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The Importance of Soft Power in Türkiye's Foreign Policy in 2002—2022

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Abstract. After a difficult path of criticism and justification, the concept of soft power has found its place in the international academic environment and has given a new breath and creative motivation to important scientific research in the field of international relations, which aims to create new concepts that can respond to the challenges of the modern world order. Along with the world powers, this concept was thoroughly taken up by Türkiye, which had the historical, cultural and geographical resources to put it into practice. A large number of neighbors and a complicated history of relations force Ankara not only to rely on traditional ways of diplomacy, but also to find other forms for the successful realization of its foreign policy interests. Compared to Turkish foreign policy before 2002, Türkiye's soft power has increased significantly since the Justice and Development Party came to power and has become one of the priorities of its foreign policy strategy. It is important to emphasize that state and non-state institutions, which are the main instruments of this policy, do not compete with each other but successfully complement each other. Türkiye has ambitiously sought to create its own original model of “soft power,” with an emphasis on historical heritage and cultural commonality. Türkiye's toolkit for realizing its soft power is quite extensive. Türkiye adopts the best practices of leading international actors and actively implements its own approaches and understandings with a focus on culture, state and non-state organizations, and education policy. In this context, soft power policy for Türkiye has proven to be very viable and attractive. Türkiye's soft power potential, which has been successfully manifested from the Balkans and the Middle East to the Caucasus and Central Asia, has serious cultural and historical foundations and contributes to the promotion of Turkish interests in areas of special interest. Over the past two decades, Türkiye's soft power policy, which is based on historical-cultural and religious traditions, geographical and economic resources, has become one of the main directions of its foreign policy.

Key words: cultural diplomacy, foreign policy, Justice and Development Party, regional leadership, historical heritage

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Значимость «мягкой силы» во внешней политике Турции в 2002—2022 гг.

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Аннотация. Пройдя непростой путь критики и обоснования, концепция «мягкой силы» нашла свое место в международной академической среде и дала новое дыхание и творческую мотивацию для важных научных исследований в сфере международных отношений, цель которых — создание новых концепций, способных ответить на вызовы современного мироустройства. Наряду с мировыми державами данную концепцию решительно подхватила и Турция, у которой были исторические, культурные и географические ресурсы для ее практического воплощения. Многочисленность соседей и непростая история взаимоотношений вынуждают Анкару основываться не только на традиционных путях ведения дипломатии, но и находить другие формы для успешной реализации своих внешнеполитических интересов. По сравнению с внешней политикой Турции до 2002 г. «мягкая сила» страны с приходом к власти Партии справедливости и развития заметно возросла и стала одним из приоритетных направлений ее внешнеполитической стратегии. При этом важно, что государственные и негосударственные институты, являющиеся основными инструментами данной политики, не конкурируют, а успешно дополняют друг друга. Турция амбициозно стремилась к созданию собственной оригинальной модели «мягкой силы» с акцентом на историческое наследие и культурную общность. Инструментарий Турции в реализации своей «мягкой силы» достаточно обширный. Турция перенимает передовой опыт ведущих международных акторов и активно внедряет собственные подходы и понимания с акцентом на культуру, государственные и негосударственные некоммерческие организации, религиозные организации, образовательную политику. В этом контексте политика «мягкой силы» для Турции оказалась очень жизнеспособной и привлекательной. Потенциал «мягкой силы» Турции, который успешно проявляется от Балкан и Ближнего Востока до Кавказа и Центральной Азии, имеет серьезные культурно-исторические основания и способствует продвижению интересов Анкары в зонах особых интересов. За последние два десятилетия политика «мягкой силы» Турции, которая опирается на историко-культурные и религиозные традиции, географические и экономические ресурсы, стала одним из главных направлений ее внешней политики.

Ключевые слова: культурная дипломатия, внешняя политика, Партия справедливости и развития, региональное лидерство, историческое наследие

Заявление о конфликте интересов. Автор заявляет об отсутствии конфликта интересов.

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Soft Power in Türkiye's Foreign Policy in the 21st Century

The concept of “soft power” has made it possible for many countries to achieve their foreign policy goals without using “hard power” with the risk of conflict clashes. Along with the world powers, this concept has been taken up by Türkiye. The geographical favorable location makes it possible to become an active participant in most regional processes. The

geographical location also determines a rather large number of Türkiye's neighbors. In the modern world eight countries share common land borders with the Republic of Türkiye: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Iran, Iraq, Syria; four countries have coastal zones in the seas surrounding Türkiye: the Republic of Cyprus, Romania, Russia and Ukraine. The multiplicity of neighbors and the complicated history of relations force Ankara not only to rely on traditional forms of

diplomacy, but also to find other forms for the successful realization of its foreign policy interests.

For Türkiye, the concept of soft power has proven to be a very viable and attractive phenomenon. The Turkish approach of soft power vision in foreign policy has been conceptualized during the rule of the *Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP)* since 2002.

In order to understand the place of soft power in Türkiye's foreign policy course, it is necessary to examine the main strategies of its foreign policy, from Ahmet Davutoğlu's concept of "Strategic Depth" to the election manifestos, government programs and new approaches in the AKP's foreign policy.

Türkiye's "soft power" differs in many ways from the experience of other countries in its form and content. The potential of Türkiye's soft power, which is revealed from the Balkans and the Middle East to the Caucasus and Central Asia, has strong cultural and historical foundations. There is no clear doctrine or foreign policy concept of Türkiye's soft power. However, cultural diplomacy and the importance of promoting a positive image of Türkiye have been emphasized in almost all the doctrines, concepts and documents presented below.

Ahmet Davutoğlu's "Strategic Depth" and the Rethinking of Turkish Foreign Policy

It should be emphasized that after 2002, when the Justice and Development Party became the ruling party in Türkiye, the need to provide a theoretical foundations for the foreign policy of the new leadership increased. The initiator of the new foreign policy concept was political science professor Ahmet Davutoğlu, who based the new concept on his book *Strategic Depth. Türkiye's International Situation (Stratejik derinlik: Türkiye'nin uluslararası konumu)* in 2001.

According to A. Davutoğlu, the Turkish understanding of geopolitics was too narrow and static due to the lack of dynamic rethinking in different periods of history and that there was a special need for new approaches after the Cold War (Davutoğlu, 2001, p 116). The scholar was engaged in the elaboration of new concepts. One of the main conclusions of the author, in addition to considering the geopolitical asset for the gradual transformation of Ankara's regional influence on the international environment, is that Türkiye, in parallel with the development of relations with the central powers, should improve and deepen cultural and economic diplomacy to achieve its foreign policy goals (Davutoğlu, 2001, p. 116). The author suggested that Türkiye's new policy should be based on six fundamental principles. However, in these principles, soft power policy did not occupy a separate place, but was a constituent part of the whole approach. He was later criticized for not paying enough attention to soft power (Figure 1).

A. Davutoğlu analyzes Türkiye's previous concepts of power and concludes that they were flawed mainly due to the lack of strategy and theory and proposes a power formula, where *Power = the constant parameters (CP)* — culture, history, geography, population + *potential parameters (PP)* — economic, technical and military capabilities + *strategic mentality (SM)* + *strategic planning (SP)* + *political will (PW)* (Davutoğlu, 2001, p. 17).

A. Davutoğlu pays special attention to the study of the historical factor and its place in shaping Türkiye's international position from the Ottoman Empire to the beginning of the 21st century. Here, the end of the Cold War is considered an important period, in which it was revealed that Türkiye was psychologically and strategically unprepared for global and regional changes and that a revision of cultural, economic, regional, and political strategy was needed in accordance with the new realities (Davutoğlu, 2001, pp. 73—74).

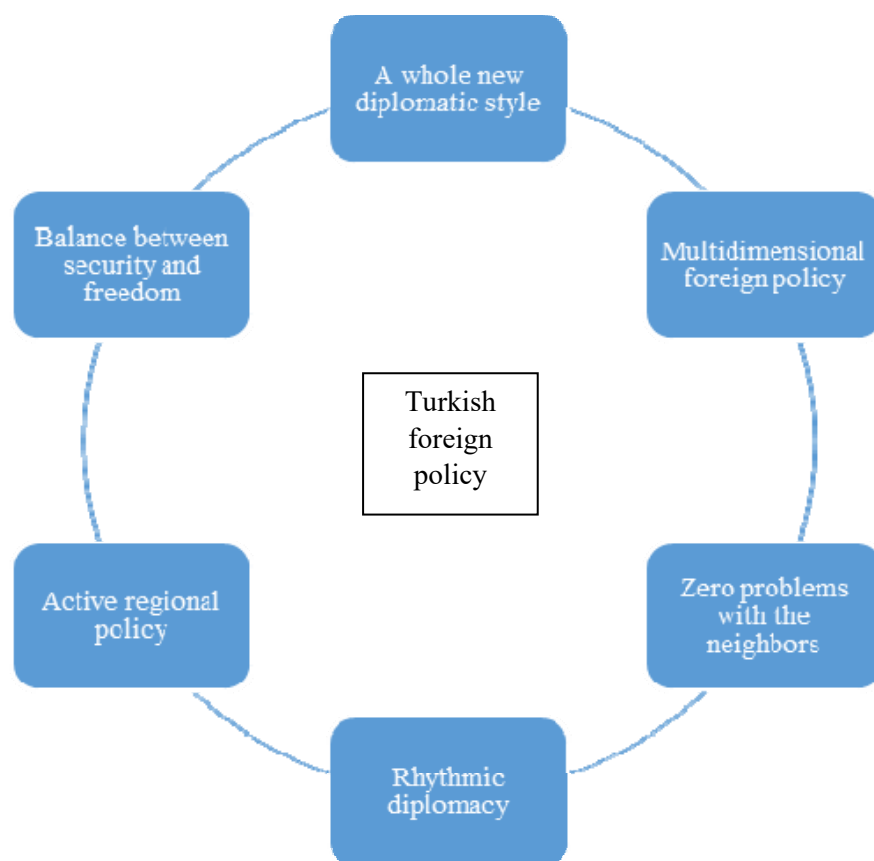


Figure 1. Six Fundamental Principles of Turkish Foreign Policy

Source: compiled by the author based on data from: Yeni Dönemde Syfir Sorun Politikası // Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Dışişleri Bakanlığı. URL: <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/yeni-donemde-sifir-sorun-politikasi.tr.mfa> (accessed: 12.02.2022).

When examined in detail, it can be understood that the proposed ideas of Turkish foreign policy regarding the organization of regional policy for the Balkans, the Caucasus, the Middle East, Central Asia and Europe have been largely implemented since 2002 under the new ruling Justice and Development Party (Aras, 2009, pp. 8—18).

Some Turkish scholars in turn agree that Türkiye's realization of its potential and power did not begin in 2002, as both the government of T. Özal and the Foreign Minister in 1997—2002, Ismail Cem, spoke and even took steps to strengthen Türkiye's foreign policy presence regionally and internationally through not only political and economic, but also cultural, historical and linguistic tools (Özdal, Dinçer & Yegin, 2010, p. 271).

A. Davutoğlu's *Strategic Depth* has been discussed by many researchers in general. For

example, N. Danforth (2008, p. 91) and A. Murinson (2006, p. 947) believed that the central components that make up this strategy are geographical and historical factors. In turn, F.S. Larrabee and A. Rabasa wrote in this regard: "The basic idea behind the doctrine of 'strategic depth' is that the importance of a state in international relations depends on its geostrategic position. The concept emphasizes the importance of Turkey's Ottoman past, its historical and cultural links with the Balkans, the Middle East and Central Asia" (Rabasa & Larrabee, 2008, p. 75).

The international press, in turn, also commented on the new doctrine of the Turkish ruling party. The British magazine *The Economist* wrote: "Strategic Depth announces the creation of a Turkish zone of political, economic and cultural influence, primarily

among its neighbors (many of them are former parts of the Ottoman Empire) in the Balkans, the South Caucasus and the Middle East.”¹

The “Zero Problems with Neighbors” Doctrine and the Promotion of Türkiye’s Soft Power Policy Towards Neighboring States

Soft power policy has also found its conceptual reflection in the famous doctrine of “Zero Problems with Neighbors” that was summarized in a new article by A. Davutoğlu in the *Foreign Policy* journal.²

After assuming the post of Foreign Minister in 2009, Davutoğlu announced that Türkiye’s foreign policy is based on three pillars: the first pillar is a prosperous Türkiye itself that will become one of the leading countries in the world, the second pillar is the relations with neighbors and the promotion of cultural diplomacy where Türkiye should achieve the absence of problems with neighbors and build the most beneficial relations with them; and the third pillar emphasizes that Türkiye should assume global responsibility and participate in many international processes.³

An important methodological principle identified by A. Davutoğlu was the “adoption of a new discourse and diplomatic style,” which the author further refers to as the soft power approach. He notes: “Although Turkey has powerful military forces because of its insecure neighborhood in the region, it does not issue

threats. Instead, Turkish diplomats and politicians have adopted a new language in regional and international politics that prioritizes Turkey’s interests.”⁴

One of Ahmet Davutoğlu’s foreign policy principles, “zero problems with neighbors,” proved to be the most popular in the academic and journalistic environment. This principle was most closely related to the concept of soft power, according to which Türkiye should normalize its relations with its neighbors based on cultural, historical and economic ties (Yenokyan & Stanis, 2022, pp. 789—792). K. Kirişçi, director of the Turkey Project’s Center on the United States and Europe, explains this principle as “rethinking and trying to solve bilateral problems by actively developing closer relations with neighbors” (Kirişçi, 2006, p. 50). Other scholars attribute a broader scope to this principle and characterize it as a new neighborhood policy (Ünlühisarcıklı, 2009, p. 77), which implies the normalization of relations with all neighboring countries using different foreign policy instruments.

By utilizing the above concepts, Türkiye seeks to increase its effectiveness in the international arena, and with the establishment of a theoretical framework, Turkish diplomacy after 2001 began to actively introduce new ideas into its foreign policy, as A. Davutoğlu’s concepts do not fully realize the potential of soft power.

Soft Power in the Writings of the Turkish Academic Community

Dr. B. Oran, a major researcher and professor at Ankara University, writes about the lack of soft power studies in the Turkish academic community. In his work on the foreign policy of the Turkish state, he states that “Turkish political thought does not pay due attention to soft power and that when evaluating Turkish foreign policy; we can notice that this concept is occasionally discussed and not fully

¹ Dreams from Their Fathers // *The Economist*. July 23, 2009. URL <https://www.economist.com/europe/2009/07/23/dreams-from-their-fathers> (accessed: 09.11.2022).

² See: Davutoğlu A. Turkey’s Zero-problems Foreign Policy // *Foreign Policy*. May 23, 2010. URL: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2010/05/20/turkeys-zero-problems-foreign-policy/> (accessed: 18.06.2022); Dreams from Their Fathers // *The Economist*. July 23, 2009. URL <https://www.economist.com/europe/2009/07/23/dreams-from-their-fathers> (accessed: 09.11.2022).

³ Davutoğlu A. Turkey’s Zero-problems Foreign Policy // *Foreign Policy*. May 23, 2010. URL: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2010/05/20/turkeys-zero-problems-foreign-policy/> (accessed: 18.06.2022).

⁴ Ibid.

utilized” (Çomak, 2011, p. 76). According to the expert, Türkiye, which has become more significant and stronger due to its developing military power, regional and international economic activity, will be able to further build on its successes if it continues to rely on soft power policy, which will provide Ankara with new opportunities and perspectives (Çomak, 2011, p. 76).

İ. Kalın, a scholar, statesman and diplomat, presents his vision of Turkish soft power, concluding that Turkish soft power is different in its methods and more moral than others. The author notes that Türkiye has unique resources and value system, which allows it not to apply the American vision of soft power as a method of “carrot and stick.” According to him, Türkiye is alien to such methods as it constructs its soft power based on more important perceptions such as historical memory, morality and cultural connection (Kalın, 2011, pp. 5—23). İ. Kalın presents the foundation of Türkiye’s soft power policy, which is based on a well-growing reputation in the Balkans, Middle East and Caucasus. The country applies the new concept not only by relying on its allies, but also by developing capabilities to engage new actors to successfully implement its soft power at the regional and international levels.

Türkiye’s task through new strategies is to present an attractive Türkiye to a wide audience around the world, while overcoming its old fears and acquiring a new image to transform its domestic and foreign policies (Kalın, 2011, p. 5). The scholar also notes that for Türkiye, one of the most important pillars of soft power is the Ottoman heritage, which Turkish and foreign authors claim was created by Turks, Kurds, Bosnians, Albanians, Circassians, Abkhazians, Arabs, Azerbaijanis, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Uzbeks, Turkmens, as well as other ethnic groups such as Armenians, Greeks, Jews, and Assyrians (Kalın, 2011, p. 10).

Today, Türkiye is the main custodian of the Ottoman heritage that once united different ethnic groups. However, here, not all

researchers support the view that Türkiye’s soft power is a new form of *neo-Ottomanism*, but put forward the idea that in the context of new opportunities and trends in global politics it is permissible to apply historical, cultural and geographical factors to achieve foreign policy goals. In this context Türkiye harmonically combines the concept of soft power with the Turkish vision of promoting and realizing foreign policy objectives (Bilgin & Eliş, 2008).

When studying Turkish soft power, many Russian and foreign researchers emphasize the religious and cultural basis, in contrast to A. Davutoğlu, who emphasizes culture, historical background and regional activism (Rabasa & Larrabee, 2008, p. 75). In this context, contemporary researcher Ahmet Erdi Ozturk emphasizes that Türkiye has used Islam as a tool in both domestic and foreign policy throughout its history. Under the AKP, the country specifically prioritized Islamic values and actively used this lever in foreign policy (Ozturk, 2021, p. 38).

The Islamic factor is also highlighted by Russian researchers who analyze the revival of Islam in the countries of the Central Asian region and Türkiye’s desire to strengthen its role in the Turkic-speaking world through the Islamic factor (Moskalenko, 2021, p. 129).

Some Turkish researchers, emphasizing the importance of democratic institutions for the implementation of “soft power” policy, note that this factor plays a positive role in the case of Türkiye, as it has become an attractive model for many countries of the Middle East region due to its democratic processes (Bilgin & Eliş, 2008).

A.E. Ozturk disagrees, providing a periodization of the events that have influenced Türkiye’s foreign policy. He emphasizes the strengthening of authoritarianism in the ruling elite, its negative impact on the attractiveness of Türkiye, which due to domestic and foreign policy shocks increasingly departed from democratic values (Table 1).

Table 1
**AKP's Political Path in Türkiye and Its Attitude
 towards Domestic and Foreign Policy, 2002—2016**

Period	Critical situations	The state of the party's domestic and foreign policy
2002—2008: Survival state	Military Memorandum in Türkiye (2007) Strengthening of the People's Republican Party	Defensive — reactive
2008—2013: Takeover and usurpation of power	Activities of the Ergenekon and Balyoz organizations Operations against the Association of Societies of Kurdistan (in Kurdish <i>Koma Cîvakên Kurdistanê</i>)	Active — strategic
2013—2016: Call period	Protests in Taksim Square and Gezi Park Corruption scandals and investigations December 17—25	Reactionary — aggressive
2016: The hegemony of his power	The failed coup attempt on July 15	Aggressive

Source: (Ozturk, 2021).

Researcher S. Lachiner joins his colleagues in stressing the media and the media factor in Türkiye's soft power. In particular, he writes: "Other elements of soft power for Turkey are in the media and cultural sphere. Turkish cultural production is in line with the needs of the region. Thanks to Turkish cultural production, many people in the region see the Turkish way of life as a role model" (Lachiner, 2010).

The Main Instruments and Institutions of Turkish Soft Power Policy

In order to achieve its foreign policy goals, Türkiye relies on culture as the main instrument of soft power. The state

disseminates cultural values both inside and outside the country, which helps to gain respect and attractiveness among the population of other countries.

The idea of "attractiveness" was wholeheartedly promoted by the AKP government through internal and external institutions, and cultural popularity was introduced as a soft power priority. One of the arguments for the increasing importance of soft power during the AKP government is that during this time there was an increase in the attractiveness of Turkish culture in neighboring countries and regions. Subsequently, many researchers have noted that Turkish culture, with its potential, could become the main instrument of the Turkish soft power model.

It is necessary to highlight the main organizations and platforms through which the Turkish state directly or indirectly implements the policy of soft power. The most active and successful structures through which the Turkish influence is spread are: the Turkish Agency for International Cooperation and Development, the Turkic Council, the Yunus Emre Institute. The International Turkic Cultural Organization (TÜRKSÖY) is considered the most important of these organizations, as it implements the largest projects (Avatkov, 2020, p. 227).

The International Turkic Cultural Organization was established in 1993 on the initiative of Türkiye and the Turkic countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (Avatkov, 2018, pp. 11—15). The main goal of the organization was to organize cultural and creative events, concerts to preserve the cultural heritage of the Turkic peoples. Every year TÜRKSÖY organizes meetings of artists, opera festivals, literary congresses and other forums, which have already become a traditional platform for exchange of experience of cultural and scientific figures of the Turkic world. The key element characterizing the activities of the organization is the promotion

of the concept of “Turkic world” in the world community. TÜRKSOY directs its activities to promote the idea of brotherhood and unity among all Turkic peoples, spreads the approach of commonality of Turkic culture, and notes the importance of preserving this culture for new generations, thus using “soft power” and cultural diplomacy strengthens the position of Türkiye in different regions of the world.

The Turkish International Cooperation Agency (TİKA) was established in 1992. Its main goal is to build favorable relations between Türkiye and foreign countries. The organization actively implements various educational programs and activities that unite the Turkic peoples of the world.⁵ The Agency expanded over time and ceased to be “Turkic” and gradually began to evolve towards expanding the geography of “cooperation and development,” covering not only Central Asia and the Caucasus, but also many other regions of the world (Beloglazov & Nadyrov 2021, p. 1384).

The Yunus Emre Institute, founded in 2007, conducts its main activities in an educational environment and actively disseminates the Turkish language almost worldwide (Frolov, 2020, p. 96). The founding document of the Institute states that the purpose of the institution is to “promote Türkiye, its language, history, culture and art... develop friendship with other countries, increase cultural exchange, and provide relevant information and documents inside and outside the country.”⁶ The Institute finances and implements various educational activities, the main purpose of which is to spread Turkish culture and the Turkish language. For example, the organization provides scholarships for students to study in Türkiye and organizes

various summer schools where participants from all over the world use Turkish as a *lingua franca* (Nutfullina, 2019). Türkiye, for its part, shows high interest in expanding educational, cultural, religious, and economic programs through the center, thus strengthening its position in various regions around the world (Yenokyan, Zakaryan & Turava, 2021, p. 30).

Russian researchers A.V. Avatkov and E.E. Chulkovskaya, after analyzing the activities of the Yunus Emre Cultural Centers, concluded that such institutions represent an important mechanism for lobbying Türkiye’s interests (Avatkov & Chulkovskaya, 2013, pp. 120—123).

Specialized bodies have been established to improve and promote the progress achieved by Türkiye. Thus, in 2008, the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-speaking Countries was established in Baku; in 2009 — The Cooperation Council of Turkic States (CCTS, Turkic Council) (Kaskarbaeva, 2019) that consists of five bodies: the Council of Heads of State, the Council of Foreign Ministers, the Council of Elders, the Council of Distinguished Foreign Ministers and the Permanent Secretariat. Initially, the organization’s program was very broad and ambitious. It included coordination of the participants’ activities in the cultural, economic and political spheres. Since 2009, the CCTS has held eight summits.

At the VIII summit of the member countries of the CCTS in Istanbul in 2021, it was decided to rename the council as the *Organization of Turkic States*. The final document *Vision of the Turkic World — 2040* was also approved and adopted, which is a strategic document “defining future cooperation in various areas of common interest in the Turkic world.”⁷ During the

⁵ Türk İşbirliği ve Koordinasyon Ajansı Başkanlığı // TİKA. URL: <http://www.tika.gov.tr/tr/sayfa/hakkimizda-14649> (accessed: 18.06.2022).

⁶ Yunus Emre vakfi kanunu. Yunus Emre Enstitüsü // Mevzuat Bilgi Sistemi. 05.05.2007. URL: <https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.5.5653.pdf> (accessed: 14.04.2022).

⁷ Turkic Council Renamed into the Organization of Turkic States // TASS. November 12, 2021. (In Russian). URL: https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/12912505?utm_source=yandex.ru&utm_medium=organic

summit, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said that “Turkic countries have remained the center of culture and civilization for thousands of years. I am sure that this will continue to be the case.”⁸

The main tools of Türkiye’s soft power are education, mass culture, etc., through which Turkish soft power is actively infiltrating many public spheres and promoting Türkiye’s positions. One of the most important tools of Turkish soft power is religion.

Diyanet is an official Turkish government institution and operates as a religious organization. Its target audience is limited to practicing Sunni Muslims.

Until 2016, *the Fethullah Gülen Movement* was actively developing and integrating into the regional context, avoiding any links with religious extremism, and acting not only as an educational, humanitarian and business network, but also promoting its representatives in various state structures. Until 2016, the role of Türkiye’s transnational non-state actor, the Gülen Movement, and its place in Türkiye’s soft power was quite significant. However, after the split between the Turkish government and Fethullah Gülen in 2016, the movement was recognized as illegitimate by the Turkish leadership. As a non-state religious actor, it has been the most effective religious channel for promoting a positive image of Türkiye. Other non-state religious organizations and even the state institution *Diyanet* could not become so successful and fully occupy the space of the already banned the Gülen Movement in Azerbaijan (Jödicke, 2017, p. 44).

In its soft power policy Türkiye naturally does not abandon such a traditional tool as mass culture, which helps the recipient to more easily perceive the ideological and value message refracted through the prism of the recipient’s values. In this context, it is

impossible to deny the importance of radio, television, news programs, and the printed press (Zubkova, 2015, p. 52). Turkish TV channels and TV series play a special role in spreading a positive image and in constructing the attractiveness of Türkiye. Today Türkiye is the second largest exporter of TV series, second only to the United States.⁹ According to the estimates of the Turkish agency TRT, about 400 million people watch Turkish TV series annually.¹⁰ For Türkiye, soap operas are one of the alternative ways to create a positive image.

Initially, the Turkish government did not take any special measures to stimulate the popularity of TV series — everything happened naturally. However, having noticed the potential and attractiveness of the industry in time, serials were channeled into the mainstream of cultural diplomacy. The Turkish state TV channels put a special emphasis on creating historical serials, through which viewers in different parts of the world develop warm feelings for the Ottoman heritage. The most loyal audience is formed where people are as close as possible to the Turkic mentality, profess the same religion, and also have a common historical past in the Ottoman Empire. Serials are also popular in the former Soviet Union, where one of the most famous was the historical costume saga *The Magnificent Century*, which tells about the life of Sultan Suleiman I, his era and conquests.¹¹

In an attempt to structure the main instruments of Turkish soft power policy, the following pillars can be identified (Figure 2).

Using these soft power tools, Türkiye promotes its foreign policy in many regions of the world.

⁹ Lotoreva A. Serials Are the Soft Power of Turkey // TRT in Russian. July 22, 2020. (In Russian). URL: <https://www.trtrussian.com/mnenie/serialy-myagkaya-silaturcii-2309506> (accessed: 02.02.2022).

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

&utm_campaign=yandex.ru&utm_referrer=yandex.ru (accessed: 14.04.2022).

⁸ Ibid.

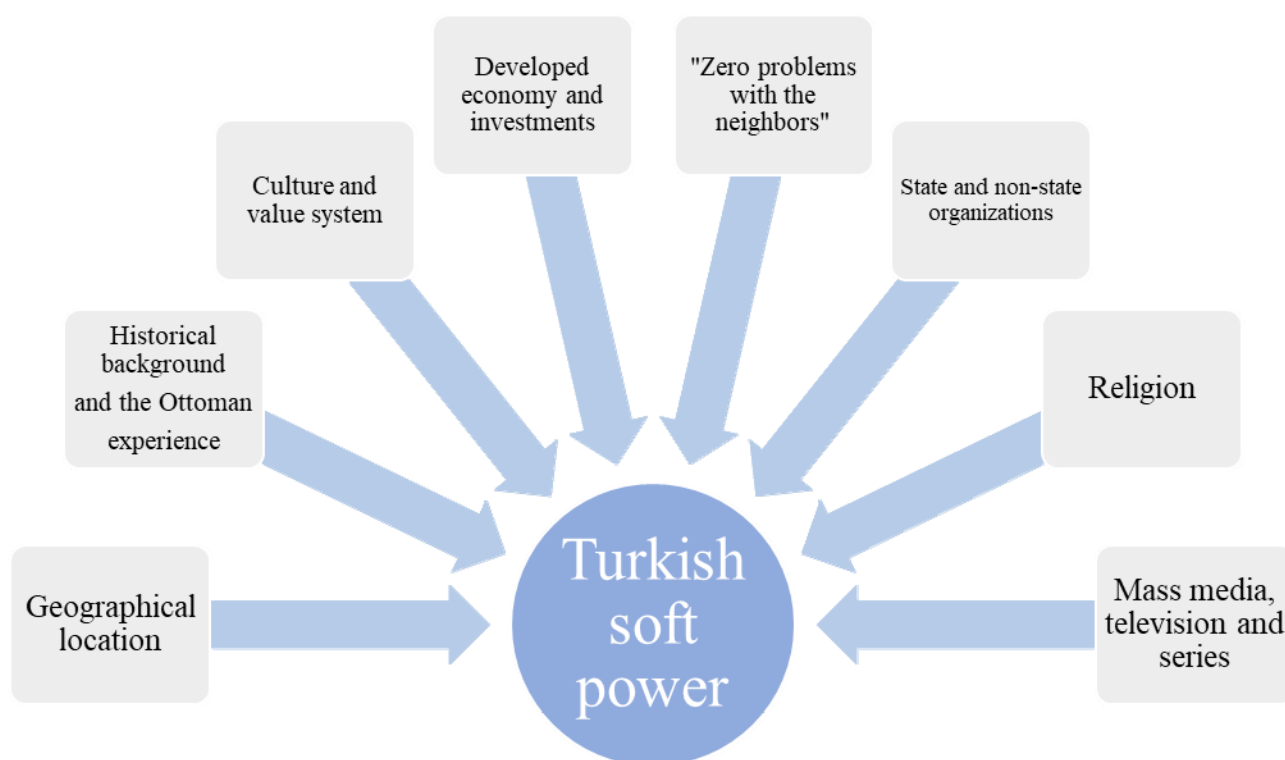


Figure 2. The Main Pillars of Turkish Soft Power

Source: compiled by the author.

Conclusion

To summarize the analysis of Turkish foreign policy under the AKP government, it can be concluded that the soft power factor has been intensified and strengthened. While in its first term the AKP was aimed at ensuring the country's regional leadership, after 2007, when the party won the elections, it concentrated the main levers of power in its hands and directed its activities towards placing Türkiye among the world leaders. One of the most important successes of Turkish soft power is that the state and non-state organizations that carry it out do not duplicate each other, although they operate in related fields. They coordinate their actions

harmoniously and act as a united front, but not as a single monolith.

Türkiye's soft power differs in many ways from the experience of other countries, both in form and content. The potential of the Turkish soft power which extends from the Balkans and the Middle East to the Caucasus and Central Asia, has strong cultural and historical foundations, with the Ottoman experience being particularly emphasized. It seems possible to conclude that, compared to the traditional Turkish foreign policy spanning almost 80 years up to 2002, Türkiye's soft power during AKP rule has increased significantly in the last 20 years and has become a foreign policy priority.

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