

# Analysis of Perception Theory: Normalization of Türkiye - Israel Relations in the Erdoğan Era

Indraningtyas<sup>1</sup> Sugito<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Indraningtyas: Department of International Relations, Faculty of Social Science and Political Science, Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, 55183

<sup>2</sup>Sugito: Department of International Relations, Faculty of Social Science and Political Science, Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, 55183

Email: [indraningtyas.isip19@mail.umy.ac.id](mailto:indraningtyas.isip19@mail.umy.ac.id)<sup>1</sup>; [sugito@umy.ac.id](mailto:sugito@umy.ac.id)<sup>2</sup>

## ABSTRACT

This article begins with the issue of restoring diplomatic relations between Turkey and Israel after previously being terminated by Erdogan due to the Mavi Marmara ship incident. This issue is a problem because Erdogan seems inconsistent in implementing his policies. Therefore, this article tries to explain foreign policy changes using a constructivist approach that focuses on individuals and uses Perception Theory formulated by Holsti as an analytical tool. This research found that the normalization of relations between Turkey and Israel was caused by a change in Erdogan's perception of looking at Turkey because of his nationalism, where there is a desire and interest to make Turkey a big, advanced, and prosperous country. Apart from that, the values of nationalism that Erdoğan adheres to also influence Erdoğan's views so that he considers severing or freezing relations with Israel to be an obstacle to Turkey achieving progress and a threat. Therefore, for the sake of progress and protection of the homeland, Erdoğan adopted a normalization policy. Most previous research analyzes this problem using the perspective of the state as a political actor, and not many studies specifically focus on Erdogan as an individual in making decisions. Therefore, this research tries to explore this problem from a different perspective, using the perspective and theory of individuals as political actor as well as policies based on constructivist values, where research from this perspective is still rarely discussed.

**Keywords:** Normalization of Diplomatic Relations, Nationalism, Turkey-Israel, Erdogan

## INTRODUCTION

Currently Turkey is present and acts as an Islamic power in the global sphere. As we know before, for decades Turkey had become a Western-oriented secular country after the collapse of the Ottoman empire. Previously, Turkey was a sovereign country which was also a continuation of the Ottoman Empire, the last Islamic Caliphate recognized by the world. The Ottoman Turks had a period of glory in the period 1517-1922 AD, when the Ottoman Turks succeeded in controlling Asia Minor, islands in the Mediterranean Sea, Egypt, Syria, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Libya, and several other areas (Marzaman, 2011). However, this glory ended when the Ottoman Turks, who at that time were led by Sultan Abdul Hamid II, decided that the Ottoman Turks would join in World War I. In 1922 there was a rebellion led by the Ottoman War General, Mustafa Kemal Pasha, who urged the Sultan to step down and the system the country was changed to a Republic. On the other hand, the Islamic fundamentalist camp asked that the Sultan be replaced. July 23, 1923, was the day the Ottoman Caliphate ended, marked by the signing of the Lausine agreement, namely determining the location of the borders of the Turkish Republic and the Sultanate was no longer considered a government (Sawhani, 2018).

During his time as president of the Republic of Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Pasha attempted to modernize and

secularize Turkey in the same way as Western countries. Mustafa Kemal Pasha passed away on November 10, 1938, and the position of President of Turkey was replaced by Ismet Inonu until 1950. Inonu was a loyal follower of Mustafa Kemal Pasha, as well as a continuation of the ideology of secularism in Turkey. This secularism policy was able to continue because the Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (CHP) party which was founded by Mustafa Kemal Pasha on September 7, 1919, always succeeded in winning the General Elections, and this secularism ended when the Era of Erdogan's leadership began.

The return of Turkey's position as one of the major sources of Islamic strength is related to the existence of the role and efforts of Rəcəp Tayyib Erdogan and the AKP Party which won the election, and defeated the CHP Party which in fact was a fanatical supporter of Kemal Pasha. From Erdogan's success in winning the election, Turkey has changed many of its previous policies, especially from liberal and secular policies to policies that are pro-Islam (Marzaman, 2011).

Under Erdogan's government, Turkey experienced significant improvements and progress, which made Turkey respected again because of its strength. These good changes made Erdogan's name stick out to enter as one of the world's best leaders. Erdoğan succeeded in winning the hearts of the

Turkish people through procuring great Islamization and economic programs and agendas. The Islamization program emerged through political policies that were carried out peacefully by Erdogan (Marzaman, 2011).

For foreign policy, Erdogan plays a major role in encouraging the struggle of Islamic communities around the world, especially for those who are experiencing conflict crises such as in Palestine, Erdogan is very loud in supporting Palestine and criticizing Israeli policies towards Palestine. Seeing how Erdogan's efforts to encourage the progress of Islam through the policies he made, it became an irony when Erdogan suddenly issued a policy of normalizing bilateral relations with Israel in 2016. This policy certainly triggers a lot of pros and cons considering this seems to contradict other policies, because as we know Israel is a country in conflict with the Palestinian people which incidentally is a Muslim brother country of Turkey so that if one observes this policy, it is very in contrast to the support that Erdogan has given to Palestine (Sawhani, 2018).

Actually, Turkey has established diplomatic relations with Israel since 1949, in contrast to other Muslim-majority countries which mostly reject Israel, Turkey actually recognizes Israel's existence and sovereignty. Relations that existed between Turkey and Israel during Erdogan's leadership did experience problems in 2010 due to cut ties of diplomatic relations, at that time Turkey deliberately cut ties with Israel because of the Israeli military attack on the Mavi Marmara ship, which was carrying humanitarian aid to Gaza, it resulted in the death of 10 activists from Türkiye. Israel was then required to pay for the damages along with the obligation to apologize for the incident. Unfortunately, Israel chose to refuse, triggering Erdogan's anger which resulted in the termination of Turkey and Israel's bilateral relations (Sawhani, 2018). However, when the termination of relations lasted for about five years, Turkey and Israel resumed normalizing bilateral relations in 2015. This of course raises a big question "Why did President Erdogan decide to restore (normalizing) ties with Israel?". Therefore, the purpose of this research is to find out the reasons why President Erdogan decided to restore bilateral relations with Israel and to explain the reasons for this change in foreign policy.

The case regarding the enactment of the policy of normalizing relations between the two countries which have been in conflict for quite a long time as happened to Turkey and Israel is an interesting matter to study, especially if the case focuses on the Executive government, it will be very interesting if the study uses an approach that focuses on the level of individual analysis, and uses a constructivism paradigm that focuses on the values embedded in actors, in this context Erdogan as a political actor (Pradana, 2016). In using this approach, it is necessary to know in advance the

reasons why individuals carry out political actions and what is the relevance of these actions to human needs, desires, images, values and beliefs. As an individual who occupies the position of president and is authorized to set policies. The theory used by the author as an analytical tool is the theory of perception formulated by Ole Holsti (Salim, 2017). It will be very interesting when the author can relate or relate the indicators of the theory and their relationship to this case and the policies issued by Erdogan (Pradana, 2016).

In research conducted by Nurmamurti which analyzes Trump's foreign policy towards the United States-China trade war, this research shows that in the policy formulation process the perpetrators (individuals) of the formulation are referred to as policy makers or decision makers who have the ability to influence policy outcomes. This research analyzes Donald Trump's leadership model through an ideosyncratic approach where this greatly influences how Trump formulates policies and how Trump's character has the potential to influence his role as foreign policy formulator. (Nurmamurti, et al., 2022). In addition, in research on the open-door policy by Erdoğan it was found that Erdoğan's personality as a decision maker was considered (Wiryawan, Azzahra, Nurshadrina, & Imanjaya, 2021).

According to Fadhil, foreign policy can be explained by using the personal characteristics of political leaders, by looking for indicators of nationalism, belief in the ability to control problems, the need for influence, the need for affiliation, conceptual complexity, and distrust of others which will refer to the leadership model, which analyzed through attitudes, judgments, and words (Fadil, 2020). In Pradana's research on Soeharto's leadership which had an impact on breaking foreign relations with China, using perception theory by Holsti, he found that policy changes were influenced by a leader's perception that arose because of the values, identities, beliefs, and beliefs held by the leader, thus influencing the leader's view of events or things. that occurs and ends in the policies made by the leader, the beliefs, and values that Suharto held were in the form of Javanese cultural values that were so thick that he learned which influenced his perspective in looking at China (Pradana, 2016).

In addition, Saslim's research (2017) still uses perception theory, a case study of the policy of normalizing diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba. The results of this study indicate that the normalization of diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba was influenced by Barack Obama's perception of by the belief system. Obama's perception of Cuba can be divided into several important points. First, Cuba is not currently a threat. Second, ideological differences are not an obstacle to cooperation in the 21st century. Third, ideological wars are

no longer important in the 21st century. Fourth, achieving change for the better can be done through collaboration. Fifth, the importance of democratic values in the country (Saslim, 2017).

## THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

In this study, the authors used a constructivism approach or point of view and also perception theory (Holsti, 1985:304). Constructivism is part of critical theory (critical theory) which can elaborate and explain that every decision, action and current policy is closely related to exploring experiences that have occurred previously in the past which focuses on ideas, norms, identities and other immaterial (non-material) things (Buzan & Hansen, 2009). This follows the direction of Kratochwil, who believes that in the process of interaction between international actors formed by a number of factors such as interests, identities, intentions and values, then there are potential reasons for one subject to perceive another as a 'friend' or 'enemy'. (Kratochwil, 1989). where the application of constructivism in this case is how Erdogan's past in the form of life journeys such as Erdogan's childhood, education/school, political journey and others influence the values and beliefs held by Erdogan thereby influencing his decision-making process.

Besides that, to explore a deeper explanation, this paper also uses the theory of perception put forward by Ole Holsti. Perception theory is the interpretation of political actors who make decisions on an issue. This interpretation is obtained through existing facts and data which are then adjusted to the values espoused by political actors to be poured into a country's foreign policy (Holsti, 2006). The facts in question are information and data about conditions that occur in the national or international environment, while values are personal aspects that are inherent in decision makers such as education, family influence, experience and so on. Perception has a large influence on foreign policy making, especially in autocratic countries where political power is held by only one person (Pradana, 2016).

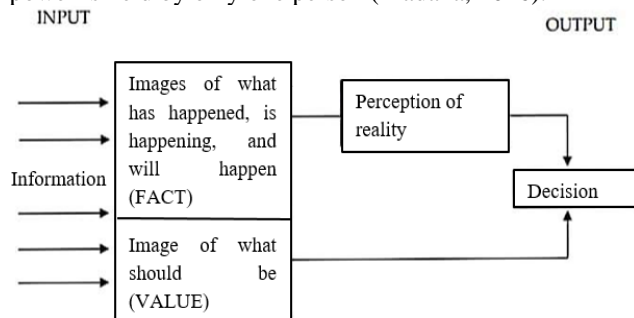


Chart 1: Holsti Perception Theory (in Russet & Star, as cited by Mas'oed 1991:21)

According to Holsti, in perception theory there are three components of perception, including values, beliefs, and knowledge or facts (Jones, 1992). Value is the prominence of a particular statement compared to other facts / reality. Beliefs are proven or known facts that are based on receiving information that previously came from the environment, even though it is different from the data itself. Meanwhile, existing and known facts or knowledge come from information received from the environment (Pradana, 2016). This is an analytical statement that connects data units in the model being tested. Meanwhile, existing and known facts or knowledge come from information received from the environment (Pradana, 2016). Using perception theory as an analytical tool or instrument will certainly be very interesting when the author can relevant or connect the indicators from this theory and their relationship to this case and the policies issued by Erdogan (Pradana, 2016). In this context, we know that the prominent values adhered to by Erdogan are Islamic values and nationalist values. Based on theory, it can be correlated, in this case the input of information in the form of facts and the reality is that Turkey's condition has declined since the policy of terminating bilateral relations with Israel, which was then input and processed into Erdogan's nationalist belief system which shaped Erdoğan's perceptions, views and desires to lead Erdoğan to be able to prosper Turkey. so, a normalization policy was issued (Harahap, 2018).

## METHOD

To obtain more in-depth research exploration and investigation results, this article will use a qualitative approach method, specifically qualitative descriptive. where the qualitative method is a research method that attempts to carry out precise and accurate interpretations and descriptions of the meaning and essence of the symptoms that occur. This method emphasizes the crucial importance of searching for data through existing sources, both written and verbal (Taylor, Bogdan, & DeVault, 2015).

The data collection technique used is through library research that utilizes data or materials in the library to support research obtained from books, magazines, newspapers, websites and other materials according to the topic to be researched and can be tested for truth. The writing of this thesis is research based on studies analytical descriptive. So the data obtained will then be analyzed by using the theoretical framework that has been determined (Akim & Ruhiat, 2020).

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### A. Fluctuation of Turkey and Israel Ties In The Erdogan Era

- Türkiye-Israel Relations: Harmonious Phases

Turkey and Israel are known to have established relations, for 67 years starting from 1949, starting when Turkey recognized Israel's sovereignty which then developed into harmonization of other relations such as economic, military cooperation and so on (Işık 2016). At the beginning of the AKP and Erdogan's administration in 2001, the Turkish-Israeli cooperation that had existed before was continued, Turkey continued the free trade economic agreement signed in 1997, even since the AKP government in 2001 trade in the value of exports and imports of the two countries continued to increase, from \$1.3 billion in 2001 which then increased to \$3.5 billion in the following years. Turkey and Israel also executed several other economic agreements including the Commercial Cooperation Agreement, Industry, Investment Protection and Double Taxation Prevention Agreement (Ibrahim & Nor, 2019).

In the military field, Israel is continuing the project to modernize Turkey's weapons as it was implemented in the era before Erdogan by providing and distributing new technology, military cooperation in the form of cooperative agreements is also manifested in the manufacture of aircraft, military visits, missiles and weapons. At the same time, the Israeli air force was also active in assisting and matching the training activities of the Turkish air force, especially during 2003-2004 (Tür, 2012).

In early 2004, Turkey-Israel signed an agreement to sell the water resources of the Manavgat River from Turkey to Israel (Akgün, Gündogar, & Gorgülü, 2014). In addition, diplomatic relations between Turkey and Israel were also strengthened. Erdogan made an official visit to Israel in May 2005, this was a rare moment (Myre, 2005). In subsequent years, Israel also carried out visits which were attended by President Shimon Peres in 2007, and Prime Minister Ehud Olmert in 2007 and 2008. Official meetings were held involving the ministries of defense of the two countries, thereby further demonstrating the close relationship that exists between the two countries. (Uzer, 2013).

#### • **Türkiye-Israel Relations: A Declining Phase**

Early signs of a decline in Turkish-Israeli bilateral relations emerged during the Iraq war in 2003. The Iraq war created rifts and differences of opinion between Turkey and Israel. After the Iraq war, Hamas' victory over Fatah in the 2006 elections also affected Turkish-Israeli relations. On February 16, a Hamas delegation led by Khaled visited Ankara to confirm Turkey's recognition of Hamas' victory, which the Israeli Prime Minister claimed was a mistake for siding with the terrorist group. (Sekulow, 2016). The turmoil subsided after an urgent meeting between the Turkish government and representatives of the Israeli embassy on 21 February 2006 (Tür, 2012).

Shortly, after tensions eased, Israel carried out the launch of Operation Cast Lead in the Gaza strip in late

December 2008. Operation Cast Lead was the starting point for a more serious deterioration in relations between Turkey and Israel. The operation drew condemnation from Erdoğan, saying Israel was "hypocritical" by talking about peace but at the same time "killing children" (The Guardian, 2009). The peak of the tension, Erdoğan clashed with Israeli president Shimon Peres at the World Economic Forum in Davos in January 2009. At the forum, Erdoğan left Peres after strongly criticizing Israel's military operations in Palestine which claimed many victims. After the events in Davos, there were more and more cracks in relations between Turkey and Israel (Tür, 2012).

#### • **Relations between Turkey and Israel after the Mavi Marmara Incident (2010)**

Due to the Hamas victory in 2006, Israel strengthened its control over the Gaza water zone, making it more difficult for foreign aid to enter (Sekulow, 2016). In response, several international humanitarian organizations including the Turkish Humanitarian Organization (İhsani Yardım Vakfı-İHH) collaborated to mobilize aid during a boat trip in May 2010. The Movement's activities include missions to lift Israel's siege on Gaza and raise international awareness of the blockade.

When the mission was carried out by İHH, there was a surprise attack, resulting in clashes between Israeli soldiers and volunteers which left nine Turkish volunteers dead and 53 injured (Rozi & Nor, 2016). The sudden attack caused outrage and drew strong criticism from high-ranking officials in Turkey, including Erdogan and Davutoğlu. As a result, Turkey has further distanced relations with Israel by suspending military cooperation, severing ties, Turkey even expelling Israel's ambassador to Turkey, withdrawing the Turkish ambassador. (Wirawan, 2016). In addition, Turkey presented three demands to Israel as conditions if it wanted to restore relations, a public apology from Israel, compensation to victims' families, and the end of Gaza blockade. Although the United Nations has intervened in the hope that Turkish-Israeli relations will recover soon, the turbidity of this relationship has yet to be clarified (Friedman & Fraser, 2011).

While the relations between Turkey and Israel continue to be strained, on the other hand the relations that exist between Turkey and Palestine are getting tighter, Turkey under Erdogan's government is making efforts to continue to support Palestine both in the form of humanitarian support and in other ways. In this regard, several high-level meetings were held in 2012 and 2014. (Sekulow, 2016). Even Turkey provides aid annually, 250 million dollars since 2012 and 200 million dollars in 2015 (Benjamin, 2016).

The tensions that occurred began to decrease with Washington's intervention asking Tel Aviv to fulfill the three

conditions or demands put forward by Ankara. In June 2016, Türkiye and Israel signed a bilateral rapprochement agreement. Many things have been mutually agreed upon, including Israel's agreement to comply with Turkey's demands in the Mavi Marmara incident, restoration of relations at the embassy, an agreement to limit Hamas activities in Turkey, and cooperation to find new oil fields in Israeli waters. (Wirawan, 2016).

**B. Islam as Values and Erdogan Aspirations In Developing Turkey**

**• Islam as Erdogan's ideals in Bringing Turkey Towards Glory**

The presence of Recep Tayib Erdogan has filled the void in Islamic leadership and is the hope for the revival of the Islamic world (Purwanto, 2020). Erdogan is seen as an exemplary Muslim leader, especially for Middle East countries (CNNIndonesia, 2022). As we know, Turkey had previously experienced glory in the Ottoman era, but the Ottoman era collapsed, and Turkey was transformed into a country with very strong secularism during the era of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's leadership. Now in the era of Erdogan, he is trying to make Turkey able to continue the government as the Ottoman Empire was. Recep Tayib Erdogan wants to bring Turkey to regain its glory and make Turkey a developed and great country like in the Ottoman era. Erdogan's hidden program to be able to revive the modern Ottoman empire (Neo-Ottomanism) is an open secret, seeing how the efforts he has made so far (Permana, 2020).

The Neo concept that Erdogan wants to realize is the reason for bringing back Islamic principles. Therefore, the policies carried out by Erdogan are closely related to Islam. The political steps based on Islam that Erdogan has carried out through his policies are a form of his belief and aspirations that with an Islamic identity, Turkey can revive the greatness of its country, and be able to bring Turkey to become an Islamic majority country that can compete with European countries in various fields. (Sofwanandi, 2016).

**• Erdoğan's failure to bring Turkey to glory with the religious route**

Within Erdogan's political movement, there have been several actions to transform Turkey into an advanced modern Turkish Islamic order. This action can be seen in Erdogan's political policies both at domestic and foreign policy (Harahap, 2018). In general, each country offers a conceptual modification of how Islam is integrated with the state government system. For example, Iran is committed to positioning itself as an 'axis of evil' against the United States, Israel and Western imperialism (Tobing & Nurwijoyo, 2020).

Similar to Turkey and Erdogan, in practice Erdogan issued a lot of his main policies for foreign policy, Erdogan

changed many of his policy directions to become very thick with Islam, even many political observers considered that Turkey's foreign policy had experienced a quite contrasting shift towards the axis considered "too Islamic" which is identical with Middle East (Permana, 2020). One of the policies for implementing Islamic values is to limit relations with countries that are in conflict with Islamic countries, so that they can fully side with Muslim countries in order to make Turkey under the AKP and Erdogan a haven for Islamic activists and forces to the ties of political communication and cooperation between Turkey and Islamic countries are getting closer in the hope of strengthening Turkey (Dinc & Yetim, 2012).

The limitation of relations began with Turkey's refusal to provide the resources and cooperation requested by Washington to invade Iraq in 2003. This was followed by other policies such as (1) Rejection of the Embargo and Isolation in Syria after the US-Iraq invasion and the events assassination of Lebanese prime minister Rafiq Hariri. (2) Refusal to send more US troops to Afghanistan. Reject the use of military force or an export embargo against Iran's nuclear program. (3) Rejecting the US approach in handling the Kurdistan Workers' Party, which is generally protected and provided with weapons, as well as other policies that are basically contrary to American foreign policy (Harahap, 2018).

Besides that, Turkey also implemented a policy of terminating bilateral relations with Israel, this policy was not only the impact of the Mavi Marmara ship incident, which was so large, it was also a form of implementing restrictions on relations based on the Islamic values that Erdoğan espoused, seeing that Turkey is a brother country to Palestine. surely Erdogan and Turkey must show great support. In this case, Turkey is truly transformed into a place where all Islamic Movements meet to unite their vision to achieve progress and success together (Alsaftawi, 2016).

However, it seems that with all the steps and policies that have been taken, they are still not enough to achieve the success that Erdogan hoped for, even after the implementation of these policies (policies that modify the concept of how Islam is combined with the system of state government, such as limiting relations with counter-Islamic countries), especially policies termination of bilateral relations with Israel, Turkey has experienced quite serious degradation in various fields (Salsabila, Prasodjo, & Suhermanto, 2022). The degradation experienced by Türkiye after severing relations with Israel included:

**1. Degradation in the Military and Security Fields**

In 2011-2014 the Turkish military experienced many failures, starting from the failure of the military to overthrow the Syrian regime in 2011-2012, the emergence of ISIS as a new international

threat (2014), the failure of Turkey's foreign and defense policy, Turkey-Russia tensions. Meanwhile, with the weakening of the Turkish military after the termination of security cooperation with Israel, Turkey was overwhelmed in dealing with threats so that it experienced a security crisis. Middle Eastern countries at that time were facing the destruction of their state and security system as well as Turkey, while Israel remained the only stable country in the region (Taghian, 2012).

## 2. Economic degradation

In the economic field after the severance of relations with Israel in 2010, although it seems that Turkey's economic figures were not directly affected, the volume of the economy of Turkey's and Israel's foreign trade has experienced a decline for some time. This is because Turkey's critical behavior towards Israel continues to experience continuity, which results in an escalation of tensions between the two countries. This resulted in a drastic decrease in trading volume within one year. In investment, it also decreased drastically from the original 997 million USD in 2010 to only 427 million USD in 2011 Turkey's investment in Israel was indeed very affected by this incident. Israel is always included in the list of the top 20 main export destination countries that provide the highest export revenue, it is even included in the top six categories of countries in the Middle East region that provide the highest export income for Turkey (Fericandra, 2016).

However, several years after the incident of severance of relations when the Turkish-Israeli conflict began to recede, due to the awareness of the economic dependency between Turkey and Israel, trade and some economic cooperation still had to be carried out and managed to show an increase in Turkey's economic profit volume again, where income rose to 250 million US dollars. this shows that Türkiye needs increased cooperation with Israel. because besides getting benefits in terms of benefits in the country's economic sector, this can be a shield for Turkey in protecting and strengthening the country's Defense in dealing with issues or problems in the Middle East Region (Taghian, 2012).

Therefore, the fact of the decline experienced by Türkiye shows that Erdoğan's aspiration in bringing Turkey to become a great power country through religion (Islam) is certainly not an easy, because an idealistic concept must deal with a reality that is already different from the context in

which the idealist concept of a state was planned. the journey of bringing developed countries along with strong religious path can be a consideration to continue or not the desire to create an idealistic state in the midst of a non-ideal reality, so the efforts of Islamism that have been carried out by Erdoğan have not able to bring Turkey to a prosperous country with great power like expected, so that another way is needed to achieve it (Hukom, 2019).

## C. The Influence of Nationalism On Erdogan's Perception Towards Israel And The Normalization Policies

Apart from adhering to Islamic principles, Erdoğan also upholds the values of nationalism. Erdoğan's principle of nationalism is very high and even close to ultranationalist (Junianto, 2013). Erogan's nationalism was even recognized by the 11th President of Turkey, Abdullah Gul, who stated that: "I know his expertise, experience, performance, and enthusiasm in serving the people of this country. I also know very well his love for the motherland and people, his belief in the truth".

The strong influence of the values of nationalism espoused by Erdoğan has made him have a belief system to save his nation, and always put the interests of the people first (Siregar, 2017). This nationalism began to form since he was a teenager, which was then supported by education and political journey which strengthened his nationalism (Zulfikar, 2021).

### 1. The Journey that Shaped Erdogan's Nationalism

The belief system and nationalism values adopted by Erdoğan cannot be separated from Erdoğan's background which forms his personality.

#### a. Education

In his educational history there are three basic things that make up the figure of Recep Tayyip Erdogan, including:

- Imam Hatip is an educational institution based on Islam. Imam Hatip remains a part of the evolution and development of Turkey's cultural and social history. As an educational institution that designs its programs based on Islamic values and nationalism, this is where Erdoğan's young character begins to form compared to Turkish children of his age. (Aydintasbas, 2018).
- Milli Türk Talebe Birliği, a student community or nationalist-oriented organization while studying at Imam Hatip. This organization introduces and promotes Turkish values from history, language, culture and other aspects. Erdoğan is a very active person in this organization, and it was from here that his steps were taken as an activist, namely an activist with

a spirit of nationalism and Islamism. one of the factors behind the formation of Erdoğan's nationalist character is from the nationalist student organizations that he got while still studying.

- Edebiyat (reading), apart from formal education, reading is also a crucial aspect that contributes to shaping Erdoğan's thoughts and character. Among the influential works of writers in this regard are Mehmet A., Bektaş Veli, Mevlana, Yunus Emre.
- b. Political Journey  
Erdoğan's nationalism grew stronger when he started to engage in politics. Erdoğan learned the values of nationalism directly through his political experience. Erdoğan's political journey began when Erdoğan began to actively join the Milli Salamat Partisi organization which was headed by Necmettin Erbakan. Erdoğan also began to diligently study politics by becoming part of the National Salvation Party. Furthermore, Erdoğan in 1975, was appointed as Chair of the Party's Youth Division (Bahri, 2017). In 1985, Erdoğan nominated himself when regional elections were held. He was elected mayor for Greater Istanbul and became President of the Greater Istanbul Metropolitan Council and succeeded in bringing a fresh wind of change to the party, both in terms of the political structure and the specific culture he built. (Bahri, 2017). Furthermore, in 2001 Erdoğan became the founder and chairman of the Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi. Its success gives a great boost of confidence to continue to advance Turkey so that it continues to grow so that it actually founded the party. In 2002 the party that Erdoğan founded immediately won the first election he participated in, and then became the first step for him to become prime minister from 2003 to 2014 and continue his career as a president (Bahri, 2017).

Thus, we are aware of how growing nationalist fervor permeates Erdoğan's government, it is not surprising that Erdoğan forged an alliance with the ultra-nationalist Nationalist Action Party (MHP) in parliament. Due to nationalism and the election campaign based on nationalist themes, the AKP leader was able to maintain power in the June 2018 elections. Even today, Erdoğan, the nationalist, is eager to witness the rebirth of the Turkish Empire. From Kurdish issues to civil rights, from Cyprus to deep paranoia about western designs in Turkey, the Regime Erdoğan established was authoritarian and superficially more conservative, but just as

nationalistic as its predecessors (Aydıntaşbas, 2018).

## 2. The Influence of Nationalism on the Policy of Restoring Turkey-Israeli Relations

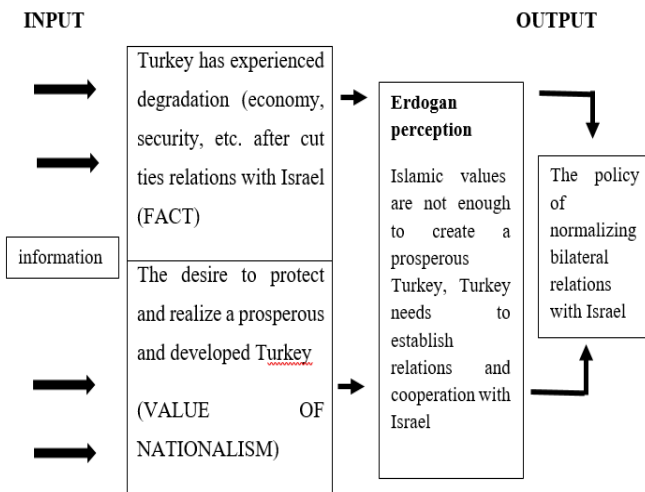
As previously explained, Erdoğan wants to bring Turkey to the peak of progress. In Erdoğan's vision, the new world order is nothing but an arena of great power competition between a resurgent Russia, the United States, China and a weakened Europe. Erdoğan's main wish is to add Turkey as an economic and military power for the 21st century. To justify the massive consolidation of power in Erdoğan's hands, the AKP prepared to prevent the kind of collapse that occurred in the Ottoman era during the 1 World War. At the beginning of new century, the atmosphere in Türkiye is filled by vulnerability and ambition. There is a perception of threat from allies and enemies and an obsession with preserving the "country". And that, marked the rise of nationalist Turkey which was spearheaded by Erdoğan (Aydıntaşbas, 2018).

Therefore, with the failure that Erdoğan got from implementing Islamic policies that had previously been implemented, where these policies were very idealistic, and all were implemented with Islamic principles, especially in foreign policy to limit relations with countries that were against Islamic countries without considering the benefits and costs that would be obtained, in particular the policy of severing relations with Israel where this policy actually brought Turkey to a decline and threat. After this failure, Erdoğan began to be aware of the fact that the policies he was carrying out were not enough to bring Turkey to the desired progress, and instead brought Turkey even further in achieving it. In this case, Nationalism, which was firmly entrenched in his beliefs, began to dominate and direct Erdoğan to think and act more rationally (Junaidi, 2016).

Thus, Erdoğan's nationalist belief system then forms an evaluation of "what has happened" and "what should have happened." These evaluations and views then shape Erdoğan's perceptions in making a policy. Based on the theory used, it appears how Erdoğan's strong belief system with nationalism influences Erdoğan's perception of Israel, where Erdoğan views that if Turkey continues to cut ties with Israel it will be a threat to the stability of Turkey's national security, so that it is necessary to reformulate foreign policy can adapt and survive with the existing reality (Pradana, 2016).

### Analysis of Perception Theory in a Case Study of Türkiye-Israel Normalization





Evaluation of "what has happened" and "what should have happened" then forms Erdogan's perception, this perception is related to Turkey's decline after the severance of relations with Israel such as: domestic military pressure which is influenced by the unstable internal conditions of the Turkish military while the threat of terrorism continues haunting, Turkey is also unable to ask Israel for help because of the cancellation of relations so that the military-industrial cooperation between the two is stopped (Arifiangko, 2016).

Meanwhile, the cessation of defense industrial relations with Israel has affected the reduction of Turkey's national funds for the military. The bombings that often occur in important Turkish cities such as Ankara and Istanbul. This situation urges the Turkish military to always be ready whenever terrorists attack for Turkey. For example, the threat of close-range rocket attacks from ISIS/ISIL (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) and the Al-Nusra Front, in Kilis, a town near the Turkish border in 2016. Besides that, the condition of Turkey which is a country surrounded by Turkish ballistic missile depots which are prone to the threat of rocket attacks, this makes Turkey's military readiness in many aspects are necessary (ALJAZEERA, 2016). Still related to Turkey's security, views about the threat that will be obtained if termination continues to be implemented, are strengthened by the agreement on security with the US which urges Erdogan to carry out normalization with Israel. As a country with close ties to the US, Erdogan must be prepared to be labeled a Jewish partner. The more Erdogan tries to leave normalization, the more the US government forces him to reconcile with Israel. If he strongly opposes US policies, Turkey must be prepared to counter international threats. (Arifiangko, 2016).

Apart from worries about security and military threats, Erdogan is also worried about economic downturn.

After the termination of Turkish and Israeli Relations in 2010, Turkey had experienced drastic decline in the value of trade, investment and tourism in 2010-2011. While we know that Israel is a country that is a member of the top six the Middle East region which provides large economic income for Turkey (in other words Turkey still has a large economic dependence on Israel). If the stoppage of import-export activities between Turkey and Israel continues, it will cause an economic imbalance between the two, including affecting politics and security. The international trade process requires parties who have advantages to benefit those who carry out international market trading activities. Israel is one of the countries that control international trade in the arms market. Two-thirds of its weapons production is diverted to exports. If exports decrease a lot, it can affect economic instability (Salsabila, Prasodjo, & Suhermanto, 2022).

Meanwhile, energy concerns are at the top of Turkey's agenda in its quest for rapprochement with Israel. Turkey is dependent on energy imports from Russia and Iran and needs to diversify its energy sources. Therefore, Turkey wants Israel's gas reservoirs for domestic use and export to Europe, in order to strengthen its energy hub status. In addition, Israeli gas can generate income for Türkiye's struggling economy. Besides that, a pipeline from Israel to Turkey via Cyprus is the optimal solution economically and practically, although approval from Cyprus may be required (Arbar, 2022). In other words, Erdogan needs Israel to be able to realize what is his goal and protect Turkey from threats. On the other hand, the tenuous relationship between the two is likely to become a threat to Turkey.

Quoted from Alarabia News in a press conference conducted by Erdogan in January 2016, he stated that:

"Israel needs a state like Turkey in the region," Erdogan said in remarks to Turkish journalists published in a leading daily.

"And we also have to accept that we need Israel. This is the reality in this region," Erdogan said.

"If joint steps are carried out based on sincerity, then normalization will follow." (ALARABIANews, 2016).

On another occasion, the Lapid Office said in a statement after a conversation between Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and the Prime Minister in 2018 stated that:

"It was decided to once again raise the level of relations between the two countries with full diplomatic ties and to return ambassadors and consul generals,"

"Upgrading relations will contribute to a deeper relationship between the two people, expand economic, trade and cultural ties, and strengthen regional stability," (France24, 2022).



To anticipate the cons and also the contradictions that occur over the restoration of Turkey-Israel relations, Erdoğan made a statement, that Turkey will continue to support Palestine even though it maintains relations and cooperation with Israel.

"Steps taken in our relations with Israel will not diminish our support for the cause of the Palestinian people,"

"On the contrary, our Palestinian brothers also stated that these steps will contribute to the solution of the Palestinian issue."

This shows that Erdoğan really shows his desire to restore cooperative relations with Israel even though he knows there will be many parties who oppose this policy. The positive scenario emphasizes that the transition to a proper relationship allows the two to deal with the threats they face such as, the Kurdish issue, Iran, Hezbollah and Hamas for Israel.

The restoration / normalization of relations between countries also opens up opportunities for fruitful cooperation. It is important to consider how, in coordination with Jerusalem allies, Ankara can be integrated into the new regional forum. Turkey could also play an important role in Israel's signaling policy to Palestinians, for example, in a pilot program of flights for Palestinians from the West Bank through Ramon Airport, which Turkey will partially operate. Maintaining the existing dialogue mechanisms between Erdoğan and Israeli President Isaac Herzog will allow the two countries to resolve disagreements, particularly on the Palestinian issue, without direct clashes. There is also potential for cooperation on issues related to climate change, in particular technologies for the efficient management of water supplies, which could form the basis for projects that other countries will follow (Lindenstrauss & Daniel, 2022).

The explanation above shows that relations and cooperation with Israel can be a springboard for Turkey to be able to realize an advanced and prosperous Turkey. Strengthened by the facts and conditions that exist where this also influences Erdoğan's perception that Israel will actually become an obstacle and a threat if it continues to be on the opposite side. Concerns about economic degradation, military and security threats from various parties after the freezing of relations made Erdoğan reconsider his decision to continue to suspend diplomatic relations with Israel or improve them, because on the one hand Israel can help protect Turkey's security with its great military capabilities and establish economic cooperation that can the closer Erdoğan is to the ideals of building an economically and militarily strong Turkey. This fact made Erdoğan consider that Turkey should continue to establish bilateral relations with Israel for the good of Turkey in the future, this is a form of nationalism and a form of Erdoğan's love for the country,

where he seeks to protect Turkey from threats and bring Turkey to such glory. what he aspires to be, even though the decision is considered to be contrary to his other principles (Pradana, 2016).

Therefore, in 2015 Erdoğan actually implemented a policy to restore diplomatic relations with Israel in order to stabilize Turkey's economy and military. This is information or input received by Erdoğan, based on the input he received through his belief system in nationalism, where Erdoğan will try to protect and advance his nation. Thus, if you look at Erdoğan's belief system, then his perception of seeing opposition to Israel as an obstacle is something natural.

## **CONCLUSION**

From the entire discussion, we can see that in fact the relations between-Turkey and Israel had started a long time ago and then developed into cooperation such as economic, military, etc. However, this relationship was hit by problems in 2010, caused by the Mavi Marmara ship incident which angered Erdoğan which resulted in suspensions of the relationship between the two. However, it was very surprising when Erdoğan decided to repair relations between the two after the incident.

From the problem above, based on the theoretical perspective author used, the normalization of diplomatic relations between Turkey and Israel in 2016 was influenced by changes in Erdoğan's perception of Turkey. As we know, previously Erdoğan had the desire to make Islam his ideal values, so he tried to get Turkey to continue its government like the Ottoman Empire, where he offered conceptual modifications to how Islam was integrated with the country's government system and was committed to positioning himself as an axis against other countries. countries like Israel and Western imperialism. However, it seems that this actually makes Turkey experience a bad situation, such as degradation both in terms of military economy and puts Turkey at external threat. In this case, the value of nationalism which is also deeply attached to Erdoğan guides and directs him to be able to act more rationally. Erdoğan's value and belief system, namely nationalism, which is deeply embedded in Erdoğan, then forms an assessment of "what has happened" and "what should happen". in the form of a deteriorating economic and military system as well as external threats resulting from the severing of relations with Israel, in such circumstances Erdoğan's desire to make Turkey a developed, safe and prosperous country will not be achieved. This assessment then shapes Erdoğan's perception in taking a policy. This fact influences Erdoğan's view that Turkey must re-establish bilateral relations with Israel.

Thus, the findings in this paper show that this policy change was caused by Erdoğan's perception which was influenced by his beliefs which were more inclined and dominant towards nationalism. Erdoğan is very nationalistic

in leading Turkey because he wants to make Turkey a big country, which influences the foreign policy of the country he leads. In this case, Erdogan needs to use various methods to bring Turkey into a developed country, including normalizing/restoring relations with Israel.

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