is the main reason why I choose this term to identify one of the counter-narratives. Second, the idea of great country is preferred over the term great power because the empirical analysis shows that the AKP elite in their speeches oftentimes confront the bipolar politics of two superpowers during the Cold War by explicitly denouncing great power politics. Hence, the term great power is usually associated with negative experiences during the Cold War by the AKP elite. Furthermore, while the AKP elite intend to benefit from Turkey’s cultural and historical legacies, which Turkey inherited from the Ottoman era, the AKP elite are also cautious about using any words that might invoke negative memories about the imperial power of the Ottoman state. Therefore, the AKP elite refrain from using terms such as Neo-Ottomanism or great power when they define Turkey and its contemporary foreign policy. I would totally agree that the expression great country is an example of euphemism. The AKP elite prefer to use the expression of “great country” in place of the term great power in order for not being criticized for pursuing a neo-imperial foreign policy. However, the title of great country is still analytically valuable and more accurate to identify the first counter-narrative that I found in the discourses of the AKP elite. The second counter-narrative, on the other hand, is called “internationally active player” because this title, I think, encompasses several other expressions used by the AKP elite such as global player, global actor, world state, soft power and wise country. The common idea that bounds all these different terms is the emphasis on universal/global ideas and norms as well as the emphasis on the new international image of Turkey that is actively participating in global affairs within the existing international organizations.

One cannot help but wonder why there are only great country and internationally active player narratives. There can be different interpretations and narratives. Turkey as neutral country or isolated state narratives can be a good starting point. For the time period of this thesis such different narratives are subsumed by the abovementioned narratives. For instance, the neutral country narrative never gained enough support to become strong enough to create its own vocabulary, symbols, practices and institutions.

Even though Turkey did not take part in the Second World War and it is widely accepted that Turkey remained “actively neutral” (Deringil 1989) virtually until the very end of the war, the neutral country narrative for Turkey based on the experiences of Turkish politicians during the Second World War failed to hold on the discourses and institutions of Turkish foreign and security policy during the Cold War. This was also true for the post-Cold War period even when circumstances were much more conducive for promoting a neutral country narrative. Turkey remained committed to the Western alliance and the national security state master narrative reigned over national security policy. This does not mean that the neutral country narrative will never permeate into Turkish strategic culture. At some point in the future it may or may not depending on the meaning ascribed to neutrality in accordance with the flow of events in international politics.

This thesis demonstrated that a discursive change in Turkish strategic culture can be observed in the changing narratives about Turkey’s past, its geography and its international role. When it comes to delineating political narratives about the past experiences I first probed into the notion of the Sèvres Syndrome which invokes certain insecurities for the Turkish elite as it connotes to the suspicion that Turkey is an object in the power games of Western countries. The positive stories about the Ottoman Empire have been produced by a group of new political elite whose main purpose is to present counter-narratives against the negative stories about the Ottoman era. The previously repressed memory of the Ottoman era is now associated with positive if not romantic narratives, whereas traumatic narratives that used to establish links between the Sèvres Treaty and present situations facing Turkey have been silenced by the AKP elite.

As for narratives about Turkey’s environment, the new narratives accentuate the importance of enhancing Turkey’s influence in the neighbourhood. While explicating political narratives on Turkey’s relations with its environment, my focus was on the changing notion of geopolitics and the varying depiction of neighbourhood. Thus, previously dominant narratives, which used to depict neighbours as threats or distant cultural and political entities to Turkey, have been confronted with new narratives that

either highlight the importance of cultural and historical ties or that promote regional cooperation and integration between Turkey and its neighbours.

Changing narratives about history and geography have also laid the foundations for new narratives about Turkey's international position and its role in the maintenance of international order. In this regard, Turkey's role in the international system has been redefined as the facilitator of the West-East reconciliation owing to Turkey's cultural and historical heritage. Turkey has also been described as a soft power owing to its increasing influence in world politics thanks to its economic capital and diplomatic capabilities. New narratives about the nature of international politics are based on a civilizational interpretation of the international system. New narratives have been produced to carved out a new international image for Turkey. In these new narratives Turkey is portrayed as a soft power and a global actor that is concerned with regional and global issues.

Turkey's international image benefitted from the opening of the accession negotiations. Because in the eyes of third countries, the EU's decision to start negotiations with Turkey was a recognition of the developments in Turkish democracy and an approval of the Turkish model of modernization. From then on, third countries and particularly Turkey's neighbours expected Turkey to behave like a European country. Such a new image of Turkey enabled policy-makers to seize regional opportunities. It also opened a window of opportunity to transform erstwhile conflicts into new areas of cooperation between Turkey and its neighbours. By triggering and supporting the change in Turkish domestic politics and by recognizing – or at least not forthrightly expressing any objection – the new narratives told by the AKP elite, the EU more or less legitimizes the transformation of Turkish strategic culture. In addition, the EU functions as a security valve for third countries in Turkey's neighbourhood against their concerns about the revival of aggressive and imperialist policies of Turkey. Nevertheless, even though Turkey's European credentials were highlighted with the opening of accession negotiations, this new international image of Turkey did never depict Turkey as an EU-compliant candidate country.

Had it not been for the reforms demanded by the EU regarding the civilian control of the military, different narratives about Turkish foreign policy could not spread widely and penetrate into official texts. This institutional change owing to EU's political conditionality has empowered civilians and their narratives vis-à-vis dominant narratives in Turkey. The empowerment of political actors during the accession process has facilitated cultural change in Turkey since new elite became able to tell their own stories and to advocate their points of view with regards to security and defence. However, this empowering impact of the EU need not to produce pro-EU narratives among the AKP elite. What is warranted by the EU impact is that the dominant master narrative, i.e. the national security state narrative, has been challenged profoundly by new narratives, whether pro-EU or not, which are promoted by a new empowered elite owing to EU reforms.

The conclusion drawn from the empirical analysis is that Turkish strategic culture has become a hybrid culture in which negative stories about the Ottoman past and Turkey's relations with its neighbours have been replaced by a mixture of regional power/great country narrative with a global image cultivated by civilizational elements and universal ideas and norms. Turkish strategic culture is no longer a strategic culture of national security state (cf. Larrabee 2010), nor "flank state" nor "middle power" (cf. Hale 2002), it is rather becoming a different kind of strategic culture which is built upon the combination of narratives of great country and narratives of internationally active player. It is not crystal clear whether great country narratives are transitional narratives in which case they provide a smooth path for the transformation of Turkish strategic culture from its national security state character to a more international one. Or rather is the great country counter-narrative a competing narrative on its own that challenges the national security state and internationally active player narratives?

Contributions to the Literature:

This thesis contributed to the literature on security studies. The concept of strategic culture can be a bridging concept between security studies and social constructivism (Greathouse 2010: 64; Meyer 2011). The thesis offered an analytical framework for

analysing strategic culture through narratives and the mechanism of narration. In my opinion a narrative-centred approach to strategic culture can serve as a bridge between discourse analysis and security studies. Stories are the main components of collective memories. Individual or collective experiences of a particular political community are told in such a way that they become collective narratives. These collective narratives, then, turn into official narratives when they are endorsed by the state elite through state institutions. Therefore, comprehending narratives about history, geography and international politics of a particular political community is the key for understanding the strategic culture of the same political community (see Freedman 2006; Howlett 2006; Johnson 2006; Gray 2007). Furthermore, a narrative-based understanding of strategic culture also enables researchers to examine non-state actors and their strategic culture by looking into public narratives.

The aim of narrative analysis is not to give a detailed analysis of policies and state behaviours; it, however, enables the researcher to make sense of today's policy choices and have an idea of possible circumstances for the future policy-making process (see Wæver 2005: 35). "Narratives do not just recount temporally order events; they also convey attitudes, feelings and emotions about them" (Georgakopolou and Goutsos 2004: 45). This is why narratives are more than a way of framing issues and policies, in fact, they essentially constitute those issues and policies (Carr 1986: 65; Browning 2008: 68) by bringing the past into identity politics of the present as much like a collective memory of past experiences as it is part of present identity and a future emerging identity (Browning 2008: 48; 55).

The thesis also highlighted the role of narrative entrepreneurs in confronting dominant narratives, creating new narratives and forming discourse coalitions (see Hajer 2005). Official narratives are challenged by narrative entrepreneurs and their discursive practices to circumvent dominant narratives. This, in turn, facilitate a change in strategic culture if new narratives are incorporated into political debates and eventually if new narratives are internalized by state officials. In addition to this, the main contribution of this thesis to the literature has been its dialectical understanding of cultural change. What has been argued throughout this thesis is that cultural change is stimulated by the political contestation between dominant and counter-narratives. Cultural change can be

triggered by internal and external factors, yet the outcome and the substance of change is shaped by the contestation between official and its counter-narratives.

The main contribution of this thesis for the literature on Turkish foreign policy has been the exploration of political narratives regarding the foreign and security policy. A narrative-centred analysis of the cultural change in Turkish strategic culture is offered by analysing the political contestation between the national security state master narrative and the two-types of counter-narratives that tell different stories about Turkey's history, geography and international role. The empirical analysis demonstrated how different narratives told by the AKP elite transcend ideological divides and stimulate a cultural change in foreign and security policy. Hence, this thesis goes beyond the widespread ideology-centred approaches in the literature (cf. Özkeçeci-Taner 2005; Robins 2007; Kösebalaban 2011). This thesis with its narrative-centred approach is a contribution to the burgeoning studies on Turkish foreign policy with their interpretivist discursive approach (e.g. Bilgin 2005; Yılmaz and Bilgin 2005; Bilgin 2007a; Bilgin 2009; Yanık 2009; Yanık 2011).

Limitations of the thesis:

What are the limitations of the thesis? It is a valid criticism that narratives are all confined to the realm of rhetoric implying nothing but rhetorical action of Turkish policy-makers to re-brand the image of their country. Nevertheless, even a rhetorical action can lead to rhetorical entrapment as argued by Schimmelfenning (2001). In contrast to the rhetorical entrapment argument, the added value of narrative analysis and narrative theory is that unlike rhetoric narratives entail a constructed/plotted causality. Where narrative differs from rhetoric is that narratives do not only describe but also evaluate events and actions, and hence form a narrative explanation based on causal plotment. Political actors as story-tellers do not just tell stories about events and actions occurred during the flow of history of international politics. What they do while telling stories is actually to provide justifications for their further actions while producing and re-producing political positions for themselves in the present through the characters portrayed in their narratives. In narratives, meanings are ascribed to events

and actions while political actors are portrayed as political characters in narratives that are positioned against other political actors. Hence, politicians as story-tellers aim to shape public opinion by assembling different events, actions and actors in accordance with a plot. Therefore, rhetorical entrapment is the outcome of narratives that produce a (pseudo-) causal yet a meaningful relationship between what is said and what is done by political actors.

The second problem is the question of whether it is possible to generalize from the findings of this thesis and put forth some general arguments that can be employed to other countries. First of all, it is not the aim of this study to provide a general framework applicable to other cases and countries, yet narrative analysis certainly is applicable to understand the transformation of strategic culture in other countries since different master narratives can always be found in other cases. Second, this thesis provides only one reading of political debates on the change in Turkish foreign policy due to the fact that the source material that this thesis draws on only includes texts produced by a sample of state elite rather than including the total population of texts available. Moreover, the media and the public usually produce their own narratives which may contribute to or challenge narratives told by politicians. Particularly, the media outlets are the places where a researcher can find political narratives in abundance. That is a significant gap which needs to be filled in by further research. However, such undertaking is outside the scope of this thesis.

Another crucial criticism that needs to be addressed is whether by demonstrating the emergence of new narratives one can argue that there is a cultural change in Turkish strategic culture. Gray, for instance, cautions us that cultural change cannot happen in a short period of time. Even an analysis on “a decade by decade basis” over exaggerates and dignifies cultural change (Gray 1999: 52). Such a warning makes sense if only culture or cultural elements are conceived as common knowledge shared by virtually all members of a political community. The logical conclusion drawn from such a static and monolithic understanding of culture is that culture can only change in the long term or is replaced by another culture when a majority of group members accept the new elements and internalize them. Nonetheless, this internally coherent and externally unchallenged

notion of culture already has been challenged in the literature (see Neumann and Heikka 2005; Neumann 2010).

The narrative approach of this thesis, on the other hand, argues that a change in culture is initiated by the change in discourses, which are constantly modified and transformed by what agents say, do or experience. A dialectical understanding of culture and cultural change is the core argument of this thesis. When it is conceptualized as discourses and narratives, culture becomes internally conflicted and externally contested due to the fact that dominant narratives are always in contradiction with counter-narratives. These internal and external “contradictions and ambiguities themselves work to produce political order, stimulate change, or generate leverage in negotiations” (Wedeen 2002: 720). At this point, it should be noted that there is always a tension between dominant narratives and counter-narratives but not necessarily an oppositional one (Andrews 2004: 53). Wibben also stresses that counter-narratives do not necessarily challenge dominant narratives in their entirety as they may reproduce some aspects of dominant narratives. She writes: “what is seen to counter a trend, on close analysis, functions to sustain it” (Wibben 2011: 56). For instance, the empirical analysis of this thesis has shown that even though great country narratives challenge nationalistic, militaristic and westernist approaches of the national security state master narrative, great country counter-narratives also reproduce the state-centric or at least state-led approach in the making and speaking of foreign and security policy in Turkey.

What are the causes of this cultural change? This thesis primarily focused on domestic actors and their discursive practices to challenge the dominant narrative at the national level. The EU accession process exerted a significant influence on the transformation of Turkish strategic culture. Nevertheless, the overlapping time frame between Turkey’s EU accession process and the development of new narratives do not indicate a causal relationship. The new narratives are perhaps better understood as contingent upon the enabling impact of the EU. This thesis may guide the future research in their efforts to elucidate the issue of causality and the impact of the EU in cultural change. This thesis stressed that European practices of rebuking the political influence of the Turkish military provided an external reference point for domestic

actors in Turkey to counter-identify themselves with the national security state master narrative. However, a different kind of tension between those new domestic actors and the EU has mounted due to European discursive practices of othering, which excludes Turkey from Europe on the basis of religious and cultural differences. Since the AKP's second victory in the 2007 general elections, and due to the EU's ambiguous policy towards Turkey, the AKP elite have adopted more self-assertive narratives that rest only on the image of Turkey as great country. The declining appeal of Europe for Turks has been amplified by the increasing dominance of the great country narrative. This does not mean that the great country narrative is anti-EU, yet compared to the internationally active player narrative it appears to be less pro-EU.

The last problem is the issue of objectivity and reliability of the empirical analysis in this study. Neumann (2008: 64-65) contends that even though discourse analysis necessitates a cultural competence, researchers who might somehow become "home blind" faces a risk of losing their objectivity due to too much familiarity with the culture he/she is trying to understand. A researcher cannot totally isolate him/herself from the existing discourses and narratives. However, there is a consensus among the scholars of discourse analysis that "a well-developed sense of empathy" (Crawford 2004: 25) and familiarity with the cultural context is necessary for comprehending discursive practices and their effects on political actors and policies. This is why, I try to be as objective as possible, yet I do not intend to contend that my analysis is definitive. Perhaps it is better to view it as an illustration of recently emerging discourse analyses on Turkish strategic culture and narratives of the Turkish state elite.

Further Research and Concluding Remarks:

Further research can be undertaken in three areas: The first one is research on the dissemination of narratives among the public and how the public engages in telling, spreading and producing different narratives in domestic politics. This obviously entails a broader approach to data collection including newspapers, surveys, fictional novels as well as art works, TV series and films. The second direction for further research is

towards a comparative analysis. The question of how these differing narratives resonate with the regional dynamics remains unanswered in this thesis. Furthermore, the link between the narratives and policies needs more clarification and the mechanisms should be elaborated more thoroughly as this thesis did not explore those links and mechanisms between narratives and policies. Lastly, the research should be spurred onto comparing and contrasting global narratives told by other states or non-state actors alike. In this vein, it would be interesting to see the differences and similarities between historical and geopolitical narratives of contemporary nation states descendant of empires such as Great Britain, France, Russia, Iran and China (see Walker 2009: 495). Such an undertaking, of course, entails comparative research design and a huge amount of time and resources, yet comparative studies are promising because they will help to revise and refine our narrative approach to culture by testing it on other cases.

Will the language of national security be restored in the future? The recent revolutions in the Arab countries are a litmus test of the new narratives promoted by the AKP elite. The Arab Spring tested the main premise of the great country counter-narrative. Why could the Turkish government not foresee the Arab Spring if Turkey as touted by the AKP elite, possesses cultural links and historical experiences in the region, which no other country does. The so-called cultural knowledge and historical wisdom of Turkey as a great country should have enabled Turkey to be ready for such a political transformation and thus Turkey should have exerted much more influence during a crisis in its vicinity. On the other hand, the internationally active player narrative for Turkey has been tested too. The AKP elite have realized that they cannot promote regional cooperation and integration unless democracy becomes institutionalized and internalized in its neighbours. In the long term, people's demands for democracy in the Middle East is in favour of Turkey's foreign policy, yet in the short term, especially because of the uncertainty about the future of Syria, Turkey's activism and objective of regional integration have been side-lined while particularly its soft power over Syria failed to produce favourable outcomes. To sum up, the hubris of great country was deflated by the Arab Spring whereas the ideal of regional integration and soft power were once again undermined by the complex realities of the region.

My concern in this thesis was not to assess the success or failure of Turkey's foreign policy or give an answer to whether the choices of the AKP were strategically wise. Instead, I focused on the question of how those choices were discursively made available and how it became possible at the cultural level for Turkey to pursue those policies politically. I never claimed to show the true intentions of recent foreign policy activism of Turkey. Nor did I argue that there is a hidden agenda behind AKP's recent activism in foreign policy. Instead, the primary purpose throughout this thesis has been to illustrate the main storylines and recurrent themes of the narratives told by the AKP elite for the period of 2002-2011. Furthermore, this thesis gave an account of discursive strategies used by the AKP elite to challenge and circumvent the old narratives of the state establishment. Hence, there is no right or wrong narrative, but there are various contending narratives among which one of them generally becomes dominant.

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Appendix

List of Interviews:

| | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Ruhi Açıkğöz | AKP Deputy | 15.04.2010 |
| Hüseyin Pazarcı | Independent-CHP deputy | 16.04.2010 |
| Mehmet Sayım Tekelioğlu | AKP Deputy | 16.04.2010 |
| Oğuz Oyan | CHP Deputy | 20.04.2010 |
| Onur Öymen | CHP Deputy | 28.04.2010 |
| Senior Diplomat | Ministry of Foreign Affairs | 30.04.2010 |
| Senior Diplomat | Ministry of Foreign Affairs | 04.05.2010 |
| Nursuna Memecan | AKP Deputy | 04.05.2010 |
| Suat Kınıklıoğlu | AKP Deputy | 06.05.2010 |
| Kemalettin Göktaş | AKP Deputy | Via email, received 06.05.2010 |
| Çiğdem Tunç | An expert at the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB) | 07.05.2010 |
| Nihat Ali Özcan | Ex-military officer and an expert at the Economic Policy Research Foundation | 07.05.2010 |
| Senior Official | Secretariat General for EU affairs | 11.05.2010 |
| Senior Official | Secretariat General for EU affairs | 11.05.2010 |
| Senior Diplomat | Ministry of Foreign Affairs | 11.05.2010 |
| Senior Diplomat | Turkish Embassy in Brussels | 13.09.2010 |
| Julien Desmedt | EU commission official | 14.09.2010 |
| Prof.Dr. Hasret Çomak | Kocaeli University | 09.03.2011 |
| Christina Bache | An expert at Peacemissions | 10.03.2011 |
| Prof. Dr.Faruk Sönmezoğlu | Istanbul University | 11.03.2011 |
| Prof. Dr. Sabri Sayarı | Sabancı University | 14.03.2011 |
| Ercan Çitlioğlu | Bahçeşehir University | 14.03.2011 |
| Murat Bilhan | Former ambassador | 15.03.2011 |
| Yalım Eralp | Former ambassador | 15.03.2011 |
| Joost Lagendijk | Senior advisor to the Istanbul Policy Center, former joint chairman of the Turkey-EU Parliamentarians delegations | 17.03.2011 |
| Dimitrios Triantaphyllou | Kadir Has University | 19.03.2011 |
| Edip Başer | Retired general, Yeditepe University | 23.03.2011 |
| Gareth Jenkins | Freelance expert | 23.03.2011 |
| Hugh Pope | Projector director at International Crisis Group | 24.03.2011 |
| Giray Saynur Bozkurt | Sakarya University | 25.03.2011 |
| Şükrü Sina Gürel | Former foreign minister | 29.03.2011 |
| Ali Engin Oba | Former ambassador | 31.03.2011 |

