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Power struggle on subjectivity and foreign policy: a post-structuralist analysis of JDP's policies towards the United States (2002–2016)

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ABSTRACT

This article analyses Turkish foreign policy towards the United States (US) during the Justice and Development Party (JDP) era by using a post-structuralist approach. Post-structuralism posits that foreign policy is a political practice reflecting domestic power struggles. Moreover, subjectivities and foreign policy practices are neither universal, objective, nor predetermined, since they are co-constitutive. From this theoretical perspective, the article explores the JDP's 'foreign policy' discourse on US-Turkish relations, highlighting discursive practices in legitimising specific subjectivities, such as 'conservative' and 'Muslim' ones, as 'inherent' origins of foreign policy conduct. In two phases, 2002–2009 and 2009–2016, it analyses how changes in JDP's foreign policy preferences towards the US function to legitimise or marginalise particular subjectivities in its power struggle vis-à-vis 'Kemalist' state elites. Ultimately, the article concludes that the JDP's discourse exhibits a continuity in hegemonising the 'Islamic' subjectivity ascribed to the Turkish population, despite changes in foreign policy decisions.

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Introduction

Subjectivity is shaped by discourses of difference or threat within the country's borders, not by the intersubjectivity that countries assign to it and that other states accept or reject. As a result, subjectivity emerges within the context of certain power relations inside a country and evolves as a result of exclusionary practices based on identity/difference (Campbell, 1990, 1992). By overlooking this detail, the state identity is viewed holistically, and the underlying dynamics are hidden. From this point of view, reading Justice and Development Party (JDP) governments' foreign policy choices as an outward activity through pre-determined identities is an inadequate approach. This interpretation implies that, once in power, the JDP will be able to make any foreign policy decisions it desires. Furthermore, the shift in foreign policy priorities, particularly after the JDP's second term began, makes it difficult to comprehend accurately. As a result, in order to assess the JDP

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governments' foreign policy choices, this article advises focusing on the impact of power struggles within the country.

The purpose of this article is to understand how the JDP governments' foreign policy priorities have changed over time. Using a post-structuralist perspective, it will be claimed that foreign policy, as an activity carried out outside of the country, is actually an instrument of the power struggle for subjectivity within the country. Foreign policy secures the formation of certain subjectivities at the expense of others, all of which is built around the language of difference. To put it another way, foreign policy decisions reflect a power struggle over what constitutes a country's subjectivity and who best represents it. As a result, changes in JDP governments' foreign policy practices are directly related to these power struggles. In this context, developments in relations with the US reflect the outcomes of the power struggle, particularly with the bureaucratic elite that identifies itself as Kemalist and/or secular. JDP governments would have the opportunity, at some point, to construct themselves as the country's 'main' representatives, as of a conservative/Islamist subjectivity, and to construct the country's subjectivity within the framework of their own imaginations through discourses of threat. To engage in a comprehensive analysis of this subject matter, this article employs archival research to scrutinise the official declarations and statements made by the JDP leadership. These declarations and statements serve as emblematic manifestations of the prevailing hegemonic discourses within the context of the JDP's distinct historical epochs concerning foreign policies.

The theoretical framework will be presented in the first section of the article. By focusing on the inclusion-exclusion relationship between subjectivity and threat discourses in post-structuralist analysis, it will be emphasised that foreign policy is a type of 'boundary-producing political performance' (Ashley, 1987; Campbell, 1992), and it will be stated that foreign policy practices are essentially constructive of subjectivity in the context of the power struggle over it. In the second section, the subjectivity imagination of JDP governments will be analysed, followed by a general evaluation of the foreign policy practices that both enable and place subjectivity at the heart of power relations in the third section. The last section will attempt to understand the developments in relations with the US during the JDP period through power struggles and threat discourses in two periods. The first period includes the years 2002 through 2009. Beginning with the JDP's election to power, this period ends with the Ergenekon and Balyoz cases, which were intended to expel high-ranking secular bureaucratic and civil elites. Power struggles between the secular bureaucratic elites, particularly in the army and judiciary, and the ruling Islamist party, the JDP, are covered during this time period. The second period begins when these cases solidified the JDP's position as the country's dominant party and ends with the Gulenist coup attempt in 2016. The JDP has grown to be a hegemonic force that defines the country's subjectivity as a Muslim one during this time period, which also covers a power struggle between the JDP and Gulenists.

Foreign policy as a subjectivity-constituting practice

Foreign policy is a discursive formation in which subjectivity is constructed through the narratives of difference. It constructs subjectivity, boundaries, and statecraft by deploying the narratives of difference and political struggles on subjectivities, as well as by portraying the other as 'foreigner' or 'outsider' (Campbell, 1992; Hansen, 2006). Therefore, the

practice of 'foreign policy' reconstructs subjectivities by drawing social and political boundaries both inside and outside. When discussing Turkish Foreign Policy, for example, the concept of 'Turkish' reflects hegemonically how Turkishness is defined, the concept of 'Foreign' evokes the borders between the 'Turkish' state and others, and the concept of 'Policy' prioritises specific types of political performances allocated to specific individuals who are politically esteemed due to their 'experiences'. In this sense, foreign policy should be defined as 'boundary-producing political performance' (Ashley, 1987; Campbell, 1992).

Foreign policy, from this perspective, is a practice about the 'inside', and foreign policy practices and specific subjectivities are ontologically linked (Ashley, 1987; Der Derian, 1989; Doty, 1993). Subjectivity is constructed inside the framework of particular imaginations with regard to foreign policy practices, and it serves as a form of discipline and control. In this sense, foreign policy, in Ashley's words, is 'an art of domesticating the meaning of man by constructing his problems, his dangers, his fears' (Ashley, 1989, p. 303). In this perspective, when we talk about domesticating the meaning of man, it suggests that foreign policy, by claiming to 'represent' a specifically defined and constructed subjectivity of a society, reconstitutes the socio-political boundaries of a society: 'the form of the 'domestic' order, the social relations of production, the various subjectivities to which they give rise, the groups (such as women) who are marginalised in the process, and the boundaries of legitimate social and political action' (Campbell, 1992, p. 70) Foreign policy, as a result, is a 'double exclusionary practice' (Campbell, 1992, p. 71). On the one hand, it provides the spatial division and organisation of geographical areas necessary for being a state; on the other hand, it defines the borders of a given subjectivity inside the state's territory.

Foreign policy conceptualises subjectivity as being 'discursive, political, relational, and social' (Hansen, 2006, p. 5). While foreign policy constructs imagined subjectivity, it also produces counter-identities that signify it. Certain political preferences are enabled by constructed representations of difference since 'others' are excluded and externalised as threats (Ashley, 1989; Weldes, 1999). While expressions of difference disclose counter-identities, certain expressions of subjectivity are externalised and propelled by narratives of threat. Threat is an interpretative process in which certain differences are externalised by portraying certain objects as 'foreign', 'divisive', or 'enemy'. Accordingly, 'the state requires discourses of 'danger' to provide a new theology of truth about who and what "we" are by highlighting who or what "we" are not, and what "we" have to fear' (Campbell, 1992, p. 54). Inter- and intra-societal divisions are transformed into the absolute difference between a certain, consistent, and safe inside and an uncertain, unstable, and dangerous outside (Weldes, 1999). The discourse of threat is employed to eliminate uncertainties and contingencies in the internal space, by externalising 'others' through narratives of dangers and risks in order to delineate the normative existence of subjectivity (Campbell, 1992; Hansen, 2006).

Therefore, foreign policy goes beyond being an ahistorical, frozen, and inter-state practice carried out between defined borders and instead provides 'both a spatial and a temporal resolution to questions about what the political community can be', based on 'the principle of state sovereignty [that] fixes a clear demarcation between life inside and outside' (Walker, 1993, p. 62). As Campbell suggests, 'danger is the consequence of a calculation of a threat which objectifies events, disciplines relations, and sequesters an

ideal of the identity of the people said to be at risk' (Campbell, 1992, p. 3). This indicates that 'threats' are not objective; they are constituted in order to discipline and control a society by co-constituting the boundaries of a society. As a result, foreign policy becomes more than just a relationship between inside and outside; it becomes a practice that establishes both.

Imaginative subjectivity of the JDP

Foreign policy in Turkey prior to the Justice and Development Party (JDP) taking office was predominantly shaped by 'Kemalist' political rationality. Turkish foreign policy was mostly shaped by the National Security Council and the military, who presented their decisions as indisputable 'national interests'. The Turkish Armed Forces took an 'anti-political' stance, effectively discouraging any political discussion about these foreign policy decisions (Cizre-Sakallıoğlu, 1997, p. 156). This approach was frequently presented as adhering to the guidelines set down by Atatürk, who founded modern Turkey, in his effort to transform the country into a 'modern civilization'.

The only ideal civilisation in the eyes of the Kemalists was European civilisation, and they considered Turkey to be firmly a part of Europe (Bozdağlıoğlu, 2008). For example, the European Union presented a vision for Kemalist elites that portrayed Turkey as having reached the level of contemporary civilisations and achieved this as a secular nation-state. Consequently, the Turkish government focused its foreign policy on the West, portraying itself as a modern nation that adheres to European values. However, Kemalist 'foreign policy' found it difficult to completely embrace European integration because of its historical suspicion of Europe, which was a result of the belief that Europe was a hegemonic power aiming to weaken Turkey. As a result, 'peace at home, peace in the world' both portrayed the country as being surrounded by enemies in its foreign policy and facilitated the labelling of any objections from the European Union as disruptive, while also ensuring the disciplining of certain subjectivities within the country (Aras, 2000). This led to fluctuating foreign policy strategies that alternated between rejecting Western values and accepting European engagement.

In this context, it is important to remember that the JPD consisted of various ideological tendencies. Despite the 'conservative-democrat' backgrounds of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Abdullah Gül, Bülent Arınç, and Abdüllatif Şener, there were different lines of political actors from the 'centre-right', 'liberal', and even 'liberal-left' within the party. The primary objective that united them was the 'democratization' of the country, which aimed to eliminate 'military and judiciary tutelage' and promote integration with the Western world (Yeşilada, 2023). Consequently, the European Union was constructed upon the foundation of a prospective partnership, thus legitimising its own existence through its 'conservative-democrat' subjectivity. As a result, AKP governments garnered significant support from liberal intellectuals and neutralised previously prominent anti-conservative/anti-Islamic stances that had peaked in the political arena during the February 28th Process. Within the country, particularly, the power of the military elite gradually waned, while the party's influence within the nation grew proportionally (Hale & Özbudun, 2010). Consequently, within the framework of the European Union process, the AKP was able to both make structural adjustments that aligned with its subjectivity and establish its discursive legitimacy.

Nevertheless, the JDP's founding cadres referred to themselves as 'conservative democrats' when they came to power. Democracy was viewed as a means for advancing universal demands, and 'human rights, as a global ideal, have been moulded as the common voice of humanity's conscience, the ground for societal healing, and a platform for intercultural dialogue' (Erdoğan, 2004, p. 10). Turkey was conceived as 'culturally Islamic, politically Western' (Adak & Turan, 2011, p. 177). In this way, Turkey's Islamic heritage was reimagined on the one hand, while certain principles were reconstructed as a requirement of 'democracy' on the other. As a result, '[JDP] explores arriving at a new synthesis rather than blindly abandoning tradition or modernity' (Erdoğan, 2004, p. 16). At the same time, Turkey's remembrance of and clinging to its 'forgotten' past will re-establish Turkey's unique status as a non-Western power.

In this regard, civilisation is a major theme in JDP governments' foreign policy discourse. This notion, according to Duran, has three geographical layers: 'the wellspring of national and spiritual values, the emblem of belonging to the Middle Eastern and Islamic geography, and the keyword of common human values' (Duran, 2013, p. 93). Along with the idea of civilisation, JDP cadres have attempted to establish a link between the past and the present, as well as the spatially national, regional, and universal elements. JDP strove to make a connection between the core institutions of democracy and the modern values of the West while retaining traditional culture and values (Çağliyan-İçener, 2009; Doğanay, 2007). The JDP was rejecting the Kemalist elites' claim that Turkey was part of Western civilisation by envisioning Turkey's relationship with the West through this civilisational lens (Çınar, 2018; Saraçoğlu & Demirkol, 2015; Yavuz, 2009).

With the emphasis on Islamic references, the past is appropriated within this identification. This re-reading has inspired Davutoglu's argument that the JDP is 'the trustees of the Age of Saadet, the Seljuk, the Ottoman, the War of Independence, and the martyrs of Çanakkale' (Başbakan Davutoğlu'ndan operasyon için ilk açıklama, 2014). Thus, the JDP claims to have facilitated Turkey's restoration to its original identity, that of 'Islamic principles'. Returning Turkey's past to the Seljuk Empire involves removing its identity from Kemalism's post-1923 secular-modern nation-state model and replacing it with an Islamic 'country' based on the imagination of a specific geography that existed in its past and future. To achieve this, the limits along identification lines must have been loosened and divisions must have been brought together under one Islamic identity. From this point of view, 'Turkey should operate as the self-aware heir of an empire, with an imagination that embraces Turks, Arabs, Persians, Kurds, Bosnians, Macedonians, and others' (Kalın, 2009a, p. 85).

Restoring Turkey to its past glory is an expression of a new conservative state identity. 'The new diplomatic style' means, according to Davutoğlu (2004),

> being a country that can come up with theses and solutions around that identity without being ashamed of its Eastern identity on Eastern platforms but can internalize the notions of the West on Western platforms and discuss the future of Europe from a European perspective.

Thus, Turkey, as 'a country with the accumulation of ancient civilizations', should strengthen its ties with the rest of the world. Considering this, conservative/Islamist forces are calling for a more proactive foreign policy. They consider the borders drawn at the end of World War I as a process that led to the dissolution of the Islamic world,

since they define themselves as sons of the Muslim Ummah. In this way, they see Islam as a fundamental identity that binds the entire imagined territory together. As a result, they argue that Kemalist isolationism should have been abandoned as a foreign policy option, and Turkey should have returned to the lands that comprise its remnants (Aras, 2000; Walker, 2007).

Foreign policy of the JDP

The struggle between the JDP cadres and Kemalists about Turkey's subjectivity was also impacted by the differing understandings of the direction of the foreign policy. Turkish foreign policy has long been considered 'unchangeable', with issues like Cyprus, the Aegean Sea, and the PKK being regarded as immovable 'red lines'. This perceived inflexibility stemmed from the dominant role of the military in defining national security threats. As Kaliber (2005, p. 328) highlights, 'these state elites, perceiving themselves as the "ultimate guardian" of the state, nurtured deep mistrust and suspicion of the political elites, particularly if the latter claimed to represent peripheral social groups disenchanted with the state's project of radical modernisation'. Consequently, the emergence of the JDP triggered a power struggle over determining the country's priorities. The JDP positioned Turkey as a civilisation distinct from the West, emphasising its Muslim character, while Kemalists argued that Turkey was an integral part of the West. This divergence in narratives was reflected in foreign policy decisions. JDP emphasised Turkey as a 'model country' for Islamic nations, while Kemalists rejected the label of a 'Muslim country' and asserted Turkey's identity as a secular, democratic, and Western nation (Yavuz, 2009). Consequently, the struggle for defining Turkish subjectivity extended into the realm of foreign policy debates.

The JDP's 'conservative-democratic' subjectivity compelled it to pursue a two-track foreign policy. While constructing its relations with the West through discourses such as democratisation and human rights as a result of the necessity of being a 'democrat', on the other hand, it led it to take a critical attitude towards the West, particularly in the context of the Middle East, as a result of the understanding brought about by its 'conservative' identity. On the one hand, this idea of dual identity contributed to EU integration; on the other hand, it was promoted under the premise that this integration was between two equal political bodies. The JDP also aimed to reinvigorate diplomatic ties with Middle Eastern nations that had been marginalised by the Kemalist bureaucratic elites, challenging their dominance in foreign policy. This approach allowed the JDP to broaden its foreign policy scope, creating an opportunity to operate within an Islamic framework. Consequently, it asserted Turkey's identity as a Muslim nation, emphasising the development of fresh relationships within this context. As a result, both the 'opening' to the Middle East and the negotiations with the EU aimed at internal restructuring and the elimination of the dominant Kemalist ideology (Çelenk, 2007; Kaliber, 2005).

The JDP's subjectivity vision corresponded with a foreign policy perspective that went beyond nation-state structures to uncover new connections. In other words, contrary to Kemalist expectations, the JDP's foreign policy has reproduced a subjectivity that elevates and incorporates the Arab and Islamic populations that it sees as a sphere of influence in its region (Kouskouvelis, 2013). As a result, the imagined subjectivity incorporated

the geographical area described beyond the National Pact (*Misak-ı Milli*). In this line of thinking, Kalin, Erdogan's chief adviser, describes Turkey as 'larger than a nation-state, smaller than an empire' (Kalın, 2009a, p. 85). In this sense, JDP foreign policy has evolved into a method of comprehending this geographical imagination as well as a way of forming the proper political community.

From this perspective, JDP governments' foreign policy can be analysed as a type of reckoning with the past (especially Kemalism). The JDP's new foreign policy, which was defined using terms like 'strategic depth', 'centre country', and 'zero problems with neighbours', attempted to replace 'passive' foreign policy discourses shaped by terminology like 'bridge' and 'outpost'. A new social contract between the state and society was suggested as a way to reform foreign policy. It was stressed that Kemalist foreign policy was confrontational, which was blamed on its lack of knowledge of Ottoman history. The JDP, on the other hand, aimed to undermine and marginalise the Kemalist regime's hegemonic language by making peace with its neighbours and re-establishing an 'Ottoman peace'.

Turkey, according to Davutoglu, who was first adviser to PM, then Minister of Foreign Affairs between 2009 and 2014 and then the PM between 2014 and 2016, was at a 'strategic depth' where it may resume a robust foreign policy. With the relationships it would develop with these basins, Turkey could rise as a 'regional leader', according to the notion of strategic depth, which started with the imagination that Turkey stands in the heart of multiple geostrategic basins (Davutoğlu, 2001, p. 118). The problems in the region were also manifested as problems in Turkey, and the 'multidimensional diplomacy' that Turkey would build will be able to address these issues (Davutoğlu, 2001, p. 223). However, Islam was the essential subjectivity that resides within Turkey's 'strategic depth'. As a result, Turkey has been a part of Islamic civilisation, and its Muslim geography has served as the world system's geostrategic hub (Davutoğlu, 1994).

At the same time, 'the Ottoman State, which is the source of this historical inheritance, was the political framework of the only cultural basin that had direct dominion over Europe' (Davutoğlu, 2001, p. 66). Therefore, Turkey's Islamic civilisation was founded on historical and geographical differences with Europe. The Muslim world, on the other hand, was portrayed as a threat by the West because of 'the geopolitical, geo-economic, and geo-strategic potentialities of the Muslim world and the need for ideological justification for strategic and tactical operations in order to have a control over these potentialities' (Davutoğlu, 1994, p. 119). This resulted in the Western support of 'undemocratic regimes in the Muslim world', since 'a democratic system in the Muslim world may create Islamic regimes with anti-western sentiments' (Davutoğlu, 1994, p. 122).

In the context of Davutoglu's strategic depth, Turkey had the necessary historical and geostrategic lines for the establishment of a just order among civilisations. What it needed to do is return to the geography of the Middle East that the Kemalist regime ignored (Walker, 2007). One of the most effective examples of this was the removal of borders between close neighbours and the incorporation of those neighbours into subjectivity. The goal of discursive regional integration was to overcome the problems caused by the Westphalian nation-state understanding. Geographies that were previously constructed as foreign or different were constructed as familiar or similar. According to Erdogan, 'all friendly and brotherly peoples from Baghdat, Cairo, Sarajevo, Baku, Nicosia and other regions turned their eyes to Turkey and are following the future news [in the

2011 General Elections]' (*Erdoğan'ın 3. balkon konuşmasının tam metni*, 2011). Similarly, Erdogan declared after the 2014 Presidential Election that 'not only Turkey has won today, but also Baghdad, Islamabad, Kabul, Beirut, Sarajevo, and Skopje. Today, Damascus, Aleppo, Hama, Homs, today, Ramallah, Nablus, Jericho, Gaza, and Jerusalem have all won' (Erdoğan, 2014). Therefore, Turkey's borders did not reflect reality; Turkey, on the other hand, was tasked with displacing this unreality.

Through its foreign policy discourses, the JDP government attempted to make conservative subjectivity hegemonic. JDP cadres' interest in the Alliance of Civilisations coincides with Turkey's role as a 'central country'. It was assumed that Turkey had demonstrated its ability to take the lead in a global initiative. Furthermore, the function of the Alliance of Civilisations that makes it more important for the JDP governments is that it positions Turkey as the leader of Islamic countries. In other words, by making Turkey the spokesperson for the 'authentic Turkish-Islamic civilization' in the alliance process, it bases the country's subjectivity on Islamic foundations (Ardıç, 2014, p. 114). Furthermore, it excludes Turkey from Western civilisation by assuming that civilisations should be fundamentally different from one another (Kalın, 2009b). Relations with the EU are defined as the meeting of different civilisations, rather than members of the same civilisation (Kösebalaban, 2007). The Alliance of Civilisations project was significant in terms of the JDP's inversion of Kemalist subjectivity, which places Turkey in Islamic civilisation rather than Western civilisation.

As a result, while the 'glorious' history of the Ottoman Empire was being reconstructed, new discoveries in the name of Islamic history began to be made. In this regard, the JDP's foreign policy has been subjected to a new assessment based on the history of Islam as seen through the lens of foreign policy. According to this perspective, the JDP governments' foreign policy discourse is based on the 'unity' of the Ummah, and Turkey's role is to be the main actor in the Ummah's recovery (Aras, 2000). As a result, the JDP and Erdogan 'have given [themselves] a leading role in creating a new civilization consciousness' as an identity-constructing practice (Duran, 2013, p. 94). During the JDP era, relations with the US inevitably reflected the same consciousness. As it will be shown below, this paper argues that relations with the US were perceived by the JDP as an excellent opportunity to stress its subjectivity, which was portrayed by the JDP elites as a different civilisation than the European and Western ones.

Relations with the United-States during the JDP era

As of now, it has been discussed how the JDP cadres use 'Turkish' subjectivity as a site of power struggle because they believe that Turkey has been a Turkish-Muslim nation with a unique socio-historical past. The JDP cadres have talked about how Turkish foreign policy ought to have reflected this fictitious subjectivity in the sense that, prior to their taking over the government, Turkey had lost its way or its essence by ignoring the Ottoman and Seljuk geographies, which were regarded as integral parts of the self. Because Turkey has identified with their values and culture, it has long felt that it should have returned to these places.

The relationship between Turkey and the United States is constructed from this perspective, which means that Turkey, as a Turkish-Muslim nation, can realign its relations

with the United States by situating itself in a different civilisation, namely Islam. By redefining Turkish subjectivity in this way, it has become more Muslim than secular, bringing Turkey into the Western alliance. As a result, this section will be covered in two parts, somehow corresponding to Kaliber and Kaliber's (2019) distinction between 'thin populist' and 'thick populist' eras of the JDP. By interpreting the Muslim subjectivity as 'conservative democrat', the JDP cadres started a power struggle with the secular-Kemalist state elites during the first phase, which spans the years 2002–2009. The JDP cadres believed that the alliance between Turkey and the USA could be codified in terms of 'democracy' rather than 'being Western' during this time. This enabled the JDP cadres to describe this relationship between different 'civilizations' sharing same 'democratic' values, rather than two nations within the same civilisation. The second phase, which spans 2009–2016, saw a rise in the JDP cadres' emphasis on Turkish-Muslim subjectivity in terms of more 'conservative' lines, since the US had come to represent the constitutive other of Muslim subjectivity, as will be discussed in further detail. Rather than sharing same values, in the second phase, the US had been presented as a 'threat' to the very core values of the 'Islamic' civilisation. To put it another way, the JDP initially embraced Muslim subjectivity as the immutable distinguishing trait of being a Turkish citizen, but with time it came to have a different perception of the exact same subjectivity, which is what separates the aforementioned two phases. Thus, the discursive construction of Turkish-US relations by the JDP cadres represents the establishment of a specific subjectivity within the country. This aims to position the JDP as the hegemonic actor in defining what constitutes a 'legitimate' or normative form of subjectivity.

First phase of the JDP and reflections on its relations with the US: 2002–2009

The JDP's relationships with the US governments were a significant part of its early 'international' relations after its founding in August 2001. The JDP was trying to establish itself as a new political movement among the established and seasoned political parties led by veteran politicians in Turkey, and having good and close relations with the Bush Administration was seen by the political elites of the JDP as a significant instrument contributing to the legitimacy of the JDP. One of Erdogan's first moves in the area of international relations was to travel to Washington in January 2002 to meet with prominent members of the US administration, including President Bush. Erdogan, who was just a PM candidate getting ready for the national elections in November 2002, stressed during his visit that Turkey-US relations would improve if the JDP won the elections (Özkan, 2002). Another significant instance demonstrating the JDP's close ties to the US occurred in December 2002, when Erdogan paid a visit to President Bush following his stunning victory in the national elections. He was not yet Prime Minister of Turkey due to the legal process he had to go through, but some Turkish newspapers, particularly those with an Islamist lean, noted that President Bush and his inner circle welcomed him as such and that there were good vibes between the two leaders (*Beyaz Saray'da Sıcak Buluşma*, 2002).

It is possible to infer that the JDP believed that having good relations with the US was a key way to set itself apart from the Welfare Party, the political party from which the JDP originated. It was a way to emphasise that, despite its Muslim identity, the JDP was not hostile to the Western values in general or to the US and NATO in particular. Maintaining

close ties with the US was a better way to highlight the fact that the JDP represented 'moderate Islam' in Turkey rather than the radical variety that might be in opposition to the US and NATO. While the Welfare Party and its seasoned leader Necmettin Erbakan had made a significant impact on Turkish political life with their strong opposition to US 'imperialism' and the existence of Israel in the Middle East, the JDP leaders highlighted at every opportunity that they represented the young and open-minded generation of Islamists in Turkey, who were much more adapted to the current dynamics in world politics. The ruling elites of the JDP emphasised that this new political party had a clear pro-Western orientation in foreign affairs by characterising its subjectivity as 'conservative democrat'. In that regard, the JDP leaders emphasised that Turkey's membership in the EU was 'the most important step of the modernisation project' and thus added it to their list of crucial goals (*Erdoğan, Bush`la Görüştü*, 2002).

The fact that the JDP self-identified as a 'Muslim' and a 'Democrat' caught the attention of the Congressional Research Service (CRS), the primary information source for members of the US Congress. For instance, a May 2002 report by CRS noted that the 'charismatic former mayor of Istanbul Recep Tayyip Erdogan' was the main opponent of the Islamists in Turkey. The same report also addressed Erdogan's claims that he was 'centrist' and dedicated to 'Western ideals of democracy' and 'human rights' (Migdalovitz, 2002, p. 5). This was indeed coming from the search for legitimacy by the JDP within Turkey. It is noteworthy that the JDP was able to carve out a position for itself in Turkish domestic politics by emphasising both its Islamist heritage and its good relations with the US.

It is important to note that the JDP governments interpreted the alliance between the US and Turkey as one between two very different civilisations. From this angle, Turkey under the JDP's leadership was not necessarily a western nation and NATO's natural ally. On the other hand, it was a 'Muslim country', able to form alliances with both NATO and the US. Given that it occurred at the same time as the Bush administration's Broader Middle East Initiative, which was established in the wake of 9/11, this portrayal was extremely timely. In that regard, President Bush's speech at the NATO Summit in Istanbul in June 2004 demonstrated how closely aligned the JDP's self-description as a conservative-democrat party and US efforts to advance democracy in the Middle East were. Bush praised Turkey as a crucial ally in the fight against terrorism, noted that Turkey is both Muslim and European because of its adherence to Western values, and praised Turkey as an example for the rest of the Muslim world.

As a result, Turkey, ruled by 'moderate Islamist' JDP, was a Muslim nation dedicated to democracy and could mediate between two civilisations by facilitating communication between the Muslim world and the west (Bush, 2004). The speech by Bush reconstructed what Turkey's subjectivity was – a Muslim and democratic nation – and who best represented it – the JDP. As a result, the US administration welcomed the JDP's self-identification and portrayal of Turkey, using it to help defend its campaign against terrorism in the region (Altunışık, 2013). In that sense, the JDP's portrayal of Turkey as both 'Muslim' and 'democratic' was entirely in alignment with the strategic priorities of the US governments in the Middle East. During its initial phase, by depicting Turkey as a Muslim and democratic nation, the JDP actively contributed to 'the transformation of its near-abroad in a Western-friendly fashion' (Oğuzlu, 2022).

Simultaneously, it bolstered its legitimacy by gaining influence in power struggles within Turkey. One of the notable examples was the March 2003 motion crisis. It is

widely acknowledged that the March 2003 motion crisis severely strained Turkey-US relations. However, neither the invasion of Iraq nor its aftermath altered the JDP's favourable first-phase approach to the US. The US' anger and disappointment over the TGNA's decision not to send troops to Iraq opened the door for harsh statements to be made by prominent members of the US administration (Gözen, 1995; Park, 2004), but this also raised doubts in some political circles in Turkey. Leading figures from the opposition questioned Erdogan about the agreements the JDP's elites made with the US during his visits to Washington and what he had promised the Bush administration regarding the invasion of Iraq.[1] This is how the JDP's favourable and close ties to the US government came to be seen as a crucial issue by Turkey's political opposition.

Intriguingly, after the motion crisis, the Kemalists within the military and the parliament, which had previously supported a pro-Western discourse, found itself in a position completely at odds with that tendency and began to criticise the JDP's ties to the US. What was even more striking was that the JDP's attitude towards the US did not change significantly even after an unprecedented military encounter between Turkish and US soldiers took place in Sulaymaniyah, Iraq, in July 2003. While JDP leaders strongly denounced the 'hood incident' and immediately engaged in diplomatic efforts to secure the release of Turkish soldiers (Howard & Goldenberg, 2003), they made a lot of effort to avoid permanently jeopardising Turkey-US relations. In order to calm the uproar in Turkish public opinion as well as the political opposition against the US, both Turkish Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul and Prime Minister Erdogan issued pacifying statements (*Bu Nasıl Müttefik!*, 2003; E*rdoğan'dan Muhalefete 'Nota' Eleştirisi*, 2003).

Over the course of the first decade of the 2000s, the JDP leaders established strong ties with the leaders of the Muslim world and positioned Turkey as a Muslim and democratic nation in its region, to the point where Turkish foreign policy was primarily described as 'Middle Easternized' (Oğuzlu, 2008; *also* Aras & Karakaya Polat, 2007). On the one hand, Middle Eastern countries became 'brothers' and 'sisters' of the same religion, emphasising the Islamic dimension of Turkish subjectivity. On the other hand, the secular element in this subjectivity began to fade, as secularism in Turkish subjectivity had been interpreted as 'authoritarian', implying a top-down approach that disregarded the 'true nature' of the Turkish nation (Tombuş & Aygenç, 2017). This indicates that the JDP sought to end the monopoly of the Kemalist bureaucratic elites on foreign policy and re-establish relations with Middle Eastern nations that they had pushed to the margins through its multifaceted diplomacy narrative. The JDP was able to mark the country as having a Muslim subjectivity and claim to forge new relationships as a 'Muslim country' by expanding its preferences for foreign policy.

Due to its Muslim subjectivity, Turkey's regional role was redefined as one that could facilitate negotiations between the 'Westerners', whose 'democratic' values were also embraced by the JDP leadership, and the 'Middle Easterners', whose 'Islamic' values were likewise respected by the Turkish nation. Turkey, for instance, mediated talks between Iran and the EU on the nuclear issue in 2007, between Israel and Syria in 2008, and between Afghanistan and Pakistan in 2007. The same year, Turkey also observed the presidential elections in Lebanon (Öniş & Yilmaz, 2009). However, the same regional position that allowed the JDP to develop close ties with leaders of Hamas, Syria, and Iran also caused rifts in the US-Turkey relations. There was a glaring difference between the JPD governments and the US governments, especially with

regard to Hamas. While the US viewed Hamas as a terrorist group, the JDP saw Hamas as the legitimate representative of Palestine.

What is crucial to note is the scepticism within the high-ranking members of the armed forces regarding Hamas. Büyükanıt's response to the question about Hamas' visit to Turkey, stating that 'Hamas is a terrorist organization', holds significant weight (*Büyükanıt'tan mesajlar* … , 2008). This statement reinforces the subjective boundaries within Turkey by categorising Hamas as not only a terrorist group, but an 'Islamist' terrorist group, emphasising the limits of the Islamist politics. In essence, certain radical Islamic perspectives that posed a threat to subjectivity in Turkey were equated with Hamas, effectively isolating these differences from the dominant subjectivity. Consequently, the portrayal of an Islamic movement as a threat continued to play a pivotal role in the ongoing hegemonic struggle between the AKP and the Kemalist bloc. For example, when it was claimed that Hamas could not rule because it was too radical, the Erdogan responded, 'They were saying that Tayyip Erdogan cannot rule the country' (*Erdoğan: BBC Savaşı Biliyor Muydu*, 2009). In this way, Hamas' legitimacy was asserted by highlighting the 'unity of fate' between Hamas and the JDP, and Turkey's subjectivity was reconstructed through a form of Muslim solidarity.

Despite differences in the Middle East, Turkey remained a dependable ally of the US governments during the JDP's initial stages. The primary driving force behind this symbiotic relationship was that, while the JDP needed the US as an ally to demonstrate the 'moderate' nature of its Islamic subjectivity and thereby gain leverage in power struggles within Turkey, the US needed the JDP as an ally to justify its promotion of democracy in the Middle East and to indirectly influence and appease regional leaders who were hostile to the US, such as Hamas, Syrian, and Iranian leaders (Migdalovitz, 2010). To put it another way, during the first phase, the JDP interpreted its Muslim subjectivity as 'conservative democrat', thus emphasising its moderate nature on different occasions. When its leaders portrayed Turkey as a Muslim nation capable of forging an alliance with the West, it appeared that the interests of the JDP and the Bush administration in terms of international relations overlapped. Beginning in 2009, which is the start of the JDP's second phase in this paper, this portrayal of Turkey by the JDP would change from a Muslim country as an ally of the West to a Muslim country as the voice of the Muslim world.

Second phase of the JDP and reflections on its relations with the US: 2009–2016

As will be discussed further, one could contend that the period following 2009 could be referred to as the JDP's second phase as it increased its political power within Turkey, the fact that enables the JDP to emphasise the 'Muslim' character of the country's subjectivity. The national elections and referendum that marked the JDP's victory, as well as Abdullah Gül's nomination and appointment to the Turkish presidency to succeed Ahmet Necdet Sezer, a figure known for his support of secularism, all took place in 2007. Additionally, the Ergenekon and Balyoz cases, which began the process of ending military tutelage, were crucial to the JDP's victory. These facts allowed the JDP to take a more assertive stance in both domestic and international politics. After his departure from Davos, Erdogan's statement, 'those who acted like a monsieur in diplomacy continue to act like a monsieur in politics', indicated that the JDP had completely distanced itself from the

Kemalist faction, which was previously seen as the dominant decision-maker in foreign policy. It signalled that in the new era, the JDP was charting its own accepted foreign policy course (*Erdoğan 'Diplomatik davranmasam başka şey yapardım'*, 2009).

In this subsequent phase, both Turkey's portrayal as a Muslim nation and the JDP's self-identification as a Muslim movement, which is the representative of the 'true' nature of Turkish-Muslim subjectivity persisted. However, the JDP's emphasis on the 'democratic' pillar of the conservative subjectivity started to diminish. In the JDP's discourse, which portrayed Turkey as the voice of the Muslim world after this period, Turkey could no longer be a part of the Western civilisation and even ally of the West anymore. Thus, JDP's self-representation of as 'conservative democrat' was gradually replaced by a more conservative one, reflecting the US as the constitutive 'other' of the self.

During the Obama presidency, the JDP's discourse continued to portray Turkey as a Muslim nation. President Obama sought to bring about peace between the Muslim world and the West by 'restoring America's trust' and 'renewing American leadership' in the international community (Obama, 2007). He did this by drawing his own conclusions from the wars that the previous administration had started in the Middle East (Obama, 2009b). In fact, President Obama travelled to Turkey in April 2009 to attend the Alliance of Civilisations' second forum. This initiative had previously been introduced by Prime Minister Erdogan and the Prime Minister of Spain, José Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, in an effort to reduce 'mutual suspicion, fear, and polarization between the Muslim countries and Western societies'.[2] Since Turkey represented the Muslim world and Spain the Western world in this initiative, the JDP's self-identification and portrayal of Turkey as 'Muslim' were literally reflected in the Alliance of Civilisations, which later became a UN initiative. Given that Turkey was the meeting point of the east and the west, it could be crucial to President Obama's efforts to broker a reset between the US and the Muslim world (Obama, 2009a). This was entirely consistent with the JDP's viewpoint, which saw the relationship between Turkey and the US as an alliance between two different civilisations.

Despite a promising start, the JDP and US administration's approaches to dealing with Israel and Iran differed significantly (Çakmak & Güneysu, 2013). Erdogan's harsh response to Israeli President Shimon Peres over Gaza at the 2009 World Economic Forum in Davos was one of the early examples of the increasing emphasis on the 'conservative' character of the JDP's subjectivity construction. With the Mavi Marmara incident in 2010, where Turkey served as the primary defender of the Palestinian cause, this was further underscored. Beginning in 2009, JDP governments constructed Israel as a threat, with the Palestinian conflict serving as the primary justification. The JDP government's possessive language regarding the Palestinian issue emphasised Muslim subjectivity of the Turkish state and society as well. Israel attacked Palestine to threaten this very subjectivity, since its attacks were directed not just at the Palestinian people but also at the Muslim civilisation. Palestine was transformed into a homeland that needed to be freed from invaders in this religious geographic imagination, and Palestine and Turkey were being equalised, which can be described as an 'Islamic solidarity politics' (Duran, 2013, p. 94). Regarding the liberation of Bursa during the Turkish War of Independence, Davutoglu said,

> Just as the occupation of Bursa was unsuccessful, and just as the dignified and honourable people of Bursa did not allow it, the dignified and honourable Palestinians, honourable Muslims, and humanity will not allow these invaders. I hope Masjid al-Aqsa will one day regain its freedom just as Osman Gazi's tomb was saved (Küçük, 2014).

The Turkish people's fight to free themselves from non-Muslim occupiers made Palestine their cause.

Iran was the second area where Turkey and the US disagreed during this time. Another indication that in this second phase the JDP elites would prefer to act more assertively in international relations by portraying Turkey as a Muslim country that was committed to 'Islamic solidarity politics' to defend the rights of the Muslim world was Davutoglu's efforts to reach a nuclear agreement with Iran, in collaboration with Brazil, despite the opposition of the US. Although the UN deemed the Tehran Declaration, which was negotiated by Turkey and Brazil in May 2010, to be 'promising', it fell short of meeting the expectations of the international community because it did not contain a specific article on the complete cessation of Iran's uranium enrichment program and did not obligate Iran to work with the International Atomic Energy Agency (*West Sceptical over Iran Nuclear Deal*, 2010). Despite Davutoglu's declaration that additional sanctions against Iran were no longer necessary, the US pushed the UNSC to adopt new sanctions just a few weeks after the Tehran Declaration was signed (Reinl, 2010). But according to Davutoglu, Turkey's and Brazil's initiatives put an end to the protracted crisis of confidence between Iran and the West. As if Brazil had played no part in this process, he interpreted the Tehran Declaration as the unequivocal evidence of 'the trust of the Iranians towards Turkey, the Turkish PM, the Turkish President, and the Turkish government'. He further stated that Turkey's initiative was a result of the JDP's regional and international vision (Davutoğlu, 2010). It is important to emphasise that Turkey was acting in support of Islamic solidarity. Turkey's leadership in the Muslim world was the reason for any success, whether it was examined by the international community or not and whether it involved other partners or not.

However, the start of the Arab uprisings in the Middle East was what caused the first notable rift in US-Turkey relations during the second phase. The JDP government gradually came to support NATO intervention in Libya with the aim of establishing 'constitutional democracy in line with the legitimate demands of the people', whereas the JDP initially adopted a cautious approach in the early stages of the uprisings, as was the case in Libya, where Erdogan opposed any foreign intervention due to the 'bonds of brotherhood' between Turkish and Libyan peoples who 'share a common history and culture' (Erdoğan, 2011). To put it another way, the JDP stopped supporting the status quo as the uprisings spread throughout the entire region and instead began to support the growing tide of protests. Erdogan called the uprisings in Libya, Egypt, and Tunisia 'revolutions' in a statement following his visits to those nations in September 2011, and he emphasised Turkey's 'unconditional support' to the 'brothers' who expressed their 'democratic demands' in those Arab nations (Erdoğan, 2019a, pp. 153–154).

Oğuzlu (2013) claims that this change of heart came about as a result of the JDP realising that its 'image' in the Muslim world would suffer greatly if Turkey chose to support the status quo rather than the revolutions. According to Öniş (2014, p. 205), the JDP's support for Arab uprisings grew to the point of 'over-activism'. Nevertheless, what remains unaddressed in this context is the extent to which the JDP leadership's endorsement of

political change in these nations surpasses mere strategic calculations. According to Ayata (2015, p. 99), 'the Turkish leadership identified the Arab uprisings and subsequent regime changes as a replication of Turkey's own transformation spearheaded by the JDP'. Their support is intricately linked to domestic power struggles and the JDP's self-perception as the 'voice of the silent masses', particularly concerning the so-called power struggle between the 'religious periphery' and the 'secular centre'. This narrative of conflict between elites and the masses has been projected onto the Arab revolutions. By aligning itself with the 'masses' in these countries, the JDP has also redefined its role as the 'representative of the masses' within Turkey.

The JDP leadership believed that the Arab 'brothers' were selecting their own leaders in response to the oppression of long-standing secular regimes in their countries, just as the Turkish people had done in 2002 in response to the country's long-standing secular and Kemalist establishment. Accordingly, the JDP had led a comparable struggle in Turkey 'as the voice of the silent masses' (Erdoğan, 2019b, p. 278). The JDP, which previously served as the voice of Muslims who were persecuted by the secular Kemalist establishment, was also speaking for all Muslims who are persecuted in the Arab world. In that sense, Davutoglu's emphasis that 'the Arab Spring is also the Turkish Spring' was not unexpected ('Arap Baharı Olduğu Kadar Türk Baharı', 2011). This understanding of people's revolutionary and 'rightful' demands against secular dictatorships reconstituted the dichotomy between 'religious masses' and 'secular elites', positioning the JDP as the representative of the former and echoing the power struggle taken place in Turkey.

The JDP further criticised the US restraint in Egypt and Syria by associating itself with these revolutions in support of Islamic solidarity. As a result of it, Turkey, led by the JDP, was one of the first nations to support and welcome Morsi's presidency, particularly due to the JDP's ideological ties to the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt (Dettmer, 2013). However, following the military overthrow of Morsi by General Sisi in July 2013, the JDP government not only criticised the Egyptian military for toppling a legitimate government chosen by the votes of the Egyptian people, but it also criticised the West in general and the US in particular for failing to label this incident as 'a coup' and turning a blind eye to the undemocratic attitude of the Egyptian military (E*rdoğan'dan Batı'ya 'Mısır Darbesi' Eleştirisi*, 2013).

The US opposition to a military overthrow of the Assad regime in Damascus also came under fire from the JDP government in Turkey. Because it represented itself as the defender of the will of the people and the voice of the Muslims in Syria, the JDP government, which described US inaction as a chasm between rhetoric and action (Kanat, 2017), criticised the US administration's cautious approach to a military intervention (Obama'nın Çizgisi Çoktan Aşıldı, 2013). Then, in how they handled the Syrian opposition, Turkey and the US markedly disagreed with one another (Abramowitz & Edelman, 2013). As a result of the differences in Egypt and Syria, the US was perceived by the JDP as a threat to Muslim subjectivity because it was seen as an imperialist power that upheld the status quo by ignoring Muslim masses' demands for democracy (Jones, 2013).

The JDP chastised the US for labelling the Gezi Protests in Turkey as 'peaceful protests' (*ABD'den Gezi Yorumu*, 2013), describing them as 'a comprehensive offensive to Turkish economy and prestige by foreign forces' and a secular riot against Muslims' freedom of expression (*Erdoğan: Gezi Parkı Gösterileri Kılıf*, 2013). Particularly in response to John Kerry's statement that the excessive use of force by Turkish security forces against the

protesters was 'concerning' and that a thorough investigation into the use of force by the police was necessary, Davutoglu responded, 'Turkey is not a democracy of second class' (*Davutoğlu'ndan Kerry'ye Yanıt*, 2013). An additional source of tension was the US Congressmen's criticism of Turkey for how it handled the Gezi Park protests (Kanat, 2015). One could argue that the JDP primarily used Kerry's remarks and Congressmen's criticism of Turkey as an illustration of how the US intrudes on Turkey's internal affairs from abroad, similar to the EU, which was codified as 'unwanted intruder' (Aydın-Düzgit, 2016, p. 50).

It is worth mentioning that the divergences between Turkey and the US with the start of the Arab uprisings and the Gezi Park protests indicated that the JDP was no longer dependent on the US. As the JDP's base and hegemonic subjectivity within Turkey solidified, the messages it sent out portrayed the US as a hypocritical non-Muslim power that had an inconsistent approach to protests and conflicts, in contrast to how it had initially preferred to forge positive and close ties with the US to demonstrate the 'moderate' character of its Islamic subjectivity and gain leverage in power struggles within Turkey. While the US had no intention of listening to Muslim demands for democracy in situations like Egypt and Syria, the JDP claims that it was interested in exaggerating secular protests like those taking place in Gezi Park. To put it another way, the JDP portrayed the US as an anti-Muslim power that ignored the voice of Muslims and supported movements that opposed their will.

In Syria, where the US preferred to work with the PYD/YPG, a secular Kurdish armed group, to combat ISIS, the JDP's portrayal of the US was also evident. According to the JDP, however, the US had chosen to rely on a terrorist organisation, namely the PYD/YPG, to combat another terrorist organisation, ISIS, in Syria by teaming up with the PKK offshoot, a Kurdish separatist terrorist group with a Marxist-Leninist origin that Turkey had been dealing with since the middle of the 1980s. The main point of contention between the two sides was the USA's reliance on the PYD/YPG to combat ISIS and the JDP's reliance on the Sunni Islamist groups in Syria as a viable alternative to Assad. This furthered the JDP's portrayal of the US as a Muslim-hating nation acting against Islamic unity (*Erdoğan'dan ABD'ye*, 2016). The JDP portrayed the relationship between Turkey and the US as a rivalry and even a clash between two different civilisations, despite the fact that there was no longer an alliance between them.

In the second phase of the JDP, the coup attempt by the Gulenists should be accepted as the second rupture in Turkey-US relations, if the Arab uprisings and their aftermath constitute the first. Following the failed coup attempt on 15 July 2016, which resulted in the deaths of 251 people, JDP's self-identification with the Muslim Brotherhood and the Arab uprisings in general grew significantly. Erdogan, the first elected Turkish President since 2014, used phrases like 'we compete with those who remind us of Morsi' to highlight the parallels between the JDP in Turkey and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt (Kurt, 2019). Opinions highlighting the same argument appeared in Turkish media as well (Güvel, 2016). The coup attempt in Turkey was specifically compared to the coup in Egypt in July 2013. The main distinction, however, was that this time, the putschists were unable to topple a legitimate government that represented the will of free Muslims in Turkey.

The effects of this coup attempt on Turkey-US relations became apparent right away. According to the JDP's leading figures, the US played a role in this coup attempt because Fethullah Gulen, the absconding leader of the Gulenist movement who lives in

Pennsylvania, was not extradited by the US despite repeated requests from Turkish authorities. Suleyman Soylu, the former minister of labour and social security, made one of the most notable accusations against the US when he claimed that the US was directly 'behind the coup' (*15 Temmuz Darbe Girişimi, 2021*). Since the Obama administration was cautious in using the word 'coup' to define the night of July 15th, their lack of a strong response to the coup attempt contributed to the rise of anti-Americanism among JDP elites (Kanat, 2020). The JDP presented the Turkish coup attempt against the legitimate government as a threat to democracy because it questioned the freedom of Muslims who chose to vote for the JDP. Additionally, the coup attempt was a movement that received support from abroad, or more specifically, it was 'an international operation against Turkey' (T*urkey Hopes US Stops Hosting FETÖ Leader*, 2022). It was evident from the JDP's discourse that Turkey had been fully subordinated to the JDP, whose subjectivity served as Turkey's subjectivity. As a result, the JDP's security and survival were essential to Turkey's security and survival. It is important to note that the JDP's self-identification with Turkey's Muslim subjectivity peaked during the coup attempt on July 15. Similar to this, because the US refused to extradite Gulen, it has been portrayed as an anti-Muslim threat that was challenging Muslims' right to free will.

Conclusion

In this article, it is argued that considering Turkey's subjectivity as a result of domestic power struggles should inform how the JDP governments analyse their foreign policy decisions. It is suggested that poststructuralist analysis of international relations may be useful in identifying these discursive formations involved in these power struggles. This article describes how the JDP governments discursively construct the relationship between the US and Turkey in order to hegemonise their understanding of subjectivity, which is based on a Turkish-Islamic understanding. It aims to understand how the JDP leadership, and the political movement as a whole, engage in discursive self-construction as the 'true' representatives of the Turkish nation. This suggests that the JDP, which has been constructed as the 'rightful' voice of this tradition, can only serve the interests of the Turkish-Muslim people. They achieve this by transposing their imaginative conceptualisation of subjectivity into the perceived reality of the nation.

Turkey has been imagined as a country, heir to the history of the Turkish-Islamic tradition. In this regard, it has been held that Turkey should be aware of this tradition that conceives of itself as a 'civilization' separate from the Western one, to which the Turkish secular-Kemalist elite aspires. In this light, the country's first nearly ten years were defined by a power struggle between these two historical blocs. The JDP cadres were able to free these groups from bureaucracy with the aid of the Gulenists, establishing their claim to a unique 'Turkish-Islamic' civilisation. In the second phase, the JDP leadership placed greater emphasis on the 'Muslim' identity of the Turkish nation, asserting it as the 'authentic' identity, while underscoring their capacity to represent this identity and even framing it as a historical necessity. Subsequently, Turkish foreign policy adopted a more overtly religious stance, manifesting in the amplification of the religious-conservative discourse within the JDP leadership during foreign policy deliberations. This discourse not only accentuated but also reconstructed the 'Islamic' dimension of the Turkish nation's subjectivity. Consequently, these representations in foreign policy not

only facilitated the consolidation of the JDP's hegemonic influence within Turkish politics but also aimed to regulate and define the boundaries of national subjectivity.

The relations between the JDP and the US, which served as a tool in these power struggles, were shaped in accordance. While the JDP elites had consistently regarded the US as a distinct civilisation, their perception of it as either a positive or negative entity underwent a transformation from the initial phase to the subsequent phase of the JDP. As a result, the US, which had previously been portrayed by the JDP as a benign great power, started to be constructed as a threat to the democratically elected governments of the Muslim world. It was also shown to be an imperialist power that was inconsistent and even hypocritical. In the second phase of the JDP, the 'alliance of civilizations' thus became a 'clash of civilizations', which further strengthened the JDP's foundation and increased its power within Turkey.

However, despite the shift in practice, the JDP's discourse on its subjectivity and Turkey's subjectivity demonstrated a clear continuity. In both the first and second phases of the JDP, Turkey was portrayed as a Muslim country that represented a different civilisation than that of Europe and the West. In the first phase of the JDP, JDP elites represented Turkey as a Muslim country as an ally of the West, but in its second phase, Turkey was seen as a Muslim nation as the voice of the Muslim world. In essence, the constancy of the JDP's representation of Muslim subjectivity is juxtaposed with a shifting interpretation of this subjectivity between its initial and subsequent phases. This illustrates how subjectivity, which has been a point of contention for different historical blocs, is closely linked to discourses on foreign policy. Changes in or continuations of the foreign policy discourse are a reflection of these power struggles.

One may legitimately question the rationale underpinning the conclusion of this article in the year 2016. To be precise, this article engages in an examination of the trajectory of the JDP towards hegemony. It accomplishes this by elucidating the strategic utilisation of foreign policy as a navigational instrument in negotiating power dynamics within the Turkish context during the period spanning from 2002 to 2016. However, the seismic events that transpired subsequently, including the failed coup d'état in 2016, the subsequent declaration of a state of exception, and the constitutional change by means of a referendum in 2017, ushered in a transformation of the Turkish political system from its erstwhile parliamentary structure into what has been colloquially referred to as the 'super-presidency' (Akkoyunlu, 2017; Esen & Gümüşçü, 2018). Furthermore, this transformation engendered the consolidation of the 'conservative-nationalist coalition' within Turkey, thereby ushered in the emergence of novel historical blocs. The phenomenon of 'exceptionalism' within Turkish politics and the attendant accrual of power within the purview of President Erdogan necessitate a more in-depth analysis, which lies beyond the objectives and scope of this article.

This article argues for the imperative exploration of the discursive construction of subjectivities through the foreign policy practices. Consequently, it posits the necessity of scrutinising the foreign policy discourses of the JDP in the context of the unsuccessful coup d'état in 2016 and the subsequent regime change in 2017, conceptualising these discourses as a manifestation of 'boundary-producing political performance'. This perspective posits that subjectivities are not inherent, immutable entities, but rather, they emerge contingently. This analysis endeavours to elucidate the performative aspects inherent in foreign policy discourse, which actively participate in both the construction

and perpetuation of the demarcations separating various subjectivities. Through a post-structuralist framework, this article seeks to shed light on the intricate interplay between language, power, and the constitution of subjects, thereby revealing the multifaceted roles that foreign policy discourse assumes as an instrument of control.

Nevertheless, it is imperative to recognise that the JDP's ascendancy to hegemony does not connote the cessation of power struggles. Quite the contrary, the ruling elites of the JDP steadfastly maintain the conviction that, since the failed coup attempt, Turkey, and by extension, their party as its true representative, confront existential threats. The survival of the JDP and that of Turkey have progressively and profoundly intertwined themselves within the discourse articulated by the JDP. As expounded within this article, foreign policy representations invariably (re)constitute the hegemonic subjectivity ostensibly upheld by a particular nation. In essence, the constructed notions of threats serve to define 'who they are', consequently shaping 'who we are'. Thus, foreign policy discourses inevitably incorporate an 'us' versus 'them' dichotomy, ultimately reconfiguring the hegemonic positioning of a specific political bloc. This occurs through the translation of their power struggle into the defining parameters of relevant subjects and threats.

Notes

1. See the discussion held in the TGNA*, TBMM Tutanak Dergisi,* Period. 22, Vol. 6, 11 March 2003, 456–462. See also, (Robins, 2003).
2. Details can be seen in 'The Alliance of Civilizations Initiative', Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Türkiye, https://www.mfa.gov.tr/the-alliance-of-civilizations-initiative.en.mfa.

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