

**T.C.  
SAKARYA UNIVERSITY  
MIDDLE EAST INSTITUTE**

**A ROLE THEORY ANALYSIS OF BOLIVIA-TURKEY RELATIONS:  
EXAMINING BILATERAL RELATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF TURKEY'S  
LATIN AMERICA POLICY AND BOLIVIA'S MIDDLE EAST POLICY**

**MASTER THESIS**

**Alvaro MONTENEGRO**

**Department: Middle East Studies**

**Thesis Supervisor: Prof. Othman ALI**

**FEBRUARY 2021**

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## **DECLARATION**

I declare that this thesis is written in accordance with the scientific code of ethics and that this work is original. In case the works of others are used, it is referred to in accordance with scientific norms. No falsification has been made in the data used, and no part of the thesis is presented as another thesis work in this university or another university.

Alvaro Montenegro  
13.12.2020

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I want to thank and congratulate myself for all the time, energy and effort I put in this work which reflects the final outcome of my three years stay in Turkey. In the whole process of finishing the thesis -which took me around one year and a half-, thoughts about giving up, moments of stress and doubts if it was all worth it, were no absent, on the contrary, were rather common. That is why, with the risk of sounding arrogant and selfish, I want to firstly thank myself for being constant.

Secondly, I want to thank my parents. Without their financial support and words of courage I would not be able to finish the thesis. Also, the recommendations and insights of my supervisor Dr.Othman Ali helped to polish my work and make it more presentable.

Finally, I want to thank Turkey; as a government for giving me the opportunity to study here, and as a nation for showing me a different culture from which I learned a lot. The memories and experiences I lived in this part of the world will stay with me.

Alvaro Montenegro  
13.12.2020

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| <b>Title of the Thesis:</b> A Role Theory Analysis of Bolivia-Turkey Relations: Examining Bilateral Relations in the Context of Turkey's Latin America Policy and Bolivia's Middle East Policy   |   |
| <b>Author:</b> Alvaro Montenegro   | <b>Supervisor:</b> Prof. Othman ALI                             |
| <b>Acceptance Date:</b> 12.2.2021  | <b>No.of pages:</b> 8 (pre text) + 79 (thesis)<br>41 (appendix) |
| <b>Department:</b> Middle Eastern Studies  |   |
| <p>Even if the origins of Bolivia and Turkey diplomatic relations can be traced to the 1950's major advances took place just in the last few years. In 2018 Turkey opened its Embassy in La Paz and one year later Bolivia's President Evo Morales visited Ankara and met with President Erdogan. It was the first time in the history of both countries that a meeting at the presidential level took place.</p> <p>The objective of the thesis is to analyze the development of this relation within the broader picture of Bolivia's foreign policy towards the Middle East and Turkey's foreign policy towards Latin America. More specifically, the thesis will examine Bolivia and Turkey own national role conceptions, their role in each other regions, their role expectations (perceptions) and enacted roles towards each other.</p> <p>In order to do that, apart from the bibliographic consultation –which is scarce-, interviews were made to the main diplomatic representatives involved in the development of the relation. Also, as a way of measuring the perceptions Bolivia has about Turkey and vice versa, questionnaires were handled to young people in both countries. Finally, speeches of Bolivia's President Morales and Turkey's President Ergdoan about the subject were analyzed.</p> <p>The research found which enacted roles by Bolivia and Turkey is compatible/incompatible and how the enactment of more specific roles, from the part of Bolivia, can be beneficial for the relation. Also perceptions/misperceptions about both countries were identified. Finally, suggestions were given about how Bolivia's foreign policy towards the Middle East in general and Turkey in specific can improve. In the case of the bilateral relation with Turkey, opportunities in the areas of trade, tourism, culture, academics, connectivity and solutions for the drug trafficking problem were identified.</p> |   |
| <b>Keywords:</b> Bolivia-Turkey relations, foreign policy, Bolivia in the Middle East, Turkey in Latin American, role theory   |   |

**Sakarya Üniversitesi, Ortadoğu Enstitüsü Yüksek Lisans /Doktora Tez Özeti**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Tezin Başlığı:</b> Bolivya-Türkiye İlişkilerinin Rol Teorisi Analiz: Bolivya'nın Orta doğu Politikası ve Türkiye'nin Latin Amerika Politikası Bağlamında.   |  |
| <b>Tezin Yazarı:</b> Alvaro Montenegro   | <b>Danışman:</b> Prof. Dr. Othman ALI                            |
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| <b>Anabilim Dalı:</b> Ortadoğu Çalışmaları   |  |
| <p>Bolivya ve Türkiye arasındaki diplomatik ilişkilerin kökenleri 1950'lere dayanır, ancak son yıllarda bu konuda önemli gelişmeler yaşanmıştır. Türkiye 2018 yılında La Paz'da Büyükelçilik açmıştır. Bir yıl sonra Bolivya Cumhurbaşkanı Evo Morales Ankara'yı ziyaret edip Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan ile görüşmüştür. Böylece her iki ülkenin de tarihinde başkanlık düzeyindeki bir toplantı ilk kez gerçekleşmiş oldu.</p> <p>Tezin amacı, bu ilişki gelişimini Bolivya'nın Ortadoğu dış politikası ve Türkiye'nin Latin Amerika dış politikasını hesaba katarak daha geniş bir çerçevede analiz etmektir. Daha spesifik olmak gerekirse bu tez, Bolivya'nın ve Türkiye'nin kendi milli rol algılarını, birbirlerinin bölgelerindeki rol ve rol beklentilerini ve birbirlerine karşı oynadıkları rolleri incelemektir.</p> <p>Bu tezin yazılımı için -az sayıda olan- bibliyografik kaynakların incelenmesinin yanı sıra ve bahsi geçen ilişkilerin gelişiminde rolü olan diplomatik temsilcilerle görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Ayrıca, ülkelerin vatandaşlarının karşılıklı olarak birbirleri hakkındaki algılarının ölçülmesi için iki ülkede de genç vatandaşlar ile anketler düzenlenmiştir. Son olarak, Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan ve Başkan Morales'in ilgili konuşmaları incelenmiştir.</p> <p>Araştırma sonucunda Bolivya ve Türkiye arasında üstlenilen rollerden karşılıklı uyum//uyumsuzluk içerisinde olanlar ve Bolivya açısından bu ilişki için üstlenilmesi faydalı olunabilecek daha spesifik roller ortaya konmuştur. Ayrıca, karşı tarafların birbiri hakkındaki doğru ve yanlış algıları belirlenmiştir. Son olarak, turizm, ticaret, uyuşturucu madde kaçakçılığı, kültür ve akademi alanlarında özel öneriler dahil olmak üzere Bolivya'nın Ortadoğu dış politikasını Türkiye ile karşılıklı ilişkiler esasında nasıl geliştirebileceğine dair öneriler sunulmuştur.</p> |  |
| <b>Anhatar Kelimeler:</b> Bolivya Türkiye İlişkileri, dış politika, Bolivya'nın Orta doğu Dış Politikası, Türkiye'nin Latin Amerika Dış Politikası, Rol Teorisi  |  |

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## INTRODUCTION

On April 7<sup>th</sup> 2019 Bolivia's President Evo Morales arrived at Ankara in order to meet with Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. It was the first time in history that a Bolivian President made visited Turkey. Morales gave a speech at Ankara University and joked about being called the "Andean Bin Laden" and its coca grower's supporters the Taliban by former US Ambassador. Morales also hold a private meeting with Erdogan at the "*Külliyesi*" (Turkish Presidential Complex) and gave a press conference where he highlighted both countries common ground: "we (Bolivia and Turkey) have enormous coincidences ideologically, pragmatically and fundamentally in the topic of integration"<sup>1</sup>. It seemed that Bolivia and Turkey relations where on the rise. On 14th February of 2018, one year before Morales visit, Turkey opened its Embassy in Bolivia.

The establishment of the bilateral relations was not something new. The origins can be traced to the 1950`s. In fact, in 2020 the newly open Turkish Embassy in La Paz organized an event commemorating the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the relation. Then, the question arises: why it took more than half a century to reach the point of 2019?

In other to provide a comprehensive answer, the relation needs to be analyzed within the broader picture of Bolivia's foreign policy towards the Middle East –of which Turkey is part- and Turkey's foreign policy towards Latin America –of which Bolivia is part. Turkey's aspirations to become a global power became evident in the last two decades. After China, USA, France, Japan and Russia, Turkey is the sixth country that has most diplomatic representations in the world with a total of 235 posts. As it is going to be seen in more detail, the consolidation of relations with Bolivia was just a natural outcome of Turkey's foreign policy in Latin America. In fact Bolivia, along with Uruguay, is the two only countries in South America which President Recep Tayyip Erdogan did not pay an official visit to<sup>2</sup>. For its part, Bolivia's rise as an international actor who took a "global leadership role" by promoting global reform and its involvement the Middle East following anti-imperialist and revolutionary guidelines, also contributed to the consolidation of relations with Turkey. Before the Morale's government (2006) Bolivia did not had clear positions about events in the Middle East such as the 2003 Iraq invasion or the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. However, after a couple of years, Bolivia's strategic alliance with Iran, condemnation of the Libyan Military intervention, backing of the Assad government, open support for Palestine and sometimes unmeasured antagonism towards Israel, helped the country to gain recognition in that region and even being considered as a member of the "Axis of Evil".

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<sup>1</sup> Evo Morales, "Bolivian and Turkey Presidents Joint Press Conference", Ankara: April 2018.

<sup>2</sup> Excluding Guyana and Surinam

## **Objective of the Study and hypothesis**

The main objective of the research is to use role theory in order to analyze Bolivia and Turkey relations within the broader context of Bolivia`s foreign policy towards the Middle East and Turkey`s foreign policy towards Latin America. More specifically, the thesis will look at 1) Bolivia and Turkey national role conceptions, 2) their roles in each other`s broader regions (Bolivia role in the Middle East and Turkey role in Latin America) and 3) their enacted roles and perceptions towards each other (Bolivia-Turkish relations). All that will be done with the aim of finding out 1) if Bolivia and Turkey roles of compatible/incompatible, 2) what misperceptions are held between the two countries and how they can be corrected, 3) how Bolivia can have more effective relations with the Middle East and 4) how Bolivia can have more effective relations with Turkey.

The hypothesis proposed to the question of why recently, and not before, Bolivia and Turkey relations experienced an apparent sudden “boom” in its development is the following: the compatibility of Bolivia and Turkey national role conceptions and enacted roles in each other regions under presidents Evo Morales and Recep Tayip Erdogan made really attractive and beneficial for both countries to consolidate and improve their already more than half century established stagnant relations.

## **Importance of the study**

The research is important for three reasons:

First, it fills the gap in the academic literature about Turkey-Bolivia relations. As the literature review revealed, until the date the topic has not been extensively explored. Even more, because the language of the thesis is English -and not Spanish or Turkish- the investigation is considered to be the first of its kind and as such will serve as the ground work for posterior more specific studies. Also, since the thesis is English, it is more easily accessible to Bolivians and Turkish citizens alike, if not the whole world.

Second, in the actual context where Bolivia-Turkey relations appear to be flourishing and gaining momentum, it is necessary now more than ever to have information about how the relation developed and how it can be framed in the future for achieving the best possible outcome. In this sense, the thesis contributes to the building of a suitable Bolivian foreign policy not only towards Turkey but to the Middle East and vice versa. According to Bolivia`s honorary consul in Istanbul, Stefan Milkovic, one the biggest limits/problems in the Bolivia-Turkey relations is that “we (Bolivia) did not have a strategic plan (...) where are we going to focus? (...) I see that there is a lot to improve. A lot can be done”<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Stefan Milkovic, Personal Interview, Istanbul: August 2018

Third, as Funk (2016) notes, within the discipline of international relations, of which foreign policy analysis is part, there is a “marginalization” of South to South relations. In this sense, a study that focuses on the connection between two countries outside the western world is of great importance. On the same note, Donelli and Gonzales (2018) point out that the “literature about the Turkish strategic orientation has ignored its southern dimension. Indeed, a review of the key textbooks about the central events of the Turkish foreign policy shows that the ‘Third World’ or the ‘Global South’ is almost absent” (:56). The rediscovering of forgotten histories, in this case Bolivia-Turkey relations- help to the construction of new imaginaries which can invigorate the Global South.

### **Research methodology**

The research uses interviews, questionnaires, speech content analysis and participant observation as data recollection tools.

Regarding interviews, three diplomatic representatives of Bolivia (Honorary Consul Marko Mikovic, Ambassador in Iran Romina Perez Ramos and Ambassador in Russia Hugo Villarroel) and three diplomatic representatives of Turkey (Honorary Consul Àlvaro Balcazar, Honorary Consul Jaime Buroga, Ambassador in Bolivia Serap Ozcoskun) were interviewed personally or by video calls. Questions were asked about development of Bolivia`s relation with Turkey along with suggestions about how the relation can improve. The testimonies of these diplomats are considered as primary-first hand sources because of the key role they played in the development of Bolivian Turkish relations. The complete translated transcripts these interviews can be found in annexes 7 and 8 respectively.

Regarding questionnaires, fifteen questions about Bolivia`s perception of Turkey and Turkey`s perception of Bolivia were handled to a total of forty young people between the ages of twenty and thirty in both countries. These questionnaires were made with the aim of “measuring” the image Bolivian citizens have about Turkey and vice versa. Subjects were selected randomly and questioned in person. Young population samples were chosen in order to narrow and focus the efforts to measure role perceptions. The complete list of questions asked can be found in annex 9.

Regarding speech content analysis, President Morales`s words at Ankara University and his joint press conference with President Erdogan at the Turkish Presidential Complex were subject to analysis. A complete translated transcript Morales speech at Ankara and press conference with Erdogan can be seen in annexes 6 and 10 respectively. Also, previous speeches by Morales in connection with the Middle East such as the breaking of diplomatic ties with Israel or his participation in the IX Investors Meeting in Dubai were taken into account. Complete translated transcripts of Morales breaking ties with Israel speech and Dubai Investment Forum participation can be seen in annexes 3 and 4 respectively.

Finally, regarding participant observation, the author had the opportunity to actively participate as translator during the official visit of Bolivia's President Morales to Turkey in April of 2019. In such context, the author was able to observe and experience directly some of the meetings and get familiarized with the diplomatic representatives of both countries, which later proved useful for gaining a personal insight of the world of diplomacy in general and the development of Bolivian and Turkish bilateral relations in particular.

### **Scope of the research**

The present research studies Bolivia-Turkey relations since its origins back to 1950's to the most recent time (2019). However, since not much information could be found about the early period and since the relation did not experiment major developments until last couple of years, naturally more emphasis is made on the period of the governments of Evo Morales in Bolivia (2006-2019) and Erdogan in Turkey (2002-2019). Also, as stated above, suggestion will be elaborated with the hope of being applied in the foreseeable future.

### **Literature Review (State of the art)**

No major written works in English, Spanish or Turkish have been found on the topic of Bolivia Turkey relations, even less one that uses role theory as an analytical framework. The chapter nine of the book "*Dünya Siyasetinde Latin Amerika*" (Latin America in World Politics) (Ed. Ismail Ermağan 2017), is somewhat dedicated to Bolivia's main characteristics, history and foreign policy. The author of the chapter, Professor Mehmet Osman Çati from Muğla University, makes a summary the relations of Bolivia with its main neighbors in the Latin American continent but also with USA, Europe and Turkey. Nonetheless, the subheading "*Bolivya Türkiye İlişkileri*", is just one page long.

According to the "Thesis Center" (YOK) of the Turkish Higher Education council there are only eight investigations (all of them master thesis) that deal with Bolivia in some way<sup>4</sup>. Of those only three are in English. The majority of these thesis study Bolivia along with other Latin America country in a comparative way. Examples of that are: "*Politics of ethnic classification: a comparative analysis of census in Bolivia and Peru*" (Kocabas. 2020), or "*Presidential system in United States of America and Latin American applications of presidential systems: Mexico, Venezuela and Bolivia*" (Helvacioğlu.2018). Among these investigations there is only one about Turkey and Bolivia: "*Fuzzy associations rules for innovation collaboration factors of smes in developing countries: a comparison of Bolivya and Turkey*" (Quinteros. 2014). This work, as an industrial engineering study, focuses in comparing medium and small

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<sup>4</sup> Thesis Center. Council of Higher Education. Retrieved from: <https://tez.yok.gov.tr/UlusalTezMerkezi/tezSorguSonucYeni.jsp>

enterprises in Bolivia and Turkey, without touching the development of both countries bilateral political, historical and economic relations.

In general, the subject of Latin American-Middle Eastern relations, of which Bolivia-Turkey relations forms part, has not been studied in depth. According to Tawil (2016), author of *“Latin American Foreign Policies Towards the Middle East”*, there are only two books -in the English language- that deal with the topic of Latin American-Middle East relations: *“The Arab World and Latin America Economic and Political Relations in the Twenty-First Century”* (Saddy, 2016) and *“Latin America and the Middle East”* (Brun and Khatlab ed, 2012). In the same way Funk (2016) states that the literature about Latin America, although is growing, is still quite small. He divides the bibliography in two groups: immigration and diaspora (from the Middle East to Latin America<sup>5</sup>) and foreign policy and commercial relations. The present work is part of the second group.

### **Sections organization**

The thesis consists of three chapters: theoretical framework, Bolivia`s role analysis and Turkey`s role analysis. In the first chapter role theory is examined in detailed in order to be applied later to the particular cases of Bolivia and Turkey. Role theory dramaturgical origins and firsts applications in psychology and sociology are first considered. With that information as a background, role theory in foreign policy analysis is properly exanimated. Also, special attention is given to clearly lay down the differences between the concept of identity in international relations constructivism and the concept of role in foreign policy analysis. Finally, role theory`s main derivate concepts to be used in the research –those of national role conception, role expectations and role compatibility/conflict- are more extensively explained. In the second chapter, role theory is properly applied to the specific case of Bolivia: Bolivia`s national role conception, role in the Middle East, engagement and role expectations towards Turkey are discussed. In the third chapter the same mechanism is applied but this time to the case of Turkey: Turkey`s national role conception, role in Latin America, engagement and role expectations towards Bolivia are analyzed. In the conclusions part, with all the information gathered in the previous chapters, potential role compatibility/conflict and perceptions/miss perceptions between Bolivia and Turkey is inferred. Lastly, suggestions for a better Bolivia`s relation with Turkey in specific and the Middle East in general are given.

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<sup>5</sup> The opposite migration; from Latin America to the Middle East is minimum and thus not take in to account. Nowadays Dubai consists as a favorite destination for many Latin American immigrants.

## CHAPTER 1: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The objective of this chapter is to lay down the basics of role theory in order to delineate how it will be applied to the analysis of Bolivia-Turkey relations. First, role theory within foreign policy analysis will be discussed. Since the line between foreign policy analysis and the broader international relations is sometimes blurry, foreign policy main characteristics will be presented along with the differences between the idea of role in foreign policy analysis and the one of identity in international relations constructivist. Also, in this section the main applications of the concept of role to the study of foreign policy will be reviewed. Second, from all role theory derived concepts attention will be shifted to only three of them: national role conception, role expectations and role conflict/compatibility. Since these are the most important role theory derived concepts and of which most of the literature writes about, they will constitute the main analytical tools from which Bolivia-Turkey relations will be analyzed.

### 1.1. ROLE THEORY IN FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS

It was in the areas of sociology and psychology that the idea of “role”, originally founded in drama, was first “transplanted” during the 1930`s and used to analyzed other problems outside the theatrical sphere (Guzelderde, 2017). Fifty years after the use of role also made its appearance in the area of international relations. Much of the advances made in psychology and sociology later were also applied in foreign policy analysis. Instead of talking about individuals having roles, like it always has been done, now the concept was being applied to states. States could also “perform” roles. Even today, some famous foreign policy analysis role theorists are classified within “the broad intellectual umbrella of social constructivism” (Marijke, 2011:16) or within the “trans disciplinary of social and political psychology” (Walker, 2011:5).

However, a valid question remains: are states people too? And, why foreign policy analysis, and no other of the three main international relations theories -realism, liberalism, constructivism- adopted role theory? In order to answer those questions, first it is necessary to have a basic understanding of the foreign policy analysis (FPA) field.

**1.1.1. Foreign Policy Analysis Key Concepts:** Foreign policy analysis is as a subfield of the broader international relations (IR) within the Political Science realm. FPA origins can be traced to the late 1950's and early 60's<sup>6</sup>. FPA can be defined as:

“A subfield of International Relations that seek to explain foreign policy behavior with reference to the theoretical ground of human decision making (let it be individual or in groups)” (Hudson. 2012:14).

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<sup>6</sup> According to Hudson (2012) three paradigmatic works contributed to the consolidation of FPA: 1) Synder (1963) “*Decision Making as an Approach to the Study of International Politics*” 2) Rosenau (1966) “*Pre Theories and theories of Foreign Policy Analysis*” and 3) Sprouts “*Man Milieu Relationship in the Context of International Politics*”(1956).



Three are the main characteristics of FPA which distinguish from main IR theories: a) it focuses on human agency, b) is process oriented and c) it works with systems of analysis.

**a) Human agency focus:** This emphasis on the human decision-making aspect is one of the main characteristics of FPA and is what differentiates it from other International Relations theories like liberalism, realism and constructivism, where the emphasis is made on the state.

In those traditional IR theories the state usually is treated like a homogeneous unit of analysis rather than a metaphysical abstraction. However, in FPA the attention is turned from the abstract state to the concrete human beings that conforms it. Hudson, in her seminal book *“Foreign Policy Analysis: Classic and Contemporary Theory”*(2014) writes:

“The perspective of FPA is that the source of all international politics and all change in international politics is specific human beings using their agency and acting individually or in groups”(7).

What Hudson is calling for is “almost an anthropology of IR” where the real leaders behind the illusory states are the main agents to analyze.

But exactly what about those leaders is important to FPA: their physical appearance, their past or their connections?

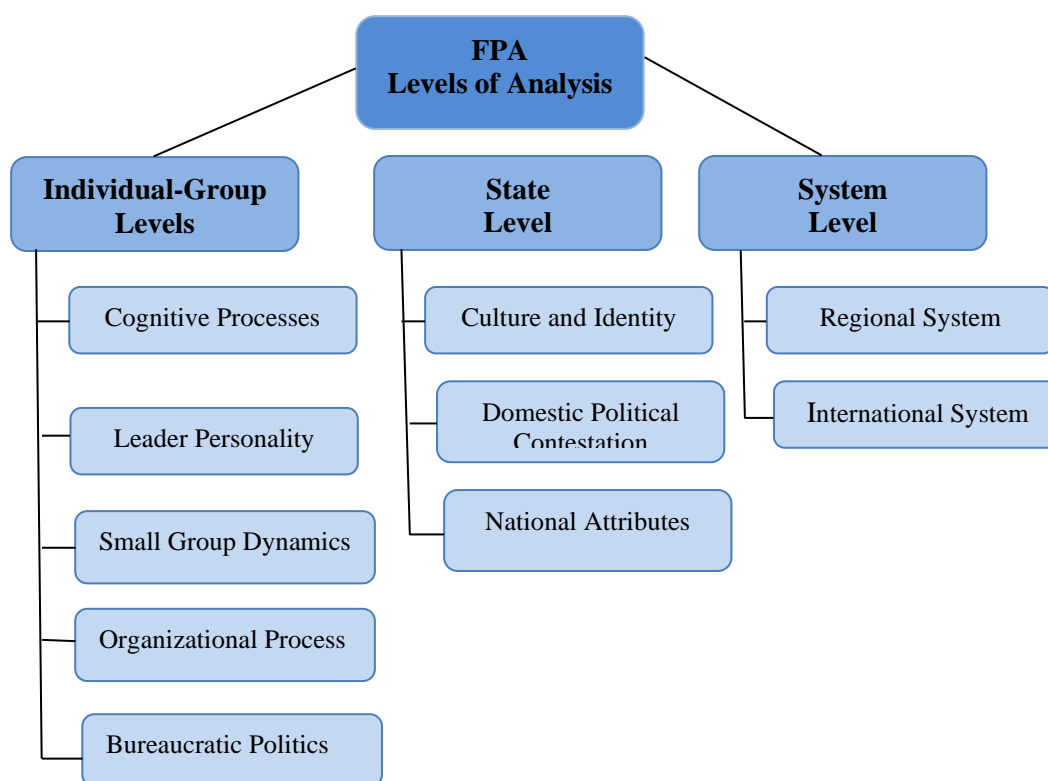
Usually, the main object of study in FPA is what Walker (2011:12) calls the “world of beliefs”, or the “world in the mind of the actors”: the leader’s cognitive systems and personal motivations. The objective is to understand how and why a country (meaning a small group of individuals) took a certain foreign policy decision.

**b) Process Oriented:** This is another characteristic of FPA: it focuses on the process. Instead of evaluating as good or bad a certain foreign policy decision based on outcomes, FPA “judge decisions based on how they were made” (Breuning, 2007:4).

Under what circumstances decisions were made? What other factors, apart from the leaders “world of beliefs” influenced in the decision?

Leaders do not act in an empty vacuum. The decision that emanate from their world of beliefs is constrained by the environment itself, or, what Walker (2011:12) terms as “*the world of events*” (which in turn defines what's possible and what's no).

**c) Systems of Analysis:** FPA addresses this connection between the “world of beliefs” and “world of events” trough level of analysis. Breuning (2007:12) divides FPA levels of analysis in three (individual, state and systemic) which can be seen with more detailed in the following figure:



**Figure:** Foreign Policy Levels of Analysis

Each of these levels has its own “sub-levels”. And each sub-level has its own particular theories and preferred methodologies. For example, in order to analyze the perceptions and personality of the leader’s two distance methodologies are used: the psychobiography and content analysis<sup>7</sup> (Hudson, 2014:58). Walker (2012: 44) also mentions a similar, but more particular approach to measure the individual “world of beliefs”: microscopic content analysis and belief inventories of leaders. Another methodology to approach leaders is the “operational code”.

Now, to which level and sub-level does role theory in foreign policy analysis situate itself? Hudson (2014:130) places role theory inside the state level, within the “*culture and identity*” subfield. This classification may cause confusion. Is role theory in FPA is the same as the concept of identity in international relations constructivism?

**1.1.2. ¿Role or Identity? Role Theory in Foreign Policy Analysis and Identity in International Relations Constructivism:** Is the concept of identity in international relations constructivism the same as the concept of role in foreign policy analysis? Both are so similar and often indiscriminately interchanged in the work of most researchers that it may appear they mean the same thing. In a sense, the idea of a nation performing

<sup>7</sup> Which in turn divides itself into thematic content analysis and quantitative or “word count” content analysis. (Hudson, 2014:62).

a certain “role” in the international arena it is deeply linked with national identity or collective identity<sup>8</sup>.

When comparing role conceptions and identity Harnish (2012) states that role conceptions are in fact part of what famous social constructivist Alexander Wendt (1999) called “the social identity of an actor and the actions and perceptions of others (:8). Other constructivist ideas such as self-image, culture, collective-psyche and, of course, identity also “share a close kinship with the literature on national role conceptions” (Breunning, 2011 :22). Nonetheless role conceptions and identity are not the same.

As Hudson notes (2014:11), Wendt constructivist theory, as an international relations theory, focuses on the state and level system of analysis, while role theory, as a foreign policy analysis approach, do not only works with the state and system levels of analysis but it also includes the individual level of analysis (human agents). Hudson (2014:12) go as far as claiming that Wendt “has no adequate conceptualization of agency at all” and argues that “it isn’t ideas all the way down; its humans agents all the way down”. Thies (2007) also calls out on Wendt, and points out those constructivists have not acknowledged its intellectual debt to Role theorists<sup>9</sup>.

Now, all this confusion between role theory and constructivism does not mean that the two theories could not benefit from each other. A mutual relation -for Role Theory to remain relevant- it is not only preferable, but necessary:

“If role theory is to continue to thrive in foreign policy analysis, then it will likely be as a result of its greater integration with international relations theory.” (Thies, 2007:24).

Role theory reconciles IR with FPA. It establishes a bridge between state identity and foreign policy (Tobler, 2013). One of the problems of FPA is the lack of a “multilevel theory” that unifies all three levels of analysis. Role theory and its ability to cross levels of analysis can address this FPA deficiency. For Le Preste (1997:21) the concept of role acts as an interface in which individual, society and system meet and interact, helping to amend FPA`s lack of tool which unites all levels of analysis.

Having explained the main characteristics of foreign policy analysis as an academic discipline and tackled the issue of identity and role now it is appropriate to address properly role theory in foreign policy analysis

**1.1.3. Key Role Concepts in Foreign Policy Analysis:** As stated before, the ideas of “stage”, “setting” or “scenario” much used in drama, can be also applied to Role Theory

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<sup>8</sup> Collective identity is the notion a social group develops about themselves. It addresses the question “*Who we are?*” Like roles, collectives’ identities work on an “ideal-self”; how we think and wish we were, and, also like roles collective identities are dynamic and not monolithic. (Berlain,1996:13)

<sup>9</sup> Thies (2007) writes: “Even Wendt, briefly, (someone would say barely) acknowledges the work of Holsti” (:22)

in Foreign Policy Analysis the same way they have been applied to the individual and its interactions with others in psychology and sociology. It is assumed that states also engage in “dramatic experiences”.

The use of the role concept in FPA became popular in the 70’s with Holsti famous paper “*National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy*” (1970). Since then many other scholars use the role concept as an analogy to understand and classify each particular role states “enact” in the international stage. According to Holsti (1970:239) national role conceptions (NCR) are “the ego’s own conception of his position and functions, and the behavior appropriate to them”. Breuning (2011:23) definition is similar a quite simpler: “The ideas about the scope of foreign policy behavior that is appropriate for the state”.

A more detailed account of NRC will be explored in the next subheading. Here an overview of the most common role applications in foreign policy analysis will be seen. These are: a) role sets, b) role performance/enactment, c) role expectations, d) role conflict/compatibility, e) role continuity/change, f) role congruence, g) role adaptation and h) role making/learning.

**a) Role sets:** Until Holsti, as he remarks, most of the works assumed that states could only play one role (Holsti, 1970:254). However, as the role theory in foreign policy analysis literature became richer it was evident that states usually could perform more than one role. Even more, depending on the particular situation a specific role can be “activated” (Thies, 2009). Questions remain: The more roles a state can perform the better? Or limited roles imply a better performance?

**i) Role location:** Closely related to national role conception and role sets is the idea of role location. Which is the most appropriate role (and thus behavior) for a particular situation, region, thematic? For example does Turkey enacts the same or diferents role in the Middle East and in the Latin America? Why? For Tobler (2013:38) the concept of role location is key to understand why a country adopts certain foreign policies

**b) Role performance/enactment:** Actual foreign policy behavior. Decisions and actions. Behavior of an actor when performing a role.

**c) Role expectations:** National role conceptions emerge as an interaction between the self-conception of the nation and the perceptions of other countries. In this sense, the consolidation of a country role in the international arena does not only comes from that country own self-perception but also depends on other nations recognition of that role<sup>10</sup>. For example, Turkey may have all the necessary material conditions to play the role of a global player but it also necessary needs other actors’ approval. As Mišík (2013) writes:

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<sup>10</sup> Harnish (2012:8) divides roles expectations in 1) domestic expectations (what the appropriate role is and what implies) and 2) alter expectations (implicit or explicit demands by others)

“States that want to become leaders have to be perceived in this way also by other states; it is not enough that they perceive themselves so” (:458).

Then, it all boils down to two questions: 1) do others accept/reject the role a country is trying to enact, and 2) do a country accepts to play the role others are trying to ascribe?

**d) Role compatibility/conflict:** As there are roles that can co-exist and even naturally cooperate with each other there are also roles that are antagonistic also by nature. Within the category of role conflict/compatibility there is also role ambiguity, role misinterpretation, role discontinuity, role overload or role conflict resolution. (Bliddle, 1986).

**e) Role continuity/ role change:** Roles are constantly changing. As Harnish (2011) remarks: “Foreign policy roles are constantly being reconstructed hence recreated and thus often also subtly modified through the words and (inter)actions of many individuals” (:2). However, when a country experiences an abrupt role change -which can be product of a coup, war, economic crisis or other traumatic national experience- the role it used internalized and performs changes completely and really fast. In such scenario, as Hudson (1999) notes, not only role ambiguity may arise but also “there may be chaos” (:771).

**f) Role congruence:** The correspondence between *national role conceptions* and *role performance/enactment*. Is there a close similarly connection between the projected NRC and the actual bilateral Foreign Policy behavior? The enacted role actually corresponds to the material actions?

**g) Role adaptation:** Changing the strategy or style when performing a role depending of the desired outcome.

**h) Role making, role learning:** The process of constructing a role. The question remains: are roles “assigned” by others or “made/learned” by the performer?

For the purpose of this thesis, from all those concepts, only three would be applied to the analysis of Bolivia-Turkey relations: national role conceptions, role perceptions and role conflict/compatibility.

## 1.2. OPERATIONALIZATION

As stated in the introduction, the general objective of the thesis is to analyze the development of Bolivia-Turkey relations using role theory as a theoretical framework. As just seen above, role theory in foreign policy analysis has many derivate concepts than can be used. Nonetheless, this study would only focus on three: 1) national role conception, 2) role expectations and 3) role conflict/cooperation.

**1.2.1. National Role Conception (NCR):** There is no universal and homogeneous definition of national role conception. However, most of the literary work on the subject

takes Holsti (1970) paradigmatic paper “*Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy*” as the starting point. Holsti defines national role conception as the “policymaker’s<sup>11</sup> (...) *image* of the appropriate orientations or functions of their state toward, or in, the external environment.” (1970:246) (own italics). For its part Shih (1988) understands NCR as a “national self-image (...) an *image* states hold about what ought to be” (:602). This national self-image presupposes a world view, a set of goals and a determined foreign policy behavior. Wish (1980:532) definition it's simpler. She refers NRC as the “foreign policy maker’s *perception* of their nation position in the international system” (own italics). Finally, Harnish (2012:8) gives a little bit more elaborate definition. For him role conception entails two parts: the ego part of the role (actors own perception in relation to others) and alter part of the role (perception of others).

The national role conception of a country determines its foreign policy. If a countries NRC change also its foreign policy will change. From example Krotz (2002), in his work comparing German and French NRC, argues that the differences between those two countries foreign policies “stem from fundamentally from divergent domestically shared views on the role and purposes of their states in the world” (:4). Divergence in the foreign policies from two apparent similar states can be explained by looking at each state national role conceptions.

How NRC are conformed? Why do nations adopt some roles and others not? From where do NRC emanate?

There is a large list of factors which influence the conformation of a determined NRC. For example, Pilch (2012:14) includes: “location, geography, abundance or not of natural, economic, technical and cultural resources, traditions, history, religion, ideology and even personality of their rulers”. Hudson (2012) terms the material characteristics of nation, such as the geography, resources, demographics, economy and political system, as “*national attributes*”<sup>12</sup>. For Hudson national attributes are important sources for the conformation of NRC, nonetheless, the real origin comes from “*deep cultural roots*” and NRC are shaped by “profound historical forces” (:10). Indeed, when talking about the formation of national image, Boulding also (1959) refers it as essentially cultural-historical phenomena. “The image is essentially a mass image, or what might be called a folk image, transmitted through the family and the intimate face-to-face group” (:122)

Now, as Shih (1998) points out it is unlikely that a nation holds a total agreement regarding what the proper role of the state in the world should be. There will be some

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<sup>11</sup> It is important to note that Holsti refers to the *policy maker's* conceptions of the role instead of talking about the conceptions the state -as an abstract concept- has of itself in the international context. This definition goes in line with the core of FPA which, as it has been seen in the 2.3.1 subheading focuses on the real human beings behind the abstract state.

<sup>12</sup> Can any state play any role? There is a deterministic view which claims national attributes constrain which roles states can play.

groups pushing for change, let it be a complete or partial. Others may resist the national role conception policy makers decided to adopt. Nonetheless, as Krotz (2002) notes, NRC are fairly constant through history. Radical change in NRC are rare and happen in extreme contexts like wars or revolutions.

National role conceptions are classified by their type, as in sociology role theory, each actor enacts a determined role, with a determined script and a determined set of behaviors (or “action templates” as Hudson (2012) would call them). In this sense, states NRC can be characterize as “good neighbor”, “mediator”, “defender of faith”, etc. Many authors have proposed different NRC types, with Holsti’s typology being the most popular and used nowadays. A non-exhaustive national role conceptions typology can be seen in the following table:

**Table 1**  
**National Role Cocenptions Typology**

| Author           | Proposed types  |
|------------------|---|
| Breuning (2011)  | Good neighbor, social engineer, merchant, power broker  |
| Gurzel (2014)    | Natural leader, big brother, protector of minorities, mediator, facilitator   |
| Holsti (1970)    | Bastion of revolution-liberator, regional leader, regional protector, active independent, liberation supporter, anti-imperialist agent, defender of the faith, mediator-integrator, regional subsystem collaborator, developer, bridge, faithful ally, independent, example, internal developer, isolate, protectee <sup>13</sup> |
| Le Preste (1977) | Tribune, guardian, catalyst, stabilizer   |
| Krotz (2002)     | Civilian power, residual world power  |
| Wehner (2015)    | security provider, leader, mediator, coordination   |

Source: Own

Now, there are other ways a nation role in the international stage can be characterized. Countries are usually labelled as great, small or medium powers. Those adjectives are not describing those countries NRC, but their *status*.

**a) Status:** The idea of status in international relations is closely related with national role conceptions. The word status derives from Latin and literally means “standing”. Status is considered a sub-category of state identity politics and understood as “an

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<sup>13</sup> Holsti also lists ancient “types” of roles: those of accommodation, hostility, indifference, attack, protection and double policy. However, these are not classified as NRC

actor’s position in a social hierarchy and consequently what rights, respect, and patterns of deference from others they should expect” (Dafoe et al, 2014). As the quote implies, status is social and has an effect on others behavior. Individuals, groups and nations seek status; they try to improve one position in their respective social systems. Status is an end in itself and determines a nations place in the political map of the globe (Neumann and De Carvalho, 2015).

A non-exhaustive typology of countries by their status can be seen in the following table:

**Table 2**  
**Status Typology**

| Author                       | Classification   |
|------------------------------|--|
| Wehner (2015)                | Regional, secondary and small power  |
| Thies (2012)                 | Emerging states, minor members, major members, great powers  |
| Neumann & De Carvalho (2015) | Great powers, emerging and rising powers, passive or oppositional small states, order-committed small states |

Source: Own.

For example, the URRS would be classified as a superpower, the UN Security Council Members as great powers, Turkey or Indonesia as regional-emerging-new middle powers, Colombia and Poland as middle range powers and Portugal or Bolivia as small states.

**1.2.2. Role Expectations:** NRC conceptions (ego) are not only conformed by the influence of internal or inherent factors such as the geography and the heroic history of a nation, but also external elements such as the perceptions of other nations. As Wehner (2015:3) affirms “roles are constituted in an interactional way (...) Role conception involves the ego own perception of its social position vis-à-vis the alter position and expectation”. Self-perception does not come only from the inside but also is attributed by others. For Wehner (2015) role expectations consist of “the expectations that the Other (Alter) ascribes and expects the Self (Ego) to enact” (:2). Thus, if NRC are understood as the “self” part, then role expectations conform the “alter” part.

These expectations about how the *other* will react are understood by Hudson (1999) as “*action templates*”. Actions templates, are “generalized expectations about how a nation (through its leaders) will react in certain foreign policy situations” (:770). For Hudson each nation has “off-the-shelf strategies of action” which can be used in a given international situation. In many cases people of other nations can identify these action templates, and predict how the other will react<sup>14</sup>. Even if peoples from two distant

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<sup>14</sup> For Hudson (1999) this predictability is “one of the fundamental grounds of peaceful international interaction” (:782)



nations (such as Bolivia and Turkey) may never been in each other's territory country nor have ever meet personally, more usual than not, appropriated or distorted, they always have an *image* of the other

**a) Image theory:** As a foreign policy analysis approach image theory emerged during the 1950's and was particularly popular during the Cold War period, where "both sides (USA and the USSR) had insufficient information about the other's interactions and therefore created *images* that substituted actual knowledge" (Mišík, 2013:446) (own italics).

Together with role theory, image theory also serves as an analytical tool for the study of perception in international relations and foreign policy analysis. However role theory and image are not the same. What's the difference between the two?

As Mišík (2013:447) remarks, while role theory deals mainly with the perception of the self (decision makers perception of their own states) image theory deals mainly with the perception of the slter (decision makers perception of other states). In other words, image theory addresses the same question role expectations do: how the other sees the self? In this sense, image theory can contribute a lot to the study of role expectations.

For image theory, and role expectations for that matter, it is the subjective image of the other, and not the "objective reality", what guides behavior: "it is one nation's image of the hostility of another, not the real hostility, which determines its reaction" (Boulding, 1959:120). That is why it is of vital importance for policy makers to understand the image others have about their own state. Boulding (1959) goes further and state that not only the image of other is a distorted truth, but also the national self-image it's a lie. "The national history is emphasized and exalted; the history if the rest of the world is neglected or even falsified to the glory of the national image" (:122).

Also it is possible to try to control impression (role perceptions) other countries have. There are many different motives for trying to doing so. Before an encounter (in this case an engagement with other country) it is needed to have a clear idea of what role the other is enacting in order to act correspondingly. The first encounter will frame the relation in the future. Once the relation develops based on that starting point settled at the beginning, as time passes it becomes more difficult to change the frame: "the initial definition of the situation projected by an individual (or country) tends to provide a plan for the cooperative activity that follows" (Goffman, 1956:9).

Images towards another nation (as well as national self-images) may be divided it to: elite and non-elite images. The first group is formed by the key decision makers who make the important decisions while the second group represents the ordinary people who has little government decision making power. Elite and non-elite images towards another country may be different as also shared. The difference lies in the fact that the elite, with help of the organized state apparatus, can impose images. Non-elite images

can also be divided into: students, journalist, academics, woman/men, jobless and elite images into: businessman, decision makers, or hegemonic media outlets.

Now, how one state forms an image of another? The image they have corresponds just perceptions of cooperation & conflict?

Herrman, Voss, Schooler & Ciarrochi (1997:409) argue that images can arise depending on how the potential relationship with the *other* is perceived. As it can be seen in the next table variables as power/capability, threat/opportunity and culture have influence in image formation:

**Table 3**  
**Potential Perceived Relationships**  
**(or “central judgments that guide basic foreign policy choices”)**

| <b>Perceived Relative Power/Capability</b>                               | <b>Perceived Threat or Opportunity</b>  | <b>Perceived Culture</b>   |
|--|---|--|
| - Limits and determines the alternatives decision makers can choose from | -Motivate policy<br><br>-Other actor threatens my current status and objectives or can help me to achieve enlarge my national interest? | -Affects policy options depending on the accepted norms of conduct<br><br>-What’s the perceived cultural sophistication? More advance or backward? |

Source: Own table based on the information in Herrman,K; Voss,J; Schooler,T; Ciarrochi,J.. (1997).

According to how these potential relationships are perceived, the authors propose six ideal images of the other: 1) imperialist, 2) barbarian, 3) enemy, 4) ally, 5) generate and 6) colony.

Mišík (2013) also proposes a similar perceived relationship model. For him “an image is a result of the intersection of three dimensions of perception as follows: 1) relative power, 2) goal compatibility, and 3) cultural distance” (:447).

For its part a work of the European Union<sup>15</sup> of its image abroad “measured” their perceived international image in six various policy domains: 1) economy, 2) trade,

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<sup>15</sup> European Commission's Service for Foreign Policy Instruments, **Analysis of the Perceptions of the EU and EU Policies Abroad**, Executive Summary, 2015..

3)politics, 4)security, 5)development, 6) migration, 7) multiculturalism and 8) human groups.

Finally it is worth to note that in recent times the use of image theory as FPA approach decreased while the popularity of role theory “remains unabated” (Misik, 2013:448)

**1.2.3. Role Conflict/Compatibility:** Role conflict is defined as the “condition on incompatible roles” (Aldag, et al. 1977) but it also can be understood as “incompatibility of images” (Bouding, 1959:130). Simmel (1920), one of the exponents of role theory in sociology, wrote:

“We always feel our own individual and total life in continual tension, if no in contradiction, with the role that is set out for us on the grounds of society, religion, fate, or the technique of living” (:1920)

Something similar happens with countries. Role conflict may arise if there are two contradictory NRC in a role set or if two countries have, as stated before, antagonist roles. In other words role conflict derives from two variables: the perception of the self or “ego” and the perception of the other. Role conflict may emerge depending how the actor sees his own position and the role is enacting, and how he/she thinks the “audience” is seeing that performance (Sheehan, 1970)

Role conflict can have internal or external causes. In the first case, the political elites may have opposite views about what role the country should play in the international stage (horizontal role conflict regarding national role conception) or there may be discontent from the “masses” concerning what role the elites are trying to enact (vertical role conflict regarding national role conception). In the second case, other states may also have conflicting perceptions on what role a third country is enacting (role conflict regarding role perceptions) (Tobler, 2013:38)

The consequences of role conflict are tension, dissatisfaction and lower performance, all of which negatively affect a relation with other countries. Role ambiguity -lack of clarity about the role to perform- also may derived in role conflict. The same happens with role overload (to many roles to enact not sufficient resources). In order to avoid role conflict Aldag (1977) proposes: 1) acknowledgment of the particular functions the enacted role entails, 2) know the expectations the enacted role generate in the other (alter) and 3) faithfully follow the script (role type, functions and style) the role implies.

For its part, role compatibility can also be understood in two ways. First, within the set of roles a state is playing. In this case all the roles in the set do not conflict with one another, rather the opposite; they are in harmony and complement each other. For example the “regional power” role goes well in hand with the “mediator role”. Both can be enacted in different settings depending on the situation and help the character, in this case the state, to have more flexibility. Secondly, role compatibility can happened between two states. If the two enacted roles match, this means both parties project an

attuned definition of the situation, which, even if it does not imply automatically an agreement will be reached, a “working consensus” will be established around the mutual important issues.

## CHAPTER 2: BOLIVIA ROLE ANALYSIS

The present chapter has four objectives: first to analyze Bolivia's own national role conception (what are Bolivia's prevalent roles? do the actual roles were the same as the old ones? how did they change?), second to understand Bolivia's more specific role in the Middle East (what roles do Bolivia's enacts in the Middle East? what are the major foreign policy principles that guide it's behavior in the region? is Bolivia politically and economically heavily involved in the Middle east or not?), third to evaluate Bolivia's engagement with Turkey (how did the diplomatic relations with Turkey developed? what where the inflexion points and the most common barriers, problems? what roles do Bolivia enacts with Turkey?) and fourth to examine Bolivia's role expectations towards Turkey (what image Bolivians have about Turkey? is this perception negative or positive, misleading or accurate? What can be done in order to project a more appropriate perception?)

Before properly analyzing Bolivia's relation with Turkey it is considered necessary first to clearly identify Bolivia's own national role conception (NRC). As learnt from the literature review, when using role theory the main thing to do before everything else is to look at national role conceptions. After a country NRC is clear, then it is possible to work on its foreign policy and relations with others. In the same way, because Turkey is an integral part of the Middle East, it is required first to understand what roles Bolivia enacts in that region. With all that information as background it is then possible to examine Bolivia's relations with Turkey -what roles are enacted and what perceptions are hold- in a holistic and comprehensive way.

### 2.1. BOLIVIA'S NATIONAL ROLE CONCEPTION

As seen in the previous chapter (theoretical framework) national role conceptions emerge from profound historical forces. Bolivia's actual national role conception cannot be understood without first doing an overview of the previous roles the country enacted. Do the actual and past roles are the same? Major role changes occurred? What was the historical context when a determined role became prevalent? This section will do first an overview of the roles Bolivia enacted during its different historical periods. Then Bolivia's actual role set will be discussed.

**2.1.1. Bolivia National Role Conception (NCR) Historical Evolution:** Bolivia's national role conception can be analyzed through five historical periods: before the Spanish invasion, during the colonial rule, at the beginning of the independence, during the 20<sup>th</sup> century and during the 21<sup>th</sup> century,

**a) Bolivia's pre-colonial NRC:** It is important to note that before the Incas, there were other cultures that developed in the geographical region where the actual Pluri-national

Republic of Bolivia lies. The “Tiwanaku” and the “Aymara”<sup>16</sup> are an example. The Incas denominated their empire as “Tiwantinsuyu” (meaning “the four regions”). The “kollasuyu” -one of those four regions- occupied the west of modern Bolivia and was populated by mainly native “aymaras” (Valencia, 1984:184). It is from this period and this pre –colonial societies that the foundations and sources of posterior national role conceptions will emerge. For Mansilla (2007), the Inca Empire had a collectivist form of organization; abnegation, trust in authorities and submission of individuals to the requirements of the state were common social behavior patterns. These ancient civilizations did not know any system to dilute their politic centralization and relied on authorities. Homogeneity was the guiding principle. For the author, the Inca civilization “should be seen as a revolutionary socialism<sup>17</sup>, but in an embryonic state” (:106).

**b) Bolivia`s colonial NRC:** In 1532 Spanish “conquistador” meet Inca ruler Atahualpa in the city of Cajamarca (actual Peru). When the colonization of the “new” continent began and, since Cristobal Colon second trip, all the rest of the expeditions from Europe to Latin America were accompanied by priests. “Spain was the defender of Catholicism as an emblematic religion of the west and auto destined itself as its universal diffuser” (Mesa and Gisber, 2008:83). Consequently, slowly a campaign to eliminate indigenous idolatry and pagan rites began.

The “*Real Audencia of Charcas*”, established in 1559 by the Spanish Crown, was the administrative and economic entity that preceded modern Bolivia. It was this territory, in the insides of the “*Cerro Rico*” (Rich Mountain) of Potosi, that the biggest silver reserves in the world were found<sup>18</sup>. During specially the second half of the XVI century, the Potosi Mountain became the gravitation center in which a “proto-identity” of what later would become Bolivia was conformed. An “imaginary community” was being formed around the mountain, in which indigenous elements amalgamate with the catholic image of Virgin Mary (Gracia, 2019:90).

It was also in the “*Real Audencia de Charcas*”, meaning the territory of what is modern Bolivia, that the first`s uprisings against the Spanish rule took place. The first rebellion in the whole South American continent began in Chuquisaca (May 1809), and two months later in La Paz (July 1809). Revolts followed in Quito, Ecuador (August 1809) and a year later in Buenos Aires, Argentina (1810). The fact that Bolivia was the “cradle of revolution” against the colonial empire, helps to understand the posterior roles the country enacted such as “bastion of revolution” and “anti-imperialist agent”. However

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<sup>16</sup> Tiwanaku culture is the oldest, its origins can be traced to 1000 b.C., however it disappeared in the XII century. Aymaras, on the other hand, are still present in modern Bolivia. They were conquered by the Incas and lead many rebellions against them.

<sup>17</sup> The Inca past and its “revolutionary socialism” would have a big influence in Bolivia during the government of Evo Morales and a major source of the NRC enacted during that time

<sup>18</sup> Even after centuries of its discovery (middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century), the histories of its richness kept attracting many people, such as the Arab migrants who arrived to Latin during the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

in a sense the Latin American independence was an “incomplete revolution”<sup>19</sup> (Valencia, 1984:164). Especially in the social structure, almost nothing had change. In absence of Spaniards rulers, the “criollos”<sup>20</sup> -son of Spanish born in Latin America-occupied the vacant upper caste. The “mestizos” –sons of Spanish mixed with indigenous- followed, and at the bottom, like it was before, the indigenous people.

**c) Bolivia`s NRC after its independence:** Immediately after the independent of Bolivia, the constitutive assembly deliberated whether the country should be part of Peru or Argentina (Mesa and Gisbert, 2008:274).The recent independent country was not, as Valencia (1984:206) argues, a “geographical unit”. Spanish geographer Carlos Badia Malagrida (1946) went further and called Bolivia a “geographical absurdity”: a conglomerate of contradictory and mutually exclusive different geographical regions<sup>21</sup>. According to former Bolivia Foreign Minister Jorge Aranibar (1993-1997), after the foundation of the country in 1825 until the war against Paraguay in 1932, there was a “lack of unity around the key topic of its (Bolivia) self-perception” (Aranibar, 1999:161).

Who was this recently independent country? How it did self-identify and presented to others? What role should play in the international stage? As Mesa & Gisbert (2008) point out, during this time Bolivian intellectuals viewed England, in the political and economic, and France, in the cultural, as “the model through which we should see ourselves” (:491). However, after the 1932 war with Paraguay, Bolivia entered new period of its diplomatic relations thanks to ex-Foreign Minister Fernando Guachalla (1936) who was the first to propose the role Bolivia should play internationally: “Bolivia should be a land of contacts and not of antagonisms” (Aranibar, 1999:162). Due to geography; at the “hearth” of South America, Bolivia´s function should be that one of attraction, articulation, union and welding in the region and not of isolation. It should have a “bio-oceanic projection” trying to be connecting point between the Pacific and the Atlantic oceans. Indeed, Valencia (1984:212) also argues that Bolivia, as the hearth of the region; “a vascular organ of life circulation and vital flows of the whole continent”, should act as a “knotting center”.

**d) Bolivia`s NRC through the XX century:** After the end of the Cold War all Latin American foreign policies, with the exception of Cuba, aligned themselves with the “agenda and international preferences of the United States” (Gardini and Lambert, 2011:4). During this period, military dictatorships ruled Bolivia. The foreign policy of

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<sup>19</sup> For Valencia (1984) the independence only secured “free trade” with other big powers like England and ended the direct control of the Spanish crown. However, it did not achieve to secure than all other political or social liberties typical of a real bourgeoisie revolution. The economic and social structures such as the feudal system and the social pyramid of the colony maintained for a long time.

<sup>20</sup> The independence movement was led by the “criollos”, that social group as the principal agent of change. (Gracia, 2019:88)

<sup>21</sup> According to Badia, each region, that clearly corresponded to a particular geographical area, should also be separated politically and unite with the correspondent neighbor country. Thus, disappearing Bolivia as an independent and separated state.

these dictatorships followed that of the US. The involvement of the Washington became more active under the banner of the “war on drugs”. During the 80’s, the fight against drug trafficking constituted the “center in the most important bilateral relation of Bolivia” (Aranibar, 1999:165) (meaning its relation with the United States<sup>22</sup>). In this period, the role Bolivia ought to play in the international stage was not clear. It is for a reason that Mesa & Gisbert’s (2008) chapter on the 1978-1982 period was titled “*The Aimless Nation*”.

With the end the 20<sup>th</sup> century, at the time Bolivian Ministry of Foreign Affairs articulated six strategic objectives that should guide the foreign policy in the future: 1) increase international presence and influence, 2) promote national interests, 3) develop new diplomatic initiatives directed towards the maritime reintegration, 4) actively participate in the construction of a more just and solidary international system, 5) project Bolivia’s diverse cultural identity and respect of religious pluralism, and 6) contribute to the sustainable development of Bolivia<sup>23</sup>. As it can be appreciated, these objectives are broad and general and do not depict specific roles the country should enact in the international arena.

**e) Bolivia’s NRC in the XXI century:** For some the election of Evo Morales in 2004 “marked a historical achievement for the indigenous movement in Bolivia”. (Medina: 2010). According to Birns & Sanchez (2011:103) the central objective of the Morales government “has been to break from the past and move towards an uncharted, left leaning future”. Domestically, the past Morales wanted to break from was the so-called liberal governments of the previous decades (who implemented free-market policies) and, internationally, break from Washington’s lead. Consequently, if Morales wanted to direct Bolivia towards unexplored and new destinations, new roles needed to be adopted. The new constitution adopted in 2006 appeared to reflect this intention. Bolivia “refounded” itself: a new pluri-national state was born which was fundamentally different from the previous republican one.

Morales government revolutionary ideology of anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism (derived from “the universal experiences of native peoples everywhere: the experience of invasion, and the experience of domination and exploitation”), combined with anti-neoliberal principles (derived from the rejection of an “unlimited progress” and the protection of the “mother earth”), made Bolivia Foreign Policy relatable with the “oppressed people” of the Global South (Morales, 2016:181). Bolivia membership in the “radical” *Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America* (ALBA) was an example of that<sup>24</sup>. The ALBA inaugurated in 2015 its “*Anti-imperialist Command*

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<sup>22</sup> With Bolivia as a main producer of cocaine and the US as a main importer there was a “shared responsibility”. Nonetheless, due to US violent and repressive methods of drug eradication and its multiple threats of cutting foreign aid an investment if its policies were not followed frictions emerged with Bolivia.

<sup>23</sup> Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Culto de la República de Bolivia. **Memoria Institucional Gestión 1993-1997**, 1997.

<sup>24</sup> The ALBA was conformed by Bolivia, Cuba, Ecuador, Venezuela, Antigua y Barbuda, Dominica, Nicaragua, San Vicente y Granadinas and Santa Lucia.



*School*<sup>25</sup> in eastern Bolivia. This military education center pretended to rival the United States led *School of the Americas* in Panama which operated for three decades (1946-1984). However, despite's Bolivia's open animosity towards Washington and close ties with "rogue states", the US did not exert strong pressure through sanctions or economic blockade like it did with Venezuela or Nicaragua. Indeed, Bolivia is not Venezuela. Yes, Bolivia declared the US ambassador "persona non-grata" in 2008, however it did not break diplomatic ties with Washington and even the relation improved with the Obama administration<sup>26</sup> (Birns and Sanchez, 2011:12).

At the end of Morales fourteen years government, Bolivia achieved to portray itself "as a representative of indigenous and environmental demands on a global level, and also an important representative of the "Global South" (Birns and Sanchez, 2011:115). These roles, "indigenous people defender" and "representative of the Global South", are clearly new discovered roles that were not enacted by the country in the past.

A summarized version of Bolivia's national role conception evolution can be appreciated in the following table:

**Table 4**  
**Bolivia's National Role Conception Historical Evolution**

| Period                                  | National Role Conception   |
|---|--|
| Pre-colonization                        | Holsti's ancient type of role: "attack". No information about a proper NRC. Other characteristics: authoritarianism, abnegation, submission, collectivism, proto revolutionary socialism   |
| After independence                      | Confusion about with role to enact. Europe the model. First ideas about enacting the role of "bridge"  |
| During the XX century                   | Again confusion about NRC. "Bridge" (first half of the XXth century) still applies. "Member of the western world" (after WWI),   |
| During Evo Morales Government (2006-19) | "Anti-Imperialist agent/anti-foreign domination", "bastion of revolution", "representative of the Global South", "international system challenger", "indigenous people's supporter/defender", "mother earth defender", "bridge/contacts point" |

Source: Own

<sup>25</sup> To the event asisted Vladimir Padrino Lopez from Venezuela, Martha Ruiz Sevilla from Nicaragua and famous Argentinian Professor Atilio Boron. Among the imparted lesson where "Theory of Imperialism", "Geopolitics of Imperialism", "Geopolitics of Natural Resources" and "Social Structure of Bolivia".

<sup>26</sup> For example in 2009 at the time Bolivia Foreign minister meet with its counterpart Hilary Clinton in the 5<sup>th</sup> Summit of the Americas.

During all this time, foreign policy wise, Bolivia was not constant. How its foreign policy could be constant if the NRC was also not constant? For Acosta (2017), who wrote a thesis on the Bolivian and French relations, the foreign policy of Bolivia has been characterized of being volatile and shaped according to the interests of the government in turn rather than guided by stable state plan. For him, Bolivian diplomacy is “improvised and short-term thought”.

Nonetheless, historically some Bolivian Foreign Policy priorities remained unaltered. These are, in hierarchical order: 1) the accesses to the Pacific Sea, 2) the relationship with the US, 3) the relation with neighbor countries and, at the end 4) the relations with the rest of the world (indeed, engagement with countries from another continents has been relegated)

**2.1.2. Bolivia Prevalent Role Set:** Bolivia`s most prevalent role set which is still valid nowadays come from the fourteen years of Morales government (2006-19). These will be the roles taking into account when searching for role compatibility/conflict with Turkey. As such a little more explanation about them it is considered necessary.

**a) Anti-Imperialist, colonialism agent/anti-foreign domination:** During the Morales government the *anti-imperialist agent* role was the main role Bolivia enacted. Anti-empire figures like that of Simon Bolivar, Fidel Castro or Ernesto “Che” Guevara<sup>27</sup> were seen as the “prototype of the political man”. Even though, as seen in the previous section, the roots of this role can be found in colonial times<sup>28</sup> (the first rebellions in whole South America against Spanish Empire started in Bolivia), it was the first time in its republican history that the country enacted this role as its main identity in the international stage so vehemently.

**b) Bastion of revolution:** The rise of Morales and its achievement as the “first indigenous” president of Bolivia was considered by some as a revolution. Fulfilling its role function Bolivia offered asylum to other “revolutionaries” actors such as Eduard Snowden or Julian Assange.

**c) Representative of the Global South:** Morales is considered the first “global Bolivian” (as Francisco de Miranda was the first “global Venezuelan”). “All oppressed peoples in the world see Evo Morales as a leader”, stated the former Bolivia’s Ambassador to Iran. Bolivia as a representative of the Global South tried to deepend ties with other non traditional countries, outside the western world. The relationship with Turkey is an example. Bolivia hosted many “global south” events such as: *G77+China, Ancient Civilizations Forum, World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth*

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<sup>27</sup> It is important to know that the “Che” Guevara was killed in Bolivia in 1967 by the government at the time with instructions and help from the United States. This also influenced Bolivia NRC as a “anti-imperialist agent”

<sup>28</sup>Also, since Bolivia’s independence, the intentions of Peru and Argentine to annex the newly born country, solidified “the affirmation of an attitude that privileges a conspiracy vision of the external environment against Bolivia “. (Aranibar, 1999:161). A similar situation happened with Turkey

**d) International system challenger:** Bolivia allied with other states that play the same role as Russia, China and Iran. According to the former Bolivia's Ambassador to Iran, the actions the country undertook since the new constitution was approved in 2006 putted Bolivia in "a different status (...) we must build another civilization we can not continue like this (...) with Iran we are building another civilization, building new paradigms (...) we intended to unite with countries that are fighting for multilateralism". In her view, the world is in a transition phase where "more than half of the countries are asking for changes in the system, in the institutions. Structural changes (...) changes in the Brown Woods systems. Who represents the United Nations? No one believes in the UN. They are in crisis"

**e) Indigenous people's supporter/defender:** Bolivia is the Latin American country that "mixed" the least with Europeans<sup>29</sup>. Bolivia it is the least "white-European" country and the place where the biggest, compared to its total population, indigenous population lies (a more detailed account for migration flows to Bolivia can be seen annex 2). In Bolivia "the indigenous" has been historically stigmatized. The exploitation and treatment of the indigenous people as third-class citizens during the colonial times generated a "long-standing conscience of an oppressed nation (...) symbolic grievances still alive in popular memory" (Mansilla, 2017:107). The situation improved a little during the Republic, however it was also in the Morales government, that the role of "Indigenous people's supporter/defender" was first being enacted.

This, as Mansilla (2007:102) points out, usually happens with big revolutionary goals: these are directed towards the attempt to return to a "mythical past" imbued with "pseudo religious lens". In the case of Bolivia, there was an intention to reassess the indigenous world before the Spanish colonization. Since there was a permanent asymmetry between Bolivia and the wealthy western countries, this disequilibrium is perceived as something "traumatic and discreditable (...) as the fountain of insecurity and the lack of a respectable international power" (Mansilla, 2017:111). In this sense, "illusions about an allegedly glorious past", are used as inferiority complex defense mechanism.

**f) Mother earth defender:** Both former Bolivia's Ambassador to Iran and Russia praise the efforts of Bolivia which made the UN officially recognized "the rights of mother earth". Bolivia also organized two rights of mother earth global summits. "We say the planet is a system of life (...) because the ancestral conception we carry is that everything is a system of life(...) nature is considered as an object at the service of man. We say all systems of life have rights", remarks Romina Perez Ramos former Bolivia's Ambassador to Iran.

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<sup>29</sup> Indeed, as Moya (2018:31) lays out, the European component percentage in the genomic composition of Latin American is as follows: Uruguay 84%, Argentina 79%, Cuba 72%, Brazil 71%, Venezuela, Colombia and Costa Rica 63%, Ecuador 41%, Mexico 34%, Peru 26% and, lastly, Bolivia 12%.

**g) Bridge/contacts point:** The “bridge” role, officially enacted in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, was maintained, and even deepened, during the Morales government. Different actions show so: the efforts to make Bolivia the center of bi-oceanic train between the Pacific and Atlantic Ocean, the policy to convert Bolivia, like Turkey, in a “energy hub” from which energy it’s exported to the many neighboring countries and the hosting of many international conferences and events.

## **2.2. BOLIVIA`S ROLE IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

As seen in the first chapter, the setting, the background where the actor develops his drama is of utter importance. In the same way, the geographical region where a country enacts its role constitutes its stage. Bolivia does not engage with Turkey in a vacuum, Turkey is in the Middle East. Thus, an understanding of which roles Bolivia enacts in the Middle East, if any, will be helpful in contextualizing the relation with Turkey.

This section will first look at Middle Eastern diaspora and Muslim presence in Bolivia. Usually countries that have a big Middle Eastern diaspora have a more active role with that region. Secondly, Bolivia`s political role and bilateral relations with the main middle eastern countries will be evaluated. How did Bolivia reacted and behaved towards the most important events occurred in the Middle East such as the Arab Spring, Syrian Civil War, 2011 Libya Military Intervention, Iran Nuclear Power development and Palestinian-Israeli conflict? Third, Bolivia`s economic role in the Middle East will be looked at. Is there any economic interchange? What are the biggest trade partners in the region? What are the most exported and imported goods? Is there hidden business opportunities? Finally a survey of Bolivia`s enacted roles in the Middle East will be presented. Which of Bolivia`s role set were enacted in the Middle East? Did new roles appear? Did some roles were not enacted?

**2.2.1. Middle Eastern Diaspora and Muslim Presence in Bolivia:** Historically, migration not only from the Middle East but from the world to Bolivia has been minimum -aside from being poorly recorded<sup>30</sup>. However, among the “minor emigrants”, people from the Middle East can be found<sup>31</sup>, the Ottoman Empire included. Nowadays, although there are no official numbers, the Latin and Caribbean Economic System (CELA) estimates that the total of Middle Eastern migrants and its decedents in Latin America are 20 million. Ayuso (et al.,2015:27) also gives a similar figure: between 15 million and 20 million: a significant number indeed. Today Brazil, with circa 10 million Arab decedents, holds the largest community outside the Middle East (Funk, 2016:15), Chile is home of the largest Palestine diaspora in Latin America and in Honduras middle eastern migrants make 2% of the total population (Moya, 2018:51).

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<sup>30</sup> Of the 11 million Europeans that arrived between 1830 and 1930 to Latin American most of them were Italians (38%), Spanish (28%) and Portuguese (11%) (Kukovec1995:59).

<sup>31</sup> Ayuso (et al.,2015:26) places the number of Middle Easter migrants to each Latin America country as follows: Brazil 40.000, Argentine 350.000, Mexico 35.000, Venezuela 150.000.

What about Bolivia? How many Middle Eastern did the country received? A good number of immigrants who arrived to the ports of Santos (Brazil) and Buenos Aires (Argentine) did not settle in those cities and kept going forward. Some reached Uruguay, others Chile, Paraguay and, others, on a less quantity, Bolivia<sup>32</sup>. Frias (2019:54) notes that of the 37.471 foreigners registered in 1950 National Census, 415 of them came from “Arab and Muslim countries”. Unfortunately, up to date about the recent migration flows from the Middle East to Bolivia are not to be found. The 2012 National Census does not provide detailed information. The only two listed countries from the Asian continent in the Census are China and Japan. It is assumed that some Middle Eastern nationals residing in Bolivia are under the “*rest of other countries*” (4621 individuals) and “*unspecified*” (2896 individuals) categories<sup>33</sup>. If this is the case, it can be inferred that the total number is definitely less than 7000 (not including the decedents of previous generations which consider themselves Bolivian).

In the lack of official government figures, the work Alberto Asbun Karmy: “*Arab Migration and its Offspring in Bolivia*” (2000), although it focuses just on Arab -and not whole Middle East migration-, has great value. According to Karmy around 350.000 Arab immigrants reached Bolivia after they firstly arrived to Buenos Aires. For its part, Ostwerwiel (1997:150), before noting that “there are no reliable figures of the number of Arabs (and Jews<sup>34</sup>) in Bolivia”, states that in 1970 there were around 7000 Arabs in the country, from which 3.500 of them lived in La Paz. This figure growth over time. In 2019, according to the Palestine Ambassador, there were around 15.000 Palestinians in Bolivia (of which 6000 lived in Santa Cruz). Among important Bolivian figures of Arab decent are leader of the “*Central Obrera Boliviana*” (COB) Juan Lechin Oquendo; the second in command of the political party “*Movimiento Izquierda Revolucionaria*” (MIR) Oscar Eid Franco and, there are also claims, ex-Bolivian president Izidoro Belzu (1848-55) was of Arab decent (Ostwerwiel.1997:164). Additionally, many Arab migrants fought in the Chaco War (1932-35) against Paraguay.

**a) Islam in Bolivia:** It is estimated that around 2000 Muslims live in Bolivia; a really small figure which represents less than 0.01% of the population<sup>35</sup>. Due to the low presence and minor influence of Muslims in Bolivia, not many academic studies on the subject exist. One exception is the bachelor thesis (in Spanish) of Frias (2019): “*The Allah Community. Conversion Processes and Social Dynamics in the Muslim Community of La Paz*”. In her work Frias applies the fieldwork data recollection technique and immerses herself in the activities of the three main mosques that operate

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<sup>32</sup> Another popular destination point was La Habana, Cuba. From there people spread to Central American countries and its southern vicinities (Venezuela, Colombia, Guyana). However, in 1891 Spanish authorities forbade that route.

<sup>33</sup> Instituto Nacional de Estadística, **Informe Anual 2015**, 2016

<sup>34</sup> According to the Israel Consul in Bolivia Francisco Hubsh, there are around 500 hundred Jews in Bolivia. From which 200 of them live in Santa Cruz, a place that has “appreciation for the Jewish”. Before La Paz was the most important *kehila* in the country.

<sup>35</sup> American Foreign Policy Council, **The World Almanac of Islamism**, 2019.

in La Paz. However, this work deals only with the city of La Paz and more than historical, its sociological. Apart from this, the thesis only relies on Spanish speaking bibliography and does not take into account English sources.

Another study (in English), specifically the chapter on Bolivia in the *“World Almanac of Islamism 2019”*, traces the origins of the Islamic community not only in one city, but on a national level. According to this work, Mahmud Amer Abusharar; a Palestinian immigrant, is considered to be the pioneer and leader behind the emerging Islamic community in Bolivia. In 1986 he founded in the east city of Santa Cruz what is considered to be the first Islamic organization in the country: *“The Bolivia Islamic Center”*<sup>36</sup>(CIB). The center, with funding from the *Gulf Cooperation Council* and the Egyptian Embassy in Bolivia, built the first mosque – *“Al-Omarein”*- in the country. Both Frias (2019) and the *“World Almanac of Islamism 2019”* agrees that CIB is the biggest and most important Islamic organization<sup>37</sup>.

Another important organization is the *“Association of the Islamic Community of Bolivia”* (ACIB), which operates mainly in La Paz. The ACIB was founded in 1995 and in 2008 built the first mosque -*“As-Salam”*- in near the center of the city. The current head of the organization is Ahmad Ali Trigo, a Bolivian national who also studied in Saudi Arabia (*Islamic University of Medina*). According to Frias (2019) the ACIB experienced a rupture in 2007 from which two other communities were born: the *“Yebbel Annur”* and the *“Asociation of the Islamic Community of Bolivia Ahlut Al-Bait* (ASIABOL).

**2.2.2. Bolivia`s Political Role in the Middle East:** Before Evo Morales got elected Bolivia had diplomatic relations only with Israel, Turkey and Egypt. In this pre-2005 period, “Bolivian governments were sympathetic to the US-led antiterrorist campaign and Foreign Policy initiatives in the Middle East and Afghanistan<sup>38</sup>” (Morales, 2016:187).

However, under Morales government Bolivia not only rejected and condemned all US intervention in the Middle East, but also, publicly supported its “brothers in arms” and “rogue states” such as Palestine, Libya, Iran and Syria. Bolivia`s revolutionary new foreign policy guidelines (anti-imperialism anti-colonialism) were applied in the Middle East. The 2014 UN General Assembly Address given by Morales captures this big foreign policy shift:

“The Iraq invasion (...) left us the lesson that wherever USA intervenes leaves destruction, hate, misery and death. But also leaves the wealth in the hands of those who profit with wars, military armament, transnational industries and oil”.

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<sup>36</sup> The center was formerly recognized by the Bolivian Ministry of Foreign Affairs three years later.

<sup>37</sup> The Bolivian Islamic center is recipient of aid from the *Muslim World League* and the *Islamic Organization for Latin America* (based in Saudi Arabia). The CIB is also affiliate of the *World Assembly of Muslim Youth*.

<sup>38</sup> For example, in the 2003 Invasion of Iraq Bolivia did not took any particular position.

What kind of relations did Bolivia had, if any, with Middle Eastern countries?

**a) Bolivia relations with Lybia:** In 2008 Evo Morales made an official and two days visit to Libya and attended to the *39<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Libyan Revolution* in Benghazi. It was the first time that a Bolivian president visited that country<sup>39</sup>. A year later, in August 2009, diplomatic relations were established through a memorandum of understanding between the general director for Latin America of the Libyan Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mohamed Matri and Bolivian foreign minister David Choquehuna<sup>40</sup>.

In 2011 Colombia, Chile, Peru and Brazil supported the 2011 *UN Human Rights Commission* membership suspension of Libya while Bolivia, Venezuela and Ecuador expressed concert against it. In a similar manner; Colombia, Peru and Chile voted for the OTAN intervention in that country (Brazil abstained this time) while the majority of the rest of Latin-American countries; Venezuela, Bolivia, Cuba, Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay, Nicaragua, Ecuador, reject it. (Martinez, 2012:19). In interview gave to Telesur during the *66<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the United Nations*<sup>41</sup> Morales stated: “world knows there was a coup organized by the Security Council and OTAN (to) create internal conflicts and take advantage to intervene”.

**b) Bolivia relations with Egypt:** In Egypt, the Bolivian government supported Mohammed Mursi. President Evo Morales condemned and termed as “genocide” the killing of 600 pro Mursi protesters in the 2013 Raba Masacre<sup>42</sup>. At the same time Morales congratulated the new Egyptian President Abdul Fatha al-Sisi for its triumph in the elections<sup>43</sup> although he did not attend, despite de the invitation, to Sisi’s presidential possession ceremony. Later, in the context of the *72<sup>th</sup> UN General Assembly* of 2018, Morales hold a bilateral meeting with el-Sisi. Among other things, they talked about the second meeting of the Ancient Cultures Forum<sup>44</sup>. In 2019, before arriving Dubai, president Morales made an unofficial and unexpected stop at Cairo Airport. Although he did not meet with the president a report says he spoke with “migration officers”<sup>45</sup>. The stop may have just been for purely logistical reasons.

**c) Bolivia relations with Syria:** Since the 2011 Syrian protests in the context of the “Arab Spring” the Bolivian government showed it support to Bashar al-Assad. In

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<sup>39</sup> Although Morales himself visited the country as syndicalist.

<sup>40</sup> **Europa Press**, “Evo Morales Inicia una Historica Visita a Libia”, 30.08.2008., <https://www.europapress.es/internacional/noticia-bolivia-evo-morales-inicia-historica-visita-libia-impulsar-relaciones-bilaterales-20080830152921.html>

<sup>41</sup> Telesur, “Morales: Potencias se Disputan las Riquezas de Libia”. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RS3ISpXTOxI>

<sup>42</sup> **Ministry of Education**, “Evo Morales Denuncia Genocidio en Egipto”, 17.08.2013, <https://comunicacion.gob.bo/?q=20130817/evo-morales-denuncia-genocidio-en-egipto>

<sup>43</sup> **Telesur**, “Evo Morales Felicito al Sisi por su Triunfo en las Elecciones de Egipto”, 6.06.2005, <https://www.telesurtv.net/news/Evo-Morales-felicito-a-Al-Sisi-por-su-triunfo-en-elecciones-de-Egipto-20140606-0049.html>

<sup>44</sup> **El Deber**, “Bolivia y Egipto buscand acuerdos para foro de Civilizaciones Antiguas”, 9.09.2018, [https://eldeber.com.bo/bolivia/bolivia-y-egipto-buscan-acuerdos-para-foro-de-civilizaciones-antiguas\\_102001](https://eldeber.com.bo/bolivia/bolivia-y-egipto-buscan-acuerdos-para-foro-de-civilizaciones-antiguas_102001)

<sup>45</sup> **El Deber**, “Morales se reúne con autoridades de Egipto”, 7.04.2019, <https://eldeber.com.bo/bolivia/morales-se-reune-con-autoridades-en-egipto>.

October 2011, just after protests erupted, an ALBA delegation, with former Communication Minister Ivan Canelas representing Bolivia, went to Damascus and reunited with the Syrian President<sup>46</sup>. On 2013, after the Ghouta chemical attacks incident, Morales expressed that the Assad government was not the responsible, but rather other groups that intend to destabilize the Damascus government. The Bolivian president warned about a possible US military intervention just like happened in Libya<sup>47</sup>. In April 2017, when another incident of chemical attack took place in Khan Shaykun and the US decided to attack Syria with cruise missiles, Bolivia, in Security Council meeting held on the subject, voted with Russia against the draft that would made Syria comply with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. On April 14 2018, after the US, France and Britain stroked Syria as a response for the alleged use of chemical weapons; the Bolivian Foreign Ministry issued a statement “manifesting its most energetic rejection to the unilateral attacks against Syria”<sup>48</sup>.

For its part the Syrian government commended as a “civic, politic and police coup” the events in Bolivia of October 2019 that ended up with the resignation of Evo Morales and expressed its solidarity with the ex-Bolivian president<sup>49</sup>.

**d) Bolivia relations with Iran**<sup>50</sup>: Iran was one of the Middle Eastern countries that at the beginning engaged the most with Latin America, especially during the Ahmadinejad government; which subscribed around 250 cooperation agreements and added six new embassies in the region. Just alone Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez traveled 8 times to Iran. Ahmadinejad and Morales met in the 2006 *Non-Align Movement Summit* in La Habana and a year later, their respective Foreign Ministers met again in Tehran. Since then Bolivian-Iran relation kept developing. Even Iranian military officers were going to impart training in the regional defense school of the (ALBA) in Santa Cruz. In international forums Bolivia condemned the economic sanctions against Iran and gave public support for its nuclear program. In general terms Bolivia Foreign Policy in the Middle East mirrored that of Iran’s. Also, apparently the Bolivian Shia “*Ahlut Al-Bait*” organization received economic aid from the Iranian Embassy in La Paz<sup>51</sup>. Its founder, Roberto “Yusuf” Chambi, studied in the religious Iranian city of Qom.

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<sup>46</sup> **Opinión**, “El ALBA no se Quedará de Brazos Cruzados en su apoyo al régimen Sirio”, 9.10.2011, <https://www.lainformacion.com/asuntos-sociales/la-alba-no-se-queda-de-brazos-cruzados-en-su-apoyo-al-regimen-sirio>.

<sup>47</sup> **Ministerio de Comunicación**, “Morales condena y rechaza posible intervención de EEUU a Siria”, 28.10.2013, <https://comunicacion.gob.bo/?q=20130828/12441>.

<sup>48</sup> **Ministerio de Comunicación**, “Bolivia condena los ataques en contra del pueblo de Siria”, 14.04.2018, <https://www.cancilleria.gob.bo/webmre/node/2447>.

<sup>49</sup> **Los Tiempos**, “Siria condena el Golpe Militar en Bolivia”, 11.11.2019,

<https://www.lavanguardia.com/politica/20191111/471515535351/siria-condena-el-golpe-militar-en-bolivia.html>

<sup>50</sup> A fairly detailed summary of the Bolivian-Iranian relations can be found in the chapter nine of the *World Almanac of Islamism* elaborated by the American Foreign Policy Council (2019).



e) **Bolivia relations with Israel:** As Funk (2016:21) notes Latin America has been a “diplomatic battleground for Israeli and Palestinian influence”. Bolivia is not the exception. Before Morales, relations with Israel were quite old and significant. Both countries signed a “cultural convention agreement” in 1961 and a “economic, cultural, scientific and technical cooperation agreement” in 1971<sup>52</sup>. However, since Morales became president, Bolivia, in the many international forums that had the opportunity to participate in, constantly and firmly abrogated for Palestine and condemned Israel: in the 2014 Non-Align Meeting, in UN General Assemblies, in the 2014 G77 + China meeting in Bolivia, in the Security Council, in the International Chamber of Commerce<sup>53</sup> and in the UN committee on the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People since 2013.

The turning point in Bolivia-Israel relations happened in 2009, when President Morales did not just condemn the Israeli operation “*Cast Lead*” in Gaza but also terminated its ambassadorial relationship because of it<sup>54</sup>. In a broadcasted presidential address of January of 2009, Evo Morales after qualifying the repression as “crimes against humanity, genocide, war crimes, extermination”, stated Bolivia’s intentions to denounce “Israel’s prime minister and all his members of his cabinet” to the International Crime Justice<sup>55</sup>. A year later in Bolivia recognized Palestine “as an independent state within its full pre-1967 borders”. (Morales, 2016:186).

Since then relation kept deteriorating. In the ASPA summit in Lima of 2012 Morales, after expressing recognition of Palestine, stated:

“We wouldn’t want in Latin America, in South America, in any continent, to have an expansionist and interventionist Israel, who is making much damage to the Palestinian people”<sup>56</sup>.

Five years later, in response to Israeli operation “*Protective Edge*” in Gaza, Morales declared Israel as a “terrorist” state and ended the free visa policy towards Israelis that had been functioning since 1972<sup>57</sup>.

f) **Bolivia relations with Palestine:** Contrary to what happened with Israel relations with Palestine seemed to keep developing. In the context of the 2019 Non-Align movement ministerial meeting in Caracas, Palestinian Foreign Minister Riyad al-Maliki signed with his Bolivian counterpart Diego Pari cooperation agreements in various

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<sup>52</sup> Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA), **Las Relaciones de América y el Caribe con el Medio Oriente: Situación Actual y Áreas de Oportunidad**, Annex II, 2012.

<sup>53</sup> Bolivia supported Palestinian Adhesion to the International Chamber of Commerce. (Morales, 2016:186)

<sup>54</sup> For its part Venezuela expelled Israel Ambassador Shlomo Cohen and part of its diplomatic team.

<sup>55</sup> Full transcript regarding this speech can be found in annex 3.

<sup>56</sup> **Ministerio de Comunicación**, “Morales: ‘Sudamerica, Latinomaerica y ningún continente quiere otro Israel expansionista’”, 2.10.211, <https://comunicacion.gob.bo/?q=20121002/morales-sudam%C3%A9rica-latinoam%C3%A9rica-y-ning%C3%BAAn-continente-quiere-otro-israel-expansionista-e>

<sup>57</sup> **Middle East Monitor**, “Bolivia declares Israel a terrorist state”, 12.02.2014, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/fr/news/bolivia-declares-israel-terrorist-state-299682688>

fields (agriculture, health, energy)<sup>58</sup>. The same year in September Palestine officially opened its embassy in La Paz. In the words of Palestinian Ambassador in Bolivia, Mahmoud Alawani: “Bolivia is key for the Palestinian relations with Latin America”<sup>59</sup>.

However, after the departure of President Morales, “welcomed news in Tel Aviv”<sup>60</sup>, the new government under President Janine Añez not only reestablished relations with Israel and brought back the free visa policy, but also it showed supportive of Israel Foreign Policy, and thus, less of that of Palestine. “The actual government is very pro-Israel, there are evangelical Christians involucrated that express much love for Israel”<sup>61</sup>, stated Francisco Hubsch, who is serving 26 years as Honorary Consul of Israel in Bolivia.

**g) Bolivia relations with United Arab Emirates:** On April 2019, before Morales visit to Turkey, the Bolivian president participated in the UAE’s “IX Annual Investment Meeting”. When

Morales came back communicated the interest of the Dubai authorities in the Lithium. He was surprised that they were aware of the latest developments; “they have a lot of interest in mining topics, even the Ministry of Political Issues and Investment ask me about Mallku Khota (a mining center y southeast Bolivia) , were are surprised, they are informed”<sup>62</sup>. A high-level delegation from Dubai was supposed to visit Bolivia but until the date nothing happened. A complete transcript of Morales speech at the IX Annual Investment Meeting in Dubai can be found in annex 4.

**2.2.3. Bolivia’s Economic Role in the Middle East:** Even if biregional agreements between Latin America & the Caribbean and the Middle East were signed since the 1950’s it was not until the beginning of the millennium that these substantially increased<sup>63</sup>. Trade quadruple from 10.47 million \$ in 2000 to 39.46 million \$ in 2010.

However, despite this improvement, trade among the two regions is still quite incipient. In 2010 the Middle East represented just 2.91% of Latin America and the Caribbean’s total global exports and 1.54% of imports. There are many potential trade opportunities which are not being exploited. For example, a staggering 66.8% of the global Middle Eastern imports of beef and 81. % of cane sugar comes from Latin

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<sup>58</sup> **Palestinian News and Info Agency**, “Palestine and Bolivia sign Development Cooperation agreement”, 22.07.2019, <https://english.wafa.ps/page.aspx?id=8Hiupfa111016276932a8Hiupf>

<sup>59</sup> **El Deber**, “Mahdmoud Alawani: Bolivia es Clave para las Relaciones de Bolivia con Latin America”, 27.09.2019, [https://eldeber.com.bo/mundo/mahmoud-alwani-bolivia-es-clave-para-las-relaciones-de-palestina-con-america-latina\\_66904](https://eldeber.com.bo/mundo/mahmoud-alwani-bolivia-es-clave-para-las-relaciones-de-palestina-con-america-latina_66904)

<sup>60</sup> **The Palestine Chronicle**, “Israel is a ‘Terrorist State’: Seven Times Bolivia and Morales Took a Stance for Palestine”, 14.09.2019, <https://www.palestinechronicle.com/israel-is-a-terrorist-state-seven-times-bolivia-and-morales-took-a-stance-for-palestine/>

<sup>61</sup> **Consulado General de Israel Guayaquil Ecuador**, “La Renovada Amistad Entre Israel y Bolivia”, 23.11.2019.

<sup>62</sup> **La Razon**, “Emiratos Árabes se interesa por el litio Boliviano y Mallku Khota; se pactan reuniones”, 2019.4.8, [https://www.la-razon.com/economia/Inversiones-interes-Emiratos-Arabes-litio-Mallku-Khota-reuniones\\_0\\_3125687421.html](https://www.la-razon.com/economia/Inversiones-interes-Emiratos-Arabes-litio-Mallku-Khota-reuniones_0_3125687421.html)

<sup>63</sup> During the 70’s and the 80’s Peru signed “more than ten agreements with Algeria and Egypt”. At that time Brazil-Iraq trade was also significant. (Ayuso et., al. 2015:17)

America<sup>64</sup>. Also, as it can be appreciated in the following table, just a few Latin America countries do business with the Middle East (just Brazil alone accounts for more than half of imports and exports).

**Table 5**  
**Latin America Imports and Exports to the Middle East 2010**

| Country                                    | Brazil  | Argentina | Colombia | Chile | México | Perú |
|--|---|-----------|----------|-------|--------|------|
| <b>Share of exports to the Middle East</b> | 62.9%   | 21.5%     | 2.4%     | 2.6%  | 3.8%   | -    |
| <b>Main exported products</b>              | Raw materials, meat, sugar, corn, lima beans, soy oil, coffe, nutmeg, tobacco                                     |           |          |       |        |      |
| <b>Share of imports to the Middle East</b> | 64.1%   | 4.6%      | 3%       | 3.7%  | 14%    | 3.4% |
| <b>Main imported products</b>              | Fuels (oil gas, aviation alcohol), chemical and mineral components (potasium chloride, urea, superphofate, iron), |           |          |       |        |      |

Source: Own table with info from Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA). (2012:40).

As seen in the table Bolivia does not even appear. What is the economic role that this country plays in the Middle East, if any?

Exports wise only two Middle Eastern countries have a relative significance for Bolivia: United Arab Emirates and Turkey. The former surprisingly occupies the ten position in Bolivian global exports while the latter occupies the eighteen position. In both countries the exported goods correspond practically in its totality to the precious metals category (gold in the case of the UAE and jewellery in the case of Turkey). After UAE and Turkey, Israel is the third Middle Easter country to which Bolivia exports the most. The Jewish State occupies the thirty-two position with a value of 5.29 million dollars. In this case the exported goods are not precious metals but rather foodstuffs (mainly brazil nuts and buckwheat). All other Bolivian exports to Middle Eastern countries are insignificant and also consists mainly of foodstuffs. Only Morocco (63), Lebanon (67), Saudi Arabia (78), Bahrain (79), Qatar (80), Kuwait (86) and Egypt (89) appear within the top one hundred global export destinations of Bolivia. All of them are under the sixty position (less than 1% of total exports) and have a value under 0.3 million dollars.

Imports wise<sup>65</sup> Turkey (23) is the first country to appear in the list occupying the twenty-third position with a 62 million dollars value. Machines constitute almost half of the imported goods. Saudi Arabia (37) and UAE (46) follow taking the thirty seventh and forty-six positions respectively. Imports from the former mainly consist of float glass and amino-resins (20 million dollars value) while asphalt and liquid dispersing

<sup>64</sup> Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA), **Las Relaciones de América y el Caribe con el Medio Oriente: Situación Actual y Áreas de Oportunidad**, 2012.

<sup>65</sup> More detailed information about Bolivia's imports from M.E. countries can be found in annex 5.

machines (5.44 dollars value) come from the latter. Israel (48) and Egypt (52) are next. Bolivia imports from Israel are mainly pesticides and broadcasting equipment (4.9 dollars value) and from Egypt machinery (3.37 dollars value). Other middle eastern countries within the top one hundred Bolivia import origins are Tunisia (76), Morocco (78), Jordan (81), Algeria (88) and Iran (91). All of them under the sixty position (less than 1% of total imports) and have a value under 0.6 million dollars. Imported goods from these countries range from chemical products, textiles, foodstuffs and machines.

From this import and export data some observations can be inferred. First, in both cases, Bolivia's trade is quite significant only with three M.E. countries: Turkey, UAE and Israel. The exported goods to these countries correspond mainly to the precious metals and foodstuffs categories while the imported goods are mainly machinery and chemical products. Second, Turkey is in average the country that Bolivia trades the most with. Turkey is the M.E. country from which Bolivia imports the most and the second to which Bolívar exports the most. Third, the fact that the UAE is the top Bolivia's M.E. export destination and is the only M.E. country within the top ten Bolivia's global exports, draws attention. Even more when there is not any mutual diplomatic mission in both countries, nor any significant migrant population or chamber of commerce. Fourth, despite the problematic relations with Israel, the Jewish State still is on the first M.E. places where Bolivia exports and imports from. Fifth, it is quite odd to find Egypt in such a low position both in exports and imports. The bilateral relations with Bolivia, apart from being established for quite some time now, appeared to be improving. Sixth, it is also worth noting that the trade balance with Iran, the closest Middle Eastern ally of Bolivia under the Morales government (2016-19), is practically non-existent. Seventh, trade with Saudi Arabia, although low, appears to have some potential.

**2.2.4. Bolivia Enacted Roles in the Middle East:** Bolivia's enacted roles in the Middle East can be seen in the following table. Main roles are the actual set of roles during Evo Morales government, which were already examined in the 2.1.2 subtitle "*Bolivia prevalent role set*". Region specific roles derive and are in harmony with those main roles however are enacted just in the Middle East.

**Table 6**  
**Bolivia Enacted Roles in the Middle East**

| <b>Main Role</b>                       | <b>Region Specific Role</b>                                     | <b>Short Comment</b>  |
|--|---|---|
| Anti-imperialist, colonialism agent    | Anti-Israel colonial project agent, Syrian government supporter | Israel seen as a colonial actor. Any kind of foreign intervention, NATO activities in the region seen as negative (Iraq, Lybia, Syria)  |
| Indigenous people's supporter/defender | Palestinian cause supporter                                     | Palestinians are compared to Bolivia's indigenous people before Spanish colonization.   |
| International system challenger        | Rogue state sympathizer   | As Morales (2016) points out, Bolivia has an "official policy of inclusion toward states that the international community had excluded or branded as supporters of terrorism"(:180)   |
| Bastion of revolution                  | Iran's faithful ally, Axis of resistance supporter              | As a revolutionary state, Bolivia sees Iran as one of its most important allies. And Iran allies, the most commonly known "axis of resistance", are Bolivia's allies.   |
| Representative of the Global South     |   | As Palestinian Ambassador in Bolivia, after thanking Bolivia's support in the UN stated: "There (in the UN) Bolivia faced the US, the world's first power, in spite of the high cost that this backing has for third world countries" <sup>66</sup> |

Source: own

As it could be seen, in the Middle East Bolivia did not enact his "bridge" role.

### **2.3. BOLIVIA'S ENGAGEMENT WITH TURKEY**

In 1844 Bolivia Foreign Ministry was officially created. At the time Bolivia already had relations with some others European countries. For example with France dated from 1833. With the United States relations were established in 1849<sup>67</sup> and with the URRS in 1945. With Turkey relations started around 1950, relatively early if we compare Bolivia's engagement with other far away emerging countries like India (2012) or Iran (2007). However, despite its early establishment, not much attention and dedication was given from La Paz to cultivate and improve relations with its counterparts in Ankara.

<sup>66</sup> **El Deber**, "Mahdmoud Alawani: Bolivia es Clave para las Relaciones de Bolivia con Latin America", 27.9.2019, [https://eldeber.com.bo/mundo/mahmoud-alwani-bolivia-es-clave-para-las-relaciones-de-palestina-con-america-latina\\_66904](https://eldeber.com.bo/mundo/mahmoud-alwani-bolivia-es-clave-para-las-relaciones-de-palestina-con-america-latina_66904)

<sup>67</sup> However US Embassy was opened in La Paz in 1942.

The first consul was designated in the 90`s and not much was done until the Bolivia`s President Evo Morales first official visit to Turkey in 2019.

The present section will first explore the not so well know Bolivian diplomatic relations with Turkey. Who were the designated consuls in Istanbul? What kind of work they have done? Which problems they encounter? Also in the first subtitle Morales 2019 visit will be covered. Second, Bolivia`s economic role in Turkey, if any, will be analyzed. Does Bolivia exports something to Turkey? What? More can be done regarding trade? Finally, Bolivia`s enacted roles with Turkey will be listed. Does Bolivia enact any Turkey specific roles? Or does it enact its more general role set?

**2.3.1. Bolivian Diplomatic Relations With Turkey Overview:** Even though, as stated before, formal relations between the two countries were established in the 50`s, from the part of Bolivia the honorary consul was not designed until the 90`s. Two consuls, both Turkish nationals, served as Bolivia`s diplomatic representatives: Karlo Yakup Milkovic and his son Stefan Yakup Milkovic.

**a) First Bolivian Honorary Consul in Turkey, Karlo Yakup Milkovic:** Karlo Milovic is a Turkish citizen with Yugoslavian ancestry. He is director of a company that goes by the name of “*Tak Teknik Cihazlar Sanyı ve Ticaret*” and was Bolivia`s first honorary consul in Turkey.

According to his son, Stefan Milkovic, a Bolivian delegation visited Istanbul in 1996 for the *Habitat II* conference. However, since there was no Bolivian diplomatic mission at that time, and since casually Stefan`s wife was Bolivian, a connection was established in order to help with the visit. It was in that context that Mr.Karlo was designed as honorary consul. Stefan remembers how his father along with its mother represented Bolivia in a Latin American festival organized by the mayor of Şişli. At the event typical Bolivian food was presented and even three Bolivian nationals were hired to dance typical dances. He also recalls that when he got married with his Bolivian wife at the time there was no way of legalizing their marriage papers in Turkey and he had no other option than to do it in Spain.

In 2004 Mr.Karlo seems to have participated in a round table conversation organized by the “Cervantes Institute”, an organization from Spain dedicated to promote the Spanish Language. The discussion topic was “inform the audience better about countries were Spanish is spoken”<sup>68</sup>.

In the last decade, due to Mr.Karlo advance age, Stefan took charge of honorary consulate. He states that his father presented its resignation however the government did not accept it.

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<sup>68</sup> Instituto Cervantes, Bolivia Mesa Redonda, 14.10.2005, [https://estambul.cervantes.es/FichasCultura/Ficha26983\\_52\\_1.htm](https://estambul.cervantes.es/FichasCultura/Ficha26983_52_1.htm)

**b) Second Bolivian Honorary Consul in Turkey, Stefan Milkovic:** Stefan like his father was born in Turkey. He studied in a German school and did his bachelor degree in economics and trade in the United States and a master degree in Harvard. He worked in a Swedish pharmaceutical company for some time and started a couple software ventures which he later sold. He went back to Turkey in order to help in his father exporting and importing business. He is married a Bolivian citizen. He also help the organization of Bolivia`s President Evo Morales official visit to Turkey in 2019 and attended to all the acts and some meetings.

As noted before, there were many things to do at the consulate and Stefan`s father could not be in charge anymore. It has to be kept in mind that at the time the affairs of Bolivian citizens in Iran and other Turkey`s neighboring countries also depended from the consulate in Istanbul. Among the problems Bolivian citizens dealt with and the consulate had to intervene: one-time entry Schengen visa holders that got stuck in Turkey and could not go back to Europe, prisoners that got released and had to go back to Bolivia, a couple which illegally crossed to Greece and got detained.

According to Stefan the problem drug trafficking specially demands much attention and energy form the consulate. In 2019 there were around 60 to 80 Bolivian nationals in Turkish jails for drug trafficking. Most of them are poor people who needed desperately money: women, young, pregnant and with children. These prisoners serve a sentence of seven years on average. The honorary consulate helped them with calling their families, giving them some pocket money and cigarettes. When they finish their sentence, a repatriation flight must be also organized. There was the case of a girl who was born in jail. “You cannot send her to Bolivia (...) She speaks perfect Turkish, little Spanish”, Stefan remembers with concern.

Another limit was the lack an effective and fluid exchange of information between the Turkish consulate and the Bolivia chancellery. “Communication failed“, states Stefan. Bolivia`s diplomatic representation in Istanbul lacked information brochures, books about Bolivia and other typical products of the country which could be displayed at the consulate. For example Stefan had to prepare by himself a tourist directory of Bolivia to show Turkish nationals who were interested in visiting the country.

Most of the few Bolivians citizens who live in Turkey are women married with Turks. “The registered ones do not pass the fingers of my hand”, remarks the consul.

**c) Evo Morales Presidential visit to Turkey:** Morales arrived in Turkey on April 9<sup>th</sup> 2019. It was the first time in history that a Bolivian president visited that country. Morales participated in many events; he paid a visit to Ataturk`s Mausoleum, gave a speech at Ankara University and reunited with Turkish President Recep Tayip Erdogan. He was accompanied by Bolivia`s Ambassador to Italy Carlos Aparicio Vedia (also concurrent Ambassador to Turkey), Bolivia`s Foreign Minister Diego Pary Rodriguez and a media team of Bolivia`s national TV channel. The author of this thesis also had

the opportunity to be with the Bolivian delegation helping the Ambassador with translation and other minor tasks.

The arrival of Morales encountered some secondary logistical problems because his plane landed at the same time when Erdogan was also coming from Russia. It was not supposed to be like that and some confusion was generated. Both Bolivian and Turkey's diplomatic teams did not know exactly who to pay attention to: the Bolivian or the Turkish President.

The next day Morales gave a speech at Ankara University in an event organized by the Latin American Studies Institute. At the act Mehmet Necati Kutlu, Ankara University Latin America Studies Institute director, and Erkan Ibis, Ankara University Rector, also offered some words<sup>69</sup>. Necati inaugurated the event by saying: "President Evo Morales is someone who has imposed himself beyond his presidency (thanks to) his character, his modesty and the fact of being a native man claiming one's own". As a Latin American history researcher Necati also highlighted Bolivia's historical indigenous identity and remembered the audience how in the colonial times, during the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the mining city of Potosi had one hundredth twenty thousand inhabitants, a similar number of Istanbul's population at that time. He also took the opportunity for asking publicly to the Bolivian president the need of more Bolivian scholarship students from and the opening of the Embassy: "We want your embassy Mr. President. Embassies go a long way. They start small but after the open wide pathways". Finally Necati ended his speech speaking some aymara; one of the native languages of Bolivia. For its part Ankara University Rector Erkan Ibis remarked the role of the Latin American Studies Institute as a gate to know more about those countries people, culture and leaders. He also stated that "Bolivia with its indigenous population is a very important example for the region because of its cultural structure and protection indigenous rights". As a sign of the University intention to know more about Bolivia he gave President Morales a "friendship certificate".

Morales speech also remarked Bolivia's indigenous movement history during the colony and in the actual times. He specially wanted to transmit the following message:

"We did not make a political party based on militants, but based on social movements (...) I would say that almost two hundred years after the foundation of the Republic in Bolivia this social movements have become in social liberation movements as well as Simon Bolivar"

He also commented how when he arrived to power he found offices of the International Monetary Fund in the Bolivian Central Bank, of the CIA in the Palace of Government, of US military aggregates in the Armed Forces and US bases in Bolivia's tropical region. However, "after thirteen years of hard democratic fight we guaranteed the re-

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<sup>69</sup> A complete transcript of Kutlu, Ibis and President Morales speech can be found in annex 6.



foundation. We passed from a colonial state of a pluri-national one. The impostor, apparent state came to an end”.

One day after the event at Ankara University, Bolivia's and Turkey's president meet at the Turkish presidential complex where Morales was received with all the necessary protocols. After both presidents exchange some words in a private meeting they offered a press conference in which some common points were highlighted: improving economic relations, TIKA's more involvement in Bolivia, agreement on both countries positions regarding Palestine and Venezuela and defense cooperation intentions. Erdogan offered Bolivia eighteen quinoa separation machines, medical equipment for kidney transplants and anesthetics for women. Morales communicated that his Turkish counterpart was going to visit Bolivia at the end of that year (2019), nonetheless in October Morales resigned leaving a new government in power. Needless to say Erdogan intended visit did not materialize. Likewise it was announced that the first trimester of 2020 there were going to be direct flights from Turkey to Bolivia and until the present date (September 2020) such thing was not accomplished. The press conference ended with Morales words: “Again, I share all your (Erdogan) principles. After talking lengthily I am an admirer of Turkey”

Bolivia's honorary consul in Turkey Stefan Milkovic qualified the event as “incredible”. It was the first time both president meet alone which was “very important for them to know each other”.

**2.3.1. Bolivia's Economic Role in Turkey:** In the press conference gave by Erdogan and Morales the former remarked that one of the first topics they discussed was the economic one. Erdogan stated that even if trade had relatively grown in the last years the commercial interchange is still too low. That is why improving trade is one of the most important objectives in the relation:

“What we are waiting is to have a minimum of 500 million dollars of commercial volume (...) we also need to strengthen and improve bilateral investment in the areas of energy, like geothermal systems, solar energy and other types”

The Turkish president also showed also interest in the lithium (although until the date nothing has been concreted).

For its part Morales stated that a week before his visit the Commander of the Bolivian Armed Forces arrived first in order to acquire equipment for fighting drug trafficking. He also remarked that he will talk with Bolivian Minister of Defense to “accelerate and facilitate defense material acquisition”. This, if realized, could mean an important purchase.

However Bolivia, as a lockdown country, has no access to the sea and thus has no ports which to export or import from. As Bolivia's consul Stefan Milkovic remarks, even if

there is a Turkish market to export minerals, soy or quinoa, Bolivia`s “(no access) to the sea complicates it (...) it would be better to export products with added value that not occupy large spaces”, he suggests.

Even if the non-official website of the Bolivian consulate in Istanbul states that its objective is to: “improve mutual trade-economic and cultural relations (...) provide support to those who will travel to Bolivia for business”, no substantial advances like the signing of trade agreements have been made.

Nonetheless, if Turkey is seen as a part of Bolivia`s wider relation with the Middle East, the economic performance is not that weak. In fact, as it can be seen in the following table, and as it has been seen in the subtitle 2.2.3. *Bolivia`s economic role in the Middle East*, Turkey occupies the second top export destination of Bolivian goods to the Middle East just after the United Arab Emirates.

**Table 7**  
**Bolivia`s Exports to the Middle East (2018)**

| Country Global Ranking   | Million US Dollars | Main export products  |
|--------------------------|--------------------|---|
| 10. United Arab Emirates | 361\$              | Gold in unwrought forms non-monetary (99.6%)  |
| 18. Turkey               | 91\$               | Jewellery and parts of precious metals (97%), raw thin (1.6%), oil seeds (0.3%), buckwheat (0.02%), veneer sheets (0.01%), raw wood (0.01%) |
| 32. Israel               | 5.29\$             | Brazil nuts (49%), buckwheat (25%), broad beans (7.3%), aluminum bars (7.1%), tungsten ore (5.4%)   |
| 63. Morocco              | 0.24\$             | Palm hearts (100%)  |
| 67. Lebanon              | 0.17\$             | Buckwheat (30%), brazil nuts (17%), palm hearts (13%), shaped wood (10%), wood carpentry (9.8%)   |
| 74. Libya                | 0.10\$             | No data available   |
| 78. Saudi Arabia         | 0.07\$             | Lemons and limes (82%), oil seeds (15%), scrap aluminum (3.5%)  |
| 79. Bahrain              | 0.05\$             | Broad and horse beans dried (98%)   |
| 80. Qatar                | 0.04\$             | No data available   |
| 86. Kuwait               | 0.02\$             | Buckwheat (42%), oil seeds (18%), broad beans (17%), pasta (11%)  |
| 89. Egypt                | 0.01\$             | Raw tin (98%), veneer sheets (4.3%),  |

Source: own with data from IMF Direction of Trade Statistics and The Observatory of Economy Complexity

As noted jewellery practically is the only good Bolivia export to Turkey. In this sense, it is necessary not only to rise the volume of the actual traded goods but more importantly, at least from the Bolivian perspective, to diversify it.

Morales in his speech at Ankara University stated that Bolivia five years ago (meaning 2014) had started exporting quinoa and chia to Turkey. Nonetheless, such product, according to the data from the IMF and OEC, does not even account for more than one percent. Indeed in the economic area there is much untapped potential and much work left to do.

**2.4.3. Bolivia Enacted Roles with Turkey:** The present research identifies three roles as the main enacted ones in the relation with Turkey. These are “bastion of revolution”, “system challenger/multipolar world supporter” and “anti-imperialist/colonialist agent”. It is argued that due to the low involvement of Bolivia in Turkey; its weak diplomatic presence, lack of clear objectives and priorities, more specific roles, ones more attuned and appropriate for a effective relation with Turkey, were not created<sup>70</sup>. Thus, Bolivia had no other option to play the general roles it played indistinctively with any other party in the international stage. The idea of role location was taken into account.

**a) Bastion of revolution:** Bolivia acted a “bastion of revolution” in the sense that it showed Turkey its support and improvement of the mutual support for Venezuela. As he stated in the press conference at the Turkish Government complex: “I share the (Turkish) position regarding Venezuela and other countries that are threatened with military intervention. I know Venezuela`s government and people really well. They are revolutionary people”. Interestingly now word about Iran, Bolivia`s closest and most “revolutionary” agent in the Middle East, was said.

**b) System challenger multipolar world agent:** According to former Bolivian Ambassador in Russia Hugo Villaroel Bolivia`s Foreign Policy has to be understood within the context of the “transformation process” of the Morales government. It was thanks for the figure of Morales that Bolivia “has gained an important place in the international context”, was able to engage itself with other more powerful countries such as Russia or Turkey and gained leadership recognition in various international forums. For the ex-ambassador the objective of the Bolivian Foreign Ministry is to “search equilibrium in international relations based on multilateralism”. The cultivation of relations with Russia and Turkey would serve that vision of a “multi polar world” of which Bolivia supports.

**c) Anti-imperialist/colonialist agent:** The Bolivian position towards Venezuela and Palestine clearly showed Turkey Morales antagonism to US foreign policy. For example when talking about Venezuela`s Juan Guadio Evo Morales stated: “despite of

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<sup>70</sup> For its part, as it is going to be seen in the next chapter, Turkey was able to create more specific roles for its relation with Bolivia.

ideological differences, to design a president is like designing a viceroy during colonial times. We don't share the way things are managed from the US"

In summary, as stated by Morales (2016), Bolivia's objective in the Middle East was a diversification of partners, and, most importantly, to increase its international profile, prestige and visibility by advocating mainly to revolutionary principles (anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism) and in minor degree populist causes (indigenism, environmentalism).

## **2.4. BOLIVIA'S ROLE EXPECTATIONS/IMAGE PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS TURKEY**

Questionnaires were handled to twenty Bolivian nationals, mainly young people between the ages of 20 and 30. A range of different questions (fifteen in total) were asked with the aim of knowing their perception about Turkey. The answers provided were enlightening in many aspects. Sometimes their perception was not far away from reality while other times it differed significantly. The questionnaires were made according to what has been seen in the theoretical framework chapter subtitle "1.3.2."; where reviewed authors proposed different perception "measuring" tools. Questions were made and organized based on that insight.

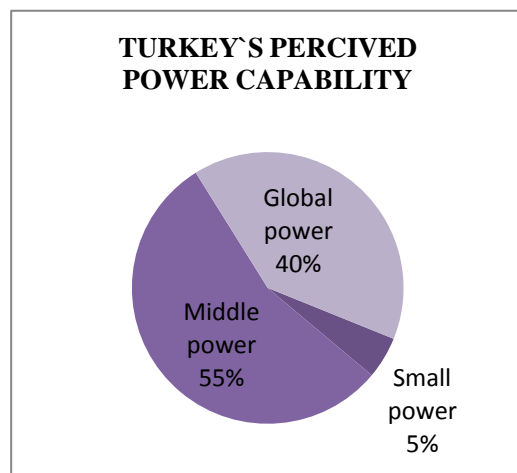
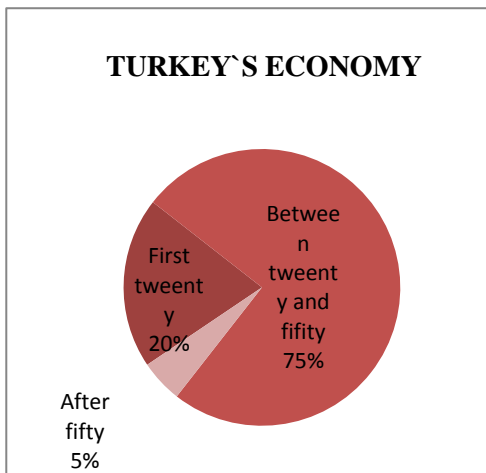
This section will analyze the recollected answers. In that way a clearer understanding of what image do Bolivian youth has about Turkey will be determined.

**2.4.1. Bolivian youth perception of Turkey:** Fourteen questions, of the fifteen, were about four different topics: potential perceived relationship, perceived Turkish role in the Middle East, perceived Turkish role in Latin America and other perceptions.

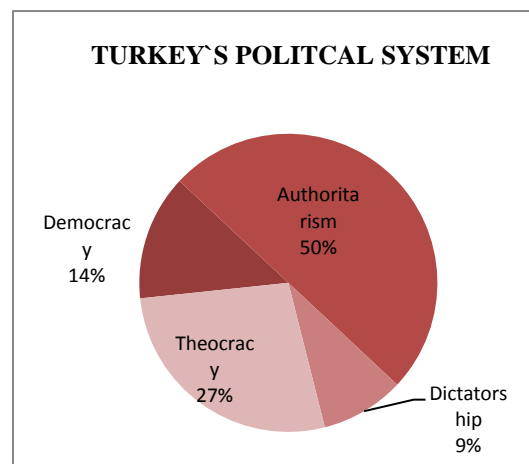
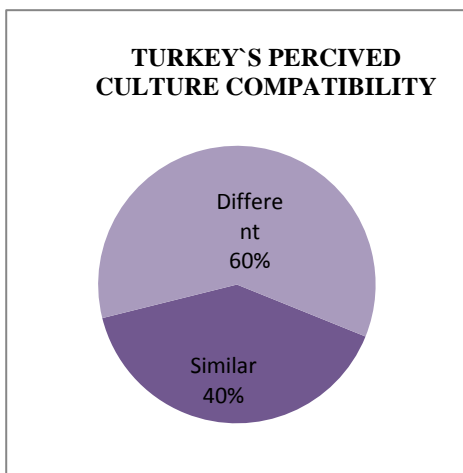
**a) Potential perceived relationship:** Questions regarding the potential perceived relationship<sup>71</sup> in the areas of power/capability, threat/opportunity and culture were asked. Regarding perceived power capability almost all of the interviewed see Turkey as a middle power (55%) or global power (40%). The image of Turkey as a small power -or what is the same as a weak country- apparently does not exist in the mind of many young Bolivians. Nonetheless Turkey is not perceived as one of the 20 most powerful economies in the world. As it can be seen in the following chart most interviewed think Turkey is between the 20 and 50 position. Even if Turkey is effectively within world's top 20 economies and is a member of the G20 there is a misperception. It can be argued that Turkey has failed to project an image of an emerging global power in Bolivia and, as usually economic power is equated with power in general, it also can be said that Turkey has failed to project an image of one of the top 20 most powerful countries.

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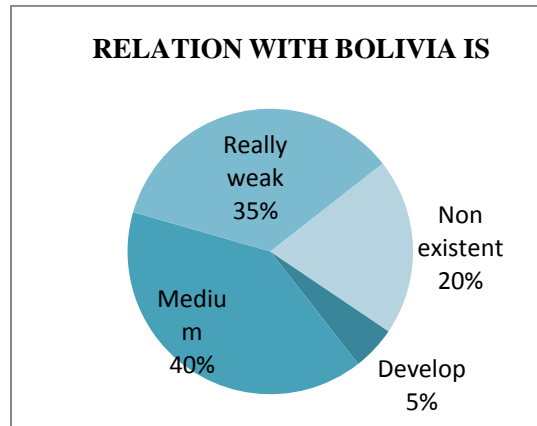
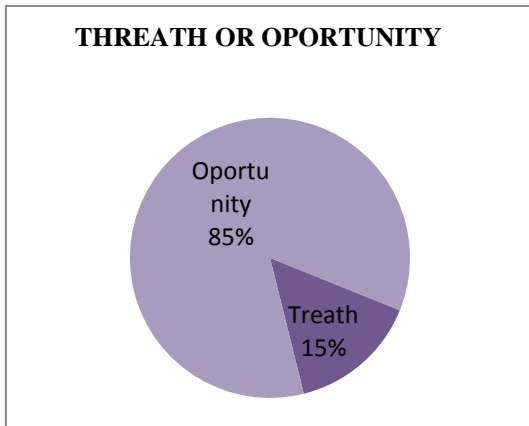
<sup>71</sup> The "potential perceived relationships" as a perceptions measure tool was taken from the work of Herrman, Voss, Schooler and Ciarrochi (1997)



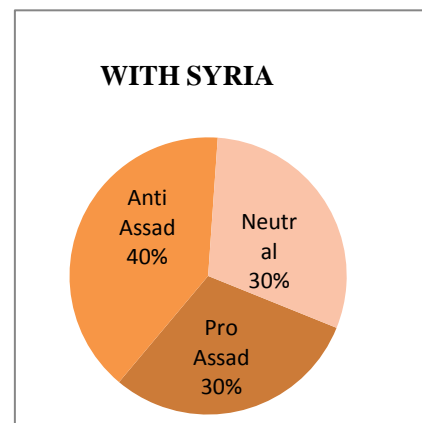
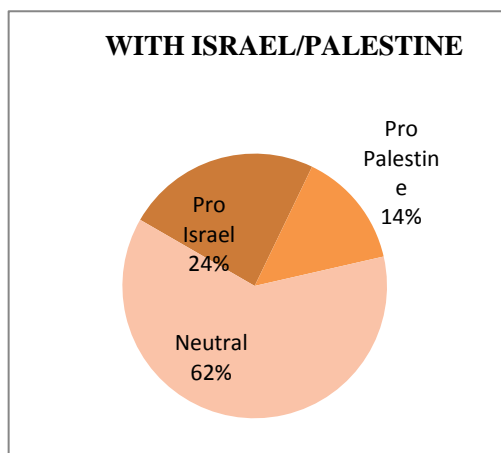
Regarding perceived culture little more than the half of the interviewed (60%) considers Turkish culture very different from Bolivia while the rest (40%) considers it similar. Culture perception is closely related to political systems. If the perceived country is seen to have the same political system then it is more likely to think the cultures are also somewhat similar. However, only 14% of the interviews see Turkey as a democracy while the rest as an autocracy (55%), dictatorship (9%) and even a theocracy (27%) like Iran or Saudi Arabia. In this aspect it is necessary to work harder to project a Turkish democracy image in Bolivia.



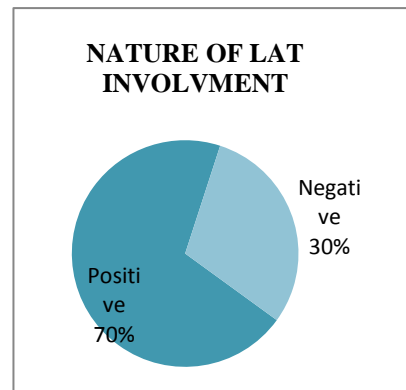
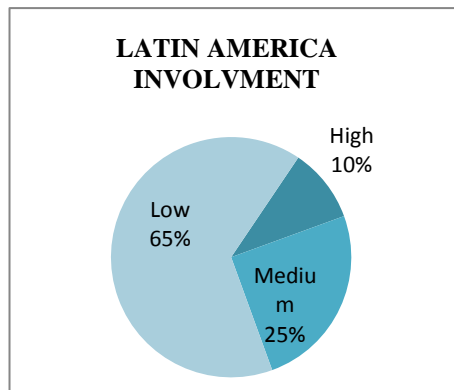
Finally 85% of interviewed think Turkey is an opportunity for cooperation and Bolivia should fully engage. Nonetheless when asked about what is the current status of Bolivia's bilateral relation with Turkey, as seen in the graphic, only 5% thought the relation is strong and really developed. The majority saw it as moderately develop (40%), followed by really weak (35%) and nonexistent (20%); a perception which is not far away from reality, as seen in the previous sections. The making of more public events by Turkey's diplomatic mission in Bolivia can help to improve this aspect.



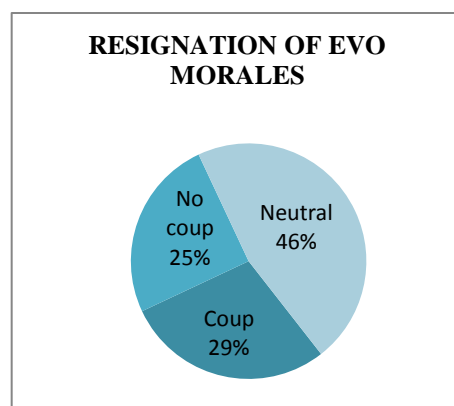
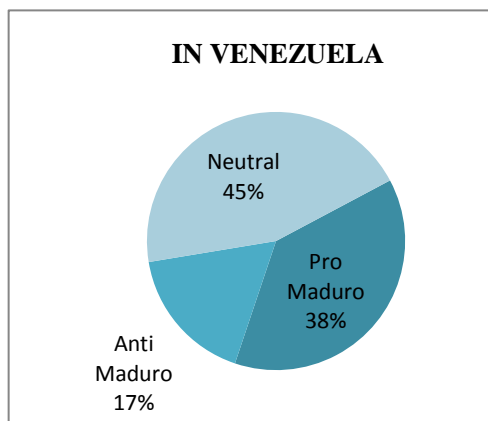
**b) Perceived Turkish role in the Middle East:** Questions concerning the perception of Turkey`s role in the Middle East were also asked; mainly Turkey`s relation with Israel/Palestine and Syria. In the first case the majority has an image of Turkey as being neutral in the Palestine/Israel conflict. This is understood and can be explained due to the lack of general information in Bolivia about such topics. However it is worth to note, leaving aside the neutral position response, that most of the interviewed think of Turkey as an Israel ally (24%) rather than a Palestinian one (14%); a critical misconception. It would be necessary to link the Palestinian cause more to Turkey in Bolivia. In the second case interestingly the majority (40%) thought of Turkey as being opposed to Assad (which is true). The rest of responses were equally divided in Turkey being a supporter of Assad (30%) and being neutral (30%)



**c) Perceived Turkish role in the Latin America:** More than half of the interviewed consider Turkey`s involvement in Latin America low (65%) followed by medium (25%) and high (10%). This perception can be explained because the people asked saw things from Bolivia, where Turkish involvement could be considered low. Nonetheless, as seen in previous sections, Turkey has diplomatic presence in all Latin American countries. On the same topic, 70% of the interviewed saw this involvement as positive while the 30% rest as negative. In the case of the bilateral relations with Bolivia, needless to say, it is of vital importance that Turkey`s presence is seen as positive.

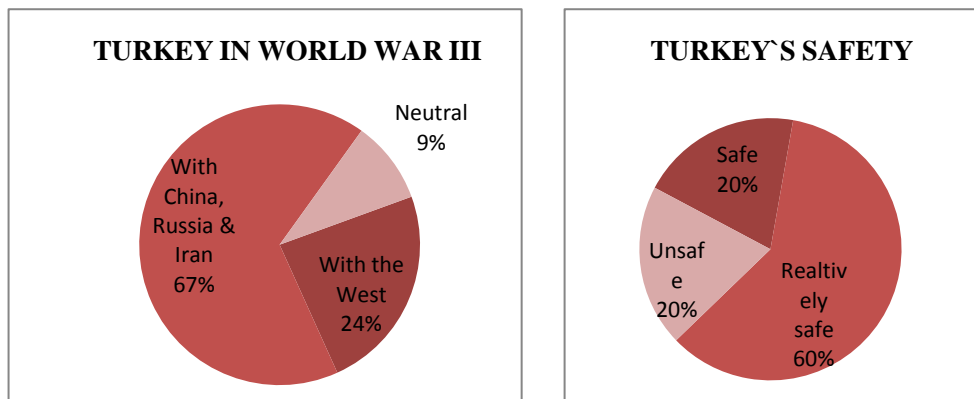


Regarding more specific Turkish roles in Latin America almost half of the interviewed (45%) have the perception of Turkey as having a neutral position vis a vis Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro. This image is closely followed by the view of Turkey supporting him (38%) and only a minority (17%) considers Turkey as being opposed to him. This topic needs to be treated with caution due to the sensitive nature of it. Many Bolivians and Latinos in general, have very polarized views about Maduro. So in order to cultivate a good perception of the role of Turkey in Latin America, and Bolivia for that matter, might be better to stick with a neutral position in that case. About the events that happened in Bolivia on October 2019 and ended with the resignation of Evo Morales, most of the interviewed also saw Turkey as having a neutral position (46%). A 29% thought Turkey denounced the events as a coup and 25% saw Turkey as having the position of no coup in Bolivia. In reality Turkey adhered to the coup version of events. This can be explained because most of Bolivia's inflexion points in its relation with Ankara were done under the Evo Morales government. However, like in the case of Maduro's Venezuela, it is better to project a neutral image regarding this sensitive topic.



**d) Other perceptions:** In order to know what perception do young Bolivians have about Turkey in the international system of alliances the following question was asked: if there was World War III with which countries do you think Turkey will be allies? As seen in the chart below the majority (67%) saw Turkey allied with Russia, Iran and

China, while a quarter of the interviewed (24%) with the US, Europe, Australia and Canada. This means the perception of Turkey as being part of the “system challengers” countries and not part of the west is prevalent. Even though in the reality Turkey is part of NATO and countries like Russia, Iran and China are far from being considered strong allies. Finally, more than half of the interviewed (60%) consider Turkey as relatively safe country. The rest sees it as safe (20%) and unsafe country (20%). For tourist purposes, here is of great importance for project the image of a safer Turkey. Even if it’s in the tumultuous region of Middle East, it can be seen as an oasis of tranquility.



**2.4.2. Turkey`s image in Bolivia:** What three images, concepts, things, words do you associate with Turkey? That was the last question asked to the interviewed. Unlike the previous questions there were no options to select and they could write down whatever response they considered most adequate. A variety of answers were provided. However, as it can be seen in the table below, the most common image is somewhat related to politics.

**Table 8**  
**Most Common Images/Concepts Associated with Turkey in Bolivia**

| Category          | Given word, concept, image   |
|-------------------|--|
| Religion related  | Islam (x4), religion (x2), mosque, crescent moon   |
| Political related | Military power, socialism, authoritarianism, conflict, war, dead people on the sea, no gender equality, sexism, Putin, good government, go against capitalism and global order |
| Economic related  | Economic power, economy, weapon trading, solid economy, wealthy, tailoring, poor population  |
| Culture related   | Food (x2), kebab (x2), carpets (x2), soup operas, movies, hot air balloons, turban, culture, multicultural, multiethnic, flag, galatasaray, tourism                            |
| History related   | Constantinople, Mohammed II  |
| Adjectives        | Cooperation, disciplined, big eyes, big noose, organized, very religious, culture people, mystery  |
| Other             | Spain, girls   |

Source: Own



Some conclusion can be made. First, in the political related category, the image of Turkey being a “sexist”, where there is no “gender equality” seems to be prevalent. Also the picture of the death body of Alan Kurdi in Turkish seacoast of 2015 appears to have had great impact which reached Bolivia. That picture is also related to the idea of Turkey as a “war” or “conflict” zone. Second, in the economic related category, most people seem to consider Turkey as an “economic power” country, as demonstrated in the subtitle above. Third, in the culture related category, the Turkish series appear to have great impact in Bolivia. According to Mehmet Necati Kutlu, Ankara University Latin America Studies faculty director, in the past few years there has been an increase of Bolivian couples who decided to put their sons Turkish names such as Kara, Zafer, Mavi, Berna, Melek because of Turkish series. Finally, by looking at all the categories, it can be argued that Turkey is still considered to be an “Arab country”: one with conflict, where there is no gender equality, authoritarian but wealthy. The image of Turkey in Bolivia seems not being able to clearly distinguish itself from the broader image of “arabs”. This misperception might not be negative in itself. It is an interesting aspect and deserves some explanation.

Bolivian image of Turkey and Turks is deeply influenced, as seen in the “2.2.1” subtitle, by the Arab migration from the Ottoman Empire that reached Latin American. In Bolivia most of the Arabs belonged to the upper class of Bolivia society. Not only for their economic success of but also because, racially speaking, they were considered to be “whites”. Due to both of these things friction emerged, at least at the beginning. One hand, envy for the economic success of foreigners grew, and on the other hand, general resentment feelings against “white” invaders flourish again (after the colonization of Bolivia whites were at the top of the social pyramid). Nonetheless, despite of these early frictions, many of the offspring that arrived in Bolivia<sup>72</sup> are by now completely assimilated.

An extract from a 1976 interview to the president of the “Arab Union Youth Group” in Bolivia illustrate this tension:

*“We want to be considered Bolivians and we feel that we are Bolivians. I never say that I am an Arab or Turco (...) It is the other people -Bolivians- who differentiate us. They think of us as foreigners. It is due to envy -they perceive us wealthy (...) when we have disagreements, they will call us Turcos to insult us”.* (Ostwerwiel, 1997:164).

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<sup>72</sup> Three main waves from the Middle East arrived to Bolivia: second half of 19<sup>th</sup> century, begin of the 20<sup>th</sup> century - WWI- and first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century -WWII.

## CHAPTER 3. TURKEY ROLE ANALYSIS

In a similar manner than the previous chapter and using the same analytical structure, the present section has also four main objectives: first to identify Turkey`s national role conception (what are Turkey`s prevalent roles? do the actual roles were the same as the old ones? how did they change?), second to analyze Turkey`s role in Latin America (what roles do Turkey enacts in Latin America? what are the major foreign policy principles that guide it`s behavior in the region? is Turkey politically and economically heavily involved in Latin America or not?), third, evaluate Turkey`s engagement with Bolivia (how did the diplomatic relations with Bolivia developed? what where the inflexion points and the most common barriers, problems? what roles do Turkey enacts with Bolivia?) and fourth to examine Turkey role expectations towards Bolivia (what image Turkish have about Bolivia? is this perception negative or positive, misleading or accurate? What can be done in order to project a more appropriate perception?)

### 3.1. TURKEY NATIONAL ROLE CONCEPTION

In order to understand Turkey`s actual/prevalent role set a short overview of its national role conception historical evolution is necessary. The present section will address how Turkey national role conception changed after the fall of the Ottoman Empire until the AKP government.

**3.1.1. Turkey National Role Conception (NRC) Historical Evolution:** Turkey`s role differed since the creation of the Republic. However, as it going to be seen, Turkey`s “original” roles were mainted even during the AKP period.

**a) Turkey NRC after WWII:** Plich (2012:25), applying Holsti`s (1960) typology, classifies the Turkish NRC after WWI as “internal developer” and “independent”. After the formation of the Turkish republic Ataturk (1923-1938) decided to adopt a risk-averse foreign policy which focused more on the domestic economic growth and political stability (internal developer role)<sup>73</sup>. Also, the trauma generated by the 1920 *Treaty of Sevres* made turkey distrust of foreign powers (independent role). In this sense, the very birth of the Turkish republic was an act of not accepting what other hegemonic countries wanted to impose.<sup>74</sup> There was a break with the Ottoman past and now the example to follow was the west and their secular modern European states. Tevfik Rüştü Aras, Ataturk`s foreign minister, once declared: “Turkey is now a western power -the death of a peasant in the Balcans is more important to Turkey that the death of the King of Afghanistan” (Gunay, 2019:463).

**b) Turkey NRC during the Cold war:** During the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, according to Günay (2019:75), two main global events “had a huge impact on Turkey self-perception as well on its relations with others”: the end of the Cold War in 1991 and the *civilization*

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<sup>73</sup> This does not mean that Turkey isolated itself; it mainted relations with others countries but limited.

<sup>74</sup> The roles of “indepentent” or “anti-hegemonic” would become part of the role set of Republican Turkey.

*debates*, which gained force after 9/11 attacks<sup>75</sup>. During the Cold War Turkey got closer to the United States and in general to the anti-communist side (Ankara feared Soviet invasion in the Eastern provinces of Ardahan and Kars). In 1949 Turkey joined to the *Council of Europe* and in 1952 NATO. Turkey was the only NATO member who limited with the URSS and its role as such was mainly to contain soviet influenced Arab nationalism. According to Plich (2012) the day Turkey joined NATO it's "independent" role was left aside and changed to a "faithful-ally". However the "internal developer" role was still being enacted. This kemalist set of roles were maintained and protected by the Turkish military elite. Nonetheless, with the end of the international order generated by Cold War dynamics, Turkey had to redefine its place in the new world politics chessboard.

**c) Turkey NRC after the Cold war:** Many new states appeared next to Ankara's borders: from the ex-Yugoslavia to the ex-soviet Caucasus. More importantly: "in the era after Cold War the notions of East and West were being redrawn along civilizational lines (...) Ankara entered and difficult process of soul-searching" (Günay, 2019:463). In the post-Cold war period, Turkish Prime Minister Turgut Özal (1989-1993) was the first to break the kemalist cautious and limited approach with neighbors. He challenged the "internal developer" role, tried the "regional leader" and reinforced the "faithful ally" one (Plich, 2012:28). When Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in 1990 Özal rapidly joined the Embargo and closed the two Iraqi pipelines that crossed Turkish territory and ended in the Yumurtalik harbor. Turkish role as "member of the western world" was not anymore played as a passive block against Soviet aggression. Now it was being actively played. During this time Turkey under the Özal administration also played the "bridge" role: being a connection, rather than an obstacle, between east and west. After Özal's government Turkey experienced a decade of political and economic hardships, until Erdogan's AKP won the elections in 2002.

**d) Turkey NRC during the AKP rule:** The rise of the AKP to power marked a new era for Turkish history. Unprecedented economic growth and a relative uncommon political stability came with Erdogan. In the previous decade (1992-2003) nine different governments were in power and three economic crises (1994, 1999 and 2001) had shaken the country. In such unstable scenario, it was hard for the Turkish decision makers to play a constant role. Nonetheless, since the AKP won the elections in 2002, there was more constant and clearer role on what role Turkey should enact.

Now, did the AKP really mean a total rupture with previous traditional roles that the country enacted? Or Turkey is still playing the roles it used to? Başer (2012) points out two theories which tackle this issue: the shift of axis theory and the autonomy theory. For the shift of axis theory the cause of the fundamental change in Turkish foreign

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<sup>75</sup> "In contrast to class and ideological conflicts where the key question was 'Which side are you on?' and people could and did choose sides and change sides in conflicts between civilizations, the question is "What are you?" (Günay, 2019: 471)

policy (getting away from the west, looking to the east, reviving Islamic identity, more active-global reaching activity) is not found in a problematic relation with a particular western country but instead: “is the result of a whole sale transformation of the perception of what role Turkey should play in the world” (Başer, 2012:7). On other side the autonomy theory argues that Turkey did not break with the west, rather, due to its economic growth and more confidence the international arena, is just trying to be more independent and look for new markets. The author appears to support the autonomy theory: “none of the roles expressed by the AKP leadership are new roles” (:14).

In other words the roles Turkey enacted during the AKP administration (bridge, example, integrator, even member of the western world, great power and integration with the Turkic world) were adopted by previous governments, with more or less prominence. They always were there. According to this line of thought, it can be concluded that Turkey basic role set did not change under AKP rule<sup>76</sup>, rather what it changed is what particular role of that role set is given more attention to depending on the situation<sup>77</sup>. Dalacoura (2017) agrees with this view stating that Davutoglu new Foreign Policy more than eclipsing or replacing traditional Kemalism has “added a new layer to it” (:4)

**d) The role of Davutoglu:** Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu (2009-2014), based on western geostrategic thinkers like Nicholaes Spikeman, Karl Haushofer, Harfold Mackinder, argued that the Turkish traditional foreign policy which aimed to maintaining the territorial integrity was no longer valid after the end of the Cold war and needed to be replaced by a more imperial and expansionist policy<sup>78</sup>. Turkey had to either expand and control its natural zone of influence or “hinterland” (Balkans, Middle East and Caucasus) or deny and loose its privileged geographical position in the world as a global power. For Plich (2012) this was a new foreign policy paradigm known as “neo-otmanism”; wich gradually replaced the “kemalist” roles implemented by Ataturk; “(Turkey) attempt to adopt a new role. The old roles where incompatible with the modern chessboard” (:7). Neotomanism did not limit its influence expansion to its immediate neighbors, but also, in its revived quest for status, expanded to “non-traditional regions (...) beyond the regional limits of Turkish Foreign Policy”; meaning East Asia, Africa and Latin America. (Donelli & Gonzales.2018:54).

**d) Turkey NRC during the Arab Spring:** For Başer (2012) the most dominant Turkish role during the period of 1992-2012 was the “member of the western world”. Although, he admits, “affinity with the US (based on UNGA votes) was gradually decreasing” (:3). The reason Başer marks 2012 as the end of the “member of the western word” role is the Arab Spring and its consequences for Turkey. During the

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<sup>76</sup> As it changed from the Ottoman Empire desintegration to the formation of the new republic

<sup>77</sup> Also, the roles played by the AKP are more “active” in terms of engagin with the world.

<sup>78</sup> Turkey had to transform itself from a “wing state” (during the Cold War) to a “central” state, with potential to be a global power.

protests many parties of the Arab countries in transition, such as the Egyptian Freedom and Justice Part or the Libyan Justice Construction Part, viewed Turkey as a role model. However, the admiration and opportunity for implementing the Turkish model did not last long<sup>79</sup>. In the case of Egypt Turkey’s image of a neutral party turned into a pro Muslim Brotherhood one. “Turkey was not perceived as an actor standing up for democracy, but as an outside actor pushing a particular agenda via democratic process” (Stein, 2014: 43). As a consequence of the Turkish Foreign Policy adopted during the Arab uprisings, which embraced the changes in the Arab world and tried to fully implement Davutoglus doctrine by supporting Muslim Brotherhood linked parties, Turkey lost much of what it had cultivated and gained during the previous period and even ended up in the risk of being completely isolated. As a consequence of this, the government was forced “to seek support abroad whenever and from whomever it can find it” (Dalacoura.2017:3)

**3.1.2. Turkey Role Sets:** A summary of the historical enacted roles of the Turkish Republic can be seen in the following table:

**Table 9**  
**Overview of Turkey National Role Conception Historical Evolution**

| Historical Period                            | Enacted Roles   |
|--|---|
| After foundation of the republic             | Internal developer, independent   |
| During Cold War                              | Internal developer, faithful ally   |
| During the Ozal post-Cold War administration | Regional leader, faithful ally, member of the western world, bridge   |
| During the AKP                               | Integration with the Turkic world, member of the western world, bridge, regional leader, natural leader/model |
| After Arab Spring                            | Integration with the Turkic world, bridge, protector of minorities  |

Source: Own.

Now, Turkey`s prevalent role set is as follows:

**a) Turkey as a bridge:** Not only between Europe and Asia but also between developed and developing world, between the Global North and the Global South

**b) Turkey as a natural leader/model:** Guzelerde (2017) writes: “There is little doubt Turkey perceives itself as a model” (:98). Although it can be argued that in the Middle East, Turkey, thanks of its economic growth and relative stability (and not because its political “democratic” system), is perceived more as an “aspiration” than a “model”.

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<sup>79</sup> With the events in Syria Turkey, in an attempt to follow a more active liberal foreign policy, started to take sides and building an image of a foreign aggressor.

According to Gürzel (2014:100) in the last decade three recent events challenged the Turkish “model” role: the 2013 Gezi Park Protests, the repression against the Fetullah Gulen Movement and the failed 2016 coup d’etat.

**c) Turkey as big brother:** May only applicable just for other Turkic states such as Azerbaijan or Turkmenistan. Turkey acts as the most relevant and powerful Turkic state and as such has the responsibility to guide and take care of other smaller Turkic states.

**d) Turkey as minority protector:** Protector of Muslim minorities worldwide. Muslims around the globe also see Erdogan’s Turkey as a reference on religious matters.

**e) Turkey as mediator:** For example along with Brazil in an attempt to resolve the Iranian Nuclear issue.

**f) Turkey as autonomous NATO ally:** As seen before during Cold War NATO occupied a central position in Turkish Foreign Policy. However from the 90’s onwards it was possible and desirable for Turkey the diversification of partners.

**g) Turkey as swing state:** Swing states are those whose alliances are not clear. They may “swing” from one band to another. Other swing states are Brazil, India and Indonesia. Swing states are usually also “emerging powers” or “intermediate states”. Swing states may be also viewed as “active independents” according to Holsti’s typology.

**h) Turkey as emerging power/ new middle power (status):** Guzelerde (2017) catalogs Turkey until 2013 as an emerging power. After that year Turkey began to be new middle power. Middle powers or “intermediate states” have considerable economic resources, they search for more international recognition, and they criticize the global power distribution asymmetries and have some capacity for international action. (Gürzel, 2014:101). With this new status, “the AKP leadership perceives itself as having not only the responsibility but the power to act” (Gürzel, 2011:98)

**i) Turkey as global power candidate (status):** Both Donelli & Gonzales (2016) and Plich (2015) set the 2008-9 Global Crisis as the date when Turkey searched to be a global power. Turkey’s call to redefine the UN Security Council, according to Gürzel (2014), constituted one of the “key plans in Turkey’s attempts to leverage itself into a global role” (:100). Nonetheless, even if President Erdogan is calling for a “new global order”, “Turkey has yet to settle on any definitive vision for that new order beyond expanded representation in key forums” (:102)

A question remains: Is Turkey enacting too many roles? “Turkey does not know who it is”, writes French journalist Thierry Meyssan<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> **Voltaire Network**, “Western Propaganda Against Turkey”, 14.04.2010, [www.voltairenet.org/article209397.html](http://www.voltairenet.org/article209397.html)

## 3.2. TURKEY ROLE IN LATIN AMERICA

Latin American constitutes the background scenario in which Turkey develops its relation with Bolivia. Bolivia was not the first country in the region which Turkey decided to engage with. On the contrary, it is one of the last and logical conclusion of Turkey's broader Latin American plan. For those reasons it is important for first understand how Ankara framed its relation with the region.

This section will first look at Turkey-Latin American relations from an historical perspective. Which were the first Latin American countries that established relations with Turkey? Why? What was the at the time context? Secondly, some of the motivations behind Turkish foreign policy towards Latin American will be explored. Is Turkey's approachment to Latin America a new phenomenon? Also special attention will be given to the use of soft power. Third, Turkey economic role in the region will be examined. With which Latin American countries Turkey trades the most with? What are the main exported and imported goods to/from the region? Finally, Turkey's enacted roles in Latin American will be presented. Are they in harmony with its prevalent main set of roles?

**3.2.1. Turkey and Latin America Relations Historical Overview:** The beginning of the official relations between Turkey and Latin America usually is traced to the mid-nineteenth century. Initially it was the Ottoman consulate in Washington the one also in charge for Central and South America regions (Önsoy. 2017). However, even before these formal diplomatic channels were opened, there were already contacts between the two regions.

**a) During the Ottoman Empire:** Rigoberto Menéndez Paredes (2007) book "*Los Árabes en Cuba*" (Arabs in Cuba) register that in 1596 a ship of 44 Muslims slaves arrived in at the time Spanish controlled port of La Habana. From these slaves, Necati (2013:27) states that at least nine of them were Turks. This group is considered the first known Turks who arrived to Latin America<sup>81</sup>.

After the middle Ages, the naval force the Ottoman Empire rivaled those of Spain or Italy. Thus, it is not surprising to know that as early as 1517, when Piri Reis drew his famous map in his "*Kitab-ı Bahriye*" (Book of Navigation), the Ottoman Empire was aware of the "discovery" of Latin America.

Another book; "*Tarih ul-Hind il-Garbi*"<sup>82</sup> (*The History of the India of the West*), also proves early Ottoman knowledge of the "new" continent. In the posterior almost three centuries of Spanish and Portuguese colonization of Latin America, the arrival of

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<sup>81</sup> The name of these slaves were: Anadolulu Yusuf, Gelibolulu İbrahim, Anadolulu Recep, Anadolulu Ali, İstanbullu Hamit, Anadolulu Veli, Karadenizli Turgut ve Anadolulu İbrahim

<sup>82</sup> *This work* mainly deals with Central and South America; its geography, people, flora and cotains and quite accurate map of the American continent. It was printed in 1730 in Constantinople by İbrahim Müteferrika, however the original author is unknown and it is believed the book was written as early as the end of XVI century (Necati, 2013:27)

Ottomans was accidental. However, as seen in the second chapter, since the 1860's until the end of the WWI many migration waves came voluntary from Ottoman dominated lands to Latin America. Most of these migrants were Arabs holding ottoman passports and became known as the "turcos". According to Kukovec (1995:60) the total Ottoman emigration the American Continent between 1881-1914 was 1.2 million; half of that number were Arab speaking people from Syria and Mount Lebanon.

It was in this context that the Empire found itself in the need of establishing diplomatic representations in Latin America in order to "look out" for subjects. The Brazilian Empire was the first South American country to establish relations with the Ottomans in 1858. Even emperor Pedro II of Brazil (1872-86) visited the Ottoman territories of Egypt in 1871 and Lebanon, Syria and Palestine in 1876 to "promote immigration to Brazil" (Ayuso et al, 2015:26). It did not take long until other Latin American countries followed the Brazilian example.

First contacts with the short Second Mexican Empire of Maximilian took place in 1864. With Cuba a consul was appointed in as early as 1873. With Venezuela a communication channel was opened during 1880's. With Argentina a consulate opened in 1899. With Chile formalized relations were institutionalized in 1913. (Önsoy, 2017:241-244).

**b) After the foundation of the Republic:** After the deposition of Sultan Mehmet VI, which marked the end of the Ottoman Empire and the foundation of the Modern Republic of Turkey in 1923, Chile, Argentina, Mexico and Brazil were the first Latin American countries to officially recognize the new state. During this time interregional relations were rather weak, if compared to the period after the Cold War. For example, no presidential visits were exchanged until 90's. This can be explained due to, as seen at the beginning of this chapter, the cautious and kind of isolationist Turkish foreign policy. Nonetheless, this does not mean that there was zero contact between regions. On the contrary, relations kept developing in a slow but constant manner. As it can be seen in the next table, numerous embassies were opened in this time.

**Table 10**  
**Turkey Embassies Opened in Latin America During the 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

| <b>COUNTRY</b> | Chile | Brazil | Argentina | México | Venezuela | Peru | Cuba |
|----------------|-------|--------|-----------|--------|-----------|------|------|
| <b>YEAR</b>    | 1930  | 1930   | 1938      | 1947   | 1957      | 1965 | 1979 |

Source: own table made with the information on Önsoy (2017)

The decade that followed the fall of the Berlin wall saw much progress in the development of relations between Turkey and Latin America. This can be explained, as seen before, due to the end of the Cold War, which allowed to "empower Turkey's role beyond the general Atlantic alliance and the NATO membership" (Donelli and Gonzales, 2018:53). In 1992 Argentine president Carlos Menem, of whom both of his parents were of Syrian origin, officially visited Turkey. It was first time a president from Latin America came to Ankara. Three years later, in 1955 Suleyman Demirel



made a tour to Argentina, Chile and Brazil. Eight bilateral agreements were signed. This visit also was the first time a Turkish President visited Latin America.

**c) During the XXI century:** At the end of the decade, especially under Turkey Foreign Minister Ismail Cem (1997-2002) relations kept developing. In 1998, as part of *The Action Plant for Latin and the Caribbean* (“*Latin America ve Karayipler Eylem Planı*”)<sup>83</sup>, a three-day summit took place in Ankara chaired by Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz. In the meeting representatives from Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, Cuba, Chile and Venezuela were present. The same year Turkey Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz visited Mexico (it was the first time a Turkish President made an official visit to that country) and Foreign Minister Ismael Cem visited Cuba, Venezuela and Argentina. During this period, it seemed that Ankara started to prioritize Latin America<sup>84</sup>.

With the beginning of the 21th century the strong Turkish interest in Latin America did not decreased in the AKP administration. On the contrary, under the Erdogan government, Turkish involvement in Latin America got only stronger. In 2004 Brazilian Foreign Minister Celso Amorin went to Ankara. It was the first time a Brazilian high rank official visited Turkey after the foundation of the Republic<sup>85</sup>. According to Önsöy (2017: 250) it was in the year 2006, when the AKP delcared the “Year of Latin America and Caribbean”, that marked a “new era” in the relations. Indeed, that year Turkey Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul visited Brazil with members of parliament, business men and ministers. A Turkish-Brazilian high-level cooperation commission was established along with the Brazilian Turkish Business Council.

During the decade that followed 2010 (year when the Arab Spring started), official visits made by Erdogan -as prime minister (2002-2014) and as president (2014-2019)- to Latin America became constant, as it can be seen in the following table:

**Table 11**  
**Erdogan Official Visits to Latin America as Prim Minister**  
**and as President (2014-19)**

| Year    | 2009   | 2010            | 2012             | 2013      | 2015                       | 2016                     | 2018                               |
|---------|--------|-----------------|------------------|-----------|----------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Country | México | Brazil<br>Chile | México<br>Brazil | Argentina | Colombia<br>Cuba<br>México | Chile<br>Peru<br>Ecuador | Argentina<br>Paraguay<br>Venezuela |

Own table made with the information on “*List of international prime ministerial trips made by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan*” and “*List of international presidential trips made by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan*” articles on Wikipedia

<sup>83</sup> **Milliyet**, “Latin Amerika Eylemi Basliyor”, 1.09.1998, <https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/ekonomi/latin-amerika-eylemi-basliyor-39036277>

<sup>84</sup> **Milliyet**, “Ankara’ini Hedefi: Latin Amerika”, 9.09.1998, <https://www.milliyet.com.tr/siyaset/ankaranin-hedefi-latin-amerika-5348108>

<sup>85</sup> **Turkish Daily News**, “Entrevista concedida pelo Senhor Ministro de Estado, Embaixador Celso Amorim”, 2004.

México is the LAT country that Erdogan went the most to (three times) and also the first to be visited. Argentina, Brazil and Chile follow with two visits, and Colombia, Cuba, Peru, Ecuador, Paraguay and Venezuela with one. This leaves just Bolivia and Uruguay (apart from Guyana and Surinam) as the two sole countries in South America which Erdogan did not pay an official to.

**3.2.2. Turkish Foreign Policy towards Latin America:** As it can be inferred from the previous section, there was a common and constant state policy towards Latin America: that of approachment.

**a) Turkish constant policy of rapprochement to Latin America:** Sometimes the development of the relation might have been less played attention to, depending on the historical context. However, since Ottoman times, no matter who was in power, the political intention to establish and improve relations with Latin America was always there<sup>86</sup>.

Indeed, as Necati (2013:36) argues, the belief that Turkey just recently showed interest in Latin America is not accurate. As he showed in his work about Ottoman and Latin American relations, the interest of the Empire was present since the “discovery” of the continent. Necati’s book “*Osmanlı İmparatorluğu - Latin Amerika: Başlangıç Dönemi*” (Ottoman Empire-Latin America: Intial Period) and the work of Mehmet Temel (2004); “*XIX. Ve XX. Yüzyılda Osmanlı Latin Amerika İlişkileri*” support that argument.

Nonetheless, it is true that, since the foundation of the Turkish Republic, Ankara gave an unprecedented attention to Latin America. As seen before, during the Cold war, Turkey aligned itself with the USA and the west in general. Unlike other Middle Eastern powers like Egypt and Iran, Turkey did not participate in “third world forums” such as the Non-Aligned Movement or the G-77. But in the past decade a preachment with the “Global South”, Latin America included, happened<sup>87</sup>. Why so?

**b) Reasons of Turkish rapprochement to Latin America:** Donelli and Gonzales (2016) identify four factors: 1) the emergence of nonwestern-powers, 2) consecuenques of the 2008-9 financial crisis, 3) the growth and dynamics of the Turkish economy and 4) the ideology of the AKP as a status seeker. Turkey, the authors write, “presented itself as a development facilitator of least developed countries (...) adopting an intermediate position between high income economy and low-income economy” (:97). To this explanation other three more can be added: 4) 2011 Arab Spring events that left

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<sup>86</sup> Every phase of the relations building was executed with patience. And, ofcourse, it took a little more than five centuries, half a millennium, to develop until the point it is now. Since the first contacts, the stablishment of consulates, embassies, the signing of agreemenst, presidential visits until the mutual support in the international arena

<sup>87</sup> In this effort to participate in “third world” forums Turkey took part in many Latin American international organizations. Since 1998 Turkey is permanent observer member in the Organizaion of America States (OEA), since 2000 of the Caribbean States (AEC), in 2011 Turkey hosted the UN conference on Least Develop Countries, since 2013 Turkey is observant member of the Pacific Alliance (conformed by Chile, Colombia, México, Peru), since 2019 observer member of the Andean Parliament<sup>87</sup> and in 2013-15-16-17 Turkey participated in four meetings with the Comunnity of the Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC)

Turkey in some kind of regional isolation (which favoured the searching of new patterns outside the Middle East), 5) the negative results of the efforts to be part of the European Union and 6) Turkey's endeavor to become a Global Player.

**c) Turkey's NGO's and soft power in Latin America:** Turkey made use of public diplomacy as a foreign policy tool to strength relations with Latin America. Non-government sectors like business, think tanks, universities, cultural and sports institutions started to involve in the continent (Günce, 2009:4). Turkey engaged in an "ethical foreign policy" towards the Global South as a tactic to expand its soft power. Means like development support, peacekeeping forces and other various humanitarian activities were used (Donelli and Gonzales, 2018:58).

For example, TIKA's (Turkey's "helping hand") carry out many projects in at least nine different Latin American countries<sup>88</sup>. In 2013 TIKA signed a cooperation agreement in various fields (tourism, science and politics, energy, social support programs) with the *Presidency Agency of International Cooperation of Colombia* (APC-Colombia) and in 2014 TIKA also signed a cooperation agreement with the *International Mexican Agency for Development* (AMEXID) (Akilli, 2016:328). TIKA opened its first office in the region in Mexico in 2015, and a year later, another in Colombia. It is from the latter that all the South American TIKA related activities are managed.

Education wise, Turkey's soft power is also expanded into Latin America. At least 300 Latin American students were beneficiaries of the Turkey Scholarships program. This government scholarship offers bachelor, master and PhD programs fully funded. In 2009 the "*Latin Amerika Çalışmaları Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi*"<sup>89</sup> (Latin America Studies Center) was inaugurated in Ankara with the participation of Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu. In his speech Davutoglu highlighted the similar "historical fate" of Turkey and Latin American and said that there will be more involvement with the region in the future<sup>90</sup>. The library of center in 2012 contained more than 5000 books related with the region and 31 students were enrolled in the master's program (Zenguin, et al.2013:22). Also, presidents of Costa Rica (Oscar Arias), Ecuador (Rafale Correa), Colombia (Juan Manuel Santos), Venezuela (Nicolas Maduro) and Bolivia (Evo Morales) spoke at the center since its inauguration.

In 2012 in the first "*Latin Amerika Workshop*" was organized by the Latin America Studies Center of Ankara University and TIKA. To the workshop assisted the ambassadors from Brazil, Cuba, Argentina, Peru, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Spain and

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<sup>88</sup> Some of TIKA projects in LAT: five hundred thousand dollars were sendo to support Chile after the 2010 earthquake, around four thousand dollars were spend in various projects in Haiti, medical equipment was sent to Belize, improvements of education infrastructure were made in Salta and Buenos Aires (Argentina), educational equipment such as laptops and projectors were sent to school in Mexico City (Hakan, 2017:50).

<sup>89</sup> Currently two Turkish universities; Ankara University and Middle East Technical University, have a "Latin America Studies" master program. From a cooperation of Ankara University and La Habana University in Cuba in 2010 initiated the publication of "Cuadernos Turquinos"; an Latin America academic journal of Turksih Studies.

<sup>90</sup> **Hurriyet**, "Davutoğlu: Latin Amerika daha çok gündemde olacak", 31.07.2009, <https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/davutoglu-latin-amerika-daha-cok-gundemde-olacak-12183454>

Portugal. A book about the event was published a year after by name of “*Latin Amerika Çalıştayı: Bildililer*” containing works of different aspects of Latin America by Turkish authors. At the event, president of TİKA, Serdar Cam, remarked that, even if relations with Latin America have been weak in the past, (now) “Latin America occupies and indispensable place in our agenda” (:18).

On the cultural side, Turkish series had a big success in Latin America, especially with women. The first Turkish series TV broadcasted was “*Binbir Gece*” (1001 Nights) in 2014 in Chile. Since then many more broadcasted in different countries of the region. The series helped to improve the most of the times incorrect perception of Turkey and its people -often associated with the Arab migrants that came from the Ottoman Empire to Latin America- (Aslan, 2019). In 2014 the first “*Latin America Muslim Religious Leaders Summit*”, organized by the Turkish Department of Religious Affairs, was held in Istanbul<sup>91</sup> and in 2015 a “*Turkish History and Cultural Center*” was opened in La Habana, Cuba.

**d) Turkey’s most important partners in Latin America:** As seen, Turkey activity in Latin America in the last 20 years has been remarkable, however, as Gonzales (2015:110) remarks: “there is much less interest in Latin America towards Turkey”. For the author there are only six “key countries” for Turkey in the region: Chile, Cuba, Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela and Cuba. Among these, Brazil is considered to be Turkey’s “most important partner in Latin America”.

The case of Colombia also deserves some attention. Despite of fact of establishing its embassy in Bogota no more than 10 years ago (in 2010<sup>92</sup>), rapidly Colombia became one of Turkey’s more active partners, even more than Argentina or Chile. Colombia not only hosts the first TİKA and Anadolu Agency offices in South America, but also the first Turkish studies center in the region. On April 2019, in the context of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Colombia a Turkish Reations, the Faculty of Finance, Government and Internatonal relations of the Externado University in Bogota inaugurated the “*Center of Turkish and Caucasus Studies*”. The center receives funding from TİKA and has conecction with Koc and Middle East Technical Universities. The also offers photographic exhibitions, movie sessions and facilitates academic exchanges<sup>93</sup>.

In sum, Turkish “opening policy” towards Latin America worked around the following objectives, according to the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs<sup>94</sup>: 1) prioritize high level visits and meetings, 2) sign trade, military, cultural and technical agreemets, 3)

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<sup>91</sup> **Anadolu Agency**, “Turkey to host Latin American Muslims in coference”, 10.11.2014, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/turkey/turkey-to-host-latin-american-muslims-in-conference/103032>

<sup>92</sup> **Te Interesa**, “Santos comienza la primera visita a Turquia de un Presidente Colombiano”, 18.11.201, [https://www.teinteresa.es/politica/Santos-comienza-Turquia-presidente-colombiano\\_0\\_593341100.html](https://www.teinteresa.es/politica/Santos-comienza-Turquia-presidente-colombiano_0_593341100.html)

<sup>93</sup> **Anadolu Agency**, “Inaguran el primer centro de estudios de Turquia y el Caucazo en Colombia”, 9.4.2019, <https://www.aa.com.tr/es/mundo/inauguran-el-primer-centro-de-estudios-de-turqu%C3%ADa-y-el-c%C3%A1lucaso-en-colombia/1446119>

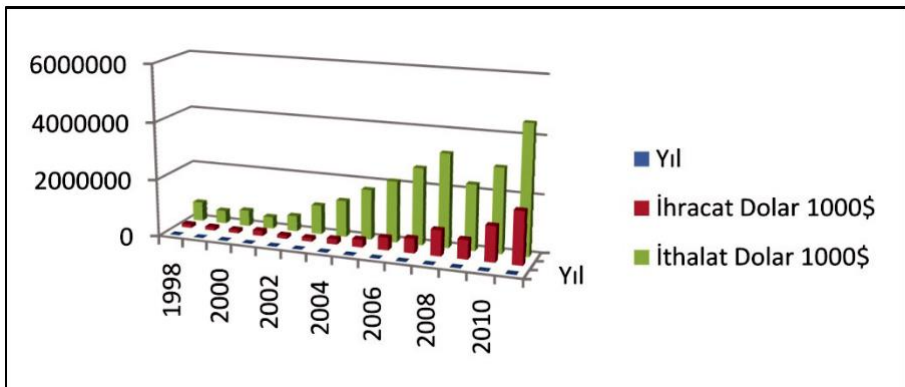
<sup>94</sup> **Turkey’s MFA**, “Turkey Relations with Latin America and Caribbean Countries”, [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/i\\_turkey\\_s-relations-with-the-latin-american-and-the-caribbean-countries.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/i_turkey_s-relations-with-the-latin-american-and-the-caribbean-countries.en.mfa)

establish bussiness councils, 4) participate fairs of the region, 5) promote activity to increase trade volume, 6) increase diplomatic representations and 7) increase cultural interaction

**3.2.3. Turkey economic role in Latin America:** Since 1980 there has been a liberalization of Turkish foreign trade policy. In line with this changes, Turkey began a processes of geographically diversify its exports (Aykuz and Erlat, 2001:11). In the beguining of the 21th century, the traditional security oriente foreign policy change to a economic oriented one. (Küntay, 2013:148). Turkey’s economic growth, wich reached 5% every year from 2003–2010, allowed the country greater commerce flexibility to comepete globally. Turkey total global trade grew from 72\$billion in 2001 to 389\$billion in 2012 (Atakul et.al, 2013:103). According to the World Bank, its global exports grew 15% each year on average. In 2000 Turkey exported to 90 countries while in 2014 to 137 countries.

In that context, for the AKP, Latin American was percieved mainly as a “new space for economic engament (...) a land of oportunities to expand trade (...) even if the cultural and religious ties were almost non existent” (Donelli and Gonzales, 2016:107). In an attempt to economically abandon -or at least diversify- the “single-axe” concept Turkey considered other regions for trade. In 2001 Europe and North America made 60% of Turkey total international trade, however “that radio decreased to 44 percent in 2012” (Atakul et.al, 2013:106).

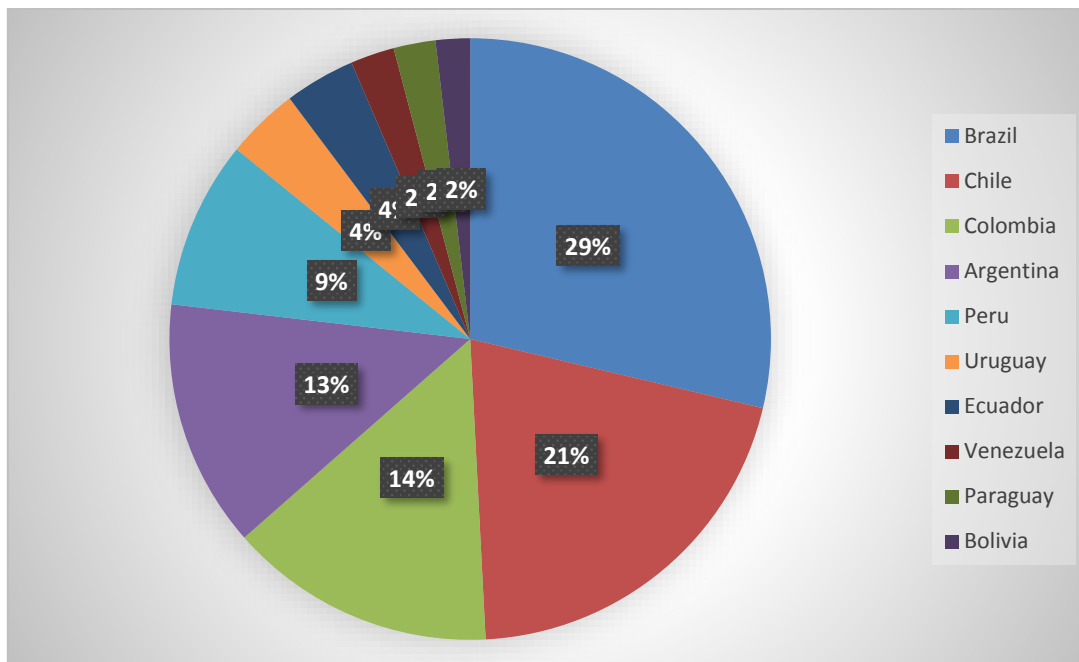
Despite of that, nowadays Turkey major trade parters (exports and imports wise) are Europe and Asia. North America and Africa come after and South America can be found at the bottom (just before Oceania). South America as a whole makes up only 1% of Turkey global exports and 2.3% of global imports. However, trade betwen Turkey and Latin American expanded around 800% just in the last ten years, as it can be seen in the following table. The first Free Trade Agreement in the region was signed with Chile in 2009<sup>95</sup>.



**Figure 2.** 1998-2011 Turkey Foreign Trade with Latin America (1000 \$)  
**Source:** Küntay (2013:152)

<sup>95</sup> There are also ongoing negotiations to do the same with Mexico, Ecuador, Peru and Colombia (Kucher, 2018).

Turkey's export destinations in South America<sup>96</sup> are distributed in the following way: Brazil (28%), Chile (20%), Colombia (14%), Argentina (13%), Perú (8.8%), Uruguay (3.8%), Ecuador (3.7%), Venezuela (2.3%), Paraguay (2.2%) and Bolivia (1.8%)<sup>97</sup>.



**Figure 3:** Turkey exports destinations to Latin America.

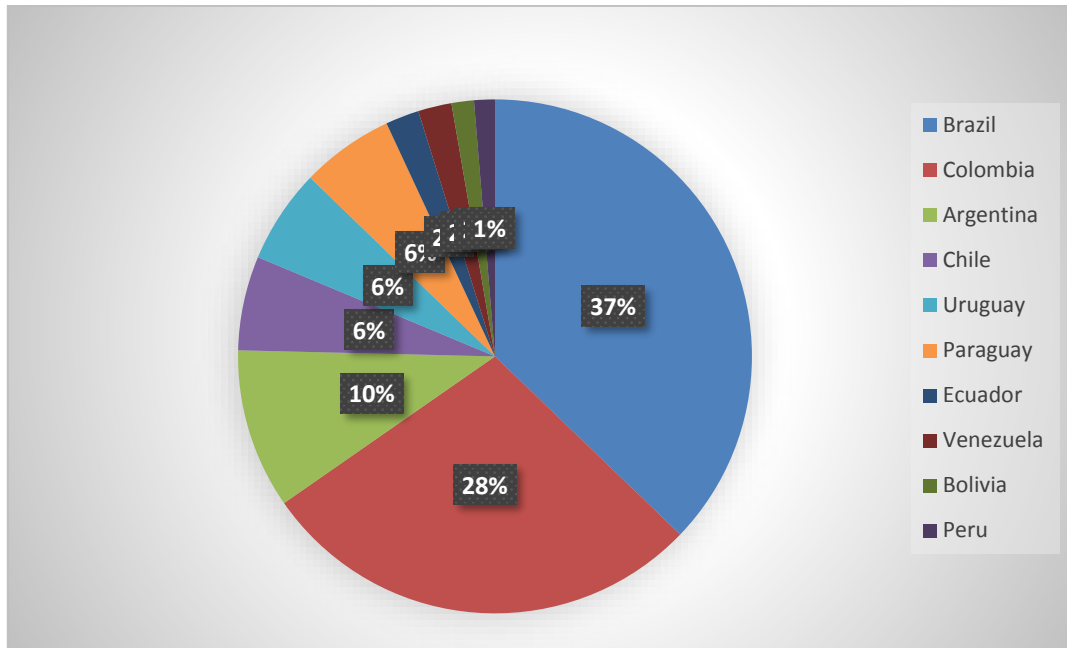
**Source:** Own graph with information of the The Observatory of Economic complexity.

It is important to note that just Brazil and Chile make up half of Turkey's total exports to Latin America. Also, only four countries (Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Argentina) concentrate 77% (almost 80%) of Turkey's total exports in the region while the rest of the other 6 countries make up 22.6%

Imports wise, the distribution of Turkey's imports origin is the following: Brazil (37%), Colombia (28%), Argentina (10%), Chile (5.9%), Uruguay (5.9%), Paraguay (5.8%), Ecuador (2.1%), Venezuela (2.1%), Bolivia (1.4%) and Peru (1.3%).

<sup>96</sup> México, due its location in Central America, was not taken into account, however is on the top of Turkey's trade partners

<sup>97</sup> **The Observatory of Economic Complexity.** "Country Profile Turkey", <https://oec.world/en/profile/country/tur>



**Figure 4:** Turkey most important destinations to South America.

**Source:** Own graph with information of the The Observatory of Economic complexity.

In this case only Brazil and Colombia concentrate 65% of Turkey's total imports in Latin America while the other 8 countries the 35% left.

As both graphics show, Turkey trades mainly with four countries in Latin America: Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Colombia. The high economic exchange with the first three countries is understandable; Argentina, Brazil and Chile all of them already had developed relations with Turkey, even with roots in the Ottoman period. However, the case of Colombia draws attention. Despite the newly established relations -the Turkish Embassy was opened recently in 2010 in Bogota- in took less than ten years for Colombia to constitute as one of the top Turkey's economic partners in the region. On the other side, the trade with Venezuela, one of the first Latin American countries to make contact with Ottoman Empire, is very low. Venezuela is in both cases (exports and imports) just above Paraguay and Bolivia; Turkey's newest partners.

The list of Turkey's exported and imported products to Latin America, along with the corresponding revenue, can be seen in detail in the annex 11. From that information, the following observations can be made: first, none Latin American country appears within Turkey's first 50 global exports and imports partners. Second, Turkey exports to Latin America are really diversified, these mainly consist of machines, textiles, transportation and metals, on the other hand, Turkey main imports from Latin America are agricultural products, live cattle, raw minerals and precious metals. Third, Haiti and Venezuela are the only countries in the region that import agricultural products from Turkey. Fourth, many Latin America exports to Turkey are not diversified, on the contrary, they are one product dominated. Colombia main exports coal briquettes (97% of total exp.),

Ecuador bananas (87% of total exp.), Uruguay bovine meat (72% of total exp) and Bolivia jewellery (97% of total exp). Sixth, even though there has been increase in birregional trade, this remains low. Just after Oceania, South America is the region with Turkey trades the least with. Investments in the region are even lower than trade (Gonzales.2015:113)

According to Kucher (2018), Latin America in general should sell high value-added processed foods and should buy manufactured products linked to sectors like electronics and high tech. Indeed, since the 90's Turkey exports not only focused on manufactured goods but also "increased into technological complexity" (Değer, 2014:9). Turkey can help the region advance in technology, especially in machinery and transport equipment, breaking the "Global North" dependence of this sector.

In 2016 the Turkey's Ministry of Commerce prepared survey for identifying Latin America's market expectations and problems for national firms who want to trade with the region<sup>98</sup>

**3.3.4. Turkey Enacted Roles in Latin America:** Turkey's enacted roles in Latin America can be listed as follows:

**a) Development facilitator:** Turkey presents itself in the region as a country which offers help. Similar to its role in Africa, Turkey carried out humanitarian programs in many Latin America countries. It also offered, as seen previously, technical assistance to facilitate many local small industrial ventures. The opening of a TIKA office in Colombia signals its role as a "development facilitator".

**b) Bridge:** The bridge role is closely related with the "development facilitator" one. In Latin America Turkey tries to act as a "bridge" between rich nations of the west and the not so rich nations of the Global south, since it has contacts with both. This "bridge" role is more region specific and differs in the sense that do not emphasise the geographical function (as it does in being a connexion point between Europe and Asia), but rather in an economic sense.

**c) Global power:** Turkey tries to project the image of a global power in Latin America. Acts like a powerful country that has the ability to reach and have presence in far away lands. As Donelli and Gonzales (2018) remark "Turkey's southern route is not an alternative to Turkish traditional (Western) and post-traditional ones (Anatolian), but it is complementary, aiming to acquire importance in global governance."(:67)

**d) Anti-imperialist agent:** Turkish support for Venezuela President Nicolas Maduro shows that Turkey has intentions and is not afraid to challenge US hegemony in Latin America. Venezuelan long known ties with other rogue states like Libya, Syria, Irak

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<sup>98</sup> **T.C. Ticaret Bakanlığı**, "Türk Firmaları İçin Latin Amerika Pazarı Beklenti ve Sorun Değerlendirme Anketi", Yayınlanan Anketler, [https://anketler.ticaret.gov.tr/eko\\_anketler.cfm?&startRow=21&currentPage=2](https://anketler.ticaret.gov.tr/eko_anketler.cfm?&startRow=21&currentPage=2)



and Iran made the country to have the image of the “terrorist state” of the region. Turkish support of Hugo Chavez legacy and its refusal to recognize Juan Guaidó shows the intended role it wants to play in Latin America.

### **3.3. TURKEY ENGAGEMENT WITH BOLIVIA**

Relations with Bolivia seem to be started somewhere during the start of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. According to Önsöy (2017:245) in the 1950's the Turkish Embassy in Santiago was the responsible for the relations with Bolivia. For its part, actual Turkey's Ambassador in Bolivia, Serap Özcoskun, states that in 1952 Turkey's Ambassador to Santiago came to Bolivia. This might be one of the first's official encounters between the two countries.

This subsection first will look at Turkey's diplomatic relations with Bolivia through an account of its consuls and ambassador. Secondly, it will evaluate Turkish economic role in Bolivia and finally it will explore Turkey's enacted roles in the relation.

**3.3.1. Turkish Diplomatic Relations With Bolivia Overview:** According to the conducted research until 2020 there appears to be three consuls and one ambassador who served as Turkey's official diplomatic representatives in Bolivia. These were: Honorary Consul Osman Birced (196?-197?), Honorary Consul Alvaro Balcazar (1994-2007), Honorary Consul Jaime Burgoa (2009-18) and Ambassador Sefire Özcoskun (2018-present). The first and the fourth are Turkish nationals while the second and the third are Bolivians.

**a) Turkey's first honorary consul in Bolivia, Osman Birced (196?-7?):** According to actual Turkey's Ambassador in Bolivia Serap Özcoskun the first consul appears to have served in the country during the 60's and his first name was Osman.

Osman Birced was born in 1936 in Istanbul and studied architecture in Istanbul Technical University. After his studies Birced settled in Izmir and later, in 1970, immigrated to La Paz. The exact reason of this decision is unknown. Osman's wife was also Turkish so he did not move to Bolivia because marriage reasons.

After a few years of his arrival Birced participated in a contest organized by the government of Hugo Banzer Suárez (1971-78) to build the presidential residence. Birced's proposal was the winner and he embarked in such an important project. His wife, Fırsum, “suggested to her husband that the reception area be kept small so that visitors would not be intimidated”<sup>99</sup>. Birced served for five years as Turkey's consul in Bolivia.

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<sup>99</sup> Peñaranda, “*Portraits of Change: Evo Morales*”, 2011, <https://revista.drclas.harvard.edu/book/evo-morales-english-version>

After fourteen years of his arrival the Turkish couple returned to his home country and settled in Marmaris<sup>100</sup>.

Birced was also an amateur actor and as such he played the lead role in the in a 1983 play (“*The Fiddler on the Roof*”) organized by the American Cooperative School in La Paz and the local Jewish community. The play is about a Russian father named Teyve who tries to maintain and keep Jewish religious and cultural traditions in his family, especially in his daughters, away from any foreign influence. The role of Teyve was played by Birced<sup>101</sup>.

**b) Turkey`s second honorary consul in Bolivia, Alvaro Balcazar (1994-2007):**

Alvaro Balcazar is the son of Mauricio Balcazar Gutierrez, former Ministry of Communication under Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada government (1993-97). Mauricio Balcazar was also ex-president Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada son in law and founder of an important political marketing agency.

The Balcazar family was long time involucrated in politics. Mauricio Balcazar brothers served as Ambassadors in Japon, Germany, Brasil, the United Nations and Africa. In this context, it is no surprising that initially it was intended to name Mauricio Balcazar as Turkey`s Honorary Consul in Bolivia. However, as his son Alvaro Balcazar remarks, Mauricio Balcazar died in 1992 before he could serve as consul. “It was agreed that my father was going to be the consul. Even the respective credentials were sended. However my father died”. In the face of these events a Turkish representation came from Buenos Aires and talked with the son about the possibility of him becoming consul; a request which he accepted.

According to Alvaro Balcazar his father was going to be the first Turkey`s Consul in Bolivia. “Before there was absolute nothing regarding Turkey (...) when I was named consul there was not any commercial nor diplomatic relations”. One of the first tasks he was assigned was the making of a census in order to know how many Turkish nationals lived in the country. “They were very few” he remembers, “there were more or less like five (...) that justifies the fact that they (Turkey) had no representation”. Among these there was a Turkish expats who had come from Egypt and had his restaurant and another who detained for drug rafficking.

Balcazar remembers that at the time when he was named consul “Turkey focused a lot of energy to Latin America and the Caribbean (...) Turkey wanted to explore this commercial area”. During the 90`s Turkey had “set the objective to have consuls in all Latin American countries to have a better commercial activity and better communication”. A prove of this interest, as seen in the subtitle 3.2.1. “*Turkey and*

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<sup>100</sup> **Mararis Belediyesi Yerel Tarih Buletin**, “*Bolivya`da Bir Marmaris Asig: Osman Bireci*”, 20.11.2012, [http://marmaris.bel.tr/Files/TARH\\_BULTENI/BULTENS/77\\_eyluk\\_2012.pdf](http://marmaris.bel.tr/Files/TARH_BULTENI/BULTENS/77_eyluk_2012.pdf)

<sup>101</sup> A video of the entire play can be seen at:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7BQR18SRu74&ab\\_channel=Obirced](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7BQR18SRu74&ab_channel=Obirced)

*Latin America Relations Historical Overview*”, was the organization of a three day summit in Ankara as part of the the 1998 “Action Plant for Latin and the Caribbean”. Balcazar, as acting consul, was invited and traveled to Ankara. There he participated in a few reunions that had the objective of transmitting Turkish official position regarding some international issues such as its intention to become part of the European Union and the Cyprus problem. “Every conflict has two visions. They (Turkey) wanted to transmit us their reality. So that in a give moment we had an official version in hand that we can discussed in Bolivia or with other countries”, states Balcazar. This encounter might have been the first contact of such level that had take place between Turkey and Bolivia.

Due to the low level of economic exchange the consulate more worked more as an “information center”. People approached to the consulate for tourist porpuses. Also students who were working on Turkey and its history went to the consulate in search of information. Because both countries did not ask for visa there was not so much movement regarding that aspect. Ocasionally some Turkish citizen who had lost its document required help. During this time the consulate depended and reported back to Turkey`s Embassy in Buenos Aires. There was a constant communication and mutual visits between the two diplomatic representations.

**c) Turkey`s third honorary consul in Bolivia, Jaime Burgoa Zalles (2009-2018):** In 2009 Bolivian citizen Jaime Burgoa Zalles was designated as Turkey`s third honorary consul in La Paz. After the departure of Alvaro Balcazar he got a direct invitation. All the necessary paperwork for the new appointment was made with the Turkish Embassy in Buenos Aires. Honrary Consul Burgoa remarks how Turkey Ambassador in Argentina at that time had already many solid contacts in Bolivia. He also remembers that even when he started seving (2009) Turkey already had a plan to open embassies in every Latin America country, included Bolivia. However, due to politic, administrative and bureocratic reasons the aperture of an embassy in La Paz was getting delayed from its original schedule.

During his time as Honorary Consul, Burgoa got in touch with the “very few” Turkish citizens that lived in Bolivia. He specially remembers Ali Ozcan. He was a Turkish national who was very active in trade fairs in the main cities of La Paz, Cochabamba and Santa Cruz. Ozcan usually requested help from the consulate asking for banners or other Turkish traditional touristic products. Burgoa communicated the demand to the Embassy in Buenos Aires which form its part sende the requested items. In the trade shows one could see the stand of Ali with its Turkish flag along with other “official” products. “That little details started to make a difference”, remembers Burgoa.

One of the first attemps made by Burgoa to promote Turkish culture in Bolivia was the organization of a musical event. He comments that a few months after his designation a esoteric music group from Uruguay called “*sufiyorum*” came to La Paz and made a

small presentation. As their name indicates they played Sufi music. Burgoa contacted the Bolivian Ministry of Culture with the intention of organizing a bigger presentation however there was no success. “I wanted an official delegation from Turkey”, he states.

Despite the “unprecedented” 14 years stability of Evo Morales government for Burgoa the “constant change of authorities” was one of the major’s problems the consulate had to face. Even though the position of Foreign Minister was regular “the bilateral affairs direction and the legalizations direction changed authorities constantly (...) legal adviser also”. Another problem was drug trafficking attempts between the two countries. “There were always problems with the (Bolivian) prisoners in the jails of Istanbul and (Turkish) prisoners in Palmasola”. At that time there were around fifty Bolivians detained in Turkey and four Turkish nationals detained in Bolivia. In order to address the issue the Consulate had to talk Bolivian vice Ministry of Institutional Affairs and the parliament Commission of International Affairs, making the process long and tiring.

**d) Turkey’s first Ambassador to Bolivia, Sefire Serap Ozcoskun (2018-present):** Sefire Serap Ozcoskun serves as the first Turkey’s Ambassador to Bolivia. She graduated from one of the best universities in Turkey; Middle East Technical University of Ankara. She has an extensive experience in Foreign Service and worked in many Turkey’s diplomatic posts such as in Greece, Germany, Romania, India, Italy, Latvia and currently Bolivia. She was present during the visit of Bolivian President Evo Morales to Turkey in 2019.

For the Turkey’s Ambassador in Bolivia, Serap Ozcoskun, Turkey did not engage with Bolivia until the 90’s because of two main reasons. First, there was the problem of distance. Until the 90’s it was not so easy to come to Latin America from Turkey. There were no direct flights. Secondly, as a consequence of the first reason, the public opinions in both regions did not know each other so well and thus there was a lack of interaction. At the end of the Cold War, as seen at the beginning of this chapter, Turkey began to look at other places like Africa and Latin America in an attempt to adapt globalization.

Now the embassy has two main objectives: consolidate the presence of TIKA in the country and having direct flights. TIKA already carried out two projects in Bolivia. One related with agriculture and the other with health. In the first one a grain separation machine to help recollection of quinoa was donated. The involvement of TIKA for the “is one of the priorities in our bilateral relations”. That is why at the time of the interview (May 2019) preparations for a TIKA team official visit from Ankara were ongoing. Regarding direct flights connections she remarked: “we are trying with Turkish Airlines to fly to more destinations in Latin America. For the time being there are flights directly to Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, Argentina, and Brazil. And we are also working that one day in Bolivia. Not to La Paz but Santa Cruz”.

**4.3.2. Turkey’s Economic role in Bolivia:** In 2010 Turkey occupied the fifty-nine position on global Bolivia’s exports destinations with a very low value of 0.19 million dollars<sup>102</sup>. However, in 2018 Turkey already placed itself in the eighteen position with a value of 91 million dollars; quite remarkable growth. The imports from Turkey also increased, although not quite as much as the exports. In 2010 Turkey occupied the thirty-three position with a value of 7.06 million dollar’s and in 2018 Turkey went up ten positions with a value of 62 million dollars. As it can be see in the following table, Turkey exports to Bolivia are pretty diversified<sup>103</sup>:

**Table 12**  
**Turkeys Exports to Bolivia**

| <b>Exported good</b>             | <b>Percentage</b> |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Refined petroleum                | 32.2%             |
| Steam turbines                   | 19.17%            |
| Industrial furnances             | 4.27%             |
| Iron and steel                   | 4.14%             |
| Baked goods                      | 3.51%             |
| Vehicle parts and cars           | 3%                |
| Insulated wire                   | 2.78%             |
| Rubberworking machinery          | 2.72%             |
| Refrigerators                    | 2.15%             |
| Textiles                         | 2%                |
| Plastics and articles of thereof | 1.59%             |
| Facial tissue                    | 1.47%             |
| Furniture                        | 0.63%             |
| Glass and glassware              | 0.25%             |

Source: Own table with data from the International Observatory of Economic Complexity

Economic relations, according to former Turkish Consul Alvaro Balcazar, were “really incipient”. There were initial contacts with the Bolivian Chamber of Commerce; but the Bolivian market was not big enough for Turkish demands. “For example Turkey demanded virgin leather in big quantities for them to process it and made clothes but the Bolivia market did not have such capacity”, he remembers.

Despite the improvements, no official trade agreement was signed. The economic exchange between Bolivia and Turkey was mainly done by private individuals. Former Turkey’s consul Jaime Burgoa comments on a Turkish national who represents a Turkish minning company who mainly buys gold. There was also a couple Turkish citizens who imported chocolates containers especially before Christmas and required a signature from the consulate to show the Bolivian National Health and Food Safety Agency. “Turkey really has a really well armed mechanism for economic relations (...)

<sup>102</sup> **International Monetary Fund**, “Direction of Trade Statistics”, <https://data.imf.org/?sk=9D6028D4-F14A-464C-A2F2-59B2CD424B85>

<sup>103</sup> Unlike Bolivia exports to Turkey which, as seen in chapter 2, consisted almost completely of jewelry

constantly I received information solicitudes about importers who might be interested in machinery, airplanes or weapons”, he remarks.

All this means there are still untapped trade opportunities to be explored. For example Former Bolivian consul in Istanbul Stefan Milkovic recalls an anecdote about him going to one of the main supermarket chains in Bolivia (*Ketal*) and seeing Turkish products. “But, there are so few Turks living in Bolivia”, he said, “then it means these products are sold to Bolivians”, he concluded. Apart from foods, the consul also perceives export opportunities in the textile and cosmetic turkish industry. However, the area that has more econmic potential according to him is tourism; specically adventure toruism<sup>104</sup>. “I see my Turkish friends tell told me we are bored from going to Paris or Londres (...) Here in Turkey we have 80 million people and I bet you at least 10% are adventurous. There are big market oportunities”

**a) Turkey`s religious and humanitarian cooperation in Bolivia:** Despite being a really small comminuty Islamic organizationis in Bolivia are pretty active. They participate in fairs informing citizens about Islam, appear on television and radio shows, give food to the homeless or organize events like the World Hijab Day.

In 2020, with the sponshorship of the Turkish NGO “*IHH Insan Yardim Vakfi*” and the help of the Turkish Embassy in La Paz a congress was held called “*Bolivya Islam Toplumu Kongresi 2020*” (Islamic Society in Bolivia Congress). Isa Amer Quevedo, head of the Bolivian Islamic Center, along with Mehmet Celik, director of IHH Latin America, spoke at the event that lasted for 3 days and had the participation of 60 Bolivians nationals<sup>105</sup>. Also during the Ramadan of 2020 in coordination with the Bolivia Islamic TIKA donated aid packages consisting of food and hygiene materials to 150 poor families in the department of Santa Cruz<sup>106</sup>.

TIKA involvement in the country seems to be a very important part of Turkish role in Bolivia. When Evo Morales visisted Turkey, President Erdogan remarqued TIKA will engage in more projects in the areas of maternal health, agricultura and women empowerment: “TIKA has realized projects with a lot of succes in Bolivia and will continue in the future”. On the same topic, former Turkey`s Honorary Consul in Bolivia Jaime Burgoa, pointed out that the cooperation with TIKA is one of the aspect of the bilateral relation that need more attention to: “Something really important is to channel TIKA`s cooperation”.

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<sup>104</sup> The inverview was made before the COVID-19 outbreak.

<sup>105</sup> **Insan Yadim Vakfi**, “Bolivia Islam Toplumu Kongresi”, 4.02.2020, <https://www.ihh.org.tr/haber/bolivya-islam-toplumu-kongresi>

<sup>106</sup> **Türk İşbirliği ve Koordinasyon Ajansı Başkanlığı**, “TİKA`dan Kolombiya ve Bolivya`da Ramazan Yardımı, 05.2020, [https://www.tika.gov.tr/tr/haber/tika%27dan\\_kolombiya\\_ve\\_bolivya%27da\\_ramazan\\_yardimi-57676](https://www.tika.gov.tr/tr/haber/tika%27dan_kolombiya_ve_bolivya%27da_ramazan_yardimi-57676)

**4.3.3. Turkey's Enacted Roles with Bolivia:** Five roles were identified as being enacted by Turkey in its relation with Bolivia.

**a) System Challenger:** Turkey welcomes Bolivia's stance against the international status quo. As an emerging Global power, Ankara might want to alter the system and accommodate itself as a consolidated global power. The old system, for example the UN Security Council, do not allow to do so. That is why in the press conference given by Morales and Erdogan the latter stated: "We've also talked about the UN and we support a democratic and just Security Council". In this regard, Bolivia and Turkey roles are in harmony.

**b) Venezuela's revolution supporter:** Turkey position towards Venezuela matches the Bolivia one. Both support the legacy of Hugo Chavez and are against the attempt to impose a new president. At the presidential press conference Erdogan, when talking about indirectly about Juan Guaido, remarked: "They want to name someone as president that has nothing to do with the elections and has nothing to do with democracy and sovereignty of the people. Within this framework we as Bolivia are supporting the legitimate government of Venezuela". This enacted role is a more specific one of the broader "anti-imperialist agent".

**c) Muslim minority protector:** As seen some paragraphs above Turkey's clearly has an interest to cooperate with the Muslim population in Bolivia. Even if the number of Islam followers in the country is almost non-existent, Turkey, through its NGO's, has demonstrated its willingness to enact the role of "Muslim minority protector" in the country.

**d) Palestine cause defender:** President Erdogan publicly recognized Bolivian support towards Palestine and antagonism towards Israel: "I want to thank Bolivia for the policy it has followed regarding Palestine, Jerusalem and Israel", he stated. Bolivia and Venezuela can be considered as the only two countries in Latin America who have a clear position towards Palestine and Israel. The Turkish administration seems to notice that and that is why it acts this common role with Bolivia.

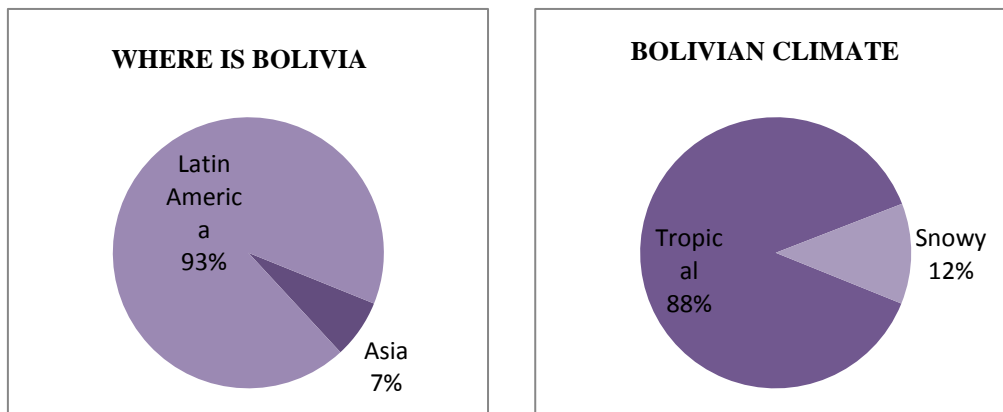
**e) Economic partner:** For the Ambassador Serap Ozcoskun the main role Turkey is trying to play in Latin America, and thus Bolivia, is an economic one. "The world became like a global village" she says, "Everybody tries to multiply its economic partners". The financial crises of 2008 pushed Turkey to diversify its trade and find more markets. This can also be beneficial for the region she remarks: "since we are close to many geographical places like the Middle East, Russia, Africa, then we could be a good starting point for the Latin American market"

### 3.4. TURKEY ROLE EXPECTATIONS/IMAGE PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS BOLIVIA

In the same manner as the last chapter's subtitle, "2.4. Bolivia's role expectations/image perceptions towards Turkey", twenty questionnaires were prepared. However, this time, answers were provided by Turkish youth. Questions were asked with the objective of finding what perception, if any, do Turkish people between the ages 20-30 have about Bolivia. Is it positive, negative or neutral? What images they associate with it?

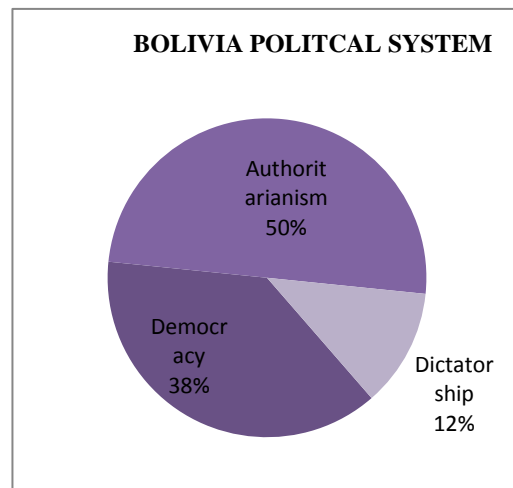
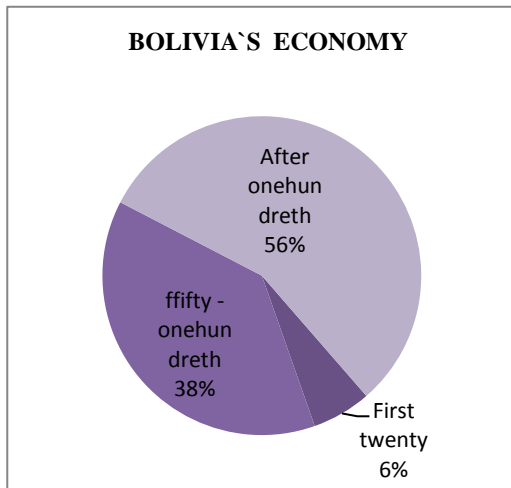
**3.4.1. Bolivian youth perception of Turkey:** Questions were asked to about the general perceptions about Bolivia, its perceived role in the Middle East, its relation with Turkey and other.

**a) General perceptions about Bolivia:** Five questions were asked in order to find what general knowledge Turkish youth have about Bolivia. First, almost all the interviewed responded correctly to question in which continent Bolivia is (93%). Bolivia then seems to then be usually associated with Latin America. Second, also most of the interviewed thought of Bolivia has having a tropical climate. This idea may be derived from the Latin America association perception it is quite accurate. Only 30% of Bolivia's territory has cold weather.

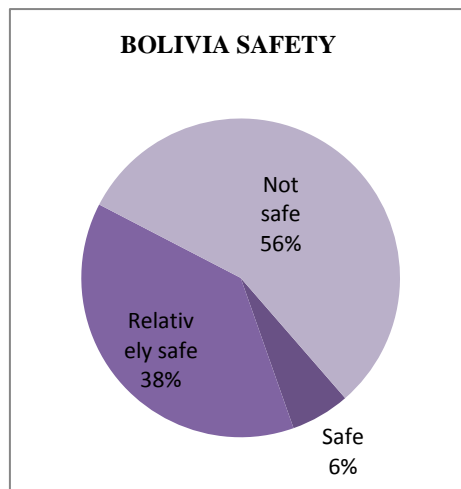


Third, regarding Bolivia's political system half considered it an authoritarianism regime (50%), followed by a democracy (38%) and a dictatorship (12%). It is concerning to find that only a little more than one third of the interviewed sees Bolivia as a democracy while in reality the country's last military regime was during the 80's. Work has to be done in order to project the image of a democratic country. Fourth, for more than a half (56%) of the interviewed Bolivia's economy is situated after the one hundredth most biggest economies in the world. Still, quite surprisingly, for 38% percent Bolivia is between the fifty and one hundredth place and even between the first twenty (6%). This means, the perception of Bolivia as a non rich country is prevalent however this not mean it is viewed as one the poorest countries in the world.

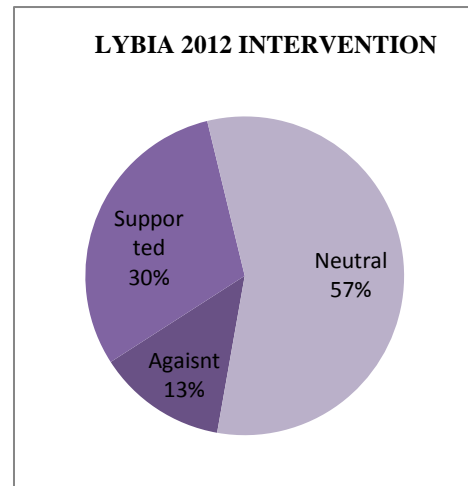
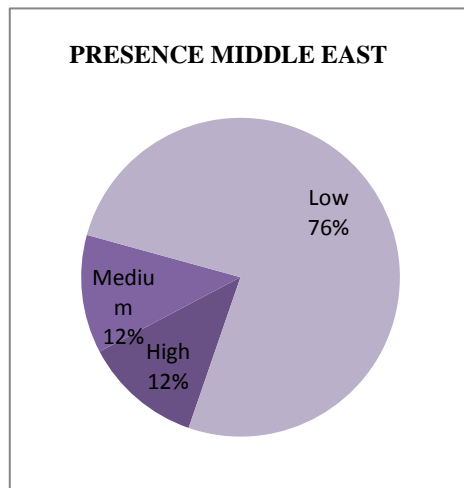




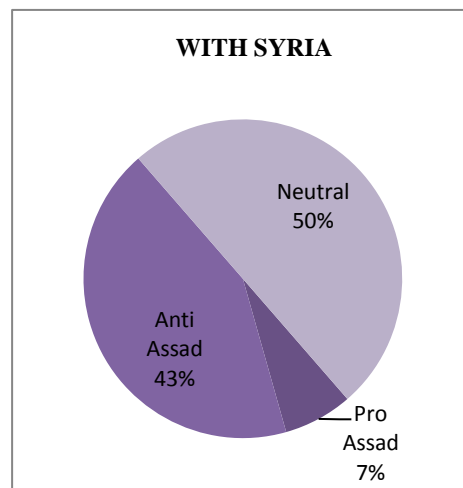
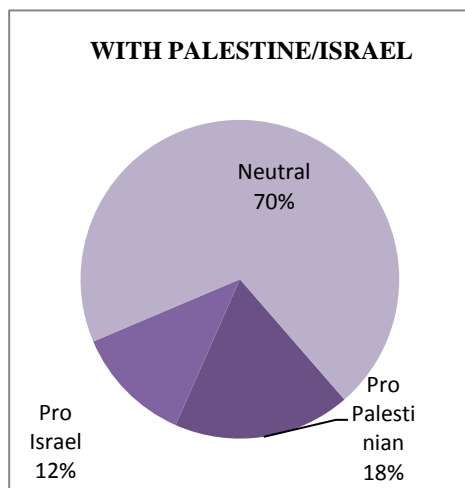
Finally, more than half (56%) see Bolivia as a unsafe country, followed by relatively safe (38%) and safe (6%). This perception also derives from the broader Latin American image of a continent where, even if its free of religious wards, gang violence and crimate rates are high.



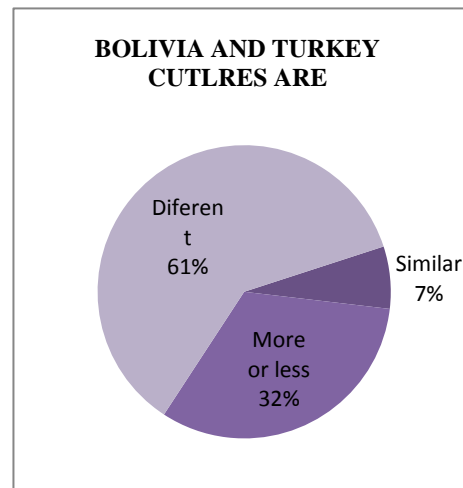
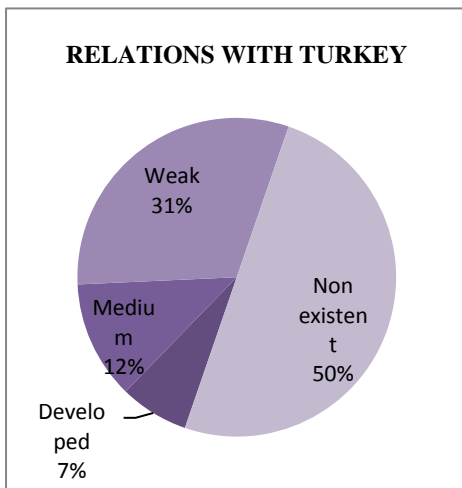
**b) Perceived Bolivian role in the Middle East:** Four questions were asked concerning Bolivia's role in the Middle East. Even if it's an unknown topic for most of the audience, there is always some kind of perception. First, the majority of the interviewed considered Bolivia's presence in the middle east low (76%); an image not far away from away from reality. Second, regarding the 2012 NATO military intervention in Lybia, a little more than half (57%) saw Bolivia has having a neutral position. Only 13% tought Bolivia was against and 30% said that supported it. As saw in the previous chapter, Bolivia actually denounced and was against Lybia's intervention. This position needs to be known in Turkey.



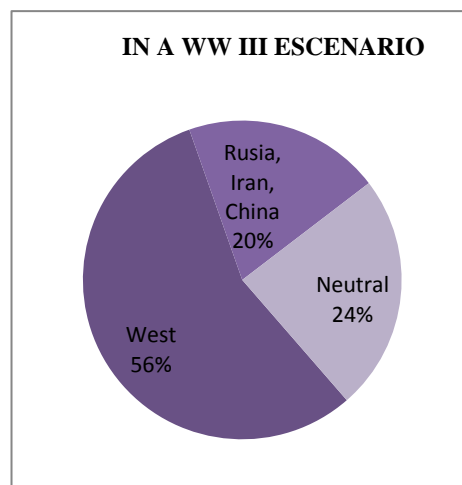
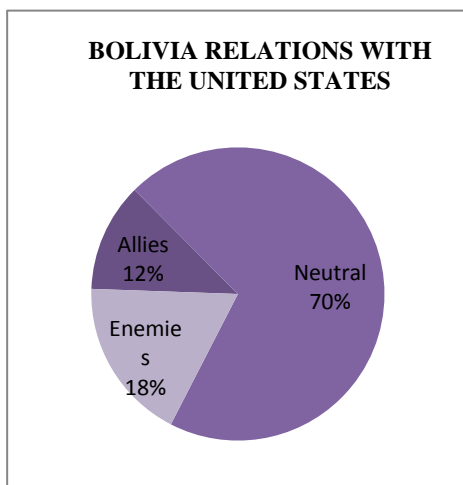
Third, concerning the Palestinian/Israeli conflict, the majority see Bolivia as being neutral (70%), while the rest as being pro Palestinian (18%) and pro Israeli (12%). As the case with Libya, Bolivia's pro Palestinian position needs to be more known. Finally, regarding Syria, half considered Bolivia as having a neutral position (50%), closely followed by being against Bashar al-Assad (43%) and at the bottom being pro Assad (7%). As it has been shown, Bolivia's support for the Syrian President and position against the attempts of military intervention are clear. However, due to Turkey's involvement in the issue, it is better not to make this position known.

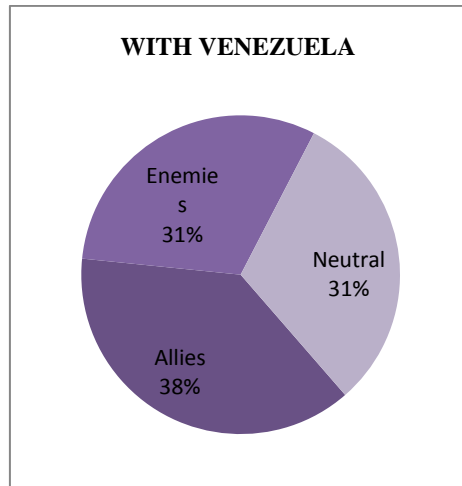


**c) Perceived Bolivia Turkey relations:** As for Bolivian perceived relation with Turkey, half of the interviewed consider them to be non-existent (50%), followed by weak (31%), relatively developed (12%) and consolidated (7%). Regarding culture resemblance, the majority sees Bolivian and Turkish cultures as being really different (61%), followed by more or less similar (32%) and at the end similar and compatible (7%). In fact, as Turkey's Ambassador in La Paz remarked, both cultures might be more similar than what is thought.



**d) Other perceptions:** Other three additional questions were asked. First, regarding Bolivia's current relations with the United States, the majority viewed them as neutral (70%). Only a minority considered Bolivia being an ally of the US (12%) or an enemy (18%). In reality, as seen in the previous chapter, Bolivia's main national role conception is being anti-imperialist and thus, being anti-US. Second, in a World War III scenario, most of the interviewed (56%) see Bolivia as being sided with the west camp (56%). The rest sees it as being neutral (24%) and lastly as being allied with Russia, China and Iran (20%). This misperception can be fixed by more effectively projecting Bolivia's role as "anti-hegemonic" and "system challenger". Finally, when asked about Bolivia's relation with Venezuela, the opinions were almost equally divided in seeing both countries as allies (38%), enemies (31%) and indifferent (31%). Venezuela's association with Bolivia seems to be not very well known, even if the latter can be considered to be product of the ideological legacy of the former.





**3.4.2. Turkey`s image in Bolivia:** One of the questions consisted in asking what are the first images, concepts, ideas that come first to your mind when you think of Bolivia. The provided answers organized by category can be seen in the following table:

**Tablo 13**  
**Most Common Images/Concepts and Associated with Bolivia in Turkey**

| Category          | Given word, concept, image  |
|-------------------|---|
| Nature related    | Lama, mountains (x2), bananas, sea, exotic fruits, forests                                |
| Political related | Fidel castro, collective movements, ditatorship, colonialism, anti-imperailsim            |
| Economic related  | Bad economy, tourism, agriculture, developing economy.                                    |
| Culture related   | Music (x2), dance, festivals, multi ethnic, spicy food.                                   |
| Adjectives        | Chaos, no sea acces, carfull, passionate, positive, poor, unsafe, tropical hospitability. |
| Other             | Drugs (x3), farms, Chile, Ecuador, atacama port, guns                                     |

Source: Own

As it can be inferred from the table above, the most common image the interviewed associate with Bolivia are drugs. This can be the case for Latin America in general, even more with the rise in popularity of series like “Narcos” in Turkey. Nonetheless, there is true behind that perception. As former Bolivia`s consul in Istanbul remarked, when talking about drugtrafficking between two countries; “Bolivia is not well known as a

country, but when you have many prisoners here, they think all Bolivian are drugtraffickers”.

After drugs, the most common idea about Bolivia was nature related: the interviewed thought of mountains, lakes, exotic fruits and animals. This natural perception can be taken advantage of to promote Bolivia a nature adventure touristic destination. Regarding politics, as the previous sections also demonstrated, the image of Bolivia as a democratic country is behind that one of a non-democratic one. This perception may come from Bolivia's image as being close with other “revolutionary” governments like Cuba that are some kind of authoritarian. Finally, regarding economy, most associate Bolivia with being a developing or poor country.

It is to be noted that, unlike Bolivia's perceptions about Turkey, it is harder for Turkish citizens to think of Bolivia simply because there is no clear image about that country in Latin America in their minds. As Turkey's ambassador in La Paz stated, when asked about what is Turkish perception of Bolivia; “is difficult to say (...) the perception of Bolivia in the Turkish public opinion is very limited”.

Nonetheless, by looking at the thesis done in Turkish universities a good portion of them associates Bolivia with other Latin American left revolutionary governments such as Venezuela. These are the cases of “*Rising on the left leaders in Latin America and its effects to international politics: An example of Venezuela-Bolivia*” (Kaya.2014), “*From 1945 till today socialist movements in Venezuela and in Bolivia*” (Abdulresit. 2013) and “*From 2000 to present Latin America-USA reciprocal economic and political sanctions: Venezuela, Bolivia and Peru samples*” (Kilalioglu.2008). These works can be taken as an example of the image of Bolivia as a leftist government with important social movements inside Turkish academia. Specially the work of Abdulresit (2013) analyzes with detail Bolivia's social, economical and political areas in the context of the country's socialist movements and guerrilla warfare. Even more, there is one master thesis addressing specifically 2009 Bolivian constitutional reform. Cakmak (2018) in his work titled “*Bolivia's constitution of 2009: A distinct constitutional process with its making process and contents*”, recognizes Bolivia's multiethnic identity while tracing the historical roots of the 2009 constitutional reform. So, even if there may not be a clear image of Bolivia in the Turkish general public, in the academia Bolivia is studied and thus understood mainly within its “anti-imperialist” , “revolutionary agent” and “indigenous movements representative” roles.

## CONCLUSIONS

The research used role theory in a three layered way in order to analyze: 1) Bolivia and Turkey national role conceptions, 2) their roles in each other's broader regions (Bolivia role in the Middle East and Turkey role in Latin America) and 3) their enacted roles towards each other (Bolivia-Turkish relations). Regarding data recollection techniques, along with biographical research, interviews to government officials in both countries - such as ambassadors and consuls- and questionnaires to the youth -also of both countries- were made.

The main contributions of the study are theoretical and practical. In the first case, this is the first time where role theory was applied in a comparative way to the study of Bolivia relations with the Middle East and Turkey, and Turkey relations with Latin American and Bolivia. Intra-regional and bilateral relations are usually studied within the framework of one of the three main theories of international relations (liberalism, constructivism and realism). Also, it was confirmed that countries might enact different roles depending where and with whom they interact. In the second case, many suggestions of how Bolivia's relation with the Middle East and Turkey can be improved were found. The interviewed government officials gave advice of how trade, intercultural exchange and different areas of cooperation can be more effective.

The study found the following roles as being enacted by Bolivia and Turkey in their relation:

**Table 14**  
**Bolivia and Turkey's Enacted Roles Towards Each Other**

|                      |                       |                   |                           |                                   |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Bolivia Roles</b> | Bastion of revolution | System challenger | Multipolar world agent    | Anti.-imperialist, colonial agent |
| <b>Turkey roles</b>  | Venezuela's supporter | System challenger | Muslim minority protector | Palestinian cause defender        |

Source: Own

The only same role that both countries enact is "system challenger". Much potential cooperation can be found in this area. Bolivia's support for Turkey's criticism and intention to reform the Security Council and Turkey's sympathy for Bolivia's condemnation of US foreign policy can set the initial framework for a future cooperation. Second, even if the other roles are not exactly the same, they are compatible. Turkey's "Venezuela's supporter" goes in hand with Bolivia's "bastion of revolution" and the same happens with Turkey's "Palestinian cause defender" and Bolivia's "anti-imperialist colonial agent". Both countries stances regarding issues in each other's regions (Venezuela and Palestine) match. Third, and related with the previous point, Turkey's enacted roles in the relation are more specific than the Bolivian ones. Bolivia's enacted roles with Turkey are the same roles that Bolivia enacts when

dealing with the Middle East in general. However, Turkey enacted roles with Bolivia are more specific and attuned than its enacted roles with Latin America in general. Fourth, most of the role compatibility seems to arise from political/ideological similarities; however, as it has been in previous chapters, these initial understanding needs to be consolidated and developed through stronger economic relations.

Regarding potential role conflict three issues were identified: first, even if there is neither Armenian diaspora nor diplomatic mission in Bolivia, in 2014 the Bolivian parliament unanimously passed a bill to officially recognize the Armenian genocide. It can be argued that this decision emanated from Bolivians inclination to align itself with the “oppressed” of world. Due to Turkish position towards Armenia, Bolivia’s needs to be intelligent enough that its political stances with Armenia won’t harm its relationship with Ankara. Second, also related with Bolivia’s ideological views, the open support for Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad and condemnation of foreign intervention in Syrian domestic affairs might trigger a role conflict with Turkey if the relation keeps developing. Bolivia previous position towards Libya is the same in the case of Syria. The invasion of a NATO member to a country which is considered to be part of the “resistance” needs to be understood carefully. Third, there are the dangers of an asymmetric relation with Turkey. Bolivia’s main role of “anti-colonialism agent” can display the function of being paranoid or suspicious of a country with global power ambitions and colonial past. Bolivia was colonized, Turkey did not. The traumas of the Bolivian colonization history, if not processed well, might interfere in the development of a relation with the country that was born from the Ottoman Empire. Turkey has to be careful to not display a paternalist attitude and just act the role of a “development facilitator”.

The present research recommends three new roles for Bolivia to enact in its relationship with Turkey: “indigenous people defender”, “global south representative” and “bridge”. As Morales Presidential visit to Ankara demonstrated, Turkish government officials were well aware of Bolivia’s indigenous identity. They recognized Bolivia as being the Latin American country with the most indigenous population. This impression needs to be cultivated and assumed. Bolivia has to highlight its ancient past and enact the expected role of “indigenous people representative”. Bolivia has also to show Turkey it is one of the key representatives of the Global South. It has to act as a catalyst to stimulate south to south cooperation. Turkey is an opportunity to bypass the Anglo-Saxon world. Finally, as President Morales stated in the 2019 “IX Annual Investment Meeting” in Dubai; “Bolivia offers great investment opportunities because of its geographic location (...) it lies in the center of South America. It constitutes itself in a great logistical platform to connect the Atlantic with the Pacific Ocean”. Bolivia needs to enact its inherent “bridge” role with Turkey and vice versa. Bolivia’s consul Stefan Milkovic remarked: “If you grab a compass and draw a circle two and a half hours from Turkey you have a market of 300 to 400 million people”. Turkey can act as gate Bolivian products as so do Bolivia for Turkey.

Bolivia's "anti-imperialist" role is so deeply rooted in the Morales government that sometimes, when enacted indiscriminately with every country, might get in the way. That is why, if potential role conflict want to be avoided, a more specific set of roles in the relation with Turkey needs to be applied.

Finally, with the information found in the questionnaires about Bolivians youth perception about Turkey vice-versa some conclusions can be found.

Regarding Bolivia's youth perception about Turkey, the latter is not considered to be a "small", "weak" or "poor" country. Nonetheless, it is also not considered to be within the twenty most powerful economies in the world. Thus, it can be argued that Turkey has failed to projects its image of being one of the G20 countries. Second, Turkey is not seen as a democracy. Third, diplomatic relations with Turkey are seen as weak and not so developed. Events providing information about the history of both countries relations organized by the Turkish Embassy would be beneficial. Fourth, Turkey's stance towards the Palestinian/Israel issue is not very know in Bolivia. Also, if desired, information events can be done. Fifth, Turkey position regarding Venezuela needs to be addresses carefully. Bolivians have many polarized views about Maduro. Sixth, Turkey's understanding about what happened in Bolivia in October 2019 as a coup is not very know. With the return of Morales political party to power it might be beneficial to educate Bolivian people about what was Turkey's stance in such critical moment. Seventh, most of the interviewed have the image of Turkey as being a "sexist" country where woman rights are not taken into account. Also work can be done to improve this aspect. Eight, as being part of the Middle East, Turkey is considered a not so safe zone where armed conflict may arise any moment. The image of Turkey as begin an "island of tranquility in a tumultuous sea" can be promoted. Finally, related with the previous point, Turkey is still considered to be an Arab country. Also information events about Turkish history can correct that perception.

Regarding Turkey's youth perception about Bolivia, most of the interviewed consider the latter as being a non-democratic country. Bolivia has held non-stop elections since the 80's, thus it is important to project the image of a proper democracy. Second, even if Bolivia is not considered to be rich, it is also not see as one the poorest countries in the world. This base image is useful but has to be improved even more when dealing with a much bigger and powerful country like Turkey. Bolivia's role in the Middle East such as its open support for Palestine, criticism of Israel, condemnation of the 2011 Libya NATO military intervention and position towards the Syrian conflict is not known. Bolivia's stance in those topics, with the exception of Syria, needs be known to the Turkish public. Fourth, Bolivia's culture it is perceived as being really different of that of Turkey's. Nonetheless, as diplomatic representatives of both countries pointed out, the similarities are more that the differences. Bolivia should highlight those common characteristics. Sixth, Bolivia is seen as being as a supporter, or at least indifferent, to US foreign policy and, in general, western views of the world. It seems Bolivia has



failed to project an anti-imperialist and revolutionary image in Turkey. Seventh, the most common image associated with Bolivia was that of drugs. The constant and prevalent arrest of Bolivian nationals who tried to smuggle drugs in to Turkey consolidates that perception. This issue of utter importance for Bolivia`s image in Turkey and needs to be a priority to solve by the Embassy. Nine, related with the previous point, more than half of the interviewed view Bolivia as a not being safe. This affects tourism negatively and can be improved if the drug issue is fixed. Nine, when thinking about Bolivia most of the interviewed think about nature. This base perception can be also drawn upon promoting tourism. In general, it has been found that there is no clear Bolivia`s image in the minds of Turkish citizens; a reality that can be taken as a gold opportunity to project a desired image.

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## ANNEXES

### Annex 1: Role Theory Perspectives in Sociology

| <b><u>Biddles (1986) Role Theory Perspectives in Sociology</u></b> |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <b>Perspective</b>   | <b>Seminal Work</b>  | <b>Short Description</b>  |
| <b>1. Functional Role Theory</b>                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lipton's 1936 "<i>The Study of Man</i>"</li> <li>● Parson's 1951 "<i>The Social System</i>"</li> </ul>                      | Focus on the characteristic behaviors of persons who occupy social positions within stable social systems. Dominant position in U.S. sociology until the mid-70's         |
| <b>2. Symbolic Interactionist Role Theory</b>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mead's "<i>Mind, Self and Society</i>" (1934)</li> </ul>  | Focus on individual actor roles, roles evolution, own role interpretation, roles relationship.  |
| <b>3. Structural Role Theory</b>                                   |  | Focus on the concept of "social structure": stable organizations of sets of persons who share same, patterned behaviors (roles) directed towards others in the structure. |
| <b>4. Organizational Role Theory</b>                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Kahn, Wolf, Quinn, Snoek, Rosenthal, "<i>Organization Stress: Studies in Role Conflict and ambiguity</i>" (1964)</li> </ul> | Focus on social systems that are pre planned, task oriented and hierarchical. Popular in business schools and industrial psychology.                                      |
| <b>5. Cognitive Role Theory</b>                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Piaget, "<i>The Language and Thought of the Child</i>" (1926)</li> </ul>  | Focus on concepts like role playing, role taking, role expectations and norms.  |

## **Annex 2: Migration Flows to Bolivia**

Even the among Europeans, who arrived through the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and constituted “the largest population influx into Latin America” (Moya, 2018:46) only few of them assented in Bolivia. As a consequence of that, Bolivia has negative migration balance (more people emigrate than immigrate). Despite being early diagnosed as an “inhabited country” and after ineffective attempts to implement public policies to attract foreigners (specially to the east lands) migration flows to Bolivia have been -and still are- insignificant. As it can be seen in the following table, in the last sixty years the number of migrants that settled in Bolivia has never accounted for more than 1,5% of the total population nor never passed the 150.000 number mark. These are mainly from neighboring countries such Brazil, Argentina and Peru and from the continent such as Mexico and Spain.

| <b><u>FOREIGNERS LIVING IN BOLIVIA ACCORDING TO<br/>LAST FOUR NATIONAL CENSUS</u></b> |                             |   |
|---|-----------------------------|---|
| <b>Census year</b>  | <b>Number of foreigners</b> | <b>% with respect to<br/>the total population</b> |
| 1950  | 37.471                      | 1,2%  |
| 1976  | 58.070                      | 1,3%  |
| 2001  | 94.391                      | 1,1%  |
| 2011  | 119.003                     | 1,2%  |

Source: Own with the data from the Bolivian *National Institute of Statistics* (2015), *the International Organization for Migration* profile on Bolivia (2011) and Frias (2019)

## **Annex 3: Bolivia Brakes Diplomatic Ties with Israel 2009 Evo Morales National Speech (translated from the Spanish)<sup>107</sup>**

“I also take this opportunity to express what is happening between Israel and Palestine. This morning in the international media I have seen such an intervention, massacre, genocide. I felt helpless. We are from the culture of life. I greet many countries for their principles of defending life, some countries have the leadership to defend life and it is not possible that as an international community we can allow this genocide of Palestine to occur. After consulting some experts in international law, experts in criminal matters, I want to propose to you and to the international community the following.

Faced with crimes against humanity, genocide, war crimes, extermination, attacks on the civilian population and other criminal acts carried out by the government of the state of Israel against the Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip, the government of Bolivia in time to condemn these crimes proposes that the International Criminal Court be the permanent International Court of Justice that judges the main responsible for this massacre that has already claimed more than a thousand lives and a third of them

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<sup>107</sup> Original speech can be found at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9FlslO6uMjY&t=3s>

children. The Israeli prime minister, and the members of his cabinet must be subjected to an international trial before the international criminal court, which has been established precisely to prosecute and convict the greatest crimes of individuals against international law. The aggressive action of the Israeli policy against the Palestinians living in Gaza against the civilian population against children seriously threatens world peace and has destroyed the principles of international law. Unfortunately, the organization of United Nations, especially the security council, I would say that it is an insecurity council, has shown a lukewarm attitude to Israel's aggression. It is urgent to convene an extraordinary general assembly of the united nations to cast a vote of condemnation to the criminal attitude of Israel against the Palestinian people. When the statute of Rome was approved in 1998, the International Criminal Court was created, the following was proclaimed: the most serious crimes of international transcendence should not go unpunished and that any state can promote the investigation and prosecution of these crimes.

Bolivia, as a sovereign and independent state that expresses its adherence to the principle of non-aggravation and respect for life, will coordinate with other states and humanitarian organizations the presentation of an investigation request for the serious crimes committed by the prime minister and other members of the Israeli cabinet in the strip of Gaza. Bolivia will also ask the Oslo-based Nobel Prize Committee to withdraw the Nobel Peace Prize that was awarded to Shimon Peres in 1994. Mr. Shimon Peres, current President of the State of Israel, must also be charged before the International Criminal Court now that nothing has done to stop the criminal attitude of Prime Ministers Israel and his government. And more, on the contrary, has justified the criminal actions against the Palestinians in Gaza. Any state can file complaints against the actors of crimes against humanity, extermination and others. Since not only the Palestinians of Gaza but the entire world community are victims of Israeli aggression, the crimes committed by the Israeli government affect world stability and peace and have pushed the world back to the worst stage of crimes against humanity that It had not been lived if not in the Second World War and in recent years in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. Bolivia will present this complaint to the ICJ, we make the call together with many states and international organizations especially organizations that defend life so that from now on we can work. But I also want to inform that Bolivia had diplomatic relations with Israel in the face of these acts of serious attack on life to humanity Bolivia breaks diplomatic relations with Israel.”

**Annex 4: Evo Morales Intervention at IX Annual Investors Meeting in Dubai (translated from the Spanish)<sup>108</sup>**

“Greetings to the authorities of the United Arab Emirates, participating journalists at this event. First of all, to thank the invitation received from the government of the United Arab Emirates, it is a great satisfaction to participate for the first time in the most important meeting of investors in the world. Greetings to the organization of forums that allow business countries and research centers to present their investment opportunities, new trends in business development and discuss global cooperation issues.

We must recognize that the world faces various crises, including the financial crisis. South America, despite being the cradle of the regions with the greatest amount of natural resources, still has inequality as one of the great challenges to be resolved. Therefore, the active participation of the state and business sectors is necessary to achieve the well-being or living well of our peoples. We are countries with asymmetric economies. Development has been unevenly driven. Fundamentally based on exports of natural resources as raw material. The fluctuation of the world economy has led some countries in the region to face economic crises. Despite this context, my country, Bolivia, has positioned itself as one of the new investment destinations. In this opportunity I want to share with you objective information about the great advances and opportunities that we have to offer. Bolivia since 2006 has promoted profound transformations in economic, political and social issues. We have developed our own community social economic model from a plural economy perspective to live well where the state, the private sector and the associative sector actively participate.

Bolivia stopped being a low-income country and is now a serious-income country. Sustained economic growth, vigorous domestic demand and a notable improvement in the quality of life of our population. In a few years and just over a decade, Bolivia has quintupled its gross domestic product. He leads growth in South America for six years in 2009 and 2014-18 consecutively. It has maintained growth levels of 4.9% and achieved a reduction in extreme poverty from 38% in 2005 to 15% in 2018. The economic life of the country has improved the population's income through wage policies and the redistribution of wealth through bonds and income. About 3 million go from poverty to the middle class, becoming an attractive market for service goods. In the last 13, business creation has increased by 388%. Private sector profits have quadrupled. According to IMF, WB projections is expected that in this administration Bolivia will also lead the economic growth of Latin America. Bolivia has shown that by applying its economic model it resists even the most extreme external shocks such as the fall in the price of mineral oil and other agricultural oil. On the other hand, through a

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<sup>108</sup> Original speech can be found at:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QBwrr4xqgpw&ab\\_channel=ElFamosoDemonElFamosoDemonVerificada](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QBwrr4xqgpw&ab_channel=ElFamosoDemonElFamosoDemonVerificada)

state investment that represents 12.5% of Bolivia's GDP, we have managed to guarantee infrastructure, transportation, energy. Aspect that allows the flourishing of productive business activities. As a state, we will continue with significant investment in the agricultural sector, power generation, roads, industrialization of hydrocarbons, metallic, non-metallic, lithium.

We call on the private sector investors to link with Bolivia on these strategic issues. Bolivia offers great investment opportunities due to its geographical location, access to markets, availability of natural resources, scarce in the world and a secure domestic market. It is located in the center of South America, it is a great logistics platform to connect the Atlantic Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. We have in our investment plan to implement the bi-oceanic train to connect both oceans. A new access port to the Paraguay-parana hydrobia to reach the Atlantic. An airport hub in Santa Cruz to connect South America with the world. These large development projects require investors and the building of alliances with the private sector. Bolivia important relations with the EU, China and the US, Mexico, Russia and India, will be incorporated as means of commercial destinations in the country. We maintain commercial and political relations with all countries and regions of the world. Respecting the differences and ties between peoples. My country has entered the era of industrialization. My country has its lithium reserve in Bolivia. We have started its industrialization and now it incorporates partners in addition to Chinese and recently India expressed its interest. We invite new players to participate in this growing industry of automobiles and other high-end technology products. In the same sense, we have entered the production of biofuels, a sector that represents great potential for the emerging needs of the region.

At the same time, Boliva is becoming one of the food exporters, mainly organic products, quinoa, meat, coffee, soy, chia, amaranth, among others. Like this region, the world is people with a very rich cultural and landscape diversity, therefore the tourism sector is a great opportunity for the private sector. We will make Bolivia a destination. Distinguished attendees Bolivia is a country with great investment opportunities and future protections. We invite you to visit the page [investbolivia.com](http://investbolivia.com)”

**Annex 5: Bolivia Imports from the Middle East**

| <b><u>Bolivia Imports from Middle East Countries (2018)</u></b> |                           |  |
|---|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Country Global Ranking</b>                                   | <b>Million US Dollars</b> | <b>Main imported products</b>  |
| 23. Turkey  | 64                        | Machines (44%), metals (24%), transportation (8.6%), plastic and rubbers (5.6%), foodstuffs (4.9%), chemical products (3.9%) |
| 37. Saudi Arabia  | 20                        | Float glass (40%), amino-resins (24%), machinery having individual functions (18%), acyclic alcohols (13%)                   |
| 46. United Arab Emirates  | 5.44                      | Asphalt and asphalt mixtures (45%), liquid dispersing machines (13%), excavation machinery (13%), amino-resins (6.5%)        |
| 48. Israel  | 4.9                       | Pesticides (23%), broadcasting equipment (11%), other heating machinery (6%), iron structures (5.1%), valves (4.9%)          |
| 52. Egypt   | 3.37                      | Machinery having individual functions (57%), other heating machinery (9.2%), iron structures (8.5%), small iron pipes (7.4%) |
| 76. Tunisia   | 0.55                      | Phosponates and phosponates (56%), knit t-shirts (13%), low voltage protection equipment (2.5%)                              |
| 78. Morocco   | 0.51                      | Textiles (52%), processed fish (44%),  |
| 81. Jordan  | 0.43                      | Textiles (73%), chemical products (23%), photocopiers (1.5%)   |
| 88. Algeria   | 0.16                      | Wheat flours (61%), apples and pears (39%)   |
| 91. Iran  | 0.11                      | Electric generating sets (28%), nitrogenous fertilizers (24%), tractors (18%), knotted carpets (10%), petroleum coke (8.6%)  |
| 121. Qatar  | 0.01                      | Vehicle parts (56%), transmissions (44%)   |

Source: own with data from IMF Direction of Trade Statistics and The Observatory of Economy Complexity

**Annex 6: Latin American Studies Director Mehmet Necati Kutlu, Ankara University's Rector Erkan Ibis and Evo Morales speeches at Ankara Univeristy (translated from the spanish)**

**Mehmet Necati Kutlu:** "President Evo Morales is a person who has imposed himself beyond his presidency. His character, his modesty, the fact of being a man of his people claiming his own, as the Turk would say "is from the country and is national." Bolivia is the most indigenous country in all of Latin America. Do not be confused it is not by population it is by percentage within that population and very important is the country of Simon Bolivar. Now the Venezuelan ambassador who is behind, will say "aren't we the country of Boliviari?" Well, it is also the place of birth but without forgetting all the emancipated lands of our America. Boliviari was the first president of Bolivia and he

was the one who gave him his name, originally it was called "The Republic of Bolivar" which later became the Republic of Bolivia . It happened the same as to Rome from Romulo, Bolivia from Bolviar.

It is a very rich country that maintained the empire, the empire that dominated it, that colonized it in some way for 200 years. Seventeen thousand tons of silver were brought from Potosi in about 100 years. Potosi in those days was a very big city. In the 16th century, one hundred and twenty thousand inhabitants was very large. Istanbul had one hundred and twenty thousand inhabitants at that time. Potosi left a legacy, it left a saying to the Spanish; when a thing is worth so much that it cannot even be calculated, we say "worth a Potosi". Today many veins are closed, silver and gold are still there, but there are other times now. And that is precisely what we come to. It is time to open new veins, Mr. President, if you allow me. Veins of culture, veins of cooperation.

We were in Bolivia in 2017 at the Universidad Mayor de San Andres, which is the largest, I understand. There we left a memory, a book on the history of our country and the symposium that we organized there, being called 1915 the longest year of the Ottoman Empire.

Other veins would be the communication of today, another very important vein. The Turkish series I understand are sweeping throughout Latin America. And what is the result? The result is as follows. Last year in the Bolivian civil registry the following names Kara, Zafer, Mavi, Berna, Damla, Melek were seen in large numbers.

Well ending now, to leave the floor to the president. Mr. President, we need more fellows. Generally speaking of scholarships. We want more Bolivian scholars. If it would be good to have some books that were of interest about Bolivian culture in our library. And we want your embassy, Mr. President. Embassies go a long way. Embassies are created small but later open very wide paths. That will be very important.

I want to finish my words by welcoming you once again, but this time in your Aymara language if you allow me. I want Aymara to be heard in our room too: *suma wirakocha president waliki jutawayta Ankara akajacha utayatichiri jallalla*".

**Erkan Ibis:** "We are very honored to host here at our University. Thanks to the center, in 2006 our government established the Latin American opening plan that inaugurated the Center for Latin American Studies. In this way we can get to know the countries of Latin America, their peoples, their great culture and we can also receive in our University their presidents, their ministers, their rectors, we can also sign collaboration protocols with their universities

Bolivia located in the center of South America and in the heart with its indigenous population is a very important example in the region for its cultural structure and the rights of indigenous people. Turkey has demonstrated the importance it shows to



Bolivia with the opening of the embassy in La Paz on February 14, 2018 and we hope that its embassy will open soon in our country.

From the University of Ankara as a sign of increasing this knowledge, today we will give the president the certificate of permanent friendship from the University of Ankara”

**Evo Morales:** “A great joy to be invited. First to the Republic of Turkey and to thank the director of the university for giving this short lecture. Our brother responsible for Latin American studies made an excellent summary about the indigenous movement, about Bolivia, about Potosí, congratulations for your great knowledge. Thank you for the opening, coverage for some of our students from our local University, we will send.

As our teacher said after the European Spanish invasions for almost 500 years, the indigenous movement was condemned to extermination. Our ancestors gave a hard resistance a hard fight for the defense of the forms of experience, community experience, solidarity, complementary, reciprocal, experience in harmony with mother earth. During the colony the indigenous movement made a tough resistance for our identity for our dignity and fundamentally in defense of natural resources. At 500 years, I mean, the invasion of Europe, came at the time called America, some indigenous leaders like Rigoberta Menchu, Guatemalan, decided to go from resistance to the seizure of power. I would say in Bolivia the original indigenous movement fulfilled our mandate after 500 years of resistance.

I will briefly summarize you. That our political instrument for liberation -MAS-IPSP- has been developed in the most humiliated, most oppressed sector of our territory. I want to be very sincere with you all over the world there are political parties of the left, anti-imperialist, anti-colonial, anti-capitalist, generally organized by politicians, nationals, patriots with a lot of knowledge. But in Bolivia this movement has been gestated by the original indigenous movement. Since the colony, the republic, the social movements, the labor unions, the original ayllus have always been a social power. But they were not a political power. Here was a Latin American doctrine of the capitalist system that told us union independence, social independence under the pretext of union independence, the unions could not do politics, under the pretext of ideological pluralism within the union. They could also be pro-imperialist, pro-capitalist. But in addition to that, I remember as a child in the highlands they told us that the politics of the peasant stick and the peak instrument of agricultural work and when I arrived in the tropical area of Cochabamba for economic reasons, again when a union leader proposed structural changes to them. They said that is a crime, their policy is ax and machete. Even in the unionized labor sector that colonial mentality, that the union cannot do politics.

However, from the indigenous movement we decide that politics is the best science of service to the people. Of course now, we are not only the indigenous peasant movement

but all social sectors promoting this political instrument of liberation. What I want you to understand is that we did not create a political movement or political party based on the militants but based on the social movements of Bolivia. I would say after almost 200 years of the founding of the republic in Bolivia these social movements become liberating social movements just like Simon Bolivar.

Because I tell you this. When we arrived at the government offices of the IMF in the Central Bank of Bolivia, the CIA in the Government Palace, a United States military group in the Bolivian Army, a North American base in Chimore to dominate and subdue Bolivia and all economic policies decided by the World Bank and IMF. IMF staff participated in cabinet meetings. Before making a bill, they came from the USA with the name of the North American buffet or the American lawyer who wrote a bill for Bolivia. And to make it our political instrument that we decide ourselves, we govern ourselves. And today after 13 years we fulfill this great desire to govern ourselves. And to go to the elections with our own political instrument, we raised three issues: politically the refounding of Bolivia, economically the nationalization of natural resources and socially the redistribution of wealth.

After three years of hard democratic struggle, we guaranteed the re-foundation, we went from a colonial state to a plurinational state. The impostor state is over, an apparent state, the classless state is over. Economically, on May 1, 2016, my hand did not shake to nationalize or recover national resources, especially gas and oil. And I want to tell you the contracts with the transnational oil companies before the nationalization were unconstitutional contracts. In the contracts they said that the owner, who is the transnational, acquires the right to appropriate at the wellhead. Why at the head of the wellhead? Because when we as leaders asked that the oil belong to the Bolivians, they told us when it is below the ground it is from the Bolivians when it leaves the ground it is no longer from the Bolivians. And in addition to that, from the revenues, from the hydrocarbons, 82% for the transnationals, 18% for the Bolivians. Then it was important how to recover natural resources.

Something else, after we nationalized, in thirteen years the oil income of 37 billion dollars, almost in 20 years of neoliberalism, when it was privatized, 3 billion of oil income. We do not want owners or bosses over our natural resources. We want partners, now we have several companies, such as Repsol and Total, that provide services and are not owners. The nationalization of natural products has allowed Bolivia to change the economic matrix. You know very well by constitution basic services is a human right. We nationalize water, nationalize telecommunication and energy. Well I can tell you so much data that we fear in the nationalization but I want to go to the social part. We implement many social programs, especially for the most humble brothers in Bolivia. As a result of these social programs, we have reduced extreme poverty from 38.2% to 15.2%. Bolivia has 11 million inhabitants, almost 3 million passed into the middle class. Imagine in 180 years they left us with 9 billion dollars of GDP. Last year we ended up

with 40 million GDP. This data surprises locals and strangers in the world. And besides that, Bolivia has a plan towards the bicentennial. Because 2025 celebrates 200 years since the founding of the republic. Our plan is based on four main areas: livestock, mining, hydrocarbons and energy.

On the agricultural issue we are surprised by the data, five years ago we began to export quinoa and chia to Turkey. Brother Minister of Education has to officiate this kind of trade between Bolivia and Turkey. But for the first time we are opening the market to the largest countries in the world such as China. We signed agreements to export quinoa, coffee, soybeans and beef cattle. We are negotiating with Russia, I know that Turkey is an ally of Russia, you are going to help me. Regarding hydrocarbons, something undesirable that we have experienced before. Natural gas was exported but LPG was imported to Bolivia. However, the governments of the past were wanting to install a GLN plate in the Pacific Ocean to send to the United States. However, first we installed two liquid separation plants. Now we are exporting LPG in small quantities to Argentina, Brazil, but mainly Paraguay. We have installed an LNG platinum ready to export to neighboring countries with less attempts with Peru. For the first time, a company of the Bolivian State YPF is going to provide services abroad. We have installed a fertilizer plant, before everything was importing fertilizers, Japan, Canada, USA, now we are exporting to Brazil and we have a great plan to deepen the petrochemical industry towards the 100th anniversary. On the subject of mining, non-metallic metals, I will specifically refer to non-metallic, which is also energetic. The Lithium. Bolivia has the largest reserves in the world. We have 17 thousand square km of the salt that is for lithium. Well it would be long to tell you because there are always some industrialized countries where technology transfer is located. However we have started, we have reached the lithium industrialization pilot plant. As a state with our own economic resources, we have started the industrialization of lithium. Last year we completed the potassium chloride plant and started exporting to Brazil. This year from the lithium carnboot potassium plant we will produce 400 tons. Now we are going to give way to the battery and cathode plant. And now partners like Germany and China are coming to continue the industrialization of the Lithium. I want to inform you that I have a great plan towards 2030, 14 large lithium plants, 20 plants to guarantee inputs from those plants and 7 for lithium by-products. We are almost convinced that when we finish our great lithium industry maybe Bolivia will set the price of lithium for the world.

You are academics, researchers, what I want you to understand is that Bolivia has a lot of hope and a lot of future. Fundamentally based on its non-renewable renewable resources. When we came to the government the public investment was 60 million dollars, now we program each year about 80 million. And when he was a candidate for the first time in 2002, what the United States Ambassador Manuel Rocha used to say “if he is president. There will be neither cooperation nor investment”. Just now investment has risen and cooperation continues. Besides that, that ambassador who said in 2005

when he was a candidate for president "Evo is Bin Laden Andino and the coca growers the Taliban". And that moment the Bolivian people voted, I felt that the US ambassador was my head of the campaign.

I feel that these are times of integration of the peoples of the world and we are not part of the walls that divide the peoples of the world. These are the times to defend multilateralism, international law and peace. I would say that the times of imperial distribution are over, we are only going to guarantee peace if there is social justice and if the dignity and identity of the peoples is respected. This information that I offered you is not thanks to Evo or the government but to the unity of the Bolivian people. How important it had been to unite socially, politically and electorally based on our principles, values and ideals as well as being a national program. Thank you so much.

### **Annex 7: Transcript Interviews to Bolivia`s Diplomatic Officials**

#### **Interview to Bolivia`s Honorary Consul in Istanbul Stefan Milkovic**

Q: What is your background?

I am a Turkish citizen, my father is also a Turkish citizen, but we belong to a minority if you want, better said an immigrant family. My father's family comes from the former Yugoslavia which was Ottoman territory 150 years ago and there was a lot of migration. Well, I studied at the German school, then I went to study economics and commerce in the United States, I worked for several years in a Swiss pharmaceutical company, I traveled a lot for myself then through the subsidiaries of the company and meanwhile my father had set up a small business here in turkey import and export and always wanted me to be in charge of that business. But before that, I wanted to do a master's degree at Harvard University in Boston and I started two software companies, one of which was able to sell it and then I saw that it was time to go back to Turkey to help my father expand the business. I am married to a Bolivian citizen in La Paz, we have three children together and it cost her lot to move. And we traveled to Bolivia

Q: You told me your father was consul

He is still the current consul. My father began to be a consul I think it was the government of Pazamora or Goni at that time and they named him consul of Bolivia before I married my wife. A delegation came from Bolivia for the Habitat conference, Habitat was an environment conference that was held in Turkey, vice-ministers I don't remember I wasn't there. And of course, a family member of wife who worked in government told us, look, Stefan, a delegation is coming, we don't know anyone in Istanbul, if you can help them. And they came, and of course we invited them to the house to eat, and there my father, who is a very open and charismatic person, and they proposed to him look, we have no office, no agreement or commercial and we want to see if he wants to be the honorary consul of Bolivia in Istanbul

Q: And before there was no consul?

No, there's none.

Q: And when was that?

Look, I think in the early eighties to the end of the nineties. My father with my mother did a lot also with the help of other Latin American Caribbean countries to provide the Latin American culture in Istanbul. I remember we had an event with the mayor of Sisli a Latin American Festival, my mother cooked potatoes "a la huancayna". And we hired three Bolivian students. I remember for them to dance a type of caporales with masks. We made to spread culture tourism etc. My father is 89 years old. And 10 years ago when he turned 80 he told me I can no longer hold the position. You are half Bolivian, you can be more useful. And he officially resigned but the government did not accept his resignation. The position is honorary but there are things to do. There is a lot of administrative stuff. For example this week we had 8 Bolivians here for different issues of permits, one who entered the Schengen area and had a one-entry visa and could not return. We had two prisoners who were released and we had to send them to Bolivia. We had someone who ran into their partner and they illegally crossed into Greece where they were caught, they couldn't get out, we helped them get out to go back to Turkey. So there are many things to do, my father cannot do all those things.

Q: You told me about many of the activities, maybe you can tell me if you remember an agreement that was made between Bolivia and Turkey?

Look at an agreement itself no. You will remember when President Evo Morales came to Turkey; the dean of the University of Ankara said that there were relations since 1955 I think. But I would not know how to tell you where this agreement comes from. But I can tell you that when I got married there was no way to legalize my papers to be able to get married in Bolivia and in Bolivia they did not accept the papers of Turkey because there was absolutely no type of agreement, so I had to go to Spain to legalize my papers for the Spanish consulate to tell me if those your papers really belong to Stefan who is a Turkish citizen. And with those papers I went to the Foreign Ministry to be able to get married because it was in Bolivia.

As an honorary consul, he represents Bolivia in Turkey and is responsible for helping Bolivians who are tourists or who live here. That is the main task of the consul to help the citizens of the country it represents. Then you have the second part, which is to establish relationships with various guilds that are formed here educational, cultural, commercial, diplomatic to spread the Bolivian culture in Turkey. And third help the Turkish citizens who want to travel to Bolivia. Inform them of the wealth of the Bolivian country. The consul does not charge a salary and provides his time and resources for the country of Bolivia

Q: So I assume that until then there was no financial agreement signed?

The trade balance, I understand, is more or less like five million dollars. It is very little for two countries that are growing a lot. I see that there is much to take advantage of. You can do a lot. At least in the tourist field, both countries are very rich in this sense; they offer wonders of the world. Of course it is difficult to access, but now Turkish Airlines is already flying to Sao Paulo, and we are getting closer and closer. Now you no longer have to go through Europe. Now in the commercial field both countries are compatible. Turkey lacks raw materials. There you could export things from Bol, not only minerals but also in agriculture, soy, and quinoa

Q: There the problem would be the infrastructure, right?

Yes, the logistics. Access to the sea complicates. The output of materials in volume is a difficult task for Bolivia if you do not have access to the sea. Then it would be to export from Bolivia products with an added value that are not volumes. You have to find a way to do a very good market study in Turkey to see what you could buy and sell. Turkey has interesting products to exploit. When I go to the “Ketal” I see Turkish food products. It's curious. I don't think there are many Turks living in Bolivia. So there is no market for Turkish expats. It means that these preserves are sold to Bolivians. Then there is in the cosmetic industry, textile. But I really think it is tourism where Bolivia could really make a great contribution.

I see my friends from Turkey say we are already getting tired from going to Paris to London we already know. We want to explore. Bolivia's topography a very different place from Turkey. You have things that are very different. With which it is adventure tourism and here we have 80 million and I assure you that at least 10% are adventurous. 8 millions of people a great market. There is a very great possibility there.

Q: What was the context in which the relationships originated?

I don't know about 55. I believe that this was done at the government level and I suppose through a bilateral or multilateral agreement. Bol and Turk established relationships. I don't know if it's through the UN. But I assure you that there was no official representation of the Bolivian government until my father was appointed consul.

I believe that the first step that a government takes so far geographically from each other is through an honorary consulate. My father and we thought more about business relationships. In culture and in commerce that goes parallel.

Q: During that time of relationships what were the biggest impediments, limits, problems

We did not have a strategic plan. The plan should be put together and prioritize things with the chancery. We lacked a lot of very basic brochures, to go to Universities, Fairs. Let's send “chullos”, send us a couple of “aguayos”. At the consulate we do not have a Bolivian book. I prepared by myself a tourist directory, numbers, places. But I think it

should be a little more professional. In this relationship there was no fluid information. Communication failed. We need to do a plan: contact 10 Turkish tourist agencies and promote Bolivia. Bring a famous Bolivian painter, artist, photographer and organize an exhibition here. We can bring a music group. Folklore is very important to the Turkish citizen. Folklore is something of the people that the people live. I feel the same *cairño* with Bolivian folklore. I always imagine seeing the *kjarkas* playing at the Bosphorus. This is how the country expands. Through music, politicians, artists, teachers who give a talk. So Turkish people appreciate this and say it would be interesting to go to a bowl, and there they create ties and trade and wealth. Where are we going to focus? Quinoa has entered Bolivia very strongly. There is no real Quinoa in Peru. Aquisolo comes from Peru. Caniahua is not here.

Q: How do you evaluate the arrival of President Morales?

The arrival of President Morales has been incredible. A bilateral meeting of high-level souls. First time. President Erdogan gave a welcome as high as possible. First to the meeting of the presidents alone. It has been very important to get to know each other. Turkey offered medical equipment, which is very good quality here, Turkish airlines flight (access). What was a little inseperating was when Erdogan arrived (arrival flights were charged). The citizen is open, loving the person.

Q: Do you want this to be part of Turkey's attempts to penetrate Latin America?

If you grab a compass and circle around and go two and a half hours from Turkey to Turkey you have a Market of 300 to 400 million people. Turkey was positioned buy well as a market as a route. (turkey can play role of an "economic bridge" for Bolivia), (economic hub, economic crossroad, economic articulation by trade route. Turkihs Airlines strategy to take advantage of the hub. Turkey already has good ties with the US, and LAT is a Market Very good and perhaps it is the furthest from Turkey in geographical terms, so it is closer.

Q: This nascent relationship with which focus do you think should be focused; purely economic, cultural or ideological relations (Bolivia position in Cyprus or Amernia)?

I believe the ideologies of a sovereign country is a matter for the country itself. In multi-relationship relationships it is about opening a relationship of friendship of exchange. Politics is discussed at close door meetings. I think President Erdogan was referring to the situation in Venezuela and there were governments that got into issues and local affairs. I think first promoting culture, international exchange, trade, tourism and the rest will come I guess.

Q: How do you evaluate the current situation of the relation?

Turkey opened its embassy. And there is a reciprocity law between governments. Bolivia agrees to Turkey with the Embassy.

Drug trafficking is a big problem. Bolivia is not well known as a country, but when you have many prisoners here, they think all of Bolivia are drug traffickers. Around 60-80 people. "Mules". They are very humble people, many women, young, pregnant, with children. It's a shame. Once they are taken prisoner, here they send prison and serve a sentence of 7 years and eleven months. We help them with calling family, Aguinaldo small, cigarettes. Once they complete the sentence and are repatriated to Bolivia, their trip must be organized. They can ask to serve their sentence in Bolivia. They have to make a request to serve in my country and this can speed things up. It goes from the Turkish interior min to the Turkish cacinllerioa to the foreign ministry bol to the internal min bol to the justice min. It would be great to streamline that process. The more there is more complicated, each one ask for things. A child is born here. You cannot send it to Bolivia. Bolivian girl, spoke perfect Turkish, little Spanish.

Very few Bolivian citizens live here, mostly women married to Turkish. Registered do not pass from the fingers of my hand. Many work, hired by a school.

### **Interview to Bolivia`s Ambassador in Iran Romina Perez Ramos**

Q: How you evaluate Bolivia`s diplomacy?

Bolivia inaugurated in 2006 new policy called the diplomacy of the peoples. That breaks certain paradigms for you. Get the UN to recognize the rights of mother earth. The MAS party came to power not as a traditional party but through social movements, our constitution of 2009 very important. We organized two summits of the Rights of Mother Earth. Our proposals at UN where heard, they were alternative proposals that have nothing to do with green capitalism, different proposal to the western capitalist vision, they are contestatory proposals. Is not an unimportant thing, that puts Bolivia in a different status. We want to build another civilization. Capitalist countries have made the largest amount of emission. Another battle that we won thanks to the diplomacy of the peoples it is water as a human right. We are the contestatory sector that makes change possible. Our policy is first to live well with mother earth. I reccomend you the books: "Work in defense of life and mother earth", "the earth does not belong to us, we belong to the earth", "living as a response to the global crisis", "understanding the diplomacy of peoples"

In the Rio plus 20 conference we introduced the rights of mother earth. We say the planet is a system of life. When they began to discuss this at Tiquipaya, everyone said how the water, the fish, the dog, the cows will have the same right. Because the ancestral conception that we are carrying is that everything is a life system that is dying. Climate change is a product of human action.

Q: And is that still promoting here in Iran?

Ofcourse, because we have had political impact. For example, Iran is vice president of the indigenous platform for the rights of mother earth and climate change. We hold the



presidency and they the vice presidency. Why do they have a lot of consideration for us? First, because we have very strong support from social movements and that is what they respect. They respect Evo's leadership in relation to the world's social movements. That is why they call him leader of the Americas. And now what we are doing is organizing the People's World Organization. Because we already have experience of having done it in our country. In other words, all the anti system movements see a leader in Evo. And it is a way of doing diplomacy. Not like Trump, who does what he wants, gets out of agreements. We are in a multilateral construction and he continues to act as within unilateralism.

So to summarize you. We do not do traditional diplomacy both in protocol and in politics at all. It is always the people now who intervene in the field of international politics through the consultations that are made especially on these capital issues such as climate change, the rights of mother earth.

I'm going to tell you an anecdote. At the summits of Sustainable Development, first were the objectives of the millennium, then as nothing could be done, come the objectives of Sustainable Development. But we are going to reach the same conditions because the paradigm has not changed the relationship of the subject man with nature: it is considered as an object at the service of man. We say all life systems have rights. Man is part of the System of life.

Now logically in relations, why with Iran? Because since the 79 revolution, already Iran breaks with paradigms of the Cold War; you were with the URRS or the USA. So what does Iran do? It says neither East nor West we choose Islamic Republic. What does that mean? While in the West they have worked for years to separate the state from church in Iran both come together; the religion with the state. In other words, the Iranian constitution is based on Islamic principles. The norms of Islam are translated into principles of the constitution. Iran is traditionally anti-imperialist country. So what is it that links us in what conditions are we with Iran? Above all the ideological positioning and the vision that we fear in relation to the civilization of the West is one of the death of capitalism, we must build another civilization because we cannot continue that way.

I: Can you tell me which were the greatest successes in the Iran-Bolivia relationship that can be replicated in the nascent Turkey-Bolivia relationship?

The relationship with Iran occurs in the year 2007. In a United Nations event Bolivia raised support for the Iranian nuclear program as a right of the peoples to always develop technology with sovereignty. We believe that the peoples have that right. Then there the relations with Iran are established, with the unconditional support from our President as a principle. Then Iran begins to have blockades everywhere and decides to have ties and more contacts, especially with the anti-imperialist Latin American countries. So they link up with Chavez in the first place. And after all that blockade, they do a tour with 20 Iranian business men around Latin American countries.

Q: The relationship is more ideological than trade oriented?

We have economic relations but there are problems due to the blockade. But obviously you establish relations first because of the ideological political factor. Basically, with Iran we are building another civilization, new paradigms. We signed 42 memorandums with Iran, between of understanding, cooperation, etc. In Javad Zarif's recent trip, which we have managed, a nanotechnology laboratory is being set up, because our president is opening a new Ministry of Science and Technology. Now science and knowledge is what increases the GDP the most. We also want to venture into that. Iran provided us with support in this area.

Q: Turkey is a traditional ally of the USA, how can we focus on that relationship?

Our relationships are not just politics, but to have commercial exchanges. Before coming here I was a deputy. There we have passed many laws for example on the issue of the Silk Road. We intend to meet with countries that fight for multilateralism; we have re-established good relations with Russia. She's helping us set up our nuclear program.

Q: I spoke with the Russian ambassador and he told me that the trade balance is very low.

The duty to be does not remain in the economic. You have support in different areas that make an impact at the multilateral level. With Iran we have all the assembly for the milk factories that they bet in the chapare. There are several memorandums of understanding to venture into the area of lithium, it was also for the industrialization of gas and oil. But precisely because of the blockade issue, other companies have already entered. As in the lithium issue, Russia and China are in a better position to offer opportunities for the development of the country. It is very difficult to carry out trade with countries that are totally blocked. That is a central problem in Iran.

Q: Other problems?

Basically the issue of blocking. If it weren't for the blockade all the agreements would have been carried out. We have in the area, politics, in the area culture, in the area of construction of alternative energies. We have signed a lot of agreements but when it comes to implementing them it is very difficult. You implement it those who are possible to make payments. Iran was very interested in importing meat from Bolivial, since I was a deputy. Inclusive it was going to put a whole slaughterhouse on us, because they have, because of their religion, a way of killing. They do not make the cattle suffer. But because they also want to support our country, that is to say now they import meat in tons from Brazil. Support the livestock sale of Bolivia. But now they are exporting to China and Russia. So our markets are not going to supply a market as big as Iran.

Q: And less to Turkey I think

Our president has gone on the last trip. I understand that you he has made new agreements. Now because the president has given all an international tour, because our policy is to relate to all countries under the principle of sovereignty. We can have relations with Saudi Arabia if they respect our wisdom, but we have principles for trade. The commercial exchange that we do differs from the exchange of free trade, which is another paradigm, so we are always going to seek a solidary integration that respects the mechanisms and instruments of a true cooperation, without exploiting or using your position to have more gains in the matter of the trade. We want partners and not bosses. For example, when the nationalization of hydrocarbons was planned, it turned out that 80% of the cake was foreign companies. Because they operated as bosses. 80% for Bolivia and 20 for them. And they accepted because they still win. The same was said in Turkey we want partners and not bosses.

I: The consul from Turkey told me that Bolivia could focus on tourism

Now Bol has a lot of market for the Uyuni Salt Flats. That is what we are working on alsohere.

I: I realized that more attention is paid to the ideological but not to the economic

Ofcourse. We are in a transition phase where more than half the world is asking for changes, in the system, in the institutions. Change of the Bretton Woods system. Who does the United Nations represent? Nobody believes in the United Nations, they are in crisis. Middle of the world calls for structural changes and that is a political change and when you say changes, trade relations also have to change. Because all commercial relations based on the hegemony of the United States are for the benefit of the United States, not ours.

I: Does Bolivia have a specific foreign policy for the Middle East?

We do have, but there are not large departments.

### **Interview to Bolivia`s Ambassador in Rusia Hugo Villarroel**

Q: How a smaller country like Bolivia should deal with a bigger one like Russia or Turkey. What should you focus on?

First I think you have to see the context. And the current context for Bolivia and its international relations is undoubtedly the process of transformation that Bolivia has been undergoing for thirteen years since President Morales. It is clear that these structural transformations of Bolivian society and the economy have made the figure of President Morales gain an important space in the international context. I believe that this is the cornerstone that enables a country like you said to be relatively small in economic and population terms to entwine relationships beyond the magnitudes of GDP, population or territory. If we do not understand that context, it is difficult to

understand that Bolivia has an international presence today. For example, in two consecutive years, there were two meetings with President Putin. Nor can one understand the role that Bolivia has in the UN. Probably in another context it would not have been possible.

Now, the construction of relations with countries in Russia, or in this case Turkey, where our president has officially announced the opening of an embassy, has already become a more structured work of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that today is in the process of prioritizing some diplomatic headquarters. The fundamental objective is to seek balance in international relations based on multilateralism, the construction of a multipolar world, which is why these counterweights are seen in China, Russia, and Turkey. The vision of our president is of a multipolar world.

Q: Is that what they call “peoples diplomacy”?

Not exactly. I would say that the focus of international politics not only of Bolivia but of Russia itself if you read the statements of Minister Lavrov. Today the foreign policy of Russia like other countries has multilateralism as its cornerstone. The action of the US shows the intention to establish a unipolar world. Multilateralism by excellence seeks balance in consensus. The unipolar world is based on force and imposition, so I am the first power in the world. I decide that it is done here there. I don't need to consult with anyone.

That is why I would say that people's diplomacy greatly strengthens and complements this state policy and seeks to combine formal diplomacy, traditionally structured by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, embassies and people with official positions. People's diplomacy, which is another of the official pillars of our foreign policy, that promotes direct contact between the populations of different countries. Looking to break the paradigm of formal diplomacy only. Our foreign policy is seeking to articulate approaches via sport, culture, music, which allows the peoples to come closer. For example, the soccer world cup organized here in Russia without proclaiming it, has been the best example of how people's diplomacy works. Millions of people came, they have known Russia, part of the culture, they have been able to go beyond the news and the clichés have been able to know what Russia is in terms of security communications. That is the diplomacy of the peoples, the direct contact of the citizens.

So, of course, as distant countries like Russia, and a small country like ours, it is very difficult to massively articulate the diplomacy of the peoples, but Bolivia, for example, every time a summit is organized, activities of social organizations are always organized in parallel. Tiquipaya, for example, had an official forum and a parallel one where, let's say, activists and NGOs discussed the same things that formal diplomacy discussed.

Returning to the main topic, today Bolivia has the opportunity to contribute some successful policies carried out in our country. For example, respect for mother earth

there is an official day declared by the UN. The issue of basic services, Bolivia promoted and is promoting the recognition of basic services as a human right and not as a business

Q: A new embassy is opening in Turkey. What were the biggest limits or problems that the Bolivian embassy in Russia faced that maybe could happen again in the Turkish embassy and we can avoid it.

Normally the limitations come from how expensive the diplomatic mission of our country is. Here in Russia itself we are still building relation. We want to have a long-term and strategic relationship with Russia. A decision made by the president. Strengthen the embassy in all aspects. A decision already made. However, there is no correlation between these decisions, which are certainly correct, and the trade balance between Russia and Bolivia, which is very incipient. One realizes immediately that the first thing to work on is commercial exchange. I believe that the two things have to go in parallel because finally everything will settle in the economy. And like many things in life, the chicken or the egg comes first. We have a commercial attaché at this embassy. But the trade balance is so small it justifies or does not justify? My personal opinion is that if we want that to grow there has to be a commercial attaché. The position of the bureaucracy is normally that the trade balance grows and we put a trade add. That is the dilemma when one has to face tasks like this. But these difficulties must be overcome.

he economic growth in Bolivia is one of the elements of success that makes Bolivia look different today. But even though our GDP is quadrupled, economic limitations always exist. We try to have a representation.

Q: Should the new embassy in Turkey only hire commercial technicians?

Both. It can also have purely political embassies. When there is no possibility of aggressively developing the trade balance. I think that is not the case in Turkey.

## **Annex 8: Transcript Interviews to Turkey`s Diplomatic Official in Bolivia**

### **Interview to Turkey`s Honorary Consul in Bolivia Alvaro Balcazar**

Q: When did you serve as consul and how did you get involved in the diplomatic world?

More than 25 years ago around 1994. The relationship comes because my family has been involved in the international field. My father passed away young. My father's brother worked for many years in the United Nations and was an ambassador in Brazil and was in Africa. And my father's other brother was also ambassador to Germany and Japan. And I work a lot at the World Bank. So the Turkish government, when it consider having a representation not only in Bolivia but in the whole Latin America and

the Caribbean, set the objective of having consulates in all countries to have a greater commercial activity and better communication. Already at that time there was an embassy in Argentina, Brazil and Venezuela, I'm not sure. And through the ambassadors that Turkey had in South America, it went on a campaign to find people who could be consuls in the different countries.

I am a doctor and I dedicate myself to my activity. But being in Bolivia for things in life I have been a person who had a lot to do with government and business positions. My father died in 1992 but the Turkish government contacted my father, Mario Balcazar, to study the possibility of him being the consul because he was a businessman who moved around the banks. So it was important to increase business relationships. They agreed that my father was going to be the consul, even the credentials were sent for the presentation to the Bolivian government, but my father died. Then he was never able to take over as representative of the government of Turkey. The representatives of the embassy of Buenos Aires approached La Paz to collect all the documentation, we talked with them and there began a conversation of consulting us, there was the offer of whether it would interest me to assume that responsibility.

Q: Then you were the first Turkish consul in Bolivia. Before that there were any contacts?

Before there was absolutely nothing about Turkey. My father was the first to be appointed but he never took over. I was the first consul. When I assumed the consulate there was no commercial relationship, no diplomatic relationship there was absolutely nothing. And among the first functions that I was commissioned to do was try to make a census of how many Turks there were in Bolivia. And they were very few. That somewhat justifies the fact that they had no representation. There were about five. One who had migrated I do not remember well if it was through Egypt. He was in charge of selling Arabic food. Another in the southern area of La Paz, was detained for drug trafficking. Also there was person in Cochabamba who had a relationship.

Q: How were those first years?

Turkey had an important boost and focused a lot of energy on Latin America and the Caribbean. It wanted to exploit that commercial area in this part of the world. And one example is that they appointed honorary consuls in almost all countries. A meeting was held in 96 if I am not mistaken, all of us consuls were invited to Ankara. We got to know the government and the country. I was very interesting. That was the big push Ankara wanted to give. As part of this impulse, Turkey installed a non-stop fly towards Brazil. That was important for Turkey and people who went to places close to the region.

From my personal point of view, the commercial balance was very incipient in Bolivia. The Bolivian market that was small. We had a little rapprochement with the chamber of

commerce. They were willing to listen. Then there were a series of contacts. But the demands that Turkey had, for example, virgin leather so that they can process it and make garments needed large quantities that the Bolivian market did not have that capacity. But of course Bolivia's production is low for demand. So the activity is year the activity was more the consulate as a center of tourist activity. Turkey has been known as a center for sightseeing. So people came looking for basic information. In another case it was an information center for people that made people looking for information for university jobs. As there was no need for a visa, there was not much consular work. Isolated cases of a Turkish citizen who lost his documents. Our point of contact, information, and accountability was to the Argentine ambassador.

Q: So in those years no commercial agreement was signed?

In the first years there was no commercial agreement. The consulate was only an information center in those years not much more. From people who wanted to travel to Turkey, study or people who wanted to know Turkish history.

Q: During your visit to Turkey in 1996, did the Turkish representatives send you a message for Bolivia in specific or Lat in general just?

No, there was no specific message for Bolivia. The message was more or less the same for all countries. Obviously large countries like Brazil and Argentina had embassies; surely they had a direct relationship. There were more than several general meetings so that we could present our consultations and also so that we could know the position of the Turkish government not only for South America the Caribbean but it was also very important for the government of Turkey to transmit us what was the position of Turkey in relation to the European Union. Turkey was interested in joining but there were some pending issues. Like for example Cyprus. Or the religious theme. And there were a series of topics in which they wanted to express to us what is Turkey's position on Cyprus on Europe so that at a certain moment we would have that official voice at hand to be able to talk about it in Bolivia with other countries. All conflicts have two visions. They wanted to convey that what is being said in reality, this is our reality. So if at a given moment being in Bolivia, I already know in different events, the consuls have the possibility of saying in the current position is this or that.

Q: During your administration, was there a visit by Turkish officials to Bolivia?

Definitely yes. The ambassadors in Argentina, as they were concurrent in Bolivia, came to present their credentials. I personally traveled countless times to Buenos Aires and was in contact with the ambassador there.

Q: How you observe the development of relationships to the point we are now. The opening of a new embassy and President Morales visit?

I left the consulate, I quit the year if I'm not mistaken 2007. I quit the consulate because I was going to immigrate to Europe. Now I live in Saudi Arabia and I have not been attentive to the relations between the Turkish government and Bolivia and less so with the previous government. I knew there was an intention to open an embassy. However, globalization wants to break down borders. Turkey is a very interesting country because it has very different characteristics from other countries that have a population with a Muslim majority and that greatly favors an approach to countries outside the Islamic world. The Turkish population is not Arab but closer to the European population and that makes rapprochement much easier. The fact that an embassy is opened is something interesting. A government will not easily open an embassy if indeed there is no commercial interest. What I can express is that it is appallingly interesting and it makes me very happy.

Q: What role should Bolivia play in the Middle East?

Bolivia is a country that has very important priorities and has to have state policies, not government policies. I believe that economic investment efforts should be directed internally to development, which is education, health, and infrastructure. However, for obvious reasons, this economic investment is difficult for the government alone and worldwide. In developed countries exist what is called "public-private associates". These partnerships have shared risk, both win or both lose. So public-private relations must be done with internationally recognized institutions. I think that in order to develop public infrastructure, having an investment from countries like the Middle East can be interesting. To try to attract investment from the private sector especially. I do not think that Bolivia should invest resources in the Middle East, Bolivia does not have the capacity to invest resources, but it is important that Bolivia has a link with the private sector so that it can invest in Bolivia together with the public company. So the opening of commercial relations seems important to me. I believe that consulates can function very well without the need for a large investment of resources. Obviously the presence of Bolivia in this region is very low. Here in Saudi Arabia we are 5 Bolivians. And then it wouldn't justify. For consular support regarding paperwork in this region (Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, UAE) it would be interesting. Because currently all these countries depend on Egypt. It is very interesting to have a consulate in the Gulf, not an embassy, because the investment of resources is high. And increase relations and contact with the private sector for investments in Bolivia in a type of public-private association. I don't think the private sector is interested in investing directly in Bolivia, but if they are public-private partners it is more interesting because the risk is shared. The objectives are similar. The objectives of the state are the same as the objectives of the private party. The world fair is going to be in Dubai and well there is no consulate, no representation. Last year the Bolivian soccer team came to play with Saudi Arabia. Invest resources no, but keep ties open yes.



## **Interview to Turkey's Honorary Consul in Bolivia Jaime Burgoa**

Q: How did you start, how was your beginning in the embassy?

I started in January 2009. The previous consul went to Spain and the question directly came to me if I was interested in being a consul. He told me to send my resume to Argentina, it was 2007, to the Argentine ambassador, because at that time Bolivia depended on Argentina. Consul Yalav, he received my resume and other people. I was not looking for a consulate. I wrote to the ambassador and interviewed him. And then I received some documents to complete personal information and others. And so the consular process began in 2008 and ended in 2009. That process means a lot, even the president has to sign a kind of diploma. Then from Buenos Aires they sent me the flag, shield, consular seal. The first task is to become familiar with all the Bolivian and Turkish authorities.

Q: Did representatives of Turkey come to Bolivia in your period?

All the ambassadors have come. The one from Argentina has come, then the one from Peru has passed. Those from Peru have come first to present their special letters. Because the Argentine ambassador, Ambassador Yalav, had already presented his credentials. He already came two three times and each time he had to coordinate.

Q: And what was Ambassador Yalav's goal of coming?

The ambassador, already in the interview I had in Buenos Aires, already told me that Turkey had paid a lot of attention to Latin American development and already had an embassy in Colombia in Ecuador in Argentina, in Chile, the oldest was in Brazil. Then he told me about the direct flights that Buenos Aires, Sao Paulo already had since that time. Then he already told me that he has a plan to open the embassies. So I say that for different reasons, sometimes administrative, sometimes political, sometimes bureaucratic, the opening of the embassies is being delayed as indicated in the initial schedule. The visits he made were not exactly to open an embassy. It was administrative processes. I don't have them very much in mind. He always sends an agenda and it has to be approved by the Chancellor. Economic, commercial cooperation on visit of Bolivian authorities to Turkey. So trying to energize a little as the ambassador had no contact here through a consul for a long time. However, I found out that he had made a lot of progress in his contacts, he had direct contact and called directly from Buenos Aires to the secretary of the vice minister, and he knew all the names.

Q: So he should have come before, right?

Clear. In fact, he came at least once. The occasion of the presentation of credentials. Appointment of the Turkish ambassador to Bolivia. It may have been 2005. Once he is appointed ambassador in Buenos Aires, he is automatically appointed concurrent ambassador in Bolivia and also in Paraguay and Uruguay. So I had a heavy load. And

that means sending notes to the foreign ministers of each country to present credentials of the concurrent ambassador. Oh and in Lima more because there was no embassy.

Q: Was the first honorary consul in Bolivia?

Not before me was Consul Alvaro Balcazar and before him I think there was none. And that was through an ambassador who had contact in Brazil and from Brazil they were looking for an honorary consul in Bolivia, he says. So they found like this. That was the previous consul with whom I had no relationship. He went to Spain.

Q: During your administration, what progress was achieved? What were the most common barriers?

There were advances and setbacks. Having a consul present actually means progress. It is a facility. Because I advance because I made contact with the very few Turkish citizens in Bolivia. Among them Ali Ozca. Sumanente active was always present in the international fairs of La Paz, Cochabamba and Santa Cruz. So, being present at the fairs, he told me I had to collaborate with material to spread. His interest was to sell the little things he brought from Turkey. He set up a stand and sold ornaments, lamps, tablecloths. The first thing I did was ask the ambassador for tourist material and they would send me a box. That little detail was beginning to make a difference. At fairs you would see the Turkish flag. In the fexpocruz that is immense. You saw a booth manned by Ali his wife.

There were always problems with the prisoners in the Istanbul prisons (like 50 Bolivians) and in Palmasola (like 4 Turks). So the vice ministry of institutional affairs had to listen to those issues. Then talk to parliamentarians, the parliament's international affairs committee for example. Everything is progress because you are starting to establish a Turkish presence in Bolivia.

Then, a few months after I started, an artistic group from Uruguayan origin came to appear. They made a modest presentation. It had very nice soft music. So, trying to get in there, making contact with the ministry of cultures, I wanted them to play the theater. However, it was never again possible to perform a sufiyorum here. I wanted an official delegation from Turkey to come. They did not come as an official delegation. They organized autonomously based on the contacts they had. I organized a presentation for them in the same ministry of cultures in a small room. Very few people came, it was improvised, the thing had to be much more serious.

Q: Was there any attempt to export or import?

I know that a lot of iron is imported for construction from Turkey. But that import has not passed through my hands, no paper has reached me. Regarding the export of gold, no paper has passed through the consulate either. Those commercial contacts have been made directly. Currently there is a person from Turkey who works for a Turkish

company based here, he pays for his stay, I don't know what mining company and it is only for gold. However, I honestly do not know if these import or export contacts have arisen while I was consul or before. The only thing that passed through my hands was some gentlemen who imported a container of chocolates and demanded a seal from the consulate here for SENASAG. And then the poor desperate gentlemen would come with their documents translated like this because they demanded my stamp. Then it seems that they managed differently. There were two importers bringing containers before Christmas, only of chocolates. One asked me only once and then never again and the other asked me every time I brought the container. That is a minor import for example. However Turkey really has a very well armed mechanism for business relationships. There have been constant requests for information from importers who might be interested in machinery to do something, contacts to import airplanes, weapons.

Q: So you think there are opportunities that have not yet been exploited?

For sure. Of all those contacts that we have sent, I did it through the national chamber of commerce. Every time I received a request for commercial information. Go to the national commercial camanra so that they give me or send me directly. That worked very well. Very active people from the chamber of commerce. However, what businesses have come out of those contacts I don't know

Q: What other problems, relationship barriers?

Possibly the change of authorities. However, the stability of the Morales government for 14 years is truly unprecedented. It is exceptional and very good. In addition to stability of government stability of the chancellor. However, the direction of bilateral affairs constantly changed authority and the legal advisor also, direction of legalizations as well. There is always a lack of stability from the authorities, there is a lot of movement.

Q: According to your experience, what advice would you give to improve the relationship with Turkey?

In the first place, we must be careful to measure very well the disproportion we have in country size. Turkey is extremely large. And it has a very large and very well structured ministry. Then you have the channels for everything well established. Not so much us. So this disproportion in size means that a lot of attention is paid to specific things that are going to be productive so that Bolivia can get more out of Turkey than Turkey could have from us. At this moment I have not visualized that three points for saying something three topics on which they should concentrate. But one of them should be the international cooperation of Turkey in Bolivia. The 2014 TIKA appeared here, we need contacts with such. With the planning ministry. They did donate equipment to the clinic hospital, something very important then, for example channeling TIKA cooperation seems very useful to me. But one thing is cooperation, you are extending the bad, what is more lasting and permanent are business relationships. Then you have to know

exactly all the commercial relationships there are. All the commercial links there are. Consolidate those commercial relationships that do not disappear in the face of any macro-economic change. You have to consolidate. Start with the existing ones. And then to stimulate commercial relations we have to send delegations to Turkey, here indirectly without much effort, your country is present with its films. Then, little by little, you have to touch flesh and blood to see the Turks how they do, how they dance, Sufi dances, dervishes, or more attractive things, beyond the novels.

Q: How do you see tourism?

I only found out that an average of 40 Turks have come per year. But of those 40 I don't know how much they have been stimulated by the drug. Knowing that they do not need a visa, they come and have fun and try to get there and some fall to Palma alone, others pass. I have always had a bit unfortunate situations, a tourist who had her cell phone stolen and passed pot. I think that tourism here for them is exotic and for Bolivians it is also very exotic. So there is a very important potential draw.

#### **Interview to Turkey's Ambassador in Bolivia Serap Ozcoskun**

Q: Why you think since the 90's Turkey became more engaged with Latin America?

I don't think there are many reasons. A few reasons for that. First of all is distance. We have this problem of transportation. Till 1995, when Demirel visited the region, unfortunately is not so easy to come to LAT. Turkish Airlines also opened new destinations and that is why it became more easy to come here. Second thing is again depending on the first reason of distance, the public opinions in both regions do not know each other so well because there is no so much interaction till that time, because again distance, lack of knowledge and so on. Then ofcourse time is passing as you have to look everything in the framework of the changing world. World began to change, we entering in a global relationship it brings also changes to everything. So turkey decided to have relations with other continents. Latin American is not alone Africa is also one of them. After the establishment of the Turkish Republic our main direction was with the western world. But we do not have the enough capacity to deal with everything. The world was divided in two by the cold war era and that also makes you direction. But with the changing world, with globalization we also decided to open up to the continents that we do not know so well till that time which means Africa and LAT. And we prepare the Strategic Paper to opening up to Latin America countries and after the first presidential visit we prepared that document and also we tried to open more embassies. It was so few at that time. Then with the beginning of 2000 now we began to open embassies in Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, Paraguay and Bolivia (2018)

Q: All this work was under AKP right?

Yes all that happened since 2000. In 2006 our strategic LAT paper was revised. Ofcourse opening an embassy in a country gives the momentum of bilateral relations.

People know that you have an embassy they will like to be also more open to come to you tell you their thoughts new ways or reactions and so on. That time we have continued to speed up our relations with the continent. We are trying with Turkish Airlines to fly to more destinations in LAT. For the time being is flying directly to Mexico, Col, Venezuela, Arg, Brazil. And we are also working that one day in Bolivia, most probably not in La Paz but in Santa Cruz

Q: What do you think the role Turkey is trying to play in LAT?

Main motive is economic. Now, the world became like a global village. Everybody tries to multiply its economic partners. This development came mainly after the recent rash in 2008. Turkey till that time our main economic partner is EU. After this crisis these countries were the most affected ones including Turkey. That pushed us to look for more economic partners. Since LAT was not very known to us we intensify our efforts to find more markets. And I think it is the same reason for LAT countries. As far as I can see LAT countries were very much trading among themselves, were not opened to world. We thought we can find a place in LAT market. And since we are close to many geographical places like middle east, Russia, Africa then we could be a good starting point for the LAT market. Second reason of course political reasons always prevail. We all have good relations with LAT countries also with Bolivia we don't have political problems. This has a positive effect in our future economic relations.

Q: How do you see Turkish support for Venezuela?

Turkish foreign policy is against any foreign intervention on domestic affairs. When you are evaluating Turkish relations with Venezuela, we think people should decide who governs them. I am aware this can be seen as Turkey is supporting Venezuela regime. We are supporting Venezuela people. We do not have to think all the same with all the countries. We have been looking to each country, we will like to have our bilateral relations on a bilateral basis.

Q: With which country do you think is the one Turkey has most trade and more common political views?

Brazil, Argentina and Mexico. Countries that we have longer relations. For Bolivia the TIKA of Bogota is the one in charge. We also want Latin American countries to know us better, we could also provide many opportunities, economic opportunities.

Q: What do you think is Turkey's perception of Bolivia?

It is difficult to say I know very few people from Bolivia. Of course the perception of Bolivia in the Turkish public opinion is very limited. In recent years I have seen now that more people are coming and visiting Bolivia. Our travel agencies have some direct tours to Peru and Bolivia. This is good. When people come here, they are coming here, seeing and reading about a country is two different things. When they come here they

see that Bolivia is very similar to turkey. There are so many similarities between turks and bolivians like they are hospitable people very open to guest they like to know people they are open minded they would like to learn aout the other part and Bolivians knows Turkey mainly from theTurkish novelas. Unfortunaly turks don't have such kind of facility so they only read about Bolivia then they come here.But till now with my interview with the turks coming here their percepcion is very positive. They say it is wonderfull to know there is a country like Bolivia in LatinAmerica. That we could have so much in common.

Q: Do you know anything about first contacts between the two countries?

Im sarching on that. But I can tell you that the diplomatic relations were stablished in 1950. This year is the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the diplomatic relations. Not only with Bolivia but with many LAT counties. And I have found that the first visit, may no be the first, but ambassador from Santiago came to La Paz in 1952 and we had other another consul here, Osman Bey. I think he was here in 1960's. The most senior Turk living in Bolivia, for the last 30 years, is a woman who knew Osman Bey. She a turkish lady married to a Bolivina man. One day im also planning talking with her.

Q: What do you think were the most common barriers of the relation?

Is not political. Is the distance is really far.

Q: Is there any TIKA involvment in Bolivia?

They have 2 projects in the previous years. One is in agriculture area the other is in health area. In health they donated some equipment. And in agriculture they also donated something use to collect quinua. And recently after the presdintial visit, the two presidents agree that TIKA should do more in Bolivia. So that is why we have been preparing visit of Turkish TIKA team from Ankara to Bolivia. There would be a meeting with TIKA and the ministry of planning here but I think after the elections we will revitalize this visit. TKA has been working so well in many parts of the world specially in Africa. I believe that we should doing more. This is one of our priorites in our bilateral relations

### **Annex 9: Questionaries Sample**

#### **Turkey`s perceptions towards Bolivia questionnaire:**

1) You think Bolivia is in:

- a) Asia                      b) Europe                      c) Latin America                      d) Africa

2) You consider Bolivia`s climate is:

- a) Warm and tropical                      b) cold and snowy

3) You think Bolivian relations with the United States are:

- a) in really good shape. Good allies (better than Turkey)
- b) more or less developed. Neutral
- c) in really bad shape. Antagonism with the US (worse than Turkey. Like Iran)

4) You think Bolivia and Turkey's cultures are:

- a) similar (compatible)
- b) very different (incompatible)
- c) more or less similar

5) Do you think Bolivia:

- a) supports Palestinian cause and is against Israel
- b) Sides with Israel
- c) Is neutral, no opinion

5) Do you think Bolivia:

- a) Supports Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad
- b) Against Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad
- c) Is neutral, no opinion

6) Do you think Bolivia:

- a) Supports Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro
- b) Against Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro
- c) Is neutral, no opinion

7) Do you think Bolivia:

- a) Denounced Libyan 2011 intervention (good allies with Gaddafi)
- b) Supported NATO 2011 Libyan intervention
- c) Neutral, no opinion

8) If there was a WWII you think Bolivia will:

- a) Side with the west (USA, Europe, Australia, Canada)
- b) Side with China, Russia, Iran

c) Will be neutral

9) You think Bolivia economy is:

a) Within the 20 most powerful in the world

b) Between the 50 and 100

c) After 100

10) Do you consider Bolivia a:

a) Democracy (like Germany or US) b) Authoritarianism (like China or Russia)

c) Dictatorship (Pinochet) d) Teocracy (like Iran, Saudi Arabia)

11) Do you consider Bolivia:

a) Really safe country

b) Relatively safe (sometimes attacks may occur)

c) Unsafe (conflict may arise any moment)

12) You think Bolivia involvement in the Middle East is:

a) High

b) Medium

c) Low

13) To which South American regional block you think Bolivia sides with:

a) ALBA (Cuba, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Haiti)

b) Alianza del Pacífico (Chile, Peru, Colombia)

c) MERCOSUR (Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay)

14) You think Bolivia and Turkey bi-lateral relations are:

a) really developed b) moderately developed

c) really weak d) non-existent

14) What three images, concepts, things, words do you associate with Bolivia?

a)

b)

c)

**Bolivia's perceptions towards Turkey questionnaire:**

1) Do you consider Turkey a:



- a) Small power    b) middle power    c) global power
- 2) For Bolivia, Turkey is a:
- a) treath we should approach wih caution
  - b) oportunity for cooperation and we should fully engage
- 3) You think Bolivia and Turkeys cultures are:
- a) very similar (compatible)    b) very different (incompatible)
- 4) Do you think Turkey:
- a) supports palestian cause and is against Israel
  - b) Sides with Israel
  - c) Its neutral, no opinion
- 5) Do you think turkey:
- a) Supports Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad
  - b) Against Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad
  - c) Neutral, no opinion
- 6) Do you think turkey:
- a) Supports Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro
  - b) Against Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro
  - c) Neutral, no opinion
- 7) Do you think turkey:
- a) Denonced and recognized Bolivian Coup
  - b) Rejected that there was a coup in Bolivia
  - c) Neutral, no opinion
- 8) If there was a WWIII you thinkg Turkey will:
- a) Side with the west (USA, Europe, Australia, Canada)
  - b) Side with China, Rusia, Iran
  - c) Neutral

9) You think Turkish economy is:

- a) Within the 20 most powerful in the world
- b) Between the 20 and 50
- c) After 50

10) Do you consider Turkey a:

- a) Democracy (like Germany or US)
- b) Authoritarianism (like China or Russia)
- c) Dictatorship (Pinochet)
- d) Teocracy (like Iran, Saudi Arabia)

11) Do you consider Turkey:

- a) Really safe country
- b) Relatively safe (sometimes attacks may occur)
- c) Unsafe (conflict may arise any moment)

12) You think Turkey involvement in Latin America is:

- a) High
- b) Medium
- c) Low

13) You think this involvement in Latin America is:

- a) Positive
- b) Negative

14) You think Bolivia and Turkey bi-lateral relations are:

- a) really develop
- b) moderately develop
- c) really weak
- d) non-existent

14) What three images, concepts, things, words do you associate with Turkey:

- a)
- b)
- c)

#### **Annex 10: Evo Morales and Erdogan Joint Press Conference April 2019**

**Erdogan:** We are very happy to have you here. This trip is going to be a milestone in our history. Last year we opened our embassy in La Paz. And we hope that Bolivia has

plans to open its embassy in Ankara as soon as possible and we will support everything to achieve this goal. We are going to celebrate 70 years of our diplomatic relations between Bolivia and Turkey. In this framework of celebration in 2020 we will organize events.

It was the first meeting we had. First we talked on the subject of economic trade. We have increase our economic and commercial relations. Our trade spending has increased by two percent in the last two years, reaching ten million dollars. The two of us agree that this is very low in terms of our country, it would be useful if we set a target for ourselves, and this is five hundred million. Apart from this, we have decided to strengthen the legal basis of our relations and we need to improve, strengthen bilateral investment in sectors such as energy, such as geothermal systems, solar energy, and other types of energy sectors. All these steps that we are going to take will benefit us and we will talk about these plans at the meeting that we are going to have in Bolivia.

And beyond this we have also spoken in our defense cooperation about our development in the industry that is also on our agenda. And TIKA has carried out extensive projects in Bolivia and we will continue in the future. We are going to talk to the director of TIKA and we are going to do different projects for the empowerment of women, child maternal health, agriculture, we are going to talk about these issues. And our esteemed members of the press, I am president pro tempore of the organization for Islamic collaboration and Mr. Morales is president of CELAC. Therefore we have also evaluated different global regional issues and we agree on different issues.

For example we have talked about the rise of the extreme right, Islamophobic movements and we do not agree on marginalization, discrimination and social exclusion. And I also want to thank Bolivia for the policy that it has followed on Palestine in Jerusalem and I also want to thank its policies that have made on the issue of Israel. And I want to highlight a very important issue about Venezuela and the will of the people was indicated in the presidential elections and what the Venezuelan people have decided cannot be asked about other people and we do not agree with this fact. They want to appoint a person as president who has nothing to do with the elections and has nothing to do with democracy and the sovereignty and will of the people. And within this framework, we as Bolivia are supporting the legitimate government of Venezuela. And to reach this solution we want to have a dialogue between the Venezuelan government and the opposition.

We have also talked about UN security, we support a democratic security council and just then after saying all this I want to thank Mr. Morales and his delegation for being here.

**Morales:** It is the first state-to-state visit between Bolivia and Turkey. First I want to express my greatest satisfaction at the great reception. Surprised of the affection, of this friendship that we built between Bolivia and Turkey.

Bolivia owes a debt to Turkey. Turkey has quickly installed its embassy in Bolivia. I want to tell you brother president. In the coming days, maximum weeks, our Turkish ambassador will be in Bolivia. It is important after 70 years of diplomatic relations how to strengthen how to build more friendship, more understanding, because we have enormous coincidences in the ideological, programmatic and fundamentally in the integration issue. I accompany this pro tempore presidency of the brother president that Bolivia is also with CELAC. I want to tell you these are times of integration and non-intervention. These are times of unity and not walls that separate us.

I share the whole position related to Venezuela and other countries that are threatened with military intervention. Venezuela and its people and its government I know very well. They are a revolutionary people. Despite its economic problems, it defends its independence, its sovereignty of the state, defends the dignity and identity of the Venezuelan people and our full support. But brothers on this continent must also be convinced, almost all governments, whether from the left or right, reject a military intervention in Venezuela or any country. Despite the ideological differences. Appointing a president is like appointing a viceroy in colonial times. And we do not share with the way it is handled from the United States.

Brother President I salute the great interest in how to improve commercial exchange. I want to tell your government and the Turkish people. In Bolivia for the first time after the founding of the republic in 1825 we began to give added value to our natural resources. We are industrializing hydrocarbons, we have started with petrochemicals and we are going to continue with partners. We have also begun to industrialize agricultural issues, we have opened markets for various products to China. I want to tell you that we have started with the industrialization of lithium that the President of Turkey is very interested in being part of this great industry. I want to tell you we have a great plan for 2030. 41 lithium plants, from industry to industry such as lithium hydroxide, lithium carbonate, cathode plant, battery plant, potassium chloride. In two departments: Oruro and Potosi. And the presence of companies as well as Turkey will be as important. And for that I greet the words of the brother president who at the end of this year visits Bolivia with a group of businessmen. I want to tell you, we have excellent relations with the confederation of private entrepreneurs in Bolivia. We will also wait with our businessmen to share a business round for our countries.

On defense I fully understand your interest in cooperating with us, transferring us. The week our commander of the armed forces was here to acquire and offer with facilities for the acquisition, fundamentally to combat drug smuggling is very necessary. After talking, I will transmit to the defense minister so that they can accelerate and take advantage of the facilities in the acquisition or transfer in defense matters.

Brother President I salute this great interest in cooperating with Bolivia. We were surprised. The president is going to cooperate with us, a donation of 18 machines to

separate the quinoa. We are importing quinoa very little we would like to export our export. With these machines for the good of our families. Before, quinoa was so demonized as criminalized as the indigenous. Now quinoa has a market all over the world. And these machines will allow the semi-processing of quinoa for the good of our peoples And again surprised by the offer of an operating donation for a kidney transplant. We are at the stage of building hospitals and for the first time Bolivia is going to build 4 4th level hospitals. I do not have much experience but thanks to our patriotic medical professionals we are with this responsibility to expand the medical service of doctors from Bolivia.

Also thank the donation of a set of anesthetics for women. The most forgotten sector is the women of social organizations. Thanks to the new constitution, the indigenous movement as well as fellow sisters are now actors. In Bolivia there is almost 51% parliamentary representation of women.

Again I share all your principles. After a long conversation I am a fan of Turkey. In Bolivia I want to tell you the novels of Turkey are very famous. Also the Turkey area line. However I have good news so far they tell us that the first quarter of 2020 will be arriving direct flights from Turkey to Bolivia. Thanks a lot.

### **Annex 11: Turkey`s Trade With Latin America**

#### **Turkeys exports to Latin America**

| <b>TURKEY EXPORTS TO LATIN AMERICA</b> |                           |  |
|--|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Country Global Ranking</b>          | <b>Million US Dollars</b> | <b>Main export products</b>  |
| 52. México                             | 668\$                     | Transportation (20%), textiles (19%), machines (17%), metals (16%)                 |
| 64. Brazil                             | 495\$                     | Textiles (19%), machines (14%), chemical products (13%), transportation (9.5%)     |
| 73. Chile                              | 356\$                     | Metals (27%), transportation (25%), machines (17%), textiles (10%)                 |
| 87. Colombia                           | 255\$                     | Metals (29%), textiles (20%), mineral products (14%), machines (12%)               |
| 88. Panama                             | 254\$                     | Metals (44%), mineral products (22%), precious metals (10%), machines (6.4%)       |
| 95. Peru                               | 181\$                     | Metals (29%), machines (24%), textiles (11%), transportation (7.4%)                |
| 96. Argentina                          | 178\$                     | Machines (31%), transportation (20%), metals (11%), textiles (10%)                 |
| 103. Haiti                             | 117\$                     | Hot rolled iron bars (42%), cement (22%), wheat flours (14%), foodstuffs 7.5%)     |
| 104. Venezuela                         | 131\$                     | Wheat flours (35%), foodstuffs (29%), chemical products (14%), toilet paper (5.9%) |
| 109. Dominican Republic                | 124\$                     | Metals (38%), refined petroleum (14%), textiles (8.6%), plastic and rubbers (5%)   |

Source: own with data from IMF Direction of Trade Statistics (2019) and The Observatory of Economy Complexity (2007)

## Turkeys imports to Latin America

| <b>TURKEY IMPORTs TO LATIN AMERICA</b> |                           |   |
|--|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Country Global Ranking</b>          | <b>Million US Dollars</b> | <b>Main imported products</b>   |
| 21. Brazil                             | 2.655\$                   | Metals (28%), coffe and soybeans (14%), raw cotton (9.7%), bovine (8.4%)          |
| 33. Colombia                           | 1.438\$                   | Coal briquettes (91%), crude petroleum (5.2%)                                     |
| 49. México                             | 743\$                     | Machines (30%), cars (20%), plastic and rubbers (15%), medical instruments (6.2%) |
| 52. Argentina                          | 515\$                     | Soybean meal (60%), dried legumes (14%), textiles (5.3%), soybeans (5.4%)         |
| 62. Uruguay                            | 303\$                     | Bovine (72%), sulfate chemical woodpulp (15%), textiles (4.6%), rice (3.5%)       |
| 67. Chile                              | 251\$                     | Refined cooper (59%), walnuts (19%), chemical products (9.1%), bovine (2%)        |
| 76. Ecuador                            | 170\$                     | Bananas (87%), gold (3.6%), foodstuffs (3.2%), wood product (2.7%)                |
| 84. Bolivia                            | 112\$                     | Jewellery (97%), raw thin (1.6%)  |
| 92. Peru                               | 73\$                      | Raw zinc (39%), vegetable products (25%), gold (8.7%), fish oil (4.9\$)           |
| 104. Paraguay                          | 36\$                      | Soybeans (99%)  |

### **Annex 11: Suggestions for a better relation between Bolivia and Turkey and the Middle East**

Even if the Middle East, as Tawil (2016:285) concludes, “might never find itself among the priorities of Latin American external relations”, it is important for Bolivia to at least organize and have priorities for consolidating its relations with that region; more in a context of growing multi-polarity and great shift in the international structure of great powers. The question is: how much should Bolivia invest in improving its presence in the Middle East?

For former Turkey`s Consul in La Paz Alvaro Balcazar, Bolivia does not need to invest resources in the Middle East in the opening of new embassies because they require a lot of resources a Bolivia does not has the capacity to do so. However the opening of consulates is possible and even desirable: “I think consulates can function really well without the necessity of big investments (...) It will be really interesting to have a consulate in the Gulf region”. Indeed, at the time all the gulf countries depend from the Embassy in Egypt. With a consulate in UEA or Qatar the main parts of the Middle East will be covered.

Until now Bolivia`s main played role in the middle east mainly was “anti-imperialist” and “bastion of revolution”. That led the country to align in self with radical

governments in the region; an action which had some positive results because it “increased Bolivia international visibility and foreign policy leverage to achieved long-term national interest” (Tawil, 2016:281). Nonetheless this cannot be an obstacle for the diversification of trade partners. For example the good relations with Iran do not mean relations with the Gulf countries, even Israel for that matter, should not be perused. It is possible to be ideologically against Israel actions in Gaza and still keep economic relations with Tel-Aviv; as Turkey does. It is possible to show support for Palestine and have cordial or purely economic relations with Israel; as the majority of Latin America countries do.

Especially it is important to pay more attention to the gulf. As seen in previous chapters, the UEA is Bolivia`s top export destination in the Middle East. Bolivia can engage more with the Gulf countries in a bilateral manner through the Gulf Cooperation Council. The Arab gulf countries are the main source of investment in the region. In the same manner it can be also beneficial to open diplomatic channels with Saudi Arabia. In the case of Egypt, the long already established relations need take care of. In 2010 Bolivia and Egypt celebrated the fifth anniversary of their relations<sup>109</sup> and in 2015 they held their third consultation mechanism meeting<sup>110</sup>. Nonetheless trade has not improved and appears to be neglected.

Initiatives such as the improvement of air connectivity, negotiation for sanitary agreements for beef export, organization of investment missions, creation of bilateral chambers of commerce, promotion of bilateral tourism routes and possibility of working with the Islamic Development Bank<sup>111</sup> can be done by Bolivia. Also advantage can be take of one of the many Latin America`s integration mechanism such as the MERCOSUR or the Pacific Alliance in order to establish or improve trade with other Middle Eastern Countries.

Based on the research and interviews done to government officials in both countries some recommendations in the areas of trade, tourism, culture, academics, connectivity and drug trafficking can be done with the aim of improving Bolivia`s relation with Turkey.

Regarding trade, it is important for Bolivia to diversity its exported products to Turkey which consist completely of jewelry. Bolivia and Turkey are economically compatible; “Turkey lacks of raw materials. There you can export things of Bolivia. But not only minerals, but also agricultural products like soy or quinoa”, states Bolivia`s Consul Stefan Milkovic. There is potential in some traditional products as “quinoa real”, which cannot be found in Peru, and “cañawa”. Also, Bolivia, as world top exporter of Brazil

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<sup>109</sup> **Los Tiempos**, “Bolivia y Egipto Celebran”, 27.11.2010, <https://www.lostiempos.com/actualidad/nacional/20101127/bolivia-egipto-celebran>

<sup>110</sup> **Ministerio Relaciones Exteriores**, 13.10.2015, <http://www.cancilleria.gob.bo/webmre/node/1118>

<sup>111</sup> These recommendations were made by the *Latin American and Caribbean Economic System* (SELA) in its 2012 report about Middle East and Latin American relations.

nuts and the third world exporter of buckwheat can consider those options. Imports wise Bolivia can look at Turkey military equipment and pharmaceutical industry.

For its part, Turkey's Consul Jaime Burgoa, recommends that it is critical to know exactly all the economic relations that exists between Bolivia and Turkey, consolidate them and, after all that is done, search for new opportunities. In his view one of the priorities in the bilateral relation is the "consolidation of the existing economic relations in order to avoid them fading away in the face of any macroeconomic change". According to him strong economic relations are more durable and permanent than TIKA's "helping hand". On a similar but different note, Burgoa's predecessor, former consul Alvaro Balcazar recommends "public-private partnerships". This kind of relationships are directed towards capturing foreign investment in such a way that risks are shared and thus the objectives are common between both the public and the private sector. Balcazar recommends public-private partnerships as an excellent tool for investment and development in general.

In its conclusions, the report "*Towards a Renewed and Strengthened Relationship: Fostering ties between Latin America and the Caribbean and the Gulf Countries*" elaborated by the Inter-American Development Bank (2019) identifies two main obstacles, as the causes of the current low trade between the two regions: 1) the "lack of fluid contact between potential exporters and importers" and 2) the "absence of expedited processes when these transactions take place"(:41). In order to try to solve these difficulties, embassies are essential. As the report suggest, in order to boost and facilitate commerce and investment, the embassies need to proactively inform about business opportunities and promote face to face encounters between potential business partners. When a deal is reached, embassies need to optimize and keep an eye of movement of goods and capital across borders. All these recommendations can be also applied to the Bolivia-Turkey relationship, even more when embassies were just installed. The opening of an embassy, according to the study, can increase bilateral trade by 20%. Also, "creation of chambers of commerce can play a key role" (Ayuso.2015:23). The roles of chambers of commerce are to plan commercial missions, issue certificates of origin, organize business training seminars and represent the country in international fairs. Due to the low actual low trade volume and distance it might not be worth it to create a Bolivian-Turkish chamber of commerce, nonetheless, a Bolivia-Middle Eastern/Asian chamber of commerce can be started.

Regarding tourism, former Bolivia's honorary consul in Istanbul Stefan Milkovic believes there is a lot of potential: "I see my friends from Turkey and they say we are already getting tired from going to Paris to London we already know. We want to explore, they say", Stefan remarks. According to him since Bolivia's topography is quite unique adventure tourism can attract some of the 80 million Turkish citizens. However some planning is needed: "we need to do a plan", Stefan states; "contact 10 Turkish tourist agencies and promote Bolivia". For its part former Turkey's consul in



La Paz Jaime Burgoa, agrees: “I think the tourism here for them (Turkish nationals) is exotic”, he says. Bolivia` receives on average forty Turkish citizens a year, according to Burgoa. A very low number indeed, even more so if many are drug trafficking motivated. However, according to Turkey`s Ambassador in La Paz Serap Ozcoskun, in the last year more Turkish people are coming to visit Bolivia: “This is good. When people come here they see that Bolivia is very similar to Turkey”.

Regarding culture, both consuls, Milkovic and Burgoa, agree on the importance of “cultural diplomacy”. Milkovic suggests that Bolivia should send to Turkey their most famous artists; especially musicians:

“Folklore is very important to the Turkish citizen (...) I always imagined the *Kjarkas*<sup>112</sup> playing at the Bosphorus. This is how the country expands. Through music, politicians, artists, teachers (...) So Turkish people would appreciate this and say it would be interesting to go to Bolivia”

Burgoa also states the importance of sending artistic delegations to Turkey; “Here (in Bolivia) Turkey indirectly and without much effort is present with its movies and series”. These cultural activities can help to project a desired image of Bolivia`s such its ancestral and indigenous identity.

The importance of cultural ties must not be undervalued. As Celso Amorin, Brazil`s former Foreign Minister and one of the pioneers of Latin America and Middle East integration remarked in an interview to a local Brazilian newspaper:

“Cultural ties are a fundamental -if sometimes underestimated- variable of the relationship between the two countries. When people get to know each other - through music, cinema, art, history, among others- it is easier to develop relations in all areas of politics and economics”<sup>113</sup>

Regarding academics, it is recommended to organized informative sessions about Turkey`s Government Scholarships program. As Mehmet Necati Kutlu, Ankara University Latin America Studies faculty director, remarked in his speech during Bolivia`s president Morales visit: “Mr. President we need more scholarship students”. Informative sessions about Turkey`s scholarship in the main Bolivia universities can help in increasing the number of Bolivians studying in Turkey. Also previous students who won the scholarship can relate their experience and tips for a successful application. “Student exchanges between schools, universities and research centers and the creation of interregional studies are extremely important for building knowledge networks” (Ayuso, 2015:30)

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<sup>112</sup> The “Kjarkas” is one of the most famous Adevan folk music bands in Bolivia

<sup>113</sup> **Turkish Daily News**, “Entrevista concedida pelo Senhor Ministro de Estado, Embaixador Celso Amorim”, 2004.

Also it is important to note that in Bolivia there is no “Asian Studies” academic program in any of the universities, let it alone a “Middle Eastern Studies” one. Due to the low Bolivian presence in the Middle East a limited resources it might be not be profitable create an academic program dedicated just to that region, however, a faculty or institute dedicated to Asia in general can help Bolivia’s Foreign Policy to be more effective.

Regarding air connectivity, during the press conference gave by Erdogan and Morales, it was stated by the former that there would be direct flights operated by Turkish Airlines to Santa Cruz from Istanbul. However one year later still that promise did not materialized. In a similar manner, in 2016 Qatar Airways and Emirates requested to operate in Bolivia, with the additional rights of making direct connections to Europe and Asia. Nonetheless, at the time Minister of Public Works stated the airport of Viru Viru in Santa Cruz (where most of the international airlines arrive), did not have the “necessary capabilities and infrastructure”<sup>114</sup>. There were plans of improving the Viru Viru airport, a project which would take 4 years to complete. However, already in 2019, the selection of the companies who would take the project was still being made. Thus, in order to have direct flights to and from Turkey, which would facilitate mobility, tourism and cultural ties, an improvement of the Viru Viru airport is a must.

Regarding drug trafficking, most of the Bolivian prisoners in Turkey have the option to serve their sentence in Bolivia. However the bureaucratic process is painfully slow because has to pass through the Turkish interior ministry, then to the Turkish chancellery, then to the Bolivian chancellery, then to the Bolivia interior ministry and finally to the Bolivian Justice Ministry. Ways to speed this process are necessary. Also, a dedicated study to map the numbers and qualities of drugs prisoners on both countries can help to understand more such an important issue.

Finally, it would be beneficial to study and learn from Paraguay`s relation with Turkey. Paraguay is similar to Bolivia in terms of population, no access to sea, economic size and culture. Also, as in the case of Bolivia, Turkey opened its Embassy in Asuncion in the last two years. Nonetheless, its trade with Turkey is bigger than Bolivia`s. The Paraguayan experience can teach many things to Bolivia.

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<sup>114</sup> **El Deber**, “Dos aerolíneas Árabes volaran en Bolivia”, 8.10.2015, [https://eldeber.com.bo/63528\\_dos-aerolineas-arabes-quieren-volar-en-bolivia](https://eldeber.com.bo/63528_dos-aerolineas-arabes-quieren-volar-en-bolivia)

## **CURRICULUM VITAE**

Alvaro Montenegro is a Bolivia citizen who was born in the city of La Paz in 1993. Alvaro studied political science in La Paz and did his master in Middle East studies as a Turkey Scholarships holder. Alvaro studied before for one year in Germany as a high school student and one semester in the United States during his bachelor student. He hopes to work in the diplomatic world before retiring to nature.