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"Strategic Depth" as an "Alternative Paradigm" for the Current Global Order: Morality in International Relations as a Case Study

Abstract

International Relations is essentially based on political realism, nation-state conception and power politics in its interpretation of world politics. Both its ontological and epistemological foundations lacked the moral basis for an ethical political conduct on the international scene. This normative deficiency created the need for an alternative paradigm as a different approach providing additional moral foundations for international relations. Turkey's foreign policy presents a vision of a paradigmatic alternative to the world order, thus establishing a legal practice breaking up with the Western domination as the only normative reference and legal basis for international relations. "Strategic Depth" invests the Turkish cultural and religious heritage. Departing from an identity consciousness crystallized in a space of civilization affiliated to the Islamic communitarian legacy, it presents a corrective dynamic of the structural, functional and ideological deficiencies of the world order. The main purpose of this paper is to understand how Davutoglu's vision, based on a postmodern perspective, is an alternative approach to morality in the Realist school of IR. In other words, how does the concept of "Strategic Depth", through the reconsideration of the national narrative of history, the denunciation of the cultural unconsciousness in the Turkish diplomacy and the presentation of a worldview borrowed from the Islamic civilization, produce an alternative normative paradigm to the Western approach in the IR discipline?

Keywords: Political Realism, IR theories, Middle East, Turkey, Davutoglu, Alternative Paradigm, Foreign Policy, Morality in IR

Introduction

Different sources called for the development of alternative paradigms in International Relations (IR) other than those dominated by the Western legacy. Most of the theorization sources in IR don't reflect the diversity of the cultural and normative structure of the international system. Theories are marked by a distinction between a Western world in pursuit of progress and the conditions of a good life and a non-Western one torn and dominated by the pursuit of survival. An inherent structural and normative dichotomy is entrenched in the discipline because of the Western domination on the theorization process in terms of sources that are based on Western social perspectives, history and practice.¹ For example, history, as the main source of theorization, starts its narratives from the Renaissance period as the sole starting point, in a very narrow but influential perspective on the international practice, without considering the historical references of other nations. Therefore, presentism, euro-centrism, nation-state centrality, anarchophilia and ahistoricism became the dominant features of IR theories. They manifest a tension between the microscopic reading of history and the macroscopic application of theory due to the centrality given to the nation state, the unilateral and linear view of history and specialization. In response, the call for developing alternative paradigms aims to pave the way for an inclusive process of theorization in the formulation of the different IR concepts instead of maintaining the Western normative exclusivity as the dominant and unique reference to follow by other nations.

By calling for a rupture with the Western domination on the Anglo-Saxon IR theories, different contributions indicated that these theories are not compatible with the existing reality because of their empiricism and materialism conceiving a sort of universalization of the human experience. Instead, the "connected history" perspective identifies networks of entanglement and continuity in the narratives of different nations.² The logic behind the alternative approaches is to develop a specific normative dimension while being concerned with the ideational and perceptual forces to add to the existing hegemonic, ethnocentric and exclusive practices. As they wonder to what degree IR theories reflect the reality they address and how far they need to be challenged, non-Western paradigms put the exception alongside the universal in the formulation of sub-systemic "post-Westphalian" concepts and theories. Accordingly, an alternative paradigm resorts to African, Asian and other cultural experiences to develop a concept that can be generalized in the discipline to capture distinct and particular patterns and compare them with others. It is to focus on different

¹Acharya, Amitav and Barry Buzan, *Why is there no non-Western international relations theory? An introduction*

² *History and international Relations*, edited by Thomas Smith (Routledge: London and NY, 1999).

practices and praxis as sources for theorization to transform local knowledge into a global tool of analysis.

Before considering the Turkish foreign policy as an alternative approach conceiving a moral perspective for the world order, it is necessary to indicate that the call for alternative approaches derives from a diagnosis signaling various deficiencies in the adaptive and interpretative capacities of the IR fundamental theories, notably, the Realist and Neorealist schools. On the other hand, by going through the various non-Western approaches, the need to produce others remains a necessity due to their incomplete and non-theoretical character as well as their inability to metamorphose into a practice supported by distinct normative and structural bases from the existing theories. Thus, the choice of the Turkish foreign policy is justified by its provision of an alternative episteme to the world order, unique normative conception, intellectual foundation and institutional legitimacy.

By tackling the Turkish foreign policy, more attention will be given to the moral dimension in the international practice due to the lack of a sufficient work dealing with morality in the IR alternative approaches. To understand how the Turkish foreign policy presents an alternative formulation and practice in IR, the study demonstrates how the Western prism dominates the conceptual and normative foundations of the discipline through the Realist and Neorealist schools while focusing on morality as a case study. Afterwards, the shortcomings of the various alternative approaches will be examined to determine to what extent there is a need to develop other ones and what the Turkish foreign policy can add in terms of moral standards and practices to the established world order. By shedding the light on the concept of strategic depth, the study will show how it establishes a praxis based on a moral ontological and epistemological foundation that alleviates the under-representation of the dominant structural and legal injustice in world politics.

Morality in the Realist and Neorealist schools of IR: The Exigency of Creating an Alternative Approach

Morality as a normative concept and practice in IR was an object of interest for countless schools and empirical studies, notably, the Realists and Neorealists. The choice of these two schools is not only based on the abundance of their sources treating morality but also on the main question of this study. The goal is to demonstrate how the Turkish foreign policy, emanating from an Islamic intellectual and normative source, presents a properly competitive, theoretically conceived and institutionally persistent alternative different from the existing ones. Therefore, the analysis will be based on both schools of thought since they were the basis of Davutoglu's critical vision about the world order and

formulation of "the strategic depth" concept. By coming up with an "alternative paradigm", as labeled by Davutoğlu, he managed to adopt a postmodernist approach in the formulation of his critical standpoint in regards to the realist conception of morality.³ By using the postmodern perspective, he defied the Western domination on the discipline by presenting an Islamic method of conceptualization and interpretation of world politics based on morality as both a concept and practice.

His model, inspired by Ibn Khaldun's cyclical theory of state,⁴ emphasized a confrontation between the equality of the Islamic universalism and the inequality of the Western unilateralism just like values versus the flow of power.⁵ He denounced the realist nature of interstate relations while affirming the necessity to establish civilizational relationships based on meta-power and *assabiyya* instead of self-help and anarchy. The domination of the Western prism on the international practice is clearly illustrated through the Realist school for two reasons. First, both Realism and Neorealism highlight how the Western prism historically and normatively dominates the formulation of the IR concepts and practice since the time of Ancient Greece till today as illustrated by the notion of morality. Second, these two schools are a source of inspiration for the American foreign policy, the hegemon pole since the end of the Cold War, in formulating the premises of the global order.

According to the Realist school, morality is marked by an exclusive domination of the Western paradigm. It is conceived as a material concept based on the centrality of the nation-state, its power aspirations, the anarchic nature of the international system as well as history linearity and one-sidedness.⁶ Morality depends essentially on the structure of the world order established on the Westphalian system since 1648 according to which the nation state is the main actor and founder of international relations. The standard of morality in the international practice, being different from the individual moral order, is derived from the autonomy of the state and its independence manifested in its political sovereignty, territorial integrity and self-determination. Only military threat justifies the recourse to resistance and violent punishment by the victim state or the international society. The use of power is lawful in the case of a deliberately perpetrated aggression against a government that violates its citizens' rights through repression, massacres or suppression of secessionist claims, as these are

³ Davutoğlu, Ahmet. *Alternative Paradigms: The Impact of Islamic and Western Weltanschauungs on Political Theory* (Lanham-New York-London: University Press of America, 1994a).

⁴ Ibn Khaldun's cyclical theory of state is an ontological and epistemological Islamic framework combining both the state, national politics, and IR into the theory of power cycle.

⁵ Sabet, Amr. *Islam and The Political, Theory, Governance and International Relations* (Pluto Press: London, 2008).

⁶ Williams, Bruce. "State Morality in International Relations", *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (Feb., 1923), pp. 17-33.

the cases where states lose their political sovereignty. Thus, the morality of states' survival and the preservation of their national interests, from a Realist standpoint, is the standard that dominates interstate relations while rendering them anarchical and violent.

Policies as activities oriented towards multiple materials goals displaying different conceptions of the good, the right and the wrong, a disagreement emerged about the hierarchy of the moral values in the international practice.⁷ Thus, Realism stressed on the inevitability of violence in an anarchical order deprived of a central authority and common values that are difficult or even impossible to achieve. IR is accordingly perceived as the field of rational choice where morals are a hypocritical disguise or a sign of ethical confusion as they are marked by cacophony, conflicting visions, cultural relativity and the absence of a universal standard. As a result, a consensus emerged on the unity of the material nature of morality, as the principle calling only for the preservation of nation-states' autonomy and their survival due to the nature of states' activities and the diversity of the moral foundational sources.

The centrality of the Westphalian system in conceiving morality is manifested by the refusal of the established analogy between the individual and the state concerning the moral obligation.⁸ This position is not only based on the difference in nature between the state and the individual and the inability of making a moral judgment in IR. However, it is also based on the difference between the state of nature where the individual was an independent actor and nation-state where he abdicated its freedom of action to the sovereign on the national level. According to Niebuhr, human ambition related to the increase of power and interest became the dominant pillar of states' foreign policies and limited human achievements due to the oppressive subordination of his life to the state and the anarchical nature of its international commitments.⁹ There is a conflict between the individual ideals and the political demands pursued by the state. Self-interest, being dominant on the group's interest in the state of nature, is limited by the state coercion of the individual and considers security achievements as a moral centrality. In this sense, international relations and the national scene are two different ethical spheres.

The moral conception in Realism, describing the human destination as a cycle of tragedy in reaction to Idealism in the 19th and 20th centuries, departs from the evolution of the nation-state creation to the analysis of the diplomatic and

⁷ Doppelt, Gerald. "Walzer's Theory of Morality in International Relations", *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (Autumn, 1978), pp. 3-26.

⁸ Morgenthau, Hans. *Politics Among Nations*. (New York: Knopf Publishing Press, 1948).

⁹ Doyle, Michael. "Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs", *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (Summer, 1983), pp. 205-235.

military relations in IR.¹⁰ The moral choice depends on the anarchic nature of the international system based on the pessimistic view of the human nature that is in permanent need of states, as the only international players, to increase their security and interests vis-à-vis each other. According to Morgenthau, the recourse to power is related to the IR social structure and the human nature since the international incidents are socially constructed for reasons related to irrational facts such as emotions and interests.¹¹

On the other hand, the nature and the degree of the states' moral responsibility are vague and indeterminate because of their dependence on the ontological reality of the state. The State, as an abstract legal personality operating in its sphere of domination and jurisdiction without legal will or accountability, has a legal supremacy and is detached of morality. It manifests a moral ideal, a transcendent being and an expression of God to the world. The will of the state is, therefore, equated to a moral ideal since it is consistent with its essential nature based on power maximization and survival as the most moral goals. With the absence of a conscious and organized power to control state security and ensure its existence, the moral justification of its actions depends on their consequences. The state is the sole and principal agent responsible of its own safety and is obliged to act alone and on its own responsibility, which explains the dependence of morality fulfillment on its survival. The security of the personal and political life within the state is essential for the development of morality that depends, by its turn, on the empowerment of a regulatory body to adjust the distribution of resources and the state's needs.

By examining the Realist sources, the history of Europe, since Ancient Greece and passing by the Christian legacy till the contemporary international order, dominated the formulation of the moral conception of IR. Morality drew its intellectual sources from Ancient Greece such as Thucydides.¹² In his book entitled "History", he focused on the moral tragedy while emphasizing the persistence of security dilemma as the reason for classical power imbalance that justifies the necessity go to war with the priority of preserving the state survival and its power. This explains why, according to Thrasymachus and other Athenian generals, morality is the product of power and ethics is the analysis of reality. As for Machiavelli, a theoretician from the Renaissance period, ethics is devilish as the nature of IR creates the need to limit the moral and ethical practices of state leaders as states' survival is a priority in the hierarchy of ethics

¹⁰ *History and international Relations*, edited by Thomas Smith (Routledge: London and NY, 1999).

¹¹ Price, Richard. "Moral Limit and Possibility in World Politics", *International Organization*, Vol. 62, No. 2 (Spring, 2008), pp. 191-220.

¹² The Historical Problem in International Relations in *History and international Relations*, edited by Thomas Smith (Routledge: London and NY, 1999), 8-32

and any means is considered necessary and justified for its preservation.¹³ Moreover, Niebuhr, being inspired by the Christian philosophy of just war, emphasized IR moral ambiguity. For him, the limitation of evil, the presence of natural rights and utilitarianism exist only in a society of a sovereign and self-determined nation that must settle its conflicts without war.

This moral ambiguity comes from the human nature encompassing virtues and vices. It's a duality transposed from the individual level to the social, societal and international ones because of the linearity of history that led to technological progress without moral development. This ambiguity is related to the fact that international relations is an area of competitive goods where the society accumulates individual selfishness and otherness in a collective egoism making politics a domain of power competition. Carr, believing in the linearity of history, another aspect of the domination of the Western prism on IR theories, and being inspired by Niebuhr's work of "Moral Rights, Immoral Society", contended that national interest controls ideology and formulates laws and principles.¹⁴ Accordingly, wars are tactics where morality is manipulated by the privileged vis-à-vis the less privileged to justify and maintain their position. Foreign policy is then a compromise between power and appeasement, the latter, a necessary moral basis of what is fair and reasonable according to the state leadership. Consequently, power creates its own morality and coercion becomes a consensual issue among citizens and government. Carr joined Morgenthau and Machiavelli in their linear perception of history, inspired by the rationality of natural sciences, as a series of cause-effect scenarios transposed to IR. The decline of the moral evaluation of power pertains, as IR is a continuous manifestation of power and interest where morality is in tension with the political obligation.

Inspired by the realist view, the Neorealists adopted the concept of power balance as the only means to reduce the recourse to power by states and maintain the system stability. It acts as a referee between those who are for the preservation of the status quo and those who defy it.¹⁵ Unlike the national order in which interests, shared values and state authority lead to an equilibrium, on the international level, the power balance is achieved through direct opposition or a competitive balance. The political stability of the international order is considered moral as, through power balance, the use of power is reduced, which allows the advancement of civilization and the emergence of new nations.

¹³ The Historical Problem in International Relations in *History and international Relations*, edited by Thomas Smith (Routledge: London and NY, 1999), 8-32

¹⁴ Niebuhr, Reinhold and Edward Carr. History, Contingency, and the Roots of Realism in *History and international Relations*, edited by Thomas Smith (Routledge: London and NY, 1999), 33-58.

¹⁵ Waltz, Kenneth. The Poverty of Ahistoricism in *History and international Relations*, edited by Thomas Smith (Routledge: London and NY, 1999), 89-114.

Although power balance refers to a balance of rights, interests and influence as a socially constructed system by common values, Neorealists didn't specify the morals or principles on which it is based especially in the case of weak states which find their independence threatened. Besides, the absence of a consensus on the foundations on which the proper balance must be conceived leads to a conceptual vagueness. By focusing on systemic factors and being convinced of the anarchic nature of the international order, Neorealism rejects any possibility of change. It neglects the issue of morality as the configuration of the international order influences states' behavior and leads to a balance among despite their power divergence.

By rejecting the domination of the western meta-narratives on IR related to nation-state centrality, progress, linearity, world anarchy and the normative supremacy of the West, postmodernism believes in the need to revise history. As a means for entrenching modernity, history marginalized any alternative where morality can exist. This explains the emergence of other venues of change based on normative particularities, specific contexts, unique intellectual perspectives and entities' understanding instead of the Age of Light standards that don't recognize uniqueness, distinctiveness and the different historical constructions. By focusing on the relativity of history, postmodernism supports informal history as a social construction of power in various specific conditions. The meaning, by having many truths, can be resituated instead of being "discovered" which requires the rejection of the scientific method involving a totalitarian logic of operation. It is, therefore, necessary to resort to the problematization of history, the discovery of its bias and usages while including the group's culture and the individual's will. As there isn't any fault-line between the national and international scenes, human agency contributes to the formulation of the interactions on the international level.

Nation state, capitalism and globalization, as teleologies of the Western power practice, are circumvented, according to the postmodernists, to reflect the unspoken that isn't articulated and remains invisible. Thus, they exceed the nation-state narrative as a symbol of truth and power leading to a merger between the nation state and political identity. The arbitrary character of national interest and security based on the elite imagination, interpretation and inclusion and exclusion strategies is rejected as it created a state of permanent crisis manifested in the discontinuity and fragmentation of locations and spaces and the volatility of the different social forms. In response, it is necessary to focus on what is illegitimate and discredited and how identities are formed and practiced by subaltern populations through the heteroglossia approach.¹⁶ This

¹⁶ Exit from history? Postmodern International Relations in *History and international Relations*, edited by Thomas Smith (Routledge: London and NY, 1999), 143-173.

approach takes into account different opposing voices. It breaks up with the orthodox methods where history is a hierarchy of significance with a beginning and an end and causal series in between as well as an invention directed to an intended public. In IR, the postmodern approach analyzes power in the peripheries instead of the center by the "decentralization of analysis" overcoming the naturalization of sovereignty and anarchy, as referential heroic practices where the first position is preferred to the second.

Based on the postmodernist critical logic, various alternative approaches have been developed. While there are countless non-Western paradigms, they didn't reconsider the IR theories in response to local conjunctures and global exigencies. They were intellectually developed through state leaders' biographies, regional specialists and official initiatives without reformulating the normative foundations of IR theories.¹⁷ In reaction to the academic weakness of the non-Western approaches and the persistent structural and normative gap in favor of the West, some attempts of conciliation were proposed by Western authors but tirelessly, as they have accentuated the dichotomy. These proposals considered normative divergence as the main cause of disagreement in the creation of the global order regulatory mechanisms, the prioritization of global issues and the formulation of common interests. They stressed on the need for a normative reconciliation without considering the structural and material gap, still persistent in favor of the Western camp that submits any normative reformulation of the global order under its authority. Among the various alternative approaches, the focus will be on those related to the reformulation of IR theories related to morality.

This was the case of Amitav Etzioni who problematized the ineffectiveness of the existing IR theories manifested in the hesitation between the use of power and the creation of an international community based on consensus and liberal tools to ensure the global order's security and demands.¹⁸ This hesitation, according to him, is due to the difficulty of reaching a consensus because of the divergence of the normative foundations and the instruments for the realization of human primacy as well as the lack of a common understanding of what is good and what needs be done. The relativity of moral codes and multiculturalism are the reasons behind the moral vacuum and the increase of the fundamental religiosity in IR.¹⁹ As a solution, he proposed to empower the regulatory function

¹⁷ Acharya, Amitav and Barry Buzan. Why is there no non-Western international relations theory? An introduction in *Non-Western International Relations Theory Perspectives On and Beyond Asia*, edited by Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan (Routledge: London and NY, 2010), 1-25.

¹⁸ Etzioni, Amitav. *From Empire to Community: A New Approach to International Relations* (Palgrave, MacMillan: NY, 2004).

¹⁹ According to Etzioni, there must be common moral values supported by the nations and the different institutions based on a synthesis of various values from the East and the West. It's a sort of conciliation between particularity and universality that prioritizes the latter and recognizes the former that allows national and transnational bodies to

of the international order through the combination of different standards from the East and the West and the inclusion of different types of actors other than the state such as the civil society as well as the international networks and movements.

Another attempt by Jonathan Fox and Shmuel Sandler was to integrate religion as a normative source in the IR theorization process.²⁰ According to their study, religion was ignored in IR because the theory was ethnocentric, dominated by European authors, marked by the legacy of the Age of Light and based on a secular Westphalian tradition. However, religion remains a source of influence in IR in terms of legitimizing different political practices, formulating worldviews, dominating internal issues and inspiring the fundamental transnational movements. By looking for concepts that can be transposed to IR from religion, the latter is a soft power tool due to its power of persuasion and attraction on people with similar faith as well as being a source of conflict for those having different convictions. Their study highlighted the centrality of religious norms as a source for formulating IR theories as they influence the international practice. However, it overlooked the structural aspect of interstate relations in terms of power influence on the selection and the integration of the religious norms in the theory. Therefore, there is a continuous need for an alternative approach due to the absence of a non-Western IR theory that reconsiders the structural and normative aspects of the interstate relations and leads to a corrective practice based on a distinct normative and intellectual conception.

According to Amr Sabet, Islam, as an IR reference formulating its episteme through adaptation, imitation and hybridization, presents a different foundation of behavior, truth and good life than that of the West and its teleologies, notably, the nation state and the distinction between the national and international levels.²¹ Facing secularism and the modern liberal project, as two pre-conditions for development and democracy, Islam is an alternative paradigm based on religion, faith and morality. Instead of the approved system of knowledge in the international world order and the speeches related to the Westphalian Peace, the

acknowledge their entities' right to decide regarding their particular preferences. Acting as a referee between the legitimate and illegitimate use of power, this synthesis constitutes a moral authority based on the recourse to normative frameworks to address the absence of transcendental and moral values and to balance between materialism and individualism. The aim is to find the actions' substance and procedures for achieving morality through values guiding the individual's life, leading to a moral understanding and acting as a functional basis for international institutions. Instead of the Hobbesian perception of morality as the ethics of survival, actions have to be judged in terms of interests' convergence and goals serving the international community and empowering international laws and institutions by orienting interest towards human well-being instead of national sovereignty.

²⁰ Fox, Jonathan and Shmuel Sandler. *Bringing Religion into International Relations* (Palgrave, Macmillan, NY, 2004).

²¹ Sabet, Amr. *Islam and The Political, Theory, Governance and International Relations* (Pluto Press: London, 2008).

Islamic reference is based on a distinct historical view and alternative principles rather than power and materialism. It offers a world vision instead of incarnating a unique socio-historical process of development.

From its traditional and original sources, Islam has a predetermined and legal vision of IR as a world divided into two abodes: the one of Islam and the other of war as a policy context. This contribution, unlike the previous ones, takes into account the structural and normative deficiencies in international relations as a starting point in the reformulation of the IR theory. Thus, in analogy to the Westphalian peace agreement creating the Christian community versus the other, the Ottoman Empire, the Islamic world division establishes a centrality for the Sharia based on the Umma in terms of dealing with Muslims and their lives. The defeat of the Ottoman Empire, colonialism and the emergence of nation-states disturbed the power balance in favor of the West, limited the reaction of the Muslim world to the integration or the rejection of modernity and eliminated any possibility of an authentic response to the IR theory.

In reaction to the Western orthodoxies and modernity, the rationalization of Islam took place through the islamization of knowledge and the conceptualization of social sciences to develop alternative religious concepts. The rationalization of Islam as a reform aims to achieve compatibility between Islam and reason for its survival. It led to the emergence of the renewal "tajdid" and diligence "ijtihad" against a backward Islam.²² Some, like El Sadr, Al Mawdudi, Qutb and Shariati, refused these reforms as Islam is beyond the failures of secular ideologies, meets people's needs and presents an autonomous IR theory. For them, the rational epistemology of modernity defies divine authority, increases the Western power and limits the creation of a legitimate social system. However, being comprehensive, complete, self-sufficient and based on divine laws different than the human ones deviating from the authority of God and morality, Sharia includes a modern understanding of the social dimension of justice, the political theory of the state, people as agents of change, foreign policy and trade.²³

On the other hand, being apologetic to the West and pathetic vis-à-vis Islam, others have surrendered to the exigencies of Western development and the secularization of religion through ijtihad. It is a sort of an islamization of modernity in a postmodern perspective in order to renew Islam in its concern of

²² It's a different method of knowledge that isn't limited to materialism but extends to the metaphysical question of morality, divine authority and purpose. Human intention and the truth of belief were given a priority in recognizing God's authority and the unity of Islam as a political and religious authority.

²³ Tadjbakhsh, Sharbanou. *International relations theory and the Islamic worldview in Non-Western International Relations Theory Perspectives On and Beyond Asia*, edited by Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan (Routledge: London and NY, 2010).

morality, good life and ethics while taking into account the Western rationality and materialism. Through the recourse to the Western tools for Islamic purposes to islamize knowledge, information is relocated, rearranged and reconsidered for the enrichment of the discipline and the resuscitation of religion. By islamization, the focus is on morality, normativity and purposes. Thereby, it links knowledge to the main purpose of the human existence as defined by the Creator through a methodology that goes beyond positivism and breaks up with epistemological imperialism.²⁴ As knowledge must be related to the ethical and metaphysical values for guidance, it is essential to deconstruct the Western paradigms in IR to determine the different discontinuities and opportunities in progress, modernity and rationality and to resurrect religious knowledge. This methodology called "Sorokin model of knowledge truth" is an attempt to link between senses, reason and faith through the consideration of empiricism, rationality and intuition respectively to establish a new scientific paradigm.²⁵ By considering the senses, the ideational of the divine sources and idealism, it is a synthesis between the ideational and empiricism.

Based on a postmodernist perspective, the islamization of knowledge reconsiders the socio-political nature of the modern state to formulate an IR Islamic theory that includes local heritage, religious commandments and modern demands. By creating such a theory, Islam, as a cultural framework, defines knowledge, good life and goals on the basis of interdependence between man, God, nature and morality instead of the material pursuit of joy as the ontological foundation of the modern state.²⁶ Thus, scientific reason and the supremacy of human sovereignty are challenged and religion is conceived as a human affair affected by time, space and historical changes and a moral claim defining the purpose of life, faith, self-protection and the community's consciousness. Amr Sabet's theoretical proposal starts with a critic of the modern nation-state whose conception should be based on internal principles emanating from the social group's belief and worldview. By ensuring the group cohesion, or *assabiyya* in other words, through reason, solidarity and consciousness, according to Ibn Khaldun's theory, the *raison d'être* of the state is a means of good life and Islamic values' propagation.²⁷

²⁴ *International Relations and Islam: Diverse Perspectives*, edited by Nassef Manabilang Adiong (Cambridge Scholars Publishing: UK, 2013).

²⁵ Tadjbakhsh, Sharbanou. International relations theory and the Islamic worldview in *Non-Western International Relations Theory Perspectives On and Beyond Asia*, edited by Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan (Routledge: London and NY, 2010).

²⁶ Sabet, Amr. *Islam and The Political, Theory, Governance and International Relations* (Pluto Press: London, 2008).

²⁷ He mentioned the presence of 3 types of authorities: natural social solidarity, natural and divine laws. The Islamic ideas concerning knowledge in IR is based on belief, justice and religious morality versus interests and material power.

This contribution indicates that the moral foundations of Sharia, disposing of a metaphysical dimension, develop a cognitive approach for IR and give rise to a distinct practice. By focusing on its nature as an internal legal system, the externalization of the Sharia to IR raises the question of the reconciliation between two paradigms, the Western and the Islamic, on the normative and ontological levels. In light of the static nature of the Islamic paradigm, it is essential to address the incompatibilities and develop a process of conceptualization for changing Islam from "an object" to "a subject" of international relations. This is to make the Islamic paradigm applicable as an IR explanatory framework on the basis of a strategic vision and influential cultural narratives emanating from the nation to justify or condemn the international practices. The ability to reconcile between the Islamic paradigm and the international order exigencies through an Islamic conceptual formulation and political practice, was intellectually and practically manifested by the Davutoglu's vision of strategic depth in the Turkish foreign policy.

Davutoglu emphasized the need to consider the concerns and the traditions of the majority of the people in the world who don't live in the West and developed an Islamic IR paradigm. He was aware of the ontological and epistemological conflict between Islam and the Christian origins of the international order as well as the influence of the community awareness on the internal and external behavior of the nation.²⁸ According to him, every nation develops a self-narration to conceptualize its relations with others in conformity with its perception of its strategic importance and cultural specificity against a hegemonic domination. By addressing the interaction between religion and culture, Davutoglu contended that based on the dominant culture's idioms, nations produce and perpetuate power relations in addition to the adoption of a speech favoring the emergence of a hegemonic *assabiyya* and counter-narrations based on religious nationalism. It's a community renaissance aiming to review people's identity, thoughts, history and experience. Every nation manifesting similarities, has priorities, agendas, interests and views expressed by a narrative and a conceptual design acting as a language used to express, represent and reflect the community's worldview. Facing the same priorities, the data is organized, ordered and interpreted differently among nations about international and global issues. In this sense, the Western and the Islamic classical traditions have differently acknowledged similar issues like war, peace, security, order, power, the international system and the role of the state.

Being inspired by the Realists and Neorealists in their power perception, Davutoglu's alternative paradigm highlights a different conceptual and historical worldview with an autonomous and independent discursive outlook. By having

²⁸ Davutoğlu, Ahmet. *The Civilizational Transformation and the Muslim World* (Kuala Lumpur: Quill, 1994b).

recourse to the concept of *assabiyya*, it presents an Islamic narrative and ontological foundation to the notion of power opposing rationality and realism to Sharia and *assabiyya*. Both Realism and Islam, developing claims about power with two different substantive bases of action, reflect two categories of political behavior. While rationality reflects a relational power to higher values to influence behavior in a structure or dominant regime, *assabiyya* is a meta-power that refers to the efforts and behaviors to change the current structure and rules.

As a worldview, *assabiyya* projects ethical, cosmological and ontological principles reflecting the loyalties, beliefs and identities of the nation and reveals key doctrines to guide the human conduct. Beliefs and ideas play an important role in ordering, organizing and interpreting information to provide a conceptual framework for the world, formulate agendas and programs and limit the conceivable alternatives. A symmetrical relationship emerges between Sharia, jurisprudence “*fiqh*” and religious verdict “*fatwa*” through which *assabiyya* becomes a praxis.²⁹ The opinion of a recognized elites who, by making decisions and issuing authoritarian rules through consensus “*ijma*”, develop the paradigmatic judgment or *fatwa* of an epistemic Islamic community. Accordingly, strategic actions are formulated to achieve goals based on shared principles, convictions and a worldview. This praxis is the result of a normative closure, constituting the macro level of the Islamic paradigm, and a cognitive openness, its micro level, creating a self-referential unity of the Islamic theory allowing its adaptation to the international exigencies.

Davutoglu's criticism is largely inspired by Ibn Khaldun, particularly in its conception of the state, which, according to him, is the result of human cooperation and not violent conflicts that lead to regionalization, centralization and differentiation.³⁰ Rejecting the state of nature, the alternative paradigm as a derivation of the Islamic theory presents a different IR empirical reality and concepts. In this regard, Davutoglu challenged the territoriality of the state and denied its inherited and naturalized necessity. There is thus a political reconceptualization of the modern state in a competitive narrative and speech based on a different religious consciousness. The challenge of the modern state and the production of an alternative are related to the fact that the IR theories are based on the modern state speech and practices that limit the horizon of political action. They resulted in an unjust international order based on the respect of sovereign states as a colonial strategy of encirclement in a challenging global order where what is applied to the Western states is not to the others, notably, the Muslim ones. Besides, the globalization control mechanisms such as exploitation, opportunity accumulation, emulation and adaptation, sustains

²⁹ Sabet, Amr. *Islam and The Political, Theory, Governance and International Relations* (Pluto Press: London, 2008).

³⁰ Human cooperation is based on social cohesion, *assabiyya*, reason and social reproduction.

differences among states.³¹ Thus, the US hegemonic order led to the entrenchment of a binary structure in international relations illustrated by the intra-textuality versus the extra-textuality reflecting two distinct worlds with different hierarchical relationships.³² The first is the great powers' society dominated by liberal assumptions emanating from their self-referential paradigms and the other is that of the Muslim world dominated by realistic assumptions imposed by the global order exigencies. The self-referential standards of the European model of state maintain this inequality by controlling the access to the sources of values and the solutions for problems on the basis of a categorical system of closure, exclusion and control. It results in categorical institutions such as the Convention on Human Rights, peace treaties and gender empowerment provisions as submissive tracks that reduce the states' capacity of choice and power.

To deconstruct the structure of the modern state, an alternative ideology and speech have to be developed to change its dimensions, significance, meaning, content and the epistemic dimension of its social life as well as the system of meanings in the collective mentalities. The state, as a means of moral and religious values' dissemination, influences the global structure and adapts to its provisions. Starting from the national level and the contestation of the modern foundations of the state, Davutoglu tries to induce a change in the systemic order on the conceptual, political, economic and social levels for the enhancement of its organizational structure in terms of resource allocation and the attainment of favorable conditions. It follows an interchangeability between non territoriality, as a strategic and geopolitical reality increasing the state capacity to exceed the system limits and introduce new principles, and the abandon of absolute power in space management in the international system. It's by breaking up with the borders' taboos that a state turns it into a regional power. Inspired by the Sharia in its ontological foundations as an autonomous conceptual and self-referential change refusing emulation and adaptation, Davutoglu's alternative paradigm delegitimizes the state structure through an active regional engagement. Accordingly, being convinced of the need to develop an alternative moral and normative paradigm, Davutoglu operationalized the notion of strategic depth as an IR Islamic approach in the Turkish foreign policy.

³¹ Emulation is the imposition and the generalization of the state system; adaptation consists of inciting others to recognize differences and develop interactions; exploitation is the powerful states' domination over resources and values for increasing their interests through the coordination of less powerful countries' efforts and opportunity accumulation is the reward monopoly segregating structures and states

³² Sabet, Amr. *Islam and The Political, Theory, Governance and International Relations* (Pluto Press: London, 2008).

"Strategic Depth" As an Alternative Paradigm in the Turkish Foreign Policy under the Rule of the AKP

Turkey's foreign policy is influenced by the Turanic and Turkic trends that adopted an expansionist policy based on ethnic and cultural motivations to rally the Turkish and Turkic people at the borders of the Empire.³³ In addition, Neo-ottomanism, designed by Ozal in the 90s and empowered later by further ideological precepts and concise theoretical constructions, influenced the formulation of the Turkish foreign policy under the rule of the AKP. The commonalities between pan-Turkism, Turanism and neo-Ottomanism are the expansionist ideological premises that are rejecting and questioning the status quo and isolationism. According to these ideologies, Turkey must play the role of a central power in Eurasia through the adoption of a diversified and multidimensional policy towards the Turkic and Muslim states that once belonged to the Ottoman Empire.

The fall of the Soviet Union, the independence of the Central Asian Republics, the emergence of conflicts in the Balkans with Muslim minorities and the arrival of Ozal favored the formulation of the Turkish foreign policy in accordance with the Neo-ottoman principles. Murrison considers Ozal a source of inspiration for the AKP since he defied the military and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs bureaucracy in the formulation of the state foreign policy, as the leader of a conservative national party adopting liberal principles. It manifested a Turkish-Islamic synthesis highlighting the importance of the Islamic culture and morality for Turkey's position in the international system while considering the Ottoman legacy as a main source of its soft power.

Therefore, strategic depth, the key concept of Turkey's foreign policy, is mainly inspired by Ozal's Neo-Ottomanism and Erbakan's multi-dimensionality in its theoretical conception by Davutoglu.³⁴ This concept implies an active engagement in the neighborhood based on historical and cultural ties as well as a communitarian belonging to the Ottoman space. Thus, Turkey is a central state situated between different zones of influence, hinterland, which is the source of its diversified identity and multidimensionality manifested in its foreign policy. Davutoglu believes that the value of a nation is based on its history and geography, two constant dimensions according to which the state may reconsider its capabilities, its role and position in a changing international conjuncture. Similarly, they create a historical responsibility among decision makers with regard to neighboring regions where Turkey can intervene thanks

³³ Murrison, Alexander. The Strategic Depth Doctrine of Turkish Foreign Policy. *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 42 (2, 2006) p. 945-964.

³⁴ Onis, Ziya and Suhnaz Yilmaz. Between Europeanization and Euro-Asianism: Foreign Policy Activism in Turkey During the AKP Era. *Turkish Studies*, vol. 10 (1, 2009).

to the evolution of the communication media and the socio-economic interdependence anchored by globalization.

For Davutoglu, communitarianism is a direct critique to the westernization and secularization processes witnessed by the Muslim states, notably Turkey. It is a reconsideration of the Turkish political history influenced by a modernization system imposed on the society by the Kemalist elite that led to its self-division.³⁵ The Muslim community, he said, is part of a transnational dynamic that transcends the Western nation-state model, due to the existence of a collective consciousness, on the identity and socio-cultural levels, which doesn't stop at ethnic and national differences. In support of these arguments, Davutoglu distinguished between two periods in the modernization of the Muslim societies: the premature period of modernization and the civilizational resurrection that took place at the beginning and at the end of the 20th century, respectively. During the first period, the Muslim modernizers intended to preserve their identity against the colonizers while the second period was marked by different reinterpretation efforts by the civilization promoters' authentic positions in the Muslim societies. In this period, an affirmation of the ontological and existential historical facts of the Islamic civilization emerged in response to the failure of the secularization process.

The psychological perception is the main element of Davutoglu's contribution "Alternative Paradigms" where he goes beyond the community social bonds to understand its self-perception. Through the ontology of the human being, the individual develops a worldview and shares it with others as a common self-perception.³⁶ The human being is distinguished by his strive for stability and freedom whose perception is integrated in the self-perception of a collectively developed civilization. Consequently, psychology, according to Davutoglu, as the starting point in building civilizations, develops the community social order from the ontological paradigm anchored in each civilization. In light of this conclusion, he denoted that the Muslim civilization, having established a hierarchy between God, man and nature, is not based on an ontological proximity as in other civilizations. As a result, the social hierarchy hasn't any *raison d'être*, unlike the Indian and Christian civilizations where individuals have the privilege of being in relationship with God and hence classified in a social hierarchy distinguished from others.³⁷

³⁵ Ulusoy, Hasan. *One policy, Many Identities; the Consistency of Turkey's Foreign Policy with Special Emphasis on its Security Dimension in the Post-Cold War Era, a Constructivist Appraisal*. (Istanbul: the ISIS Press, 2007).

³⁶ Interview conducted with K. Balci at Today's Zaman headquarter, Istanbul, Turkey, July, 2011.

³⁷ Davutoğlu, Ahmet. *Alternative Paradigms: The Impact of Islamic and Western Weltanschauungs on Political Theory* (Lanham-New York-London: University Press of America, 1994a).

Based on the ontological foundation of civilization in creating a worldview, individuals create a consolidated self-perception that is disseminated over the time within the society, which explains the importance of history for nations. The same for geography whose importance in the Muslim civilization in terms of birthplace and formulation of a monolithic self-perception, allowed its expansion and interaction with other civilizations due to the geographical proximity and centrality of the cities of Islam, Mecca and Medina, to other civilizations' centers. It is through this interaction that the Islamic civilization evolved and is perpetuated while reconsidering its self-perception in order to adapt to the different civilizations. Consequently, the normative and intellectual achievements of these civilizations were rebuilt and integrated within the Islamic civilization, which highlights the importance of the notion of alternative paradigms for civilizations' sustainability.

Davutoglu verified the alternative paradigm notion by the recourse to many historical eras where interactions took place between different civilizations. According to him, there is a continuity in history, since ancient times, which was interrupted by waves of colonization in the 19th century. In this sense, civilizations have a life cycle. First come the self-perception formulation and its development through its interaction with other civilizations, then, its expansion until reaching the peak of its intellectual originality and its paradigmatic consolidation on the political level. Once the intellectual expansion of the civilization stops and turns into a political paradigm, the civilization witnesses the beginning of its decline. In light of this analysis, the Islamic and Western civilizations started to decline during the Ottoman era and by the end of the 20th century respectively due to their intellectual stagnation and ideological saturation as an uncontested political paradigm.

To overcome this intellectual crisis, new ethics need to be developed in a new intellectual paradigm conceiving classical and fundamental principles. From the stage of maturity and stability, the West went into an intellectual stagnation strengthened by the transformation of the Western paradigm into a political one crystallizing, both, the peak of the civilization, notably, its superiority and the beginning of its decline. According to Davutoglu, Turkey, being the last cradle of ancient civilizations and a witness of an identity crisis, may contribute to the formulation of a new paradigm for the Muslim civilization.³⁸ Having self-confidence based on its Islamic self-perception despite its modernization, Turkey as a "torn state", as conceived by Huntington, is capable of overcoming this state of crisis through an intellectual production and the development of a new individual and collective paradigm. Based on its central position, socioeconomic

³⁸ Dagi, Ihsan. Transformation of Islamic Political Identity in Turkey. *Turkish Studies*, vol. 1 (6, 2005) p. 21-37.

and cultural assets and multi-identity character, Turkey can facilitate the success of the globalization process by narrowing the gap between the North and the South as well as the East and the West.

The intellectual reproduction emerges within the rediscovery of the psychological ontology on the personal level and oneself sociological ontology on the historical level. The first ontology answers the question of who I am and the second of what I represent? By answering these two questions, continuity will be established in the area of ancient civilizations "kadim medeniyet", notably, the Arab and Muslim world. It is the permanent transformation of civilizations through their openness and adaptation manifested in the attainment of a new synthesis for their foundations that they persist. In light of this reasoning, any hierarchy or classification among civilizations has no *raison d'être* since they should engage into a process of exchange based on normative interdependence. Consequently, Davutoglu questions the centrality of the Western civilization as the only predominant world civilization while considering such centrality as an illusion levered to trigger a crisis in the peripheries' self-perception.

Alternative paradigms can be better understood by highlighting two models of civilization, the Islamic and the Western models whose ontological and epistemological differences in human knowledge and spirituality are manifested in their productions on the political, economic and cultural levels.³⁹ The interaction between these two civilizations paves the way for the reformulation and the reconsideration of the ontological and epistemological premises of the Islamic paradigm.

Unlike the pragmatic postulates put forward by Western intellectuals about the conversion of civilizations to the Western model, Davutoglu contended that civilizations' authenticity, by having a core, sustain and persist.⁴⁰ This core is the self-perception, the foundation of an intellectual prototype based on a worldview, *Weltanschauung*. In this sense, for a civilization to be eliminated, it is necessary to destroy self-perception and *Weltanschauung* and replace them by a new self-perception and worldview. The civilizations' power is based on maintaining a link between self-perception and life style, in other words, the meaning of life "*Lebenswelt*".

According to Davutoglu, 5 self-perceptions arise within the following prototypes: strong and rigid; strong and flexible; strong and local; weak and rigid and weak and flexible. From the assumptions developed by Galtung in the

³⁹ Altunisik, Meliha. Worldviews and Turkish Foreign Policy in the Middle East. *New Perspectives on Turkey*, n°40 (2009) p. 171-195.

⁴⁰ Davutoğlu, Ahmet. *Alternative Paradigms: The Impact of Islamic and Western Weltanschauungs on Political Theory* (Lanham-New York-London: University Press of America, 1994a).

interpretation of the Western thought, he elaborated a line of thought that expresses the normative foundations of the Muslim civilization. Thus, the Muslim civilization, affiliated to a strong and flexible prototype, introduced itself as an alternative paradigm by which the Turkish diplomacy is inspired to enrich the intellectual foundations of the global order and the Western civilization belonging to a strong and rigid paradigm.

The international practice is influenced by the unequal perception of the notion of space developed by the West distinguishing between a privileged center and a submitted or disadvantaged periphery. This distinction requires a reformulation of the global order based on a homogeneous and egalitarian perception of space as promoted by the Muslim civilization. In opposition to the linear view of history underlining a Western monopoly on the future, notably, the time, based on its achievements, Davutoglu introduces an alternative vision where man hasn't any influence on time but spend his life deploying the necessary effort to improve his condition.⁴¹ Turkey's foreign policy has been inspired by this vision in its multi-dimensionality and expansion into different directions like Africa that, according to Davutoglu, will witness an intellectual and civilizational renaissance. It's in light of the concept of space and time in Islam that Turkey's foreign policy has developed an equidistant and equal dynamics with different partners without differentiating between its interlocutors in terms of priority and importance.

Moreover, the human relationship to knowledge in the Muslim civilization is not intended to be based on the legitimacy of a single source in the interpretation of the world and reality, as illustrated by the reason and epistemology in Europe, but rather on a variety of knowledge sources. Thus, Turkey under the rule of the AKP was not limited to the Kemalist reference in its secular and Western ideas but has expanded its identity reference by the inclusion of traditional moral values concretized by a variety of actors that contribute to the formulation of its foreign policy, especially in delivering humanitarian assistance. On the other hand, the relationship between man and nature, in the Muslim civilization, is based on a responsibility to protect and preserve it while the West legitimizes its domination and exploitation. As for man and God, their relation is integral and harmonious in the Muslim civilization as its self-perception is inseparable from God's perception. This is no longer the case in the Western civilization where the state substitutes for divine centrality in the individual's self- perception and *Lebenswelt*.⁴² Accordingly, the Turkish foreign policy is partly inspired in its humanitarian dimension in terms of assistance provision without distinction based on race, ethnicity, color or

⁴¹ Altunisik, Meliha. The Possibilities and Limits of Turkey's Soft Power in the Middle East. *Insight Turkey*, vol. 10 (2, 2008) pp. 41-54.

⁴² Interview conducted with K. Balci at Today's Zaman headquarter, Istanbul, Turkey, July, 2011.

religion. There is a religious motivation and a divine obligation concretized in the Turkish diplomacy by active civil society actors that have recourse to the notion of communitarian solidarity encouraging believers to be for the help and assistance of the disadvantaged.⁴³

As for the relationship between men, the Western civilization has not granted equal status to all individuals while Islam perceives all human beings in one ontological equal status in the absolute. This inequality in the Western civilization is reflected on the global order where Western nations have a privileged political and economic status and adopt biased policies vis-à-vis other nations. Taking into account the worldview, the individual and communitarian self-perceptions based on the Islamic civilization in the foreign policy formulation, Davutoglu confirmed the notion of complementarity between cultures as a prerequisite for enriching the rigid structure of the Western civilization. The visa abolition policy is a manifestation of this concept as a starting point in the concretization of a cumulative cultural diversity breaking up with the unilateral and one-dimensional version of the Western determinism in international relations.⁴⁴ In this sense, Turkey adopts an independent policy from its one-dimensional Western orientation that it once adopted in its regional conduct and led to its superior attitude vis-à-vis its neighbors.

The Operationalization of the Strategic Depth: Borders' Circumvention and World Order Defiance

By denouncing the historical and cultural unconsciousness in the Turkish diplomacy, a policy of rapprochement was adopted with the neighborhood on the basis of cultural and historical ties to contribute to regional peace and stability. The religious factor emerged under the public opinion and the social actors' pressure in reaction to the Western passivity in terms of intervention and adoption of fair policies vis-à-vis the injustices inflicted on Muslims in the Middle East, the Balkans and the Caucasus.⁴⁵ Turkey's ability to consider its people's will as a part of its strategic vision and role as an economic power, based on a flexible worldview inspired by its history and culture, enables it to anchor the notion of alternative paradigm.⁴⁶ In this sense, Turkey departed from the principle of zero problems with neighbors to establish a dialogue and avoid thorny issues with neighbors while paying more attention to areas of common interest. Inspired by the Islamic approach in developing the notion of strategic depth as an

⁴³ Adem, Cigdem. Non-State Actors and Environmentalism in Environmentalism in *Turkey: Between Democracy and Development?* Edited by F. Adaman and M. Arsel (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2005), p. 71-86.

⁴⁴ Larrabee, Stephen. Turkey rediscovers the Middle East, *Foreign Affairs*, www.foreignaffairs.com, 2007, accessed on March 2010.

⁴⁵ *Turkey and the Greater Middle East*. Edited by Bulent Aras, (Istanbul: Tasam Publications, 2004),172 p.

⁴⁶ Yilmaz, Hakan. Islam, Sovereignty, and Democracy: A Turkish View. *Middle East Journal*, vol. 61 (3, 2007), pp. 477-493.

operational concept in the Turkish foreign policy, Davutoglu based his critics and conceptual paradigm on borders' incompatibility with the Arab and Muslim world reality and the adoption of an active regional policy to challenge the normative and moral deficiencies of the world order.

According to Davutoglu, borders have a negative influence on interstate and inter-communal interactions because, having a functional structure, they limit the state capacity to extend its sovereignty beyond its official territory although they express the right of an uncontested authority. There is a mismatch between the socio-cultural and political realities of nations and states' borders, which questions the notion of borders, notably in the South. Their arbitrariness in terms of neglecting the cultural and ethnic characteristics of the populations in question makes them artificial since they haven't been traced according to physical criteria separating the adjacent territories. Borders contribute to the crystallization of particularities on the structural, national and identity levels in a given territory while having different functions in terms of nature and effects that may be positive and negative.⁴⁷ In the Middle East and Europe, the notion of borders has been linked to conflicts because of the presence of multi-ethnic empires replaced by nation-states separated by a system of delimitation that didn't account for the existing ethnic and cultural realities.

In the Middle East, borders are a source of inter-state conflicts as colonial forces, in the wake of the World War I, imposed them. The concept of borders hadn't a strict meaning, in terms of territorial delimitation and demarcation in the Middle East where border areas separated between empires. Similarly, sovereignty was linked to the exercise of authority over a community or a people and not a specific territory as in Europe. The territory was defined based on the socio-cultural entity living within, called tribe, on which the central authority had power. This form of communitarian sovereignty, traditionally rooted in the region, contrasts with the territorial sovereignty, imported by the European colonization. Thus, the concept of border and sovereignty, specifically related to the socio-cultural reality of the region, was ignored at the time of the demarcation, which rendered it the main cause of border disputes in the Middle East.⁴⁸

The state building process was not rooted in the socio-political practice of the region whose historical evolution did not favor the emergence of sovereign

⁴⁷ Ozcan, Mesut. Border Concept and Turkey-Iraq Border. *Turkish Review of Middle East Studies*, Annual 13, (2002) OBIV, Istanbul.

⁴⁸ It's worth mentioning that the borders' delimitation in the Middle East didn't follow the dispositions of the international law in terms of respecting 4 steps in the creation of interstate borders which are the historical precedence, the delimitation, the demarcation and the characterization processes.

entities similar to Europe.⁴⁹ In this respect, the borders didn't suit the needs of the existing social entities as their modes of subsistence were fulfilled through a permanent and unlimited movement through borders. Consequently, the notion of borders was reduced to the legitimization of the emerging political entity in terms of exercising administrative power and developing external relations, regardless of people's needs. In this sense, borders must be revisited as a reality highlighting the presence of a sovereign entity whose function is to facilitate contact between people.

Davutoglu's vision is to decrease borders' psychological dimension by opening them with neighboring states to reduce its adverse effects in terms of territorial disputes and ethnic separatism. Turkey seeks to develop relations with its neighbors on the basis of a shared history, culture and common identity so that the territories would be opened on the image of the communitarian model that existed within the Ottoman cultural and ethnic framework. The aim is to overcome the negative effects of the demarcation process while respecting states' national sovereignty by having recourse to reconciliatory and regional interdependence mechanisms like the increase of public contact, the establishment of zones of free trade and the elimination of visas.

On the other hand, in resistance to the American hegemonic domination on the global order, Turkey, based on its political stability and economic growth, highlighted the image of an Islam capable of integrating the liberal values of development and modernity. The multi-identity character of Turkey, as a Muslim state in its socio-cultural and Western structure supported by its institutional integration to the West, requires the adoption of a multidimensional policy in the post-Cold War context. Here, Brzezinski confirmed that Turkey is geopolitically a pivotal state because of its historical heritage and regional orientations that affect interstate interactions in the Middle East.⁵⁰ It is also considered as an economic power in the light of its economic growth and its role as the central corridor of oil and gas pipelines between the Middle East, Central Asia and Europe. Therefore, its ability to develop a multifaceted and proactive policy based on a constructivist approach for solving its regional surroundings' problems solidifies its regional power role.⁵¹ According to the Copenhagen criteria in terms of adopting soft power in its regional and international obligations, Turkey developed a multifaceted approach as a part of its proactive

⁴⁹ Davutoglu, Ahmet. *Strategic Depth: Turkey's Role and Position on the International Scene*. (Beirut: Al Jazeera Center for Studies, 2010).

⁵⁰ Bilgin, Pinar. Securing Turkey through Western-Oriented Foreign Policy. *New Perspectives on Turkey*, n°40, (2009) p. 105-127.

⁵¹ Keyman, Fuat. Globalization, Modernity and Democracy: in Search of a Viable Domestic Polity for Sustainable Turkish Foreign Policy. *New perspectives on Turkey*, Special Edition on the Turkish Foreign Policy, n° 40 (2009), 240p and Fuller, Graham. *Turkey faces East New Orientation Towards the Middle East and the Old Soviet Union*. (RAND, Project Air Force, Arrayo Center, 1992), 70 p.

policy with its neighbors. It highlighted the centrality of the interaction between civilizations, underlined by Davutoglu, in a complementary rationale where Turkey's adoption of Western principles strengthens the intellectual paradigm of the Muslim civilization.⁵²

The cultural and religious dimension is important for the AKP in order to reconstruct the internal political order in a just and egalitarian formulation that takes into account all citizens on equal basis. It aims to reintegrate the mass, notably, the conservative majority among the middle and lower classes, into the political and economic center alongside the modernized and secular classes.⁵³ According Onis, the reconsideration of the internal order and the ruling elite's will to strengthen its position vis-à-vis the establishment go hand in hand with the concept of strategic depth according to which Turkey invests its cultural and religious heritage in its policy with neighbors. It's an identity consciousness crystallized within the space of civilization affiliated to the Islamic communitarian belonging that breaks up with the traditional elite's secular determinism by manifesting a bilateral and multilateral reconciliation with neighbors.

The reconsideration of the unidirectional conduct of the Turkish foreign policy in the Post-Cold War context dominated by an ethnocentric hegemonic power structure is transformed into a momentum for rectifying the structural, functional and ideological deficiencies of the world order. Turkey's emergence as a center of civilization and its affirmation as a global player emphasizes the AKP's will to take part into global politics and play the role of mediator between the different cultural, religious and ethnic entities to criticize and improve the premises of the dominant order based on its socio-cultural and historical heritage.⁵⁴

In his article "Conflict of Interest: An Explanation of World Disorder " published in 1998, Davutoglu criticized Fukuyama and Huntington's theories

⁵² This complementarity was manifested by Turkey's decision to take the initiative of holding the fourth UN conference about the Least Developed Countries by contributing to the preparation and negotiations over the final documents, notably, the Istanbul action program for the Least Developed Countries between 2011-2020. In light of the participation of different civil society members, the Istanbul Declaration decided for the realization of a series of actions vis-à-vis 48 countries that constitutes the framework of cooperation and responsibility between the UN, the different development partners, the Least Developed Countries and the international institutions. An annual assistance of 205 million dollars was provided for the contribution to the decisions implementation in different fields like disasters' management, tourism, private sector empowerment, the increase of productive capacities, science and technology. Also, a package of technical and economic cooperation was introduced as well as a promise for the increase of the private sector investment in the Least Developed Countries in addition to the inauguration of an international agricultural center and another one for science, technology and innovation.

⁵³ Keyman, Fuat and Ziya Onis. *Turkish Politics in A Changing World: Global Dynamics and Domestic Transformations*. (Istanbul : Bilgi University Press, 2007)

⁵⁴ Davutoglu, Ahmet. The Turkish Policy in the Middle East and the Turkish-Egyptian Relations. *Sharq Nameh*, n° 6 (2010), p. 1-10.

while opposing the idea of the European values and structures' supremacy in light of their inability to adapt to the religious and ethnic diversities and sensitivities. Furthermore, he indicated that conflicts do not occur only between civilizations as the majority of the wars that have taken place in the international system was among nations that belonged to the same civilization for purely geopolitical reasons. Accordingly, the international system established by the United States after World War II, could not persist after the Cold War as the imbalance of the bipolar order was disturbed by the Euro-American confrontation and the outbreak of the war in Bosnia.⁵⁵

He criticized the world order established by the United States following the Gulf War entitled "the New World Order" which solidifies the US hegemony, stigmatizes cultural and civilizational differences and monopolizes them. In this respect, he considers that the idea of the Islamic threat has been manipulated by the United States and the Western World to justify the cultural domination strategy and ensure the persistence of the established world order. According to him, this order was not capable of deploying the United Nations collective security mechanisms to prevent the ethnic cleansing that took place in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is at this stage where he criticized the ideological categorizations propelled by the United States as they favored the Western civilization over the Muslim states and the rest of the world. They also advocated for a reconsideration of the international order institutions, especially the United Nations, to develop collective security mechanisms to deal with what he calls "the global adventurism strategy" adopted by global powers. However, the global order premises contradict with the main purpose of its reconsideration that should aim for the insurance of a peaceful coexistence among the different cultures and ethnicities in an atmosphere of tolerance and values exchange without domination.

Davutoğlu, in the formulation of an alternative paradigm, didn't refer to Atatürk or to its founding principles in the traditional foreign policy of Turkey. He developed a strategic vision through which more importance was given to the Muslim world that he called the "Region of the Old Civilizations" that is the subject of a geostrategic competition among the Western powers.⁵⁶ Davutoğlu emphasized the region geostrategic importance because of its possession of 8 strategic straits controlling vital sea passages, resulting in an intra-systemic competition. The Region of the Old Civilization extends from Northern Caucasus to Kuwait and the southern region of Central Asia while manifesting a homogeneous cultural continuity where borders demarcation don't reflect its

⁵⁵ Davutoğlu, Ahmet. *Alternative Paradigms: The Impact of Islamic and Western Weltanschauungs on Political Theory* (Lanham-New York-London: University Press of America, 1994a).

⁵⁶ Murrison, Alexander. The Strategic Depth Doctrine of Turkish Foreign Policy. *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 42 (2, 2006), p. 945-964.

communitarian reality. He added that the Arab and Muslim World has a very unfavorable position in the current world order and is deprived of the capacity to formulate an anti-systemic strategy that "challenges" the Western world as stipulated by Huntington. He even denounced the despotic political order in the different Muslim countries. For him, authoritarian regimes are ensured by military and corrupted political elites who, to consolidate their hold on power, manipulate the predominant anti-Western feelings in the Muslim societies and exploit the fear of the Western powers from the emergence of anti-Western Islamic regimes in the region.⁵⁷

The Moral dimension of The Turkish Foreign Policy: The Humanitarian Foreign Action

In May 2010, Israel attacked the Mavi Marmara flotilla sent by a Turkish charitable organization, the Humanitarian Relief Foundation (IHH), to provide 10,000 tons of humanitarian aid to Palestinian citizens who suffer from a blockade in Gaza.⁵⁸ Although the campaign organizers were aware of the risks they may encounter from the Israeli authorities and armed forces, the 6 ships of humanitarian aid boarded to Gaza through international waters without violating the Israeli sovereignty. The degrading humanitarian situation in Gaza was the main reason behind the initiative as humanitarian aids for Palestinians are restricted by the Israeli authorities according to the UNRWA and the FAO statements stating that 61% of Gazans suffer from lack of food and 80% of them depend on aid from outside.⁵⁹

This move defied Israel as it refused the flotilla's access to Gaza because of the Islamic and conservative character of the organization in charge of the campaign that was allegedly accused of having links with Hamas and Al Qaeda. By attacking the ship with the Israeli Special Forces, nine Turkish activists were killed and 30 were injured. Turkey has condemned the aggression and called for holding urgent meetings at the United Nations, the OIC and NATO, the release of the victims' bodies, investigation on the incidents and the address of an official apology from the Israeli government. Turkey identified the attacks as a kind of "state terrorism" in the UN Security Council and in the official statements of the OIC, NATO and the European Union. Facing Turkey's determinism to end the blockade on Gaza, have an official apology and hold an international investigation, Israel agreed to ease the blockade while refusing to hold an international investigation or to apologize.

⁵⁷ Davutoğlu, Ahmet. *The Civilizational Transformation and the Muslim World* (Kuala Lumpur: Quill, 1994b).

⁵⁸ Ulutas, Ufuk. *A Raid From The Sea: The Gaza Flotilla Attack and Blockade Under Legal Scrutiny*, *SETA Policy Brief*, 2010.

⁵⁹ Dashed Hopes: Continuation of the Gaza Blockade, July 2010, <https://www.amnestyusa.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/gazareport2011.pdf>, accessed on May 25th, 2015.

The Turkish engagement into a philanthropic activity and humanitarian missions towards unprivileged nations was recently manifested in the Turkish foreign policy as a moral dimension emanating from its leadership ideological conviction. By encouraging civil society, mainly founded by conservative actors coming from an Islamic background, the humanitarian dimension contributed to the empowerment of the communitarian consciousness and belongings among the people of the region while fostering interactivity among nations from different civilizations on the basis of complementarity.⁶⁰ In light of different respondents' answers, these actors play an intermediary role between Turkey and the world nations through their activities.⁶¹ As part of Turkey's global role, it carries out a public diplomacy on the regional and international levels through the provision of assistance for the disadvantaged. In this sense, they present a socio-human capital that embodies the communitarian aspect of the AKP vision by forming a fraternity network with Islamic nations in different regions.

Turkey's humanitarian activities started to spread around the world since 2004, particularly in the most affected zones by disasters and crises such as the Middle East, Africa and Latin America. This dimension is important because it includes a large network of non-state actors such as businessmen, media institutions and humanitarian organizations among which 7 are members of the Alliance of the Islamic Cooperation Organization for Rescue that includes 20 associations of the Arab and Muslim world. Most humanitarian organizations are members in various international and regional institutions such as the UNHCR, ECOSOC, UNRWA, OCHA (OCHH), The Unity, an umbrella organization bringing together non-governmental Islamic organizations in the world, ICHAD affiliated to the OIC and the Forum Humanitarian in London that acts as an intermediary between the Muslim and non-Muslim Western associations.

The Turkish humanitarian organizations function as an intermediary between donors and receivers, notably the disfranchised in different destinations worldwide. The respondents among the leaders of these organizations like Deniz Feneri, Kimse Yok Mu, Yardimeli and Can Suyu, stressed that their activities are addressed to every nation in need regardless of race, ethnicity and religion. They noted that developing countries, especially Arab and Muslim states such as Palestine, Iraq, Syria, Indonesia, Pakistan and Somalia receive a large share of their aid due to the presence of serious threats to their people's lives.⁶² Aid is granted to over 47 countries and 7 regions based on a formal request from

⁶⁰ Interview conducted with Ibrahim Atalan at Deniz Feneri headquarter, Istanbul, Turkey, August, 2011.

⁶¹ Interview conducted with Izzet Sahin at IHH headquarter, Istanbul, Turkey, July, 2011.

⁶² Interviews conducted at Kimse Yok Mu, Can Suyu, Yardim Eli and Deniz Feneri headquarters at Istanbul, Turkey, August, 2011.

governmental institutions or an initiative taken by organizations to intervene in case of emergency in response to natural disasters and crises. Thus, aid was granted to Indonesia after the Tsunami, to Pakistan in 2005 after the earthquake and to Nigeria at the time of the drought. Humanitarian interventions were also made at the time of the disasters that occurred in Chile, New Zealand, Bangladesh and Myanmar.

The activities of these organizations are rather related to the distribution of general humanitarian aid. It mainly consists of individual assistance, emergency aid and donations, the implementation of infrastructural projects for refugees in the field of education, health care, hygiene and residence. Also, it involves the provision of subsistence and medical aid materials and the establishment of ambulatory clinics and projects. In Iraq, aid was distributed in Basra, Baghdad, Mosul and Kirkuk as well as in the Sudan and Lebanon for rescuing refugees through local NGOs, municipal officials and the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs taking part into fieldworks to identify people's needs. Accordingly, the Turkish NGOs receive proposals and reports from their partners in several countries to determine the different needs that have to be considered in the decision-making process concerning the money transfer and staff mobility to implement and evaluate projects.

Created in 2000 by the Turkish and British doctors, Yeryuzu Doktorlar, is another NGO located in Turkey that provides medical care, financial assistance and humanitarian aid such as the emergency aid and participates in developmental long-term health projects in 30 regions around the world.⁶³ On the other hand, other projects are implemented by this organization like the emergency projects as in the case of floods, earthquake and civil wars. Besides, it provides financial assistance, prepares surgical operations and carries out capacity-building initiatives and projects like the supply of medical aids, the preparation of training sessions for the use of medical equipment and hospitals' modernization.

Different Memorandum of Understandings were concluded with Yeryuzu Doktorlar partners that are local organizations in many countries whose mission is to identify the organization responsibilities in terms of equipment and personnel provision. This organization operates by its own initiatives, through an invitation from a local organization or a request from the authorities of the country of concern. In Tunisia and Libya, the organization intervened by sending a team for needs' assessment, reviewing medical statistics and having recourse to medical and health institutions to identify the different needs. In Somalia and Kenya, a refugee camp was established for Somalis on the borders with Ethiopia.

⁶³ Interview conducted at Yer Yuzu Doktorlar, Istanbul, Turkey, August, 2011.

Besides, teams were sent for emergency operations against malnutrition by distributing nutrients, creating clinics near the camp, visiting hospitals and establishing a camp for displaced people due to famines and droughts.

The IHH is another conservative NGO that sends humanitarian aid for the rescue of countries in disaster or humanitarian crisis through a campaign to mobilize the necessary resources to support the different target regions. Together with Mazlumder, a Turkish conservative NGO, IHH is dedicated to the defense of human rights in Turkey, the Middle East and worldwide where there are violations. Both dedicate a significant margin of their programs to the support of "oppressed" and "humiliated people" as in Palestine, Iraq, Syria and the other affected countries. They adopt a critical tone towards Israel based on their refusal of the inequalities inflicted on Muslims everywhere.

IHH's activities include advocacy for human freedoms and rights. Displaying a religious motive in carrying out their activities, its members' worldview is based on the presence of 4 categories of people: believers and non-believers, benefactors and criminals. For the IHH leaders, the ultimate goal of the organization is to combine religious belief and good behavior throughout the rescue and the defense of human beings whatever their religion, race or ethnicity is. Accordingly, it expands its field of action to Latin America, the Balkans and Asia in addition to the Arab and Muslim world,⁶⁴ and mobilizes for the help of the war victims in Bosnia, Chechnya, Afghanistan, Iraq and Palestine. For them, the human being is created for two reasons, to believe in God, the Creator and to help His creatures through mutual support. Besides, they have recourse to non-Muslim or non-Turkish volunteering organizations to concretize the multiethnic and multicultural model inspired by the Ottoman legacy they are pleading for. The communitarian aspect is thus revived through public diplomacy held by the means of and for the people through Turkish non-governmental organizations to strengthen moral practices as dialogue and humanitarian solidarity within the framework of conciliation between different civilizations.

The organization played an important role as well in raising the Turkish public opinion awareness about the situation in Africa and 40 other countries. For Gaza, the organization held press conferences and mobilized for demonstrations in front of the Israeli embassy and consulate in Istanbul and Ankara respectively. It was also active in organizing awareness programs in different schools and associations about the Israeli attacks against Gaza in 2006. The Palestinian question is primordial for the organization since it is about an

⁶⁴ Interview conducted with Izzet Sahin at IHH headquarter, Istanbul, Turkey, July, 2011.

occupation perpetuated by the domination of the Zionists that adopt unfair policies with the support of the United States.⁶⁵

As for Mazlumder, like IHH, it mobilizes religious values and principles to respond to all forms of injustice and oppression in Turkey and around the world in terms of state oppression, ethnic and religious discrimination and torture. It advocates for the freedom of religious communities, democratization, good governance, the end of violation and oppression in addition to holding criminals accountable. Monitoring, advocacy and legal advice are the main activities that the organization carries out against injustice.⁶⁶ Mazlumder observes violations against human rights taking place in the world and publishes reports about the victims' condition in different countries. Field visits are conducted in countries in crisis, such as Gaza, to hold investigation about chemical weapons, take pictures, collect materials and take samples that are sent to the International Court of Human Rights, the International Criminal Court, the European Court and other Human Rights NGOs. It reminds the international community and the concerned authorities of the need to end the injustice inflicted on people in the different regions, especially the Middle East. Some members of this organization are traveling to different countries and lead activities and mobilization campaigns in solidarity with the oppressed people in cooperation with local partners such as organizations and volunteers.

As for advocacy, it consists of addressing the concerned authorities and international organizations and publishing reports on the developments in the countries in question to reveal violations and enforce the provisions of the international law. Accordingly, the organization members are directed to parliamentarians, embassies and the Turkish government to get the necessary signatures for petitions and campaigns prepared by Mazlumder to lobby for their cause before policymakers and politicians in addition to the organization of protests and demonstrations. For example, the organization has prepared for protests outside the embassy of Great Britain at the time of the arrest of Raed Saleh, a Palestinian militant, by the British authorities.

On the other hand, legal advice is based on providing volunteers who help refugees from various countries in the preparation of the necessary documents for their stay in Turkey in coordination with the UNHCR and the government. Meetings are held and lawyers are mobilized in solidarity with the refugees to discuss their conditions like the case of the Syrian refugees on the Turkish-Syrian borders to inform the Turkish government and mobilize for their rescue.

⁶⁵ Interview conducted with Izzet Sahin at IHH headquarter, Istanbul, Turkey, July 2011.

⁶⁶ Interview conducted at Mazlumder headquarter, Istanbul, Ankara, July, 2011.

In addition to these civil society actors, there are institutions affiliated to the state such as the Turkish Red Crescent that contributes to the fulfillment of the humanitarian dimension of the foreign policy. The Turkish Red Crescent, Turk Kizilay, operates in two phases, the distribution of emergency aid and the implementation of rehabilitation projects in different countries in crises like Palestine, Somalia, Sudan and Iraq. The organization cooperates with many Turkish NGOs and coordinates its activities with the Prime Minister and its instance specialized in emergency aid "Affet ve Acil Durum Yönetimi Başkanlığı". As a member in the national societies, it intervenes in the wake of a request raised by members of the OIC and governments to cooperate in the required areas and provide the necessary assistance.⁶⁷ It sends a delegation of experts for needs' assessment, the distribution of logistics and humanitarian aid like the creation of refugee camps, the provision of subsistence and hygienic aids and the implementation of various projects in the field of irrigation, agriculture, sanitation, schools and hospitals' construction as well as women's psychological support.

Conclusion

By thinking about an alternative approach in IR, it was interesting to find out why calls for the development of alternative paradigms other than the existing ones are made. Such calls already made by Western academicians must be based on a diagnosis demonstrating the symptoms of failure in the cognitive, intellectual and practical foundations of the existing IR paradigms. If it is not the case, these calls seem unjustifiable and may lose their *raison d'être*. By examining the different literature dealing with the "attempts" of formulating alternative approaches, countless proposals from different cultural and intellectual perspectives were made. By taking into account the recent nature of IR, even if most of its intellectual origins dig their source into the Greco-Roman and modern European history, the Arab, Muslim, Turkish, Indian, South American and Asian intellectuals have contributed to the defiance of the Western omnipresence in the discipline by presenting alternative visions for the international practice. Although these attempts exist and date before these calls for non-Western contributions, some academicians have renewed this call in the 2000s. Then, what's the reason of this call renewal? It's in the answer to this question that this paper was dedicated.

By opting for the Turkish foreign policy since 2002 as an example of an alternative approach in IR, the purpose was to show why the previous contributions were considered insufficient for those who have made calls for the

⁶⁷ Interview conducted at Turk Kizilay in Ankara, Turkey, August 2011.

formulation of alternative approaches. As they are mostly limited to a national scale, based on a normative and intellectual closure alienated from the dominant and globally recognized system of knowledge and manifested an unfinished attempt of conceptualization in the discipline, previous contributions couldn't go through conventional modes of knowledge circulation and scientific production. These attempts followed production models that are not consistent with those followed by the already existing Western paradigms in terms of sources, research methodology, academic circulation and broadcast media. Besides, they couldn't be concretized into standardized practices that are internationally adopted and implemented as models of action in IR. Many remained in their language of production without being translated while others were simply suggestions that attempted to correct the deficiencies in the dominant order in response to momentary exigencies without being conceived into an approved conceptual and theoretical formulation. Some were just thoughts that didn't materialize into an approach or practice as they were limited to criticism addressed to the dominant Western approaches without proposing an alternative.

By choosing the concept of strategic depth elaborated by Davutoglu, the former advisor to the Turkish Prime Minister in Foreign Affairs and the former foreign minister who has designated it as an alternative paradigm, it was possible to highlight an alternative IR conceptual formulation to the established global order. This alternative was concretized into a practice through the Turkish foreign policy based on Turkey's geo-cultural, historical and strategic assets. In his critiques of the international system and its cognitive and ontological foundations, the strategic depth presents a vision for a diplomatic practice based on an Islamic normative and intellectual foundation, the Sharia that overcomes the normative and practical shortcomings of the Western prism in terms of domination, inequality and injustice. Inspired by Ibn Khaldun's theory of *assabiyya* presenting an Islamic version of the nation birth, the development of its communitarian consciousness and the implementation of its foreign relations, strategic depth has reformulated it into a diplomatic vision and operationalized it as a model of action in foreign policy.

By focusing on morality, the study attempted to illustrate how the Turkish foreign policy by resorting to the normative foundation of the Islamic scholarship has questioned the theoretical precepts of morality in IR as conceived by the Realists. The presentation of the humanitarian aspect of the Turkish foreign policy based on the concept of strategic depth highlights the ideological and normative deficiencies of the Realist theory, its ethnocentrism, unjust practice and dominant perception on IR standards regulating interstate relations. In light of the adoption of a philanthropic policy as part of its foreign policy with the different states of the world on the basis of diversity,

multidimensionality and equality, the concept of strategic depth reveals an alternative moral principle to the current world order. Being developed by a Turkish academician in non-Western academic institutions, in Turkey and Malaysia, on the basis of an Islamic conceptual framework circulated throughout the conventional media of academic production and knowledge dissemination and operationalized as a model of political action, strategic depth presents an alternative paradigm to the Western domination in the IR discipline.