

Neo-Pan-Islamism in Turkey: foreign policy discourse of Turkey's Islamist thinkers and parties (1970s-1990s) - ALESSIO CALABRÒ

SUMMARY

This research amplifies the range of studies dealing with the history of Islamic movements in contemporary Turkey. It offers an in-depth analysis of the vision of external world within the religious brotherhoods in the years of their support to the establishment of the first Turkish pro-Islamic parties. Additionally, it searches the same elements in those parties, possibly tracing the same kind of influence on the AKP in foreign policy.

This kind of research contributes to a deeper understanding of the historical development of Turkish Islamic movements. It studies an element of their ideology that has been underrated. Much importance has been given by scholars to the AKP's foreign policy and its Neo-Ottomanism. Therefore, as the AKP has its roots in Islamist movements, it would be significant to understand what the ramifications of these roots are regarding foreign relations.

The primary object of this thesis is the ideological bases of Turkish Islamic political movements regarding their approach to the external world, i.e. their vision of foreign relations. The history of these ideas is studied here through various sources to answer several questions.

The focus, however, is both on the general foreign policy envisioned by those groups and on specific issues of the time observed as they were faced within the discourse of Turkey's Islamist parties. For this reason, the dissertation's main result is the extrapolation of the core elements of Turkish Pan-Islamism, or neo-Pan-Islamism. Here I single out as the constant ingredients of the Islamist worldview on foreign policy and question the possibility of the existence of distinctive features of Turkish (neo-)Pan-Islamism, making it typically different from the one developing in other Muslim countries. The thesis analyzes first the responses given by relevant Islamist intellectuals, religious leaders, writers and journalists, who have influenced Turkish Islamism in forming a consistent set of ideas concerning foreign affairs. In the second part, Islamist political parties are going to be connected to that tradition and studied as the main subject.

As regards its structure, the core of the present dissertation is divided into two parts, both subdivided into several subsections. After an introductory part including the explanation of critical concepts and typologies, and a history of Turkish Islamism as outlined through a study of the most relevant historiographical contributions to the subject, the research starts with a first study on the theoretical and organizational imprints left by the religious brotherhood. In this first part, the development and evolution of Turkish Islamism is explored in terms of intellectual history, by focusing in particular on the ideological and theoretical elements of Turkey's political Islam in respect to foreign policy and international relations. This part focuses more on the wider Turkish Islamist framework than on the more specific context of the National Outlook.

Conversely, the second part focuses on the National Outlook Movement, by examining the ideological expressions of the NOM parties and highlighting their evolution from the MNP to the FP. In any case, the second part also includes links between the party's stances – expressed through electoral campaigns, programs and manifestoes, or pamphlets – and the international context stimulating those elaborations.

The first part of the dissertation contains the analysis of the most distinguishable ideological origins of Turkish Islamist discourse. More in detail, the first part of the dissertation includes an in-depth analysis of the ideological bases of Turkey's Islamist views on foreign relations.

More specifically, this is done by starting from the beginnings of Turkey's political Islam in contraposition to the dominant Kemalist ideology and the establishment of the Republic, from the

beginning of Atatürk's era to the transition to a multiparty system after the Second World War. The situation of Turkish Islamist thinkers and religious brotherhoods, which were the most important religious groups in Turkish society – later representing the bases for the foundation of Islamist political parties and movements –, is reviewed with regard to the first Republican era.

A final section of this first part explores the theses of the abovementioned Turkish Islamist thinkers that dealt with foreign relations theories and issues in Turkey's Republican era, fundamentally linking it to the Ottoman-rooted tradition of pan-Islamism and tracing the elements of continuity as well as the differences in respect to that ideological trend. The writings of those thinkers, in particular those that according to literature have been the most influential on the NOM, are investigated with the objective of drawing conclusions about common lines on foreign policy.

The second part of the dissertation is about the Islamist discourse on foreign affairs as produced specifically by the NOM's political parties. It analyzes this discourse and its evolution throughout the parties' life. It takes into account the texts produced by the parties, including programs, manifestoes, public speeches and pamphlets comprising foreign policy questions. The aim is to include all those sources that contributed to the circulation of NOM ideas inside Turkey and to the consequent development of an Islamist cultural environment. In brief, this part outlines the foreign policy discourses imagined and propagandized by the National Outlook in its various party incarnations, exploring their changes and consistency through time. A second section of this part finally explores the history of the NOM parties and their foreign policies from the point of view of their parliamentary interventions, mostly dealing with the foreign policy stances as expressed in parliamentary speeches by the MPs belonging to the National Outlook. This final section ultimately helps in revealing the NOM's specific positions in relation to the changing international scenarios and main foreign policy issues involving Turkey from the 1970s to the 1990s.
