

## Turkish Foreign Policy in the Early Republican Period: An ‘International Society’ Approach

### Türkiye’nin Erken Cumhuriyet Dönemi Dış Politikası: Bir ‘Uluslararası Toplum’ Yaklaşımı

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#### Abstract

This article presents a theoretical account of Turkish foreign policy in the early Republican Period (1919-1938). It utilizes the international society approach of the English School theory to explain the main principles of Turkish foreign policy. The theory merges the study of international relations with history and provides a useful framework to analyze transformation of international politics. In the literature, Turkish foreign policy in the early Republican Period has usually been studied in a descriptive manner with reference to Atatürk’s vision. There are a limited number of theoretical studies that integrate IR theories with the study of the history of Turkish foreign policy. This article contributes to this emerging literature. It claims that a significant aim of Atatürk’s foreign policy was to get the new republic recognized as part of the international society to put the country under the ‘protective’ framework of the contemporary standards of international law. Turkey aimed at having peace, getting international recognition, establishing multi-lateral alliances, achieving full-independence and modernization which were closely associated with consolidating Turkey’s position in the European international society. This consolidation was expected to make the new Turkish Republic an equal member of the society. As such, the article claims that Atatürk followed a strategy that would consolidate Turkey’s position in the European international society so that the country is approached on equal-terms on the principles of international law including but not limited to sovereign-equality and non-intervention. The article relies on primary sources and a qualitative analysis of and excerpts from Atatürk’s speeches to crystallize this claim.

**Keywords:** Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Turkish Foreign Policy, International Society, Turkey, English School

#### Öz

Bu makale erken Cumhuriyet Dönemi (1919-1938) Türk dış politikasının teorik bir anlatımını sunmaktadır. Atatürk’ün dış politika stratejisinin temel ilkelerini açıklamak için ‘Uluslararası Toplum Yaklaşımı’ olarak da adlandırılan, uluslararası ilişkilerde ‘İngiliz Okulu’ kuramını kullanmaktadır. Bu kuram uluslararası ilişkiler çalışmalarını tarih ile birleştirerek uluslararası politikanın dönüşümünün incelenmesine yardımcı olabilecek kullanışlı bir çerçeve sağlamaktadır. Literatürde erken Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türk dış politikası, genellikle Atatürk’ün vizyonuna atıf verilerek, betimsel bir şekilde

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incelenmiştir. Uluslararası İlişkiler kuramlarını Türk dış politika tarihi çalışmalarıyla bütünleştiren analitik çalışmaların sayısı ise oldukça sınırlıdır. Bu makale geliştirmekte olan bu yazına ampirik bir katkıda bulunmayı hedeflemektedir. Makale Atatürk'ün dış politikasının önemli bir amacının, yeni Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin uluslararası toplumun bir parçası olarak tanınmasını sağlamak ve ülkeyi çağdaş uluslararası hukuk standartlarının 'koruyucu' çerçevesi altına sokmak olduğunu iddia etmektedir. Türkiye, o dönemde Avrupa uluslararası toplumundaki konumunu sağlamlaştırmakla yakından ilişkili olarak gördüğü, barışı ve uluslararası tanınırlığını temin etmek, çok taraflı ittifaklar kurmak, tam bağımsızlığı ve modernizasyonu sağlamak hedeflerine yönelmiştir. Avrupa uluslararası toplumundaki konumun güçlendirilmesinin, yeni Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'ni bu toplumun eşit bir üyesi yapması beklenmiştir. Böylelikle makale, Atatürk'ün Türkiye'nin Avrupa uluslararası toplumundaki konumunu pekiştirecek bir strateji izlediğini, ülkeye egemen eşitlik ve müdahale etmeme dahil ancak bunlarla sınırlı olmamak üzere çeşitli uluslararası hukuk ilkelerinde eşit şartlarda yaklaşılmasını temin edecek bir strateji izlediğini iddia etmektedir. Makale, Atatürk'ün dönemin uluslararası hukukunu benimseyen dış politika stratejisinin bir değerlendirmesini sunarken makaledeki iddiaları desteklemek için birincil kaynaklara başvurmuştur. Atatürk'ün konuşmalarının nitel bir incelemesini yapmakta ve konuşmalardan çeşitli alıntılar sunmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Türk Dış Politikası, İngiliz Okulu, Türkiye, Uluslararası Toplum

## 1. Introduction

This research is based on a theoretical analysis of Turkish foreign policy (TFP) during the War of Independence and the subsequent era (1919-1939). Utilizing the International Society approach of the English School theory, the article analyzes Atatürk's strategy to have the new Republic of Turkey recognized as part of the European 'international society'.

The English School theory claims that states establish international societies based on shared values and common goals. States then abide by these values and goals in their conduct of foreign policy. When recognized as a member of the 'society', a state enters a framework of shared legal principles including but not limited to sovereign equality, non-intervention and/or peaceful resolution of disputes. Utilizing the English School perspective, this article claims that one of the major aims of TFP under Atatürk was to consolidate Turkey's position in the 'society' so that it is approached on equal terms with other members of the international society. In his speeches, Atatürk frequently refers to common values, qualities, and contemporary standards that the Turkey shares with the then international society.

The following parts answer two interrelated sets of theoretical and empirical questions. Theoretical questions deal mainly with the definition of the 'international society': How is an international society constructed and how does it differ from the 'international system'? What were the main principles of the European international society of the period? Which actors define the main principles of the international society? On the other hand, the empirical questions address the historical developments of the period: What were the conditions of the era? How did Atatürk frame Turkey's foreign policy strategy in relation to the contemporary international society? What were the strategies of the Ankara Government to get recognized by the international society?

The article relies on primary sources and presents evidence from Atatürk's speeches. Examples from different speeches clarify how Atatürk perceived the European international society at that period and which strategies he used to integrate Turkey to the society. The first part of the article answers the theoretical questions by explaining the main assumptions of the English School theory. This part also presents an account on the evolution of the international society approach from the eighteenth to the twentieth century. The second part of the article analyzes Atatürk's foreign policy vision while answering the empirical set of questions. In doing so, it provides a theory-informed understanding of TFP in the early Republican Period.

## 2. The English School and "International Society"

Scholars of International Relations (IR) generally refer to an anarchical international system of states meaning that there is no overall authority, universal sovereign, or a world government that control, define and sanction inter-state relations. Many studies of IR regard states as unitary actors acting under anarchy with an aim to increase national interest and security and to ensure their political survival. Under an anarchical international system, states are frequently defined as self-interested organisms acting to increase their national interest through power politics. (Sterling-Folker, 2006, p. 304). The English School Theory or the International Society approach (Dunne, 1998) is one of these theories that build its propositions on the international anarchy assumption.<sup>1</sup>

The proponents of the English School claim that certain 'institutions' such as war, balance of power, sovereign-equality, and non-intervention are established through inter-state relations, which mitigate the impact of anarchy and serve the maintenance of order in the international system. (Griffiths, Roach, & Solomon, 2009, p. 211; See also, Butterfield & Wight, 1966; Bull & Watson, 1984; Watson, 1992; Buzan, 2014). States, through wars and diplomacy, have historically developed common norms and values which they seek to abide by in their relations. This proposition is built on Grotius' argument that international law could mitigate the effects of anarchy, if states establish an order based on shared legal principles. Although the international system is anarchic and power politics is central to this system, states build 'societies' based on shared values and common interest. The members of the international society achieve order in their relations under the anarchical international system through established customary behavior and the codification of shared values. (Sterling-Folker, 2006, p. 305).

Studies that utilize this theory widely apply historical analysis to understand the establishment of an international society and analyze the relationship between the members and non-members of that society. Hence, the theory adopts a methodology involving a historical sociology of state systems. With reference to international history, the theory asks two main questions: (1) How do international societies come into being? (2) How to differentiate international society from

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1 Hedley Bull's book *The Anarchical Society: A study of order in world politics* is assumed to be one of the seminal works of the theory. Bull, in the introduction, mentions that the book aims to propose ways to maintain order in an anarchic international system. See (Bull, 1977).

the international system? (Sterling-Folker, 2006, pp. 305–306). The proponents of the theory investigated the establishment and evolution of the European international society after the Westphalia treaty based on shared principles including sovereign-equality, non-intervention, and balance of power. They focused on the society's basic norms (the standards of civilization) and its relations with the 'others', non-European states.

One of the key figures in the English School theory, Hedley Bull states that there were three traditional understandings of international relations: (1) Hobbesian tradition that understands international relations through an analysis of 'war', (2) Kantian tradition searching for the potential of establishing a 'community of mankind' and (3) Grotian tradition that focuses on the evolution of international society (Bull, 1977, p. 23). Observing these three traditions the English School theory developed three key concepts: international system, international society and the world system (Buzan, 2004, p. 7; Little, 1995, pp. 15–16; Buzan, 2014).

'International system' refers to the traditional Hobbesian/Machiavellian/ Realist IR understanding that takes nation-states as major actors struggling for power under an anarchical international system. (Bull, 1977, p. 23) States as the unitary actors of this system interact with each other and affect each other's actions. Since the system is anarchic, states act in a national interest-based self-help system.

'International society' is developed with reference to Grotius' (internationalist) understanding of international law. (Buzan, 2004, p. 7). The argument here is that states form societies based on shared interest and rules of conduct. They establish institutions and norms to mitigate the impact of systemic anarchy and to achieve order. Bull states that "as against the Hobbesian tradition, the Grotians contend that states are not engaged in simple struggle, like gladiators in an arena, but are limited in their conflicts with one another by common rules and institutions" (Bull, 1977, p. 25). This concept has been the major area of study in the English School tradition (Buzan 2014; See also Demirel 2017).

'World Society' is inspired from Kantian (universalist) normative understanding of progress in international relations. It "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 center of IR theory" (Buzan, 2004, p. 7). It is a revolutionary approach to the traditional inter-state, anarchic and systemic understanding of IR. The Kantian understanding "takes the essential nature of international politics to lie not in conflict among states, as on the Hobbesian view, but in the trans-national social bonds that link the individual human beings who are the subjects or citizens of states" (Bull, 1977, p. 24). The concept is proposed as an alternative understanding to the international system (Bull, 1977, pp. 24–25; Buzan, 2004, pp. 7–8).

Among these three key concepts, this study takes the concept of *international society*. The English School theory, as it is explained by Buzan (2004, p. 1), understands international system via a societal understanding. The proponents of the English School have generally studied

the emergence and development of the modern European international society. International relations, as it is argued, resembles the social life in which individuals both form the society and get influenced by it. If the units within the society “share a common identity (a religion, a system of governance, a language), or even just a common set of rules or norms (...), then these inter-subjective understandings not only condition their behavior but also define the boundaries of a social system” (Buzan, 2004, p. 8). Hence, to understand and explain the emergence of those societies, one needs to analyze the existing institutions and norms to clarify the boundaries and members of those societies. At this point, historical and sociological analysis are used to analyze the inter-state relations in a given period to explain the existing inter-state societies in the international system.

The English School scholars have endeavored to develop both an analytical and a normative theory.<sup>2</sup> It is analytical in terms of defining the key characteristics and dynamics of inter-state relations, and in terms of analyzing how states affect and get affected by the international system. It is normative since it prescribes ways to overcome anarchy and achieve order in that system.<sup>3</sup> Although the English School studies the emergence of international societies, they do not adhere a positive connotation to it. Having a society might not always be a normatively positive development. According to Luard (1976, p. 340), “a society may be closely knit yet marked by frequent conflict” (cited in Buzan, 2004, p. 15). For instance, ‘war’ was an important institution in the Westphalian European international society. As Buzan (2004, p. 15) exemplifies “many human societies have ritualized and institutionalized both intense violence (rituals of sacrifice, warrior cultures) and huge degrees of inequality (slavery; ethnic, religious, caste and gender discrimination)” (Buzan, 2004, p. 15).

An additional example to this argument might be that the members of the European international society were not eager to extend their society to include new members and were not always benevolent towards those that were not members of their societies; those that do not share the standards of civilization. Bellamy (2004, p. 214) argues that the “interaction between European international society and non-European societies did not automatically produce the expansion of this society”. The main principles of the European international society emerged in the fifteenth century and then have become gradually institutionalized and expanded to non-European regions in the following centuries (Yurdusev, 2009, p. 71). The European states were not benevolent towards the non-European states. Instead, they were ambivalent towards those states that do not meet their standards of civilization (Suzuki, 2004, pp. 115–144). For instance, the non-intervention principle was not applied to the Ottoman Empire, because it was not recognized as member of the International Society. The Ottoman Empire had a rich, complex, and long-standing relationship with European states. However, it “did not take part in this system

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2 Some ES scholars might disagree with this ‘normative theory’ argument. The three concepts are argued to be “analytical concept designed to capture the material and social structures of the international system.” Thus, it is defined not as a “normative theory but a theory of norms”. See (Buzan, 2004, p. 14; Buzan & Little, 2000).

3 It asks questions including “how do we lead the good life” and “how is progress possible in international society”. (Buzan, 2004, p. 14).

in the beginning and it officially became a member only with the Treaty of Paris of 1856 ... The membership of the Empire was disputable even after the Paris Treaty” (Yurdusev, 2009, p. 71). Hence the shared principles of the European society were not applied to the Ottoman Empire.

### **3. The Emergence of European International Society**

A classical and central assumption of the English School theory is that the current international society has evolved out of the developments in Europe (Buzan, 2004, p. 241).<sup>4</sup> The eighteenth century can be taken as a “benchmark” to study the emergence and the development of the European international society. While analyzing international societies, the English School scholars studied the existing primary institutions in Europe. In fact, the Westphalian system remained as an antecedent of the modern international society. In the nineteenth century, international society was regarded as European so that states that fail to meet the European standards of civilization – which were defined by the Europeans themselves – were not admitted as a member of the community. Bull (1977, p. 32) argues that these ‘standards of civilization’ was a test which “Turkey was the first to pass when under Article VIII of the Treaty of Paris of 1856 she was admitted to the public law and concert of Europe”. The members of the international society were all expected to be “a particular kind of political entity called ‘states’ ... entities that do not satisfy the criterion cannot be members” (Bull, 1977, p. 33).

Some fundamental characteristics of the European international society stemmed from this ‘state’ criteria. As Bull (1977, p. 33) points out, the idea that all member states should have equal rights, that their responsibilities “are reciprocal, that the rules and institutions of international society derive from their consent, and the idea that political entities such as Oriental kingdoms, Islamic emirates or African chieftaincies should be excluded from membership” all stem from this criterion. Nationalism had become another important defining element of the nineteenth century European society. The legitimacy of any regime in international society was not defined according to dynastic relationship anymore. Likewise, the source of legitimacy did not come from the god, natural law, or the natural rights of the rulers anymore. Instead, legitimacy had started to be defined with reference to the rights of nation, people, or with popular support. Discussions have shown that some of the primary institutions have also been replaced by others in this process. Sovereignty, war, and international law have been redefined in the following decades. By the end of the nineteenth century some of the eighteenth-century institutions were left behind. As Buzan (2004, p. 242) points out institutions like “nationalism, equality of people, self-determination, popular sovereignty, the market, multilateralism...” were taken on board instead of some eighteenth-century institutions. Theorists of international society have focused on international law rather than natural law to identify the ‘rules of conduct’ that regulated inter-state/intra-society relations. Rather than focusing on what states should do, they have focused

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4 Because the assumptions of the theory are widely built on the experience of Europe and European states, the English School has been criticized for being Eurocentric (Kayaoglu, 2010; Kuru, 2016; Linklater, 2010; Ruacan, 2018; Suzuki, Zhang, & Joel, 2016).

on what they have done and been doing. Thus, treaties and the customary law became critical in defining international society. Institutions that reflect inter-state “co-operation” were analyzed as the expressions of the international society (Bull, 1977, pp. 33–35).

In the twentieth century, scholars of the English School observed that the World Wars strengthened the Hobbesian interpretation of international relations. Besides, the international society has no longer been limited to Europe (Bull, 1977, p. 36). The international society was no longer regarded as European since the European society expanded to the global system. However, the doctrine first expressed by Scottish Lawyer James Lorimer in the 1880s remained as an important element in defining the nations of the world. Lorimer divided the mankind into three categories: the members of the international society mainly in Europe and Asia ‘civilized humanity’, the partially recognized countries in Asia ‘barbarous humanity’, and the rest that were not entitled for recognition ‘savage humanity’ (Bull, 1977, pp. 36–37).

The League of Nations and the United Nations were interpreted as the major institutions of the international society since their role were central to the maintenance of international order. The First World War and the emergent Wilsonian principles became important defining elements of the world-wide international society. Thus, by the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century, emphasis on international institutions, the principles of self-determination, and popular sovereignty increased. The nineteenth century nationalism consolidated. Besides, especially with the impact of the First World War and Wilsonian principles, ‘war’, a major institution of eighteenth and nineteenth century European international society, was downgraded (Bull, 1977, pp. 38–39). Emphasis on the maintenance of peace through international organizations (the League of Nations) became an important institution of the international society.

#### **4. Turkish Foreign Policy during the Atatürk Era (1919-1938)**

The Republic of Turkey was founded on the ashes of the Ottoman Empire, which endured for several centuries through rigorous diplomacy and balance of power. Atatürk, the founding leader of the Turkish state and nation, played a primary role in the initiation and success of the Turkish National War of Independence, and the following consolidation period. In addition to defining the basic political principles of the Republic, Atatürk also defined the “structural determinants” of TFP (Aydın, 1999). These structural determinants still affect the foreign policy behavior of the country. Atatürk was mainly concerned with the country’s unity, sovereignty, and independence. After the establishment of the republic, his emphasis on preserving the status-quo and peace aimed to protect the country from prolonged war and maintain the country’s stability. Aydın (1999, p. 159) defines the new Republic as follows:

The new Turkey was not an empire, but a relatively small nation-state; not an autocracy or theocracy, but a parliamentary democracy; not a state founded on expansionist principles, but a nation dedicated to the existing status quo; not a multinational, multiracial, and multi religious

state, but an almost 'homogeneous' society. Her aims were not to create and expand an empire, but to build and perpetuate a strong, stable nation within the boundaries of its homeland.

Atatürk aimed at establishing a state that would be a member of the civilized humanity (aforementioned), that respects the main principles of contemporary international law and the sovereign equality of states, confines itself to the preservation of the status-quo (of course, after assuming the territories defined in the *Misak-i Milli* – the National Pact), and participates as a member of the existing international organizations (Bilge-Criss, 2008, pp. 114–115). This direction was followed to become a member of the European international society and act with respect to the framework of its institutions. To elaborate on this argument the following parts analyze the major international developments in the period between 1919-1938, major characteristics of Atatürk's foreign policy, and main aims of his foreign policy definition with reference to Atatürk's speeches.

#### **4.1. Major political developments in the period**

The First World War had devastating effects on both Europe and other parties that took part in the war. The battling parties faced serious economic repercussions (especially Germany) and social turmoil (especially Russia). Britain, and France aimed at making peace agreements with the defeated powers (Austria, Ottoman Empire, Germany), and the USA entered diplomatic maneuvers to establish international peace through the League of Nations. However, the peace agreements that ended the war, together with the economic and political crisis in the defeated countries, had already started to create some revisionist tendencies in the defeated countries. As Gönübol and Kürkçü (2010, pp. 3-5) argue, the interwar period, rather than being a period of peace, had become a period of instability that led the revisionist and anti-revisionist powers into the Second World War.

In the early years of the War of Independence, Atatürk's aim was to mobilize military and political forces to establish a new independent republic. In 1919, he initiated his attempts with the congresses in Erzurum and Sivas through which the National Pact had been conceptualized and defined. The National Pact defined the borders of the new republic that would emerge from the ashes of the Ottoman Empire. The rigorous wording of the pact included several references to the existing international norms and several references to the right of the self-determination of people in different districts such as Kars, Ardahan and Batum and West Thrace (See Türk Tarih Kurumu [Turkish Historical Society], 1920). By April 1920, after the occupation of Istanbul by the Entente powers and the dissolution of the Istanbul government, the political movement that was led by Atatürk in Anatolia declared the establishment of the Turkish Grand National Assembly (*Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi*, TBMM) (see Ataturk, 1920a). The National Assembly resembled the political identity of the Anatolian movement and served as the foundation of the new Republic of Turkey (Gönübol & Kürkçü, 2010, pp. 5–7).



The Turkish War of Independence intensified in the period between 1920 and 1922. The Anatolian movement increased its political significance after several victories and treaties in the East against Armenia (ended with the *Gümrü* peace Treaty 1920), in the South against France (Ankara Treaty 1921), and in the West against Greece (ended by September 1922). Atatürk claimed that the İstanbul government did not represent the Turkish nation and the conditions of the Sevres Treaty (signed by Istanbul government in 1920) were not acceptable. The military victories of the Anatolian movement led by the Grand National Assembly increased its diplomatic significance that led the Entente powers to summon its representatives to the London Conference in 1921. The London conference resembles the diplomatic recognition of the Anatolian movement and, arguably, signaled the entrance of the New Republic of Turkey in the post-First World War European international society. The following two years (1922-1923) had been significant for the political and diplomatic accomplishments of the Anatolian movement. After the Mudanya Armistice in 1922, which ended the military aspect of the War of Independence, the representatives of the Turkish Grand National Assembly were summoned to a peace conference in Lausanne that resulted in the Lausanne Peace Treaty in 1923. The Lausanne Treaty, to a great extent recognized the National Pact and could be regarded as one of the major accomplishments of Atatürk's movement (Gönlübol & Kürkçü, 2010, pp. 6–11; Sönmezoğlu, 2008, pp. 147–151).

The early years of the post-War period included a series of rapid political and social reforms (including the abolition of the Sultanate and the Caliphate) and the transition towards the republican regime. In October 1923, TBMM declared the beginning of the Republic of Turkish Republican period. In the international realm, the new republic had dealt with the remaining disputes from the Lausanne Treaty (Including the status of Mosul, the Syrian border, War debts issue with France, Capitulations, and the population exchange issue with Greece).<sup>5</sup> By 1930s Turkey have solved most of its First World War disputes and was ready to be more actively involved in international diplomatic activities. The new Republic started to engage in cooperative relations with the members of the international society. The country became a member of the League of Nations in 1932 which also included major European powers like France and Europe. Turkey also engaged in cooperative relationship with Greece which had traditionally been an ally of Turkey's ex-enemies (Bilge-Criss, 2008, pp. 95–112; Gönlübol & Kürkçü, 2010, pp. 10–13).

The newly emerging revisionist tendencies in Italy and Germany increased the tensions in the European continent. These tensions intensified Turkey's integration with the international community. The Italian attack on Ethiopia, have led Turkey and Britain to concern about the status of the Eastern Mediterranean region. Turkey and Britain entered an alliance with the 1936 Mediterranean Pact. In the Middle East, Turkey initiated an alliance with Iran, Afghanistan, and Iraq in 1937 (Sadabad Pact). Turkey also solved its disputes on the straits. Whereas the ultra-nationalist tendencies increased in Europe, and different blocks between great powers started

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5 The solution of the Mosul dispute between Turkey and Britain is an important point for the English School approach. Turkey accepted the League of Nations decision to put Mosul under the British mandate. It could be understood as Turkey's eagerness to accept the order maintaining role of the league and a sacrifice in its path to become a member of the International society.

to emerge, the young Republic of Turkey lost its founding father Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (Bilge-Criss, 2008, p. 7).

#### **4.2. The main characteristics of Atatürk's foreign policy**

Both during the War of Independence and afterwards, Atatürk rigorously followed international realities. One might argue that he was well-informed about the post-First World War emerging international society, its values, and institutions, which were accepted as key elements in maintaining peace. The consolidated impact of nationalism (mentioned above), the emergent self-determination principles, and the emphasis on the maintenance of peace were among the international institutions of the period which Atatürk applied in his conduct of foreign policy. This is apparent in his opening speech of the Erzurum Congress in July 1919 (Atatürk, 1919a, 1919b). For instance, he refers to the Istanbul Government's "lack of popular support" and its "ignorance of national conscience" which were key elements of international legitimacy in Europe since the nineteenth century. In a way, he de-legitimized the Istanbul government through specific emphasis on nationalism and self-determination. Achieving public support was an important element of Atatürk political movement since he knew that it would lead to international diplomatic recognition. That is possibly why the first steps Atatürk took was to summon congresses of representatives in Erzurum and Sivas. Atatürk also called the parliamentarians of the Istanbul Government, which was dissolved by the Entente powers in 1920 (Atatürk, 1920b).

Leaders of the National Struggle defined the boundaries of the new republic at the beginning of the resistance movement through the National Pact and stick with it without following ideas of Pan-Islamism or Pan-Turkism, which Atatürk regarded as idealistic or unrealistic (Korkmaz, 2019). When asked about Turkey's participation in the London Conference, Atatürk refers to the National Pact which he presented as a legal document determining the borders of the new country therefore a necessary condition for peace. He stated that Turkey will fight for the National Pact, "this is an important condition for the establishment of peace" (Atatürk, 2006c). Atatürk also stated that Turkey is happy to be invited to the London Conference but, he adds, Turkey will see what the real intention of Entente powers is. In 1922, when asked about Turkey's conditions for peace, Atatürk responds again with reference to the National Pact, but this time also adds the Ankara Treaty (1922) signed between Turkey and France. He says there can be peace only if the entente powers respect the borders of the Turkey set by the National Pact and the agreement Turkey reached with France (Atatürk, 2006k). Atatürk was aware of Turkey's capabilities since, as Aydın explains, "it had no desire for territorial conquest and had no power to do so even if it had desired it" (Aydın, 1999, p. 156). Turkey's main goal was set to meet common values and goals with the international society and to take part in the operation of the principles and practices of the then international society.

Atatürk frequently refers to Turkey's intention to achieve peace in foreign policy. The foreign policy of the Republic of Turkey was based on the principle of having "peaceful" relations within

the country and beyond the country's neighborhood.<sup>6</sup> However, Atatürk also adds that 'peace' depends on the recognition of the sovereignty and unity of the country. He says that the Turkish nation fought its war for its unity and freedom. When a reporter asked Atatürk to send a message to the American nation, he calls the Americans to recognize and support Turkey's fight for freedom and unity (Atatürk, 2006f). So, Turkey welcomes any attempt at peace that respect the unity and freedom of the Turkish nation. He calls all entente powers to respect Turkey's fight and that Turkey will be sending envoy to the London Conference: "If the entente states desire to take on the Turkish issue respectfully and appropriately, TBMM will send an envoy with the intent that they find a committee having the real authority to represent the people and the country" (Atatürk, 2006l). He continues to refer to Turkey's independence, as a united country, that asks its counterparts for respecting the country's sovereignty. When a reporter asks about the impact of Turkey's participation in the London Conference on Turkey – Russian relations, he responds by restating the sovereign-equality principle. He says that Turkey's relations with Russia is a relationship between two sovereign and equal states and that Turkey acts for its own interest that is based on the national will and to establish peace (Atatürk, 2006l).

Atatürk frequently calls the world to recognize Turkey's fight for freedom and independence. He says that Turkish people are humble and peaceful in nature and would like to live as a sovereign and independent nation inside its borders. If one can reach a political solution, then military action is not desirable. "We never wanted to needlessly spill blood, the real mentality of our nation and the Turkish Grand National Assembly is like this. If the world civilization rightfully recognizes those responsible for the spill of blood, then there is no further need for atrocity." (Atatürk, 2006h). Talking to the *United Press* reporter, Atatürk adds, "America, Europe and the whole world civilization should know that, the Turkish Nation – like all civilized and competent nations-certainly decided to live under unconditional freedom and sovereignty. Any force intending to breach this legitimate right will forever remain an enemy of Turkey." (Atatürk, 2006k).

Atatürk intended to get the country accepted as a 'sovereign-equal' member of the international community, an institution of European international society. He understood that this recognition would come with a peace treaty that is to be established with the entente powers. He says "Our conditions are pretty clear and simple; we want an unconditional confirmation of our freedom... We will keep insisting on the return of all land remaining inside our national borders. Then, we expect that a fully sovereign Turkey lives in these lands, with no capitulations" (Atatürk, 2006g). The peace principle was formulated around to the preservation of the status-quo especially after the Lausanne Treaty. Thus, Atatürk followed a rigorously designed foreign policy approach to not become part of political and military conflicts. By the end of 1923, Atatürk started to refer to the country as the 'new Turkey'. When asked about the Lausanne Peace Conference he calls the entente powers to recognize the new country. The new Turkey is not the old Ottoman empire, they should not attempt to approach it with the way they did to the Ottoman Empire (Atatürk,

6 Gönülöbol and Kürkçü define nine characteristics of TFP in the period. (Gönülöbol & Kürkçü, 2010, pp. 9–22).

2006d). Atatürk calls for an 'equal' peace. He criticizes the entente powers, asking them to treat Turkey as part of modern civilized nations. He says that the entente powers put "conditions that would never be thought of for civilized nations and countries" (Atatürk, 2006j). He formulated a peaceful, active, and multi-dimensional foreign policy leading to several alliances in the Balkans, the Middle East and the Mediterranean. Furthermore, in the pre-Cold War context, the new Republic also had close ties with the Soviet Republic in the North (Gönlübol & Kürkçü, 2010, p. 24).

Another key characteristic of Atatürk's foreign policy, which also supports the argument that he aimed Turkey to become part of the European international society, was its Western direction. Atatürk expects the new Republic of Turkey to be recognized as equal to those of Europe. When a reporter from *Neue Freie Presse* asks Atatürk whether Turkey is an 'Eastern' or a 'Western' country he states that the Republic of Turkey is in essence the same with those of Europe and America. There might be some differences in shape but the essence of the 'republic' is the same (Atatürk, 2006i). In the following years, he refers to modernizing the country based on the standards of the west (Atatürk, 2006a), and to "move beyond the west" in terms of civilization and modernization (Atatürk, 2006e). The aim to reach the level of contemporary civilization remained a structural determinant of Atatürk's foreign policy. That level of civilization had been defined with reference to the European civilization (Arsan, 1961, p. 69; Gönlübol & Sar, 1997). Turkey entered a deep reform process to develop the sociopolitical structure of the country. As soon as the end of the National War of Independence, Turkey started to build close relations with the Western powers. This Western direction in domestic and foreign policies played a key role in the country's modernization attempts (Atatürk, 2006b).

In fact, the modernization attempts were a source of security for Turkey's international standing. Turkey as a modern nation-state would become an equal member of the international society as represented legitimately by popular public support. His all-inclusive definition of nationalism (subjective nationalism) also served this purpose (Keyman, 2008, pp. 155–162). According to this, not only those who were Turkish, but also those who considered themselves Turkish were part of the nation and society. To sum up, TFP aimed at peace, international recognition, establishing multi-lateral alliances, achieving full-independence, and modernization which were closely associated with consolidating Turkey's position in the European international society. This consolidation was expected to bring sovereign equality, non-intervention, and recognition to the new Republic in return.

## **5. Conclusion**

The English School theory with its analysis on the nature of inter-state relations and its emphasis on historical sociological analysis stands as a useful perspective to understand International relations. Although there is no consensus over the exact definition of its key concepts including world society, international system, and international society one might find several definitions

of them in the literature. These concepts serve as organizing tools in a complex system of world politics. The theory also merges IR with history to make more sound analysis. Rather than focusing just on one aspect of the foreign policy making mechanism (like international law, the regime of a state, the leader) or solely providing a detailed historical analysis, the theory combines those elements under a holistic approach.

In the literature, TFP in the early Republican Period is usually studied in a descriptive manner and with reference to different aspects of Atatürk's vision. There are limited theoretical studies that integrate IR theories with the study of the history of TFP. This paper attempts to contribute to filling in this gap. Especially, as this paper argues, the English School theory provides opportunities for such attempt. The paper proposes a systematic assessment of Atatürk's speeches as a useful tool in this regard. Utilizing the English School approach, this paper analyzed the major developments of TFP under Atatürk.

To conclude, Atatürk's realist understanding of status-quo and strategic use of the National Pact; his references to the national conscience, popular support, and self-determination; his inclusive and broad definition of Turkish nationalism; emphasis on the rapid modernization of the country into a European nation-state; his references to Turkey's Western direction; and establishment of peaceful diplomatic relations were all instruments to make Turkey a diplomatically recognized member of the then European international society. The article claims that through following a scrupulous diplomatic strategy, Atatürk consolidated the status of the new Republic of Turkey as an equal and respected member of the international society.

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