

Explaining Turkey's Cultural Diplomacy in Afghanistan during the AKP Era

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Abstract

Turkey as one of the regional actors in the Middle East has taken the 'Look East' policy in its foreign policy since 2002, when the Justice and Development Party (AKP) has come to power. Although the relations between Turkey and Afghanistan have a historical background dating back to the Ottoman, but the geopolitical and geostrategic position of Afghanistan has doubled its significance for Turkish politicians during the Neo-Ottomanism, the situation which has emerged in Turkish politics, especially its cultural diplomacy over Afghanistan. Since the rise to power of the AKP.

So, in this article, the main question is, what are the objectives and tools of Turkish cultural diplomacy in Afghanistan during the AKP era? In response to this question, the main hypothesis is that Turkey's cultural diplomacy during the AKP era was based on the use of shared linguistic, ethnic and religious values to strengthen Turkey's soft power in Afghanistan as well as the hegemony of Turkey in the region.

Keywords: *Turkey, Afghanistan, Cultural Diplomacy, Ethnicity, AKP, Neo-Ottomanism*

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Introduction

With the end of the Ottoman Empire and the creation of the new nation of Turkey, its former role, influence and power as the Muslim Caliphate within most of the Islamic world started to wane dramatically. This change of perception was partly due to the new geopolitical realities in Turkey, the Middle East and Europe, but also to Turkey's own inward looking cultural policies.

With the 1979 Iranian revolution and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan however the Turkish government had to reexamine its relations particularly within the region and the Islamic World. However, with the launch of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) by the USA in Afghanistan in 2001, Turkey as a NATO member and US ally entered a new phase in its relations and influence in Afghanistan.

Although the relations between Turkey and Afghanistan date back to the Ottoman Empire, but the geopolitical and geostrategic position of Afghanistan has recently doubled its significance for Turkish politicians especially in the neo-Ottoman politics of the ruling Justice and Development Party.

Previous studies and articles associated with Turkey-Afghanistan relations has been mostly about historical ties and Turkey's presence in Afghanistan in post-September 11 attacks in terms of hard power. Any basic research on the cultural policy of Turkey is yet to be conducted in which Turkey soft power should be considers. For example, the book by Mir Mohammad Sedigh Farhang "Afghanistan in the last five centuries", the most writings and references have been limited to Military advisors of German and Ottoman presence in the middle of WWI such as Ottoman

representative Al-Beik who arrived through Iran to Afghanistan.

The above researches are mainly focused on the historical-cultural relations of Turkey and the influence of Turkey in the process of modernization of Afghanistan due to the coexistence and religious affiliation of the Afghan people towards the Ottoman Caliphate. But in the present study, while pointing to such a background, which can be considered the foundation of Turkish cultural diplomacy in Afghanistan, the main focus is on the strategies and policies of the AKP at the beginning of the third millennium. The most important of these is the Eurasian strategy of Davutoglu, which includes a set of new cultural policies of the Islamic Caliphate, Neo-Ottomanism and Pan-Turkism. Afghanistan has a special place in this strategy as a link with the Turkic-speaking republics of Central Asia and the Turks in Xinjiang.

So, in this article, the main question is, what are the objectives and tools of Turkish cultural diplomacy in contemporary Afghanistan during AKP era?

And in response to this question, the main hypothesis is that Turkey's cultural diplomacy during the AKP era was based on the use of shared linguistic, ethnic and religious values

with some ethnic groups to strengthen its soft power and influence in Afghanistan and the its hegemony in the region. According to many international relations theorists, cultural diplomacy is a typical example of the application of soft power which allows countries to influence the others and encourage them to collaborate through elements such as culture, values and ideas. (Hassankhani, 2005:138) In order to address and examine these issues this paper is divided into three parts. First, the theoretical framework of the article is discussed as constructivism and its characteristics. Second, the history of the relations between Turkey and Afghanistan as well as the issue of ethnicity in Afghanistan will be examined. Third, Turkey's cultural diplomacy and its instruments and objectives will be examined in Afghanistan.

The research method in this research is qualitative, based on 'Grounded Theory' in which the Turkish cultural diplomacy in Afghanistan is studied inductively. The article also attempts to collect and analyze information through regular collection and finally to conceptualize and prove the phenomenon of Turkish cultural diplomacy in Afghanistan.

I. Theoretical Framework

Basically, the emergence of the role of culture in national security and strategic behaviors has been accompanied by the collapse of the Soviet Union. During the Cold War, realism shadows all over the strategic issues of this era and especially cultural theories in description and analysis of strategic behaviors were severely marginalized. (AbdullahKhani ,2011:9) The collapse of the Soviet Union and the inability of the realists to analyze and anticipate this event based on its teachings undermine this theory and cause the re-emergence of cultural and constructivist theories. The constructivist approach, which is referred to as the meta-theory, tries to coordinate culture, politics, and the inner community that is linked to the identity and also conduct of the state in global politics will be examined. (ibid: 9)

Cultural diplomacy reflects this reality that theory of constructivism with sociological roots has enjoyed the knowledge of greater capability than conventional theories for explaining cultural diplomacy.

By compiling the book of "The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge", Peter Berger and Thomas Luckman in the 1970s introduced this theory, (Berger & Luckman,1976:13-15) whose roots go back to Chicago school and Phenomenology.

The first major ontological point of constructivism is that intellectual and normative structures are as important as material structures, because systems of meaning define how actors should interpret their material environment. The second point is that identities shape the interests and actions.

Understanding how the interests are shaped is the key to explaining a wide range of international phenomena which are not well understood or neglected.

Based on its third proposition, Agencies and structures interact with one another. According to constructivists, structures are not essentially material, but are based on imagination and thoughts. These include norms, beliefs, practices and habits which have a material consequence. In this way, internal identity policy provides facilities and limitations for government behavior in abroad. Hence, the State needs to act through a national identity inside in order to legitimize the authority that affects its identity abroad (Wednt, 2006: 248). So countries are trying to expand their culture as a soft power to achieve three goals including; promoting the degree of legitimacy of the system in political views of the international public opinion, gaining international prestige and ultimately managing public opinion.

In general, one of the major features of constructivist theory is the attention to the cultural and normative structures alongside the material elements.

So that even in these circumstances of global conflicts, these are ideas that make sense of the material elements of power, weapons, land, and population, moreover, norms have a major role in the organization of interests.

In fact, Constructivists provide a new definition of power and power relationships, in which, a powerful government does not necessarily have to possess economic and military power, rather, it must have the ability to create such a normative space that can easily create behaviors of his own consideration. (Checkel, 1998: 472) For example, the new Turkish approach proves this constructive argument, despite the limitations of military and political power, Turkey is trying to create political and religious norms in the Afghanistan, in a way that poses itself as an active and powerful actor in the region.

II. Afghanistan's unfinished nation-state building

Afghanistan is a society in which ethnicity and tribal ties are more important than any other factors in identifying an individual. The hard and heavy ethnic-tribal atmosphere in Afghanistan has always been able to cast its heavy shadow on the modern structures of this country such as legal and executive institutions.

The division of power on the basis of ethnic and linguistic criteria goes beyond the references of the people, indicating the adherence of modern institutions to the tribal and ethnic equations in Afghanistan. This important component is also evident in the field of Afghanistan's foreign policy and has always been a good platform for other countries to intervene and exert influence in Afghanistan. Therefore, in this article, in order to understand Turkish cultural diplomacy in Afghanistan, in which the ethnic approach is obvious, we have to study the ethnic and racial groups in Afghanistan in details.

The main ethnic groups of Afghanistan are as follow: Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara, Uzbek, Aimak, Turkmen, Baloch, Pashai, Nuristani, Gujjar, Arab, Brahui, and Pamiri. The Pashtuns form the largest ethnic group in Afghanistan of around 40%. The vast majority of the population of southern Afghanistan belongs to this group, according to different reports and statistics. However, they are also present in the East and West regions and belong to the denomination of Hanafi Sunni Islam. Their language is Pashtu which is a branch of the Persian language. Those Afghan tribes living in the south are consistent with Durrantor Abdali and Ghilji tribes who are known to Durrani. After the arrival of Ahmad Khan Abdali, (Valian, 1961:36) Afghans living in the East; means Yusufzai and the other tribes were split from the Peshawar desert and northern canyons. Some Pashtuns oppose the Afghan name and consider that the Pashtun name is prior to Afghan. Nevertheless, those ethnic names which are accepted among Afghans; do not have a long history. For the first time, the word Afghan is recorded in the 16th century in the form of "Avagāa" by the Indian astronomer VarāhaMihira in

his Brihat-samhita. (Septfonds,2017) On the other hand, Pashtuns, despite Afghanistan's mistreatment of the Jews, associate themselves to the Jewish people, even if there is no valid document. For example, orientalist such as Sir William Jones and Major Raverty have supported the theory of physiognomy, and declared that there are similarities between the Pashtuns and the Jews. Although they are Indo-Europeans in terms of language, but they are ideologically twin with Wahhabism. Also, in many cases, like as the implementation of Islamic law, they are extremists. (Najafi , 2010:51) The government has always been exclusive between the Pashtun tribes in Afghanistan. For centuries, the Durrani and Yusufzai tribes have been fighting over pasture with each other. (Ali Abadi,1996:51).

Tajiks are the second ethnic group and they are the men of letters and pen, those who have inherited the Iranian bureaucracy and are capable of speaking and writing Persian. These ethnic groups make up almost 30% of Afghanistan's population. (Ibid) Though the Tajiks are predominantly Sunni and Hanafi Muslims like much of Turkey yet Culturally and linguistically linked to Iran. Despite the religious affinity Turkey has little influence over them.

Other ethnic groups which are the focus of this paper are the Hazaras and they are descendants of Mongol - Tatar and from the thirteenth century onwards, they have been sent into the area. These ethnic groups form the Altaic language group which in Afghanistan includes the Turco-Mongols Hazaras, Uzbeks, Turkmen, Aimaq, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Ghezelbash and other tribes called *Chagatai*, but due to racial mixture there is no absolute claim descent. (Hopkins,2012:5).

For example, it is told that Hazaras are the descendants of Genghis Khan and the Mongol soldiers who were present when Genghis Khan set expedition against the region in the 13th century. Hazaras are Shiite but they speak Persian language. Hazaras can be divided into three groups, Daikundi, Dayzngy and Bihsud and residents are in the mountains of central Afghanistan.

They are a mixture of different races and ethnic groups and form a part of the mass armies of Genghis Khan and Timur. Despite Persian and Shia identity, they are the Huns people in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran and live with the same title. In Afghanistan, they are considered as the natives of the central regions and most of them are Twelver Shia. They speak Persian with their own, the dialect of Dari. Some of them are Shia Ismaili while others belong to the Sunni Hanafi religion. In the AbdurRahman Khan period there was a great injustice with the Hazaras as a result of being Shiite. Most of their lands were confiscated. Yellow skin or ethnic Uzbeks named after one of the Turkic-speaking Uzbeks living in Central Asia are known as the descendants of Genghis Khan who live around the cities of Mazar-i-Sharif, Maymana, Khanabad, Kunduz and Badakhshan. (Ali Abadi, 1996:21) They are regarded as a branch of the Jochi Khan's Mongol tribes and clans after Uzbek Khan. Of their commanders, Uzbek Khan and his son Jani Beg on before Timur, whose name has remained as the leader of the Uzbeks, the Uzbek Khan caused Golden Horde to become a Muslim. (Akiner, 2008:238) It is stated that Turkmen and other ethnic groups are ethnically Asian yellow-raced from the plains of Manchuria and Mongolia, their initial home, but another measurement says that Turkic people appearance look likes to Circassian. Under pressure from the Chinese emperors from the East in the third and fourth centuries, also because of the spread of Islamic conquests Turkmen immigrated from the mainland to the West and entered into areas of Oxus and the north of Khorasan. (Goli, 1987:16-17) (see Table1)

EHTNIC GROUP	"Afghanistan: Where Things Stand" (2004–2009)	"A survey of the Afghan people" (2006)	"A survey of the Afghan people" (2007)"	"A survey of the Afghan people" (2010)"	"A survey of the Afghan people" (2010)
Pashtuns	33-41%	36%	35%	35%	35%
TAJIKS	32-14%	32%	32%	32%	32%
Hazaras	13/6%	34 %	10%	11%	11%
Uzbeks	7/5 %	9%	8%	9%	9%
Baloch	10-3%	10%	10%	10%	10%
Turkmen	2/1%	2%	3%	2%	2%
Aimaqs	0%	0/1%	2%	1%	1%
Other (Pashai, Sadat, Nuristani, ...)	0/4%	¼%	2%	3%	5%

Table 1. Statistics taken by the Asia Foundation in 2004-2010 to 32 out of 34 provinces in Afghanistan

available online at <https://asiafoundation.org/where-we-work/Afghanistan> (accessed 02 October 2018).

Ethnic diversity in the country resulted in the conflict so that the nation-state building process has always received a lot of damage in Afghanistan. Ethnicity, Tribalism, cultural and linguistic bias has overcome the social component such as the rule of law, national unity, and national solidarity. The incitement of ethnic issues in this country has always been associated with many wars and conflicts.

The involvement of other extra-regional countries was not only unable to diminish its intensity; but also gave speed to the wheel rolling downhill and caused chaos and strife. None of the ethnic groups in the short history of Afghanistan could and would form a strong and stable central government that has elements of political progress. The ethnic composition of Afghanistan has always been afraid of a strong and stable government and the context of such a government is also excluded by the ethnic-centered society. For the first time in communist ideology and the

former Soviet Union were given the ethnic color. Marxist groups such as the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) with regard to their ethnic background ended in chaos. Such sectarian tendencies of the Communist leadership, justified the widespread presence of the Red Army in Afghanistan. The Soviet and their internationalism aspirations, regardless of the cultural background of the people and religious structure of the country, started to build the nation-state which was far from reality. The government has always been exclusive between the Pashtun tribes in Afghanistan and there has been conflict over the power gained which existed between them. It is common among Afghans that the throne of Afghanistan has not been seen on non-Pashtuns. Durrani and Yusufzai tribes have been fighting each other over the pastures. (Ali Abadi, 1996:15)

According to Maxwell J Fry the revolution of the Afghan race occurred, when people and the ethnic structure of Afghanistan declined to pay direct taxes on different economic activities. Ethnic and religious leaders were the leaders of rabble-rousing to give up the government. (Rasanayagam,2003:54-55) Such a ban from the society was considered as the final blow to the government and caused crisis which reached Nadir and revealed the status of government in Afghanistan. Talking about ethnic structure in Afghanistan, in chapter five of his book, Fry calls the Afghanistan economy the Fragmented Economy: "In the minds of a number of economists in Afghanistan to an understanding of the economy, the idea of a fragmented economy is considered here. The central hypothesis is that the economy has consisted of distinct segments which have been only very loosely linked to one another. This fragmentation has occurred in three ways. The first is the separateness of the public sector from both the modern private sector and the bazaar economy. The second is the lack of cohesion between economic sectors, particularly agriculture, construction, industry and foreign trade, and the isolation of the subsistence economy. The third is the separation by distance of Afghanistan from the rest of the world and of regions within the

country itself.” (Fry, 1974:44)

After the Taliban defeat, the nation-state building in Afghanistan by US demonstrated that in the case of the existence of ethnicity; as well as the Marxist ideology, the country will experience many challenges with its democracy. The last Afghanistan presidential election (held in 2014) was met with questions and doubts. The presidential election by the people in this country was not based on political wisdom, social promise, freedom and social justice and the common slogans of the presidential candidates in the rest of the world but has been based solely on ethnic orientation. (Byrd, 2015) The political order in Afghanistan has been individualism, tribal alliance, ethnic background and power. This is because the social structure is coupled with violence, like as the enormous political powers of kings, presidents and rulers of this country which have not changed peacefully and have been linked to murders, coups and brutal murder. The Afghan society approach towards political phenomena is an old approach and has no compatibility with the policies of nation-state. In this approach, the person in the family as defined by their ethnic identity depends heavily on the ethnic group. The emphasis is on the blood and race. For example, Hazaras and Pashtuns can be from this kind of identity. This study considered some ethnic identification archaism. For example, a person who calls himself Tajik rarely introduces himself as Afghan. Here, Persian and Afghan governments have put together two identities, to create a defined and accepted identity for the person there. The policies adopted by the trans-regional governments in Afghanistan. In this country, in such a situation, the instrumentalist approach is not seen; this is because people are trying to justify their presence and culture.

As a result of the subsistence economy and rural population in Afghanistan; more than 53% of the country, has caused unresolved ethnic conflicts. Rural population in Afghanistan was reported at 72.87 % in 2016 according to the World Bank collection of development indicators. (Trading Economics,2016)

The general dominant ideology in the nineteenth century Afghanistan relied heavily on the caste, class consciousness, class struggles and set of welfares that were undeniable and were rooted in the economy but in this set, insisting on the economy caused ethnic cultural realities to stay hidden. In fact, the social and the ethnic matter are two permanent and general categories which existed in all human societies and can serve as a source of similar conflict, misunderstanding and intolerance. In the depths of human life, there are always two powerful dynamics. The socio-economic dynamics and ethno-cultural dynamics were effective. Economic and social dynamics have not met in ethnic states. Afghanistan is a country whose population is mostly rural with a very small percentage in the urban areas. In Afghanistan, most of the people are not class-conscious. Afghan ethnic groups, especially Pashtuns, are based on religious and tribal factors. Since the central government budget and treasury has been suffering, there has not been any contribution to the creation of a dynamic ethno-cultural measurement. This is the reason why the structure of an ethno-tribal character is strong. Another negative feature of the Afghan society is failure to enter the country due to modernity. During Amanullah Khan Period, Afghanistan began entering into the modern era before Iran and Turkey, but because of the colonial intervention in Afghanistan, the modernism process remained unfinished. Staying away from modernity has brought devastating effects on the Afghan society and the people and nationality are yet to be formed. Afghanistan is a country where ethnicity concepts are highlighted every day.

From the perspective of Max Weber, ethnic group is one of the most annoying concepts, because it is full of emotions. Weber opined that human groups are referred to as ethnic groups because their beliefs are subjective to the shared ancestry. This occurs due to any physical similarities, customs, or both or because of memories of colonization and migration. (Stone, 1995:391) Weber says that the concepts of “nationality” with the concept of “the people” are ethnically rooted in the ambiguous connotation that

whatever is felt to be particularly common must be due to common ancestry. People who consider themselves as members of a nation are often much less shared by generations are interdependent rather than people who belong to different nationalities and hostile (Ibid) as the 2014 presidential elections in Afghanistan was ethnic. Voters did not pay attention to the strategies of the candidates and every person just wanted the triumph of their candidate. Afghanistan's society, even today, is in a state of society before modernization. But what is striking in the Afghan society in the form of hostile and fanatic tribes is religious fundamentalism and chaotic situation due to ethnic clefs in the body of the Afghan government.

III. Relations Between Turkey and Afghanistan

Relations between Turkey and Afghanistan have a long history dating back to the Ottoman Empire. In the twentieth century, the two countries had close ties with each other. Moreover, after the former Soviet Union, Afghanistan was the second country to recognize the new republic of Turkey in 1921. Meanwhile, Turkey due to its Ottoman heritage in the Muslim and Sunni world in particular has a spiritual influence amongst most of the Muslim population in Afghanistan, and both sides, have always tried to enjoy good relations with each other.

In WWI and during the Ottoman Empire by aligning itself with Germany and subsequent loss it lost nearly all of its colonies in North Africa and other areas. However, in Afghanistan, Ottoman Sultan prior and during WWI was officially regarded as the Caliph of Muslim countries and enjoyed good relations especially during the time of Habibullah Khan as the ruler of Afghanistan. The Ottoman government tried to grant him the Order of Mejidie. With the arrival of the World War, Mahmoud Tarzi's most influence was in publishing *Seraj-al-Akhbar*, and had Pan-Islamism thoughts similar to Sayyid Jamāl ad-Dīn Afghani. During the Battle of Gallipoli Campaign between Britain and Turkey in 1915, Tarzi's wrote in favor of the Ottoman and was

their speaker in Afghanistan. (Ruttig, ,2011) He absorbed many Anti-British Afghans in the favor of the Turkish government. In fact, the first political tendency of Turkey to Afghanistan was because of the hostilities and military confrontation between Turkey and Britain.

In 1955 Davoud, the Prime Minister of Afghanistan refused to join the Baghdad Pact which was formed by Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, Iraq, USA and Britain. (Ibid)The Soviets occupied Afghanistan in 1979 and1980; hence, Turkey decided to stay away from the events in Afghanistan. After the defeat of General Dostum from Taliban, Turkey accepted him as refuge and attempted to influence the political environment of Afghanistan under Taliban control and sent some instructors to Afghanistan under the Taliban religious cooperation. The President Süleyman Demirel established Turkish schools in Afghnistan in 1994, which welcomed by Mujahideen. Later, the Taliban identified Turkish schools and their intentions against Islam and somehow a nationalistic movement. These schools were closed because they were considered as centers to promote Turkish language and Turkish Nationalism. (Gülen , 2015).

The social fabric of Afghanistan is in favor of religious and ethnic tendencies toward Turkey. Turkey intended to increase the grouping of society as its own cabals by participating in Afghanistan. By the primary objectives of the US engagement with Turkey in Afghanistan, Turkey was recognized as a postwar peace force like those in the third option of the Bush administration in Iraq. (Ullman,2002:204) Today, there is a new face of Turkish Islam that tries to spread Turkish nationalism in religious and cultural packages. There are dramatic differences in the understanding of Islam among Muslim Turks and other Muslims such that some kind of compromise knocks gently on the waves. The moderate Islam is a mean in the hands of the foreign policy of Turkey in achieving the goal of promoting Turkish national interests.

It should be noted, however, that there were many

components and commonalities between the two countries that strengthened relations between them. In the meantime, the two elements of the Sunni majority in Afghanistan, followed by the minority languages of the country (Uzbeks and Turkmen), were another important pillar.

When Taliban were defeated, Turkey recognized Hamid Karzai's government and actively participated in Afghanistan after the September 11 events.

As a member of NATO, with respect to national interests, commitments to this organization and a link with US policies, Turkey sent troops to Afghanistan and tried to expand its influence in the country, taking into account various political, economic, security and cultural issues.

At the same time, with the arrival of Turkish foreign policy theorist Davutoğlu and the policy of a more eastern perspective, more attention was paid to Afghanistan. (Davutoğlu, 2001:459) And, apart from its past policies in Afghanistan, Ankara is trying to expand its role and influence in Afghanistan. In recent years, the country has hosted several conferences on Afghanistan such as quadrilateral intra-Afghan peace dialogue including Taliban's Qatar Office members, Mullah Mohammad Rassoul splinter faction members, the Afghan government representatives and Hezb-i-Islami Afghanistan (HIA) members which had been hold in 2018. (Hamim Kakar, 2018) Ankara has announced that it will not refuse to do anything to help maintain peace and stability in Afghanistan.

IV. Turkey's cultural diplomacy in Afghanistan

The idea of Pan-Turkism: The belief in the immense role of Turks in the history at the beginning of the 20th century has been the subject of the "Pan Turkism" term (Kalin, 2009: 83). As a matter of fact, the terms Pan-Turkism, Turkish nationalism or ethnic Turk union, Pan-Turanism, all emerged from Turkey's nationalistic views. Mehmed Ziya Gökalp was one of the intellectuals of Pan-Turanism. One of his poems about Pan-

Turanism has been established in the Magazine of Young Pens:

“Homeland of the Turks, not Turkey/ Not Turkestan, farther
The territory is vast and eternal/ In the name of Turan.
(Gökalp,1959:38). The poem implies the depth of thought on the idea of Turkish nationalism in the region; while the scholars of Turk **ethicists** never had a realistic look in the history of areas such as Central Asia and the Middle East. (Berkes,1954: 386) The Young Turk Revolution in 1908 brought the Committee of Union and Progress to power in the Ottoman Empire. Several Turkish intellectuals participated in its policy-making bodies. The committee supported the establishment of various organizations such as the *Türk Ocağı* (Turkish Hearth, established in 1912) and journals were being published such as *TürkYurdu* (Turkish homeland) promoting cultural or political Pan-Turkism and Pan-Turanism. (Louis,1993:46)

The government of Young Turks fundamentally transformed the ideas of Pan-Turanism, which is now referred to as Pan Turkism. As mentioned earlier until the 1990s, Turkey was faced with a significant obstacle, the former Soviet Union, and there were no national advertising and promoting opportunities in the region. Since the beginning of the 1990s, the idea of Pan-Turkism was greatly exported. With the advent of the Republics of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, the thought of Pan Turkism passed the boundaries of Turkey and reached some parts of the region. During the first years after the Cold war, some Kemalists tried to make Pan-Turkism, based on the teachings of Eurasianism, replacing Kemalism's teachings in the type of Turkey's engagement with its peripheral regions.

In the following years and at the time of Erbakan, attempts were made to consider the look East Policy in the regional and even international interactions of Turkey. With the advent of the Justice and Development Party in 2001, the neo-Ottomanism and the attention to the historical and strategic depth of Turkey has been taken. Overall, these attitudes indicate that during the Post-

Cold War period, Turkish elites believed that Turkey could obtain hegemonic status in specific areas of its peripheral regions.

Media: Since the 1980 that Freedom of the Press Act was adopted in Turkey, the media had a significant impact on public opinion, both inside and outside Turkey. (Erdem,2018:3-4)

The Turks, with the emphasis on the distribution of Turkish as the fifth language in the world, put the language component in the center of their cultural magnetism in the region.

And this component is used to deepen its relationship by creating satellite networks such as Eurasia that broadcast 24 hours a day in Central Asia and the Caucasus. (Basiri & Khânsâri-Fard, 2016: 79)

Turkey's TV, especially the TRT's public channels, is the soft power of Turkey in the region, especially in the region of Turkic language countries. (Sedqizadeh, 2010:82-83)

Private Turkish channels such as NTV, Channel D, Channel 6, each one belongs to one of Turkey's cultural-economic complexes, which are in fact the levers of political power in Turkey. By producing films such as "Fetih 1453", Turkey has been fully aligned with Neo-Ottomanism politics. Meanwhile MensurAkgün says: "In the direction of this regional influence, Turkish cinema has played its role and the Turkish series has been considered among the Arabs." (Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2008:67) Turkish series are considered as the soft power of Turkish diplomacy and their growth is a successful example for cultural globalization. And has social, political and economic consequences. (Arisoy, 2016)

Ticka, Kizi La, the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, the State Department, the TRT, the Younes Emere Foundation, the Investment and Support Agency, the Media Information Office and other institutions, along other entities such as

NGOs, rescue organizations, human rights organizations, foundations, universities, media and other civil society actors are all active in Turkish public diplomacy. (Kalin,2011:21)

Turkey has been very successful in the field of cinema and

visual media, especially in series broadcast in Afghanistan. Despite the limitations in Hindi serials broadcast by the Afghan Government, Turkish series is aimed at targeting the indigenous culture of the Afghan people. Of course, the series took place with the teachings of Islam and promote Turkish culture. (Turkish language frenzy in Afghanistan,2014)

In December 2016, the president of Afghanistan, Ashraf Ghani met Erdogan during his two-day visit. Both presidents signed a memorandum of understanding, a declaration of intent, and also an agreement to collaborate on security matters. *Cumhuriyet* and *Akşam* supported the Turkish government on the matter of expanding media collaboration with Afghanistan. The coverage suggests that the Turkish government views its relationship with Afghanistan as businesslike. (Hawk,2016)

Establishment of Turkish Schools: The history of Turkish educational presence in Afghanistan dates back to the early twentieth century, 1901, when Mahmoud Tarzi returned to Afghanistan from exile in Turkey and got a high ranking governmental post. (Gregorian, 2013:297-298) He used the advantages of being son-in-law of Amanullah Shah. This influence has been effective in Amanullah Shah. The first girls' school opened in the same period. The Amanullah Shah Reforms in education began with the recruitment of Egyptian and Turkish teachers. In 1924, Amanullah also founded the four-year school, the Board School or *Maktabe-Hokam*. The aim of the school was to teach the fundamental official basics in Afghanistan. Amanullah tried to make Afghanistan educational structure like that of Turkey; hence, the Turkish language was taught as a second language. (ibid) There were two opportunities for Turks to visit Afghanistan; one was the Pan-Islamism which had been reinforced by the German government of Kaiser Wilhelm. The other was the Ottoman Empire, which had led the Indian Islamic Reformists who had anti-British nature in Afghanistan, would accept the attendance of representatives of the Ottoman Empire. With this not-so-old history, the reformist King, Amanullah also

intended to achieve modernity in Afghanistan, by using the experience of a regional country. Turkey has legitimacy among Muslims, thus sending students to Turkey for entering the spirit of modernity was reasonable.

In the post-Cold War, especially in AKP periods from 2002 there are new Turkish cultural and instructional entities which are established in other countries. One of the most influential Turkish institute in this field is Yunus Emre Institute which is a world-wide non-profit organization created by the Turkish government in 2007. Named after the famous 14th-century poet Yunus Emre, it aims to promote Turkish culture around the world. It also has been regarded a Turkish soft power institution and cultural section of the Turkish embassy in different countries including Afghanistan. (Yunus Emre Institute,2019)

This institution has several programs in this regard. Including the call for Turkish professors to teach Turkish language in different countries, the establishment of specialized Turkish libraries, the provision of digital resources and the establishment of protocols for cooperation with universities in order to establish a Turkish language and literature courses. (Kürşad, 2005)

So, the presence of Turkey in Afghanistan on education is wider than the past. During a ceremony on the 24th of July 2016, Dr. Serdar ÇAM the Turkish International Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA) executive, inaugurated the Turkish Language and Literature Department at the University of Kabul, aimed at strengthening the social infrastructure, with more than 700 projects in various fields and the projects in the fields of education and health. One of the most important activities of Turkey is the training of Afghan soldiers. In this context, TİKA re-activated the Kabul Military School which was founded in 1933 by the government of Turkey. (Faaliathaye Tika dar Afghanistan,2016) It also established 42 schools in Mazar-i-Sharif province. The schools had an internet system as well as laboratories for chemistry, biology and physics, with 8 thousand students. So far, more than 90 schools have been built by TİKA in

Afghanistan. In development and humanitarian assistance, Turkey has implemented a significant workforce in Afghanistan for road-building and technical skills.

The establishment of Turkish schools as well as the granting of scholarships to students is one of the strategies of the Turks in creating a well-educated, who are inclined to them. (Adami & Noori ,2013: 8) Another association which is active in this field can be "Community solidarity and sympathy with Afghan refugees in Turkey " that recruit and train Afghan refugees in Turkey and even send Turk teachers to Afghanistan for the training of students and to send them to scientific Olympiads. (Report produced on Afghan Refugees in Turkey: Living Conditions and Reasons to Escape to Europe,2018)

According to an expert on Afghan affairs, "In Afghanistan, seven high schools in the centers of major cities such as Kabul, Herat, Kandahar, Mazar-e- Sharif and Jalalabad have been launched by Turkey." So, that there is a chance for Afghan students of ethnic Uzbeks to complete their education and undergraduate studies by travelling to Turkey. (Salehi,2018)

However, one of the most important cultural diplomacy efforts of Turkey in Afghanistan is Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Rumi's tomb restoration project. Rumi was born in Balkh about eight hundred years ago and died in Konya so he is the symbol of the relationship between Afghanistan and Turkey. In this regard, Turkey planned to establish a college with the same name over there in Afghanistan. According to the reports, the International Coordination and cooperation Agency has set a special team who are rebuilding the house of Rumi in the city of Balkh, and at the end of it, this place will become Mawlānā Cultural Center. (Sadeghi, 2017)

Another Turkish educational influence in Afghanistan is achieved through teaching of the Turkish Language and Literature among young people of Turkish origin in Afghanistan. The Turkish Cooperation and Development Agency, TIKA has established Turkish language classes in Mazar-e- Sharif in northern Afghanistan. Kara Dogan TIKA coordinator in Mazar-e

Sharif added: “Turkish languages with the age of 8500 years, has a long history and is one of the richest languages in the world.” This statement reflects the intention of the country to promote the historical knowledge with academic facts among Hazaras, Uzbeks and Afghans, the situation that reflects the intention of the country to promote the historical knowledge with academic facts among Hazaras, Uzbeks and Afghans. (Kelâs’ha-ye âmozesh-e zabân turki dar Afghanistan,2018) Accordingly, to promote the mentioned diplomacy in Afghanistan, Kabul University and the University of Jowzjan established the Turkish language teaching department. In light of these classes, 140 students, boys and girls will learn the Turkish language. In the face of increasing demands, the classes will continue.

Neo-Ottoman reflection: As mentioned earlier, the roots of Turkey's legitimate presence in Afghanistan should be sought in the First World War, where Pan-Islamic and anti-British tendencies legitimized the Ottoman Empire. Religious institutions of Muslims in India influenced Afghans' thoughts. The political-religious teachings of anti-British Deobandi schools made the idea of the Abbasid caliphate alive. The First World War brought the two anti-British groups and Pan-Islamists closer together, following the Ottoman Empire. (Binder,1963:16)

In recent years Turkey shares some enthusiasms with the Uzbeks and for the last ten years has supported them in political issues in Afghanistan and tried to be powerful by the support of Uzbeks in northern Afghanistan and promote its influence in the shape of light Pan-Turkism in the region. As a result of this goal, Turkey explicitly supported “Abdul Rashid Dostum” as the representative of Uzbeks and his party, the Northern National Islamic Movement of Afghanistan which represents the Uzbeks and tries to expand the scope of jurisdiction of Uzbeks in northern Afghanistan.

Since the fall of the Taliban, Turkey has tried to cooperate with the Bonn conference and in this respect, had close relations with the interim government and the then Transitional

Government of Afghanistan and has also actively participated in the reconstruction of Afghanistan to establish security in the country. This has been a major concern for Turkey through its major contribution to the International Coalition for Afghanistan (ISAF). (Tarjoman newspaper,2010)

Another agency in this regard is the Presidency of Religious Affairs, *Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı*, the state agency which is responsible for regulating and monitoring the conduct of religious services (in mosques and elsewhere), as well as for the imposition of 'proper Islam.' (Kenar & Gürpınar,2013:21-46).

The overseas activities of *Diyanet* includes activities in the countries where many Turkish citizens live or in the countries whose people speak Turkish languages; such as Germany, America, Australia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. Among the important services of the organization includes establishing organizations of Religious Affairs, holding consultative religious meetings, holding three common religious conferences, building mosques on a distinct map and design, delegating the administration of mosques, Center for Research, Development and Documentation (AR-GED), Centre for international Research and Dialogue, religious services and educational services. (Islamic Republic of Iran Cultural Center in Ankara,2016) For example, in 2016, Afghan officials announced that the *Diyanet* organization of Turkey as past years, shared sacrificial meat among two thousand needful families in Faryab province in northern Afghanistan in Eid al-Adha. The regional distribution of sacrificial meat is important because it is considered as charity (Sâdât Khodâverdi,2016) Also, between 2005 and 2009, Turkey allocated about US \$ 400 million ODA to Afghanistan. One year later, Turkey allocated US \$ 107 million. It has been said that US \$ 130 million was allocated in 2011 (Kardaş, 2013:8)

V. Iran Cultural Diplomacy in Afghanistan

Iranian cultural diplomacy in Afghanistan is based on historical,

cultural, religious and linguistic commonalities. These components have naturally formed the basis of foreign relations between the two nations as a result of which other areas of economic, political and security relations between the two countries are influenced by the historical roots and common culture of the two nations. Therefore, Iran has always tried to develop and extend its relations with Afghanistan in other areas by relying on such cultural resources and commonalities in order to set up friendly and fraternal relations with all Afghan groups and ethnicities. In other words, contributing to the maintenance of peace and tranquility in Afghanistan has always been a constant component of Iranian policies toward this country.

Iran sticks on the policy of good neighborliness and defends Afghanistan's territorial integrity and independence. As a result, Tehran is one of the most solemn opponents of foreign interference in Afghanistan, especially by the United States. This opposition is rooted in history and dates back to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, which coincided with the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran. Despite Iran's problems during the early months after the victory of the Islamic Revolution and the start of the Iraqi-imposed war against Iran, the Iranian government and people openly opposed the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and supported the Muslim people of this country and the Afghan Mujahedeen.

Despite being involved in a war imposed on it by the Ba'hist Iraqi regime, Iran supported the Afghan Mujahedeen against the occupying Soviet forces and their allies during the occupation of Afghanistan. Following the Red Army's withdrawal from Afghanistan and the start of conflict among the Mujahedeen factions, Iran endeavored to establish peace and reconciliation in this war-torn country. These endeavors continued until the emergence of Taliban, who occupied most parts of Afghanistan. Iran's relations with the Taliban deteriorated in 1998, with Taliban forces seizing the Iranian consulate in Mazar-e-Sharif, killing 11 Iranian diplomats and massacring thousands of Shiites. Consequently, Iran deployed

300,000 troops along its borders with Afghanistan and got ready to invade this country. But Iran's political and military leaders eventually decided to avoid conflict with Afghanistan. (Fitzgerald: 2011, P.3) In the post-Taliban era, Iran also made extensive efforts to establish peace in Afghanistan and facilitate the return of Afghan refugees to their homeland.

If we would like to study and explore the developments that have taken place between the Iranian and Afghan governments since the independence of this country until very recently, we must scrutinize them in terms of common history, Persian language, and Iranian culture. From the perspective of diplomacy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Afghanistan is a country that has historical and cultural commonalities with Iran. Seeking to respect Afghanistan's territorial integrity and independence, Tehran endeavors to use both countries' cultural commonalities as a basis for interaction in other fields. Even efforts should be made to take advantage of the people as the second route of interaction along the first route (government-official route), because the lengthy settlement of Afghan refugees and migrants in Iran has provided a fair ground for public understanding and dialogue over the last few decades.

Iran and Turkish Cultural Diplomacy in Afghanistan: After the AKP came to power in Ankara, the Turkish government, by shifting to its periphery, in addition to hard power has tried to use its soft power levers to expand its regional influence over regional rivals such as the Islamic Republic of Iran.

To this end, while strengthening its scientific and cultural diplomacy in Afghanistan and providing targeted education to the youth of this country, At the same time, it hosts tens of thousands of Afghan students at Turkish universities who pursue Turkish cultural goals in their country after graduation(irna.ir/news/82905880/).

According to the "strategic depth" doctrine of current President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and former Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, they are trying to spread the Neo-Ottomanism

in Central Asia and the Caucasus, the Middle East and even Eastern Europe. Therefore, certainly they cannot ignore Afghanistan. But since Turkey's policies in North Africa and the Middle East did not work well after Arab Spring revolutions due to complicated competition with other regional powers like Iran, Turkish leaders try not to neglect strategic fronts on other fronts, including in Central Asia, to revive the strategic depth and soft power of Turkey.

In other words, now that Turkey sees the prospect of joining the European Union as well as emerging as the only regional power in the Middle East as bleak and gloomy, Ankara will try not to miss at least two regions in the east, the Caucasus and Central Asia, including Afghanistan.

Conclusion

Pan-Turkism believers in more formal and informal circles, following the collapse of the Soviet Union, tried to increase their presence in Afghanistan through utilizing ethnic and linguistic characteristics. But now, in the light of the policies of the Erdogan Islamist government, this is not the only leverage of Turkish influence in Afghanistan, but it is undoubtedly a permanent leverage in the regional influence of Turkey. In the cultural dimension, Turkey is highly active after the fall of the Taliban in Afghanistan, the Afghan schools of Turkish language supported by Turkey.

The number of Turkish scholarships in Afghanistan is increasing, and every year Afghan students, especially Turkish ones, are more likely to go to Turkey. In the economic dimension, Turkey in recent years, apart from the large-scale economic assistance program for Afghanistan (at a cost of 200 million dollars), has been active in the widespread investment in the construction of hospitals and emerging market of Afghanistan.

In the military dimension, indeed, among NATO members, it was only Turkey that had many potentialities and commonalities with Afghanistan. Apart from helping train Afghan forces during

the past years, Ankara also gained a respectable role in this country. Additionally, at the political level, Ankara has been pushing for a secular political model of its government (largely backed up by the United States and Europe) as a model for governance in Afghanistan. Turkey tried to replace Pan-Turkism based on the teachings of Kemalism with the teachings of Eurasianism in the type of Turkey's engagement with its peripheral regions. But due to challenges and formal resistance of this region against Pan-Turkism, Turkey has changed its Pan-Turkish policy and taking into consideration a realistic and pragmatic measure in the field of culture and economics.

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