

“Drop Turkey from NATO now”: Construction of Anti-Türkiye Discourse in the U.S. Public Opinion

“Türkiye’yi NATO’dan Hemen Çıkarın”: ABD Kamuoyunda Türkiye-Karşıtı Söylemin İnşası

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Abstract

After the outbreak of the Ukraine-Russia War, Sweden and Finland abandoned their neutrality policies and announced that they would apply for NATO membership. Türkiye declared that it would veto their membership applications, stating that these two countries supported terrorist organizations. This situation alarmed the European member countries of NATO and the United States, and it was stated that Türkiye's veto would cause a rift in the NATO alliance and jeopardize European security. This study analyzes reader comments in the three leading U.S. newspapers: The New York Times, The Washington Post, and The Wall Street Journal. The study was limited to the reader's comments on news about Türkiye's veto between May 19, 2022, when Türkiye announced its objection to Sweden and Finland's NATO membership applications, and June 30, 2022, when the crisis was resolved. The study applies an eclectic methodology and employs a corpus-assisted discourse analysis method. The themes, strategies, and linguistic practices through which Türkiye and Turkish identities are discursively constructed were analyzed. As a result of the analysis, it was concluded that Türkiye's announcement to veto Sweden's and Finland's membership applications to NATO has fed the anti-Turkish sentiment that dominates U.S. public opinion, especially in the context of Türkiye-U.S. relations that reached a breaking point after 2016. Moreover, it is argued that anti-Turkish sentiment is constructed through “traditional” discourse themes such as the stereotype of the “bad Turk” and Islamophobia, as well as discourse themes that establish the identification of President Erdoğan and Türkiye.

Keywords:

Türkiye, NATO, U.S. public, Ukraine-Russia War, Corpus-assisted discourse analysis

Öz

Ukrayna-Rusya Savaşı'nın başlamasıyla beraber, İsveç ve Finlandiya, tarafsızlık politikalarını terk ederek, NATO üyelik başvurusunda bulunacaklarını açıklamışlardır. Türkiye ise, bu iki ülkenin terör örgütlerine destek verdiğini belirterek üyelik başvurularını veto edeceğini açıklamıştır. Bu durum, ABD başta olmak üzere NATO üyesi Avrupa ülkelerini tedirgin etmiş, Türkiye'nin veto hakkının, NATO ittifakı içerisinde ayrışma yaratacağı ve Avrupa güvenliğini tehlikeye atacağı dile getirilmiştir. Bu çalışma söz konusu endişenin, ABD kamuoyunda nasıl karşılık bulduğu sorusundan hareket ederek, ABD'nin önde gelen üç gazetesi olan, The New York Times, The Washington Post ve The Wall Street Journal gazetelerinde konu ile ilgili yapılan okuyucu yorumlarını incelemiştir. Çalışma, Türkiye'nin, İsveç ve Finlandiya'nın NATO'ya üyelik başvurularına itirazını açıkladığı 19 Mayıs 2022 tarihinden krizin aşıldığı 30 Haziran 2022 tarihine kadar geçen sürede, üç basın kuruluşunun web sayfalarında, Türkiye'ye yönelik haberlere yapılan okur yorumları ile sınırlandırılmıştır. Çalışmada ekletik bir metodoloji benimsenmiş, derlembilim destekli söylem analizi yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Bu çerçevede Türkiye ve Türk kimliklerinin söylemsel olarak hangi temalar, stratejiler ve dilsel pratiklerle inşa edildiği analiz edilmiştir. Analiz sonucu, Türkiye'nin, İsveç ve Finlandiya'nın NATO üyelik başvurusunu veto edeceği ilan etmesinin, özellikle 2016 sonrasında kopma noktasına gelen Türkiye-ABD ilişkileri bağlamında, ABD kamuoyunda egemen olan Türkiye karşıtlığının beslediği sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Ayrıca, Türkiye karşıtlığının, “kötü Türk” stereotipi, İslamofobi gibi “gelenekselleşmiş” söylem temalarının yanı sıra Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan ve Türkiye özdeşliğini kuran söylem temaları aracılığıyla inşa edildiğini ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler:

Türkiye, NATO, ABD kamuoyu, Ukrayna-Rusya Savaşı, derlembilim söylem analizi

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Introduction

The Ukraine-Russia War triggered attempts to restructure the European security architecture. Sweden and Finland abandoned their traditional neutrality policies in the emerging war conjuncture. To ensure the integrity of the European defense against Russia, they applied for membership in NATO. All NATO member states, except Türkiye, quickly approved these applications¹. Türkiye declared that it would veto the application because both countries supported terrorist organizations. Türkiye's objection brought Türkiye and U.S. relations in NATO, which had been on the rocks after 2016, back on the agenda. It inflamed the debate over whether Türkiye is a reliable ally among the public of allied countries, especially the U.S. public (Crowley & Erlanger, 2022; Lieberman & Wallace, 2022). By analyzing the comments on the news on the websites of the three newspapers with the highest circulation in the U.S., this study is important to show the opposition to Türkiye in the U.S. Although it is normal to claim that comments feed the anti-Türkiye discourse in the international conjuncture where the Ukraine-Russia war dominates the agenda, it is critical to determine which argument strategies and which social actors this oppositional discourse constructs in order to locate the steps of public diplomacy to be carried out in the process of normalization of relations towards the U.S. public.

The research design relies on critical discourse analysis. The first section provides the contextual discussion ground by conveying the transformation of the relationship between Türkiye and NATO and the U.S. Since it defines readers' comments as the research object, the study employs the corpus-assisted critical discourse analysis technique. In this framework, the categories of social actors are determined based on the frequency of the 7040 comments in the corpora. Analyses such as collocation statistics, keyword in context (KWIC), and concordance analysis will be used to prepare the corpora for discourse analysis, which is possible with the open-source K.H. Coder. In the next step, the study will use discourse historical analysis to reveal how social actors are discursively constructed.

Türkiye-NATO-U.S. Relationship

NATO was established in 1949 under the leadership of the U.S. against the Soviet-Russian threat that emerged in Eastern Europe. Concerned that the European states, which had been struggling with economic and political problems after World War II, would fall under Soviet hegemony, the U.S. abandoned the isolation policy it had maintained for a long time and pioneered the establishment of NATO. Therefore, as many researchers point out, it is impossible to think of NATO without the U.S. (Thompson, 2021, p. 20). In response to the Soviet threat and the risk of losing the European market, NATO was an important as a diplomatic and military tool for the U.S. to ensure the enforcement of national interests and a collective security organization. For this reason, the Transatlantic alliance that characterized the European security architecture is also seen as the most crucial organization that ensured the continuity of the U.S. hegemony during the Cold War period.

¹Throughout the study, the authors prefer to use the internationally recognized name "Türkiye". However, the dataset's English version of the country's name, "Turkey", has not been changed to remain faithful to its original form.

Although the Soviet threat represented the *raison d’être* and legitimacy of NATO, the existence of the alliance began to be questioned with the dissolution of the Soviet Union. In the post-Soviet era, E.U. member states, led by France, began criticizing the U.S. presence in Europe, claiming that NATO had completed its mission (Thompson, 2021, p. 24). However, the disintegration process of Yugoslavia and, finally, the September 11 attacks highlighted the importance of NATO in terms of European security architecture. In particular, the concepts of deterrence, forward defense, crisis management and military participation in crises, and collective defense/security have continued through integration with the concept of counter-terrorism. It can be said that the conflicts of opinion and interest that arose among the allies during the non-crisis periods did not prevent them from coming together comfortably and safely under the umbrella of NATO in crisis.

Another point that must be emphasized is that NATO is not seen only as a collective defense organization for allied countries and their public. Regarding allied countries and the public, NATO is also an identity that is the bearer of Western values and democracy (Boller, 2018). In this regard, Thompson (2021) states that from the point of view of the U.S. public, NATO is seen as a diplomatic tool that serves to maintain and secure the national interests of the U.S. on the one hand and to carry values such as human rights and democracy to the world on the other. Greece and Türkiye evaluated NATO as an indicator of Western identity during the Cold War (Giannotta, 2021; Kınacıoğlu, 2017; Oğuzlu, 2012a, 2012b, 2013a, 2013b). Again, it must be highlighted that there is an identity perception towards NATO in the former USSR countries, now members of NATO. Numerous social surveys show that the perception of NATO among these countries has increased, especially after the Russian attack on Georgia in 2008, and that member countries perceive NATO both as a collective security organization and a bearer of Western identity against Russia (Cizik, 2021; Michnik, 2021; Thomson, 2022).

For Türkiye, NATO is not only a concrete achievement of the goal of Westernization but also a diplomatic platform on which relations with the U.S. are institutionalized (Yılmaz, 2012). Giannotta (2021), who defines the characteristics of the relations as a win-win relationship in the historical process, states that Türkiye has achieved military modernization, economic development, democratic institutionalization, and gains through NATO membership, and in return, NATO has access to the Middle East and Central Asian regions through Türkiye (Martin, 2022). It can be said that Türkiye and NATO relations over a long period formed the basis for the relations in which the Türkiye and the U.S. share a common interest, even though they have conflicting interests on the Cyprus issue (Açıkmeşe & Triantaphyllou, 2012). Thus, Türkiye supported the U.S. thesis in the post-Cold War era when the *raison d’être* of NATO was questioned and contributed to the implementation of the concept of counterterrorism through NATO after the September 11 attacks. The U.S. also supported Türkiye’s projects to “become a role model country” after both the Cold War and the Arab Spring (Atmaca, 2017, p. 63; Güvenç & Özel, 2012, p. 547; Oğuzlu, 2012a, p. 156).

On the other hand, it can be said that this mutually beneficial relationship model changed after 2016 due to the deterioration of relations between Türkiye and the U.S. and

the conflicts of interest that have arisen. The AK Party's adoption of a more nationalist line in foreign policy after 2016 (Yılmaz & Shipoli, 2022), the ontological security risks and conflicts of interest created by the civil war in Syria, the coup attempt of July 15, 2016, the F-35 and S-400 crises (Yetim & Hazar, 2023), Türkiye and Russia relations, the Eastern Mediterranean crisis with Greece and the E.U., and the conflicts of interest in Libya have caused Türkiye-NATO-U.S. relations to turn from a win-win model to one of mutual distrust (Gülmez, 2020; Kara, 2022a, 2022b; Kutlay & Öniş, 2021; Martin, 2022; Mehmetçik & Çelik, 2022). As İdiz (2021) states, Türkiye and the U.S. relations have turned into a dialogue of the deaf, in which the parties do not care about the security concerns of the other. The results of the opinion polls conducted in Türkiye show that anti-U.S. sentiment has reached a high level (Aydın, M., Çelikpala, M., Açıkmeşe A. S., Sokullu E. C, Güvenç, S., Şenyuva Ö., & Kaya Sönmez S., 2022; M. Aydın, Çelikpala M., Açıkmeşe A. S., Sokullu E. C, Güvenç, S., Şenyuva Ö., Kaya Sönmez S., & Özel, S., 2021)². On the other hand, it is also possible to say that aggressive approaches towards Türkiye are adopted among the U.S. political elite (Çınar, 2021; Magalhaes, 2021).

It must be noted that in addition to conflicts of national interest, the negative image of Türkiye in the U.S. public is also contributed by discourses based on the stereotype of the "bad Turk". The Armenian Deportation and the Cyprus problem constitute the source of negative attitudes towards Turkish identity in U.S. public opinion. Çağrı Erhan (2000) noted that Türkiye and the U.S. relations had been characterized in a positive atmosphere throughout the history of the Republic. Erhan says that the U.S. officials functionalized the reforms that the newly formed Republic implemented in its early years to detoxify the stereotype of the "bad Turk" in the U.S. press and determine public diplomacy towards the U.S. public. Similarly, Çeçen, Bulut & Ayçin (2021) claim that in the historical course of relations, Armenian and Greek/Greek lobbying activities have impacted the Congress and the press. Magalhaes (2021), in his article examining Türkiye-U.S. relations, argues that the Congress' anti-Türkiye proneness' has negatively affected the two countries' relations. According to Magalhaes (2021), it is possible to determine the influence of the U.S. Congress on the two countries over time. Accordingly, while Congress adopted a hostile attitude toward Türkiye between 1947 and 1995, it adopted a more conciliatory stance between 1995 and 2010. However, in parallel with Türkiye-Israel and Türkiye-Iran relations after 2010, Congress began to adopt a hostile attitude toward Türkiye again (Magalhaes, 2021). Thus, it is argued that Armenian and Greek lobbying activities have played an essential role in shaping Turkish perceptions in the U.S. public opinion and producing and disseminating negative news about Türkiye in the U.S. press (Çeçen, Bulut & Ayçin, 2021; Erhan, 2000). Moreover, it can be said that the rise of Islamophobia and xenophobia in U.S. public opinion after the September 11 attacks feeds the perception of the "bad Turks". Many studies have noted that xenophobia and Islamophobia became dominant in U.S. public opinion after the attacks (Abbas, 2019; Isani & Silverman, 2016; Samaie & Malmir, 2017). Islam, identified with "jihad" and "terror" in the U.S. public opinion, is not only perceived as a fear of the Other, who is different only because of his or her religious identity, but it has also become a structural component of American racism.

²The project on the foreign policy perceptions of the Turkish public has been carried out under the coordination of Prof. Mustafa Aydın. The results of the research conducted since 2013 can be accessed at <https://www.khas.edu.tr/khas-kurumsal-arastirmalar/>. Access: 10.02.2023.

This transformation legitimizes xenophobia by feeding a fear of the culturally different Other (Canan-Sokullu, 2012, p. 162). In this context, it can be mentioned that xenophobia and Islamophobia in the U.S. public also pave the way for negative attitudes towards Türkiye due to its distinctive identity within the NATO alliance.

Mutual distrust has reached a new dimension with the Russian occupation of Ukraine. The Ukraine-Russia War has once again confirmed the importance of NATO for European security. In this process, the member countries of NATO, especially the U.S. and the U.K., declared their support for Ukraine. Russia’s aggression has also led to the emergence of a NATO identity that demands intra-group solidarity and integrity beyond security concerns. In this context, Sweden and Finland, where Russia’s aggression has heightened ontological security concerns, have abandoned their traditional neutrality policies and applied for NATO membership. Although both countries have developed various forms of cooperation with NATO, they believe that any option other than the full membership and the Transatlantic security umbrella does not guarantee their security. However, Türkiye rejected the NATO membership of both countries because they supported terrorist organizations and announced that it would veto the membership application (Rauhala & Birnbaum & Nakashima, 2022). President Erdoğan’s remarks triggered a crisis within NATO, which has a unanimous decision-making mechanism (Malsin, 2022). NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg initiated diplomatic initiatives between Turkish, Swedish, and Finnish officials to resolve the crisis. The stance by Türkiye has also raised questions about the future of NATO and whether Türkiye is still a reliable ally in the public opinion of the U.S. and other member countries. On the one hand, U.S. public opinion claimed that Türkiye was using its veto power as a negotiating tool against the U.S., thus the crisis of the membership process would be overcome. Others argued that if this was not possible, new security structures should be established without Türkiye.

Methodology

This study aims to analyze what themes, strategies, and linguistic practices of anti-Turkish discourse and sentiments are constructed in the reader comments on the websites of the three most widely read newspapers in the U.S.: *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and *The Wall Street Journal*. The data was collected from May 19, 2022, when Türkiye announced its objections to NATO membership applications of Sweden and Finland, to June 30, 2022, when the crisis was over. The reason for choosing the objection to Sweden and Finland’s membership process as a case study is that Türkiye’s unique position within NATO will be characterized by anti-Turkish stereotypes expressed through reader comments. The assumption is that these stereotypes will provide more descriptive data on Türkiye-U.S. relations, characterized by mutual distrust after 2016. Another reason reader comments are preferred as a unit of analysis is the assumption that they reflect the public agenda since all three media outlets can set the public agenda, as they are the most visited websites in the U.S.

The following is a classification of comments on news content before and after the NATO Summit. Seven thousand and forty (7040) comments were analyzed on twelve

news stories, eight before the NATO Summit and four after the Summit (Table 1-Excel news and comments). K.H. Coder software was used to analyze the data. K.H. Coder is open-to-use software developed by K. Higuchi that enables quantitative content analysis, data mining, and computer-aided linguistic analysis. K.H. Coder is also applied in the discursive analysis of large data sets. Yang & Chen (2021) used K.H. Coder software in their study to analyze how Chinese identity was discursively constructed in the duality of globalization and nationalism during the pandemic process. In a similar study, Podar & Voinea (2022) examined the crisis communication process in Romania during the pandemic and used the K.H. Coder program. Besides these, K.H. Coder is also used in discourse analysis studies on populism and social movements (Balaban, Stoica, Vincze & Medveschi, 2021; Samaie & Malmir, 2017; Stoenegner & Wodak, 2016; Wright & Brookes, 2019). The common feature of these studies is that they are corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS) in which discourse analysis techniques and corpus linguistics (CL- corpus linguistics) techniques are used eclectically (Ancarno, 2020). In the CADS process, software such as K.H. Coder enables the time- and energy-saving application of large amounts of data called corpora to filter the corpora for discourse analysis.

Table-1: News and Comments

Newspapers	News	Comments
New York Times	2	1115
Wall Street Journal	4	1102
Washington Post	6	4823
Total	12	7040

By applying the CADS approach, the study will reveal the construction of anti-Turkish discourse through an analysis that eclectically employs CL and DHA techniques. First, the social actor's categories related to Türkiye and Turkish identities were determined in the commented news texts, and keywords were identified. The keywords "Türkiye", "Erdoğan", "Ankara", "Turks", and "Muslim" consist of words directly related to Türkiye and Turkish identities and phrases that are indirectly associated with the words "NATO", "Russia", and "Putin". In the second step, statistics were made on the words (POS- part of speech) in which each keyword occurs together in the text. By placing each word in the middle, the K.H. Coder software provides access to the words that appear together in a sentence or paragraph, five from the left and five from the right. In the third step, the words that appeared with the keywords were filtered according to their type (as a noun, proper noun, adjective, or verb). This filtering process enabled the transition to the discourse historical analysis (DHA) step.

DHA is a detailed analysis technique that includes the study of grammatical techniques, from the arrangement of words that make up meaning in the sentence to techniques such as inclusivity, mythology, hyperbole, and the use of metaphor. DHA focuses on the issues that make up discourse, the argument strategies, and the grammatical usages that embody them. DHA has been used in many different areas, from populist

discourses to xenophobia, migration studies to the construction of national identity, and climate change discourses to health discourses in the pandemic. Although there are discourse themes, argument strategies and grammatical usages specific to the field in which they are applied, the leading proponents of this technique, Reisigl & Wodak (2009) speak of five basic strategies that construct discourse. These are nomination, predication, justification, framing or perspectivization of discourse, and intensification strategies (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009, p. 95). The study attempts to analyze the naming, predication and judgment strategies for the discursive construction of Türkiye/Turkish identity. First, the Co-Occurrence function was invoked to spot themes and topics about the issue (Figure 1). Among the POSs obtained from the filtering process in the second step, by focusing on nouns, proper nouns, and verbs, it was found out how Türkiye is called. Türkiye was identified by three social actor categories: Türkiye as a political entity and country, Türkiye as an actor embodied by the image of a leader (Erdoğan’s Türkiye) and ethnic, religious, and cultural Turkish identity. The words (nouns, proper nouns, and verbs) associated with these actor categories were searched again with the Concordance Analysis in the K.H. Coder to spot the usage of “Turkey” in the context. Later, the same method was applied to the judgment/predication strategy to determine how Türkiye was predicated as positive and/or negative, checking the adjectives used together with the keyword. Finally, the same method was applied to the argumentation strategy to present the topoi that construct Turkish identity. Accordingly, it was argued that the discursive construction of Türkiye/Turkish identity can be categorized under three themes: *Difference and Betrayal Topos*, *Geopolitical Location Topos*, and *AK Party/Erdoğan’s Türkiye Topos*. These topos are constructed with the strategies of sharpening the difference between us and them, blaming, trivializing, and delegitimizing, as well as with grammatical techniques (metaphor, exaggeration, mythology, personification) and constructions of meaning that embody these strategies.

Results and Discussion

Figure 1 demonstrates the network of words that readers repeated at least 100 times and draws a general picture of the topics under which Türkiye’s action is discussed. As expected, the issue was mainly discussed in the context of the Ukraine-Russia war, Türkiye’s veto statement, and Sweden and Finland’s application for membership. An important aspect of this discussion is the connection between Russian President Putin and Turkish President Erdoğan. Türkiye’s strategic location, especially the status of the Black Sea and the Straits, can also be mentioned as the title that shapes the discussion of the readers’ comments. The conflict of interest between Türkiye and the U.S. was also discussed regarding Syria and Iraq policies, PKK terrorism and the S-400 crisis.

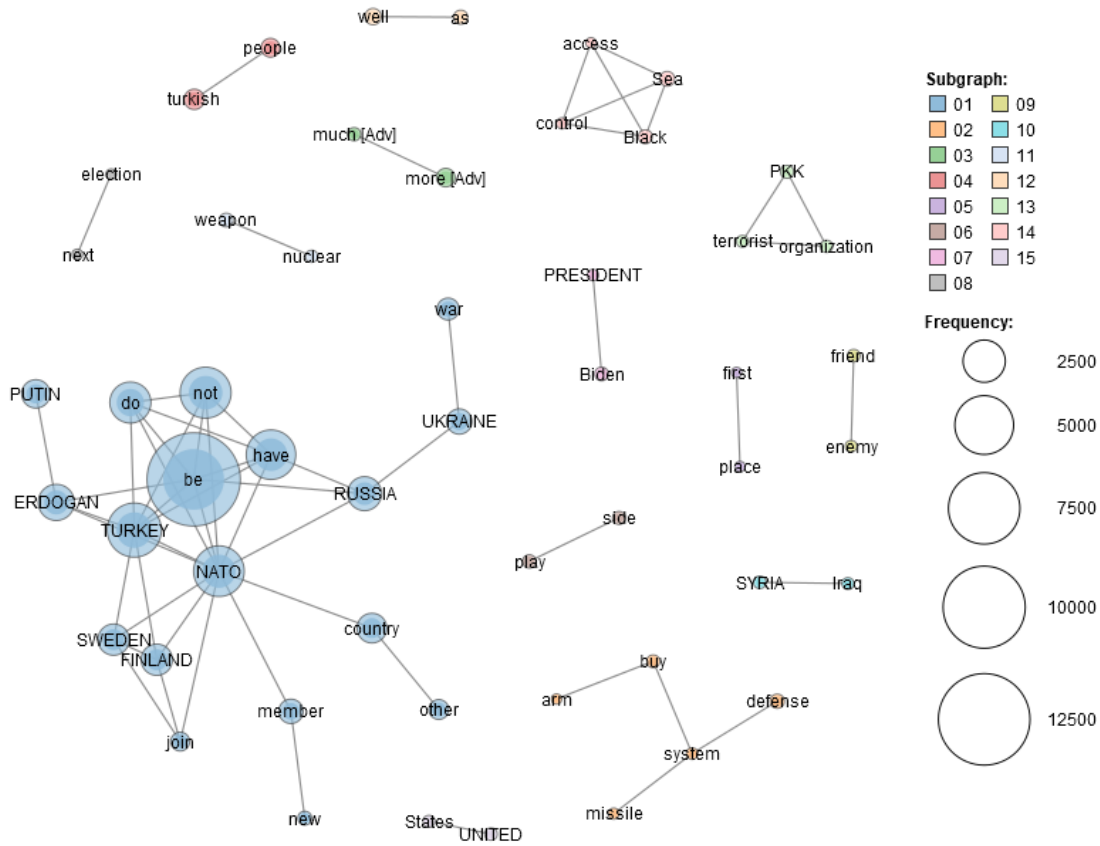


Figure-1: Co-occurrence Network of Words

Figure 2 shows the data for likes and shares of comments. The interaction of likes and shares shows that after the Summit, the rate of comments tended to decrease on all three websites. This is because the issue received less news, comments, and analysis on the websites. However, when examining the comments with the highest number of “like” and “share” interactions, it is noticeable that they are those with anti-Turkish, stereotypical, and orientalist content. Another reason the interaction rate is higher in pre-Summit is that the veto crisis legitimizes discourses based on anti-Turkish stereotypes. The partial resolution of the problem led to a decrease in media attention on the one hand and a relative decrease in anti-Türkiye sentiment on the other.

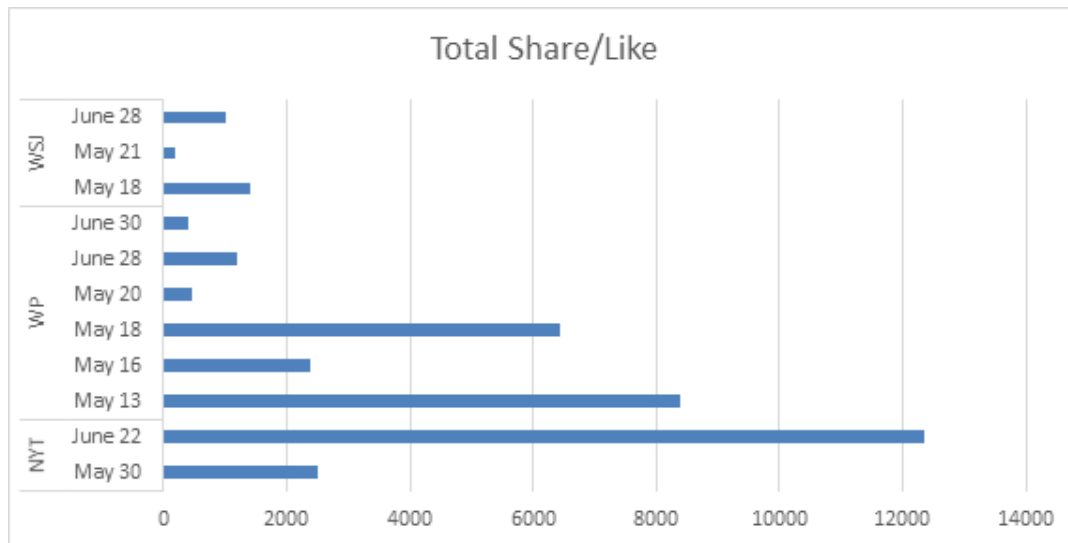


Figure-2: The rates of Like/Share

Nevertheless, it must be said that anti-Türkiye discourses did not disappear in the post-Summit comments. These comments mostly expressed satisfaction with the resolution of the crisis and the establishment of NATO solidarity. The word association analysis before and after the Summit also shows this change in comments (*Figure 3 and Figure 4*).

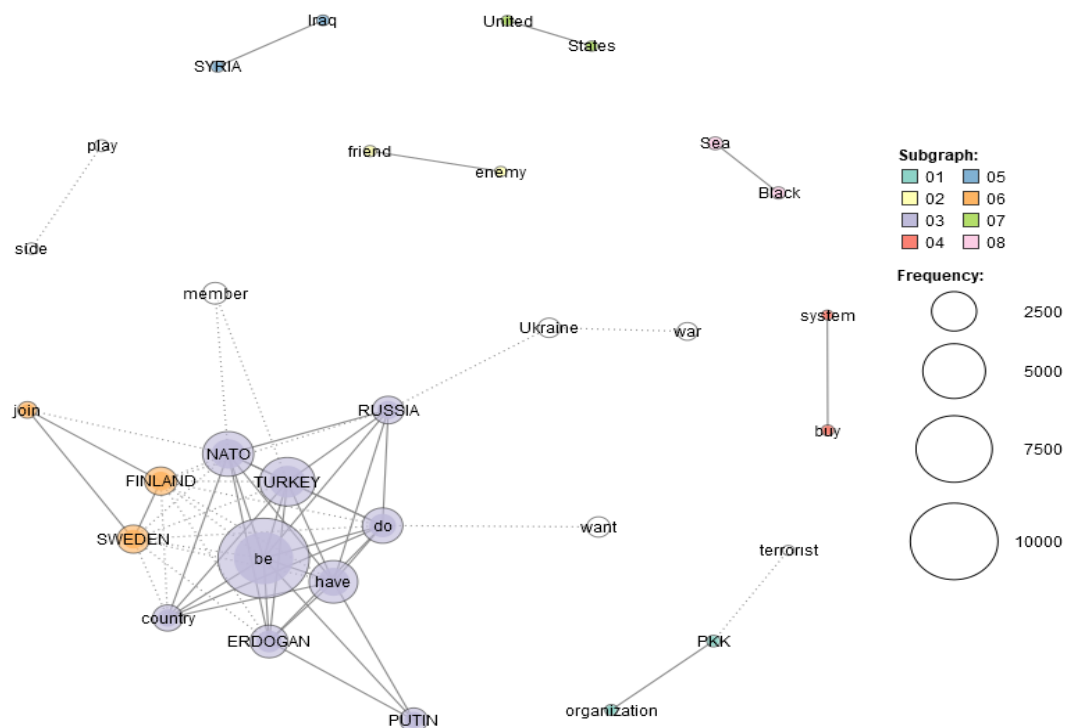


Figure-3: Co-occurrence Networks of Words Before NATO Summit

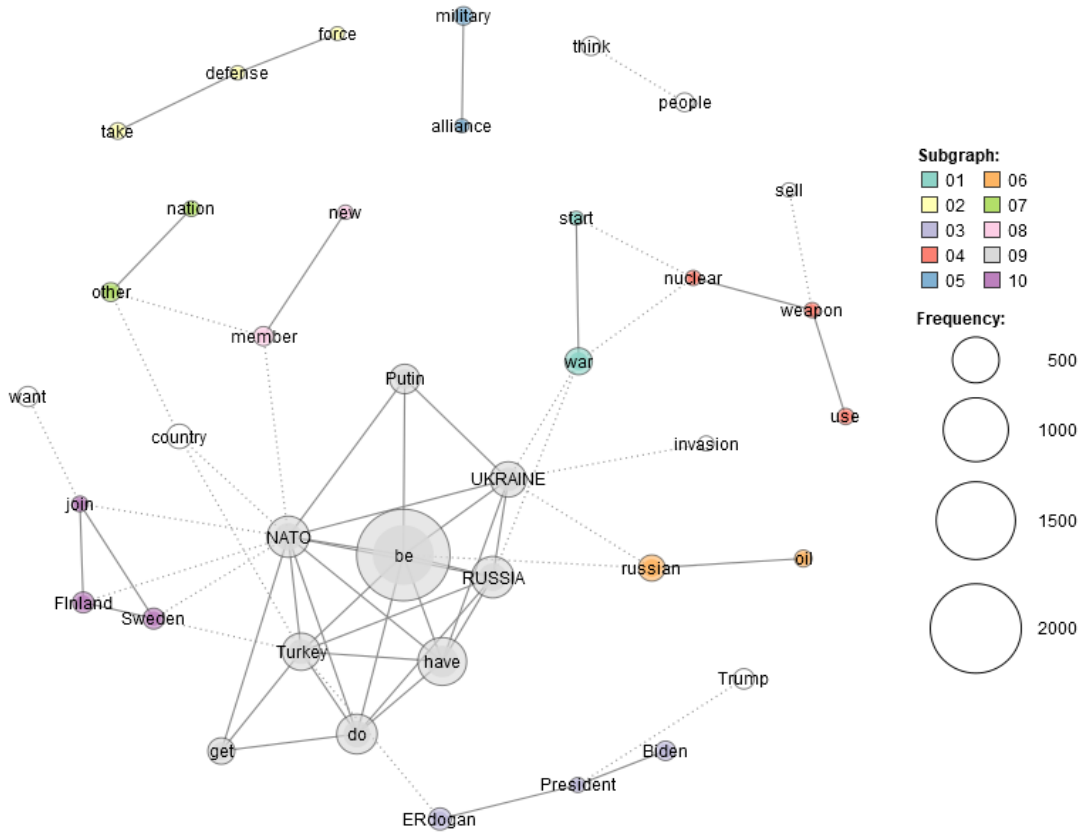


Figure-4: Co-occurrence Networks of Words After NATO Summit

Nomination Strategies

In order to identify definitions directly related to Türkiye, the frequency of terms in the comments was used. Social actor categories were formed by determining particular nouns related to Türkiye among the words above the mean ($m=13.29$). Table 2 shows the social actor groups and their frequency values.

Table-2: Social Actor Groups³

Social Actor Groups	Proper Nouns	Frequency
Political Unit	Turkey	4217
	TURKIYE	60
	Ankara	34
	Türkiyes	31

³Spelling errors in tables, graphs, and quotations in the text are included in reader comments, and the errors have not been corrected.

Leaders	ERDOGAN	1811
	Erdogen	37
	Recep	37
	Ataturk	35
	Tayyip	32
Ethnic/Historic/Cultural Actor	Turks	274
	Ottoman	46
	Muslim	29
	Constantinople	14
Strategically Important Actor	Incirlik	49
	Bosporus	41
	Straits	37
	ISTANBUL	34
	Bosporus	21

Table 2 points out that the comments identified three social actor groups related to Türkiye. After this stage, specific names belonging to social actor categories were analyzed using collocation statistics and KWIC functions.

The most frequently used actor group in the comments consists of defining the country as a political entity. Türkiye was treated as a monolith, using the names “Turkey”, “TURKIYE”, and “Ankara” used as a metonym. It can be said that the holistic approach to interpreting Türkiye as a political entity is constructed by two axes: “direct negations” that Türkiye as a country should not be a member of NATO, and that it should leave NATO, and “indirect affirmations” that it should stay in NATO due to its strategic location.

The proposition to include Sweden and Finland in NATO could be joined by removing a proposition to remove Turkey from NATO. Erdogan seems to prefer support and alliance with authoritarian strongmen like Putin and Assad. NATO needs to have a more reliable alliance. If Erdogan cannot do the right thing in the face of Putin ‘s invasion of Ukraine, he cannot be trusted to choose NATO ‘s side in any crisis (GhostDancing, 2022).

Another negative nomination strategy regarding Türkiye is the presence of President Erdoğan. Correspondingly, Türkiye is reduced to Erdoğan’s leadership and actions. The most notable examples of this strategy are the negation of Türkiye and Turkish identities through personification-oriented metonyms such as “Erdoğan’s Türkiye” (Erdoğan’s Türkiye, Türkiye’s Erdoğan). Apart from that, President Erdoğan is described as “an authoritarian leader”, “cooperating with Russia”, “milking both sides”, “playing both sides”, and “blackmailing the U.S. and NATO”. It can be argued that the opposition against Erdoğan in the comments is also against Türkiye and is the reason for the negative statements.

Turkey will ALWAYS remain a “disruptive” ally as long as Erdogan is in power. And there is little chance that he ‘ll lose his iron grip on power any time soon. It can be argued that Erdogan has NEVER subscribed to democratic principles. Rescinding decades-old secularism originally instituted by Kemal Atatürk was just a start. He often acts like a

dictator (S. Roy, 2022).

As one can see, Türkiye as a country is defined by the temporal contradiction before and after Erdoğan. It is stated that Erdoğan rules Türkiye as a dictator and pursues an Islamist agenda, and the current situation of Türkiye does not comply with the standards of democracy. This approach can be seen in the context of the contrast established with the Atatürk. Accordingly, there is a difference between the Türkiye of the Atatürk era and the Türkiye of the Erdoğan era. This temporal contrast also constitutes the reason for disagreement about the Türkiye. While the prevailing opinion claims that Erdoğan's Türkiye can never be trusted, another approach defines Türkiye as an actor with whom long-term relations have developed and opposes reducing it to Erdoğan's actions.

Thank you for the well-composed article that covers these most relevant issues. Turkey has historically been a very important ally in NATO during the Cold War and since... (Michael Anthony, 2022).

Another linguistic practice used in expressing opinions about Türkiye is synecdoche. Synecdoche such as *Turks*, *Muslims*, *Islamists*, *Eastern*, and *Ottoman* create ethnic, religious, spatial, and historical-cultural references. Turkish identity is construed from the concordance analysis as the Other of the West in a spatial and identity context.

The Turkish people want to live in a Democracy." Depends on what you mean by "Democracy. There's a big spectrum from holding elections periodically to liberal democracy. Turkey has a power-centric and authoritarian culture, and most Turks do not want a liberal democracy by Western standards. The vast majority do not even know what that is or feels like. Remember that the Turkish people have voted Erdogan into power without interruptions since 2002 (Tolga, Y., 2022).

Although Turkish identity is predominantly defined by the stereotype of the "bad Turk," some comments qualify Turks as "reliable" allies. It is claimed that the conflict of interest stems from Erdoğan. Additionally, the Turkish-Kurdish opposition reinforces the stereotype of the bad Turk. According to these comments, the Kurds are more reliable allies for U.S. national interests than the Turks. The essentialist opposition between Turkish and Kurdish identities is constructed with prejudices, such as the fact that Turks have an authoritarian tendency and hunger for power.

It seems pretty simple to me - kick out Turkey and let them twist in the wind. Then the Kurds can rise up and take over their half of the country. Meanwhile, NATO gets several new members and gets to dump the Turks (CommonSenseConservative, 2022b).

In the comments, Muslim identity is constructed as a fearful image of the Western Christian identity. A *Muslim* is defined as a population that is not at peace, is hostile to the West, does not hold Western values, and poses a threat to Europe. These definitions are reinforced by narratives that aim to establish the equation between Muslims and terrorists. Accordingly, Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood are defined as terrorist organizations, so Türkiye's support is seen as support for terrorists.

Realpolitik: ally among the Muslim world is an oxymoron and a mirage (Jonathan55,

2022).

There are no ally’s among the Muslim ... we are all none believers for them. Ok, to be lied to and be a pawn (HOPile, 2022).

Thumbs down! The Turks own their Ideocracy, their a 3d world country just above Afghanistan, backwards nation controlled by a dictator. Until they come back more to center, let them twist in the wind alone(CommonSenseConservative, 2022a).

Predication Strategies

Predication strategies aim to show which positive or negative characterizations, metaphors, metonyms, and inclusions of social actors are charged in the text. This strategy mainly consists of narratives and personifications based on stereotypes reinforcing the distinction between in-group and outgroup. Yang & Chen (2021) argue that predication strategies can be determined through a detailed analysis of adjectives and personal pronouns, “we” and “they”. Following Yang & Chen’s methodology, a list of adjectives and pronouns used with social actor categories were generated. Then adjectives and pronouns that appeared with each actor category (five words from the left, five words from the right) were obtained and classified according to their types (POS).

Türkiye

Figure 5 demonstrates adjectives with a high probability of being seen with Türkiye (Turkey/TURKIYE/Ankara). It can be asserted that the negative attitude towards Türkiye in the comments is concrete by the narratives that sharpen the difference between us and them (we/they) and the adjectives and phrases used to describe Türkiye. The adjectives used with the keyword “Turkey” can be divided into positive and negative categories. The positive adjectives are frequently used to refer to Türkiye’s strategic importance, thus indirectly confirming the presence of Türkiye in NATO. Such comments often state that Türkiye should be in NATO due to its strategic importance, that it has NATO’s second-largest army, and that it is the country that controls the Black Sea.

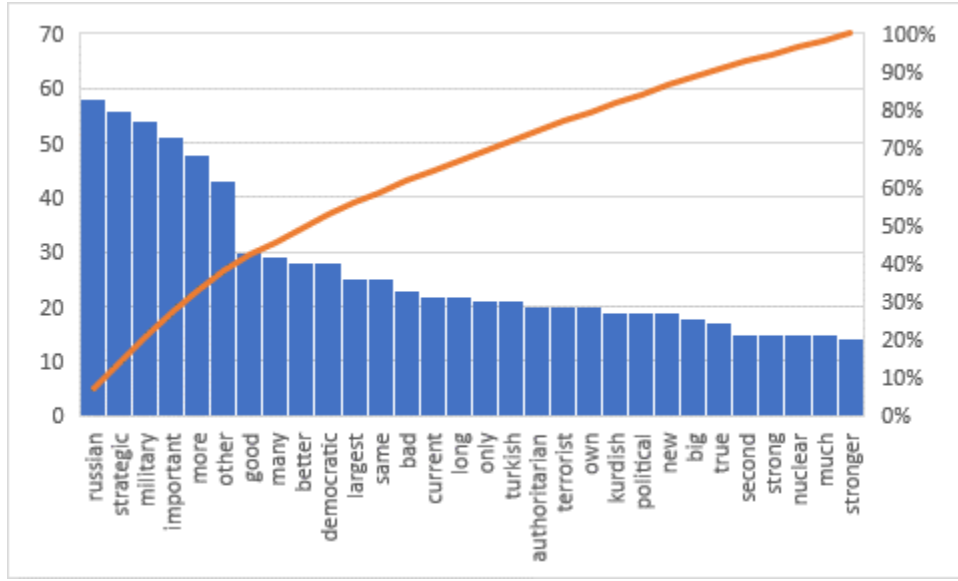


Figure-5: Adjectives used with “Turkey”

Negative adjectives, on the other hand, are primarily seen in comments that emphasize conflicts of interest between Türkiye and the U.S. These comments assert that Türkiye does not adopt Western values and approaches to democracy, should be excluded from the NATO alliance, and is an “authoritarian” and “pro-Russian” country. Some commentators define Türkiye as Russia’s “trojan horse” in NATO due to its non-participation in the sanctions against Russia. It is believed that Türkiye is an actor that disrupts in-group solidarity against the Russian threat. On the one hand, the Trojan horse claims to reproduce the Cold War era free world/totalitarian world dichotomy with the opposition between NATO and Ukraine vs Russia; on the other hand, they reinforce the assumed opposition between Türkiye and the West with comments that refer to the past. Armenian genocide allegations, Turkish-Kurdish opposition, and Turkish-Greek opposition are functionalized and form the basis for the anti-Turkish stereotype in these comments.

Erdoğan

The anti-Turkish sentiments are built with an anti-Erdoğan attitude. These comments allege that Türkiye is divided into two periods: before and after Erdoğan, and today’s Türkiye is referred to as “Erdoğan’s Türkiye”. Türkiye’s non-participation in sanctions against Russia and Sweden’s and Finland’s veto declarations on the NATO membership application are cited as evidence for this argument and supported by the close relationship between Erdoğan and Putin. So, it is necessary to clarify how Erdoğan is characterized.

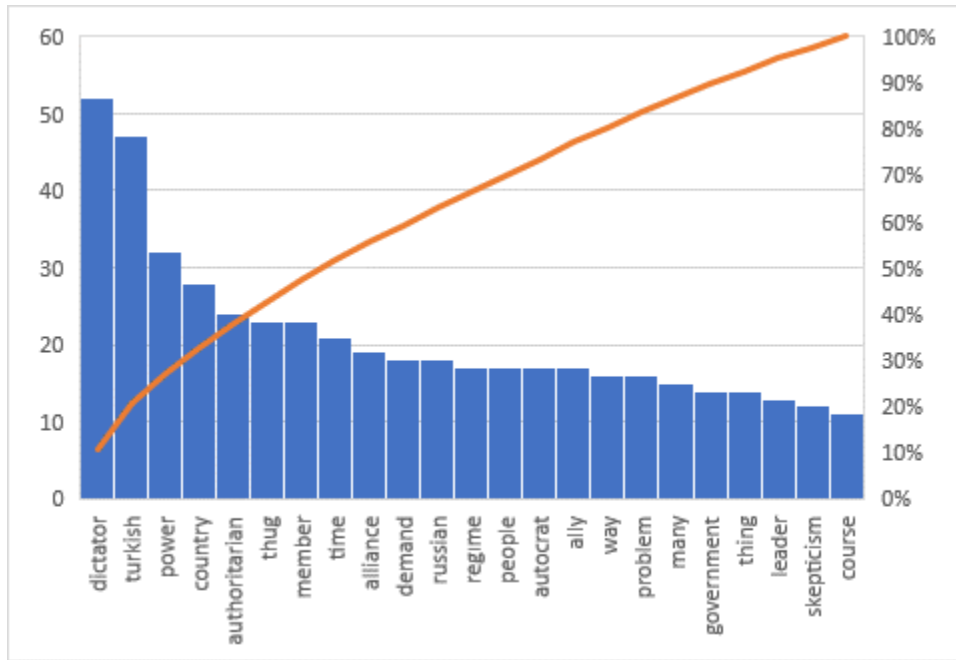


Figure-6: The Most Common Used Nouns and Adjectives with “Erdoğan”

Figure 6 demonstrates that Erdoğan is portrayed by personal adjectives such as “dictator”, “authoritarian”, “thug”, and “autocrat”. Words like “Russian”, “country”, “regime”, “power”, “demand”, and “more” also play a role in the production of the Erdoğan image as indirect negations by deriving metaphorical meanings.

Turkey is run by a dictator who wants to keep ties with Russia. Erdogan has always been buddy buddy with Putin. Funny how the only authoritarian NATO country is in bed with Russia. This terrorist thing is like “Let’s make up some excuse why we dont want them in, so we dont look to Mr Putin like we just said “yes” (Nazmorgul, 2022).

...What Erdogan is demanding is that two of the world’s freest countries, countries more democratic than America, take away the freedom of people he doesn’t like, just like he does (ZoeKennedy, 2022).

Invoking the past through stereotypes such as “Erdoğan”, “Turk”, “Ottoman”, and “Muslim” and positioning Türkiye as anti-Western is another predicative strategy that reinforces anti-Turkish sentiment. The narrative that the Ottoman Empire committed genocide against Greeks, Armenians and minorities reinforces the identical synthesis between Türkiye and the Ottoman past. The aggressive and ruthless Turk stereotype is kept in circulation as an object of hatred. The Muslim=terrorist equation is reformulated as the Turkish=terrorist equation, and Islam is interpreted as an inseparable part of Turkish identity. Türkiye’s attitude towards the YPG and its support for Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood are seen as proof of the justification of the terrorist Muslim-Turkish identity, albeit on a limited scale. In addition, there is a desire that Türkiye should not participate in Western institutions such as NATO and the European Union because of its Muslim identity.

The country within which Jamal Khashoggi was murdered accuses Finland and Sweden of harboring terrorist organizations? Really? ... I'd say Finland and Sweden will be far more reliable partners than Turkey has ever been (Hamiltonian Canuck, 2022).

Using the personal pronouns “we” and “they” is another linguistic practice reinforcing the distinction between in-group and out-group. By “we”, it meant NATO and the U.S., and these actors are accepted as the only ones who defend and promote Western values and democracy. It is emphasized that Türkiye is the only actor in NATO that opposes the membership application of Sweden and Finland. In other words, Türkiye is the actor that disturbs the solidarity within the group and betrays the group. On the other hand, the pronoun “they” shows that the negative attitude towards Türkiye is based on anti-Western holistic stereotypes. Thus, these comments represent a Manichean narration of complex international relations, reducing them to a struggle between good and evil and simplifying international reality.

... There is no place in NATO for Erdogan's Turkey. They should go (CallMeIshmael, 2022).

Some commentators maintain a holistic view of Türkiye based on the distinction between “us and them, even though they accept that the U.S. does not act against Türkiye under the alliance law. These readers claim that the opposition and the ruling groups in Türkiye share the same foreign policy interests.

One should point out that when it comes to most of the foreign policy points made in the comment, the opposition parties in Turkey also agree with and support Erdogan. The relations are complicated because of the region Turkey is in that makes their national interests sometimes conflict with U.S. policy. Similarly, NATO countries have not been fair in their treatment of a member. For example, the second largest military in NATO is not allowed to purchase air defense systems from the U.S. Had the U.S. sold them the Patriots they would not have purchased the S-400s. Now they are excluded from the F35 sales and even their request to purchase F16s and modernization kits is not approved, while Turkey already has about 250 F16s. Also, the sentences like Turkey is waging a war against the Kurds is one sided. Kurds are also waging a war against Turkey. While many Turks criticize Erdogan for his domestic policies they are much more united when it comes to foreign affairs (Sammy, 2022).

Argumentation Strategies

Another strategy that is employed to legitimize the discourse is the argumentation strategy. The opposition to Türkiye can be distinguished into three main topos: *The difference and betrayal topos*, *The geopolitical location topos*, and *The AK Party/Erdoğan's Türkiye topos*.⁴

Difference and Betrayal Topos

Türkiye's Muslim identity puts it in a different position within the NATO alliance. As mentioned, this difference is sometimes seen as essential in NATO's efforts to improve its relations with Central Asian and Middle Eastern countries. However, after 2016, Türkiye's fragile relations with NATO and the US have turned this difference into a reason

⁴It should not be forgotten that these strategies and themes feed each other and can only be evaluated holistically. For this reason, the titles made in the continuation of the study in order to ensure the clarity of the analysis do not express independent categories.

for exclusion. Türkiye’s veto on Sweden and Finland’s application to join NATO has led the U.S. media to assess whether Türkiye is a reliable ally. For many readers, Türkiye’s distinctive identity within NATO is a sufficient reason to exclude Türkiye from NATO or to “deactivate it with a new defense alliance system to be formed. Therefore, the only cultural-religious difference of Türkiye in the alliance is instrumentalized as a blame strategy in the construction of anti-Turkish discourse.

Turkey is holding up Sweden joining? Seems the wise thing to do is give Turkey the boot and allow Sweden in. Turkey has become an Islamic dictatorship and doesn’t respect the values of the free world (KimJady, 2022).

NATO is an alliance of democratic nations who are committed to stability, progress and freedom. Turkey has always been a poor fit. A generation ago we were told that the Shah’s Iran was indispensable to our security, but our support of that regime did much to alienate us from the people of that part of the world, and continues to undermine our interests. There is no security in being aligned with a corrupt and oppressive government that can offer only false friendship. We should have learned that lesson a long time ago (Walter C. Derrick, 2022).

Defining the alliance by analogy with “friendship” accepts loyalty as an essential element of the NATO alliance. However, it can be argued that loyalty is identified with the national interests of the United States as representing Western values and democracy. Thus, the loyalty concerned is hierarchical. As can be seen from the quote, the desire is to achieve pure integrity and equality by excluding Türkiye from NATO membership because it is an actor that disrupts in-group solidarity. This desire is reinforced by the reason that “Turkey has never met the standards of NATO”, which is “a lesson that [the West] should have learned a long time ago”(Peterberman, 2022; Walter, 2022). The desire for Sweden and Finland to join the alliance rather than Türkiye indicates that readers define NATO from an identity perspective that focuses on Western cultural values. Accordingly, NATO should not accept countries that have not assimilated Western values, such as Türkiye. These comments are critical because they show that NATO is perceived as an identity with Western values rather than a defensive alliance.

Moreover, such interpretations place Türkiye and Turkish identities in a historical context and argue that Türkiye should not be a NATO member. Correspondingly, Türkiye is viewed as if it has been the enemy of the West and its values for centuries. With its membership in NATO, it has benefited from the blessings of this security umbrella but has continued its hostility towards the West. These interpretations, in which history is instrumentalized to reinforce the “us and them” distinction, embody the perception in U.S. public opinion that Türkiye is the enemy within.

Turkey has never gotten over losing their Ottoman Empire, a bit like Putin, twisted pride and narratives remain an undercurrent. While a beautiful place to visits with very kind people as a tourist, it is a nest of serpent eggs where the attempted genocides of non Turks are a recurring phenomenon. Several peoples that inhabit Turkey have been persecuted throughout their recent history from the Armenian genocide to the Kurds and Turkmen more recently. It is in all but in name and Islamists State masquerading as a democracy too. The culture and government have never really adapted to modern democratic norms. Erdogan

will help Putin rather than NATO nations who take in and protect Kurdish political refugees (SiSeulementVoltaire, 2022).

The topos of betrayal is another argumentative strategy that constructs the anti-Türkiye discourse. Readers consider Türkiye's purchase of the Russian S-400 air defense system and its non-participation in the sanctions against Russia as betrayals. Türkiye's NATO membership is questioned with statements such as "Türkiye is the Trojan Horse of Russia/Putin". The betrayal topos consists of pars pro toto attitudes and narratives, especially in the context of the identities established between President Erdoğan and Russian President Vladimir Putin. In these interpretations, the foreign policy and national interests of Türkiye are reduced to the actions and personalities of its two leaders. Türkiye's attitude toward the accession applications of Sweden and Finland is defined as "haggling" with the U.S. and "blackmailing" the U.S.

Erdogan has friendly relations with Putin since previous times... (DomingoTrassen, 2022).

Erdogan is the Trojan horse in NATO. Turkey under Erdogan should not be a member of NATO, in my humble opinion. The people he wants from Sweden and Finland are not terrorists, they are opposition to Erdogan's regime. He harbors criminals and refuses to extradite them, he welcomes oligarchs. He gets money from EU to hold refugees, but when it suits him, he uses them to blackmail EU, by flooding them to EU borders. He buys weapon material from Russia against NATO's will. He plays negotiator between Ukraine and Russia. He sends drones to Ukraine but refuses to sanction Russia. He is just another idiot dictator (Run With The Wind, 2022).

Geopolitical Location Topos

It can be said that Turkey's geopolitical position is often up for debate in the comments. While some commentators argue that Turkey should remain in the NATO alliance even if it is an unreliable ally due to its geopolitical location, others say that Turkey's geopolitical location has lost its importance. For instance, those who consider Türkiye's geopolitical location significant claim that Türkiye is a country that should be in NATO to keep the Black Sea under control and encircle Russia. Some commentators argue that Turkey should remain in the alliance for its geopolitical position alone, even if it does not pursue policies compatible with the NATO alliance.

Türkiye already hosts U.S. nuclear weapons aimed at Russia and Iran not to mention US military bases vital to U.S. global power projection. Also, Türkiye controls access to the Black Sea, so without Türkiye, US/NATO would have no access Black Sea, Caspian Sea countries and Central Asia, which is an area the US trying to expand its sphere of influence. In other words, NATO/US needs Türkiye more than Türkiye needs NATO/US. Türkiye knows this hence why it's playing hardball. Nothing wrong with this especially considering there's no imminent threat to either Finland or Sweden (Galol, 2022).

On the contrary, some argue that Türkiye's geopolitical position was valuable during the Cold War but has become less important today. Developments in military technology, military cooperations developed with Greece and the alliance formed with the YPG in Syria trivialize Türkiye's geopolitical location. Although it retains its value, it is claimed

that Türkiye is no longer the only actor in this region and that Greece and the YPG are more reliable allies regarding the interests of the U.S. and NATO.

We should assist the Kurdish people in establishing their much deserved, and long overdue, nationhood, to be carved from portions of Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Turkey. The Kurds will prove to be honest, loyal, reliable, and grateful allies. Second only in importance to the Israelis in the region (ErikKC, 2022).

AK Party/Erdoğan’s Türkiye Topos

The most common argument strategy suggesting that Türkiye should be excluded from NATO is delegitimization. Delegitimization is achieved by defining the actor in question and/or its actions as non-normative to support the asserted view. The delegitimization strategy is based on the AK Party/Erdoğan’s Türkiye Topos. While meeting the demands of the countries that have applied for NATO membership against the Russian threat is accepted as an in-group norm, Türkiye’s failure to respond to these demands was considered a deviation from the norm.

The AK Party and Erdoğan’s Türkiye topos is constituted by a two-layered narrative. On the first level, Erdoğan’s existence is regarded as the reason for Türkiye’s non-normative behavior. As highlighted earlier, Türkiye’s foreign policy priorities and national interests are reduced to those of the AK Party and President Erdoğan. Pars pro toto definitions such as “Erdoğan’s Türkiye” and “Türkiye under Erdoğan” illustrate today’s Türkiye, and it is claimed that Türkiye is moving away from democratic values and standards. So, Türkiye, as a country that does not adhere to democratic values, should not have the right to reject the membership applications of Sweden and Finland. Therefore, it should be said that delegitimization is fueled by narratives in which anti-Erdoğanism is mobilized to popularize stereotypical sentiments towards Türkiye.

Maybe we should suspend or expulse Türkiye from NATO. Ask Erdogan how he would like to be a neighbor of Russia without the backing of NATO... (Tomas First, 2022).

In the second level, it is argued that the allegation of “support for terrorism”, which is the reason for Türkiye’s rejection to membership applications of Sweden and Finland, is not valid, and it is argued that Türkiye is not “sincere” and “anti-democratic against the Kurds”. It is postulated that Türkiye is using its NATO membership and veto card as a negotiating tool and cover for its illegitimate demands. For strongly anti-Turkish commentators, Türkiye and Erdoğan are using the threat of a veto to demand “bribes” from the U.S. NATO member countries to “milk” the alliance.

Erdogan has a bargaining chip and he’s gonna play it for all it’s worth. I’d be very surprised if he throws sand in the gears with a veto. Instead, I’m pretty sure that we’ll provide him with something as a payoff, and then he’ll miraculously approve the applications (IvanTufaart, 2022).

Conclusions

The assumption of democracy is based on the will of the people. Although this assumption constitutes the primary condition of democracy, the determination of foreign policy is one of its limits. However, even if the public is not directly involved in determining foreign policy, people's choices set the foreign policy agenda. Therefore, although it can be said that the political elites designate foreign policy decision-making processes in democratic societies, it should be added that this decision-making process is not the monopoly and arbitrariness of the political elites but is based on guiding, manipulating, or following the general tendency of the public. The common point of traditional agenda-setting theories is based on the evidence of this argument. Studies based on the agenda-setting hypothesis prove that the media set the foreign policy agenda on the public's agenda, that the media determine what we think about, if not what we should think about, that the political elites try to set the agenda in attempting to manipulate the media agenda, that the media convey events and issues within a particular framework, and that the media convey events to their followers. They claim that they teach how to make connections between topics and people and that they create connection tendencies. However, communication technologies put these one-sided explanations up for debate. In particular, blogs, reader comments on the websites of media institutions, and social media platforms allow the public to participate in determining foreign policy agendas. These channels are the channels where the public is visible.

Based on this assumption, the study attempted to show how Turkish identity was discursively constructed in U.S. public opinion. In this context, the crisis that emerged after President Erdoğan's announcement that Türkiye would veto Sweden and Finland's NATO membership applications was selected as a case study, and reader comments on news and analysis on the websites of three leading U.S. newspapers were examined. The study contributes to the literature by revealing the moments, strategies, and themes through which the anti-Türkiye discourse is constructed. Although there have been many studies on the perception of Türkiye in U.S. public opinion before and during World War II, recent studies mainly explain the level of international relations theories and relations between states and do not focus on the anti-Türkiye sentiment in U.S. public opinion. In this context, the study aims to help fill this gap in the literature. The first moment that shapes the anti-Türkiye discourse is the identification that readers make between U.S. national interests and the NATO alliance. Readers identify NATO as an alliance system created to defend democracy and freedoms under U.S. national interests. Thus, it can be alleged that NATO is also accepted as an identity that bears these values. Therefore, Türkiye's objection as a NATO member country is interpreted as an act of an unwilling and incompetent actor carrying the NATO identity, which violates the solidarity within the group and goes against the global values of democracy and human rights. This definition is reinforced by the stereotypical Turkish perceptions that feed the theme of difference and betrayal. On the other hand, more realistic views that argue that Türkiye should remain in NATO also share anti-Turkish perceptions based on these stereotypes. Therefore, although Türkiye is an "unreliable" country that "does not share democratic values", it is considered an actor that should remain in NATO because of its geopolitical

location.

The second moment that characterizes the anti-Türkiye discourse is the theme “AK Party/Erdoğan’s Türkiye”. This theme draws attention to Erdoğan’s existence and government as the sole reason for Türkiye’s departure from democratic values by creating a temporal contrast between Türkiye before and after Erdoğan. This approach, which ignores the complex nature of international relations, constructs the anti-Türkiye discourse with argumentative strategies that re-stereotype Turkish identity in Erdoğan’s personality. Hence, Türkiye’s objection is interpreted as Erdoğan’s “bargaining card”, “bribe”, and “blackmail” against the U.S. rather than a demand of an actor in the alliance in line with its national interests and simplified in Erdoğan’s personality and demands.

It can be argued that anti-Türkiye discourse in U.S. public opinion is reciprocal. In comparison, anti-Türkiye sentiment on the realism axis is constructed in line with the conflicts between perceptions of national interest. In contrast, anti-Türkiye sentiment on the identity axis is formed by conflicts and differentiations based on perceptions of democracy, freedom and human rights.

Finally, although opinion polls show that the dominant trends in public opinion in both countries define the other as the enemy, this study hopes to open space for future studies by depicting the discursive moments and themes of the anti-Türkiye perception and providing data on Turkey’s public diplomacy towards the U.S.

Etik Beyanı: Yazar çalışmanın, etik kurul izni gerektirmeyen çalışmalar arasında yer aldığını beyan eder. Aksi bir durumun tespiti halinde Kastamonu İletişim Araştırmaları Dergisi’nin hiçbir sorumluluğu olmayıp, tüm sorumluluk çalışmanın yazarına aittir.

Yazar Katkıları: 1. yazarın katkı oranı %50, 2. yazarın katkı oranı ise %50’dir.

Çıkar Çatışması Beyanı: Yazarlar herhangi bir çıkar çatışması olmadığını beyan etmektedirler.

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[com/comments/?storyUrl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.washingtonpost.com%2Fworld%2F2022%2F05%2F18%2Ffinland-sweden-nato-apply%2F](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/05/18/finland-sweden-nato-apply/)

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Run With The Wind (2022, May 18). Erdogan is the Trojan horse in NATO. Turkey under Erdogan should not be a member of NATO, in my humble opinion. The people he wants from Sweden and Finland are not terrorists, they are opposition to Erdogan’s regime. He harbors criminals and refuses to extradite them, he welcomes oligarchs. He gets money from EU to hold refugees, but when it suits him, he uses them to blackmail EU, by flooding them to EU borders. He buys weapon material from Russia against NATO’s will. He plays negotiator between Ukraine and Russia. He sends drones to Ukraine but refuses to sanction Russia. He is just another idiot dictator [Comment on the webpage *Turkey blocks start of NATO talks on Finland’s and Sweden’s applications*]. *The Washington Post*. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/comments/?storyUrl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.washingtonpost.com%2Fworld%2F2022%2F05%2F18%2Ffinland-sweden-nato-apply%2F>

S. Roy (2022, May 30). Turkey will ALWAYS remain a “disruptive” ally as long as Erdogan is in power. And there is little chance that he ‘ll lose his iron grip on power any time soon. It can be argued that Erdogan has NEVER subscribed to democratic principles. Rescinding decades-old secularism originally instituted by Kemal Atatürk was just a start. He often acts like a dictator [Comment on the webpage *For NATO, Turkey Is a Disruptive Ally*]. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/30/us/politics/turkey-nato-russia.html#commentsContainer>

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Sammy (2022, May 30). One should point out that when it comes to most of the foreign policy points made in the comment, the opposition parties in Turkey also agree with and support Erdogan. The relations are complicated because of the region Turkey is in that makes their national interests sometimes conflict with U.S. policy. Similarly, NATO countries have not been fair in their treatment of a member. For example, the second largest military in NATO is not allowed to purchase air

defense systems from the U.S. Had the U.S. sold them the Patriots they would not have purchased the S-400s. Now they are excluded from the F35 sales and even their request to purchase F16s and modernization kits is not approved, while Turkey already has about 250 F16s. Also, the sentences like Turkey is waging a war against the Kurds is one sided. Kurds are also waging a war against Turkey. While many Turks criticize Erdogan for his domestic policies they are much more united when it comes to foreign affairs [Comment on the webpage *For NATO, Turkey Is a Disruptive Ally*]. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/30/us/politics/turkey-nato-russia.html#commentsContainer>

SiSeulementVoltaire (2022, June 22). Turkey has never gotten over losing their Ottoman Empire, a bit like Putin, twisted pride and narratives remain an undercurrent. While a beautiful place to visits with very kind people as a tourist, it is a nest of serpent eggs where the attempted genocides of non Turks are a recurring phenomenon. Several peoples that inhabit Turkey have been persecuted throughout their recent history from the Armenian genocide to the Kurds and Turkmen more recently. It is in all but in name and Islamists State masquerading as a democracy too. The culture and government have never really adapted to modern democratic norms. Erdogan will help Putin rather than NATO nations who take in and protect Kurdish political refugees [Comment on the webpage *Analysis: What Turkey Wants to Let Finland and Sweden Into NATO*]. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/22/world/europe/finland-sweden-turkey-nato.html?searchResultPosition=1>

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NATO. Ask Erdogan how he would like to be a neighbor of Russia without the backing of NATO [Comment on the webpage *NATO Bids From Finland and Sweden Now Depend on Turkey's President*]. The Wall Street Journal. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/nato-bids-from-finland-and-sweden-now-depend-on-turkeys-president-11653130800>

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