

THE IMPACT OF THREAT PERCEPTION ON NATIONAL ROLE CONCEPTIONS: THE CASES OF TURKEY AND RUSSIA

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Abstract

The thesis examines the impact of such an important variable as threat perception on national role conceptions. National role conceptions, although dependent on decision-makers personal beliefs, are quite stable in the countries' foreign policies. Providing deeper insight on the interaction between the agent and the structure than mainstream IR theories, they, nevertheless, do not explain why some states behave irrationally and even aggressively while maintaining former conceptions. Comparing the cases of Turkey and Russia, I will demonstrate how a heightened sense of insecurity, caused by the national traumas on which the states were established, resulted in distrust to their significant Other, the West, and had a significant influence on the way the national role conceptions have been interpreted.

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Table of Contents

Abstract.....	i
Acknowledgments.....	ii
Table of Contents.....	iii
1. Introduction	1
1.1 Methodology.....	4
2. Theoretical Framework.....	8
2.1 National identity	8
2.2. National role conceptions.....	10
2.3 Threat perception	13
3. Threat perception in Turkey and Russia	17
3.1 Turkish Sevres Syndrome.....	17
3.2 Russia’s notion of external threat.....	20
3.3 Threat perception in the political discourse in Turkey and Russia	23
4. The impact of threat perception on the national role conceptions of Turkey and Russia	32
4.1 The formation of Turkish and Russian national role conceptions	32
4.2 The influence of threat perception on the foreign policy of the countries	37
4.3 Putin and Erdogan’s understanding of national role conceptions	45
Conclusion.....	51
Bibliography	54
Appendix	59

1. Introduction

Currently, a growing number of analysts do not consider a state as a unitary actor of international relations. Instead, they analyze how the identities and interests of the states are constructed. Still, putting the emphasis either on the structure or on the agency they propose abstract theoretical treatment in the first case or detailed interpretations of specific cases in the second one. To mediate two extremes there is an advantage of using role theory that embraces the importance of decision-makers' perspective, the interconnections between role conceptions and ideas prevalent among citizens, the issues of change and adaptation in national role conceptions and the degree to which it is possible to hold multiple roles.¹ Nevertheless, the theory of national role conceptions does not explain why some countries tend to behave more reactively than others and implement so-called irrational policies. Here I mean not those governments whose assertive and occasionally aggressive actions constitute a part of their overall coherent strategies based on existent understanding of their national roles, but the states that behave this way despite their role conceptions that presuppose cooperative behavior.

Two relevant examples are the current Turkish and Russian foreign policies under the AKP and Vladimir Putin's rule respectively. Despite growing interconnections with the Western powers and active participation in international organizations, these two countries continue to act apprehensively and often see a conspiracy behind others' intentions. This sense of distrust reached its highest level in the last years revealing itself in the Ukrainian and the refugee crisis. Russia's annexation of Crimea became a very unpleasant surprise to the world's leading politicians. Considered a severe violation of international law by a majority of countries, I would argue, it cannot be explained adequately without addressing psycho-social motives of the

¹ Sebastian Harnisch, Cornelia Frank, and Hanns W. Maull, *Role Theory in International Relations*, (Taylor & Francis, 2011), 27.

president. Concerning Turkey, the refugee crisis became a point when Erdogan's rhetoric became unprecedentedly hostile and accusative and his politics towards the EU intimidating to the extreme. Despite the opening of new perspectives in the negotiation process with the EU and an overall opportunity to enhance its international political status, the government started seeing enemies everywhere be it Turkey's Western partners, neighborhood countries or Russia. Therefore, the research puzzle is why Turkey and Russia tend to overreact on external incentives when their behavior cannot be explained sufficiently by rationalist explananda.

I would suggest that this type of behavior can be explained by the national trauma on which Turkish and Russian state were established. After the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, unacceptable conditions of the Sevre Treaty were imposed on Turkey, according to which it was supposed to lose a significant part of its territory. Although the treaty had been ultimately revised, it, nevertheless, resulted in Turkey developing an almost pathological complex about imagined external threats and a notorious distrust towards the West. The same perception is typical for Russia. The collapse of the Soviet Union transformed it from one of the two great powers into a middle power, at times highly dependent on Western assistance for its survival. The refusal to be treated as an equal partner resulted in confidence that the West, and particularly the US, has only the goal of deterring Russia, similar to the Cold War period.

The comparison of two countries is interesting due to the existence of some features that make their experiences similar. Thus, initially in both countries governments adopted clearly Western-orientated policies while at the same time dramatically reducing the importance of relations with their neighborhood. This way they demonstrated their distinctiveness to the previous autocratic regimes and put them in one line with democratic countries thus trying to be recognized by their significant Other. Still, the idea of the nefarious, plotting, conspiring, and

neo-imperialist West has always been present and its proponents could regain power after every unsuccessful attempt to forge closer ties with Western societies and institutions. For both countries the beginning of the 2000s became a turning point when the new governments prioritized a new, more proactive role in international relations. Getting a constant reassurance about ill-intentioned Western behavior, illustrated by ultimately fruitless accession negotiations with the EU for Turkey and NATO expansion for Russia, regimes in both countries have gradually become increasingly autocratic. Moreover, feeling rejected by the West, the countries presented their own version and vision of reality and understanding of international norms. Still, I would argue that this threat perception based implementation of national role conceptions significantly depends on the leader's personality. In the Russian case we could evidence it during the 4-year presidency of Dmitry Medvedev who implemented a number of reforms aimed at modernizing the country and launched a so-called reset in the relations with the US. In Turkey recent developments can be linked to the personality of Recep Tayyip Erdogan who managed to fully concentrate power in his hands making appointments on the basis of loyalty and getting rid of those who demonstrate any hint of dissent.

Based on the listed arguments, I would propose two hypotheses that I am going to test in this thesis:

1. There is a stable perception of threat that influences Turkish and Russian national role conceptions.
2. The use of threats and conspiracy theories as a political tool depends on the leadership personality.

1.1 Methodology

The thesis presents a comparative case study of Turkish and Russian national role conceptions. The choice of cases is based on Mill's method of agreement according to which there is a difference in some key independent variables but an existence of one common independent variable results in the same dependent variable.² Thus, it will be demonstrated that despite the divergence in some important characteristics that influence the formation of national identity, such as, for example, relations with NATO, the existence of a common variable, which is threat perception, will have similar implications on national role conceptions of Turkey and Russia. To prove the importance of the factor of threat perception and to demonstrate the need for it to be taken into consideration in a comparative study, the method of process tracing will be applied as well. Process tracing can be defined as "the systematic examination of diagnostic evidence selected and analyzed in light of research questions and hypotheses posed by the investigator."³ According to Checkel, this method is ideally employed to study causal mechanisms between independent and dependent variables.⁴ In the cases of Russia and Turkey it will be applied to verify the hypothesis that national traumas, caused by the collapse of the USSR and the Treaty of Sevres, resulted in a high level of threat perception that came to dominate the perception of Self of both countries as independent nation-states. Therefore, I am going to use threat perception, which also includes the sense of distrust and the prevalence of conspiracy theories about other countries, as an independent variable and check how it influences a dependent variable, which is the implementation of national role conceptions by the elites. To

² John Stuart Mill, *A system of logic, ratiocinative and inductive: being a connected view of the principles of evidence and the methods of scientific investigation*, (Longmans, green, and Company, 1884).

³ David Collier, "Understanding process tracing," *PS Political science and politics* 44.4 (2011): 823.

⁴ Audie Klotz and Prakash Deepa, *Qualitative methods in international relations*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 114-127.

implement the method of process tracing I will concentrate on key events between Turkey and Russia and its significant Other, the West, to investigate how they contributed to the strengthening of that perception.

The way decision makers perceive the position of their countries on the international arena and the possible existence of threats is explicitly reflected into their addresses to the nation. Even if the statements do not reveal possible hidden motives, they, nevertheless, provide a picture of how the politicians want the country to be seen in the eyes of its population and other states. For this reason, as the data for the research, annual presidential addresses to the nation will be used. In the Russian case it will be presidential addresses to Federal Assembly from 1994 until 2015, and in Turkish case, Opening Speeches in Turkish Grand National Assembly. Thus, the addresses to Federal Assembly cover 6 speeches of Boris Yeltsin from 1994 to 1999, 4 speeches of Dmitry Medvedev from 2008 to 2011 and 12 speeches of the current president Vladimir Putin from 2000 to 2007 and from 2012 to 2015. 1994 was chosen as a starting point as it was the year when the first address was performed according to the requirement of the new Russian Constitution of 1993. From that time on, we can trace the construction of the Russian identity and the affirmation of its national interests. The first two years after the collapse of the Soviet Union can be seen as a transitional period for the country as its economy was too weak and it was yet to be decided in what measure newborn Russia could and should have adopted the legacy of the USSR in political and ideological terms.

As only one speech per year was used, not the number of times the theme was mentioned was counted, but the very fact of its appearance was checked. Still, there is a need to consider the fact that in some speeches threats appear as existential but in others there is only the indication of their possibility in the future or they are relatively small to make a real impact on the national

strategy. For the mentioned reasons the following way to demonstrate the changes throughout the years was chosen. The numbers from 0 to 3 will be assigned to each speech with the following interpretations:

- 0,5 - where one potential/small threat was mentioned;
- 1 – one real threat or two potential/small threats;
- 1,5 – one real and one potential/small threat;
- 2 – two real threats;
- 2,5 and 3 – according to the previous mechanism.

The analysis of annual presidential speeches in Turkey will also start in the beginning of 1990s due to the fact that previous policies were constrained by the environment of the Cold War. Since Turkey is a representative republic it would have been more appropriate to analyze the speeches of Turkish Prime Ministers. Nevertheless, there are no main annual addresses of the Prime Minister to the Parliament, therefore, we cannot apply the same approach to threat perception dynamics as in the Russian case. Instead, I will use the qualitative analysis of Prime Ministers' important addresses and statements and look for the topic of the external threat in them.

Finally, qualitative content analysis will be applied in order to examine the representation of Russian and Turkish national role conceptions by their elites. Content analysis is a set of analytical techniques, in which systematic and objective procedures are employed to describe the content of messages by using qualitative or quantitative indicators.⁵ As data, the core speeches of the presidents, premier-ministers and foreign policy ministers, such as addresses to the nation,

⁵ Mírian Oliveira, et al, "Thematic Content Analysis: Is There a Difference Between the Support Provided by the MAXQDA® and NVivo® Software Packages," *Proceedings of the 12th European Conference on Research Methods for Business and Management Studies*. 2013, 74.

UN General Assembly speeches, etc. will be analyzed. The analysis begins with the early 2000s to coincide with the rise to power of Vladimir Putin and the Justice and Development Party (AKP). I am going to apply the list of role types offered by Holsti⁶ and improved by Chafetz⁷ to ascertain which of them prevail in the politicians' speeches. These types include a regional leader, a global system leader, a faithful ally, a regional protector, an anti-imperialist, a mediator-integrator, an example, a protectee, a regional subsystem collaborator, a global system collaborator, a bridge, an internal developer, active independent and independent. As already stated, preference is given to qualitative analysis because the researcher's knowledge about the context in which the politicians' representations occurred are a prerequisite for better interpretation.

The thesis proceeds as follows: in the first chapter, I will provide theoretical background on the concept of national identity and the importance of the "Other" in the process of its construction. Then I will elaborate on the connection of the identity of the country with its national role conceptions and the role of threat perception as an intervening variable. In the second chapter, I will trace the development of threat perception and the sense of distrust in Turkish and Russian history and see how it becomes apparent and measurable in the political discourse of the elites. Finally, the aim of the third chapter is to show the construction of national role conceptions by Turkish and Russian decision-makers and to prove that threat perception influences the implementation of these roles especially during the rule of Putin and Erdogan.

⁶ Kalevi Holsti, "National role conceptions in the study of foreign policy," *International Studies Quarterly*, 14(3) (1970).

⁷ Glenn Chafetz, Hillel Abramson, and Suzette Grillot, "Role theory and foreign policy: Belarussian and Ukrainian compliance with the nuclear nonproliferation regime," *Political Psychology* (1996).

2. Theoretical Framework

The chapter is going to introduce the connection between such notions as nation, national identity, national role conceptions and threat perception. Following constructivist ideas, role theory, which is one of the main topic of the thesis, examines the interaction between the agents and the structure of international relations.⁸ Thus, the concepts of identity and (self-) image become central for understanding the decision-making process. Nevertheless, there are also some intervening variables, such as introduced threat perception, which influences prioritization of some roles over the others and may cause significant changes in a way the roles will be implemented.

2.1 National identity

Arguably, the central category that needs to be analyzed in order to understand the behavior of states in the international arena is the notion of nation due to the fact that the goals of states are said to be based on national interests and the defense of these interests. Most definitions of nations allow either describe them as historical communities formed on a basis of common language, territory and other factors, or as imagined political communities.⁹ The first interpretation is promoted by Anthony Smith, who argues that the roots of nations should be found in history and mainly in the lives of ethnic communities¹⁰ while the second one can be found in the works of Benedict Anderson¹¹ and Ernest Gellner¹² among other modernists, of who the latter in particular proposes the congruence of a political and national unit, stating that

⁸ Sebastian Harnisch, Cornelia Frank, and Hanns W. Maull, eds., *Role Theory in International Relations*, 16.

⁹ Anthony Smith, *Nationalism. Theory, Ideology, History*, (Polity Press, Cambridge, 2001), 11.

¹⁰ Anthony Smith, *Nationalism. Theory, Ideology, History*, (Polity Press, Cambridge, 2001).

¹¹ Benedict, Anderson, *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*, (Verso Books, 2006).

¹² Ernest Gellner, *Nations and nationalism*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 1983).

nationalism is a project undertaken by political elites. Regardless of these differences, the determinant of any nation is its identity. According to Guibernau, national identity is a collective feeling of belonging to a nation and of sharing the attributes that set it apart from other nations. Thus the fundamental elements of the concept are continuity over time and differentiation from others.¹³ Following the constructivist approach, Tsygankov states that the formation of national identity necessarily happens through interactions with other actors. Moreover, as a result of such interactions, some nations or cultural communities emerge as more important than others and become so-called significant Others. It is through these significant Others national Selves define their identity and develop appropriate actions. Therefore, the relations with and the recognition of the Other become an essential element of how the state sees itself on the international arena and can either encourage or discourage the Self to act cooperatively.¹⁴

Still, it is impossible to separate national identity from concrete interpretations of it by its leaders because identity itself does not explain specific policy choices; only specific interpretations and representations of this identity by individuals and groups lead to policies. Thus we can apply the notion of ‘national identity conceptions’ offered by Hymans, who define them as individuals’ understanding of the nation’s identity, the sense of what the nation stands for and of its relative position in the hierarchy of states.¹⁵ He proposes that these two questions of self-identification directly correspond to the dimension of solidarity and the dimension of status respectively. The first indicates whether ‘we’ as a unitary group agree on the fact of sharing interests and values with ‘them’ or not, and can be conceived as a horizontal dimension of self-other comparison. The second refers to the status dimension and requires the perceived choice of

¹³ Montserrat Guibernau, *The Identity of Nations*, (Polity, 2007), 10-11.

¹⁴ Andrei Tsygankov, *Russia's foreign policy: change and continuity in national identity*, 15.

¹⁵ Jacques Hymans, *The psychology of nuclear proliferation: Identity, emotions and foreign policy*, (Cambridge University Press, 2006), 18-19.

us being their equal, and probably even superior, or accepting that we are below them.¹⁶ Hymans argues that the second dimension, which can be called vertical, is often ignored in international relations theory. Nevertheless, it is central in the field of identity research due to the fact that oppositional consciousness is not sufficient for coming into conflict with the dominant group. It should be complemented by a belief in the potential efficacy of opposing the other group.¹⁷

Finally, the realization of self-identity in the international system that comes from the constant comparison of ‘us’ versus ‘them’ presupposes the possession of roles that a state prescribes to itself and performs in relation to those ‘others’. According to Wendt, adopting roles implies always existing capacity for character planning to engage in critical self-reflection and life-changing choices.¹⁸ It forms national role conceptions, which are the policymakers’ own definitions of decisions, commitments, rules, and actions suitable to the relevant state, and the functions it should perform.¹⁹ They help empirically answer the basic questions of national identity concerning the aforementioned solidarity and status dimensions.²⁰

2.2. National role conceptions

Having defined what constitutes the core of national identities, policy-makers already have a vision of their countries’ place in the international system. Comparing the characteristics of their own states to other states, they get the understanding of who real and potential allies and enemies are, and also what duties and responsibilities they should undertake. Thus, any state

¹⁶ Ibid., 21-23.

¹⁷ Ibid., 23.

¹⁸ Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is what states make of it: the social construction of power politics," *International organization* 46.02 (1992): 419.

¹⁹ Kalevi Holsti, "National role conceptions in the study of foreign policy," *International Studies Quarterly*, 14(3) (1970): 233-309.

²⁰ Jacques Hymans, *The psychology of nuclear proliferation: Identity, emotions and foreign policy*, (Cambridge University Press, 2006), 20.

prescribes to itself a number of roles that it needs to perform both regionally and globally. These roles serve as a base for future actions that will depend on which role will be given more priority in a particular situation and period of time. According to Walker, role analysis has three potential values: descriptive, organizational, and explanatory.²¹ Descriptively, concepts provide a vocabulary of images that allow analyzing foreign policy on all three levels: individual, national and systemic. Organizationally, concepts permit the adoption of either a structure-oriented or a process-oriented perspective. The first option implies the focus on the structure of roles at the national level or on the structure of a set of roles which define the relations between countries. The second option concerns the concentration on the processes of role location, role conflicts as well as their appearance and disappearance. Finally, the explanatory value mostly depends on the capability of a researcher or policy maker to apply self-contained propositions and methods or a set of auxiliary limiting conditions and rules.²²

The first scholar who applied role theory from social science to the study of international relations was Kalevi Holsti in 1970.²³ He came with a critique towards the previous attempts to divide countries into several groups based exclusively on their position to the great powers during the cold war. Such approaches, which commonly included the terms bloc leader, allies, non-aligned ignored the fact that the states simultaneously participate in different sets of interactions and, hence, do not explain variations in behavior of countries, which fall under one of the categories.²⁴ For instance, a number of countries could be united under the broad term of ally. Nevertheless, this category itself did not explain why some of them would pursue regional goals, while others would avoid any kind of interactions with their neighbors. Holsti's new

²¹ Stephen Walker, *Role theory and foreign policy analysis*, (Duke University Press, 1987), 2-3.

²² Ibid.

²³ Kalevi Holsti, "National role conceptions in the study of foreign policy," 233-309.

²⁴ Ibid., 235.

classification included bastion of revolution-liberator, regional leader, regional protector, active independent, liberation supporter, anti-imperialist agent, defender of the faith, mediator-integrator, regional-subsystem collaborator, developer, bridge, faithful ally, independent, example, internal development, isolate, and protectee.²⁵ The proposed extension was important as foreign policy decisions and actions result from the interplay between policymakers' role conceptions, domestic pressures and peculiarities of the external environment.²⁶ Although Holsti's roles continue to serve as a reference point for subsequent works, they had to be modified as they were developed after the Cold War, which set a completely different configuration of power and therefore a need for modified categories.

An improved classification was developed by Chafetz et al who excluded such roles as bastion of revolution-liberator, liberation supporter, defender of the faith, developer, faithful ally, and isolate but added global system leader and global system collaborator as relevant for the post-Cold War era.²⁷ It should be noted that both studies were conducted in order to find wider connections between national role conceptions and other characteristics. Thus Holsti assigned values from 0 to 5 for each of his conception types to assess the country's level of international activity-passivity while Chafetz aimed to link the types to the tendency towards nuclear status.

An important contribution to the role theory was made by James Rosenau who states that role concepts can reveal microdynamics of global change that occurs as a result of role conflicts when the actors have to make a choice between them.²⁸ He also introduces the concept of scenarios, which explains the possible development of events between several actors when their

²⁵ Ibid., 255.

²⁶ Ibid., 243.

²⁷ Glenn Chafetz, Hillel Abramson, and Suzette Grillot, "Role theory and foreign policy: Belarussian and Ukrainian compliance with the nuclear nonproliferation regime," *Political Psychology* (1996): 727-757.

²⁸ James Rosenau, *Turbulence in world politics: A theory of change and continuity*, (Princeton University Press, 1990), 216.

behavior is restrained by established roles.²⁹ The point is that scenarios are attached to the role but not to their occupants, which means that different occupants resolve similar role conflicts in different ways.³⁰ Consequently, his work supports the idea of the importance of personal factors in the decision-making process and challenges the realist notion of states as unitary actors.

Another valuable contribution to the study of national role conceptions was introduced by Naomi Wish. Through the empirical analysis of decision-makers' speeches she demonstrated how national role conceptions lead to different types of international behavior.³¹ Acknowledging the pioneering works of Holsti and Walker for foreign policy analysis, she highlights their limitations that, according to her, are caused by the concentration on the level of international involvement in the first case and on roles that are either U.S. or Soviet Union orientated in the second one.³² Instead of combining countries in groups on the base of existing classification, she offered such categories as elites' perceptions of status, motivational orientation and issue areas and showed their connection to foreign policy behavior.³³

2.3 Threat perception

Traditionally, threat perception occupies one of the central places in realist paradigm. For both classical and structural realists threats are the result of power asymmetries. Any shifts in power balance will make some states feel less secure due to the anarchical character of the

²⁹ Ibid, 217.

³⁰ Ibid., 220.

³¹ Naomi Bailin Wish, "Foreign policy makers and their national role conceptions," *International Studies Quarterly* (1980): 532-554.

³² Ibid., 534-535.

³³ Ibid., 536.

international system, where no hierarchically superior global guarantor of peace exists.³⁴ Antithetically, the most fundamental work on the role of perceptions in international politics is the one of Robert Jervis who argues that the explanation of crucial decisions is impossible without considering the decision-makers' beliefs about the world and the images of others. He claims that although perceptions are not the only important variable that influences the behavior of countries, the actors will often respond identically having the same perceptions. Otherwise, it is quite easy to find the reasons of the differences in the decision-making process.³⁵

According to Cohen, a perception of threat is anticipation on the part of an observer, the decision maker, of impending harm – usually of a military, strategic, or economic kind.³⁶ He bases his assumptions on the partial critique of the fundamental work of David Singer, who wrote that threats arise out of a situation of armed hostility, in which each body of policy-makers assumes that the other entertains aggressive designs that will be persuaded by physical and direct means if the estimated gains seem to outweigh the estimated losses. A combination of recent events, historical memory, and identifiable sociocultural differences may provides the vehicle by which this vague out-group suspicion may be readily converted into concrete hostility toward a specific external actor.³⁷ Cohen objects such approach saying that Singer overlooked the irrational and involuntary aspect of threat perception. He states that there is a crucial gap between a cold conclusion that a given opponent possesses a certain intent and the essentially subjective conviction, or the “gut feeling”.³⁸ Moreover, there should be predispositions to

³⁴ Rocio Garcia-Retamero, Stephanie M. Müller, and David L. Rousseau, "The impact of value similarity and power on the perception of threat," *Political Psychology* 33.2 (2012): 180.

³⁵ Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*, (Princeton University Press, 1976), 28-31.

³⁶ Raymond Cohen, *Threat perception in international crisis*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1979), 4.

³⁷ David J. Singer, "Threat-perception and the armament-tension dilemma," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (1958): 90-105.

³⁸ Raymond Cohen, *Threat perception in international crisis*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1979), 6.

perceive threats, which are derived from distrust, past experience, contingency planning, and personal anxiety.³⁹

Cohen argues that familiarity is an important factor that gives a reason to expect the stimulus to be present in the particular situation in which the actor finds himself. He will likely perceive even a rare stimulus if preceding events indicate its further appearance. Thus, the more familiar a phenomenon is, the more quickly it will be recognized.⁴⁰ There are also some background factors that are important for the current perception of threat:

1. Previous relations between the perceiver of the threat and the source of the threat, including historical as well as recent events;
2. Any previous experience of threat on the part of the perceiver, and other personal characteristics with a bearing on the subject, including such psychological factors as exaggerated anxiety and mistrust, personal attitudes, and philosophical beliefs;
3. The balance of capabilities between the relevant actors (diplomatic capabilities, military and economic means, and the help of allies);
4. Structural factors (influence of bureaucratic forms and procedures, institutional interests, and contingency planning;
5. The juridical framework (agreements, international law, and norms of behavior) within which relations are conducted;
6. The policy and interest of the perceiver in the area or issue in question.⁴¹

One more important factor that has a direct connection to the emergence of threat perception, according to Cohen, is the belief in the existence of tacit rules of the game that have to be kept by all states. In general, they prescribe the boundaries of permissible behavior without

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*, (Princeton University Press, 1976), 147.

⁴¹ Raymond Cohen, *Threat perception in international crisis*, 25-26.

necessarily being restricted by international law.⁴² Providing the example of the Cold War period, he illustrates how these rules signified the recognition of spheres of influence and the illegitimacy of nuclear war.⁴³ The major source of threat perception is the belief that another state violated the commonly accepted rules of the game, or the norms, which automatically makes it “the other” in relation to the violated “us”.⁴⁴

An additional point is made by Garcia-Retamero et al. who suggest that before threat perception is developing based on the power balance, decision-makers estimate the value similarity between their society and the outgroup. If they conclude that there are no shared values, the possibility of threat perception based on a weaker relative position grows.⁴⁵

⁴² Ibid., 180-181.

⁴³ Ibid., 180.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 178-189.

⁴⁵ Rocio Garcia-Retamero, Stephanie M. Müller, and David L. Rousseau, "The impact of value similarity and power on the perception of threat," *Political Psychology* 33.2 (2012): 182.

3. Threat perception in Turkey and Russia

Zarakol emphasizes a striking resemblance between Turkey and Russia despite the differences between these countries' material conditions. Thus, they both are torn between the West and the East, which is seen by the countries' elites either as a weakness that needs to be overcome by choosing one side, or as an advantage that can be exploited, for instance by acting as a bridge.⁴⁶ He further proposes that to be torn between the East and the West is to exist with the same dilemmas that are faced by stigmatized individuals.⁴⁷ For both the choice is between accepting a stigmatized attribute and try to improve his life within that awareness or pretending that a stigma does not exist or may be overcome with the right measures. Nevertheless, according to Zarakol, the first option implies admitting one's own second-class status while the second one presupposes constant dissonance without a guarantee of success.⁴⁸ Both Turkey and Russia found themselves stigmatized, defeated, and stigmatized again because of trying to escape a stigma position.⁴⁹ The purpose of the chapter is to demonstrate the origin of such self-characterization in the two countries and to investigate how this issue is revealed in their political discourse.

3.1 Turkish Sevres Syndrome

The contemporary high level of Turkish threat perception originates in the Sevres Treaty that was signed by the representatives of the Ottoman Empire as a part of the Versailles Peace Treaties in 1920 after the end of the First World War. The agreement proposed the division of the Ottoman Empire between zones of influence of the Western powers, new Kurdish and Armenian states, a loss of significant territory to Greece, and a Turkish rump state. The rejection of this peace by the Turkish nationalists led by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk resulted in the Turkish War of Independence between 1919 and 1923 and the conclusion of far more favorable Lausanne

⁴⁶ Ayse Zarakol, *After defeat: how the East learned to live with the West*. Vol. 118, (Cambridge University Press, 2010), 9.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 7-8.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 12.

Treaty. For the new Turkish elites the Sevres Treaty became the epitome of external and internal existential threats posed and exemplified by the actions of the West and ethnic minority groups.⁵⁰ Fatma Gocek states that the memory of the Sevres Treaty is still alive and meaningful in interpreting a contemporary Turkish experience.⁵¹ What is important, it concerns not only Turkish nationalists but a majority of the population.⁵² The EU requirements, for example, that Turkey needs to satisfy in order to join the Union are equated to the Sevres Treaty.⁵³ Although never implemented, the Treaty manifests itself in the so-called 'Sevres syndrome' that implies interpreting public interactions through the sense of fear of abandonment and betrayal by the West.⁵⁴ Gocek's main argument is that the syndrome was created with an objective of nation-state formation and later reproduced to sustain the political power of Republican elites and the military.⁵⁵ She also points out a paradoxical feature of the syndrome: once it was supposed to falter after the end of the Cold War, the period characterized by the prospects of EU membership, emergence of the Justice and Development Party, economic stability and the capture of Abdullah Ocalan, a leader of the Kurdistan Workers' Party, the Sevre syndrome was fully developed. Her explanation is based on the proposition that this new political tranquility contributed to the emergence of the alternate model based not on the necessity of the preservation of the state but on the rights and well-being of the citizens.⁵⁶

According to Gocek, there are three groups of scholars that explain the Sevres syndrome in different ways. The first group, which approaches it through the historical perspective,

⁵⁰ Trkay Salim Nefes, "Understanding Anti-Semitic Rhetoric in Turkey Through The Svres Syndrome," *Turkish Studies* 16.4 (2015): 575.

⁵¹ Fatma Mge Gek, *The transformation of Turkey: redefining state and society from the Ottoman Empire to the modern era*, (Vol. 103. IB Tauris, 2011), 98.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 99.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 100.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 99-100.

ascribes susceptibility to the syndrome exclusively to the Kemalists who were advocates of Western reforms and saw the origin of threat in the country's unfortunate geopolitical location. The scholars of the second group refer only to radical Kemalists who use the syndrome in their nationalist rhetoric in order to embed the ideas in society. The last group's ideas are presented by Ahmet Davutoglu who connect the Insecurity Syndrome to Turkey's EU membership process.⁵⁷

Dietrich Jung and Wolfgang Piccoli describe the first group as being represented by Kemalists who believe that Turkey is situated in a bad neighborhood and in a ring of evil that resulted from the territorial grievances and various kinds of resentments, tensions and mutual suspicions left from the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire.⁵⁸ In the Kemalists' interpretation political Islam and Kurdish nationalism become equal to foreign interference, therefore there is no clear distinction between internal and external threats.⁵⁹ But while direct threats are coming from the immediate neighborhood, there is also a sense of distrust to the Western partners resulting from pressure for democratization and respect for human rights, which are also perceived through the lens of Sevres.⁶⁰

The second group, represented by ultra-nationalists, use the Treaty of Sevres as an indicator of the heroic past of the Turkish nation that succeeded in fundamental revision of the Treaty's conditions that were originally dictated by the imperialist forces.⁶¹ Thus, the reference to Sevres was constantly made with an objective of consolidating the citizenry as a unitary nation. A feat accomplished by silencing all those who were not Turks.⁶² Defining the Turkish

⁵⁷ Fatma Müge Göçek, *The transformation of Turkey: redefining state and society from the Ottoman Empire to the modern era*, 100-107.

⁵⁸ Dietrich Jung and Wolfgang Piccoli, *Turkey at the crossroads: Ottoman legacies and a greater Middle East*, (Zed books, 2001), 116.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 117.

⁶¹ Fatma Müge Göçek, *The transformation of Turkey: redefining state and society from the Ottoman Empire to the modern era*, 103.

⁶² Ibid.

nation as noble, the politicians opposed it to non-Muslim minorities, such as Greeks and Armenians, thus making the definition of the nation based on exclusiveness.⁶³ Moreover, such nationalist rhetoric also applied to the existence of an external threat such as the EU whose allegedly true aim was to sow the seeds of discord and division with the radical reforms it demanded from Turkey. Thus, the reforms demanded by the Union supposedly aimed to weaken national unity and replace the Lausanne Treaty by the Sevres Treaty.⁶⁴

Ahmet Davutoglu, the proponent of the third approach, connects the Insecurity Syndrome to the historical reflex that was formed as a consequence of the Western division of the Ottoman Empire based primarily on religion and then on ethnicity.⁶⁵ European integration arouses a sense of danger firstly, because of its supranational character and secondly, it underlines the ethnic and cultural identities within countries, which can lead to Kurdish and Islamists' desire to separate and form their own states.⁶⁶

3.2 Russia's notion of external threat

Despite the attempts of balancing between Europe and Asia, the West solely played the role of the significant Other for Russia as well as for Turkey. In Russia's case it has been playing a prominent role in creating the country's system of meanings and representing a superior civilization whose influences cannot be ignored. This view was reflected in three schools of thought that have been dominating since the country's imperial past. These schools are

⁶³ Ibid., 103-104.

⁶⁴ Kemal Kirişçi, *Turkey's foreign policy in turbulent times*, (European Union Institute for Security Studies, 2006), 34.

⁶⁵ Ahmet Davutoglu cited in Fatma Müge Göçek, *The transformation of Turkey: redefining state and society from the Ottoman Empire to the modern era*, 107.

⁶⁶ Ibid: 107-108.

Westernist, Statist, and Civilizationist.⁶⁷ Westernizers emphasized Russia's similarity with the West and argued that only by joining the community of 'Western civilized nations' the country would be able to respond to its threats and overcome its inherent backwardness.⁶⁸ Statists ascribed priority to values of power, sovereignty and stability over freedom and democracy. Generally, they are not anti-Western but agree to the establishment of liberal values only if they have the potential to strengthen the state.⁶⁹ Finally, Civilizationists have always opposed Russian to the Western values and presented Russia as a distinct civilization. Their responses to security dilemmas have been more aggressive and were illustrated in the ideologies and doctrines of imperialism, Pan-Slavism, and world revolution.⁷⁰

The end of the two great powers' ideological struggle did not result in the end of distrust of the West. The collapse of the Soviet Union left the country in a very weak economic position and, hence, dependent on Western support and investments. The sudden fall from the status of a great power to a developing country left its mark on the national pride and created a perception that the West would try to prevent Russia from regaining power. However, this sense of humiliation, inferiority and insecurity has been developed over centuries. According to Tsygankov, since the conquest by the Mongols and with further wars in Europe and Asia, Russians have developed a complex of insecurity and a readiness to sacrifice everything for the country's independence and sovereignty.⁷¹ Thus the notion of external threat became central for the aforementioned school of Statism, which is considered to be the most influential in Russia's foreign policy thinking.⁷² Despite occasionally Westernizers such as Gorbachev and Yeltsin

⁶⁷ Andrei Tsygankov, *Russia's foreign policy: change and continuity in national identity*, (Rowman & Littlefield, 2010), 4.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 5.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 5-6.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 7.

⁷¹ Ibid., 5.

⁷² Ibid.

raising to power, Statists have continued to hold a significant power during Russian history. Thus, the rapid shift away from the initially favorable approach towards the West in the beginning of the 1990s can be explained with the success of Statists in identifying new threats emerging from instabilities in the former Soviet Republics, hence, making it difficult for Westernizers to continue policies of disengagement from the periphery.⁷³

In distinction to Turkey, Russian perception of threat to its nationhood is often located outside its borders. This is the result of the vagueness of the concept of nation that is demonstrated by the transformation of nationalist ideas from the USSR to post-Soviet republics. Brubaker argues that the Soviet Union successfully institutionalized multinationality, first, naming the republics after the ethnicities and, second, providing them with a high level of autonomy. Consequently, by the time of its collapse the republics and, namely, their national elites had already been prepared to conduct the policies on their own.⁷⁴ The problem was that 17% of Russians were left outside of their ethnical homeland, thus, suddenly having become minorities within new states. It had direct implications on the development of the concept of ‘Russianness’, which was framed around the idea of Russia being a divided nation.⁷⁵ The idea leaves open the question of which would be the main criteria to define the concept, ethno-national or territorial. In this respect, an attitude towards a number of Russians living abroad, or ‘compatriots’, became a cornerstone in the process. Still, it provides the elites with moral justifications for pursuing policies directed towards the defense of the Russian nation where the most prominent example is the annexation of Crimea implemented because of the perceived threat to its Russian population.

⁷³ Ibid., 18-19.

⁷⁴ Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism refrained: Nationhood and the national question in the new Europe*, (Cambridge, UK, 1996).

⁷⁵ Marlene Laruelle, "Russia as a 'Divided Nation,' from Compatriots to Crimea," *Problems of Post-Communism* 62: 88-97, 2015.

3.3 Threat perception in the political discourse in Turkey and Russia

Frequently, giving the speeches, politicians are constrained by the normative frames of the international organizations especially when the membership is very important to them. Therefore, they tend to concentrate on the flaws in the functioning of the international system and on threats in general without specifying, which of them are the most urgent for their countries. For this reason, it is important to consider the speeches where personal perceptions of the elites are expressed more openly. In his famous Munich speech of 2007, Vladimir Putin supported this idea by stressing the usefulness of the conference in the possibility to avoid excessive politeness and the necessity to speak in empty diplomatic terms, so he could directly say what he really thought.⁷⁶ The mentioned problem of limits is less pronounced in the domestic speeches when the messages concerning perceived threats are delivered more clearly partly with the objective of consolidation the nation.

⁷⁶ “Putin's Prepared Remarks at 43rd Munich Conference on Security Policy,” *The Washington Post*, February 12, 2007, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/02/12/AR2007021200555.html>.



Note: 1994-1999 (Yeltsin), 2000-2007 (Putin), 2008-2011 (Medvedev), 2012-2015 (Putin)

The study of the presidential addresses proved that the topic of an external threat indeed occupies an important position in the Russia's assessment of the international situation and actors' intentions.⁷⁷ The list of all mentioned threats and the number assigned to them can be found in the appendix. Threat issues included the expansion of NATO and building nuclear complexes in Russia's neighborhood countries, sponsoring of nationalist forces inside the Russia's borders, international terrorism and issues of contested borders. The latter appeared in the speeches of Boris Yeltsin as their unsettledness came as a direct result of the establishment of a number of new states along the long Russian border and represented a danger in the case of their use by extremists. Yet, the discourse was renewed in 2013 by Vladimir Putin who strengthened control measures over immigrants coming from the Southern borders.⁷⁸ But in

⁷⁷ Presidential Addresses to the Federal Assembly 1994-2013, *the official site of the Kremlin*, <http://en.kremlin.ru/>.

⁷⁸ Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly, December 12, 2013, *the official site of the Kremlin*, accessed April 20, 2016, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/19825>.

general, two issues, Western policies and international terrorism, were represented as major dangers for Russia.

Clearly the main source of the threat is coming from the antagonistic intentions of the West and the US in particular. The references to the West as a source of danger has started already in 1995 with Yeltsin's statement that it tries to prevent Russia's integration with CIS and the warning that Russia would not tolerate NATO expansion.⁷⁹ Nevertheless, in the addresses of the first president the issue of threat is not pronounced and is limited to possible conflict with NATO. Later, the topic of alliance's expansion comes along with and as the archetype of Western conspiracy theories in general. The West is represented as a strong opponent who aspires to prevent Russia from regaining power. In order to do that it supports nationalist movements inside the country in order to sow internal discord and division. Moreover, it uses any opportunity to expand ever closer towards Russia's borders and to limit the country's freedom of actions by criticizing its behavior and turning its friends against it. The second major issue, which is international terrorism, started being mentioned from the beginning of Vladimir Putin's presidency in 2000.⁸⁰ Before, even if there were some references to this problem, they were local in nature. An interesting fact is that terrorism often used to be mentioned when there was no clear threat coming from the West. In other cases it was mentioned as an additional threat to the antagonistic Western intentions but also its urgency was explained as a result of the erroneous interventionist policies of the US, particularly in the Middle East.

⁷⁹ Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly, 1995 (Послание Президента России Бориса Ельцина Федеральному Собранию РФ: «О действенности государственной власти в России» 1995 год), *Intelros*, accessed April 20, 2016, http://www.intelros.ru/2007/02/05/poslanie_prezidenta_rosii_borisa_elcina_federalnomu_sobraniju_rf_o_dejstvennosti_gosudarstvennoj_vlasti_v_rossii_1995_god.html.

⁸⁰ Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, July 8, 2000, *the official site of the Kremlin*, accessed April 20, 2016, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/21480>.

In spite of the stability in appearance of above threats in the politicians' speeches, there is clear evidence that their intensity varies in accordance to who occupies the presidential post. During Yeltsin's presidency, the emphasis on the external threat was not strong and only in 1995 achieved the score 1,5, yet no substantial threats were mentioned.⁸¹ The possible explanation for such attitude is the poor condition of the Russian economy and the need for international support and cooperation to recover. In the years of Putin's rule threat perception played a significant role in defining the country's interests. Only in the beginning of his presidency in 2001 and 2002 its intensity was 0 and 0,5 respectively. The break in generally antagonistic rhetoric can be connected with the global focus on fighting terrorism after 9/11, so Russia could try to concentrate on strengthening its position in diplomacy and contribution to conflicts resolution. In the final year of his eight year rule, Putin's threat perception was particularly high and achieved the score of 2 when he accused the West of building military bases along the Russian borders and using financial resources to intervene in the country's internal affairs.⁸² Moreover, in aforementioned Munich speech he made it clear that no one can feel safe in the world where one country, namely the US, keeps overstepping its limits and considers itself the only center of decision-making. While advocating multipolarity, there is a presence of the constant offense that Russia is not treated as an equal partner. It concerns the attempts to teach Russia how to be a democracy, not taking into consideration Russia's rapid economic growth and continuing NATO expansion, which undermines mutual trust.⁸³

An interesting case is Medvedev's presidency. Although liberal, he is, commonly thought to be Putin's man who was used to follow his instructions. Still, the analysis of his addresses to

⁸¹ Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly, 1995.

⁸² Annual Address to the Federal Assembly, April 26, 2007, *the official site of the Kremlin*, accessed April 20, 2016, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/24203>.

⁸³ "Putin's Prepared Remarks at 43rd Munich Conference on Security Policy."

the Federal Assembly indicates decline in perception of threat with every consequent year but later there is sharp growth in it since 2012 when Putin became president again. For this reason, we can suggest that the interpretation of external impulses significantly depends on leadership personality. It becomes particularly evident in Putin's address of 2014 when existential threats became the central topic and the indicator of threat perception achieved 3, which is connected to the overall atmosphere of hostility as a result of the Ukraine crisis.⁸⁴ Nevertheless, there are indicators of major mistrust to the Western intentions, which is revealed in his statement that Ukraine was just an excuse and the reason for implementing sanctions would be found anyway.⁸⁵ Additionally, Putin accused external powers of supporting separatism in order to bring about the disintegration of Russia like Yugoslavia in the 1990s.⁸⁶

In the case of Turkey, the references to different types of threats are used in the presidential speeches to Turkish Grand National Assembly. Since the basic principles of the new state were secularism and homogeneity of the nation, those who questioned them immediately became perceived as a threat.⁸⁷ Therefore, the threats originate from domestic separatist forces and from overall regional instability. This view has been expressed by all presidents starting with Süleyman Demirel who was a president from 1993 till 2000. He admitted that the major concerns for Turkey, which are politicization of matters of religion and race, originate in the Turkish history. He also referred to Turkey as being the heir of the Ottoman Empire and proclaimed the compatibility of democracy, secularism, Islam, and modernism.⁸⁸ These two points are expressed

⁸⁴ Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly, December 4, 2014, the official site of the Kremlin, accessed April 20, 2016, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/47173>.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Fatma Müge Göçek, *The transformation of Turkey: redefining state and society from the Ottoman Empire to the modern era*, 146-147.

⁸⁸ Address By His Excellency President Süleyman Demirel To The Opening Session Of The Second Legislative Year Of The 21st Congregation Of The Turkish Grand National Assembly, 01.10.1999, *Presidency of the Republic of Turkey*, accessed May 13, 2016, <http://www.tccb.gov.tr/konusmalari-suleyman-demirel/1718/4080/address-by->

in the opposite way in the addresses of his successor Ahmet Necdet Sezer. There was a strong emphasis on the necessity to maintain Atatürk's principles and, hence, there was no reference to the Ottoman past. The main threats were seen in Islamic fundamentalism and the activities of the terrorist organization PKK, whose presence in Iraq seemed unacceptable and jeopardized the unity of Turkey.⁸⁹ The president prioritized the objective of EU accession but the appearance of certain level of mistrust caused by the prolongation of negotiations can be noticed. Thus he stated that Turkey would not accept the imposition of additional conditions and discriminations.⁹⁰ The same term 'discrimination' was used by the previous president in his description of the EU attitude to Turkey.⁹¹ For Sezer the situation was complicated by the accession of Cyprus, which now had a sanctioning power against Turkey and could try to isolate the country.⁹² The increasingly interventionist activities of the US, arguably Turkey's closest ally, in the Middle East after the 9/11 attacks became one more factor that contributed to the growing discontent with Western policies. Thus, recalling the consequences of the First Gulf War in general and for Turkey in particular, Sezer stated that the future of Iraq could not be

his-excellency-president-suleyman-demirel-to-the-opening-session-of-the-second-legislative-year-of-the-21st-congregation-of-the-turkish-grand-national-assembly.html

⁸⁹ ADDRESS BY H.E. AHMET NECDET SEZER, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY AT THE OPENING SESSION OF THE 22nd TERM, 4th LEGISLATIVE YEAR OF THE TURKISH GRAND NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, 01.10.2005, *Presidency of the Republic of Turkey*, accessed May 13, 2016, <http://www.tccb.gov.tr/konusmalari-ahmet-necdet-sezer/1721/7759/address-by-h-e-ahmet-necdet-sezer-president-of-the-republic-of-turkey-at-the-opening-session-of-the-22nd-term-4th-legislative-year-of-the-turkish-grand-national-assembly.html>.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Address By His Excellency President Süleyman Demirel To The Opening Session Of The Second Legislative Year Of The 21st Congregation Of The Turkish Grand National Assembly, 01.10.1999, *Presidency of the Republic of Turkey*, accessed May 13, 2016, <http://www.tccb.gov.tr/konusmalari-suleyman-demirel/1718/4080/address-by-his-excellency-president-suleyman-demirel-to-the-opening-session-of-the-second-legislative-year-of-the-21st-congregation-of-the-turkish-grand-national-assembly.html>.

⁹² ADDRESS BY H.E. AHMET NECDET SEZER, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY AT THE OPENING SESSION OF THE 22nd TERM, 4th LEGISLATIVE YEAR OF THE TURKISH GRAND NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, 01.10.2005, *Presidency of the Republic of Turkey*, accessed May 13, 2016, <http://www.tccb.gov.tr/konusmalari-ahmet-necdet-sezer/1721/7759/address-by-h-e-ahmet-necdet-sezer-president-of-the-republic-of-turkey-at-the-opening-session-of-the-22nd-term-4th-legislative-year-of-the-turkish-grand-national-assembly.html>.

imposed from abroad.⁹³ Therefore, while Demirel and Sezer shared the view of the sources of threats and prioritized the relations with their Western allies, they both noticed the reluctance to be treated as equal partners, which caused certain offence and mistrust.

An important point in Turkish politics occurred when the Justice and Development Party whose members had an Islamist background came into power in 2002. Nevertheless, it did not have fundamental implication on threat perception but sharpened already existing trends. The main threat was still seen in the instability of the region, particularly caused by the activities of terrorist and extremist groups and later by the civil war in Syria. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who occupied a post of Prime Minister from 2003 to 2014, often referred to the topic of terrorism in his addresses to AK Party. For instance, in 2008 he states that the fight against terrorist organizations should not be exclusively a military concern but it has diplomatic, economic, political and social dimensions as well.⁹⁴ This way he used to create a sense of unity among the nation showing the urgency of the problem for everyone. Success in creating this sense of common purpose for the whole population regardless the differences in ethnicity and religion is essential for the ruling party as there is a fear of terrorist attempts and specifically of the PKK to destroy the state by the alleged objective of defending the rights of the Kurds.⁹⁵ The issue was also relevant in the addresses of Abdullah Gül, who was the President from 2007 to 2014 and

⁹³ ADDRESS OF HIS EXCELLENCY PRESIDENT AHMET NECDET SEZER AT THE OPENING OF THE FOURTH LEGISLATIVE YEAR OF THE 21ST CONGREGATION OF THE TURKISH GRAND NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, 01.10.2001, *Presidency of the Republic of Turkey*, accessed May 13, 2016, <https://www.tccb.gov.tr/konusmalari-ahmet-necdet-sezer/1721/7515/address-of-his-excellency-president-ahmet-necdet-sezer-at-the-opening-of-the-fourth-legislative-year-of-the-21st-congregation-of-the-turkish-grand-national-assembly.html>.

⁹⁴ AK PARTİ Genel Başkanı ve Başbakan Recep Tayyip Erdoğan'ın AK PARTİ TBMM Grup Toplantısı'nda yaptığı konuşmanın tam metni, *AK PARTİ KONYA İL BAŞKANLIĞI*, accessed May 31, 2016, http://www.akpartikonya.com/haberler/126_ak-parti-genel-baskani-ve-basbakan-recep-tayyip-erdoganin-ak-parti-tbmm-grup-toplantisinde-yaptigi-konusmanin-tam-metni.

⁹⁵ GENİŞLETİLMİŞ İL BAŞKANLARI TOPLANTISI, *Recep Tayyip Erdoğan Sitesi*, accessed May 31, 2016, <http://www.tayyip.net/genisletilmis-il-baskanlari-toplantisi/>.

proposed that the extremist groups might try to exploit peaceful demonstrations.⁹⁶ The issue of extremism and terrorism started being represented in a specific way when Erdogan became president in 2014. Thus, he proposed a vision of New Turkey opposing to the unstable Old one, where parallel state structures used to have a big influence on the policies of the country.⁹⁷ Associating Turkey with democratic values where the will of the nation and the governments' decisions are inseparable, he presents those structures and their activities as being alien to the national will.⁹⁸

The issue of growing mistrust of Western partners also occupies a strong position in the politicians' discourse since the AKP's coming to power despite presenting the EU accession as a primary goal. Pointing out the reluctance of some member states to accept Turkey as an equal partner that fully shares the European values and norms, Erdogan connects it to the problem of Islamophobia that can equally be defined as racism.⁹⁹ The defense of Islam as a peaceful religion was clearly expressed in the opinion towards mass killings of Armenians in 1915. The Turkish elites categorically refuse to call those events as 'genocide' stating that historical events are taken out of context and are used as a tool against Turkey.¹⁰⁰ Thus, the reference to the others' conspiracy theories is commonly used to demonstrate Turkey's position of victim. Lately, anti-Western discourse became even more pronounced due to the refugee crisis, in the cause of which

⁹⁶ TBMM'nin 24. Dönem 4. Yasama Yılı'nın, October 1, 2013, *Presidency of the Republic of Turkey*, accessed May 13, 2016, www.tccb.gov.tr.

⁹⁷ Opening Remarks On The Occasion Of The 24th Term Of The 5th Legislative Year Of The Turkish Grand National Assembly, October 1, 2014, *Presidency of the Republic of Turkey*, accessed May 13, 2016, <http://www.tccb.gov.tr/en/speeches-statements/558/3192/opening-remarks-on-the-occasion-of-the-24th-term-of-the-5th-legislative-year-of-the-turkish-grand-national-assembly.html>.

⁹⁸ Turkish Grand National Assembly 25th Term 2nd Legislative Year Opening Speech, October 1, 2015, *Presidency of the Republic of Turkey*, accessed May 13, 2016, <http://www.tccb.gov.tr/en/speeches-statements/558/35495/turkish-grand-national-assembly-25th-term-2nd-legislative-year-opening-speech.html>.

⁹⁹ Başbakan Erdoğan konuştu, *Sabah*, accessed May 31, 2016, <http://www.sabah.com.tr/gundem/2012/10/13/basbakan-erdogan-konusuyor>.

¹⁰⁰ Erdogan condemns pope for Armenia 'genocide' comment, *Aljazeera*, accessed May 25, 2016, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/04/erdogan-condemns-pope-armenia-genocide-comment-150414180142664.html>.

Europe has increasingly come to depend on Turkey, causing skeptical remarks by President Erdogan. He pointed out that the world community used to ignore all efforts made by Turkey hosting 2.5 million refugees but so much praised Merkel for opening German borders for new arrivals although the number of refugee that came to Europe was much less.¹⁰¹ Moreover, now the Union needs Turkey to ease the crisis, promising to speed its membership talks but Erdogan admitted to hardly believe in their success. He argues that if some member countries were reluctant about the country joining the EU for so many years, there is no reason to believe that they would now change their position.¹⁰² What makes matters worse is the understanding that even if the governments are eager to cooperate with Erdogan and offer concessions in this difficult period, there is no guarantee of them complying when the crisis has been solved. The realization of being used by the West on the one hand and being surrounded by unstable regimes and terrorist organization on the other hand, makes Turkish foreign policy highly insecure and increasingly isolationist.

¹⁰¹ Angela Charlton and Suzan Fraser, "EU tries for new Turkey strategy to stem refugee flow," *The Big Story*, accessed 19 May, 2016, <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/1b2c5dcda00d40039569f11cf240ab00/eu-tries-new-turkey-strategy-stem-refugee-flow>.

¹⁰² Ibid.

4. The impact of threat perception on the national role conceptions of Turkey and Russia

The last chapter will demonstrate how national role conceptions are presented in the speeches of Russian and Turkish political elites. It will be argued that conceptions tend to be rather stable during the time but prioritization of some of them depends on decision-makers' beliefs and an overall assessment of the situation. The way the countries tend to overreact on certain impulses indicates an increased threat perception and an established sense of distrust to the others. Nevertheless, it will be shown that the leaders can demonstrate different intensity of threat perception that can also be interpreted as a strategy for achieving political goals.

4.1 The formation of Turkish and Russian national role conceptions

Key politicians within the same state can hold remarkably different conceptions about their nations. Thus, depending on the belief system of the ruling elite and the distribution of power in a state, different foreign policy approaches can emerge. Some decision-makers interpret international and domestic imperatives in a way that does not correspond to what others consider objective reality.¹⁰³ We witnessed how the perception of threat in political discourses varied due to the leader's personality. However, national role conceptions are more stable and new leaders tend to adopt existent mainstream views.¹⁰⁴ Nevertheless, the leaders can decide which roles should be prioritized in different situations and hence, political behavior will also vary accordingly.

¹⁰³ Bülent Aras and Aylin Gorener, "National role conceptions and foreign policy orientation: the ideational bases of the Justice and Development Party's foreign policy activism in the Middle East," *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 12.1 (2010): 75.

¹⁰⁴ Jacques Hymans, *The psychology of nuclear proliferation: Identity, emotions and foreign policy*, 18-21.

Based on the speeches given in the UN General Assembly, some common characteristics concerning the Russian national role conceptions can be identified. First, through the years elites have presented Russia as a global system collaborator, which is reflected in the support for established multipolar system of international relations. Confirming the UN's leading role and the superiority of its principles, the country opposes configurations when decisions are being made unilaterally, at times in violation of the UN Charter. Here the reference is typically made to the US that is condemned for acting from the position of the strength as the lone superpower, a critique that suggests the national role conception of an anti-imperialist. While, if this critique is mostly used casually, as for example in 2010, when the concern with the practice of unilateral coercive measures was expressed,¹⁰⁵ or in 2013, when Western Manichean world views in which the dichotomy of democracies versus tyrannies was equated to good versus evil, were criticized, it may become an issue of serious contention when some serious events involving Russian active participation occur. First, it happened in 2008 after the Georgian War, when during the process of justifying the recognition of the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, Minister of Foreign affairs, Sergey Lavrov, stated that recognition was necessary for Russian security and explained the emergence of the conflict in the region by the Western all-permissiveness syndrome that is based on the assumption of the unipolarity of the world.¹⁰⁶ Still, the peak of anti-imperialist sentiments was reached in the statements made in 2014 and 2015 after the Russian annexation of Crimea. For instance, in 2015 it was expressed in 3 different dimensions. Primarily it concerned export of democratic revolutions that had led to destruction, violation of human rights and creation of power vacuum later exploited by alleged terrorists. The second problem was identified as NATO's expansionistic tendencies, forcing Ukraine into a false choice

¹⁰⁵ Address by Vitaly Churkin, September 29, 2010, *UN General Assembly*.

¹⁰⁶ Address by Sergey Lavrov, September 27, 2008, *UN General Assembly*.

between West and East. Finally, developed countries were accused in selfishness, as they prefer creating closed and exclusive economic associations between the scenes without consulting others, including their own nations.¹⁰⁷

Other roles of prominence in the majority of Russian statements are active independent and a development assistant. Thus, determination for active cooperation with different regions, organizations and groupings, such as CIS, SCO and BRICS is commonly expressed. Despite the disapproval of the US policies, there are constant references on Russia's attempts to promote closer and more effective cooperation with the country. The relevant example is the initiative of the so called "new start" with the US during the presidency of Dmitry Medvedev.¹⁰⁸ Concerning the role of a development assistant, it was already present in the beginning of 2000s when Russia started writing off debts for developing countries and became a donor state¹⁰⁹ in 2003, a status that continues till present. For example, it was mentioned in 2014 with reference to Russian doctors who work abroad in Africa to fight the Ebola virus.¹¹⁰ The speakers also present Russia as a defender of peace, particularly, against the most prominent global threat, which is international terrorism. Thus, with the rise of ISIS, it was emphasized both in 2014 and 2015 that Russia is making a substantial contribution to fighting the Islamist insurgency, including providing military and technical assistance to Iraq and Syria.¹¹¹

From the establishment of the Turkish republic the basic principles the national role conception developed and affirmed by Ataturk remained salient until the last decade of the Cold War. Thus, foreign policy of the country was Western-oriented, but at the same time, with the notable exceptions of participation in the Korean War and the intervention in Cyprus, somewhat

¹⁰⁷ Statement by Vladimir Putin, September 28, 2015, *UN General Assembly*.

¹⁰⁸ Address by Vitaly Churkin, September 29, 2010, *UN General Assembly*.

¹⁰⁹ Statement by Vladimir Putin, September 25, 2003, *UN General Assembly*.

¹¹⁰ Statement by Sergey Lavrov, September 27, 2014, *UN General Assembly*.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

isolationist and with a strong domestic focus, while a solid institutionalized apparatus at home prevented any deviation from this line. It was only with the presidency of Turgut Ozal during the 1980s when a space for alternative national role conceptions appeared in the political discourse that was until then dominated by traditional republican conceptions. Paradoxically, it was the Western-oriented policies of Republican elites that pushed Turkey towards implementing democratic reforms and allowed the victory at the polls of Ozal's Motherland Party.¹¹²

The way the Turkish elites see the place and the role of their country on the international arena is also evident in their statements made in UN General Assembly. There are some common features that have not changed over time and did not depend on the speaker. First, it is characterization of Turkey as a development assistant and as an actor setting an international example. There are references to the country's development assistance in Africa, projects for Afghanistan, aid campaigns for Somalia, direct investments in some of the least developed countries, etc.¹¹³ Moreover, it is stated that Turkey does it all in a more efficient way than other donor countries. For instance, referring to the case of Somalia in 2011, Erdogan pointed out the failure of the UN to implement appropriate policies but emphasized the range of measures undertaken by Turkey that were necessarily based on humanitarian principles.¹¹⁴ Another role that of great significance in speeches every year is that of a regional subsystem collaborator. The objective of achieving peace and stability in the Middle East region is considered a foreign policy priority. Still, from 2009 there is determination to move from passive good neighborliness to active friendship in Ahmet Davutoglu's so called "zero problems with neighbors" policy.¹¹⁵

¹¹² Bülent Aras and Aylin Gorener, "National role conceptions and foreign policy orientation: the ideational bases of the Justice and Development Party's foreign policy activism in the Middle East," 78-79.

¹¹³ Addresses to UN General Assembly 2006 – 2015, *UN General Assembly*, <http://www.un.org/en/ga/>.

¹¹⁴ Address by Recep Tayyip Erdogan, September 22, 2011, *UN General Assembly*.

¹¹⁵ Address by Recep Tayyip Erdogan, September 24, 2009, *UN General Assembly*.

Acknowledging the priority for a productive win-win cooperation, the speakers sometimes tend to emphasize the country's leadership in the region, for example, characterizing Turkey as "a force for peace and stability in its volatile region."¹¹⁶ It is also reflected in the way it refers to other countries from the position of a democratic state. Thus, Erdogan commented on the beginning of the Arab Spring in 2011 by saying that Turkey is happy that its calls for democracy had finally been heeded.¹¹⁷ Later on in 2013, Abdullah Gul referring to the Arab uprisings, stated that transformation into mature democracies cannot be made overnight.¹¹⁸ This way Turkey presented itself as a Western-type democracy that provides an example for its neighbors, which are only at the path towards democracy. This attitude allows for aspirations to play a more prominent role in global affairs. It is reflected in such roles as a global system collaborator and active independent. The first one exemplified in the expression of support of G20 policies to restore global growth in 2010, in the reference to Turkey's leading role in advancing the goals of the Alliance of Civilizations in 2008 and to the country's active participation in peacekeeping operations.¹¹⁹ The second one is evidenced by the proclaimed objective of establishing deep ties and expanding networks with different regions such as South Asia, Far East and Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, easing tensions with Greece and securing good relations with old partners.¹²⁰

As a consequence of being a regional leader and a global system collaborator Turkey also undertook the role of a bridge and a mediator-integrator. It was indicated by mentioning, for instance, the role of Turkey in peace talks between Syria and Israel and other possibilities that

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Address by Recep Tayyip Erdogan, September 22, 2011, *UN General Assembly*.

¹¹⁸ Address by Abdullah Gul, September 24, 2013, *UN General Assembly*.

¹¹⁹ Address by Abdullah Gul, September 23, 2008, *UN General Assembly*.

¹²⁰ Addresses to UN General Assembly 2006 – 2015, *UN General Assembly*, <http://www.un.org/en/ga/>.

arouse due to the country's strategic location and orientation.¹²¹ The combination of these roles and the way they are expressed provide us with better understanding of how Turkish elites see the place of their country in the world. Without explicitly exalting Turkey over its neighbors, they nevertheless show the country's superiority describing it as a democracy, a donor country that seeks to help less developed ones exclusively out of humanitarian concerns. Remarkably, Turkey serves as an example for the developed world as well. Criticizing the UN failure in solving urgent problems, the elites emphasize the Turkish success in dealing with them thereby promoting, for example, the country's candidature for the UN Security Council.¹²² Presidential addresses of the last years demonstrate the same role conceptions but they have become even more prominent due to the refugee crisis. It became particularly evident with the role of an example. Thus, in his 2015 speech, Erdogan characterized Turkey as "a shining star of the world" and stated that the quality of its hospitality became a humanitarian lesson to the international community.¹²³

4.2 The influence of threat perception on the foreign policy of the countries

Morozov proposes that Russia should be described as a subaltern empire in order to better understand its politics.¹²⁴ The main arguments supporting this claim are Russia's economical and normative dependency on the West, justifying its own foreign policy by accusing the West of neocolonialism, engaging in imperial pursuits in its Near Abroad through securing the spheres of influence, dependency on the image of a great power, and promoting international

¹²¹ Address by Abdullah Gul, September 23, 2008, *UN General Assembly*.

¹²² Statement by Abdullah Gul, September 22, 2006, *UN General Assembly*.

¹²³ Turkish Grand National Assembly 25th Term 2nd Legislative Year Opening Speech, 01.10.2015.

¹²⁴ Viatcheslav Morozov, *Russia's Postcolonial Identity: A Subaltern Empire in a Eurocentric World*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 1.

democratization while pursuing increasingly repressive domestic policies.¹²⁵ The same logic can be applied for modern Turkey as the listed arguments apply to it as well since it has become more engaged in its neighborhood policy. Therefore, we can state that for both countries the subaltern position makes the West a key reference point for any political discourse. The negation of the West is the only way to claim the status of alternative modernity due to their subaltern Eurocentrism.¹²⁶

Turkish relations with Europe and the US were traditionally of paramount importance. For many decades it has been an active NATO and OSCE member, and overall a key partner for European security. From the beginning of its aspirations to join the European Economic Community, Turkey had to face several painful rejections in 1989 and in 1997. Only in 1999 Turkey became a candidate for EU membership, and implemented significant political and economic reforms in order to fulfill the ‘Copenhagen Criteria’ and accession talks started in 2005. Generally, EU membership is understood within the context of the Kemalist idea of identification with modernity.¹²⁷ Thus, the objective of joining the EU has had a clear ideological motive. Europe is described as a common home in which the destinies of Turkey and other countries are intertwined.¹²⁸ For this reason the accession of Central European countries was met with incomprehension but to the greater extent it was Cyprus becoming a full member of the EU that contributed to a growing sense of distrust due to the fact that it now has a veto power for new members’ accession. Therefore, after slowing down bilateral negotiations, a new foreign policy strategy of the country was developed with the objective of playing a more independent

¹²⁵ Ibid, 9.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 161.

¹²⁷ Ioannis N. Grigoriadis, "Turkey's accession to the European Union: Debating the most difficult enlargement ever," *SAIS Review* 26.1 (2006): 147-160.

¹²⁸ "Turkey – EU Relations," *Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, accessed May 26, 2016, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/relations-between-turkey-and-the-european-union.en.mfa>.

and active role in global affairs. This point of time is commonly perceived as the turn from an exclusively Western-oriented foreign policy to a multilateral and more proactive foreign policy, particularly, in the Middle East.¹²⁹

Hinnebusch and Ehteshami state that there are two narratives in the history of the Turkish Republic: the Kemalist one, which dominated its first seven decades, and the Sunni Islamist one that became prevailing from the beginning of 2000s.¹³⁰ Until the death of Atatürk in 1938 Kemalism was presented in the form of single-party, authoritarian rule and the main goal in Turkish foreign policy driven by threat perception was to stabilize external relations in order to buy time to consolidate internal development thus preserving the integrity of the state.¹³¹ An Islamist narrative re-emerged at the surface from the 1970s on, although it had never fully disappeared and kept functioning through transnational networks.¹³² The turning point occurred with the AKP's election victory in 2002 after which its founder Erdoğan started recruiting foreign policy advisers on the basis of their loyalty to the party and this new orientation. In turn, this resulted in a shift from institutionalism toward individualism in foreign policy making.¹³³ Thus, one of the most important appointees became the international relations scholar Ahmet Davutoğlu who occupied the posts of Minister of Foreign Affairs and Prime Minister. It were his writing on the new foreign policy strategy and introduction of the idea 'zero problems with neighbors' that most prominently indicated the shift in Turkish foreign policy towards closer

¹²⁹ Ugur Cevdet Panayirci and Emre Iseri, "A Content Analysis of the AKP's "Honorable" Foreign Policy Discourse: The Nexus of Domestic–International Politics," *Turkish Studies* 15.1 (2014): 63.

¹³⁰ Raymond A. Hinnebusch and Anoushiravan Ehteshami, eds., *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, (Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2014), 315-335.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid.

relations with its neighbors and indicated the acceptance of the country's responsibility toward the peace in the region.¹³⁴

Despite the perceived visibility of the shift towards the Middle East in which the supposedly Islamist roots of AKP play a significant role, there exists a view that an overemphasis of the change of the Turkish identity has considerable analytical shortcomings. First, there was no abandonment of the goal of EU accession at any point, and the new engagement in regional affairs does not contradict this objective. Moreover, since the national identity is not a stable phenomenon and rather the result of the politicians' personal ideas about a certain reality, what matters for foreign policy is national role conceptions that shape the elites' imagination. Consequently, the renewed interest in cooperation with Turkey's neighbors can be explained by the construction of a newfound national role that endows the nation and state with functions in new issue areas.¹³⁵ Moreover, the concept of Neo-Ottomanism itself is not new and was used as an indicator of the policies of Turgut Ozal who came into power in 1980s and was the first leader who took an increasingly activist and internationalist approach saying that Turkey should leave its passive and hesitant policies behind, especially considering the new opportunities opened after the end of the Cold War.¹³⁶ An important novelty was that unlike Kemalists, he did not see the ideas of Islam, Turkism and Ottomanism as an obstacle for integration with the West. Therefore, one may conclude, the AKP did not bring in any entirely new agenda but rather developed a narrative previously promoted by Ozal.¹³⁷

¹³⁴ Policy of Zero Problems with our Neighbors. Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/policy-of-zero-problems-with-our-neighbors.en.mfa>

¹³⁵ Bülent Aras and Aylin Gorener, "National role conceptions and foreign policy orientation: the ideational bases of the Justice and Development Party's foreign policy activism in the Middle East," 73-74.

¹³⁶ Sedat Laçiner, "Özalizm (neo-Ottomanism): an alternative in Turkish foreign policy?." *Yönetim Bilimleri Dergisi* 1.1 (2003).

¹³⁷ Ibid.

Turkey's participation in the Korean War and accession to NATO in 1952 is considered as a start of the official strategic partnership between Turkey and the US. Nevertheless, Turkey passed through numerous occasions that caused the emergence of a profound sense of distrust towards its ally. Among those cases are the 1962 negotiations resulting in the withdrawal of US nuclear missiles from Turkish territory without asking for the country's opinion in an unofficial quid pro quo for the USSR withdrawing theirs from Cuba, the 1963-64 Cyprus crisis when President Lyndon Jonson disapproved the Turkey's intention to invade Cyprus and the consequential arms embargo against Turkey in 1974.¹³⁸ Still, the event that left perhaps the most significant imprint on the perceptions of Turkey concerning the US intentions in the Middle East was the 1990 Gulf War. After the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, Turkey became an active member of the Gulf War coalition as it saw the events as an opportunity to demonstrate its strategic importance to Europe and the US. Instead, the future developments left a strong legacy in Turkish policy that resulted in continuation of perceiving the region as a source of risk but now coupled with growing activism and attention to sovereignty issues. It also highlighted the relevance of the Sevre Syndrome that would explain NATO policies of deliberate facilitation of Kurdish aspirations with the ultimate goal of fostering the breakup of the Turkish state.¹³⁹

As well as in the case of the EU the turning point when partial disapproval transformed into open demonstration of discontent was the AKP rise to power that practically coincided with the US invasion of Iraq in 2003. The creation of a Kurdish federal entity facilitated the reemergence of the PKK as a major security threat for Turkey. As a consequence, the Turkish Parliament refused to allow US troops the use of its territory in preparation for the Iraqi invasion

¹³⁸ Ioannis N. Grigoriadis, "Friends no more?: The rise of anti-American nationalism in Turkey," *The Middle East Journal* 64.1 (2010): 51-66.

¹³⁹ Stephen F. Larrabee and Ian O. Lesser, *Turkish foreign policy in an age of uncertainty*, (Rand Corporation, 2003), 133-136.

because a direct parallel was drawn between the events of 2003 and 1991, when Turkey already had to pay the price for US adventurism in the Middle East.¹⁴⁰ What is important, such an outcome cannot be explained exclusively by the reorientation in foreign policy made by AKP. The opposition to the US campaign was also expressed by the military and bureaucratic elites who were considered loyal partners of the US.¹⁴¹ Therefore, we can conclude that there was a conflict between several national roles Turkey subscribed to. On the one hand, it continued to be a faithful Western ally, on the other hand, it had already developed the role of sub-system collaborator. Eventually the decision-makers prioritized the second role as the first had been distorted by distrust of the real intentions of the West.

Concerning Russia, its foreign policy strategy mostly developed as a response to Western actions. As mentioned before, Statists, who based their policies on threat perception, managed to rapidly return to power as a result of NATO expansion eastwards. It was perceived as a betrayal and conspiracy from the Western side as there could not be any other intention behind the policy perceived as profoundly aggressive besides deterring Russia. Despite some accomplishments in bilateral dialogue such as, for example, the establishment of the Russia-NATO Council and cooperation in Afghanistan, the Kremlin always remained suspicious of the West's real objectives. Thus, in 2011 then Russian Ambassador to NATO Dmitri Rogozin suggested that the functioning of the alliance was still based on the fear of Russia regardless of what the country really stands for now.¹⁴² Any involvement in domestic processes of CIS countries as well as NATO expansion was perceived as interference in Russia's sphere of interest. The existence of spheres of interest, originating in the Cold War period was an unspoken rule, which was violated

¹⁴⁰ Ioannis N. Grigoriadis, "Friends no more?: The rise of anti-American nationalism in Turkey," 55-57.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Andrei P. Tsygankov, "The Russia-NATO mistrust: Ethnophobia and the double expansion to contain "the Russian Bear", " *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 46.1 (2013): 179-188.

in the Ukrainian revolt in 2014. With the Crimean annexation Vladimir Putin exhibited an alternative view on the norms of the current international system. It has already been mentioned how Turkey and Russia promote their own understanding of the meaning of democracy. In the Russian case there is also a considerable subjectivity in defining the notion of sovereignty.

In his analysis of the transformation of the concept of sovereignty Glanville states that according to traditional Westphalian interpretation it emerged around the seventeenth century and meant the right of states to rule over a certain territory and population however they choose without outside interference. Only in recent years the sovereigns' undivided rights were challenged by notions of conditional and responsible sovereignty, which found its practical implementation for instance in the principle of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P).¹⁴³ Instead, Glanville argues that it was rather a right to wage just war and intervene in the affairs of other states that was present during the whole history of statehood but the principle of non-intervention was established only in the twentieth century. Therefore, such an innovation as the aforementioned 'responsibility to protect' has deep historical roots but what is significantly new about this idea is the proposition that the society of states has certain responsibilities to protect populations.¹⁴⁴ From the Russian perspective the prevalence of certain discourse again can be seen as the Western demonstration of who has the power to establish these rules. Thus, the purposefully developed opposite view on the question of sovereignty came to light in the annexation of Crimea in 2014. Morozov argues that there was no drastic turn from a non-interventionist stance to military interference. It was rather an expected outcome of a consistent position during Putin's third term that legitimized intervention by the anti-interventionist logic, which implied that since the government in a neighboring state fell because of an illegitimate

¹⁴³ Luke Glanville, "The myth of "traditional" sovereignty," *International Studies Quarterly* 57.1 (2013): 79-90.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

revolt caused by Western intervention, the Russian state has the legitimate right to intervene to minimize the damage and protect its interests.¹⁴⁵

Putin's 'Crimean' speech proves this attitude and provides additional insight on the way he perceives Russian national identity and the position it occupies in relation to others.¹⁴⁶ First, there is an indication of a shared identity between Russia, Ukraine and Belorussia that goes far back in the history and the emphasis that Crimea has always been a part of Russia at least in people's minds. An important distinction is made between 'us' and Soviet decision-makers who used to act behind the scenes following personal goals and ignoring the will of the people. A major tragedy, which is the collapse of the Soviet Union, occurred as a result of their irresponsible policies and led to the situation when the biggest ethnic group became divided by borders. Hence, Russia agreed to make concessions for Ukraine only presupposing it would stay loyal and the right of Russian minorities there would be protected. Instead, after the Maidan events of 2014 the new social and political forces in Ukraine, characterized as Nationalists, neo-Nazis, Russophobes, anti-Semites, and ideological heirs of Bandera came into power. The first alleged target of these illegitimate new authorities was the Russian-speaking population, therefore it would be a betrayal by the Russian state to abandon its compatriots.¹⁴⁷

Second, there is a clear indication on the Russian attitude towards its significant Other, the West. Thus, it is noticed that the West accuses Russia in violation of norms of international law although itself adheres to them only in reference to others. Moreover, in the case of Kosovo, the West created a precedent and, according to this view no difference exists to Kosovo with respect to the right to self-determination in the Crimean case. Making Kosovo a unique case is an

¹⁴⁵ Viatcheslav Morozov, *Russia's Postcolonial Identity: A Subaltern Empire in a Eurocentric World*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 142.

¹⁴⁶ Address by President of the Russian Federation, March 18, 2014, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20603>

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

attempt to make everything suit Western interests. The coalition led by the US believes in its exceptionalism and the exclusive right to decide the destiny of the world, thus putting second the principles of international law. In response to Russian peaceful initiatives, they made decisions behind Russia's back, confronting it with a *fait accompli*, as it had happened with NATO's expansion and the deployment of a missile defense system to Poland. Finally, there has always been a containment policy towards Russia because of the country's refusal to submit to Western leadership, yet with Ukraine the West crossed a red line, which made impossible for Russia to remain passive.¹⁴⁸

4.3 Putin and Erdogan's understanding of national role conceptions

Wish introduces a correlation analysis between national role conceptions and foreign policy behavior. Among three characteristics of foreign policy behavior, which are participation, hostility and independence of action, what we are interested in here is the second as the level of hostility reveals the susceptibility of a country to different threats. Thus she demonstrated that hostility is inherent to the behavior of those countries who possess competitively motivated roles and when issue areas concern territory or ideology.¹⁴⁹ Her study supports the conclusions made by Morse who distinguishes between high policies that refer to the issues of security and the existence of the state and low policies concerning welfare of the citizens. Referring them to foreign and domestic affairs accordingly, he stresses the current merging of two types of policies. Nevertheless, he notices that a state's greater concern for its citizens' welfare makes its behavior less hostile, and vice versa, when decision-makers are more preoccupied with the sovereignty

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Naomi Bailin Wish, "Foreign policy makers and their national role conceptions," *International Studies Quarterly* (1980): 544-545.

questions, their policies become more assertive.¹⁵⁰ Since both Turkish and Russian decision-makers are overconcerned with the problem of the defense of nationhood and sovereignty, the implementation of the countries' national role conceptions becomes more reactive. Moreover, this type of behavior becomes even more apparent when several roles are in conflict during the histories of the countries, especially, in the policies of the last presidents Erdogan and Putin.

Generally, the thesis was able to illustrate that in distinction to threat perception, there are no drastic changes in national role conceptions during the time depending on who occupies the leadership post. It confirms the proposition made in the theoretical part about the tendency of new leaders to adopt established conceptions. Nevertheless, it does not prevent the ruling elites from gradually developing new conceptions based on the understanding of the current status of their countries relative to others and prioritize them over previous national role conceptions. Despite the fact that some role conceptions have been present in Turkish and Russian political discourses for decades, it is evident how some of them become more pronounced during the rule of the Justice and Development Party in Turkey and Vladimir Putin in Russia. Among these roles are, for instance, active independent, anti-imperialist, defender of the peace, an example, which presuppose a more active foreign policy behavior. Nevertheless, although they demonstrate how the politicians see the relative position of their countries, they do not prescribe a certain way of behavior. Here the personal estimate of threat contributes significantly to the way a certain role will be performed. The analyzed speeches indicate a growing threat perception in Russia in 2000s, with an exception of Medvedev's presidency, and during the rule of the AKP in Turkey. Thus we can attribute threat driven implementation of national roles to the personalities of Putin and Erdogan.

¹⁵⁰ Edward L. Morse, "The transformation of foreign policies: Modernization, interdependence, and externalization." *World Politics* 22.03 (1970): 371-392.

Increasing the perceptions and representations of eternally existing threats and conspiracies against their countries both leaders create a popular belief that the nations need their leadership, otherwise their states will simply fall apart. Concerning Erdogan, it was stated that a leader who looks paranoiac in good times, looks as a savior when things go bad. Thus, if they succeed in creating a fear of chaos, it will help strengthen their positions.¹⁵¹

The remarkable feature that unites Putin and Erdogan's views on the position and role of their countries in the international system is the proclaimed morality of their policies. Putting morality above commonly accepted norms of international law they allow themselves interpreting these norms in a rather subjective way. Such a way of thinking emerges from the belief that the principles of international behavior were developed by the West and they are also modified by the West as it sees fit according to its strategic and material interests. Probably, one of the most relevant examples is the concept of democracy that imposes clear obligations on a country. And here Turkey and Russia are placed in very similar paradoxical situations when on the one hand, democracy is the only possible characterization for them as they were created on the basis of the opposition to the previous regimes but on the other hand, autocracy has been a part of their national identities despite brief and rather unsuccessful periods of liberal rule in both countries. It is a common pattern throughout the history of the Turkish Republic and of post-Soviet Russia that when liberalization attempts took place they were soon stopped out of fear of political elites losing their power. Nevertheless, when the countries embarked on a democratization process, for instance, through membership in international organizations that presupposed the acceptance of established norms and reforming domestic institutions, there was no way back since being democratic is directly associated with being developed and civilized.

¹⁵¹ Ian Bremmer, "Why Turkey Went Back to Erdogan," *Time*, accessed May 22, 2016, <http://time.com/4101186/why-turkey-went-back-to-erdogan/>.

Due to the hybrid nature of Turkish and Russian democracies-autocracies, both countries constantly found themselves in a position of an object for criticism from their Western partners. Disappointment arising from the refusal to be accepted as equal and also the lack of understanding of the countries' national characteristics that must be taken into consideration for mutually beneficial cooperation to prevail, resulted in the creation of their own Turkish and Russian realities where such concept as 'democracy' is understood in an alternative way. There are several major factors that contributed most to the development of a high level of distrust to the West. In the case of Turkey they are the prolonged EU accession negotiations accompanied by alleged support for Kurdish separatism that is considered the main threat to the stability of the state, and suspicious activities of the US in the Middle East starting with Iraqi invasion in 2003. For Russia the major factor is the Western interference in its spheres of influence, which combine NATO expansion, missile defense system and support for the so called color revolutions.

Morozov points to the dramatically intensified securitization of the West after the political crisis of 2011-2012 and the 2014 intervention in Ukraine, which resulted in the annexation of Crimea. Such developments were driven by the same logic of subaltern empire that is currently going through a period of instability and insecurity. The core of the threat was continued to be seen in the imperialistic motives of the West that consolidates and expands its influence through the color revolutions in the post-Soviet space. But the defensive reaction served as a tool for domestic transformations as well, as it provided the justification to defend the domestic cultural space from external interference and to repress the so called fifth columns that allegedly represented the Western Other inside the states' borders.¹⁵² While the color revolutions were rather perceived as potential risks to the survival of the regime, the urban protests

¹⁵² Viatcheslav Morozov, *Russia's Postcolonial Identity: A Subaltern Empire in a Eurocentric World*, 135.

represented an imminent threat. Domestic unrest is seen through the same prism as international trends that concern Russia's interests and is strongly associated with Western conspiracies. This attitude is reflected itself in such high-profile cases as the Pussy Riot trial, the Bolotnaya case and also in stricter control over cyberspace.¹⁵³

The Russian protest of 2011-2013 that led to the mentioned Bolotnaya case coincided with the Turkish Gezi Park protests of 2012. In both cases large segments of society protested against governmental policies. The main cause in Russia was unfair elections that resulted in the victory of Vladimir Putin while in Turkey it was the increasing authoritarianism of Recep Tayyip Erdogan. The protests in both countries were heavily suppressed by security police and resulted in a strengthening of state control. For instance in Russia, a new law was passed that would henceforth make unauthorized demonstrations illegal. Unsurprisingly, the common element of both stories are the claims of Putin and Erdogan about external conspiracies as the true forces behind the protests. Thus according to Erdogan, it was a massive professional conspiracy prepared by domestic traitors and external collaborators that brought about the Gezi Park protests.¹⁵⁴ The growing anti-Western rhetoric of both leaders in the following years can be also seen as a tool for strengthening their power position and justifying non-democratic reforms under the goal of protecting national interests and the very existence of the states. For this reason, we can conclude that although the sense of threat perception and distrust of the intentions of the West has been present from the establishment of the modern Turkish and Russian states and periodically reinforced itself, it was deliberately used as a strategy by the current leaders to

¹⁵³ Viatcheslav Morozov, *Russia's Postcolonial Identity: A Subaltern Empire in a Eurocentric World*, 140.

¹⁵⁴ "Turkish prime minister vows to increase police force," *Daily News*, accessed May 15, 2016, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-prime-minister-vows-to-increase-police-force.aspx?pageID=238&nID=49006&NewsCatID=338>

concentrate power and consolidate a sense of a very particular national identity among their population.

Conclusion

The purpose of the thesis was to demonstrate how threat perception influences national role conceptions. It was proposed that existing categorization of national role conceptions is not sufficient for explaining why some states tend to overreact and behave irrationally when there is no explicit threat. I argued that the reason for a heightened sense of insecurity and distrust to others can be found in national traumas that make the countries perceive themselves as victims. The examples of Turkey and Russia fully demonstrate how the historical circumstances, in which the states were established, resulted in the increased perception of threat that had a strong impact on the elites' decision-making process.

Painful historical memory of the Turkish Republic takes roots in the 1920 Sevres Treaty that aimed to divide the Ottoman Empire after the First World War and take away large parts of the Turkish territory. Although never been implemented, the belief that external powers aim to destroy the state has been alive since then and, hence, resulted in the emergence of the so called Sevres Syndrome. The syndrome was constantly reinforced due to the perceived refusal of the West to treat Turkey as an equal partner, which was especially visible in the negotiations concerning EU accession process. The country felt betrayed again because of the absence of any significant progress in the process while it put a lot of effort in reforming domestic institutions to comply with Copenhagen criteria that was later compared by the elites to the Sevres Treaty.

In the case of Russia, the national trauma originates in the collapse of the Soviet Union after which the country lost the status of the superpower and became dependent on the Western support and recognition. Nevertheless, Western-orientated policies did not last long and soon were replaced by cautious and pragmatic strategy that is especially visible during the presidency of Vladimir Putin. Similar to Turkey's, the Russia's sense of distrust to the Western intentions

and believe in the US conspiracy theories was constantly reinforced by the perceived refusal of the West to respect Russia the way it is, which was demonstrated by the concrete examples of NATO expansion and sponsoring color revolutions in Russia's neighborhood.

Notably, both countries showed similar development of national role conceptions. Since in the beginning Turkey and Russia conducted pro-Western policies, their main role was a global system collaborator and a faithful ally in the case of Turkey. Other roles, such as active independent, defender of the peace, development assistant, a regional subsystem collaborator and an example were also present but became fully apparent in later years. Such shift was caused by the fact that despite the rapid economic growth and democratizing efforts, the countries still felt that they are rejected to join the Western club. Thus, the combination of the role conceptions that presupposed more active participation in regional and global affairs allowed the Turkish and Russian elites promoting an alternative vision where they do not need to choose between West and East but can combine the values of both and represent a unique role model.

Last but not least, the thesis proved that leadership personality plays an important role in the degree the perception of threat will influence decision-making based on established national role conceptions. Thus, the analysis of the presidential addresses in Russia demonstrated that threat perception was quite low not only in Yeltsin's but also in Medvedev's speeches. Nevertheless, it has been one of the central topic during three terms of Putin's presidency. In the case of Turkey, threat indicators are not so explicit in the elites' speeches, probably, because of the fact that the country, as the member of NATO and a candidate on joining the EU, for a long time tried to create an image of a Western-type democracy. Nevertheless, when Erdogan managed to concentrate power in his hands and felt less restrained by the opinions of other leading politicians, his rhetoric turned highly accusative and he started promoting an idea of

Turkey being encircled by the enemies whose ultimate goal is disintegration of the Turkish state. Therefore, we can conclude that although threat perception and distrust to the West did exist in the minds of the elites and the societies due to the countries' national traumas, it was equally used as a tool for creating the sense of national unity where the leadership personality seems to play a role of a protector of the state from Western conspiracies.

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Appendix

Boris Yeltsin

1994 – no enemies; need to eliminate hotbeds of conflicts on the borders (0,5)

1995 –real and potential threats on the borders; conspiracy theories (preventing integration with CIS); possible NATO expansion (1,5)

1996 – no real threats (0)

1997 – possible NATO expansion (0,5)

1998 – possible NATO expansion to Baltic countries (0,5)

1999 – no threats; core problems are inside the country (0)

Vladimir Putin

2000 – attempts to infringe on the sovereign rights (humanitarian intervention); international terrorism (1,5)

2001 – no threat (0)

2002 – 09/11 events imply the cold war is over; danger of terrorism fully applies to Russia (0,5)

2003 – developed countries push Russia out of world markets and use strong armies to increase zones of strategic influence rather than fighting common evils (conspiracy); international terrorism (1)

2004 – terrorism (in Chechnya) (1)

2005 – collapse of the USSR was a major disaster; terrorism (1)

2006 – international terrorism; putting pressure on Russia under any pretext (1,5)

2007 – money from abroad to intervene internal affairs; military bases along the borders (2)

Dmitry Medvedev

2008 – sponsoring the regime in Georgia, the conflict was used as a pretext of NATO to enter the Black Sea; military bases around Russia + NATO expansion (2)

2009 – international terrorism (in Northern Caucasus) (1)

2010 – potential arms race (0,5)

2011 – no threat (0)

Vladimir Putin

2012 – foreign interference, accepting money from abroad is unacceptable (conspiracy) (0,5)

2013 – Amoral International (from southern regions) → control over immigrants; missile defense system – to achieve superiority over Russia; others are monitoring Russian progress (conspiracy) (1)

2014 – America influences Russian relations with neighbors; sanctions would come anyway to contain Russia; support for separatism in Russia to disintegrate it like Yugoslavia; US global missile defense (3)

2015 – international terrorism (Syria); Turkish betrayal (1,5)