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**TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY DISCOURSE BEFORE AND AFTER THE
ANNEXATION OF CRIMEA: A CONSTRUCTIVIST APPROACH**

MA thesis

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Tartu 2022

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ABSTRACT

The goal of this master's thesis is to create understanding on how Turkish foreign policy discourse towards Russia changed after the annexation of Crimean. To achieve this constructivist approach to discourse, language and identity is adopted. The theoretical framework is based on the works of Alexander Wendt, Nicholas Onuf and Ted Hopf. For the analysis of official discourses, key speeches, statements produced by Turkish policy-makers were selected. The discourse analysis was conducted through a timeline around key events – the re-election of Vladimir Putin, the annexation of Crimea and the failed July 15 coup attempt in Turkey. The academic discourse will be analysed through the readings of texts, statements produced by leading Turkish and Russian Eurasianists – namely Dogu Perincek in Turkey and Alexander Dugin in Russia.

To begin, this thesis agrees with Wendt's claim that the current constructivist studies on foreign policy discourse limited the possibility of any identity changes in foreign policy. Although the annexation of the Crimea resulted in some practical changes in policy, previous research at the most primitive level of discursive structure was unable to answer the question why there was not dramatic change in Turkey's foreign policy / identity discourse in relation to Russia in the post -Crimean period. Having answered this question this study will be an important theoretical contribution to the foreign policy discourse analysis.

The results of the analysis show that by the official discourse, are depicted in a way as to gain the support of nationalists within Turkey who put the importance on the identity-related ties between Turkey and the Crimean Tatars. At the same time Turkish policy-makers avoided any aggressive “language” in their speeches towards Russia. On the contrary, Turkish officials seemed to distance from the “traditional” partner (friend) West and look for new rapprochements, closeness with Russia and other Eastern countries. In short, the perception of Russia in Turkish official discourses did not substantially change and became more positive after the annexation of Crimea.

Finally, the findings of this thesis show that there has been a period in Turkey-Russia relations that constructivist analysis of Turkish foreign policy should be taken into

consideration to analyse the probability of change or non-change in foreign policy discourse. This study will also further reaffirm the necessity of constructivist approach to the identity changes in foreign policy when analysing the reasons behind the action or inaction circumstances of actors.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Historically, this has always called into question to whom the Crimean Peninsula belongs. Regarding this, the most important historical event related to the peninsula of Crimea dates back to the 1770s, when the Russian and Ottoman Empires defined the future of it. The Treaty of Kucuk Kainardji is the treaty that brought the end of war between the Ottoman and Russian Empires. The Kucuk Kainardji Treaty, which was signed in 1774, contained significant provisions for the Ottoman Empire. One of the clauses of the Kucuk Kainardji Treaty states that Crimea will remain independent, that the peninsula will not be annexed to other countries, and that Crimea would be directly under Turkish sovereignty if there is any interference. But during the dissolution of Soviet Russia and the Russian invasion of Crimea in 2014, Turkey did not use its rights under this agreement. (Viktorija Jakjimovska, 2022)

In 2014, international actors reacted differently to Russia's annexation of Crimea. The events started in February 2014, and a sham referendum was held in March. With the speed of the process the annexation was widely considered to be illegal. European countries reacted by implementing a new sanctions' package on Russia and stating that the referendum result was invalid and falsified. But within Turkey there have been a few parties who did believe the results of referendum were not reliable. Crimea's population has a history that is not entirely linked to Russia. In opposing annexation, the Crimean Tatar community, who are historically part of the Turkish ethnic groups, played an important role. That is why, these ethnic links between Turkish and Crimean communities resulted in some engagement by Turkey's officials in the political discourse over the annexation.

Turkey's government officials stated that the Ukrainian people has the right to decide their future, especially on issues such as Crimea's status. Since Turkey has ethnic and cultural ties with Crimea, the status and fate of the Crimean Tatars, has been a different and serious issue for the country to decide. Although Turkey criticized and rejected the results of forceful referendum, Turkey appears to proceed with caution in its response to the

annexation. Unlike European countries and USA that have imposed sanctions on Russian government and officials, Ankara tended to preserve positive relations. The government's drafts on this issue did not encompass the implementation of any sanction.

In terms of Turkish government's strategy regarding the Crimean issue, there were essentially two directions to contemplate simultaneously. The first one was based on history and culture which can be linked to each other. So, Turkey condemned the annexation of Crimea and refusing to accept the results of referendum. Not taking any serious action against Russian government decision indicated the second option, which was considered to keep strategic relations with Kremlin. In spite of directly engaging, involvement in the Turkish officials stated that they are ready to serve as a mediator for a peaceful resolution.

To put it briefly, the Turkish stance in discourses and policies over the Ukrainian crisis were controversial. The causes of this stance might stem from a variety of factors. Although most of the scholars claim that the best way of Foreign Policy Analysis can be achieved by applying realist and liberalist approaches, I argue that in this unique case – Turkish foreign policy discourses towards Crimean crisis and Russia can be better explained by constructivist approach. Although these two approaches are using different policy instruments in FPA they both are similar in their theoretical nature. Because both Realists and Liberalists are state centric, and they argue that power (hard and soft power, respectively) and economic interest plays the most important role in foreign policy orientation. According to Faruk, both realism and liberalism agree that foreign policy is constructed on rational matters, certain goals and states hold non-changeable, fixed identities. (F.Yalvac, 2014) By considering these similarities this study gave their explanations together.

As for Turkish foreign policy realists argued that its Western orientation in the early 2000s can be related with economic interests, the need for securitizing, balance of power against the threats, or close relations with the Middle Eastern countries for military power. However, liberals gave more detailed analysis of Turkish foreign policy by including domestic dimensions and emphasized the importance of democratization, being a part of international community and so on. (Y.Bozdaglioglu, 2003: 7-9) But I would still argue that Liberalism has many assumptions in common with Realism in FPA. From the traditional approach perspective, both liberalists and realists might argue that Turkey holds an

unchanged stance on Crimean Crisis based on its shared economic interests, energy market with Russia. If I were to examine the case to see how the Turkish foreign discourse changed by applying these traditional approaches non-material factors, identity construction in policy-making should be ignored.

In the selected case, there are some possible identity-related factors that make a constructivist approach more appropriate to examine the change in Turkish foreign policy discourse. For instance, Turkish national ties with Tatar population of the peninsula were one of the possibilities that could make Turkish discourse change in response to the illegal acts. Another factor could be the historical background or ties from the Ottoman Empire which are strongly linked to the Crimean Tatar people. I argue that although Turkey had a chance to maximize its rational-material gains from the West by agreeing on imposing sanctions on Russia and put aggressive foreign policy discourse towards the annexation, Turkey chose another way of acting which can be explained by constructivist perspective.

In the light of these non-material valid reasons/factors mentioned above the purpose of this research is to see how the Turkey's foreign policy discourses to the Crimean crisis has changed after the annexation, in the light of the relationship between identity discourse and foreign policy formation. For this aim the first chapter will discuss the changes of the identity discourse and ideas, their implications in foreign policy discourse. In the following chapter the conceptual analysis and explanation of the variables will be placed. In the conclusion, it will be restated how the Turkish identity discourse, which was one of the key factors in Turkish foreign policy towards the annexation of Crimea, has changed.

Research puzzle

To begin with, to justify my research question we need to see the research puzzle. In this regard, a short historical background, and the question whom the peninsula belongs to should be outlined briefly. I would argue that what makes the issue for research more thought-provoking can be related to Crimea's geography, history and demography that have made it an unstable and conflicted area. The conflicts and severe rivalries over the peninsula

mostly happened because of its complex social, economic, and political position, population for centuries. Crimean Khanate which existed in present-day southern Ukraine from 1441 until 1783, was one of the successors of the Golden Horde which has dominated and ruled Russian principalities. Before Crimea was annexed by the Russian Empire in 1783, it was ruled the Ottoman Empire from 1478 to 1774. But because of the geographical position, weakness of the Ottoman Empire at the end of 18th century Crimea has gradually been absorbed into and occupied by the Russian Empire and it expanded its control to the "warm waters". It was vital for the Russian Empire to set a navy in Black Sea and this was achieved in 1783 by establishing the Sevastopol port (Koru, 2016).

The tsar of Russian Empire settled thousands of Russia's populations in the peninsula over the years to strengthen their control. 300.000 Turkish Tatars emigrated the peninsula for Turkey between 1784 and 1790, because of the religious and political persecution of the Tatars which leads to widespread migration. Because of mass deportation or persecution, Tatars left Crimea again between 1807 and 1811 during the Ottoman-Russian Empire war, again from 1859 to 1863 during the Crimean War. However, before the Soviet Union's repressions, Crimea's population was still 39 percent Turkish Tatars.

In 20th century as for the legal status and name of Crimean Peninsula, there have been many changes since the collapse of Russian Empire in 1917. In 2021 the peninsula was declared as an autonomous republic as a part of the Russian SFSR. In 1950s Joseph Stalin accused the Crimean Tatars of supporting Nazi Germany throughout the War. As a result, the population was deported either to the Russian Empire's interiors or within the territories of Crimea which are far from the Black Sea. This made the control of the peninsula easier. (B. Williams, 2000:81) After the death of the Russian dictator Joseph Stalin, in February 1954 the Crimean Oblast was transferred to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic by issuing an official decree. Regarding the legitimacy of this transfer there are many scholars that argued the population of the peninsula was deprived from of its right on the status change of Crimea. For example, according to Anton Bebler (2015: 35) the transfer of peninsula to Ukraine was illegal, illegitimate and it was against the USSR constitution which required both sides' agreements regarding the border changes. After the collapse of the USSR on December 8,

1991, the Crimean region remained part of newly independent Ukraine without consulting whether the population desired to do so or not. (see, Anton Bebler, 2015: 37-39)

As a result of mass deportations during the USSR control, Tatars have been unable to return to their homelands following Stalin's deportation, and it was only after the fall of Communism that many Tatars returned to their homeland. According to an official Ukrainian census taken in the aftermath of Cold War, Turkish Tatars made up around the 11 percent of peninsula population. (Melichar, 2015: 88) Ethnic Russian and Ukrainian population made approximately 58 % and 24 % of the whole population of the peninsula, accordingly. Using this ethnic factor, the Russian propaganda in Ukraine and Crimea led to “organized” protests, clash of pro-Russian and pro-Ukrainian protestors which resulted in death, injuries of civilians and all these processes including removal of Ukrainian leader Viktor Yanukovych led to the crisis in Ukraine, the annexation of Crimea in the following. Thus, the ethnic composition of the peninsula was sharply changed after the annexation to Russia because the Tatars have again been subjected to deportation and persecutions for those who opposed the “referendum”. (Melichar, 2015: 99-102) The percentage of ethnic groups are not clearly available since the annexation of Crimea to Russia after the Euromaidan. In other words, there is not publicly available and reliable survey data concerning the ethnic composition of the region or the support for joining Russia among the population. (Katchanovski, 2015: 80-81)

In the light of the background of historical ties and security concerns in the Black Sea, Turkey would be expected to seriously oppose it and intervene in the crisis. But this did not happen. From a realist point of view, finding an answer to Turkey's inaction can only be explained by rational factors. However, in my thesis, I have taken a constructivist discursive approach to this issue and tried to investigate this puzzle by analysing the discourses of politicians and the construction of identity as a factor behind the lack of action. To achieve this goal, I developed the main research question.

Research Question and Research Design

These changed policies mentioned above led to the question of changes in Turkish discourse towards Russia. Therefore, the main study question is as follows: *How did Turkish foreign policy discourse change towards Russia following the annexation of Crimea?* To answer the main research question, I will apply the theoretical concept of different identity dimensions and foreign policy discourse. Moreover, to better explain this main research question following sub-questions have also been formulated: *How is Turkey's identity discourse towards Russia constructed before Crimea? Are the “Turn to the East” policies, which was heavily promoted in 2010s and the breakup with the “West”, changed the Turkish identity discourse towards Russia? What are the discourses that constructed after Crimea? Have there been any changes in “language”?*

Consequently, since the goal of this thesis is to examine how the Turkish discourse towards Russia changed after Crimean crisis using a constructivist approach based on my observations, I will go over speeches, statements made by officials and arguments from public discourses during the proposed period (2012-2016) to prove that all my findings could be a valuable tool to determine the change in Turkish foreign policy discourses.

On the basis of the preceding, I drawn from Alexander Wendt (1996: 391-393). In his work, he suggested some points to help constructivist researchers apply to the appropriate data for their analysis. Following Waeber (2002: 27), it is important to note that this theoretical discourse analysis puts high significance on the political discourses, speeches, statements, documents etc. Discourse analysis, in other words, examines how speakers use language to construct meaning and identity. In this sense, some forms of this type of resources can be defined, such as presidential election campaign platforms, speeches in high-level meetings in Ankara and Moscow, statements made by high-ranked political figures after significant events. I believe that beyond the main literature these types of direct, socially structured resources will be helpful in analysing foreign policy discourse from the interpretative research perspective.

The design of thesis is structured based on the research question to achieve detailed and valid findings. Therefore, the first chapter will be intended to introduce a brief overview

and historical background of the selected case. The second chapter will refer to the academic literature on the constructivist approach, identity-foreign policy interaction. These will be based on how the constructivist theory emerged and why the national identity perspective had to be studied based on the primary data be it scholars, the academic research, constructivists' books. Moreover, this chapter will discuss the development of identity discourse and ideas, and their impact on foreign policy discourse and their relevance to the selected case. The third chapter will focus on the discursive pre-Crimea within the period of 2012-2014. The data for this discourse analysis will be official speeches, statements, and interviews conducted by Rajab Tayyip Erdogan and the position of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs during the selected period. I will devote the following chapter to the discursive post-Crimea within the period of 2014-2016, as well as to the empirical framework and results/discussion where I will label my findings based on the methodology applied. Here I will again examine the results in depth, try to see whether my expectations matched with findings and check the reliability of my study in foreign policy discourse. Finally, in the last chapter I will restate the research problem, question, theory, methods used, data collected and results. I will argue that Turkish identity discourse which was one of the key factors in Turkish foreign policy towards the annexation of Crimea and try to conclude the reasons behind the non-changed bilateral relations. With giving a clear answer to the research question, ensuring that it is understandable to readers how my main argument was stated and what the study will contribute to constructivist analysis of foreign policy discourse.

Limitations

There are several limitations to my argumentation. One of the first limitations is that I focused mostly on Russia as the main actor of pivot to the East policy of Turkey. By doing so, I put the other major actors of Asia aside, such as Iran, Turkish speaking countries which capture the most important place in Turkish foreign policy strategies. At the same time, I also argue that this limitation is real but that focusing on one country (Russia) I have been able to offer a more detailed account of what is happening regarding the case selected.

Other limitations can be related to the focus of the empirical part of my study on academic and political discourses. From here some issues can be raised by readers: Why I mixed up political discourses of officials (leading figures in foreign policy) with those of public discourses and lower ranking politicians' approaches. However, since I followed Constructivist theory, one of the arguments is that foreign policy discourse is the outcome of the Turkish identity formation. Thus, it is worth analysing ideational aspects in both public and academic discourses. Another problem revealed with academic discourses in the empirical part of research because the publications on Turkish academic discourse have been limited to some extent. Publications were mostly limited to the foreign policy experts' thoughts, comments, statements. To avoid this limitation, I tried to collect data and include different stands from harsh critics to staunch supporters of official's political discourses.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW, THEORETICAL, AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Literature review on Turkish Foreign Policy Analysis

This thesis - Case study - examines Turkey's foreign policy discourse towards Russia before and after the annexation of Crimea to see whether there was a change. This will be achieved by focusing on discourses of Russia in Turkish officials' speeches. As for the case selection, with a special focus on the Crimean annexation, the main research question will be answered. However, it should be mentioned that although the literature has gone to other cases, such as the plane incident, the Syrian civil war in which Russia and Turkey engaged, the failed coup attempt in Turkey – the main focus of my study will be the annexation of Crimea and discourses around this event.

Since the shifting dynamics of Turkish foreign policy discourses have been experienced in the 2010s, in studying TFP, several theoretical approaches have taken a different critical perspective. To begin with, realists and liberalists have had a variety of publications on TFP (i.e., Ereker and Ozer, 2018: 370-71). These traditional approaches claimed that states are asocial, they properly pursue a set of objectives, and they possess fixed preferences and identities in foreign policy formulation. Since these approaches are state-centric and based on rational factors they failed to examine the circumstances when the non-material factors formulated Turkish foreign policy actions. (Y.Bozdaglioglu, 2003: 7-9)

In recent decades liberal theory approach to Turkish Foreign Policy analysis has also increased. Michael W. Doyle analyses the effects of different factors in keeping a peaceful environment in international relations. One of them is that existing international cooperation is necessary for resolving chaos in bilateral relations. Liberal philosophy also associates peaceful policy actions with liberal democratic governments. (Michael W. Doyle. 2016: 55-

56) While liberal approach has had more detailed analysis with applying domestic dimensions in foreign policy formation, it still holds many assumptions in common with those of realism. Moreover, as mentioned by Faruk, liberal policies of actors often played a cover role for realist actions. (Faruk, 2014) Even though there have been some shifts of Turkey toward a liberal foreign policy discourse in the early 2000s, they have partially succeeded in explaining the key non-material factors. (see, Zuhail Mert Uzuner, 2014: 125-126) I would also agree with this argument that although these traditional approaches gained a success in analysing foreign policy, still some non-material, identity-related factors which play an important role in Turkish foreign policy discourse have been missed.

Following the traditional approaches, there have recently been a few efforts to analyse Turkey's new foreign policy initiatives using Neoclassical Realism. For instance, in Turkish FPA some neoclassical realist scholars argued that state institutions and their leaders' views have had a key role in foreign policy discourses. (Iseri & Dilek, 2011: 42-43). In addition to Neorealism's emphasis on the limiting effects of systemic factors, neoclassical realism emphasizes the significance of a state's internal factors, notably policymakers' views and state institutions, in understanding its foreign policy.

Neo-realism and Neo-liberalism considered material premises as the central assumptions of their studies, and they use this assumption in explaining the state behaviour which were clearly rejected by constructivist researchers (Thies, 2004: 159-160) The researchers of these approaches claim that states are unitary rational actors; they calculate their costs, seek to maximize expected utilities, achieve their main interests even without adequate information. Neo-realists, moreover, claim that the international system is endless and cannot be changed by any factors.

Wendt (1992) differs with neo - realist theory on the issue of national interests. According to him, to survive is the main interest of nations. He, on the other hand, argues that "... national interests contain four objective goals: survival, autonomy, economic well-being, and collective self-esteem". (Waltz, 1979) Wendt (1992:391-392) contends that in anarchy, a state's identity and interests are linked, they constitute dependent and independent variables. In other words, non-material factors formulate the state interests. More precisely, identity shapes state interests, which ultimately affect state foreign policies toward

other actors. Further to strengthen Wendt's argument, we can put this viewpoint forward which adequately supports idea; international actors respond to the different political issues in different ways. And these different ways can be associated with the different identities that shape interests of the actors that determine their behaviour within the structure - the international system.

Since the structure of relations between Turkey and Russia has its complexity over centuries which I argue cannot be explained by only focusing solely on non-material, rational factors. For this reason, in order to better understand the Turkish discourses towards Russia's actions it requires analysis of non-rational factors as well. For instance, as mentioned by Adam, the Turkish-Russian relationship is complicated by some identical, economic, and geopolitical reasons, and the recent rise in bilateral relation has significantly reduced the likelihood of open conflict between two major international actors in the region. (Balcer, 2014: 7-8) However, he claims that this relation could not be defined as a strategic partnership since current geopolitical realities, the tough historical memory can limit the prospect of such a partnership being established.

There are a variety of constructivist explanations of Turkish foreign policy in studies, all of which highlight the problem of how identities influence foreign policy formulation. Constructivist approaches differ slightly in how they describe the way changes in the Turkish identity impacted Turkish foreign policy. Uzer claims that states' behaviour is influenced by identity and ideas. (Umut Uzer, 2014: 158-160) He describes his approach as pluralistic, with an argument that stands between constructivist theory's identity factor and realist approach's material factors.

Constructivism is the example of post-positivist idea that has recently been used into Turkish Foreign Policy Analysis. Moreover, as opposed to Realism's materialist approach, Constructivism has an ideational ontology in TFPA. (Alexander Wendt, 1999: 1-7). According to Onuf, people and societies make and constitute each other, and so the world is a societal construct made up of both social and material facts. (N.Onuf, 1989: 35-440) Many scholars on TFP adopted Wendt's (Alexander Wendt, 1999: 1-3) Constructivism which focuses on socially constructed international relations, however others prefer post-structural constructivism, which stresses linguistic interaction and creation of social realities. More

precisely, the core of the social structure in IR theory which is produced by ideas rather than material factors is the main concept of Wendt's constructivism.

Regarding the comparison of constructivist approach in foreign policy, as mentioned by Maysam the traditional foreign policy approaches, such as realist, neo-liberal and neo-realist theories decision-making process is rational action. The actors and decision-makers are seeking to maximize their benefits through instruments, means. These traditional approaches argue that decision-makers are asocial which means that the interactions among actors does not have an impact on decision-making process. On the other hand, constructivist foreign policy analysis argues that agents perceive others through communication and dialogues rather than simply focusing on rational factors, their utilities, and benefits. (Behraves, 2011) Based on the arguments of Maysam, I would argue that discursive approach is not only in "words" what the policymakers say in their speeches, but also what Nicholas Onuf claimed decades ago; "saying is doing". Broadly speaking, in contrast to traditional foreign policy approaches which emphasizes on rationality of actors, according to constructivism the language that decision makers use in their interactions and discourses can make or change their mind on critical issues in foreign policy decisions.

Theory on Identity and Foreign Policy: The Need for Constructivist approach

In the middle of the twentieth century scholars, researchers started to add meaning to the concept of identity in social science and politics. They have conceptualized and developed the term from the self-other perspective. (Srdjan Vucetic, 2017: 3-5). Discussion on identity can be followed by two paths as Berenskoetter (2011: 3595) argued. The first one is the common usage of the concept of identity among scholars, scientists, researchers, while the latter one is the usage of ideas in practice. I believe that to better understand Turkish identity in foreign policy towards Russia we should first necessarily have a deep look at the terminology itself, in other words the meaning of the concept which was provided by the

previous research. Therefore, this subsection will give a core definition, summary of “identity” to understand the basic meaning. The following subsection will focus on the theoretical debates on identity practices in foreign policy.

Moreover, the constructivist approach does not insist that identity should be perceived separately from other concepts / factors such as religion, ethnic basis, historical memories, cultures, regime type. On the other hand, Wendt (1994, 403-405) emphasizes that identity is self-perception, in other words how others see the actor. It means that constructivists do not deny the importance of, for example, Islamic beliefs in Turkish identity, but this belief is not an unchanged objective fact in constituting identity. These are all the byproducts of interactions of actors with others.

As mentioned above, from the second half of 1980s the term of identity in constructivist approach has been studied. First, I wanted to look at the term "collective identity" before conceptualizing the self-other notion. Wendt differentiates two conceptions of national identities. These are social and corporate identities. The difference is the level of the construction, international and domestic level respectively. (Wendt, 1994: 403-405) Even while governments frequently express their interests as the main foreign policy driving factor, this does not mean that academics also should agree with that, because always states' foreign policy directions are affected by socially constructed factors.

The binary of 'self' and 'other' has been purposed long before the constructivist approach in the 18th century as a response to the Western European Countries' efforts to create a more integrated and cohesive unity. It was proposed that people's self-perception links them all together into communities, on the other hand it also causes them to act in ways that endanger their survival. This relationship was studied as fundamental to human nature and the cause of the state's growth. People were driven apart by war situations, but the necessity to secure themselves against one another forced them to join within the groups. These also were referred to the interaction among actors which create unities in war situations and consider the interests of 'others' to avoid possible conflicts. (Richard N. 2008: 475) These all can be regarded as positivist approach to this binary.

To better understand the relevance of self and other perceptions in our study we should further examine the core definitions of these two concepts by constructivist approach.

While examining "self" and "others" binary it had to be considered how this difference affects the identity construction. In other words, I need further examine the conditions to construct the identities which are the basis for foreign policymaking. Since the identity concept has two dimensions it is required to examine the reasons which generates "self", as well as the distinctions that creates the ground to understand "otherness" which overall leads to state identity construction. The idea of "self" and "other" is also critical in explaining the importance of state and national identity in foreign policy making.

In constructivism, on the other hand, there is a set of mental and organizational factors that enable the agents to identify themselves from a 'self' and 'other' role perspective. (Wendt, 1999: 1-3) Regarding this identification social identity is always in process and generates the self – other interests, also negative and positive perception of others. Since the logical fundamental concept of collective identity is the self-other assumption, researchers aimed to examine the link between "self" and "other". Wendt argues that collective identity has direct influence, which allows it to persuade agents, international actors to consider other actors' interest as part of the "self", allowing them to act in a right way. (Wendt, 1999: 1-7) He categorized "self" as "other" and related this connection to the role identities. Therefore, he merges the two actors into a "single" identity and calls the actions of these actors as considering "the welfare other as part of that of the self". (ibid. 225-229)

It was also argued by Constructivists that the identity has played an important role in decision-making process over the world in both developed and developing countries. As William (1990) claims that the consequent "national identity dynamic" also impacts the decision-making process in foreign policy which also has had the influence on international relations. That is why identity discourse is worth examining since IR is constructed on a single actor's behaviour towards each other. Taking this link between foreign policy and national identity, William Bloom (1990) also argues that foreign policy serves as a tool in nation building and vice versa. It was also argued that in decision-making process new term – "state identity" has started to play more important role in the aftermath of Cold War. But the difference between state and national identity has always been ambiguous. The major distinction between the two categories occurs at the level of construction; national identity is built inside the community and links to other countries, whilst "self" and "other" formulate

state identity and maintain national communities' "self" -ness. However, this difference is not always made in the same way, and it stems from different theoretical approaches and domains in international relations theory. Identity is often referred to as "national" by researchers who focus on domestic affairs, whereas state identity is expressed by those whose profession is more concerned with foreign policy and IR. Some social scientists, on the other hand, employ the single phrase "national identity" instead of explaining the distinction between the two ideas. (Thomas Berger, 2011: 317-320) while others offered several dimensions of identity. (T, Banchof.1999). This argument also will be useful in defining the role of national and state identity in Turkish foreign policy discourse. I will also refer to the arguments of Kemal (see, Ciftci, 2013: 143-169) in identity/foreign policy discourse nexus.

Kemal (2013) argued that state identity has more power in Turkish foreign policy making because state identity expresses the official considerations whereas national identity displayed the main characteristics of the nation. For instance, in Turkey Islamism was the part of national identity which was not one of the key factors in decision making while Kemalist ideas constituted the state identity mainly drives the foreign policy for a long time in 20th century. According to Kemal Islamists have been against the modernization and always accused Kemalists of imitating the West because Turkey's foreign policy was strongly oriented to the West. As a result of these opposing views Islamists were expelled from the political system. They again returned to the political stage with the victory of AKP (JDP – Justice and Development Party) at the 3 November 2002 elections with partially changed ideas such as accepting modernization. (Ciftci, 2013: 143-145) It can also be argued that this change in political regime has also played an important role in shifting Turkish foreign policy orientation towards the West and Eurasia in the early 2000s.

To sum up, some topics should be concluded, as I've described in last two subchapters to make it more understandable to readers. To begin with, the constructivist assumptions and arguments can explain the possibility of a change in Turkish foreign policy discourse towards Russia while being still under the domination of the powerful West (during a given period). As a result, I apply the constructivist theory of international relations, according to which the Turkish foreign policy towards Russia was formed by state's identity discourses on Russia which is changeable by time.

Lastly, above-mentioned arguments and Wendt's theory about change in the identity/foreign policy discourse will be proved and enhanced if the change indeed happened, in other words changes in identity discourse led to the stable foreign policy towards Russia. If not, then further revision and counterarguments will be also applied since the changes in identity might not change the foreign policy discourse.

Theoretical Framework

Constructivist approach

To create my framework, in this subsection first I will give examples of constructivist assumptions from some researchers. Then I will continue with examining the core meanings of discourse, discourse analysis which will help to understand the relevance of it to constructivist research. I will also use certain tools to define the importance of Crimea in Turkish identity and to justify that how the change in Turkish discourses towards Russia could be predicted before the annexation. In Constructivist approach there are variety of non-material tools in FPA which were used in analysing foreign policy discourse by scholars, such as ruling regime (Gill 2014: 62-63), political and economic elite groups (Donaldson and Noguee 2014: 110-1), the significance of entrepreneurial bureaucrats (Checkel, 1993), as well as the role of the public (see, Betul Dicle, 2008: 3-5).

Constructivism emerged from the need for a new approach as opposed to other classic international relations theories. Both realism and liberalism dominated international relations for a half century. Even though it was first used a couple of decades ago, the term of constructivism has been neglected by these two main theories for a long time and at the end it has become one of the most compulsory approaches in rivalry with dominant rationalist and materialist theories in the study of international relations (IR). The end of both the Soviet Union and the Cold War in the 1980s has resulted in changing considerations over the theories and led to the new approaches to arise. (T.Hopf, 2002: 1-2)

To begin with, I argue that Constructivism as other theories in international relations is not a complete theory and always had difficulties in its explanations of international relations. Constructivism, rather than being a theory of international relations, can be viewed as an approach. In my research, I will also argue that constructivism is not the same as realism or liberalism in terms of theory. Because Constructivism is an epistemological approach in which theory is constructed from the findings rather than from testing existing theories (hypotheses). It did, however, make a substantial contribution to the IR theoretical debates. Constructivism could be used to analyse foreign policy in a range of methods. It is a different technique that involves broad assumptions in analysing foreign policy, international relations. In other words, as argued by Weber constructivism introduces new aspects and factors in IR that existing theories did not. (Weber 2013)

Constructivism's prominence in the theory of International Relations in the 1980s, particularly in the Western countries, namely USA, Canada, can be linked to the political processes and circumstances of the end of Cold War which could not be fully explained by traditional IR theories. This was the time that many theories could not give a valid explanation to the events that began in world politics. Francis Fukuyama called this period as the end history or end of theories. (Fukuyama.1989: 3) The political debates were held among the theories such as neorealism and neoliberalism or ontological and epistemological assumptions also paved the way for new approach, theory. (Skolimowska. 2017: 184-185) In other words, the emergence of Constructivism in the field of International Relations can be related to a number of factors, including a desire to rethink the IR theories, as well as classical theories' difficulty to capture the ongoing processes during this span of time (1980-1990).

While constructivism was not adequately and accurately represented by Alexander Wendt in his single book "Anarch What States Make It" Nicholas Onuf (1989), an American professor, used the word "Constructivism" to describe a new international relations theory. In 1989, he released his book under the name of "World of Our Making: Rules and Rule in Social Theory and International Relations," in which the term was introduced for the first time. Many researchers, be it Alexander Wendt, Peter Katzenstein (1996) followed him in this field and uploaded new explanations with more in-depth research on constructivism.

Moreover, Constructivist approach has several different “branches” that try to explain international relations and foreign policy discourse - identity relation with different methodology. For instance, Conventional Constructivism, Critical constructivism, Societal Constructivism, Transnational Constructivism, Holistic Constructivism. As Christian argue even though these are different branches they strongly agree on the importance of socially constructed factors, norms, ideas and so on. (Christian R. et al. 1996: 26-27). However, I would argue that critical constructivism is more suitable to my research method and research puzzle, question. Because unlike others it tends to ask “how” questions (Sarina Theys, 2018: 1-2) and is interested in reconstructing identities through communication and interaction. For answering this question this approach uses identity, role, cultural factors as a tool. As a result, the focus on the question of “how possible” rather than simply explaining the rational factors behind processes will help to apply interpretative research in answering my research question which also reflects the “how” framework. Moreover, Critical Constructivism emphasizes the importance of “language” as the main tool in identity construction which is also important in discourse

Jackson and Smith (1999: 120-121) argued that the international political system “is not something ‘out there’ like the solar system. It does not exist on its own. It exists only as an intersubjective awareness among people; in that sense the system is constituted by *ideas*, not by material forces. It is a human invention or creation not of a physical or material kind but of a purely intellectual and ideational kind. It is a set of ideas, a body of thought, a system of norms, which has been arranged by certain people at a particular time and place.” (Jackson & Sorensen, 2007: 162).” To be more precise, he argued that this system is socially changeable. Moreover, in their publications Constructivists argue that social ideas are central to the identity discourse and as a result they treat ideas as promising explanatory variables in the study of IR. In the description of ideas that underlies constructivist work's main approach they are defined as standards of actors’ behaviour within the given identity. According to Katzenstein (1996) “ideas and norms are there to describe societal expectations for the proper behaviour of actors with a given identification”. G.Ruggie argued that ideas are just as significant as material elements in establishing the actor selfness and identities (Gerard Ruggie 1998). Jay Jakson (1999) also emphasized the importance of the ideas and norms in

identity building. As he argued “the interests they hold, and the structures within which they operate, are defined by social norms and ideas, rather than by objective or material conditions”. By framing the socialization concept to make states follow community norms, Zuern (2005) links this interaction to human behaviour and shows a valid connection between them. I would argue that social ideas are also relevant to the discourse analysis of FP since they create the logic of appropriateness which are helpful to explain where and why actors behave in a way and whether it was expected or not.

Discourse and discourse analysis

Discourse is a contentious and complex notion; it is frequently employed in research, but it has still multiple meanings within each different situation and context. There is no obvious agreement among the many scholars, researchers to discourse analysis on how discourses should be selected and examined. (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002:1). That is why I will focus on the different meanings of these concepts given by some scholars.

Discourse is the area in which meanings are produced, modified, and incorporated into reality. More precisely, people get to understand the material world around them and give new meanings to it. (Holzscheiter 2013, 4-5). According to Jorgensen and Phillips, a discourse is a specific technique of discussing, interpreting, or accepting the realities of material world. (see, Jorgensen and Phillips 2002, p. 1) Although there are several approaches regarding discourse analysis, some of these approaches suits different issues better while others fail to do so. (Gee, 2011, 10-11)

Although there are many different approaches to discourse they all tend to agree that language is constructed due to different patterns people follow and different environments people engage in. As a result, discourse analysis examines these different patterns within which humans understand the world and how social reality is constructed (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002: p.1-2)

With creating a timeline for discourse analysis Waever argues that there are some situations, a certain time that someone’s arguments can be plausible, more effective while would make no sense at others. To avoiding this, discourse analysis focuses on the structures

of discourses and formulates new rules in each unique and different situation for using discourses which include statements, texts, speeches; more precisely, on special occasions what could be said and what could not be. (Waever, 2001: 27-30)

As mentioned above, discourse analysis focuses on the discourses such as texts, speeches, statements, publicly shared materials. The critical point when analysing these discourses is that researchers should focus on the meaning of them, how people relate to each other or for what discourses are used, not on the reasons behind them. (Waever, 2001: 26-28) In short, the aim of discourse analysis is only the meaning of what was said, and researchers should only focus on what is in texts, statements, exploring the patterns of discourse. (See, Jorgensen and Phillips, 2002: 20-22)

To sum up, this study will mainly follow constructivist assumptions created by Wendt and Onuf, and Hopf's well-structured and stimulant constructivist discourse analysis. As Hopf argued, the emergence of social-constructivism and discourse analysis not only stimulated researchers to challenge the existing concepts but also to work on the identity – foreign policy nexus. (Hopf, 2002: 259-260) According to him identity is constructed on the discourses, and it has consequences in foreign policy. That is why my study was structured on this framework also called constructivist discourse analysis.

Methodological approach

Previous rational theories have had debate on current discursive systems that limited foreign policy analysis and could not explain the main reasons behind actors' behaviour. Based on scholarly discourses and official statements, speeches, I propose that this constructivist theory might explain the conditions in the pre-Crimean and post-Crimean periods, as well as any identity shifts toward Russia.

In the light of the above, the main logic of my research is the interpretative/constructivist discourse analysis. In this regard, I will mainly focus on the assumptions developed by Alexander Wendt (1992, 1994), Nicholas Onuf(1989) and as well as Hopf's well-structured constructivist discourse analysis. Since the discourse analysis as a

method examines how meaning are produced it will suit my research question which reflects the “how” framing. While some scholars make a distinction between the discourse analysis and Constructivism (i.e., Adler, 1997: 321-332; Wendt and Katzenstein 1996: 33-75) others (i.e., Hopf, 2002: 259-261) gave a particular methodological position in constructivist approach. Holzscheiter (2014: 4-5) argues that discourse is the area in which humans understand the world and give it meaning. Ove (2009) gives the basic assumption of Discourse analysis that individuals produce and reproduce the understanding of self and the world in their speeches. (P.K. Ove, 2009: 3-5) Onuf and Wendt claim that “language” (discourse), interactions as one of the main factors in identity building. Moreover, Hopf (2002) provides a good nexus between identity and discourse analysis. He argues that identities are crucial in understanding how the states perceive each other and the content of identity can be examined by uncovering discourses such as texts, speeches, statements etc. To show the impact of social identities on the USSR foreign policies Hopf choses follows stages in his analysis: 1. inductive empirical reconstruction of the Russian identity, 2. discursive analysis 3. looking at the policy-makers as a part of social structure. (Hopf, 2002: 1-5)

Similarly, Constructivist theorists (A.Wendt, N.Onuf) also argue that international relations are a world of human consciousness, a world of beliefs and opinions, ideas, physiological concepts, language, narratives, signals, and interpretations among individuals. They adopted human awareness assumption from social science to analyse human behaviour and relate it to the states' behaviour. The interaction among the states is the product of human nature and it is changeable. In other words, according to constructivist studies, the international system is the output of an individual's awareness in groups, societies which are constructed ideas rather than material factors. This again makes sense of the relevance of this research's method and theory.

In this background this study will be interpretative case research which advocates subjective epistemology and is distinctive in its approach to the research design. Because my inductive research is not testing an existing theory (hypothesis) using the empirical data as positivist approaches do, but it is focusing on the collected data to derive a theory from the observation of data. Moreover, as mentioned by James Hiller (2016; 101) opposed to the

positivist methods which use objective techniques, interpretative research has more in common with constructivist approach. Interpretative researchers believe that social reality cannot be abstracted from social factors, and they put humans' meaning making practices at the center of research.

As for the sampling strategy of the collected data, interpretative research uses a theoretical sampling strategy which means the data is selected purposefully; whether they are appropriate for the theoretical considerations and how they suit the research. I applied this sampling strategy and also chose the data based on the purpose of study. For instance, rather than random sampling for the analysis part small samples of official data were selected based on their importance; Turkish officials' 21 speeches and statements after the crucial meetings, events, crisis, turning points between Turkey and Russia.

When it comes to the case selection, Turkey's foreign policy discourse towards Crimean crisis, in this regard, is a unique case study to evaluate the relevance and validity of constructivist approach as an alternative explanation of foreign policy formulations. Because Turkey has a special geopolitical position on the borderline between East and West, North and South, also between two opposite civilizations – the Christian West and the Muslim East, various ethnic groups. As a result of these geopolitical and civilizational characteristics, the construction of Turkish identity discourse has become complex, and its foreign policy orientation changed over decades. Therefore, my thesis provides a framework for analysing this unique case -Turkish foreign policy discourse towards Russia using constructivist theory to better test the identity related change in discourses. This research uses the above-mentioned framework to explain why Turkey did not change its main stance in the foreign policy discourse towards Russia despite serious national identity factors related to the annexation of Crimea. In terms of case selection, the importance of Crimea is strong enough to test our framework of the study.

Moreover, several issues should be considered while formulating my research design. In this case, some different concepts have been analysed. "Self" and "Other" binary was included to see the changes in perceptions of Russia in Turkish discourses. However, since the previous research which have mostly been done in the period of Turkey's western orientation and because of the Turkish foreign policy changes in the eve of Crimean Crisis

different perception of Russia could also be related to the different perception of the West in 2010s. I argue that this exceptional addition will help to see the changes in political discourses towards Russia before the annexation of Crimea because of distancing from the West as follows. This change can be related to the perception of Russia as a "strategic partner", potential "friend" rather than threat.

Regarding the timeline, instead of following what other scholars did in their research (using long term), I chose the shorter timeline from 2012 to 2016, as Hansen did in his discourse analysis (see, Hansen, 2006). To better examine the relation of identity and foreign policy discourse in Turkish stance towards Russia by using the case of Crimean Crisis, I argue that analysing the shorter timeframe from the time of the election of Putin in Russia and pre-election debates in Turkey to the events in Ukraine and Crimea, and then to the year after that was turning point in Turkish foreign policy (coup attempt in 2016) is necessary to achieve my research goal. The shorter period allows me to examine deeply how the discourses of the Turkish policymakers and Turkish academic discourses changed or remained unchanged. Some more events within this timeframe will also be viewed shortly. The first 2 years period before Crimean crisis will include "self" and "other" perceptions of Russia in Turkish discourses and in the second 2 years period (2014-2014) will look for changes in these discourses based on identity reconstruction by policymakers.

Finally, in the analytical part of this work, the analysis of the collected data has been structured around the brief overview of bilateral relations and two main discourse analysis themes: Turkey's "Pivot to the East" policy and Eurasianism. As the main requirement for the constructivist discourse analysis is about finding links among speeches, statements and other academic discourses the focus paid on how these discourses have been in connection to each other before and after Crimean crisis. Therefore, how the Turkish official and academic discourse see Russia from the "self" and "other" perspective, the links between these discourses (i.e., Turkish policymakers' and Eurasianists' views) would be important in the examination of identity discourse in foreign policy and whether the changes happened.

CHAPTER 3.

TURKISH DISCOURSE TOWARDS RUSSIA BEFORE THE ANNEXATION OF CRIMEA

The Turkish foreign policy discourse towards Russia before the annexation of Crimea is analysed in this chapter. This chapter will develop the basic discursive framework that existed before the Crimean issue based on official statements and academic discourses. As the constructivist approach was applied, this discursive analysis will focus on some major themes that help to better structure the workflow of this chapter. These themes will focus on some questions as follows; How Turkey views "Self" and "Others" theory in foreign policy discourse? What is the position of Russia in this binary, how Turkish discourses perceived Russia, potential (current) threat, the geopolitical rival or strategic partner? How were the historical memories and identity factors comprehended in bilateral relations? How did the Western vs Eurasian policy of Turkey was related to how Russia was perceived in Turkish foreign policy discourses?

In terms of making identity discourse analysis of foreign policy, I will proceed with the sequence given below. First this chapter will start to briefly look at the bilateral relations in the eve of Crimean crisis. Then Turkish identity discourse towards Russia will be examined from the "self" - "other" binary perspective. The following subsection will cover the discourse analysis of Turkish Eurasianist and officials' speeches, statements regarding its "Pivot to the East" policies which will strengthen the constructivist notion of this study.

Firstly, it is important to consider what the scholars had argued about Turkish policymakers' worldview and their foreign policy concepts towards Russia. As mentioned by some scholars, (Görener ve Uçal, 2011: 357-358) in analysing the official Turkish foreign policy discourses from the first decade of twenty first century it is important to take the views of Erdogan into account which played an important role in identity building. That is because Erdogan is dominant in foreign policy making, and since he has completely removed most internal constraints on his authority, any attempt to understand Turkey's recent foreign

policy outcomes without addressing his leadership, his view of the globe and in our case, Russia would be significantly insufficient. He has a say in foreign policy decisions and other foreign policy bodies or actors (i.e., Turkish MFA) often make statements in accordance with Erdogan's speeches. When AKP won elections for the next term in 2011 Erdogan's government made some changes in its foreign policy directions, fundamental goals from West to East. Erdogan's personal relationship with Eurasian leaders also played an important role in this essence such as Putin, other Turkish and Islamic countries' leaders. To see his dominance in foreign policy decision making I will also give a complementation of his views with other officials, namely, Foreign Policy Ministers Ahmed Cavushoglu, Mevlut Cavushoglu and President Abdullah Gul.

Moreover, since my study focus is analysis of foreign policy discourse, some characteristics mentioned by scholars (Görener ve Uçal, 2011: 357-358) are useful and this can help to locate Erdogan's and main policy makers' views, speeches, statements under identity context/structure. But this does not mean that this study will only focus on the personal views, but also on the broader identity discourse and Turkish public debates on Crimean population - Turkish community. Because the Crimean issue has also gained the status of an internal political importance in Turkey. (Adam, 2014: 7-8) Even though there were more vital domestic issues during this crisis such as upcoming presidential elections the unlawful annexation of Crimea also met harsh criticisms among Turkey's people. Due to the aim of my study to analyse the identity construction in Turkish foreign policy discourse towards Russia, trying to limit the officials' positions on the issue and looking from a full broader identity context with consulting academic discourses will further help to deepen and strengthen this constructivist analysis.

Brief overview of Pre-Crimean bilateral relations

After the Cold War, Turkey no longer neighbored Russia. In other words, the most serious security threat to Turkey has disappeared. This signaled the start of a new era in Turkish-Russian relations. Although the 1990s witnessed the increase in Turkey-Russia relations, this

new beginning was not without complications. In the 2000s the relationship between Turkey and Russia has been characterized by tensions, cooperation, and competition. (Megan & Lindenstrauss, 2013: 62-65). The election of Vladimir Putin in Russia and Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Turkey marked a good turn in bilateral relations. Moreover, since the Turkish-Russian relationship has been complicated by several identity, geopolitical and other elements, and the rise in Turkey-Russia relations has significantly reduced the likelihood of open conflict between two countries in the early 2000s. For instance, in the eve of the unlawful annexation of Crimea, Turkish-Russian relations were marked by several memorable events. Prime Minister Erdogan's visit to both Moscow and Kazan during March 14-16, 2011 was the clear indication of future improvement in Turkish-Russian relations.

However, their relations could not be solely described as stable since regional geopolitical processes have had impacts on it throughout 2010s. With the Arab Spring and Russian intervention in Syria, Turkey's near neighbor, freezing relations between Turkey and Russia were experienced. So, during the Syria conflict in 2011 Turkish-Russian bilateral relations entered a new phase – the political discourses reflect the tensions. Russia's intervention in Syria – next to Turkey brought a short-lasting freezing period and both sides began to go through a "Syria test" as of March 2011. However, during the same period, Turkey's stalled relations with the European Union (EU) and Turkey's membership request from the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) as an option against the EU led to a new dimension in relations between Turkey and Russia. In other words, being opposite to the West more or less brought these two countries together.

When Putin won the elections again in 2012 Turkey-Russia relations went again through the normalization phase. A peak point in the normalization phase during the pre-Crimea period was Putin's Ankara visit on 3 December 2012 should be highly emphasized. This third meeting of the Russia-Turkey High Level Cooperation Council is enough to argue that Turkish-Russian relations, which was tested by the Syrian crisis, entered 2013 with the positive attitude with this official visit. (Dombey and Clover, 2012) Afterward Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov paid a visit to Istanbul and met with Turkey's Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu in April 2013 and "Joint Declaration of the Third Meeting of the

Republic of Turkey-Russian Federation” was signed at the ministerial level which mostly covered Erdogan and Putin’s statements. The Ministers highlighted that the political and economic center of the future will be Eurasia and they also exchanged their views on the strengthening the bilateral relations. (mfa.gov.tr, 17.04.2013)

Following Putin's visit to Istanbul, the G20 summit in St. Petersburg was another significant event in bilateral relations. On September 5, 2013, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan met with Russian President Vladimir Putin during Saint Petersburg summit. Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu had also a meeting with his Russian colleague Sergey Lavrov on July 6, 2013. (Reuters, 2013) The Syrian situation and the use of chemical weapons in the war was once again discussed during these high-level meetings.

Recep Tayyip Erdogan once again met with Russian President Vladimir Putin in St. Petersburg in November 2013. The joint press conference between of two presidents following the meeting was very significant. (mfa.gov.tr, 22.11.2013) They discussed recent developments in relations. Putin stated that he does not see any cause for relations with Turkey to freeze, that is possible to disagree on the issues, but that this would not worsen bilateral relations; rather, these two countries will come closer and look for agreement. During a meeting in St. Petersburg, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan also highlighted the Shanghai Organization membership issue: "Take Turkey to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and save us from the EU problem". (Yeni Safak, 23.11.2013) In the same article Erdogan also maintained that Turkey would quit its efforts to join the EU if they were accepted to the SCO. I would argue that these meetings and statements again showed that the probable movement of Turkish discourses to the East and distancing from the West accelerated in 2010s. This change can also be observed from academic discourses. One of the examples of these changes is the position of Russian Eurasianist Dugin and Turkish Eurasianists on each other’s perceptions which will be further examined in the next sub-chapters.

The perception of Russia in Turkish discourse before Crimean Crisis

This sub-chapter will try to draw the attention to the issue of perception based on the trust in bilateral relations and examine it as one of the main reasons for changes in foreign policy discourses which existed in the first period of selected timeframe (2012-2014). As any international actor in international relations, historically, the issue of trust occupies a very important place in Turkey's foreign relations. That's why some political experts point to loss of trust as the main reason why Turkish foreign policy discourses were distancing from the US and NATO and pivoted to the East.

It should also be explained why trust was included in this constructivist discourse analysis. Indeed, the question can rise that why trust is essential in understanding Turkish foreign policy discourse towards Russia in 2010s from a constructivist perspective. I argue that it is essential for policymakers in their foreign policy discourses, decision making and their abilities to realize their initiatives confidently, trust plays an important role in the assessment of others. I would agree with Richard who argues that trust is a set of expectations of actors that other actors will behave in a manner regarding specific issues, interests. (Richard Lebow, 2013)

However, in early 2000s most of the studies approached Turkish-Russian bilateral relations not based on trust but on the mutual interests and benefits from the current cooperation. One of these scholars is Isachenko (2021: 5) who argues that from the early 1990s, after the collapse of the USSR trust was not priority in bilateral relations. According to Isachenko, both actors put the importance on mutual benefits. I would argue that to some extent it can be agreed that Turkish-Russian relations have been established on mutual benefits if we talk about economic relations, trade, and tourism between two countries. But as the non-material factor trust is one of the core concepts in International Relations, representing a key element in state relations it is worth examining.

Regarding the trust in Turkish-Russian relations, having analysed official speeches from Turkey leaders and ministerial statements some patterns can be seized in 21st century. Previous work by Fatih Ozbay (2011: 38-39) on discourses between Turkey and Russia also

refers to the absence of mutual trust and gaining it through years has been trend of bilateral relations. That was the main reason for the absence or lack of visits of high-ranking Turkish and Russian Ankara-Moscow visits in early 2000s. In 2009 Turkish President Abdullah Gul's visit to Moscow should be regarded as the significant event or turning point in bilateral relations. Abdullah Gul also visited Kazan, the capital city of Tatarstan, which in previous decades wasn't even possible and could be perceived negatively. Because such a visit to Turkish community within Russian Federation would be suspicious since Kremlin was concerned in previous decades that Ankara attempts to build Pan-Turanism throughout the Caucasus, Central Asia, as well as within the Russian Federation. (William Engdahl, 2009) During his visit President Gul made this statement: "Normally such visits are followed by some disturbances. For this reason, both sides have exhibited mutual sensitivity. We did not experience the slightest problem regarding our visit to the Tatar Republic. On the contrary, it was encouraged. This is proof that a relation based on trust is evolving between Turkey and Russia" (Ozbay, 2011: 55-56)

In the light of the above, in the eve of the annexation of Crimea, trust and the perception of Russia in Turkish political discourse significantly changed from the end of Cold War to 2010s. That is why I also included trust in this study to see the previous conditions which led to pre-Crimean actual discourses that this study will analyse. In this regard, the speech was delivered by Ambassador Naci Koru at the Ankara meeting with Russia's Foreign Minister was very important: "..... the close dialogue at the highest level ensured an atmosphere of mutual trust and removed the artificial obstacles in the way of deeper cooperation. This shared understanding was officially institutionalized with the establishment of the High-Level Cooperation Council in 2010" He also added that "...besides remaining a leading energy supplier, Russia has now become a partner in establishing Turkey's first nuclear power plant. The Akkuyu plant is the biggest stand-alone investment project in our history and stands testament to the trust underlying our two nations' growing ties." (Turkish MFA, 2013)

To conclude, although from the dissolution of the Soviet Union there was observed the tendency of mistrust in Turkish-Russian bilateral relations, the better ground emerged in the eve of Crimean crisis. This new phase in relations also led to the new patterns in Turkish

political discourses on the “Turn (pivot) to the East” policies of Turkey which is discussed in the next subsection. In this regard, political discourse was also followed by Turkish Eurasianist discourse in its desire for rapprochement with Russia

Turkey’s “Pivot to the East” policy and Eurasianism Before the Annexation

The persistent restatement that Russia is culturally distinct from Turkey is one of the primary repeating themes of the pre-Crimean Turkish identity discourse towards Russia. But the main foreign policy interests can overtake these differences since Turkey followed foreign policy discourse in accordance with political orientations, situations in the region. That is why, states which aim to be a superpower in the region, sometimes should follow their main foreign policy goals, construct “identities” rather than following existing national identity differences.

Eurasianism is one of these foreign policy concepts that has had a significant effect on both Russian and Turkish foreign policies. It is the geopolitical idea that assumes closer relations with Asia rather than with the West. The most contemporary form of this idea - Neo-Eurasianism emerged in 20th century in Russia and there have been three pillars according to three main figures of the school thought: Lev Gumilev, Alexander Panarin and Alexander Dugin (Ozgur Tufegci, 2015: 86-90). Regarding the realization of this idea in politics for the first time, when Yevgeny Primakov was appointed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2000, the Eurasian approach began to be the main foreign policy direction in Russian foreign policy rather than remaining in academic discourse.

In Turkey the idea evolved only in the 1990s and did not have founders/forefathers as Aleksandr Dugin (2004). This idea wasn't politicized as others among political parties in Turkey, be it Pan-Turkism, Islamism. But in Russia it prioritized foreign policy goals in bilateral and multilateral relations with Asia and the West. Moreover, in Russia the idea is more radical and always claims the imperial territories back, while in Turkey the idea was

only supported by left-wing and right-wing who urge relations with Asian countries. One of the founders of Neo-Eurasianism Alexander, who labeled the Western countries as the main enemy of this idea, has also commented on Turkish Eurasianism and in the 1990s he perceived Turkey as one of the adversaries. Since the political atmosphere changed in the 2000s and Turkish-Russian relations deepened, Dugin also changed his stance on the issue, gaining prestige among Turkish politicians. After his meeting with Turkish Eurasianist Dogu Perchinek in November 2003, he outlined the idea in both Turkey and Russia as follows: “Eurasianism has two main pillars. One is Turkish and the other is Russian. These are not alternatives to each other. On the contrary, they are pillars who support each other and should unite.” (Suat Kiniklioglu, 2022: 13-14)

Even though the idea emerged in the 1990s, Turkey’s Eurasianist ideology has gone under changes three times from the end of the Cold War to 2010s. First two manifestations regarding Eurasianism were pro-Western based on the geopolitical position of Turkey while third, most actual one was ideological, anti-Western and can be regarded as “Pivot to East”. (Dalay, 2021) Third phase of Eurasianism under the rule of AKP party led to changings in Turkish foreign policy attitude towards “others” including Russia. The main difference is that the early forms of Eurasianism proposed rapprochement, close relationship with the Western countries, while the third phase in 2000s sought to deepen relations with the Eastern countries, be it Russia, China.

Moreover, Eurasianists obviously support the idea of more integration and close ties with Asia. For instance, Erol Manistali argued that “Turkey is acting in accordance with the United States, Israel, and the EU, and gives all the necessary support for their regional politics. However, Turkey has common strategic interests with Russia, China, and Iran. Turkey’s improving relations with prominent Asian powers—such as Russia, China, and Iran—are, all things being equal, a natural outcome of the local dynamics of the region.” (Cumhuriyyet, 2012) Another leading Eurasianist Dogu Perincek argues that in Atlantic space Turkey is inferior to the USA and plays a role of servant: “The Turkish nationalists would befriend China and Russia in order to get rid of the United States. Turkey will inevitably be at the forefront of the emerging 'Eurasian civilization'. Ankara is a servant in the Atlantic, but an equal partner in Eurasia. In this strategic alliance, the United States has tried to disintegrate

Turkey through the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), Russia through Chechen militias, and China through so-called Uyghur separatism.” (Selcuk Colakoglu, 2019) But regarding the eastern countries he claims that there is equal opportunity, and these relations are naturally vital. They also claim the importance of defense cooperation with Russia and China.

Regarding Eurasianism, it has been very ambiguous what exactly the idea stands for. Within Turkey since there have been three phases of Eurasianism there was not a clear agreement on the concept. Nationally it was related to the links between Turkey and newly independent Turkic republics in Eurasia while geopolitically the emergence of relations with the Eastern powers. Emre Ersen (2019: 32-33) argued that the concept of “Eurasianism” is flexible, and it can be applied for different intends, interests in accordance with states’ geopolitical agendas.

Besides these ideological supporters of Eurasianism it was escalated to the political discourse when JDP (Justice and Development Party) started to rule the government (from 2007-2008). This ideology reached its peak in 2010s. Because of Turkey’s stalled accession process to the EU, Turkey became Shanghai Cooperation Organization’s “dialogue partner” and began to get involved in economic, military cooperation with organization and members. Moreover, Turkey’s Pivot to the East also resulted from the emerging problems between Turkey and USA and NATO in broader essence. Tarik Oguzlu argues that these problems reached to the peak point when USA started to support the Gezi Park protests against the increasing authoritarianism and future presidential elections and ruling regime in 2013. Thus, Turkey’s growing interest in Eurasian countries, good relationship attempts with the Eastern great powers were also related to the contrasted interests of Turkey and USA, USA’s interference in domestic political processes. These contrasted interests have also emerged with the Syrian crisis when USA changed its strategy towards Middle East and started to support Kurdish-dominated People’s Protection Units which is the branch of terrorist organization PKK in Syria. Another reason put forward by Tarik Oguzlu was related to the rising popularity of the Eastern leaders such as Putin and Xi Jinping in world politics and their perceptions of the Western countries which triggered the changes in world order and created the new political atmosphere. (Tarik Oguzlu, et al. 2019: 33-34)

Regarding the political discourse observed during this period, Turkey's turn to the East and the rise of Eurasianism can also be seen in the speeches of high-ranking political figures. For instance, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey and Ambassador Naci Koru delivered a speech during the Turkey-Russia meeting in Ankara which was very important for defining prospects in bilateral relations: "... we see the rise of China and India, leaving little doubt that the 21st century will see a resurgence of Asia. In this fast-evolving international environment, Turkey and Russia can work together in devising tools of regional cooperation that reflect the dynamics and needs of the region." (Turkish MFA, 2013) It is understood from the statement that Turkey sought cooperation not only in the economic field but also in regional political issues.

In January 2013 it was the first time that a top-level Turkish political figure – Recep Tayyip Erdogan voiced in a direct manner that Turkey convicted to join Shanghai Cooperation Organization: "Shanghai Cooperation Organization would be 'better and far more powerful' than the EU" (Tayyip Erdogan, 31.01.2013) The debate on the membership was again opened up when Erdogan and Putin met in Strelna on November 21 and Erdogan again expressed his willingness: "..... Fifty years of experience (EU talks) is not easy. Allow us into the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and save us from this trouble". (Daily News, 22.11.2013) He also stated that Turkey will abandon its long-lasting membership request and never aim to join the EU again if Turkey was accepted by SCO: "If we get into the SCO, we will say good-bye to the European Union. The Shanghai Five is better - much more powerful. Pakistan wants in. India wants in as well. If the SCO wants us, all of us will become members of this organization." (The Diplomat, 2013)

Following this event, Erdogan's statements were reiterated by Turkish politicians at a high-level meeting in Ankara in February 2013, and Turkish Foreign Minister commented on Turkish-Russian relations: "Turkey and Russia have been in constant interaction for centuries had its ups and downs, its periods of rivalry and solidarity, of competition and cooperation. But at no point in our long history have relations reached the level and complexity we witness today. The steady and multi-faceted expansion of our cooperation in the last two decades has dramatically transformed the nature of our bilateral relations, moving Turkey and Russia ever closer together." (mfa.gov.tr, 2013) It is clear from the statement that

the Deputy Minister reaffirmed Erdogan's statements and again calls not focusing on the historical memories but on the prospects for cooperation.

In the light of the above, it can be argued that before the annexation of Crimea official statements from Turkish policy-makers aimed to create closer relations with Russia and the Eastern countries as a whole. These speeches delivered by high-ranking political figures again help to claim that the concept of "Eurasianism" on the Turkish-Russian relations was not narrowed to national-cultural ties or perceiving each other in a prominent manner but based on mutual interests, benefits, and identities that formulated in interactions by policy-makers. Nevertheless, this discourse analysis is not looking for the reasons behind the "language" but for what is said in texts, speeches, or statements. That is why, in the fourth chapter official discourses on Eurasianism and "Pivot to the East" policy will be again examined to see whether the change happened in discourses.

The Perception of Russia in official discourse before Crimean Crisis

In this subsection the perception of Russia in official discourses of Turkish policy-makers will be examined to see how this positive stance in Turkish discourse towards Russia was built in official speeches. For this aim some factors such as national identities, decision-makers' personal beliefs (as the representative of national interests, leaders' speeches and their personal perception of each other should be examined. Because key politicians within the same government can rely on the different foreign policy conceptions, goals which they believe that those are corresponding to the interests of their nations.), historical traumas/experiences from each other or from the mutual threat / significant "Others" will be also viewed to see how pre-Crimean ground was achieved. These factors mentioned above will help to understand why Turkey discourse tends to be flexible towards Russia.

To begin with, Guibernau's argument about national identity will help to move forward. He argues that national identity is a feeling of nations who belong to a common group which

differentiates them from “others”. Regarding this argument, Turkish national identity refers to its origins and religion, Islam which is the important part of the Turkish nationality. So, this lets us argue that from the only national identity perspective Slavic, Orthodox Russian identity should be perceived as “other” or regarding threat perception as a historical “enemy” in turkey. According to constructivist thinker Tsygankov (2013: 3-4) national identity is constructed through the interactions with others. Thus, I will move forward with the second argument which can help to emphasize that based on the interactions of national identities which leads to perceiving “self” and “others”, countries develop appropriate actions toward others. More precisely, based on these interactions, states compare their characteristics with others, they comprehend those who are potential or real threats or partners/allies.

As a member of NATO and close relations with the West Turkish self-perception was more western oriented during the Cold War and in early 2000s. That is why previous parties in power and presidents stressed the importance of the EU accession, but when AKP came to power in 2002 an important turning point occurred in the following years. As the main figure in AKP Party and Prime Minister from 2003 to 2014, Receb Tayyip Erdogan stated that it is time to focus on only national interests and the main threat perception is internal terrorist organizations’ attacks and the recent events in the Middle East, success is in creation common sense of whole population on priorities. Erdogan relates the problem of the EU accession with Islamophobia among European countries (hurriyet.com.tr, 03.11.2012).

In terms of the speeches, statements delivered by high-ranking political figures Turkish MFA Ahmed Davutoglu views on Russia at the “The road to 2023” London conference are very remarkable to better understand policy makers’ perceptions: “... friends and potential friends. No third category. Yes, today historically in the last 400 years, Turkey made many wars against Russia. Especially during Cold War, Russia was the main enemy in the minds of Turkish people. But today Russia is being seen as one of the main partners. And if you make a poll, nobody would say Russia is the main threat to Turkey. Ten years ago, this was not the case.” (mfa.gov.tr, 2011) This speech can form the initial ideas about how Russia and Turkey would build their bilateral relations before the annexation of Crimea. (2012-2014).

Lastly, regarding the perception of significant “Other” I would argue that during the AKP rule and Putin’s presidency in Russia distancing from Europe and looking for an

independent position for their countries brought Russia and Turkey closer. Since Turkey was dissatisfied the Western countries' responses to the events in Middle East and already gave up unsuccessful accession process, blamed Western countries for domestic interference. In the early 2010s Russia mostly developed its foreign policy strategies as a response to Western countries' sanctions, both countries were about to break up with the West. Both countries sought to have a say in world politics and tended to play an independent "peace keeping", "mediator", "significant" roles in the region, Middle East where the conflicts had already started. With their interference to the regional priority issues to achieve "zero problems with neighbors", (Davutoglu Doctrine, hurriyyet.com.tr, 2012) these two authoritarian regimes positioned themselves how they understand the meaning of democracy and sovereignty and how they want to be perceived by the dominant West.

To sum up the chapter, it was argued that these two countries have different cultures, identities and they perceived each other as rival back in the history. But as it is clear from the discussion there have been several reasons to bring these two "confrontational partners" closer in early 2010s and made Turkey and Russia turn to the Eurasia. These factors differ from material to non-material ones; for example, economic relations, distancing from or perception of the West, personal ties of two authoritarian leaders, etc. All the academic and political discourses indicate that internal perception of other, or the policy of making internal something as "foreign" is also important, since it helps to understand how the discourse about foreign actors is constructed. In the case of Turkish foreign policy though, it should be mentioned that even some part of the discourses regarding perception of others would entail the possibility of lack of interest towards Russia and Eurasia (i.e. historical enemy perception), but the existence of other part of the discourses that was created, on the one hand encouraged for closer ties.

CHAPTER 4

TURKISH DISCOURSE TOWARDS RUSSIA AFTER THE ANNEXATION OF CRIMEA

The previous chapter drew the attention to the orientations of Turkish foreign policy discourse towards Russia before the annexation of Crimea. In this chapter I examine the changes in Turkish foreign policy and identity discourse towards Russia due to the crisis in Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea. Although there is much that Turkey needs to respond to the Crimean crisis on the basis of historical and identity ties, I find that there was no substantial change in Turkey's foreign policy discourse towards Russia. But instead of changing the policy towards Russia, the crisis in Ukraine and the subsequent events in Turkey (protests, coup attempt) created a new way of thinking among senior Turkish leaders that the "important" West has lost its place in world politics, only under the banner of liberalism it has been able to intervene in the internal affairs of the countries.

I also argue that changed Russian identity after the annexation of Crimea have also played an important role in Turkey-Russian reproachments and Russia's "Pivot to the East" in foreign policy has encouraged the Asian countries, such as Turkey to establish Eurasian cooperation/integrations as the alternative of those of the Western countries. In this regard I have examined the debates and ties between Turkish and Russian political thinkers. The impacts of economic interdependence, public and political discourses, mutual distancing from the West and some other factors have also been included to see whether incremental changes in foreign policy happened. In order to better understand this process and analyse each theme separately, this chapter is divided into some subsections.

Changed Turkish foreign policy discourse towards Russia?

After the annexation of Crimea Turkey's response to the issue encouraged many researchers to analyse Turkish foreign policy discourse more deeply. Even though some of

them weren't successful with answering the question why Turkey has been quiet about the Crimea, these studies paved the way for the further research. In this sub-chapter I will analyse post-Crimean discourse using the political and academic discourses over the issue.

The Revolution of Dignity, was also called "EuroMaidan", in Ukraine ended in February 2014 and protesters made the current president Victor Yanukovich fled the country. The Ukrainians clearly stated their willingness to join the EU and started negotiations, signing the agreements. Following these events, a group of armed men dressed as Russian soldiers attacked the key facilities, state buildings in Crimea. The Crimean Supreme Council proposed a referendum on 16 March and put only two options for voters; to join Russia or to return to the 1992 constitution which was giving autonomy to the peninsula. Therefore, the results were falsified, and the Treaty of Accession was signed between Crimea and Russian representatives on 18th of March. (Pifer, 2020)

These events were condemned by the world community and this illegal annexation was not recognized internationally. As of the importance of the peninsula in Turkey's security, the extension of the crisis in Ukraine to the Peninsula of Crimea has given this issue a new dimension for Turkey, since Turkey shared also mutual historical, ethnic backgrounds with the region. Considering these circumstances some significant policies have been followed by Turkey. Firstly, Ankara sought peace, a diplomatic solution, the protection of territorial integrity, equal citizenship, and respect for human rights, continued not to recognize internationally illegal annexation of Crimea (Turkey MFA, 16.03.2022) and it was ready to de-escalate tensions through diplomatic methods. Even though Turkey officially opposed the annexation of Crimea it mostly kept a balancing policy towards both countries, intended to benefit from the peacekeeping role since Turkish officials often stated that Ankara is ready to be a mediator between Kyiv and Moscow. (Ataman, 2022) This was also noted by Foreign Minister of Turkey several times during the press conferences after official meetings: "..... all problems in Crimea should be solved through dialogue within the unity of Ukraine. Crimea should be a center of welfare, tourism, and relations among cultures not of tensions Peaceful coexistence of all ethnic and religious groups in Crimea is essential to the welfare of both Crimea and Ukraine as well as to the peace of Black Sea region. Turkey is

ready to contribute to decrease the tension and to settle the problems in Crimea". (mfa.gov.tr, 01.03.2014)

Second, in addition to refusing to recognize an unlawful annexation, it was claimed that the security of the Crimean Tatars is the most significant part of the territory, and the Crimea region is vital to Turkey's existence. Despite the neutral position at political level Turkish officials have often stated that the safety of the Crimean Tatars is the most important condition for Turkey. (Anadolu Agency, 2014) As the Turkish Foreign Minister stated during his meeting with the Ukrainian Foreign Minister in the aftermath of the crisis, Crimea is a key in Turkey-Ukraine friendship and security in the region: "Let's keep the Crimean Peninsula as a peninsula of peace and mutual welfare. All groups should coexist peacefully. It is of great importance for us that Crimean Tatars live in peace together with other groups in Crimea as equal citizens within the unity of Ukraine. These troublesome days will be behind us. We are all friends, neighbors in this region and we will build the future together. Turkey is ready to provide every support for the bright future of both Ukraine and Crimea." (mfa.gov.tr)

Despite the above-mentioned policies Muhittin (2022) argues that there have been some circumstances that shaped Turkey's stand towards Russia. One of the most important was its growing economic and energy relations with Russia. Since Turkey did not get the expected integration and support from the Western countries in some certain areas Turkey-Russia partnership has been improved and played an important role in the position of Ankara during the Ukrainian Crisis. That is why the member of NATO alliance Turkey preferred its bilateral relations with Russia and made a decisive turn to the East - Asia.

Nevertheless, the Turkish initiatives in the Crimea issue did not only end with these statements but also applied in practice to some extent. For instance, with the organization of Turkey, 410 delegates from different countries and several non-governmental units met in Ankara in 2015 to bring the Crimean Tatars with all peninsula population together. Russia attempted to prevent the congress from taking place. Despite this, the World Congress of Crimean Tatars delivered many political statements. Even Russia's membership in the UN Security Council was questioned. (Euromaidan Press, 30.07.2015) Former Deputy Prime Minister Numan Kurtuluş remarked during the meeting that the UN did not respond

appropriately to Russia's occupation of Crimea, and that Turkey does not recognize the annexation, and this will never happen. During this congress Turkey's Foreign Minister, Mevlut Cavusoglu, also stressed that Ankara "will never accept the illegal occupation of Crimea" and that Ankara "will continue voicing discomfort with the situation." (Euromaidan Press, 01.08.2015.) Even though Turkish policymakers reacted to the issue from a national identity perspective, I still would argue that these statements were not escalated to the aggressive phase. Erdogan and his team always avoided any possible tension in relations with Russia.

Even though Turkey strongly opposed the annexation and emphasized that the referendum will never be recognized, in terms of bilateral relations Ankara followed a balanced policy. That is why Turkey did not impose sanctions on Russia and leading policy makers as Western countries did. (BBC News, 01.05.2014) So it is necessary to evaluate explicitly the reasons why Turkey behaved like this since there have been numerous arguments by scholars, policy experts. Based on my observation I argue that Ankara's relative non-response to the annexation can be identified in the lack of change in its discourse towards Russia.

After the referendum in Crimea, another concern of Turkey was the strengthening of Russia in the Black Sea and the ineffective behaviour of NATO. Turkey has decided to solve this issue on its own, thanks to formations such as BLACKSEAFOR and KUH, Turkey has increased its superiority in the Black Sea. (Sakir Seker, 2018: 403) As it was stated by Turkish leaders Turkey cannot be a party to any actor in this geography and should look after its interests. As some scholars (i.e. Ereker and Ozer, 2018) have argued, these state interests and multidimensional concerns caused Turkey to not be able to take a stand on the side of Russia, Ukraine, the West, or any other actor. All these multilateral political maneuvers, flexible political steps pave the way for deep analysis of the issue to understand the main factors and the logic behind this foreign policy stance.

Turkey has important interests in Ukraine, including but not limited to the security of the Tatar population in Crimea. Turkey's flexible stance on the issue can be interpreted that Turkey did not want to harm bilateral relations. Moscow is also interested in ending a long-lasting breakthrough for two countries. Another reason brought two leaders together is

protests to “topple” their attempts. Both leaders accused the West in organizing the anti-government protests in Turkey and Russia, respectively in 2011 before Russian presidential elections and in 2013, Gezi Park protests to overthrow Justice and Development Party rule, to hinder 2014 Turkey’s presidential election. Moreover, Syria is the mutual interest area of Turkey and Russia where USA’s interference was criticized by both Erdogan and Putin. After all these events that were perceived as USA’s biased policy towards Turkey, an obvious distancing from the West increased. Finally, Erdogan framed the West as outsiders or rivals: “Outsiders like the oil, the gold, and the diamonds of the Islamic geography. Believe me they don't like us. Outsiders who appear to us as friends like to see our children die”. (Semih Idiz, 2014)

In this respect, Putin's 2014 December visit to Ankara should be well evaluated. The events of early December for both countries can be framed as a struggle with influence in Middle East after Arab Spring and these events were perceived by Ankara as huge potential for Turkey's position. Besides Turkey's geopolitical ambitions another importance of this meeting in Ankara was alternatives to "South Stream" since after Ukraine crisis Putin perceived Turkey as potential transit country for pipelines. But Western countries' stance on Ankara meeting and further events on Turkey's borders complicated the realization of this project. (Moscow Center, 08.12.2014)

In terms of gas and oil market, besides the future transit potential of Turkey, Russia remained an important supplier of Turkey as it was before Ukrainian crisis. Russia supplies most of Turkey's natural gas needs and this market keeps the Turkish economy alive. Stuck in the export of cheap goods and technology to the world market, Turkey may face a major crisis as its relations with Russia will deteriorate. For this reason, Turkey had to limit its reaction to the annexation of Crimea or Russia's protection of the Bashar Assad regime, while supporting opponents. In short, Erdogan has shied away from any type of contradiction with Putin to keep steady supply of Russia's gas and oil. (S.Cagaptay, J.Jeffrey, 2014) In the aftermath of the Crimean annexation and Syrian crisis Russia and Turkey’s leaders met in Moscow on September 2015 and Erdogan again briefly outlined relations in last decade and expressed the importance of bilateral economic relations as follows; “For the last 10 years, bilateral relations between Turkey and Russia have reached a very good basic level. Ignoring

the fact that in the world plan some negative moments were negatively expressed in trade between the two countries, everything is equally positive in the development of bilateral trade". (kremlin.ru 2015) He also stated his ambitions for the near future regarding the expanding trade turnover; "...in 2014, the trade turnover reached 31 billion dollars, for the first six months of this year - at the level of 11 billion dollars. As you know, our goal is to achieve a mark of 100 billion dollars, we have set ourselves such a goal - to achieve this level by 2023". (kremlin.ru, 2015)

Despite the continuation of official meetings and good relations after the Crimean crisis, there have been some events that have affected the development of cooperation between Turkey and Russia. One of them is downing of a Russian Su-24M attack aircraft by a Turkish F-16 fighter jet near the Syria – Turkey border on 24 November 2015. In the aftermath of incident Turkey-Russia bilateral relations were strained, and because of this breakdown, Turkish leaders openly supported NATO's ambitions to establish a permanent naval force in the Black Sea. Simultaneously, Turkey started to strengthen its military and political ties with Ukraine, strongly condemning Russia's engagement in Crimea, and supporting Georgia's NATO membership request. (Ersen, 2017: 85-87) While Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said that downing of Russian jet is provocation, Erdogan has contested this claim: "I think if there is a party that needs to apologize, it is not us those who violated our airspace are the ones who need to apologize. Our pilots and our armed forces, they fulfilled their duties, which simply acted by responding to ... violations of the rules of engagement. I think this is the essence."

In this regard, Erdogan hoped for the support from the Western partners, but NATO did not have a single say on this issue. Although the fighting jet incident resulted in short-term tension in the Turkish-Russian relationship Turkey did not get the full support from the West as the member of the NATO alliance, and as a result Ankara have been obligated to hold a flexible stance in its foreign policy discourses towards Russia and apologize for the incident. (Carnegie Moscow Center, 16.02.2015) In his letter President Erdogan described Russia as a "strategic partner" and "friend" and he expressed his regret for incident: "We never had the desire or deliberate intention of shooting down the Russian Federation's plane

condolences to the family of the Russian pilot who was killed, and I am saying: "Excuse us" " (kremlin.ru, 2016)

It was also argued that the last and most influential turning point in Turkey's foreign policy discourse towards East (Russia) and the West was the coup attempt in 2016. This has resulted in harsh criticisms in Erdogan's speeches who also gained the support of nationalist parties with the anti-Western slogan "native and national" (Oğuzlu, 2019: 32) Moreover, in the post-July 15 coup attempt period Ankara got the full support of Russia and other Eastern states, while its Western "partners" again hesitated to support Turkey - NATO's ally.

Moreover, Turkey's president blamed the West in supporting terrorism within Turkey in his meeting with foreign investors in early August: "The West is supporting terrorism and taking sides with coups they have actors inside, but the scenario of this coup was written abroad." (The Guardian, 2015) In the post-July 15 coup attempt Erdogan made his first visit to Russia which was the first meeting since Russia's SU-24 jet downing. I argue that this can be regarded as strict turning point in Turkish foreign policy. During this meeting Recep Tayyip Erdogan constantly called Putin "Dear Friend" and described this meeting as "the start of a very different period" in bilateral relations. (France24, 2016) After the meeting he also expressed his gratitude to Russia for a support in the aftermath of "coup attempt": "This visit seems to me a new milestone in bilateral relations, beginning with a clean slate, and I personally, with all my heart and on behalf of the Turkish nation salute Mr. Putin and all Russians" (Graham-Harrison & Kirchgaessner, 2016) To conclude this paragraph, I would argue that after the annexation of Crimea Turkish foreign policy discourse towards Russia did not substantially change from using positive "language" to negative. But from the speeches and statements of Turkish President it can be understood that the crises in the aftermath of Crimean crisis undermined "trust" between Turkey and the West while looking for the reproachment, close ties with the Eastern countries, especially Russia.

I argue that this flexible stance in foreign policy discourses could also be related to the domestic issues during this period, be it presidential elections afterwards of the crisis in Ukraine, huge trade turnover between two countries (interdependence), the same authoritarian style of Putin and Erdogan, Ankara's pivot policy and so on - this list can be extended. But when we look at the Turkish officials' discourses and the scenarios mentioned

above, I would say that these official discourses played an important role in the rapprochement of Turkey and Russia and Ankara wanted to come to an agreement with Russia in every crisis. To conclude all the post-Crimean scenarios Turkey still defended the territorial integrity of Ukraine and the territorial immunity of the Crimea, the rights of the Crimean people but this did not substantially change the way how Turkish officials perceive Russia in their discourses. Due to the official visits of the leaders of Ankara and Moscow, we can see the efforts to get Russia-Turkey closer politically. In the economic field, we have witnessed Turkey's support of Russia for its natural gas and oil policy, with Turkey's attitude towards Russia's projects in a different way than Western Countries. It tried to counter the desire of European countries to get rid of the Russian suspension through transit pipelines over Turkey and Azerbaijan (NABUCCO), so it attempted to be close with Turkey, to start the South Stream from the Black Sea, via Turkey. In other words, the discourses also reflected in states' actions, as Nicolas Onuf (1989) mentioned "saying is doing".

Turkey's "Pivot to the East" policy and Eurasianism After the Annexation of Crimea

The purpose of this sub-chapter is to assess the major domestic factors that have led to Eurasianism's increasing popularity in Turkish foreign policy discourse after the annexation of Crimea and to also examine Turkey's "Pivot to the East" policies in Turkish discourses. For the beginning, this sub-chapter will start by giving an outline of the evolution of Eurasianist views in Turkey in the post-Cold War period and then will examine the ties between Turkish and Russian Eurasianists, namely Alexander Dugin from Russia and significant Neo-Eurasianist figures from Turkey. The issue of whether Eurasianism may provide a viable agenda for Turkish leading figures who are seeking foreign policy choices, directions towards Russia in the aftermath of the Crimean annexation.

To begin with it was argued by some scholars that besides the three changes/manifestations of Eurasianism in Turkey it is also important to note that there have

been several interpretations of the idea in Turkish political discourse. I will follow Eurasianist Mehmet Percinek's interpretations who is also the chairman of the Vatan Party and in his book, he divides Turkish Eurasianism into three pillars in the chronological order. The first two pillars – Pan-Turkist and Neo-Ottomanist interpretations focused on Turkey's geopolitical significance, its leadership in the region. The supporters of these two pillars perceived Russia as a rival and did not see any real prospect for collaboration/cooperation between two states. Neo-Ottomanism was first adapted by foreign policy spokesman and Foreign Policy Minister Ahmet Davutoglu who was against the ideological and pro-Western stance in foreign policy. But still I would argue that this anti-Western stance only focused on the soft power influence over former Ottoman territories.

Since this chapter focused on the post-Crimea discourse the supporters (i.e., Mehmet Perincek) of the third pillar of Eurasianism played more important role in Turkish-Russian rapprochement after the annexation. Despite two above mentioned versions this pillar of Eurasianism – also known as Kemalist Eurasianism abandoned soft power, focused on the possible rapprochement between the Moscow and Ankara governments introducing the importance of assertive foreign policy. (Akcali and Perinçek, 2009: 550-551) They argue that Kemalist Eurasianism highlights the importance of alliance with Turkey's eastern neighbors, namely Russia, Iran and other Turkish speaking countries and they are against any type of pro-Western policy. They also argue that Kemalist Eurasianism was first applied in foreign policy by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. For example, according to Ercan Dolapci, Neo-Eurasianists - Kemalists regarded the dialogue between Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and Vladimir Lenin as anti-imperialist (Western) rapprochement. (Ercan Dolapci, 2015) In contrast to this argument, in his research paper Suat argues that emergence of Neo-Eurasianism or Kemalism dates back to 1996 when Dogu Perincek published "The Eurasian Alternative" book and First Eurasia Conference was organized in Turkey. Following this one of the founders of Russian Eurasianism Alexander Dugin published his "The Foundations of Geopolitics" which led to the dialogue between Turkish and Russian Eurasianists. (Suat Kınıklıoğlu, 2022: 13-14) As a consequence of these debates, conferences it was obvious that Russian Eurasianism has impacted on Turkish foreign policy discourse.

After the referendum in Crimea Turkish Eurasianists – more precisely followers of Perincek's ideas -- did not call the annexation Russia's occupation. Perincek proposed that Turkey should come to an agreement on this issue and clearly expressed that "Crimea is not occupied by Russia. If we don't recognize Crimea as Russian territory, we cannot get the world to recognize the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus." As a staunch supporter of Eurasian reintegration, Perincekists also blamed the USA for organizing a warplane incident on the Turkish border in 2015 and Turkey's failed coup attempt in 2016. (Suat Kiniklioglu, 2022: 13-14) All these ideas from Eurasianists brought them closer to the government and as a leader of VATAN Party Perincek met with Erdogan several times and expressed his solidarity in foreign policy actions. (Cumhuriyet, 2016)

Regarding the role of Eurasianists in bilateral relations, another interesting point is that during the failed coup attempt the founder of Russian Eurasianism Alexander Dugin was on a trip to Ankara, met with Mehmet Perincek, and he also expressed that the organizer of warplane incident has been the United States that aimed to disrupt relations between Turkey and Russia. (Ersen, 2019: 32-33) It was also argued that Alexander Dugin was the key figure in normalization of Turkey-Russia Relations in 2015 aircraft jet incident. But for some reason his role was ignored by Putin and Erdogan, on the contrary, Turkish businessman Cavit Caglar and Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev were seen as key figures in the normalization process of relations that led to Ankara-Moscow rapprochement. Concluding a couple of paragraphs above it can be argued that the impact of Russian Eurasianism on the Turkish discourse and debates between Turkish-Russian Eurasianism have played a significant role in the formation of strong Eurasianist orientation in Turkish foreign policy in the aftermath of the Russian warplane incident in 2015 and failed coup attempt in 2016.

It should be said that during the Ukrainian crisis and the annexation of Crimea, the situation in Turkey was very complex. In the aftermath of the annexation of Crimea the local elections were going to be held to choose mayors and members of district councils from parties. To ensure a win in the upcoming presidential elections in August 2014 JDP (AKP) would have to get the greatest share of the vote and the highest number of representatives in districts. (Eurasianet, 2014) On the other hand, JDP leader Recep Tayyip Erdogan also acknowledged that while keeping relations stable with economically and politically superior

Russia it is also important to get the support from Turkish nationalists in elections who see Turkey's role as a defender of Tatars' national interests. That is why the Turkish Government and Foreign Ministry have portrayed Turkey as the protector of Tatars and any Turkic people around the world in need. During his meeting with Crimean Tatar leaders Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu said, "Don't let it cross your mind that our prime minister and president will be indifferent to any issue affecting our kin in Crimea or anywhere in the world" (Jones, 2014). I would argue that this statement shows that Turkish policy makers tend to react harshly to the annexation from the national identity perspective and play to the public in their statements to gain nationalists' support, but at the same time, it was clear that they avoided being involved in any possible conflict with Russia. I would also agree with those Eurasianist researchers who related the importance of these non-changed relations to several factors, be it economic interdependence, personal choices of leaders, upcoming presidential elections in Turkey etc.

After the annexation of Crimea because of aforementioned domestic issues Ankara did not get back to its "Pivot to the East" policy until the July 15 coup attempt in 2016. Since this was regarded as the turning point in Turkish foreign policy towards the West this year also witnessed the close ties with the Eastern "new" friends. The desire to join the SCO did change neither after Crimean crisis nor the "warplane" crisis between Russia and Turkey, and Erdogan again reiterated his request for membership in his statements afterward: "Why shouldn't Turkey be in the Shanghai Five? I said this to (Russian President) Mr Putin, to (Kazakh President) Nazarbayev, to those who are in the Shanghai Five now". (Reuters, 20.11.2016) After the failed July 15 coup attempt Erdogan's anti-Western and pro-Eastern speeches, statements were also in accordance with official visits. Thus, President Erdogan made his first visit to Russia and second to China, also following visits were to Pakistan and Uzbekistan in November. (The Guardian, 2016) It was obvious that these countries were not chosen randomly and all of them were the members of Shanghai Cooperation Organization. After his visit to Uzbekistan on November 20 he again told reporters "Turkey is discussing the issue of joining the SCO". He also added that "... being a member of the SCO will allow Turkey to act more freely (in its EU bid)" (Hurriyet, 2016)

To conclude the scenarios mentioned above, after the annexation of Crimea although Turkish foreign policy discourse towards Russia has experienced some fluctuations, it didn't substantially change from its positive trend to negative. In their "language" both academic (Eurasianist discourse) and political discourses followed the same trend and always looked for reproachment after each crisis in bilateral relations. And in the second period of selected timeframe for analysis (2014-2016) can be regarded with a "small break" in Turkey's "Pivot to the East" policy because of some domestic issues. But the dialogues with the SCO members again started after the failed coup attempt on July 15 and Erdogan again followed his pre-Crimean discourses and intend about joining the organization.

CONCLUSION

By linking identity and foreign policy discourse, the main goal of this thesis was to create an understanding of how Turkish foreign policy discourse towards Russia changed after the annexation of Crimea. The official discourse articulated through speeches, statements from top policy-makers while the thoughts from Eurasianists – viewed as academic discourses – were analysed to see how these views differed in their discourses. Moreover, by adding the stance of Turkish discourses towards the West yielded an understanding of how Turkey's subject position pivoted to the East because of trust issues. In this background, to achieve this aim set above a constructivist approach to discourse, language was adapted. Theoretical framework was based on the constructivist assumptions of Nicholas Onuf, Alexander Wendt, as well as Ole Waever and Ted Hopf's discourse analysis. The discourse analysis of the official texts (speeches, statements) was conducted through a creation of timeframe from 2012 to 2016 around the key events – the election of Vladimir Putin, the annexation of Crimea and the failed July 15 coup attempt in Ankara. As a matter of fact, based on the suggestions of Waever for discourse analysis the selection of the short timeframe led to a stronger result in the analysis of the discourses. The sampling strategy of the collected data for interpretative research was based on the theoretical considerations which means the data is selected purposefully; whether they are appropriate for the research goal and how they suit the method. In other words, small samples of official data were selected based on their importance; 21 Turkish officials' speeches and statements after the crucial events, crisis, turning points between Turkey and Russia.

Moreover, I also included the distancing stance of Turkey from the West and building trust in relations with Russia to see the whole picture of how Turkish foreign policy discourses towards Russia were produced before the annexation of Crimea. Therefore, this study came to the conclusion that by the official discourse, Russia is perceived as a “potential” strategic partner rather than “other”, “rival” in the eve of Crimean crisis. When it comes to the post-Crimean discourses, the events in Crimea are depicted in a way as to gain the support of Turkish nationalists. However, both official and academic discourses avoided

any aggressive stance towards Russia, and they didn't change from a positive stance to negative.

In the light of the above one key research question was developed as follows: *How did Turkish foreign policy discourse change towards Russia following the annexation of Crimea?* To answer this question two themes – Turkish Eurasianism and “Pivot to the East” was analysed in a selected timeframe. As a result, the findings of this study show that official discourses expressed concern over the annexation of Crimea based on Turkey's security in Black Sea and identity ties to the Turkish community of the peninsula but did not substantially change its stance towards Russia. In other words, despite the discursive emphasis on Crimea's importance in terms of security, culture, religion, Turkish policy-makers did not focus on the Russia's expansionist actions by being directly involved in the issue, joining the West in imposing sanctions towards Russia or being weary in their speeches on the violation of international norms. In accordance with the official discourses, the leading Turkish Eurasianists shared the same view with the policy-makers by expressing the importance of close relations with Russia.

Moreover, selected timeframe also covered official discourses on some crucial events from 2014 to 2016 to see if any change happened in the aftermath of Crimean crisis such as Syrian issue, the downing of Russian warplane and the failed coup attempt in Turkey. Although the downing of the Russia's S-24 aircraft led to aggressive expressions in Turkey's foreign policy discourse, the positive perception of Russia in Turkish official speeches returned with Putin's support for Erdogan in the failed coup attempt. In the first meeting after a long “jet crisis” break Erdogan's repeated address to Putin as “friend” while presenting the West as “outsiders” or “rivals” is a clear proof of this argument. In addition, loss of trust and distance from the West again increased the popularity of “Pivot to the East” policies in official discourses two years later in 2016.

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Annex 1. Official discourse

| <i>Events</i> | <i>Dates</i> | <i>Speeches</i> |
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| Abdullah Gul - Turkish president's first visit to Kazan (Tatarstan) - Turkish community within Russia (significant event) | 2009 | "Normally such visits are followed by some disturbances. For this reason, both sides have exhibited mutual sensitivity. We did not experience the slightest problem regarding our visit to the Tatar Republic. On the contrary, it was encouraged. This is proof that a relation based on trust is evolving between Turkey and Russia" |
| Deputy Minister Naci Koru- MFA meeting after Istanbul Conference | 19.02.2013 | "...besides remaining a leading energy supplier, Russia has now become a partner in establishing Turkey's first nuclear power plant. The Akkuyu plant is the biggest stand-alone investment project in our history and stands testament to the trust underlying our two nations' growing ties." |
| R.T. Erdogan - last visit to Russia before Annexation | 23.11.2013 | "Take Turkey to the Shanghai Cooperation |

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| | | Organization and save us from the EU problem". |
| Putin's Ankara visit | 01.2013 | "Shanghai Cooperation Organization would be 'better and far more powerful' than the EU" |
| Deputy Minister Naci Koru- MFA meeting after Istanbul Conference | 02.2013 | "..... we see the rise of China and India, leaving little doubt that the 21st century will see a resurgence of Asia. In this fast-evolving international environment, Turkey and Russia can work together in devising tools of regional cooperation that reflect the dynamics and needs of the region." |
| R.T.Erdogan - Last meeting of leaders before Crimea | 22.11.2013 | "..... Fifty years of experience (EU talks) is not easy. Allow us into the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and save us from this trouble" |
| Turkey's Foreign Minister - MFA meeting after Istanbul Conference | 02.2013 | "Turkey and Russia have been in constant interaction for centuries had its ups and downs, its periods |

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| | | <p>of rivalry and solidarity, of competition and cooperation. But at no point in our long history have relations reached the level and complexity we witness today..... our cooperation in the last two decades has dramatically transformed the nature of our bilateral relations, moving Turkey and Russia ever closer together.”</p> |
| <p>MFA Ahmet Davutoglu - “The road to 2023” London conference</p> | <p>22.11.2011</p> | <p>“... friends and potential friends. No third category. Yes, today historically in the last 400 years, Turkey made many wars against Russia. Especially during Cold War, Russia was the main enemy in the minds of Turkish people. But today Russia is being seen as one of the main partners. And if you make a poll, nobody would say Russia is the main threat to Turkey. Ten years ago, this was not the case.”</p> |

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| MFA Ahmet Davutoglu – first statement on Crimea | 01.03.2014 | <p>all problems in Crimea should be solved through dialogue within the unity of Ukraine. Crimea should be a center of welfare, tourism, and relations among cultures not of tensions</p> <p>Peaceful coexistence of all ethnic and religious groups in Crimea is essential to the welfare of both Crimea and Ukraine as well as to the peace of Black Sea region. Turkey is ready to contribute to decrease the tension and to settle the problems in Crimea"</p> |
| MFA Ahmet Davutoglu's first visit to Ukraine after crisis | 28.02-01.03.2014 | <p>"Let's keep the Crimean Peninsula as a peninsula of peace and mutual welfare. All groups should coexist peacefully. It is of great importance for us that Crimean Tatars live in peace together with other groups in Crimea as equal citizens within the unity of Ukraine. These troublesome days will be behind us. We</p> |

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| | | are all friends, neighbors in this region and we will build the future together. Turkey is ready to provide every support for the bright future of both Ukraine and Crimea.” |
| MFA Mevlut Cavusoglu – Second Crimean World Congress | 01.08.2015 | "will never accept the illegal occupation of Crimea" and that Ankara "will continue voicing discomfort with the situation." |
| R.T. Erdogan – Istanbul Conference of Organization of Islamic Cooperation | 27.10.2014 | “Outsiders like the oil, the gold, and the diamonds of the Islamic geography. Believe me they don't like us. Outsiders who appear to us as friends like to see our children die” |
| R.T. Erdogan – after the downing of Russian aircraft | 10.2015 | “I think if there is a party that needs to apologize, it is not us those who violated our airspace are the ones who need to apologize. Our pilots and our armed forces, they fulfilled their duties, which simply acted by |

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| | | responding to ... violations of the rules of engagement. I think this is the essence." |
| R.T. Erdogan – official letter to Russian President, excuse for warplane incident | 06.2016 | “We never had the desire or deliberate intention of shooting down the Russian Federation’s plane condolences to the family of the Russian pilot who was killed, and I am saying: “Excuse us” |
| R.T. Erdogan – speech delivered after the failed coup attempt in meeting with foreign investors | 03.08.2016 | "The West is supporting terrorism and taking sides with coups they have actors inside, but the scenario of this coup was written abroad." |
| R.T. Erdogan – first meeting with Russian president after the warplane crisis | 09.08.2016 | “This visit seems to me a new milestone in bilateral relations, beginning with a clean slate, and I personally, with all my heart and on behalf of the Turkish nation salute Mr. Putin and all Russians” |
| Turkish MFA Ahmet Davutoglu - first visit to Ukraine after Crimean crisis | 03.2014 | "Don't let it cross your mind that our prime minister and president will be indifferent |

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| | | to any issue affecting our kin in Crimea or anywhere in the world" |
| R.T. Erdogan – after his visits to Pakistan and Uzbekistan | 20.11.2016 | “Why shouldn't Turkey be in the Shanghai Five? I said this to (Russian President) Mr Putin, to (Kazakh President) Nazarbayev, to those who are in the Shanghai Five now” |
| R.T. Erdogan – after his visits to Pakistan and Uzbekistan | 20.11.2016 | “Turkey is discussing the issue of joining the SCO” |
| R.T. Erdogan – after his visits to Pakistan and Uzbekistan | 20.11.2016 | |
| R.T. Erdogan – after his visits to Pakistan and Uzbekistan | 20.11.2016 | “... being a member of the SCO will allow Turkey to act more freely (in its EU bid)” |