

DISCOURSES ON TÜRKİYE IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT BETWEEN 2007 AND 2015 WITHIN THE IMAGE OF THE EUROPEAN SECURITY COMMUNITY*

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Abstract

Maintaining a constructive relationship and promoting dialogue and cooperation with Türkiye is crucial for European security. However, Türkiye has long been associated with a de-Europeanization trend that poses serious risks and difficulties for European security, affecting a number of areas including energy security, regional stability, migratory dynamics, and security cooperation. In this context, this article examines how Türkiye was perceived between 2007 and 2015 in the European Parliament (EP), during which time it exhibited some signs of de-Europeanization under the discursive construction of Europe as a security community. It also analyzes the extent to which MEPs' articulations of Turkish and European identities in this period diverged from or converged with those in the period 1997-2007, which was generally a period of Turkish Europeanization within this conceptualization of Europe. For this purpose, the discourse-historical approach (DHA) is used to critically assess EP discourses on Türkiye from a social constructivist viewpoint, which holds that identities are socially constructed through the discourses of agents. Under the discursive construction of the European security community, this study reveals two opposing and prevalent representations of Türkiye as subtopics: Türkiye as a strategic partner and a security threat in the region. This article contends that, despite Türkiye's de-Europeanization period, the positive images of Türkiye within the European security community outweigh the negative ones due to the country's critical potential implications for European security, its crucial roles integrated with its NATO membership and its geostrategic importance.

Keywords: *European Parliament, de-Europeanization, European security community, discourse-historical approach, identity.*

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AVRUPA GÜVENLİK TOPLULUĞU TEMSİLİ İÇERİSİNDE 2007-2015 YILLARI ARASINDA AVRUPA PARLAMENTOSUNDA TÜRKİYE ÜZERİNE SÖYLEMLER

Öz

Türkiye ile yapıcı bir ilişkinin sürdürülmesi, diyalog ve işbirliğinin teşvik edilmesi Avrupa'nın güvenliği açısından hayati öneme sahiptir. Ancak Türkiye uzun süredir Avrupa'nın güvenliği için ciddi riskler ve zorluklar oluşturan, enerji güvenliği, bölgesel istikrar, göç dinamikleri ve güvenlik işbirliği gibi birçok alanı etkileyen bir Avrupalılaştırma sürecinden uzaklaşma eğilimiyle ilişkilendirilmektedir. Bu bağlamda bu makale, Avrupa'nın bir güvenlik topluluğu olarak söylemsel inşası kapsamında Avrupalılaştırmadan uzaklaşmanın bazı işaretlerini sergileyen Türkiye'nin 2007 ile 2015 yılları arasında Avrupa Parlamentosu'nda (AP) nasıl algılandığını incelemektedir. Aynı zamanda, bu dönemde AP üyelerinin Türk ve Avrupalı kimliklerini ifade etme biçimlerinin, bu Avrupa kavramsallaştırması içerisinde genel olarak Türk Avrupalılaştırma dönemi olan 1997-2007 dönemindekilerden ne ölçüde farklılaştığını veya yakınlaştığını da analiz etmektedir. Bu amaçla, AP'nin Türkiye hakkındaki söylemlerini, kimliklerin sosyal olarak aktörlerin söylemleri aracılığıyla inşa edildiğini savunan sosyal yapılandırmacı bir bakış açısıyla eleştirel bir şekilde değerlendirmek için söylem-tarihsel yaklaşımı kullanılıyor. Avrupa güvenlik topluluğunun söylemsel yapısı altında bu çalışma, Türkiye'nin iki karşıt ve yaygın alt konu temsilini ortaya koyuyor: bölgede stratejik bir ortak ve bir güvenlik tehdidi olarak Türkiye. Bu makale, Türkiye'nin Avrupalılaştırmadan uzaklaşma sürecine rağmen, ülkenin Avrupa güvenliği açısından kritik potansiyel sonuçları, NATO üyeliğiyle bütünleşen kritik rolleri ve jeostratejik önemi nedeniyle, Türkiye'nin Avrupa güvenlik topluluğu içindeki olumlu imajının olumsuz imajlardan daha ağır bastığını ileri sürmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Avrupa Parlamentosu, Avrupalılaştırma sürecinden uzaklaşma, Avrupa güvenlik topluluğu, söylem-tarihsel yaklaşım, kimlik.*

Introduction

As an ongoing challenge, the issue of Turkish accession has always provoked an ontological inquiry about the European Union (EU) in terms of identity.

Besides the controversies on identity, the developments in Türkiye¹ and the EU also cause divergence in the relations, while Türkiye's de-Europeanization in the 2007-2015 term as the focus period of this study has even turned into anti-Europeanism and anti-Western populism² in the last decade. In this context, the EP's perception of Turkish identity in the 2007-2015 period was primarily inclined towards discursive othering of Türkiye and excluding Turkish accession through various fallacies and interdiscursivities, sometimes even by challenging "European democratic values," revealing that MEPs are also more critical of European identity (Erdoğan, 2022)³. Nevertheless, the images of Türkiye presented under the discursive construction of Europe as a security community lead to the opposite conclusion as an exception. Contrary to what is expected as a consequence of the de-Europeanization period in Türkiye, this article argues that the positive images of Türkiye within the European security community outweigh the negative ones in terms of diversity and frequency because of the critical nature of Türkiye's potential implications for European security, its crucial roles integrated with its NATO membership and its geostrategic importance. In other words, security concerns caused by various problems in this period overcome the fact that Türkiye is de-Europeanized while perceiving and positioning it within the European security community.

Within this context, the study includes a main research question and a sub-question. The main research question critically analyzes how and in which ways Türkiye was perceived and discursively constructed between 2007 and 2015, during which time it exhibited some signs of de-Europeanization, in the European Parliament (EP) in the context of the discursive construction of Europe as a security community. The sub-question asks to what extent MEPs' articulations of Turkish and European identities within the image of the European security community in this period diverged from or converged with those in the 1997-2007 period, mainly known as a period of Europeanization in Türkiye. Therefore, this study aims to contribute to the literature with in-depth discursive analyzes based on comparison with the previous studies and new conceptual discussions. This research ends in 2015 because of the intensity and complexity of the EP debates on Türkiye, their intricate structure with many issues and events, and especially the subsequent deterioration of EU-Türkiye relations and its de-Europeanization that led to the aforementioned anti-Europeanism and anti-

¹ Through a presidential circular numbered 31679 on 4 December 2021, "Turkey" changed its spelling to "Türkiye" for correspondence with other states and international institutions and organizations and also called for exports to be labelled "Made in Türkiye" (T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı Resmi Gazete, 2021). For this reason, the spelling "Türkiye" is preferred in this article.

² In the article by Kaliber and Kaliber (2019: 1), how de-Europeanizing in Turkish foreign policy discourse systematically turned into a severe anti-Westernism is explained.

³ This argument is the main outstanding finding of my doctoral dissertation (Erdoğan, 2022).

Western populism in Türkiye thereafter, which calls for further research. The reason for choosing the EP stems primarily from the EP's discursive power in relation to the EU's enlargement policy, as well as the EP's representative power for all citizens and political parties in EU member states while it is also essentially under-researched despite the importance of political discourse for political scientists, the EP's increasing visibility with mediatization, and its status as the only EU institution directly elected by European citizens (Ilie, 2010: 57).

As regards limiting the scope of the research, only the discourses of MEPs during official EP debates⁴ whose titles include the words "Turkey" or "enlargement" between 2007 and 2015 were analyzed in detail. In this regard, 30 EP debates meeting these criteria were discovered for this nine-year period out of 315 EP debates, totaling 618 pages and 942 speeches. The analysis of the discourses of MEPs in these 30 EP debates was organized around discourse topics, in which discursive strategies and the linguistic means used in the mentioned discourse topics are presented below through the selected excerpts from the EP debates. This structure of representation of the analyzed data was strengthened with additional categories of the analysis. These additions included primary events that were referred to in the debates, the EP groups, the countries of the relevant MEPs as the speaker, intertextuality/interdiscursivity, logical fallacies, the representations of Türkiye, and resulting representations of Europe. Divergence within the EP groups and countries, comparison to the 1997–2007 period, and general evaluation were categorized, as well. These categories equated to 12 tables in total.

This article is divided into three sections. After outlining the study's theoretical framework and methodology in the first section below, the second one briefly discusses the de-Europeanization of Türkiye within the 2007-2015 period. For the analysis of the EP debates on Türkiye, two dominant representations of Türkiye that emerged between 2007 and 2015 within the image of Europe as a security community, "Türkiye as a strategic partner in the region" and "Türkiye as a security threat in the region," are then touched upon in the third part. Therefore, the article aims to fill a gap in the academic research on how Türkiye's de-Europeanization is perceived in the EP and on how this perception of MEPs affects the articulations of Turkish identity and, in turn, European identity in terms of discourses in which the concept of "security" is prominent. The analysis part also includes comparisons of the periods 1997-2007 and 2007-2015 and other studies done so far in terms of Turkish and, in turn, European identities,

⁴ These debates transcribed verbatim as Word documents were retrieved through the archives website of the EP through the official EP website (European Parliament, 2024). The analyzes include three parliamentary terms: the sixth term (2004–2009), the seventh term (2009–2014) and the eighth term (2014–2019).

which makes this study complementary to them. Thus, various Turkish and European identities, which are transformed and added within the de-Europeanization process of Türkiye, are also revealed in this study.

Social Constructivism and Discourse-Historical Approach

In this theoretical and methodological part of the study, social constructivism and Wodak's discourse-historical approach (DHA) are reviewed. In European studies, the discussions on the enlargement of the EU increasingly necessitated the importance of defining Europe and European identity. In this regard, through the publication of the *Journal of European Public Policy* special issue of Christiansen, Jorgensen and Wiener in 1999, social constructivism as a branch of constructivism became the leading approach to the study of European integration in order to explore the question of European identity, as a spillover from International Relations. Social constructivism is regarded as the middle ground in juxtaposing rationalism and reflectivism to European integration (Christiansen, Jorgensen and Wiener, 1999: 528). Accordingly, actors' identities are created as a result of social interaction rather than being given (Rosamond, 2000: 198). Their identities and interests are conditioned by nonmaterial structures— in other words, normative or ideational structures such as systems of shared ideas, beliefs and values (Reus-Smit, 2001: 198). From a social constructivist perspective, identity cannot be entirely separated from features such as ethnicity, religion, history or culture (Rumelili, 2008: 99).

Christiansen, Jorgensen and Wiener (1999: 541) state that discourse becomes significant for constructivism when identity formations become crucial. In the same vein, Wendt (1999: 341) points out that social constructivism lets agents reproduce a particular conception of who they are since agents are accepted as mutually constitutive in constructivism. During this communication, agents take part in the constitution of their identities and counter-identities. In other words, identities are socially constructed through this reciprocal interaction of agents, which necessitates discourse. As a result, agents can change their understanding of the Self and, in turn, affect the perception of the Other, which shows the importance of discourse in social constructivism.

As an excellent tool for analyzing national identities and the construction of European identities, Wodak's DHA is an interpretative methodology of qualitative text analysis within CDA. By focusing on the interdisciplinary and eclectic nature of CDA, DHA was created by Wodak and her colleagues from the Vienna School of Discourse Analysis (Wodak, 2015: 1). DHA focuses its efforts on the field of politics, in which it attempts to form conceptual frameworks for political discourse while its main focus on identity construction necessitates the discursive construction of "in" and "out" groups (Wodak, 2001: 73). In this respect, the DHA study of Vienna School investigations contributed to the analysis of the discursive construction of difference, which caused the political

and social exclusion of particular outgroups in Austria. This makes DHA relevant in understanding how the EP discursively constructs European identity and its perception of Türkiye, which is framed from time to time as an “other” within the European security community. Furthermore, the DHA’s emphasis on historical, political, and social contexts in shaping discourse makes it well-suited to exploring the complex factors that influence how Türkiye is perceived in the EP and how the EP’s perception of Türkiye evolves over time.

The employment of DHA necessitates a three-dimensional approach. Firstly, “discourse topics,” in other words, the main thematic areas or contents of a specific discourse, are identified. Secondly, “discursive strategies” are examined, which helps uncover underlying strategies that shape Türkiye as a security partner or threat in this analysis. As the last step of DHA, the “linguistic means (as types) and the specific, context-dependent linguistic realizations (as tokens)” are revealed (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001: 44). To reveal DHA, Reisigl and Wodak (2001: 44) direct the empirical questions to the texts, which necessitate discursive strategies within the second step above in order to answer them, namely referential and nomination strategies, predicational strategies, argumentation strategies, perspectivation, framing, or discourse representation and lastly intensification and mitigation strategies. Moreover, DHA also shows “intertextuality” and “interdiscursivity” with other related texts and discourses, which is crucial for understanding how various texts and discourses about Türkiye influence the EP perception on Turkish identity. After exploring social constructivism and the DHA here, the next section examines the process of de-Europeanization that Türkiye underwent between 2007 and 2015, marking a significant shift in its political alignment with the EU.

De-Europeanization of Türkiye within the 2007-2015 Period

Türkiye has gone through periods both of Europeanization and of de-Europeanization. As to its definition, Europeanization refers to a wide range of historical, political, social, and normative contexts in which domestic and European actors constantly discuss, adopt, and apply European norms, values, and policies, which started in Türkiye in the nineteenth century (Hopf, 1998: 176–177). De-Europeanization, on the other hand, means the weakening impact of the EU and European norms, values, and policies as a reference point in a candidate country to the EU (Aydın-Düzgüt and Kaliber, 2016: 5). In this sense, de-Europeanization is broadly handled, including the worsening in formal, technical, and institutional alignment defined as “EU-ization” and the normative sense called “Europeanization” (Aydın-Düzgüt and Kaliber, 2016: 5–6). In the Turkish case, it is seen “as the distancing of society and politics in Türkiye from the European system of norms, values and policy expectations” including political misalignment between Türkiye and the EU (Aydın-Düzgüt and Kaliber,

2016: 6). This research accepts 2007 as the start of Türkiye's de-Europeanization for various reasons related to Türkiye, the EU, and the international arena.

In Türkiye, the government and the public were already alienated from the EU in 2007, as some political developments had pushed the Turkish political elites and public opinion away from the EU membership objective. Despite the modification of Türkiye's Cyprus policy between 2002 and 2004 with the EU membership intention, the EU membership of the Greek Cypriots in 2004 without a resolution on the island caused disappointment among Turkish public opinion (Yaka, 2006: 33). The "open-ended" accession process of Türkiye's EU membership as presented in the Negotiating Framework with Türkiye on 3 October 2005 and then, in particular, the December 2006 decision of the European Council to suspend negotiations on eight chapters because of Türkiye's restrictions in terms of the Republic of Cyprus greatly exacerbated Turkish public disappointment. This attitude in the EU also displeased Turkish politicians and bureaucrats, diminished the EU conditionality's credibility, weakened EU commitment in Türkiye, and undermined the EU's transformative power (Saatçioğlu, 2014: 97). In this regard, the 2009 Eurobarometer survey (Eurobarometer 71, 2009: 93) showed that only 39% of Turkish people regarded Turkish accession to the EU as a good thing, while 71% of Turkish citizens were of the same opinion in Eurobarometer in 2004 (Eurobarometer 61, 2004).

The widespread enthusiasm and the EU membership objective in Türkiye thus gradually vanished from the Turkish political agenda (Yaka, 2016: 154). The demotivation in Türkiye, which even provoked the Eurosceptic movement in the country, damaged the Turkish government's incentive to adopt costly EU reforms (Saatçioğlu, 2014: 97). It therefore caused a significant slowdown in the pace of reforms in Türkiye beginning from 2007 and the typical problem in the de facto implementation of these reforms, which also triggered Türkiye's de-Europeanization as of 2007 (Kaliber, 2016: 60; Saatçioğlu, 2014: 97; Sipahioğlu, 2017: 56). Various scholars agree that the rising power of the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, AKP) motivated it to achieve new self-confidence and political will after the 2007 general election despite the 2008 AKP closure trial (Aras, 2009: 7; Kanat, 2010: 213–214; Yaka, 2016: 155). Thus, it began to follow a new foreign policy strategy to make Türkiye an independent and respected global player and an essential mediator in conflicts in the Middle East, the Balkans, and the Caucasus (Aras, 2009: 7; Kanat, 2010: 213–214; Yaka, 2016: 155). For this aim, the incumbent AKP launched a neo-Ottoman foreign policy or a kind of "civilizational geopolitics" (Bilgin and Bilgiç, 2011: 173–195). The 2011 general election, with 50% of all votes going to the AKP, "doubled the legitimacy of the AKP rule and its reforms and granted public approval to the AKP as the primary democratizing actor of the country" and made the AKP the sole democratizing and pro-reform actor outside the EU (Yılmaz, 2016: 94). The reduced need for the EU was also reflected in Prime Minister

Erdoğan's "2023 speech" at the 2012 AKP congress, where he did not make any reference to the EU (Nas and Özer, 2017: 98). Despite the 2013 Gezi Park protests which distanced the AKP further from the EU, the relationship took on a new dimension in 2015 as a result of the refugee crisis, as the only improvement in relations throughout this period.

Among the factors arising from the EU that started de-Europeanization in Türkiye, various developments in the EU that weakened the credibility of the EU conditionality became prominent. First, the open-ended structure of the negotiations for the first time, according to the Negotiating Framework Document of Türkiye on 3 October 2005, had already created mistrust in Türkiye, as mentioned before (Nas and Özer, 2017: 95). Secondly, according to diverse scholars, Türkiye was discussed using the terms "enlargement fatigue," "absorption capacity," and "privileged partnership" after 2006 in the EU under the right-wing Sarkozy-Merkel axis, rather than the Copenhagen criteria (Keyman and Aydın-Düzgüt, 2013: 276–277; Yılmaz, 2016: 87). In this respect, while the wording "open-ended process" existed in the Croatian Negotiating Framework in the same year, it was without the wording on "absorption capacity" and "strong bonds" for the EU membership of Croatia, which undermined the credibility of the EU conditionality in Türkiye (Levin, 2011: 168).

The other factors arising from the EU can be summarized as the existence of the EU's absorption capacity condition, the prospect of permanent derogations for Türkiye in agriculture, structural policies, and free movement of persons, the EU policies that linked the Turkish accession to the Cyprus issue, France and Austria stating in 2009 that they would put Türkiye's accession to the EU to a referendum despite being not constitutionally necessary, the Euro crisis in 2008, the enlargement fatigue of the EU in the aftermath of the 2004/2007 enlargements, concerns about terrorism, instability, and a mass refugee problem from Türkiye to the EU with its accession and the dangerous orientation in the EU member states based on rising populism, radicalism, and even authoritarian tendencies (Levin, 2011: 168; Nas and Özer, 2017: 97; Sipahioğlu, 2017: 58; Keyman and Aydın-Düzgüt, 2013: 276–277; Yılmaz, 2016: 87; Aydın-Düzgüt and Kaliber, 2016: 2; Lindgaard, Wessel and Banke, 2018: 11).

In the international arena, in terms of Türkiye's de-Europeanization, Aydın-Düzgüt (2016: 45) and Alpan (2016: 22) stated that events such as the rapid deterioration of Turkish-Israeli relations after the 2008–09 Gaza War, the subsequent "one-minute" crisis with Israel in 2009, "the relative normalization of relations with Armenia" in 2009, the Iranian swap deal broken with Brazil and Türkiye in 2009, "Turkey's active rejection of the proposed sanctions on Iran at the UN Security Council," "Ankara's close relations with Syria," and the flotilla incident in 2010 involving the Turkish ship MV *Mavi Marmara* contributed to the inclination of Turkish foreign policy more towards the Middle East and its

southern neighborhood and away from the EU and the United States. Therefore, as a result of these factors Turkish accession to the EU has become less and less probable. After exploring the process of de-Europeanization in Türkiye during the 2007-2015 period in this part, the analysis of the EP debates on Türkiye is presented in the next section.

Analyses: The Image of Türkiye as a Security Partner in the Region

Security is discussed in the EP in a multidimensional way, including the contexts of foreign policy, defense policy, migration, the neighborhood policy of the EU, and interrelated economic, political, social, and environmental factors. In such a broad context, the EP frequently discusses the crucial roles of Türkiye, integrated with its NATO membership, candidate status, potential membership of the EU, and its (geo)strategic importance, which constitutes a critical part of Türkiye's potential implications for European security. Especially after the Arab uprisings in the early 2010s, the subsequent mass immigration to Europe, growing frictions because of oil and gas reserves in the eastern Mediterranean, and the war against the self-proclaimed Islamic State, attention to security issues intensified in the EP debates.

Moreover, the peak of deaths from terrorism in 2015 in Türkiye and some EU member states, including Denmark, France, Germany, and Sweden, according to the Global Terrorism Index (2016: 17), highlighted the irreplaceable importance of European security, which was reflected in 12 debates on terrorism in the EP between 2007 and 2015. As a result, the roles of Türkiye for the interests of the European security community have attracted attention in all discursive spheres, even when its membership of the EU has not been explicitly supported or discussed. Under the discursive construction of Europe as a security community, two opposite and prevailing representations of Türkiye are presented as subtopics in this study. These prevailing representations are Türkiye as a strategic partner and as a security threat in the region.

Within the image of Türkiye as a strategic partner, the importance of Türkiye for Europe's interests in the region is one of the most repeated discourse topics in the EP debates. The concept of a strategic partnership between the EU and Türkiye is frequently underlined. This concept signifies long-term relationships and is mainly associated with realist assumptions on the structure of the international system, especially in the context of the end of the Cold War with its common interests and common security issues, while there are also other scholars who evaluate the practice of a strategic partnership as a social construction (Şahin, 2019: 28–33). Türkiye as a strategic partner for the security in the region, including the Black Sea, the Middle Eastern countries, the southern Caucasus, Central Asia, and Africa, is underlined in almost every EP debate between 2007 and 2015. In this analysis, it is observed that Türkiye's role as a strategic partner for security is discussed in the context of many topics such as energy, migration,

and conflicts in the Middle Eastern countries, especially in the center-right EPP-ED/EPP/PPE discourse, as well as other groups in the EP, which is elaborated below under the images of Türkiye as a bridge between civilizations, a model for the Mediterranean and the Middle East, an alternative route for European energy security, and a host for refugees:

Turkey is a bridge between Europe, the Middle East and Asia: a country strong both economically and militarily, and the sole NATO member close to the Middle East, Central Asia and the Caucasus. The European Union needs Turkey and Turkey needs the European Union. All the issues with Turkey can be settled in the process of negotiating Turkey's accession to the European Union (Frunzulică, 2015).

Discourses focusing on Türkiye's role as a bridge between civilizations are frequently observed in the EP debates between 2007 and 2015. In this respect, the concept of the clash of civilizations created and clarified by Samuel Huntington (1993: 146), which reappears after September 11, gains importance. Especially with the Arab uprisings after 2010, interdiscursivities with the clash of civilizations discourse are intensified in the center-right EPP-ED/EPP/PPE discourse. Similar discourses of the center left and liberals are also observed in the security-related arguments about Türkiye. In the extract above from the S&D, Türkiye's accession is directly associated with Europe's security interests with the predication of Türkiye as not only "a bridge between Europe, the Middle East, and Asia" but also "the sole NATO member close to the Middle East, Central Asia and the Caucasus." Within this image of Türkiye, the continuity of the representations of "Turkey as a panacea for the clash of civilizations" revealed by Aydın-Düzgüt (2012: 30–65) and "Turkey as one of the instruments to prevent the 'clash of civilizations'" emphasized by Öner (2009: 251) is remarkable.

Turkey is undoubtedly an essential partner of the European Union, with whom we share mutual strategic interests. I think it is right that we are continuing developments with Turkey that make it clear that Turkey is in the European and transatlantic camp. You only have to look at the map to know that it is in the European interest as well as in the interest of Turkey if it wants to secure and expand its level of development in the long term, and not only in the economic area, where it has been successful. But I also think that Turkey can be an effective factor in stability and a role model in the region, and I am pleased that relations between Israel and Turkey seem to be getting better again. It should be encouraged accordingly, so as to set stability in its region (Brok, 2013).

The speech above contains the predication of Türkiye as a role “model” country for the stability in the region. In general, it is observed in the EP that the parliamentarians from the center-right, center-left, liberal, green, and extreme-right political groups, constituting the majority of the EP, utilize the model discourse in the EP with the Arab uprisings. They justify Türkiye’s engagement with those countries on the basis of its significance as a model in the region and thus its contribution to the EU. In this “model” rhetoric, colonial and Eurocentric dispositions, in which the Mediterranean and the Middle East are distanced with the choice⁵ of the Turkish democracy as a model rather than a Western model democracy in the hierarchy of democracy attract attention (Aydın-Düzgüt, Rumelili and Gülmez, 2020: 748). Moreover, the excerpt explicitly constructs a realist perspective through a conventional metaphor of equilibrium, namely the “mutual strategic interests” of both Türkiye and the EU, while predicating Türkiye as a model for the region’s stability (Drulak, 2006: 512). Nevertheless, the repetitive use of the “we” pronoun referring to Europeans in this extract underlines the exclusion of Türkiye, although “continuing developments with Turkey” position Türkiye in “the European and transatlantic camp,” which depends on the state and course of “mutual strategic interests.” Furthermore, the “map” reference for geography here is also vital since the critical political geographers claim that “geography supports increasingly uncertain sociocultural and political spheres” in which “geographical imaginings are constructed as an attempt to denote territory as well as identity concretely” (Pace, 2006: 163). Therefore, further legitimation of the model rhetoric as an identity construction for Türkiye is sustained through geography in the excerpt. This speech also repeatedly employs a political flag word, “stability,” to justify Türkiye as a role model through positive deontic-evaluative meanings (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001: 55). In this image, the discursive continuity of the representations of Türkiye as a model to be copied revealed by Aydın-Düzgüt (2012: 51) and as a model for the Muslim world emphasized by Öner (2009: 257) is distinguished, while Lindgaard, Wessel and Banke (2018: 2) also underline Türkiye as a model secular democracy for the Arab Spring countries in 2011.

I think it is good that Mrs Oomen-Ruijten’s report talks about the opening of new negotiation chapters, such as 15, on energy. It seems to me that cooperation between Turkey and the Union in energy matters is very relevant indeed. We Europeans

⁵ This choice is based on the belief that “religious/cultural affinity around the shared Islamic identity would lead to a policy of imitation” (Aydın-Düzgüt, Rumelili and Gülmez, 2020: 748). Thus, it is discursively constructed that a superior Europe that guides a Muslim country presumed to be culturally affiliated to the Middle East contributes to the democratization processes in this region, which reinstates the “subordination of the Mediterranean and the Middle East to the West” (Aydın-Düzgüt, Rumelili and Gülmez, 2020: 749).

need to diversify our sources of supply and also the routes through which energy supplies flow. Turkey, because of its geographical location, occupies a strategic place in the necessary diversification (Mon, 2013).

Türkiye's strategic role in energy security, as an alternative way of providing the diversification of energy suppliers, is one of the most repeated, crucial, and underlined topics in the EP debates. Even though Türkiye does not produce natural gas or oil, Keyman (2016: 2282) mentions Türkiye's crucial strategic role in the "transmission of natural gas between the Middle East, the post-Soviet republics, and Europe," which is also mentioned in the EP debates in this way. In this respect, the excerpt also explains the reason for Türkiye's strategic importance for energy matters in Europe. Through the *topos* of usefulness as an argumentation strategy, Türkiye's usefulness is clarified with its function of providing necessary diversification of European energy supply thanks to its geographical location, which affects the progress of the opening of the energy chapter. Therefore, the extract above ties the cooperation of Türkiye with the EU to providing an alternative way to its accession process. Additionally, this excerpt uses a conventional metaphor of equilibrium, namely "cooperation" between Türkiye and the Union, to construct an understanding of Europe as an "interaction between fixed units that continuously seek mutual trade-offs" by embedding an influential realist metaphorical expression (Drulak, 2006: 512). In the extract above, the ethnification of one side as a referential strategy of culturalization as a discursive strategy is also realized through the use of the word "Europeans," while this word used with the deictic "we" contributes to the binary division between "us," namely "we Europeans," and "Turkey" (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001: 50).

With regard to the discursive continuity, the previous studies focusing on the 1997–2007 period do not mention this image of Türkiye as an alternative route for European energy security. However, there are references to energy security in the studies of Aydın-Düzgüt (2012: 41) and Türkeş-Kılıç (2019: 39). In her book, Aydın-Düzgüt (2012: 41) underlines referential strategies through metaphorical expressions such as "security of (energy) supply" in the excerpts in which the prospects of Turkish accession are discussed to construct Europe as a security community. In the article of Türkeş-Kılıç (2019: 39), she points out the quotation from Andreas Mölzer from the nonattached members (NI) in the EP on improvement in energy security as one of the reasons for a privileged partnership with Türkiye rather than membership in the form of security gains.

At a time when we ourselves are having intensive discussions in the EU – and indeed this morning in this Chamber – about how adequate protection can be given to refugees, we commend and praise all the efforts made by the Turkish

Government in hosting more refugees than any other country in the world today. If we want to make sure that those in need of protection can find a safe haven in the region, we need to step up our efforts actively to assist Turkey in providing adequate shelter, healthcare and education for refugees and their children (Piri, 2015).

Various scholars, including Doty (1998: 80–81), Bigo (2006: 394–400), Huysmans (2006: 81), and Kaya (2009: 11), state how national debates concerning immigrants and migration discursively construct them as a *problematique* for national security, especially in the aftermath of 9/11. Securitization of migration is also typical in the EP debates. In this respect, it is observed that debates over the refugee problem after the conflict in Syria have become prominent in the EP since 2012. For this reason, there is no continuity of the representation of Türkiye in this role from the 1997–2007 period. Instead, Türkiye was then discursively constructed as a potential security threat for Europe with the fear of uncontrolled migration from Turkish people in the studies of Levin (2011: 191–193) and Aydın-Düzgit (2012: 55). In this regard, Türkiye is explicitly predicated as a hosting state for refugees in the extract above. There is an explicit comparison between Türkiye and “any other country in the world” regarding hosting refugees. According to Reisigl and Wodak (2001: 109), comparison, employed for equating predication and argumentation strategies as a rhetorical technique, aims at persuasion and serves to minimize or exaggerate. With this comparison, Türkiye is equated with a haven, and thus its efforts are exaggerated for refugees as a part of intensifying strategies as discursive strategies. In sum, the positive representations of Türkiye in the 1997–2007 period converging with those in the 2007–2015 period are Türkiye as a bridge between civilizations and Türkiye as a model for the Mediterranean and Middle Eastern countries. Nevertheless, the images of Türkiye as an alternative route for European energy security and Türkiye as a host for refugees diverge from those between 1997 and 2007. After examining here Türkiye’s image as a security partner in the region, the next section focuses on the contrasting discursive construction, analyzing how Türkiye is perceived in the EP as a security threat in the region.

The Image of Türkiye as a Security Threat in the Region

The discursive construction of Europe as a security community basically relies on Türkiye’s role in terms of the clash of civilizations thesis, as mentioned before. It has generally been constructed as preventing this assumed clash until this part of the analysis. However, the clash of civilizations discourse by its nature can also justify the exclusion of Türkiye in the security-related arguments about Türkiye. In this part, the discourses that construct Europe as a security community through representing Türkiye as a security threat in the region are

analyzed. In this framework, the civilizational exclusion of Türkiye from the European security community is revealed in terms of Türkiye's foreign policy and borders. In other words, under the image of Türkiye as a security threat in the region, the representations of Türkiye whose foreign policy may be incompatible with the EU and Türkiye as a frontline state to the conflictual regions are examined below.

Madam President, the leadership of the European Union is proving to be inferior, as it is constantly succumbing to Turkey's blackmail. A Turkey that silences the DAES and smuggles oil with the jihadists. A Turkey that organizes the slave trade of transporting thousands of refugees from Syria to the Aegean islands with a profit of over twelve billion euros. A Turkey that continues to violate the airspace of Greece. Finally, gentlemen of the European Union, you have put the wolf in charge of the sheep, and not only that: you are also giving Ankara three billion euros. Mr Weber, Greece was flooded with thousands of refugees because Mrs Merkel invited them to come to Germany. Mr Weber, Greece is a sovereign country and does not accept co-management of its external borders. Mr Weber, decide, the borders of Greece are Greek and will continue to be protected by the Greeks and not German troops, as you dream, because this has ended historically and irrevocably for seventy years (Marias, 2015).

It has been accepted in both policy circles and academia that, since 2007, Türkiye has undergone certain changes in its foreign policy orientations which are incompatible with the EU (Aydın-Düzgüt, 2012: 54). They have been grounded on the zero-problem approach and the need for Türkiye to become more proactive in its broader neighborhood. In this regard, there is no continuity of this representation when studies focused on the 1997–2007 period are examined. Nevertheless, the representation of Türkiye as a security threat in terms of its foreign policy as anti-European and anti-Western is recognized in the EP debates beginning in 2009. In this context, it is observed that some MEPs consider the Cyprus issue and Türkiye's problems with Greece and Armenia as a part of Türkiye's foreign policy that is incompatible with the security of Europe⁶. In this respect, nationalist voices on behalf of Greece are recognized while representing Türkiye negatively with its foreign policy practices in the

⁶ See also, for example, the parliamentary speeches of Adamos Adamou from the GUE/NGL on 11 March 2009, Nikolaos Chountis from the GUE/NGL on 25 November 2009, Nikolaos Salavarakos from the EFD on 20 January 2010, Charalampos Angourakis from the GUE/NGL on 10 February 2010, Charles Tannock from the ECR on 8 March 2011, Niki Tzavela from the EFD on 8 March 2011 and Sophia Sakorapha from the GUE/NGL on 20 May 2015.

extract above. The *topos* of threat is combined with the *topos* of (Greek) borders in denoting Greece as a sovereign entity against “German troops,” historically implying the events in World War II. The use of the “sheep” and “wolf” metaphors is significant in this context in order to show the unreliability of Türkiye in foreign policy matters while the EU is portrayed as being incapable of opposing “Turkey’s blackmail.” Besides relations with Cyprus⁷, Greece, and Armenia, Türkiye’s foreign policy regarding its military operations in Iraq, because of the PKK camps in northern Iraq in 2008 and the self-proclaimed Islamic State after 2011, is also intensively criticized and helps justify Türkiye’s exclusion, especially in the discourse of the right wing and extreme right in the EP⁸.

Madam President, I would like to focus on three points regarding Turkey’s accession to the European Union. The first of these is its visa policy for third country nationals. Speaking two years ago in Parliament, I expressed my surprise that Turkey did not bring this policy into line with that of the European Union. According to the European Commission’s 2011 Progress Report, Turkey has recently signed visa waiver agreements with Sudan and Yemen. I have also been informed that Iranian, Libyan, Lebanese and Syrian nationals do not require visas either. Last week, a very widely read Spanish newspaper claimed that Turkey’s visa exemption for some countries, together with its land border, which runs for thousands of kilometres, make the country a corridor of choice for organised crime (Mon, 2012).

Türkiye’s negative representation because of its geographic borders and specifically its southern borders as a potential security threat is widespread in the discourses of the center right, extreme right, extreme left, nonattached MEPs, and additionally the center left. In this respect, the discursive continuity of this

⁷ For practical reasons, the word “Cyprus” in this study refers to the “Republic of Cyprus,” which became an EU member state on 1 May 2004 (Işıkşal, 2019: 119). Nevertheless, it is officially called the “Greek Cypriot Administration of Southern Cyprus” by the Republic of Türkiye because of the lack of a lasting solution to the Cyprus problem (Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs Directorate for EU Affairs, 2019). The word “Cyprus” is preferred in the debates, which has also made this research adopt the same usage.

⁸ Some MEPs describe its military power within its foreign policy as a security threat mainly because of Türkiye’s military operations in northern Iraq against the PKK. See, for example, the parliamentary speeches of Philip Claeyss from ITS on 24 October 2007, Werner Langen from the PPE-ED on 24 October 2007, Marco Cappato from the ALDE on 24 October 2007, Jan Marinus Wiersma from the PSE on 24 October 2007, Feleknaş Uca from the GUE/NGL on 21 May 2008, Miroslav Mikolášik from the PPE on 8 March 2011, and Georgios Koumoutsakos from the PPE on 27 September 2011.

representation in the findings of Aydın-Düzgüt (2012: 52–53), Türkeş-Kılıç (2019: 40–47), Lindgaard, Wessel and Banke (2018: 4), and Levin (2011: 26) from the 1997–2007 period is evident. In this regard, drug smuggling and organized crime through Türkiye are underlined in the extract above. Originating from its southeastern border, Türkiye is identified as a transit country for crime, which discursively constitutes a threat to the European security community. The predication of Türkiye as “a corridor of choice for organized crime” is observed here while otherness is also ascribed to Türkiye’s neighbors such as Iran and Syria. Moreover, the possible immigration activity of individuals to Europe is implicitly mentioned because of Türkiye’s visa waiver agreements for third-country nationals, which are incompatible with the relevant Schengen visa policies of the EU. These discursively external threats through Türkiye, such as migration and organized crime, construct Europe as a bounded area that should be saved from these threats. Therefore, the excerpt constructs drug smuggling and organized crime as transnational security problems, and it also shows a high degree of securitization of Türkiye’s borders through reference to drug smuggling, organized crime, and implicitly illegal immigration.

The critical situation along the Syrian border highlights the additional dangers associated with Turkish accession. When the European Coal and Steel Community was founded exactly 60 years ago in 1952, its founders’ main aim was to achieve lasting peace in Europe. We simply have to recognise that, as is quite apparent from the present situation, accession by Turkey, which has a border to Syria and is a front-line state in the Middle East conflict, would mean bringing ongoing military conflicts into the heart of the European Union (Obermayr, 2012).

In the speech, Türkiye is explicitly predicated as “a frontline state in the Middle East conflict.” It directly focuses on the border issue with Turkish accession and Türkiye’s border with Syria while engaging in the demarcation of clear boundaries between Europe and the Middle East, contributing to the clash of civilizations thesis. The *topos* of borders, which is crucial to identity (re)production, provides here a homogeneous identity both for peaceful Europe and for the conflictual Middle East through a fallacious *trajectio in alium*, as a victim-victimizer-reversal (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001: 134). Though the victimizer is not Türkiye, the speech strategically changes the victimizer and attributes the reasons for possible military conflicts in the EU to the Turkish accession. In this regard, securitization of Turkish accession provides construction of identity through geography, which is generally through the concept of security as an existential threat. To sum up, in terms of discursive continuity, the representation of Türkiye, whose foreign policy may be incompatible with the EU, is new as a result of Türkiye’s foreign policy turns after 2007. Nevertheless, Türkiye’s representation based on its geographic

borders with its southern neighbors in the 2007–2015 period was already widespread between 1997 and 2007. In other words, MEPs’ articulations on Türkiye, whose foreign policy may be incompatible with the EU, have diverged from those in the 1997–2007 period, although their discourses on Türkiye as a frontline state to the conflictual regions have converged. This is because the perception of the EP of Turkish identity has been influenced by the changes in its foreign policy affecting EU-Türkiye relations as the political context. Having discussed the perception of Türkiye as a security threat in the region here, this study moves to the conclusion below, synthesizing the insights from this analysis on Türkiye’s image within the European security community.

Conclusion

Türkiye has long been linked to a tendency of de-Europeanization that seriously jeopardizes and complicates European security. In this regard, this study has examined how Türkiye was perceived between 2007 and 2015, during which time Türkiye exhibited some signs of de-Europeanization, in the EP under the discursive construction of Europe as a security community. It has also analyzed the extent to which MEPs’ articulations of Turkish and, in turn, European identities in this period diverged from or converged with those in the period 1997–2007, which was generally a period of Turkish Europeanization, within this conceptualization of Europe. Under this image of Europe as a security community, the constructions of Türkiye as a strategic partner and a security threat in the region have been elaborated above. The representations of Türkiye as a bridge between civilizations, a model for the Mediterranean and the Middle East, an alternative route for European energy security, and a host for refugees within the image of a strategic partner in the region have been uncovered as relatively positive, even though it is not regarded all the time as a candidate country or within the EU’s enlargement policy. Instead, Türkiye is positioned as an outsider cooperating with the EU on specific security-related issues such as migration, energy, and conflicts in the Middle East. In general, the positive representations of Türkiye in the 1997–2007 period converging with those in the 2007–2015 period are Türkiye as a bridge between civilizations and Türkiye as a model for the Mediterranean and Middle Eastern countries. Nevertheless, the images of Türkiye as an alternative route for European energy security and Türkiye as a host for refugees diverge from those between 1997 and 2007. The reason is the radical changes in the political context of energy and migration issues affecting EU-Türkiye relations. While Türkiye was discursively constructed as a security threat by referring to the migration of Turkish people from Türkiye to Europe in the 1997–2007 period, it is no longer a security threat in terms of migration. Instead, Türkiye’s new image regarding migration is discursively constructed as a host for refugees due to the conflict in Syria and

Iraq. To be more precise, MEPs have had to discursively construct Türkiye with a new positive representation because of migrants at the gates of European states, making Türkiye an indispensable strategic partner.

The study also reveals the images of Türkiye, whose foreign policy may be incompatible with the EU and Türkiye as a frontline state to the conflictual regions under the discursive construction of Türkiye as a security threat in the region. Because of the changes in Turkish foreign policy orientations incompatible with the EU after 2007, there is no continuity of the representation of Türkiye, whose foreign policy may be incompatible with the EU when studies focused on the 1997–2007 period are examined. However, Türkiye’s security threat representation based on its geographic borders with its southern neighbors in the 2007–2015 period was already widespread between 1997 and 2007. In other words, MEPs’ articulations on Türkiye, whose foreign policy may be incompatible with the EU, have diverged from those in the 1997–2007 period, although their discourses on Türkiye as a frontline state to the conflictual regions have converged. This is because the perception of the EP of Turkish identity has been influenced by the changes in its foreign policy affecting EU-Türkiye relations as the political context. Concluding from these convergences and divergences, it is evident that Europe continues to see itself as a security community compared to the findings of the 1997-2007 period through positioning Türkiye as a strategic partner and a security threat in the region at the same time.

All in all, this article has contended that Türkiye’s de-Europeanization has not negatively affected its security partner image since this image remains still stronger regarding the diversity of subimages and frequency of EP debates in favor of its partner representation, as it did in its Europeanization period. This conclusion affirms that the security concerns caused by various problems in the period prevail over the fact that Türkiye has de-Europeanized, due to the critical nature of Türkiye’s potential implications for European security and its crucial roles integrated with its NATO membership and its geostrategic importance. In terms of its contribution, this study fills a gap in the academic research on how Türkiye’s de-Europeanization compared to its Europeanization period is perceived in the EP and on how this perception of MEPs affects the articulations of the Turkish identity and, in turn, the European identity. This research also includes comparisons of these periods and other studies in previous years, which makes it different, innovative, and complementary to previous studies. Last but not least, the EP debates after 2015, such as the 2016-2023 period, can be focused on as further research because of the subsequent worsening of the EU-Türkiye relations and its de-Europeanization, which resulted in anti-Europeanism and anti-Western populism in Türkiye.

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