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**ANALYSES OF TURKEY'S ACCESSION TO THE EU IN
THE CONTEXT OF THEORY ON CONTEMPORARY
EMPIRES**

Bachelor's Thesis

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ABSTRACT

This paper looks at the process of Turkey's accession to the EU, contextualising its discussion with debates on contemporary empires. The paper is searching for an answer on whether or not the core reason for the failure of the accession negotiations, so far, is that both the EU and Turkey have characteristics of empire, and, as a direct consequence, one (Turkey) cannot fit to another (EU). This research gives an overview on various scholarship examining reasons why Turkey has not been accepted as a full member of the EU. The paper outlines how various scholars have defined the phenomenon of contemporary empire and gives a brief overview on examples of superpowers considered as modern empires, while taking a deeper look at the EU. After having done that, the paper looks at how Turkey complies with the characteristics of contemporary empire by examining the country's historical and geopolitical parameters. Finally, the paper scrutinises the Turkey-EU relations in the context of study by analysing communicational linkages between the two sides in political, economic and cultural clusters. The theoretical scholarly work on the definition on contemporary political empire is used as a framework of this research. The paper is leaning to a conclusion that Turkey complies with a core-periphery relation feature, which is also the major characteristic defined by the scholars. Turkey is not remarkably large by its land size, but it has certain power over its indirect neighbours including Azerbaijan, Armenia, the KRG, Iran and Syria, which can be considered as Turkey's periphery areas in the context of study. By redefining its geopolitical position in the Middle-East, the Black Sea basin, and Caucasus, Turkey has given the EU a sign that it is not the same country that wanted to become a part of the European Community back in 1959 – evidently, it has grown more powerful and cannot be considered as a periphery of the EU anymore.

Keywords: Turkey, the EU, contemporary empire, core, periphery, the AKP, Neo-Ottomanism

INTRODUCTION

Two world wars affected the political geography of Europe dramatically. The end of the World War I meant also a collapse of the great Ottoman Empire, after more than six hundred years of rule. While at the same time, it was also a beginning of westernization of the newly born Republic of Turkey, which then also indicated its intentions to be geopolitically closer to Europe. As a great leader and the first President of the Republic of Turkey Mustafa Kemal Atatürk has summarized his ideas of Turkey's new direction after the fall of the Ottoman Empire (Atatürk's Revolutions And Modernization, 2013):

We cannot shut our eyes and assume that we live in isolation. We cannot fence off and live without having any contacts with the world. On the contrary, we shall live on the scene of civilization as a progressive and civilized nation. Such life is possible only through, science and technology. We will take the science and technology from any country wherever they may be found, and put them in the heads of all individuals of the nation. There is no condition or reservation concerning the adoption of science and technology.

During the post-World War II period, the impetus to create a united Europe started to emerge, while pro-European and pro-secular predecessor of the Ottoman Empire clearly wanted to become a part of it. After the establishment of the European Economic Community in 1958, Turkey applied for associate membership in 1959, and four years later the association agreement (also known as the Ankara Agreement) was signed. It took 36 years after the association agreement when the EU decided to recognise Turkey with a candidate status for a full membership. Finally, in 2005 accession negotiations between the European Union (EU) and Turkey began. However, as the negotiation process has been ongoing for almost a decade now, while no other candidate country's path to the EU has ever been so long, cumbersome, and difficult, there is a legitimate question "why"?

In order to find reasons for Turkey and the EU negotiations entanglement, there are many scholars taking part in this debate, including Turunc (2011), Somer (2007), Müftüler-

Bac (2010), Capan and Onursal from the Turkish School, Steunenberg, Petek and R uth, Arnold, Alessandri, Larrabee, and many others. The aforementioned scholars are taking the discussion further from the question on either Turkey is fulfilling formal requirements according to Copenhagen Criteria or not and arguing on a number of points like the question of both Turkey's and EU's identity, Turkey's cultural compatibility within the EU, geographical and geopolitical stance and compatibility of Islam with democracy.

There are scholars debating on both Turkish and the EU's identity question. In instance, M ft ler-Bac (2010, 80) as well as Capan and Onursal (2007, 99) see the core reason on Turkey's membership negotiations entanglement EU specific factors and the question on EU identity crises precisely. M ft ler-Bac finds there other EU-specific factors complicating Turkey's position in the enlargement process rather than Turkey's ability to meet the Copenhagen Criteria (2010, 80). She stresses out EU-specific factors like EU's institutional set-up together with the importance of the Europeanization of the Turko-Greek conflict within the framework of Turkey-EU relations and the impact of Turkey's population on EU institutions (*Ibid.*). Capan and Onursal, for example, are pointing out that the EU is not close enough to its 'people' and, therefore, is lacking of democracy and transparency while referring to a democratic deficit of the EU, a phrase coined by David Marquand in the 1970s (2007, 98-99). Arnold, as an European scholar, opposes to aforementioned Turkish authors with a statement that "according to the basic and legal principles of the EU only European states and peoples can become members; and there is no doubt either that Turkey is not a European state and that its citizens are not a European people" (2007, 102).

There is also sizeable scholarly work devoted to the question of Turkey's cultural compatibility within the EU. There are both number of prominent scholars and national political leaders who have called Turkey as 'the other'. Thomas Diez (2004), Heinz Kramer (2006), Nathalie Tocci (2007), Paul Kubicek (2009) and Mehmet Ugur (2010), as referred in Turunc, emphasize that Turkey's non-convergence with European norms puts the focus on Turkey as "the other" (2011, 535). Arnold, in his turn, is arguing there are necessary changes Turkey needs to carry out in order to fulfil the criteria but which all is too deeply rooted in history, political culture and religious beliefs and so will be extremely difficult to handle (2007, 108). The factor of historical, cultural and social differences, which 90 million Muslim Turkish citizens could bring into the EU, is one of the main issues what the EU is visibly

afraid of (Arnold 2007, 109). Steunenberg, Petek and R uth researched discourses in Germany and Turkey on Turkish accession to the EU and cultural compatibility as one of the discourses that straightforwardly claims that Turkey is not part of ‘Europe’; this is related to the ethno-nationalist frame reported by Koenig and colleagues, as referred in Steunenberg et al (2011, 465).

The statements of the leaders of the EU throughout the accession period proved what aforementioned scholars on Turkey’s cultural incompatibility within the Union have argued about. According to Sedat Laciner, as referred in Steunenberg et al, the former French President Sarkozy have declared “I do not believe that Turkey belongs in Europe, and for a simple reason: because it is Asia Minor. What I wish to offer Turkey is a true partnership with Europe, but not integration into Europe” (2011, 449). The same source noted about German Chancellor Merkel’s hesitation about a possibility for Turkey to eventually join the EU as a full Member State, “suggesting that Germany may also prefer a ‘privileged partnership’ [for Turkey]” (*Ibid.*). Interestingly enough, Merkel’s predecessor Helmut Schmidt declared, referring to Turks that “[t]hey are not suited to us” (Arnold 2007, 109).

Many scholars find geographical and geopolitical stance as one of the arguments why Turkey and EU negotiations are entangled. One of the reasons of the opposition to Turkey’s membership is its size. Larrabee, while minimizing the actual population of Turkey, stated that “[w]ith a population of over 70 million, Turkey would be the second largest EU member behind Germany, and one of the least developed” (2010, 173). Another reason lies in Turkey’s geographical position. Turunc has called Turkey as “trapped” between East and West, while notifying that the reason Turkey is seen as a bridge between East and West it is why it is not rooted in Europe (2011, 535). Arnold is pointing out that in case where Turkey became a member “[t]he EU would share common borders with Georgia, Armenia, Iran, Iraq, and Syria. Politically speaking, it would be part of the Near and Middle East and share this region’s political problems, first including the current and future situation of Iraq and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict” (2007, 124). Ahmet Davutoglu, the former Foreign Minister of Turkey and currently the country’s Prime Minister, who considers Turkey as the centre of several intersecting regions and finds much more important challenge for Turkey to redefine its place in Afro-Eurasia than being a “sideline country” of Europe and outpost of the West, as referred in Alessandri (2010, 93). Alessandri is also pointing out that “Ankara’s growing engagement

with its Middle Eastern neighbours shows that Turkey is in a different position culturally and geopolitically from the rest of Europe” (2010, 96).

Another part of the scholarship finds political Islam together with dilemma between democracy and secularization as problematic factors on Turkey’s road to democracy and to the EU. Ehteshami points out “in such strategically important Muslim countries as Turkey [...] parties and personalities are already in government, increasingly painting the national agenda in religious colours” (2004, 103). Somer brings out secularists and Islamic-conservatives differences in understanding secularism while claiming that for Islamic-conservatives freedom and religion has the outmost importance, for secularists it is the separation of religion and state (2007, 1280). He also raises a question on the nature of the ruling party of Turkish Republic since 2002, Justice and Development Party (AKP) “whether it is a secretly Islamist, moderate Islamist, or Islamic-conservative democratic party, and how sincere its commitments are to secular democracy” (Somer 2007, 1272). Larrabee argues that “[m]any AKP members had supported EU membership largely because they expected it would strengthen religious freedom” (2010, 174). Although, the support towards the EU membership among Turkey’s national political leaders as well as among Turkish citizens has been decreasing over the last years. According to a survey at the end of 2014 conducted by Turkish research company *TNS Piar*, as referred in Turkish daily newspaper *Sabah*, the desire of Turks to join the EU has dropped to an all-time low. According to the survey, only 28 percent of Turks supported Turkish membership to the EU, which is ten percent less compared to the survey conducted half a year before (Opinion poll shows Turkish support for EU membership at record low, 2014).

While searching for the reason on why Turkey’s accession process to the EU is entangled, this paper gets its discussion framed up by a theory-driven talk on contemporary empires. It is important to keep in mind that when Turkey first applied for associate membership of the European Community in 1959, it was aiming at becoming and eventually being genuinely recognised as an integral part of a Europe-centered as well as Europe-bound civilisational framework. The legacy of Mustafa Kemal drove Turkey to taking an active part in the process of building a new European community. After more than sixty years of the accession process, Turkey’s position in global perspective has changed enormously – it has redefined its foreign policy strategy together with its geopolitical stance and relations with the

Arab world; it has taken back some parts of its Ottoman legacy and extended its global reach. This paper is arguing that Turkey's changing position and geopolitical weight is the core reason why Turkey does not fit to the EU anymore. While there is number of scholarly articles arguing that the EU is an empire, this paper is taking a closer look at Turkey by testing its contemporary characteristics against those of modern empires.

By raising to some extent a speculative question 'if one empire (Turkey) fits to another (EU)', this research work will be aiming at observing contemporary political empires by the scholars like Arbesman (2011), Danfort (2014), Gravier (2009), Howe (2002), Kim (2004), Parker (2010), Stivachtis (2013) and Zielonka (2006, 2011, 2012). Gravier analyses the concept of empire in the European integration process while using, among others, Motyl's (1997) definition to empire. Zielonka, in different years, is observing the EU and the US as contemporary empires. Howe interprets the meaning of the idea of 'empire' and 'imperialism'. Kim analyses imperial geography and empire's entrails. Parker analyses the elements of empire as a pattern of order with geopolitical effects while using Doyle's (1986) concept of empire. Danforth is analysing Turkey's relationship with 'its' Ottoman past. Stivachtis is examining how representatives from the English School like Bull (1977), Watson (1987, 1992), Wight (1977, 1991), Buzan (1991, 1993, 2004) and others, have viewed 'empire' in three different forms.

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In the first chapter the paper aims at defining contemporary political empire as such. In order to do so the paper goes through a literature review on broader debate about the scope for empires in the contemporary world. Firstly, a definition of 'empire' given by different scholars will be examined. In this chapter the paper goes more in depth with a core-periphery relation which is defined by the scholars as the most explicit characteristic of empires. Secondly, other features of empire given by Gravier and Zielonka will be examined together with the English School's conceptualisation of empire. Lastly, this chapter will give a brief overview on examples of superpowers considered as modern empires by the scholars, while taking a deeper look at the EU and its characteristics of contemporary empire in order to understand better the relation between Turkey and the EU.

In the second chapter, the paper will analyse parameters of a contemporary empire against the case study of Turkey while trying to give an answer whether Turkey has features to be called 'contemporary political empire' or not. While there is no noticeable scholarship concretely observing Turkey **as a contemporary political empire**, different concepts of 'empire' offered by the (named) scholars are used and these concepts are compared with Turkey in order to test its historical and geopolitical parameters together with its global reach. The third chapter will take a closer look at Turkey's new foreign policy strategy together with its agenda to distinctly define its relations with indirect neighbours like Armenia as well as Ankara's position on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Turkey's greater willingness to engage Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in northern Iraq and strengthening ties with Iran and Syria. This chapter will also examine Turkey's more positive approach to its Ottoman legacy which has indirect effect on its new foreign policy strategy.

In chapter three, the paper will observe the EU's and Turkey's behaviour common to an empire. This chapter will go through the practical examples of the EU's and Turkey's list of actions that are characteristic to empires according to its definition stated in the first chapter. The fourth chapter will go more in depth with the discussion how Turkey and the EU communicate in different clusters such as political, economical and cultural, while taking into the consideration actions from both sides. In this chapter the paper will take a closer look on

EU's actions in broadening its reach to the East, while keeping the negotiations with Turkey standstill. This chapter will also take a look at Turkey's new foreign policy strategy with a vision of having zero problems with its indirect neighbours. The third chapter will also examine the EU's position on the question of Armenian Genocide issue and Turkey's response to it, Turkey-EU economic relations together with Turkey's increasing role in global economics, and some issues on Turkey's cultural compatibility within the EU from the perspective of a predominantly Muslim society fitting into a predominantly Christian or/and agnostic political environment.

1. DEFINING CONTEMPORARY EMPIRE

In order to answer to the main question of this work ‘whether one empire (Turkey) fits to another (EU)’, it is necessary to, firstly, define what is meant by ‘empire’, what features it has, since “the notion of empire is hazy” as Zielonka puts it (2011, 337). As this paper is analysing the situation of Turkey’s membership talks to the EU over the last decade while formulating hypothesis that the core reason for the failure of the talks is that both the EU and Turkey have characteristics of empire and one (Turkey) cannot fit to another (EU), it is important to first look at the parameters of the contemporary political empire.

1.1. Definition of empire and imperialism

While searching for the definition of empire one has to look at the definition of imperialism as well since the scope of the term ‘empire’ in contemporary literature is too narrow. As empire is usually referred as a form of imperialism, it proves close relativeness between these terms and therefore justifies the use of both terms in this work. In instance, in Howe’s (2002) definition empire and imperialism go hand in hand while one is a form and other is an action. Howe (2002) defines empire and imperialism as following:

empire is a large, composite, multi-ethnic or multinational political unit, usually created by conquest, and divided between a dominant centre and subordinate, sometimes far distant, peripheries

[and]

imperialism is used to mean the actions and attitudes which create or uphold such big political units - but also less obvious and indirect kinds of control or domination by one people or country over others. It may make sense to use terms like cultural or economic imperialism to describe some of these less formal sorts of domination.

Kim, when analysing imperial geography and empire's entrails, also defines the concept of imperialism by using the term of empire as a form of the former one. He conceptualizes imperialism as

a political system of exploitative dominance of nation X over nation Y, or the mere dominance of nation X over nation Z in order to sustain the exploitative dominance of nation Y. This subordination relation may be *de jure* or *de facto*, formal or informal, direct or indirect. (Kim 2004, 59)

Although, Kim notes that despite understanding the exploitation as a point of the relation between nations within the concept of imperialism, he still admits that not all nation-to-nation relations are exploitative but can also have asymmetric nature of the power in other ways (2004, 59). Kim does not name any of these 'other ways' but brings an example from the Cold War era where the US, while reining China and the Soviet Union, "imperialistically subordinated" states and nations "at the security perimeter" of oneself but it did not exploit these countries (*Ibid.*). It can, perhaps, be understood, while there was not to exploit from these states by the US in Kim's example. For Zielonka (2012, 509),

[t]he term 'empire' represents a vast territorial unit with global military, economic and diplomatic influence [...] empire must have a record of acting in a way that imposes significant domestic constraints on a variety of formally sovereign or autonomous actors [...] seen as a kind of periphery to be governed by the imperial centre [...] rule over peripheries is justified by the empire's civilising mission or vocation [...] towards their external environment.

According to Zielonka, there is still too little theoretical work on empires and the concept of contemporary empires, which differs from other actors, is not yet formulated at all (2012, 508). He points out that while historically empires are mostly seen as imposing colonial rule with cruelty and exploitation, one can find also positive examples from history, where empires have brought peace established liberal rules and involved peripheries to decision making process (*Ibid.*). This kind of parallels can be drawn also today where stronger powers tend to 'help' weaker ones in order to bring peace but there goes a thin line between the establishment of peace and the annexation.

1.1.1. Core and periphery

According to Motyl (2006) ten years ago Amazon listed 10,513 books with empire in the title on its website while Barnes and Noble listed 10,210 and most of these books assume that empire is about metropolis controlling periphery through annexation or some form of economic and political power (Zielonka 2006, 10). Also, most of the scholars this paper is referring to, together with Zielonka (2006, 2011, 2012), Gravier (2009), Doyle (1986), Motyl (1997, 1999), Cooley and Nexon (2008), Nexon and Wright (2007) suggest that the existence of core and periphery is one of the characteristics of empire. For Motyl, the presence of core and periphery is a major characteristic of empires (Gravier 2009, 634).

Doyle (1986), as referred in Parker (2010, 111), defines an empire as:

A relationship, formal or informal, in which one state controls the effective political sovereignty of another political society [...] the political control exercised by one polity (the metropole) over the domestic and foreign policy of another polity (the periphery), resulting in control over who rules and what rulers can do.

There is also a debate on the relationship between core and periphery precisely, together with status and nature of one and other. For example, Galtung (1971) argues that the core and periphery's relationship is about harmony and mutual dependency, as referred in Zielonka (2011, 340). In some cases periphery has a part of metropolitan decision-making process and can access to resources, albeit in another case peripheries are kept at a distance and are even being discriminated (Zielonka 2011, 340). Doyle (1986), as referred in Zielonka, describes the nature of metropolis and periphery in contrast – metropolis has centralized government and periphery has weak government; metropolis has differentiated economy while periphery has undifferentiated economy; metropolis has shared political loyalties and periphery has highly divided ones (2011, 340).

Motyl (1997) specifies the relationship of core and periphery while separating them in following aspects, as referred in Gravier (2009, 639), a distinct core elite and a distinct peripheral elite; a distinct core population and a distinct peripheral population; a dictatorial relationship between the core elite and the peripheral elite.

Motyl (1999) argues that “core-periphery relations resemble an incomplete wheel, with a hub and spoke but no rim”, as referred in Cooley and Nexon (2008, 12) In Motyl’s theory of a “rimless wheel” different peripheries controlled by one metropolis must not have relations between themselves while having relations only with the core which itself must have a status where it can implement decisions on the peripheries and latter ones serve the core’s will (Gravier, 634). According to Nexon and Wright (2007), there are two reasons why Motyl’s “rimeless hub-and-spoke” type relation system works between core and periphery, as referred in Colley and Nexon (2008, 13):

First, rule through intermediaries who enjoy some degree of autonomy over local rule-making and enforcement; Second, heterogeneous asymmetric contracting between the core and its peripheries.

Such a “rimless wheel” system can be long lasting if metropolis is able to control the relation between different peripheries and make sure the peripheries feel that they get something back from the core. Like Nexon and Wright (2007) point out, as referred in Cooley and Nexon (2008, 13):

Empires [...] like all political systems, are based upon bargains that specify rights and obligations. For instance, imperial bargains may involve an exchange of basing rights in the periphery for access to markets in the core.

Interestingly, empire studies prove that in some cases a periphery can take advantage from its relatedness with a centre, in instance when the former one drags the centre into its parochial conflicts in order to find a long lasting solution to their relations (Zielonka 2012, 506). In this case, if the centre succeeds it usually receives respect from the periphery and therefore reliability.

1.1.3. Formal and informal empire

Different analysts of imperialism distinguish formal and informal empires (or imperialism). Howe defines formal imperialism as “physical control or full-fledged colonial rule” and informal imperialism as “less direct but still powerful kinds of dominance” (2000). Doyle (1986) and Lake (1996) claim that in informal type of empire a core dominates a

periphery while controlling latter ones government, which is “nominally sovereign but functionally dependent”, as referred in Cooley and Nixon (2008, 12). For Nexon and Wright (2007) a key part have intermediaries to play since they are the “local elite” and own power on the citizens of the periphery, as referred in Cooley and Nexon (2008, 13).

According to the definitions of formal and informal empire given by the scholars it can be summarized that ‘formal’ empire has physically developed their territorial borders at the expense of other states while these ‘other states’ become legally as a part of empire. ‘Informal’ empire, on the other hand, has also extended its power to other territories but not necessarily by invasion; it can also use soft power in order to co-opt with other states while still making latter ones dependent on oneself.

1.1.4. Other features of empire

While agreeing with aforementioned scholars that empire has a core or metropolis and a periphery (Doyle 1986; Motyl 1997, 1999; Zielonka 2006, 2011, Gravier 2009), Gravier counts seven characteristics of empires altogether (2009, 629):

- 1) empires are polities,
- 2) empires are composite,
- 3) empires consist of a dominating centre and of dominated peripheries,
- 4) empires are temporally unstable,
- 5) empires follow a rationale of territorial extension,
- 6) empires are authoritarian,
- 7) empires diffuse an imperial identity and culture.

Later in her work, she excludes authoritarianism and temporal instability as empire characteristics by using arguments such as “empires do not claim this [authoritarian] aspect because they legitimize themselves as the only peaceful solution for a better world” (2009, 639). For temporal instability not to be characteristic of empire, she raises two arguments: firstly, “empires last more or less and seem to be qualified empires regardless of their duration: Alexander’s empire lasted 11 years, Rome several centuries” and secondly, “to rise, undergo transformations, and fall, is not specific to empires” (2009, 636).

For Gravier, the characteristic of empires to be polities is the most important

component since it makes the difference between empires and supranational economic networks and refers to Wallerstein's 'world-economy' as a section of economic interrelations which has no political centre and suggests that as soon as one emerges, the 'world-economy' becomes an empire (2009, 629-630). In order to make a point here, Gravier brings an illustrative example with the WTO and the EU where first one does not have citizens while the latter one has (2009, 630).

Zielonka, in addition to core and periphery, emphasizes a global influence in material, institutional and ideological terms inherent to empire, while stating that a true empire must have an imperial vision of itself (2011, 341). Peripheries are more likely to resist against metropolis without a reasonable vision of integration or assimilation in bilateral understanding (Zielonka 2012, 504). Zielonka finds empires' "civilising missions" important for analysing their vision of themselves and of the whole world (2012, 503). In Zielonka's understanding, where he also refers to Kearns (2009) "[c]ivilising missions shape an empire's geopolitical imaginary that gives the external environment structure and function" and adds a scope of imperial policies "such as: securing order, combating barbarism and terrorism, spreading enlightenment and reason, and protecting rights and freedoms" (Zielonka 2012, 503-504). According to Zielonka, civilising missions entitle empires to make sacrifices in order to achieve their goal and any "conquest" can be seen as "salvation" (2012, 503).

Zielonka argues that empire can also be one "in denial", i.e. it does not see itself as such, while referring to Motyl (1997) who claims that "[e]mpires can emerge silently – without noisy campaigns or bombastic proclamations of manifest destiny" as well to Bachrach and Baratz (1962) who argue that power is not entirely about certain decisions (2012, 508).

The scholars of the English School view three forms of empire: as a form of statehood, as a form of an international society and as a form of a world society (Stivachtis 2013, 129). Before understanding the concepts offered by the English School scholars it is necessary to open the definitions of international society and world society. The same scholar quotes Bull and Watson, defining international society as

a group of states [...] which not merely form a system, in the sense that the behaviour of each

is necessary factor in the calculations of the others, but also have established by dialogue and consent common rules and institutions for the conduct of their relations, and recognize their common interest in maintaining these arrangements (Stivachtis 2013, 130).

Stivachtis (2013, 131) summarizes the definition of world society, according to the traditional English School usage, as following:

World society [...] takes individuals, non-state organizations, and ultimately the global population as a whole as the focus of global societal identities and arrangements, and puts transcendence of the states-system at the centre of IR theory.

Following to these (named) definitions Stivachtis claims that imperial empire cannot be a form of international society but can be a form of world society (2013, 34). According to Watson (1992), empire means a “direct administration of different communities from an imperial centre” and while this context does not apply to independent states, it cannot be a form of international society in a way it is understood by the English School definition (Stivachtis 2013, 134). An interesting example Stivachtis brings from Bull’s (1977) is that originally the Ottoman Empire was a “part of the European states system and after 1856 as part of the European international society” (2013, 133). Here, Bull likely refers to 1856 reform edict as part of the Tanzimat reforms seeking to equality for all regardless to one’s religious belief. In a sense that world society meaning is broad enough it suits for empires. Although, the question remains regarding to how the centre manages its constituencies, i.e. are the norms, rules and identities negotiated democratically, whether the core acts legitimately or not (Stivachtis 2013, 134).

1.2. Outlining definition of ‘empire’

After comparing the definition of empire by the (named) scholars it can be summarized that in most definitions empire is a political unit, a formulation of imperialism, which has a core and a periphery (or peripheries). One of the major empire’s features is a core’s domination over its periphery, while it can be also a domination of one nation’s over another. Usually one’s domination over another means annexation and exploitation but in

some cases it can also be for peaceful causes, such as economic development, liberal rules and better institutionalization. The relations between core and periphery depend on former one – whether it has a clear vision of itself, how it creates and keeps the order in peripheries, how does it limit the relation with its various peripheries, what does it ‘give back’ as a bargain to peripheries. One’s domination over another can be territorial, economic or cultural. A formal empire means indirect physical control over another territory or nation; and informal, which means less direct domination. In informal empire a core dominates a periphery by controlling latter one’s government, which is nominally sovereign but functionally dependent.

According to the English School, empire can only be a form of international society in case it is not imperial, i.e. imperial centre directly administrating its constituencies. Still, empire can be a form of world society in case the core holds democratic negotiations on rules and norms with its constituencies.

1.3. Modern empires

There is number of scholars defining empire’s characteristics while comparing them together with a certain contemporary empires which are commonly named as superpowers in today’s world politics. A great deal of scholars is arguing that the EU and the US are empires (Bacevich 2002, Ferguson 2004, Maier 2006, Zielonka 2006, Beck and Grande 2007, Colomer 2007), as referred in Zielonka (2011, 337). The EU and the US dictate also global economic rules and norms. According to Sapir (2007), as referred in Zielonka, at the time “the EU and US generated 80 percent of the international norms and standards that regulate global markets”, which likely remains more or less the same today (2012, 510). The EU and the USA are also defined as examples of the geopolitics of empires in contemporary look (Parker 2010, 128). Zielonka even sees controversy in the position of the aforementioned empires, while arguing that “the US treats Europe as one of its peripheries and this clashes with the EU’s own imperial ambitions” (2011, 338).

When referring to various books, Zielonka claims “the United States of America, China, Russia and even the European Union “look, talk and walk” like empires” (2012, 502). As superpowers these states mostly possess power on various fields like economic, military

and political while influencing vastly other states. The US and Russia having world strongest military power together with its nuclear armoury and the EU and China being key economic powers are constantly tend to interfere in their relevant peripheries (Zielonka 2012, 509). While doing so, they all tend to believe themselves to be the “agents of development and peace” (Zielonka, 2012, 510). When looking at the global international organisations, it can be seen that at least one of those four named superpowers are members of it, while all being a member of the United Nations Security Council (the EU having its representative states as members together with the United Kingdom and France).

In addition to the (named) four contemporary superpowers some scholars are arguing that there are other prospective contemporary empires. In instance, Zielonka sees imperial features of Japan together with its “Middle Kingdom mentality” and having military expenditure bigger than Russia’s and almost as enormous as China’s but admits, while referring to Inoguchi and Jackson (1998) that Japan neglects its imperial posture due to historical reasons (2011, 342). Another “Middle Kingdom mentality” that Zielonka claims to have is India since its people believe “their democracy, economy and language give them edge over Russia or China” but agrees with Kapur and Metha (2006) that India’s too weak structure of state institutions counters it “from exercising power in a purposeful manner on a global scale (*Ibid.*). According to Kennedy (1987), there is also a possibility for new empires to rise and contemporary ones to fall, whereas Davies and Stiglitz (2010) put the prosperity of the EU and the US under a question especially because of the continuous “economic and security turmoil” (Zielonka 2011, 342).

1.3.1. The EU as an empire

In order to better understand the relation between Turkey and the EU in the context of this research work, it is important to have a discussion on characteristics of the EU as a contemporary empire. Therefore this subchapter is concentrating on the EU’s behaviour and governing structures inherent to an empire as well as the opinion of its political elite. The paper is not going into a heavy debate on the very question of whether or not the EU is a modern empire – the point here is to keep focus on the main argument why Turkey cannot fit to the EU.

When speaking of the EU's characteristics of empire there is no such thing as core and periphery in their classical terms. According to Gravier, "there cannot be a geographical localization, since the core cannot be reduced to one state [...] all member states are part of both the core and of the periphery of the EU [...] the EU's core is not a place but a *statum*" (2009, 632). Even if Brussels is called the capital of the EU, nobody ever claimed Belgium to be a core of the EU (Gravier 2009, 632).

In policies such as environment, agriculture and transport, laws are made by the central organs of the EU – the Commission, the Parliament and the Council – and are enforced to all its member states, although latter ones have a right of veto on social security, taxation, foreign affairs and defence (How it works: European laws). Still, in majority of policies and law making members remain sovereign. Gravier admits that her conception of the EU being an empire is similar to Zielonka's neo-medieval empire (2006) due to the "multiplicity" of the EU's governance system as its core but in which Gravier does not agree with Zielonka is that the EU is hierarchically flat but she agrees with Zielonka that the EU is neither a Westphalian hierarchical pyramid (2009, 632). Walker (2006) claims the EU to be "rather a complex heterarchical pyramid with several summits", as referred in Gravier (*Ibid.*).

With time, the EU has extended its control over its relevant peripheries – considerable part of Eastern Europe and also the Balkans – by using the membership conditionality as an excuse; currently, the Union introduces its governance system to several countries such as Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia, Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus (Zielonka, 2012, 509). The biggest EU enlargement in 2004 can be seen as "a prototype of imperial politics" because the EU took politic and economic control over that time "unstable and impoverished" Eastern-European countries (Zielonka 2006, 11). Because these eastern new-born states had recently gained or re-gained their independence after the collapse of the USSR made them economically and politically weaker from the other European countries, which in turn made them eagerly want to become members of the EU.

Even the former and today's European leaders have publicly admitted that the EU has characteristics of empire or that it will become a superstate. Welt (2007), as referred in Zielonka, has brought an example where the former president of the European Commission,

José Manuel Barroso, recognized that the EU has features of empire, but denies the imperial structure (2011, 341). Current German chancellor Angela Merkel stated in her speech to the European Parliament in 2012 that her vision about the EU is that it is becoming a superstate where the Commission became a government (Merkel: EU Will Become a Superstate, 2012). Although, just six months before her statement in front of the Parliament, unlike her UK and US colleagues, Merkel was reluctant about any ambitions regarding to the EU becoming a superstate (Feierstein, 2012).

After looking at the scholarly definitions of empire, it could be argued that the EU most certainly qualifies as one. Although, Gravier notes that the EU does not qualify as contemporary empire yet, since it does not have a concrete dominating core, she recognizes the EU as emerging empire (2009, 645). According to Howe's (2002) interpretation of empire, the EU has almost all characteristics of empire except the dominant centre in means of the empire theory – it is large multiethnic and multinational political unit, it was created by conquest (when considering the result of the World War II as a conquest) and it has considerable peripheries. The last characteristic is proved by the Union's neighbourhood policy where the entity's rules are offered to some of its neighbouring countries to follow, even though those countries may never become full Member States of the EU. By doing so, the EU empowers its position in its periphery area and extends its reach.

3. TESTING PARAMETERS OF A CONTEMPORARY EMPIRE AGAINST THE CASE STUDY OF TURKEY

Many scholars are analysing Turkey's transition from the Ottoman Empire to a modern state today while finding some characteristics from Ottoman era in today's Turkey behaviour. Nevertheless, there is no relevant academic work found among the scholars that would examine modern Turkey as an empire, which makes it difficult to bring any literature review on this matter. Therefore, in this chapter the paper will, firstly, look at the characteristics of Ottoman Empire in modern Turkey and, secondly, the country's changed geopolitical strategy. Main focus of this chapter will be on testing parameters of contemporary empire with Turkey basing on the definition of empire given by the scholars in the first chapter.

3.1. Historical parameters: Neo-Ottomanism and Ottomania

While scholars have compared the Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey, the most common parameter within this comparison lies on the question of Ottomanism and Neo-Ottomanism, similarities and differences of the terms. In instance, Sahin finds five similarities of the named terms (Islam, Ottoman Legacy and Politics in Turkey: An Axis Shift?, 2011):

1. Reconfiguration of the state body in line with the international system.
2. Attempts to form new political identity and culture in order to respond to rising nationalist demands.
3. Trying to keep a balance between the new thinking and the traditional values.
4. Attempts to integrate into the European system.
5. Harmony with the superpowers of the time (Britain and US, respectively).

Turkey as well as the Ottoman Empire has tried to integrate into Europe by making changes in law and creating a secular. Although, Sahin argues, that Ottoman Empire did not have alternatives at that time as Turkey has today and latter one is not “as desperate as its Ottomanist predecessors”. He also argues that the AKP “backed by ideologically independent and self-confident Muslim – conservative *intelligentia*” is not satisfied with the “special partnership” that the EU is offering and wants a full membership instead. (*Ibid.*)

According to Turkish historian Karpaz (2002), Neo-Ottomanism as a term dates back to 1970’s when Greeks first used it during the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974 (*Ibid.*). Sahin relates the previously listed similarities between Ottomanism and Neo-Ottomanism mostly with the Tanzimat era in XIX century and the AKP (Justice and Development Party) era since 2002 until today when latter one has been in power (*Ibid.*). Interestingly, the core reason for similarities lies in the relations with Europe and the EU today where both the Tanzimat reforms and the AKP reforms main goal was to better fit within Europe and the EU. According to Sahin (2011), the major change of the Tanzimat reforms was secularisation of education system but as it is commonly known, the changes the AKP has established in law in order to meet the Copenhagen Criteria while creating more democratic governing system, less corruption, towards more human rights and secularisation in general.

According to Danforth, in the beginning of 1990’s “Ottomania” emerged, in other words Turkey “reconnected with its Ottoman roots” after Mustafa Kemal Atatürk had rejected Turkish Ottoman history (2014, 655-656). The Ottoman Empire was turned into Turkish national power symbol already back in 1950s by the Turkish government and since the 1990’s the Ottoman Empire has been symbolizing cultural and religious tolerance, which is also promoted by the EU (Danforth 2014, 674). Many Turks have started to see Ottoman legacy positively, especially due to its multiculturalism as “potential building blocks” in order to increase Turkey’s role both on internal and external scale (Larrabee 2010, 159). Once the Ottoman history was allowed to approve once again, Turks have admired their Ottoman roots even in a daily life, for example writing books and making films about it.

3.2. Geopolitical parameters: the core-periphery relation

Turkey has taken direct actions towards its Eastern and Southern neighbours in order to strengthen its geopolitical position in the region. Larrabee argues that Turkey even started to develop relations with “non-Western” areas already during the President Özal’s rule in the beginning of 1990’s, although crucial steps for strengthening ties with various areas have been made under the rule of the AKP since 2002 (2010, 158). Since 2002, besides the EU membership talks, Turkey has been actively trying to develop relations with its neighbours like Azerbaijan, Armenia, Iraq, Iran and Syria. Additionally, Turkey started to improve relations with the Arab world by establishing the Turkish-Arab Cooperation Forum with the Arab League and was nominated as a Secretary-General in the Organization of the Islamic Conference in the same year (Altunışık 2009, 146).

Already in the beginning of its rule, the AKP started to develop new foreign policy strategy for Turkey – “the doctrine of Strategic Depth”, created by Davutoglu, an adviser of the Prime Minister Erdogan at that time (Larrabee, 159). While Davutoglu currently holds Prime Minister’s position himself, it is quite obvious that he have had a great influence over Erdogan’s decisions regarding geopolitical decisions for more than a decade now. The Strategic Depth strategy is also a clear proof that Turkey has a clear vision of its position in global politics and that goes well with Zielonka’s theory that true empire needs to have imperial vision of itself, its geopolitical imaginary.

According to Larrabee (2010, 159), “[t]he core idea of the doctrine is that a nation’s value in international relations depends on its geostrategic location” and that for Davutoglu, Turkey’s geopolitical stance, especially thanks to the Bosphorus, makes it important on global scale. It is important to note here, that the doctrine underlines also Turkey’s Ottoman history together with its cultural ties with the Middle East, the Balkans and Central Asia while suggesting latter ones to be Turkey’s allies in order to “counterbalance its ties with the West” (Larrabee, 159). Turkey’s broader, but at the same time ambitious, vision is to have “zero problems with neighbours”, as Davutoglu has put it, while Candar (2009) sees a main challenge for Turkey to have regional peace and stability first, following cooperation with its neighboring states in order to achieve Davutoglu’s goal (Larrabee, 162).

3.2.1. Relations with Armenia and Azerbaijan

Turkey has always had very good relations with Azerbaijan while it did not have any diplomatic relations with Armenia until 2009 when the Zurich Protocols were signed. Turkey-Armenia relations have been tight particularly for two reasons: Turkey's denial of the Armenian Genocide in 1915; and the occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh by Armenia (Larrabee 2010, 169).

According to Phillips (2012), the objectives of the Zürich Protocols were “the establishment of diplomatic relations, the opening of the borders and the development of bilateral trade”, as referred in Giuliani (2013). Although the Protocols were bilaterally signed and supported by the US, neither Armenia nor Turkey have ratified them while scholars like Ismailzade (2011) and Phillips (2012) argue on numerous reasons including the fact that the content was kept in secret from civil society as well as from Azerbaijan and the Prime Minister of Turkey at that time, was not involved in the process (Giuliani 2013).

Considering the latest actions from both sides, there will be no ratification in the nearest future. For example, the President of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan asked the National Assembly of Armenia to recall the Armenia-Turkey Protocols from the Parliament by justifying his decision with Ankara's unwillingness to ratify the Protocols and their continuous denial of the Armenian Genocide, while Turkey's President Erdogan demonstrated his attitude by organising initiative to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Gallipoli on 24 April – on the same day when Armenia was commemorating the centenary of the Armenian Genocide (Armenia Recalls the Zurich Protocols, 2015). The usual date for the Gallipoli commemoration is 25 April that, in countries like Australia and New Zealand, is celebrated on the state level, recognising the ANZAC unity established back in 1915. This kind of way of action is definitely not contributing to develop bilateral relations between Turkey and Armenia and proves that politics undermine any kind of economic ambitions that both countries would benefit from.

Another major reason why Turkey is not eager to ratify the Zürich Protocols lies in its good relations with Azerbaijan who is even, according to Coene (2010), sometimes referred to as Turkey's “smaller brother” (Giuliani, 2013). Azerbaijan-Armenia conflict over the

Nagorno-Karabakh is the second issue why Turkey-Armenia relations are strained. Giuliani argues that taking a mediator's position in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict would bring Turkey various advantages "like regional trade agreements, energy projects and the opening of the Turkish-Armenian border" (2013). Nevertheless, even if Turkey would benefit from playing a mediator, politically it is difficult to take any action since in any way it would undermine one's relations either with Azerbaijan or Armenia and as long as Turkey does not find any major motivation to interfere to Azerbaijan-Armenia conflict, it will keep low profile.

When looking Turkey's behaviour towards Armenia and Azerbaijan from imperialism perspective, one could argue that interfering to the Azerbaijan-Armenia conflict of its two so-called peripheries, would make Ankara an exemplary metropolis that controls communication and relations of its periphery areas while keeping order. Although, Ankara has not taken a role of a strong mediator, yet.

3.2.2. Relations with Turkish Kurds and the KRG

While being the biggest ethnic minority, Kurds have been fighting for their civil rights ever since Turkey became the Republic. The relations between Turkish government and Kurds in Turkey have been tense, even deadlocked. After the 2009 local elections when the AKP had made a really bad result in the Kurdish southeast, the Prime Minister Erdogan launched 'Kurdish Opening' initiative in order to gain more support from Turkish Kurds while the content of the initiative was to reduce restrictions on the usage of the Kurdish language in schools and media and to extend Kurds' cultural rights. As Erdogan's initiative did not like to the opposition parties and also upset Turkish public it finally did not find any solution and the problem of Kurds remains. (Larrabee 2010, 163)

Turkey's relations with the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in Northern Iraq had been rather bad since the KRG was supporting the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), the militant organization fighting against Turkey. After 2008 there was a major shift in Turkey's foreign policy strategy when the relations between Turkey and the KRG started to improve (Larrabee 2010, 161). Larrabee argues that the core reason for Ankara to develop relations with the KRG lies in its own incapacity to deal with Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in Turkey and therefore hopes the KRG's help on this matter while the latter one has already

changed its position toward the PKK since it needs Turkey's support facing with strong and hostile Iran and the Shia-dominated government of Baghdad (162).

Economically, both Turkey and KRG, benefit from cooperation, especially in oil business since the KRG has the oil and Turkey has market relations with the EU (162). In addition, there are more than 1,000 Turkish companies with about 40,000 employees in the KRG's area and which makes the KRG dependent on Turkey's products and Turkey independent on the KRG market while being far more profitable for Turkish GDP than the business Turkey has with the biggest states of the EU (Chomani 2014). However, there has been a decline in Turkey-KRG relations after former one refused to help other in fighting against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) (Chomani 2014).

3.2.3. Relations with Iran and Syria

Turkey's relations with Iran had not always been as good as today. Diplomatic relations between two countries were tense in the 1980s and 1990s mainly because, from one side, Turkey blamed Iran for supporting the PKK while, from the other side, Iran accused Turkey for having good relations with Israel (Habibi 2012, 2). However, the relationship of two countries is not caved anymore – Iran is not supporting the PKK anymore, contrary to that, it is helping Turkey to fight against the PKK; and Turkey's relations with Israel are tense due to former's support for Palestine. Turkey-Iran relationship have improved significantly since 2002 when the AKP took power and already in 2004 the security cooperation agreement between two countries was signed in Tehran which, additionally, labeled the PKK as a terrorist organisation (Larrabee, 164).

Another important “driving force” in the process of improvement relations between Turkey and Iran is bilateral trade and investments, also tourism, while both countries' economy depends much on each other (Habibi 2012, 1). For example, “Turkey's imports from Iran from \$1.9 billion (2 percent of total imports) in 2004 to \$6.9 billion (3.9 percent of the total) in 2010, [...] an estimated 2.7 million Iranian tourists visited Turkey in 2010, compared with one million in 2008” (Habibi 2012, 4). In addition to security and economic cooperation energy plays another important role in Turkey and Iran friendly relations. According to Larrabee, “Iran is Turkey's second-largest supplier of natural gas” after Russia (2010, 164).

Iran is also one of the leading countries that export crude oil to Turkey, while having 30 percent of total oil imports in Turkey (Habibi 2012, 4).

Just like with Iran, Turkey had tense relations with Syria during the 1980s and 1990s because of the latter one's support to the PKK (Larrabee 2010, 165). Sezgin (2002) argues that the turnaround in Turkey and Syria relations came in 1998 when Turkey menaced Syria with invasion after what latter one stopped supporting the PKK; from there on two countries' militaries had joint trainings and their bilateral trade was increasing over the years (Larrabee 2010, 166). Ever since the Syrian Civil War started in 2011 Turkey-Syria relations have gone downhill. Even though the AKP government thought, thank to its good relations with Assad regime, it could influence Syrian government in order to sop the violence and start reforms, but without any result (Aras, 2012). Though, Turkey is currently taking the biggest amount of Syrian refugees, it is reluctant to help to protect Kobani city from ISIS. Zaman argues:

Erdogan has chosen to exploit Kobani's imminent fall to wrest maximum concessions from assorted Kurdish leaders [...] But Turkey would probably be happy to see Kobani fall [...] Kobani's fall would deal a humiliating blow to the PKK and weaken its support among Syria's Kurds (2014).

Having looked at Turkey's relations with the KRG, Iran and now with Syria, very concrete similarity reveals – with all named countries Turkey held relations strained because of these countries support to the PKK. While having been Turkey's biggest headache for many decades, it is obvious that Turkey's only wish is to eliminate the headache. One way for Turkey to undermine the PKK is not to support the Kurds in Kobani.

3.4. Outlining parameters of a contemporary empire against the case study of Turkey

Based on assumption of validity in regards of the contemporary empire's definition given by the scholars in the first chapter, one could suggest that Turkey mainly complies with a core-periphery relation feature, which is considered a major characteristic of the phenomenon. Turkey is not remarkably large by its land size but it enjoys a certain degree of

consideration among and, to a huge extent, influence over its immediate neighbourhood, including Azerbaijan, Armenia, the KRG, Iran and Syria. Moreover, Turkey could have even more power on the KRG. In instance, by helping the KRG fighting against the ISIL would make the KRG dependent on the Turkish state, giving the latter more power in the region.

Additionally, Turkey complies with Zielonka's definitions where a true empire needs to have a vision of itself, and Turkey, after establishing its doctrine of Strategic Depth, clearly defined the vision of itself in global politics. The country's closer relations with the Arab League and with the Organization of the Islamic Conference are helping Turkey to empower its position in the Arab world. By redefining its geopolitical position in the Middle East, the Black Sea basin, and the Caucasus, Turkey gives the EU plenty of signals that that it is not the same country that wanted to become a part of the European Community in 1959.

4. DISCUSSION ON TURKEY-EU RELATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF STUDY

After examining both Turkey and the EU as contemporary empires, in order to understand whether Turkey's membership to the EU is relevant or not, it is important to analyse how they communicate in different clusters, such as politics, economics, culture and foreign policy. The chapter will look closer how Turkey and the EU are connecting on political level, especially in foreign policy; on what stance are Turkey and the EU economies connected and dependent on each other; and how they are interacting in cross-cultural way.

4.1. Political cluster

One of the most up to date issues in the framework of the negotiations between the EU and Turkey is how latter one meets the Copenhagen Criteria. After the accession talks started in 2005, the process has been slow, while the EU has blocked some of the chapters of the *acquis* because of the Cyprus conflict and opposition of some member states towards Turkey's accession, including France and Germany. Europeanisation in Turkey was already in action before the accession negotiations were opened in 2005, while Turkey had already started with "numerous constitutional and legislative changes [...] to align Turkish law with EU values, norms and practices". In order to become an EU Member State, Turkey has to meet 35 chapters of the *acquis communautaire*, while nearly 80,000 pages of EU law have to be included to Turkish law. (Nugent 2007, 491) Nugent argues, that through accession negotiations the EU exports its "values and standards" to applicant countries while "repressing" applicants by insisting to change their national policies and law in order to be compatible with the Union's policies (*Ibid.*).

Currently, there are 14 opened and 17 blocked chapters out of the aforementioned 35 being negotiated on, while Turkish Foreign Economic Relations Board (DEİK) urges the EU

to open the energy chapter as the next one of the *acquis* (EU urged to open energy chapter in accession talks, 2015). In addition, the European Commission and the European Parliament have expressed their support to open the energy chapter of Turkey throughout their reports (Yanatma, 2012). Contrary to the DEIK, Turkish Energy and Natural Resources Minister Yıldız has publicly stated that Turkey does no longer insist the energy chapter to be opened, claiming that the EU policies are being unstable and Turkey's energy policy being strategic and "more consistent" – a reference to *Nabucco* and *TANAP* pipelines projects (Eraz, 2015). Economist Ertem is arguing that prolonging to open the energy chapter from the EU's side would only harm the Union itself as it is lacking from options "while Turkey becomes the hub of natural gas" and being most convenient deal for the EU (Eraz, 2015).

Followed to before mentioned case of the Armenian Genocide in the third chapter, there has been a strong response from Europe. For the 100-th anniversary of the tragedy of 1915, also the European Parliament and the Pope have recognised the Armenian massacre as genocide (Peker and Pop, 2015). While the Pope have called the Armenian tragedy "the first genocide of XX century" (Peker and Rocca, 2015), the European Parliament have adopted resolution urging Turkey "to recognize the Armenian genocide and pave the way for a genuine reconciliation between the two nations" (EU Parliament adopts resolution calling on Turkey to recognize Armenian genocide, 2015). President Erdogan "dismissed" the resolutions already before it had been voted and the Foreign Minister of Turkey alleged the EU for rewriting the history (Peker and Pop, 2015). When considering Turkey as a modern empire, one should not be missing a situation when the country cannot allow itself to publicly recognise its predecessor's wrongdoing since it could show a definite level of weakness.

4.2. Economic cluster

Turkey and the EU have very tight economic relations while the EU is Turkey's biggest import and export partner and Turkey is the 7th biggest import and 5th biggest export partner for the EU (Turkey, 2015). Economic relations strengthened and trade exchange increased between the EU and Turkey especially after the Customs Union came into force at the end of 1995.

Whereas Turkey had a poor macroeconomic environment in the 1990s, the Customs Union deal with the EU in 1995 was “an important milestone” for Turkey both economically and politically (Yilmaz 2011, p. 235). Yilmaz notes, that even though the Customs Union, firstly, brought Turkey a falling tariff revenue, the deal was still beneficial to both Turkey and the EU, especially due to the increasing trade flow and market competition, although Turkish exports to the EU increased with “a long delay“, after 2001 economic crises (pp. 237-239). After China joined with the WTO, Turkish imports from the EU saw a decline when Turkish imports from China, together with other East Asian countries, started to increase, while reaching from 2.2 percent in 2001 to 9.2 percent in 2010 (Yilmaz, p. 238).

Yilmaz argues, that the Customs Union affects Turkey with serious limits while forbidding the latter one from trading free trade agreements (FTA) with countries independent from the EU (p. 242). That kind of behaviour proves that the Customs Union was dictated by the EU from the beginning. According to Yilmaz, in a situation where Turkey’s membership to the EU seems uncertain, Turkey should seriously revise the conditions of the Customs Union and, perhaps, change it into FTA (*Ibid.*).

After enormous economic growth in 2011, Turkey’s economy has been boosting and getting more and more independent from the EU. While the EU is still the biggest economic partner of Turkey, the latter’s economy is getting more global through an increasing number of bilateral trade agreements with countries all over the world. Ellyatt raises an ambitious hypothesis: whether Turkey could become “the China of Europe” while referring to its position as the second fastest growing economy after China in 2011 (2013). She points to even more ambitious goals of the Turkish former Prime Minister and current President Erdogan who wants Turkey by 2023 to have a gross domestic product of USD 2 trillion from USD 775 billion in 2012, a per capita income of USD 25,000 from USD 10,524 in 2012, also to reduce unemployment to 5 percent from 9.8 percent in 2012 and to raise the number of people in the workforce to 30 million compared with 22.3 million in 2013 (Ellyatt, 2013).

Such numbers, if achieved, would make Turkey a true global economic player next to China, the US and the EU. It has also been argued by some authors that next to the BRICS countries there will be a MIST – a term been coined representing the next block of “large emerging economies” with Mexico, Indonesia, South Korea and Turkey (Roughneen, 2011).

4.3. Cultural cluster

Turkey and the EU cultural differences are seen as the biggest obstacle for Turkey's membership to the EU (Arnold 2007, Steunenberget al 2011). Turkey's cultural compatibility within the EU is undermined especially due to its Muslim society that many EU member states do not tolerate and even despise. A headscarf ban in France is one of the most debated ways of discrimination of Muslim minority in Europe. Islamists terrorist's attack to Charlie Hebdo, a satiric French Newspaper, office and killing of its employees in the beginning of 2015 shocked and terrified the whole world while raising controversial debate where one part was supporting Charlie Hebdo's action of publishing satirical pictures of Prophet Muhammad and other part claimed it to be wrong. Turkey, with 99.8 per cent of Muslim population, reacted with banning the Charlie Hebdo cover together with the police raid to office of the Istanbul newspaper Cumhuriyet which columnists published a sample from the French satirist newspaper's latest edition, and imprisonment of the columnists (Lev et al, 2015).

Islamic terrorist attacks and discrimination of Muslims minorities in the EU raises a serious question if the West and the Middle East can exist side by side or is it a continuous "clash of civilizations" as Huntington has put it. Western societies tend to put the equal sign between Muslims and terrorists, especially after the 9/11 attacks, and attitude is hard to change. However, one possible way of building cultural compatibility is through different cultural programmes.

While most of the Turks started to migrate from Turkey to the EU countries in order to find job, then after the pan-European student exchange programme Erasmus was launched in 1987 it gave many new opportunities for youth. After Turkey joined with the Erasmus programme in 2004, the number of Turkish outgoing students and staff at European universities has rapidly grown with a total number nearly 90,000 in 2013 and the number of incoming students and staff was approximately 40,000 the same year (garagErasmus event in Istanbul, 2013). While Istanbul is one of the top most popular destinations for students in Erasmus programme, the number of incoming students and staff will be increasing in the future. As one of the most important aims of the Erasmus programme is cultural exchange and multiculturalism, it is undoubtedly one of the best and most efficient ways of reaching cultural compatibility between Turkey and the EU.

CONCLUSION

The objective of this paper was to analyse Turkey's accession to the EU in the context of theory on contemporary empires in order to outline a comprehensive understanding whether or not the EU and Turkey are compatible enough to be in the same union. Firstly, the paper gave an overview on various scholarship examining reasons why Turkey has not accepted as a full member of the EU, even though the first association agreement – Ankara agreement – was signed bilaterally in 1963. Scholars have argued on reasons, why the negotiations are entangled, such as the question of both Turkey's and EU's identity, Turkey's cultural compatibility within the EU, geographical and geopolitical stance and compatibility of Islam with democracy.

In a somewhat intriguing way, the paper formulated hypothesis that the core reason for the failure of the negotiations is that both the EU and Turkey have characteristics of contemporary political empires, and one (Turkey) cannot fit to another one (EU). For that, this research outlined the definition of empire given by different scholars and gave a brief overview of contemporary superpowers – the EU, the US, Russia and China – which are, to some extent, 'confirmed' as modern empires by a wide circle of scholarship. According to the generalised definition of empire, this research underscored that in most definitions, offered by representatives of different schools of thought, one of the major characteristics of contemporary empire is core's domination over periphery, be it territorially, economically or culturally orientated. In addition, some part of the scholarship defined 'contemporary empire' to be a formation of 'international society' without having an imperial centre, or 'world society' in case the core holds democratic negotiations on rules and norms with its constituencies.

After attempting to generalise on the definition of empire, this research tested the parameters of a contemporary empire against the case study of modern Turkey by scrutinising its behaviour as a presumably empire. In this segment of study, the paper compared the

parameters of modern Turkey with its fallen historic predecessor, the Ottoman Empire, and concluded that during the second half of XX century its Ottoman roots started to re-emerge in Turkish society and politics. Secondly, a set of geopolitical parameters were examined in order to understand Turkey's attitude towards its close neighbours – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Iraq (more specifically, the KRG), Syria – in context of the core-periphery relations. Turkey's attitude towards the aforementioned countries is a clear sign that it wants to control the situation within the region. Close and bilaterally dependent economic relations with its neighbourhood areas, major energy projects situating Turkey in a 'bridge-like' position between the EU and the Middle East and Caucasus – it all proves that Turkey is striving, with certain success, to become a geopolitical powerhouse.

The last chapter was concentrating on the discussion on Turkey and the EU relations in the context of study by analysing a communication between the two parties in political, economic and cultural clusters. Turkey, in its formal capacity as a candidate Member State of the EU, clearly understands implications of the accession negotiations. Politically, the heart of the negotiation lies in the Copenhagen Criteria, which Turkey needs to meet, but regardless of changes made in Turkish law, there are political reasons for the negotiations being entangled – while a major reason lies in the Cyprus dispute where Turkey does not want to 'surrender'. In addition, the paper was taking a closer look on the EU's supportive position on the Armenian Genocide and Turkey's reaction to it; this research summarised that when considering Turkey's features of a presumably contemporary empire, it is evidently important for the country not to show its weakness by recognising guilt on itself for historical actions of its predecessors.

Economically, Turkey-EU relations are bounded with the Customs Union and today Turkey's biggest trade partner is still the EU. Nevertheless, after the serious reshuffling of Turkey's economic relations with China in 2001, the country became economically more independent from the EU and, while considering the numbers of Erdogan's vision for 2023, Turkey is not far from joining the club of global economic superpowers. In cultural cluster, this research work looked at Turkey-EU communication in a broader sense, since Turkey is a part of a global Muslim community that, according to many scholars, is seen as a serious obstacle for its membership to the EU. As cultural beliefs and principles are hard to brake, the opposition towards Turkish as Muslims in the EU, also on governmental level, might be

leading the whole accession process to a final deadlock, where Turkey could, with necessity, be saying ‘no’ to the EU and not *vice versa*.

Finally, after the paper has analysed Turkey’s accession process to the EU in context of theory on contemporary empires, while trying to answer ‘whether one empire (Turkey) fits to another (EU)’ and whether Turkey has features to be called ‘contemporary political empire’, it can be concluded that Turkey complies with a core-periphery relation feature which is also the major characteristic defined by the scholars. Turkey is not remarkably large by its land size but it has certain power over its indirect neighbours including Azerbaijan, Armenia, the KRG and Syria that can be considered as Turkey’s periphery areas in the context of study. Turkey is not yet an economic superpower and its action towards its periphery countries is not that crucial, while mainly possessing economic power on its close neighbours, for example in the Middle East and Caucasus.

Nevertheless, Turkey has taken a much stronger and independent position in world politics by dictating the rules of play in a number of cases. Especially important is to carefully follow Turkish internal and external political decisions since 2002 when the AKP came on power. Country’s admiration to its Ottoman legacy has grown during the AKP’s rule and Turkish political leaders’ attitude towards the EU has become more strict and hardline. Furthermore, meeting the Copenhagen Criteria has not been Turkey’s top political priority anymore as it was in the beginning of 2000. By redefining its geopolitical position in the Middle-East and Caucasus Turkey has given the EU a sign that it is not the same country that wanted to become a part of the European Community in 1959, it has grown more powerful and cannot be considered as a periphery of the EU anymore.

In the future, Turkey’s behaviour in its region and the country’s ambitions in XXI century should be analysed more carefully in the context of Turkey’s accession process to the EU. One has to look at a broader perspective in order to understand the new background of the reasons why Turkey’s accession to the EU is entangled.

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