

ISTANBUL BILGI UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
EUROPEAN STUDIES MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAM

EUROPEANIZATION OR DE-EUROPEANIZATION: DYNAMICS OF TURKEY'S
DISCOURSE AGAINST THE EU BETWEEN 2015 AND 2020

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ISTANBUL

2020

**EUROPEANIZATION OR DE-EUROPEANIZATION: DYNAMICS OF TURKEY'S DISCOURSE
AGAINST THE EU BETWEEN 2015 AND 2020**

**Avrupalılařma veya Avrupalılařmadan Uzaklařma: Türkiye'nin 2015-2020 Arasında Avrupa Birlięi'ne
Karřı Söyleminin Dinamikleri**

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Tezin Onaylandıęı Tarih: 24.06.2020

Toplam Sayfa Sayısı: 127

Anahtar Kelimeler (Türkçe)

- 1) Türkiye-AB İliřkileri
- 2) Avrupalılařma
- 3) Avrupalılařmadan Uzaklařma
- 4) Türk Dıř Politikası
- 5) Eleřtirel Söylem Analizi

Anahtar Kelimeler (İngilizce)

- 1) Turkey-EU relations
- 2) Europeanization
- 3) De-Europeanization
- 4) Turkish Foreign Policy
- 5) Critical Discourse Analysis

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Since the beginning of my academic journey, I was never alone in studying for exams, preparing for presentations, or writing papers. My beautiful sister Rabia, who I had a chance to get a degree in the same major, has always been there for me to give feedback and help me to improve myself. It was also the case for this thesis, without her unconditional support and encouragement, I could not have finished this thesis. I am so lucky to have you as my sister, thank you millions of time for everything you have done for me. Just like her, my mother, my father, my sister, and my brother have been a great source of strength for me throughout this process; so, I would like to thank them for their tremendous love and support. Thanks to their unchanging belief in me, I have come this far.

Apart from my family, many people provided me with both emotional and academic support during this process. It is not possible for me to write every single name here; however, there are some people whose contributions cannot be forgotten. First of all, I want to express my gratitude to my dear friends Ayşenur Öztürk, Esra Dursun, Şeyma Nazlı Gürbüz, Neslihan Saydam, and Tuba Aydın for always trusting and motivating me to go forward. Without their advice and comments, I might have struggled to finish this thesis. I would also like to thank my colleagues, especially my senior Adil Uçar, for always covering me during my post-graduate studies and providing me with time to focus on my thesis. Last but not least, I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. Özge Onursal Beşgül for her guidance and assistance during the whole process.

I feel like I am surrounded by the best people in the world. I am blessed to have you all. Thank you for always making me feel eased and having supportive words when I needed the most.

ABSTRACT

The classic literature on Europeanization tends to explain the Europeanization process in countries as a mere process of domestic change in compliance with the EU's rules and regulations. However, this top-down perspective ignores the pivotal role of domestic actors' actions and discourses, especially the ones' who are influential in the construction of states' identity and discourse, in enabling or disabling the Europeanization process in a country. Thus, the recent approaches to Europeanization started to emphasize domestic actors' impact in determining the scope and ways of Europeanization in countries. This stance is also emphasized in the nascent phenomenon of de-Europeanization that emerged in some EU member and candidate countries, including Turkey, in recent years. This thesis draws from the growing literature on de-Europeanization and examines the current divergence between Turkey and the EU through the analysis of the discursive constructions of the EU/Europe/West in the discourse of the political leader in power between 2015 and 2020. Through critical discourse analysis, it seeks to analyze whether the weakening impact of the EU as a normative and political context in Turkey is normalized and justified by the discursive practices of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in this period.

Key Words: EU-Turkey relations, Europeanization, de-Europeanization, critical discourse analysis, Turkish foreign policy, foreign policy discourse

ÖZET

Avrupalılařma ile ilgili klasik literatür, ülkelerdeki Avrupalılařma sürecini AB kurallarına ve yönetmeliklerine uygun olarak görülen bir iç dönüşüm süreci olarak açıklama eğilimindedir. Ancak bu yukarıdan aşağıya bakış açısı, yerel aktörlerin eylemlerinin ve söylemlerinin, özellikle de devletlerin kimlięi ve söyleminin inřasında etkili olanların, bir ülkede Avrupalılařma sürecinin etkinleřtirilmesi ya da etkisizleřtirilmesindeki önemli rolünü göz ardı etmektedir. Bu nedenle, Avrupalılařmaya yönelik son yaklařımlar, ülkelerdeki Avrupalılařmanın kapsamının ve yollarının belirlenmesinde yerli aktörlerin etkisine dikkat çekmeye bařlamıřtır. Bu durum, son yıllarda Türkiye dahil bazı AB üyesi ve aday ülkelerde ortaya çıkan Avrupalılařmadan uzaklařma olgusu için de geçerlidir. Bu tez, Avrupalılařmadan uzaklařma ile ilgili büyüyen literatürden yararlanmakta ve Türkiye ile AB arasındaki mevcut uzaklařmayı iktidardaki siyasi liderin 2015-2020 yılları arasındaki söyleminde AB/Avrupa/Batı'nın ifade edilme şekillerinin analizi yoluyla incelemektedir. Eleřtirel söylem analizi yoluyla, AB'nin Türkiye'deki normatif ve politik bir bağlam olarak zayıflayan etkisinin normalleřtirilmesinde ve meřrulařtırılmasında Cumhurbaşkanı Recep Tayyip Erdoğan'ın bu dönemdeki söylemsel uygulamalarının etkisinin olup olmadığının analiz edilmesi amaçlanmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Türkiye-AB iliřkiler, Avrupalılařma, Avrupalılařmadan uzaklařma, eleřtirel söylem analizi, Türk dıř politikası, dıř politika söylemi

ABBREVIATIONS

AKP: Justice and Development Party

CDA: Critical Discourse Analysis

CEEC: Central and Eastern European Countries

CHP: Republican People's Party

Daesh: Islamic State of Iraq and Levant

DEİK: Foreign Relation Economic Board

DHA: Discourse-Historical Approach

EC: European Community

ECC: European Economic Community

ECSC: European Coal and Steel Community

ENP: European Neighborhood Policy

EP: European Parliament

EPRS: European Parliamentary Research Service

EU: European Union

Eurostat: European Statistical Office

FETÖ: Gülenist Terrorist Organization

OECD: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

OIC: Organization for Islamic Cooperation

PKK: Kurdistan Workers Party

PYD: Kurdish Democratic Union Party

SDF: Syrian Democratic Forces

UK: United Kingdom

UN: United Nations

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

It has been 61 years since Turkey applied for an association with the EEC for the first time in 1959, looking for an improved relationship with Europe and, ultimately, full membership to the community. However, the path to the EU proved to be more challenging than expected for Turkey, with several ups and downs throughout the years. During the early 2000s, the prospect of EU membership has come close to realization for the first time thanks to the continuous efforts to implement Europeanization reforms aiming to transform the country in line with the European norms, rules, values, and regulations. However, in the aftermath of the start of accession negotiations in 2005, the positive developments and expectations have been replaced with disappointment, skepticism, and distrust, which paved the way for the current divergence between Turkey and the EU.

In 2005, the Europeanization process has started to lose its momentum gradually, while the signs of the nascent process called de-Europeanization have emerged in the 2010s. When it comes to the period after 2014, the relations between Turkey and the EU have hit a new bottom. In 2016, the EU decided to temporarily freeze the accession negotiations with Turkey, which has caused the process to come to a standstill. Since then, the de-Europeanization process in Turkey, which can be defined as “the loss or weakening of the EU as a normative and political context and as a reference point in domestic settings and national public debates”, has become more visible (Aydın-Düzgıt & Kaliber, 2016, p.5). Especially in the last five years, the references to the EU/Europe/West in domestic actors’ discourse, especially President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s discourse, have decreased considerably compared with the earlier periods, and even when they are mentioned, it was generally in order to refer them in a negative context.

Taking account of the abovementioned developments, this thesis aims to analyze the phenomenon of de-Europeanization in Turkey through the analysis of the discursive

articulations of the EU/Europe/West in the political leader in power's discourse between 2015 and 2020. In doing so, the thesis will be built on the theoretical discussions over Europeanization and de-Europeanization processes and the pivotal role of domestic politics and actors' discourse in enabling or disabling these processes. The main research question of this thesis is "How and to what extent the weakening impact of the EU as a normative and political context in Turkey is normalized and justified through the discursive articulations of the EU/Europe/West in the discourse of political leader in power between 2015 and 2020?". Along with this question, the following questions will also be answered: How Turkey's distancing from the EU is taking place? How and why does de-Europeanization manifest itself in the attitudes and discourse of political leaders? How does Turkey position itself against and in relation to the EU?

Considering the current dominant and hegemonic role of President Erdoğan in determining the policy choices of Turkey, answers to these questions will be sought by looking at the discursive articulations of the EU/Europe/West in his discourse between 2015 and 2020. The reason to focus solely on President Erdoğan's discourse is related to the dynamics of the selected time period during which several internal and external developments paved the way for a political environment where President Erdoğan governed Turkey singlehandedly with firm control over the primary state organs of law enforcement, judiciary and the military especially after the failed coup attempt on 15 July 2016 (Bashirov & Lancaster, 2018; Haugom, 2019; Kaliber & Kaliber, 2019). The transition from the parliamentary system to the presidential system has also allowed the president to make decisions unilaterally without needing to consult other bodies in the government (Bashirov & Lancaster, 2018; Haugom, 2019). It can, therefore, be argued that the decision-making process for foreign policy in Turkey has been concentrated in the hands of President Erdoğan along with his close circle of advisers in the last five years, which made his statements the reflection of state authority (Haugom, 2019, p.214). Thus, it is

reasonable to concentrate on President Erdoğan's discourse to investigate the de-Europeanization process in Turkey, although it is accepted that not including other domestic political actors' discourse puts some limitations in the analysis. To compensate for this limitation as much as possible, a wide range of statements delivered on different occasions and settings will be included in the analysis.

In-depth literature on Europeanization and/or de-Europeanization reviewed in this thesis will be beneficial to understand Turkey's increasing distancing from the EU and how it was enabled through the discursive atmosphere created by the political leader in power. This thesis adopted the understanding of Europeanization as a "wider political and normative context" (Kaliber, 2013) rather than a mere process of domestic change in compliance with the EU's rules and regulations (Börzel & Risse, 2007; Johan P. Olsen, 2002; Ladrech, 1994). Thus, a more constructivist way of explaining Europeanization that regards it as a domestically driven process is acknowledged instead of classic approaches which consider it as a top-down process triggered by the EU conditionality. So, it is asserted that not only European level actors, politics and institutions but also domestic actors' use of European rules, values, norms, and institutions as a reference point in their discourses are important in shaping the form and degree of Europeanization and/or de-Europeanization in a country (Kaliber, 2013). That is to say, domestic actors are accepted as "not just mediators but creators of Europeanization" (Kaliber, 2013). The determining role of the domestic political actors' discourse in Turkey's Europeanization/de-Europeanization could be observed when one carefully examines the historical evolution of Turkey-EU relations. Thus, an in-depth historical background will be included in the following chapters to give readers comprehension of Turkey's transformation process from Europeanization to de-Europeanization.

During the last two decade, domestic actors, especially the governing party leaders, were very effective in determining the impact of Europeanization in Turkey through the ways in

which they interpreted, represented and used the European norms, values, rules, and regulations in national debates (Aydın-Düzgüt & Kaliber, 2016). In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the Europeanization process in Turkey was catalyzed by the discursive articulations of Turkish politicians who have constantly voiced their goal to the EU membership as one of the most important foreign policy strategies. The newly established AKP (Justice and Development Party) utilized the pro-EU discourse in its election propaganda and continued this rhetoric in the early years of its governance, which created a positive atmosphere that enabled the improvement of relations between Turkey and the EU. Starting from the Helsinki Council, where Turkey's candidacy has been granted, both the Turkish politicians and the public have believed and supported the idea of full membership by some means or other, which made compliance with the European norms, values, and rules easier for Turkey. In a sense, as the scholars working in the field of Europeanization argued, it was indeed the 'golden age of Europeanization' in Turkey between 1999 and 2005 (Öniş, 2010; Öniş & Yılmaz, 2009a).

However, as the time came closer to the formal beginning of the accession negotiations, the discussions about the EU membership has started to wane. The mood of optimism slipped into a mood of pessimism. The pace of reforms undertaken by the AKP government slowed down. Euro-fatigue has replaced the Euro-enthusiasm that the AKP government has shown in the early 2000s (Kaliber, 2013, p. 64). The governing party has begun to show the signs of "reform fatigue" with the decreasing aggressiveness in adopting and implementing new reforms (Patton, 2007). In 2007, negotiations with the EU came to a standstill because of the objections of the Greek Cypriot administration regarding the divided island of Cyprus as well as opposition from EU member states like Germany and France. It was around the same time that the EU has mostly lost its attractiveness for both the Turkish politicians and the public. The "Christian club" arguments that Erdoğan started to rise before the beginning of accession negotiations by saying, "Either the EU will show political maturity and become a global power, or it will end

up as a Christian club” escalated in the media (The Guardian, 2005). The idea that the EU membership pertains to just Christian states has started to spread among Turkish people raising the skepticism and distrust for EU membership (Patton, 2007).

The AKP government, in its second term after 2007, also started to decrease its reliance on a pro-EU approach due to increasing criticisms about its pro-EU policies (G. Yılmaz, 2016b). Both the weakened credibility of EU conditionality and rising Euroscepticism and nationalism in the society were effective in changing the stance of the AKP towards the EU (G. Yılmaz, 2016b). Although the Europeanization reforms continued in the post-2005 period, they were implemented selectively. That is to say; the AKP government chose to implement reforms that were useful for promoting their own political agenda and preferred not to adopt others which were unhelpful (G. Yılmaz, 2016b). At the same time, rapprochement with the Middle East took place in Turkey thanks to the policy of zero problems with the neighbors. So, the degree of the EU’s importance in Turkish foreign policy has begun to decrease. In the post-2005, both the domestic and international developments led to a more limited Europeanization and paved the way for a newly emerging process of de-Europeanization in Turkey (Aydın-Düzgıt & Kaliber, 2016).

As mentioned above, the relations between Turkey and the EU have become more complicated than ever in the 2010s. The Europeanization process has been gradually replaced with the de-Europeanization in Turkey. Domestic actors’ stance and narrative against the EU has also facilitated this transformation. As the recent arguments on Europeanization suggested, “Europeanization exists as a context to the extent that European norms, values, and institutions are incorporated into the public narratives by domestic actors” (Kaliber, 2013). Thus, when the discourse of domestic actors changed from positive to negative, or they refrain from mentioning the EU, it can be expected that the EU might lose its power as a normative and political context in a country over time. In Turkey’s case, it was indeed the impact of domestic political actors

that facilitated and enabled the de-Europeanization process beginning from the 2010s. At this point, it is important to understand what is meant by de-Europeanization. This thesis adapted Alper Kaliber and Senem Aydın Düzgit's definition of de-Europeanization which explains it as "the loss or weakening of the EU/Europe as a normative/political context and as a reference point in domestic settings and national public debates" (Aydın-Düzgit & Kaliber, 2016). Hence, Turkey-EU relations in the last five years are assessed through the de-Europeanization lens by drawing on their definition that depicts the process of de-Europeanization as "distancing of society and politics in Turkey from the European system of norms, values and policy expectations" (Aydın-Düzgit & Kaliber, 2016).

In the 2010s, de-Europeanization has begun to show itself in many spheres of politics and society in Turkey. This does not mean that reforms have stopped after 2014; however, even when they were implemented, Turkish politicians intentionally avoid referring to the EU as a driving force behind them. With the third election victory and increasing public support for the AKP in 2011, the estrangement from the EU has also become clear in the discourse of political leaders. Political leaders either minimized the references of European norms, values, and rules in their speeches or used them in a negative context. For scholars working on the Europeanization literature, "the weakening of the EU as normative and political context" has manifested itself in the ruling party's policies and discourse since the early 2010s (Aydın-Düzgit & Kaliber, 2016; Kaliber & Kaliber, 2019; G. Yılmaz, 2016b). Since then, the EU and European member states have been subject to criticisms by Turkish politicians, especially by former Prime Minister and current President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who has frequently been using inflammatory rhetoric when speaking about them. The loss of the EU's effectiveness as a political tool for the AKP's survival was also an important factor in enabling the de-Europeanization process in Turkey (G. Yılmaz, 2016b). Thanks to the increasing public support in each election, the AKP has guaranteed its position in domestic politics, which makes it easier

for them to act outside the normative/political context of the EU. Hence, the adaptation of new reforms slowed down even further, and reforms that do not align with the preferences of the AKP have begun to be reversed ultimately.

When it comes to the period after 2014- which is the main subject of this thesis- the relations between Turkey and the EU have gone from bad to worse. Some scholars even argue that Anti-Westernism has replaced de-Europeanization in the discourse of political leaders due to the increasing severity of deep distrust and hatred against Western states and institutions (Kaliber & Kaliber, 2019). In recent years, it was common to see President Erdoğan speaking about the EU in a harsh language almost every day in the media. Reforms have almost stopped, and the accession negotiations were firstly suspended and then frozen in the last five years. The failed coup attempt was another turning point in the deteriorating relationship and weakening of the EU's impact on Turkey. Strict emergency measures taken by Turkey following the coup attempt drew negative criticism from the EU for the alleged human rights violations. Turkey, on the other hand, blamed the EU for a number of factors, “including the bloc's indifference to Turkey's anti-terrorism operations, a lack of solidarity following the deadly FETÖ-led coup attempt in 2016, the lack of outside assistance on the migration issue and the bloc's failure to adhere to agreements especially the migration deal signed in 2016” (Daily Sabah, 2019c).

Taking into account of all these, some regularities across the discourse of Erdoğan in the last five years has been detected in this thesis through the critical discourse analysis (CDA). As shown in the analysis chapter, de-Europeanization manifests itself in the discourse of Erdoğan regarding the EU/Europe and the West. The identity of Turkey was constantly constructed as opposed to the EU/Europe/West between 2015 and 2020. While Turkey was depicted as a peaceful democratic country which is able to overcome all obstacles and conspiracies plotted against it, the EU/Europe/West was constructed as ‘hypocritical’, ‘exclusionary’, ‘racist’, ‘Islamophobic’, ‘crisis-ridden’, ‘unwelcomed penetrator’ and ‘inferior’

entity in the discourse of Erdoğan. There were also many instances where the EU/Europe/West was depicted as an external enemy who collaborates with internal enemies in order to prevent Turkey from becoming a global power (Kaliber & Kaliber, 2019).

Thus, this thesis will try to analyze the de-Europeanization process in Turkey between 2015 and 2020 through the CDA and answer the following question: “How and to what extent the weakening impact of the EU as a normative and political context in Turkey is normalized and justified through the discursive articulations of the EU/Europe/West in the discourse of political leader in power between 2015 and 2020?”

1.1 Methodology

In this thesis, the main aim is to find answers to the question of “How and to what extent the weakening impact of the EU as a normative and political context in Turkey is normalized and justified through the discursive articulations of the EU/Europe in the discourse of political leader in power between 2015 and 2020?”. Thus, in order to come up with a valuable answer to this question, a qualitative study that is based on the method of critical discourse analysis (CDA), and mostly the discourse-historical approach (DHA) of Vienna School, is employed to observe the changing nature of Turkey’s foreign policy stance and discourses of the political leader in power against the EU, Europe, and the West between 2015 and 2020. In doing so, The Republic of Turkey’s president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s speeches and statements towards or in relation to the EU/Europe/West is used as the primary sources of this research. Therefore, the speeches and statements of President Erdoğan between the time period of 2015 and 2020- more specifically from 20th December 2014 to 31st December 2019- which is available in the website of the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey is analyzed in order to detect the explicit references- or the absences of references- to Europe, the EU, specific EU member states or the West in several occasions. Only the speeches or statements which mention, refer or imply the EU, Europe, specific EU member states, or the West are included. In total, 604 speeches were

examined, among which 179 speeches that mentioned the EU, Europe, or the West either positively or negatively were selected. Then, a detailed analysis is conducted according to the CDA and/or the DHA strand of the CDA method.

1.2 Organization of this Thesis

This thesis is composed of six chapters. The introduction chapter is followed by a literature review chapter that engages with the ‘Europeanization theory’, ‘de-Europeanization theory’, and the role of domestic actors’ actions and discourses on these processes, respectively. Firstly, the literature chapter will be opened up on the term of Europeanization. The reason behind starting the theoretical framework with the Europeanization literature derived from the fact that one should understand the classic approaches to Europeanization in order to grasp the newly emerging literature on Europeanization and de-Europeanization. After giving a detailed review of Europeanization literature, some insight will be given into the arguments regarding the description and scope of the nascent phenomenon of de-Europeanization. Lastly, in order to come up with a valuable answer to this thesis’ question, the pivotal role of does domestic politics and actors’ discourses in determining the scope and extent of the Europeanization and de-Europeanization process in countries will be discussed.

In Chapter 3, the methodology which is used in this thesis is explained in detail. First of all, since the analysis is made by examining the discursive articulations of the EU/Europe/West in President Erdoğan’s rhetoric, the role of discourse in constructing states’ identity and power is argued. Then, the method of critical discourse analysis (CDA), along with its sub-branch discourse historical approach (DHA), is discussed. Wide coverage was given to this chapter because it is essential to understand the method in order to comprehend the ways President Erdoğan’s statements is analyzed in the analysis chapter. In Chapter 4, an extensive historical background of Turkey-EU relations, from the beginning of the relations to the present, is

presented. While doing so, the transformation from the deep Europeanization to de-Europeanization in Turkey is analyzed.

In Chapter 5, critical discourse analysis was made by examining the official speeches of Erdoğan between 2015 and 2020, which mentioned the EU, Europe, or the West, either positive or negative way. In doing so, the ways Erdoğan discursively constructed the EU, Europe, and the West in his speeches were detected. A total of six ways of discursive constructions of the EU/Europe/West were identified in Erdoğan's speeches, and each of them was analyzed in different subchapters. Finally, Chapter 6 is the conclusion where all the findings come together with the literature review, resulting in a discussion over the de-Europeanized discourse of Erdoğan and its effects on normalizing and justifying the de-Europeanization process in Turkey.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: EUROPEANIZATION AND DE- EUROPEANIZATION

Europeanization as a framework has been in the literature for a while; however, not until the late 1990s that it has become quite prominent in analyzing the transformation process in the European Union's member and candidate countries. With the successive enlargement rounds in 2004 and 2007, Europeanization has increasingly become relevant in assessing the impact of the EU on the socio-political and economic transformation of both newly added countries and acceding ones. This period has also coincided with significant developments in Turkey concerning the EU's membership since the end of the 1990s meant a new beginning for Turkey-EU relations. Turkey became a candidate country in the 1999 Helsinki Council, which marks the penetration of the Europeanization process into Turkey. With the acknowledgment of its candidacy status, Turkey has undergone significant developments thanks to the reform packages introduced in different areas such as human rights, the rule of law, civil-military relations, education, and so on. The Europeanization efforts have started in the mid-1990s in Turkey due to the expectance of candidacy or even full membership; however, with the actual status of candidacy given, these efforts have become more visible and progressive.

Notably, in the years between 2002 and 2005- which can also be defined as 'golden years of the AKP'- "deep Europeanization" has been manifested itself in different areas from economics to democratization (Öniş, 2010; Öniş & Yılmaz, 2009a). Years between 1999 and 2005 has been defined as "golden age of Europeanization" in Turkey (Öniş, 2010; Öniş & Yılmaz, 2009a); however, although it can be expected that the start of the accession negotiations has accelerated this process, it had the reverse effects on Turkey. The beginning of the accession

negotiations in 2005 has become the end of “golden age of Europeanization” in Turkey (Öniş, 2010; Öniş & Yılmaz, 2009b).

Since then, de-Europeanization arguments started to arise in assessing the Turkish case. It can be argued that the divergence between Turkey and the EU on multiple fronts has begun to be observed in the aftermath of 2005. The pace of reforms has slowed down considerably, and there is even turning back to the pre-reform practices in some areas. Furthermore, Turkey seemed to lose its eagerness of full membership, which is unquestionably one of the most important strategic goals of Turkish foreign policy in the early 2000s. Thus, de-Europeanization which can be defined as “the loss or weakening of the EU/Europe as a normative/political context and as a reference point in domestic and national public debates” has become more and more relevant in interpreting Turkey’s relations with the EU (Aydın-Düzgit & Kaliber, 2016).

Since this thesis aims to understand the dynamics of Turkey-EU relations in the last five years, firstly, by asking the question of “How Turkey’s distancing from the EU is taking place?”; secondly, “How and why does de-Europeanization manifest itself in the attitudes and discourse of Turkish political leaders?”, and, mainly, “How and to what extent the weakening impact of the EU as a normative and political context in Turkey is normalized and justified through the discursive articulations of the EU/Europe/West in the discourse of political leader in power between 2015 and 2020?”, it is essential to look at the literature on Europeanization and de-Europeanization in detail. In the following sections, I engage with the literature on Europeanization and de-Europeanization to assess the transformative power of the EU on member and candidate countries and domestic actors’ pivotal role in enabling these processes. In the first section, I will analyze and give a brief background on the Europeanization theory which is increasingly studied after the East European enlargement of the EU; and, then turn to the de-Europeanization theory to understand the weakening of the EU as a normative and

political context in some countries including Turkey. Lastly, I will engage with the role of domestic actors in triggering and justifying these processes, which can be used to understand the dynamics of Turkey-EU relations between 2015 and 2020.

2.1 Europeanization Theory and Its Effect on Member and Candidate States

Europeanization is a phenomenon that is useful to understand the expansion of the European system of governance in countries that are directly or indirectly in relation to the European countries or the EU through accession process and political or economic relations. According to the classic literature, Europeanization implies a domestic transformation that takes place in a country after it engages with the EU's accession process; however, it is not necessarily occurred in member states but also candidate countries and non-member states (Börzel & Risse, 2007; Graziano & Vink, 2006; Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier, 2006; Sedelmeier, 2011). One of the oldest and most popular definitions of the term is by Robert Ladrech, who explains the meaning of Europeanization as “incremental process reorienting the direction and shape of politics to the degree that EC political and economic dynamics become part of the organizational logic of national politics and policy-making” (Ladrech, 1994; Sipahioğlu, 2017, p. 53). Many scholars define Europeanization as “emergence and the development of European level of governance that changes the political, legal and social institutions in the domestic sphere according to norms and policies of Europe” (Olsen, 2002; Risse & Börzel, 2000). Héritier, in his definition, emphasizes the domestic change in member states by referring to Europeanization as “the process of influence deriving from European decisions and affecting member states’ policies and political and administrative structure” (Héritier et al., 2001). Buller and Gamble also argue that Europeanization is “a situation where distinct modes of European governance have transformed aspects of domestic politics” (Buller & Gamble, 2002). In line with these definitions, throughout the years, Europeanization has

begun to be regarded as a process that leads to important changes in the EU member states especially in the areas related to the first pillar and adaptation to the *acquis communautaire* (Müftüler-Baç & Gürsoy, 2010).

On the other hand, at the beginning of the 2000s, some scholars started to broaden the scope of the term by defining Europeanization as a process affecting not only formal regulations, rules, and governance but also informal norms, standards, and culture. To put it simply, Europeanization has become known as “becoming more European like” in every aspect (Tovias, 2007). Radaelli, in his comprehensive definition, argues that Europeanization is a process comprised of “construction, diffusion, and institutionalization of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, procedures, styles, ‘ways of doing things’ and shared beliefs and norms”, which are first described and reinforced at the EU level and then conveyed to the domestic politics, structures, public choices and even national discourse (Radaelli, 2004). Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, on the other hand, defines Europeanization as “a process in which states adopt the EU’s formal and informal rules” (Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier, 2006, p. 10).

Although the definition of Europeanization has been discussed for a long time, its actual meaning and scope remained ambiguous. Flockhart, in his pioneering article called “Europeanization or EU-ization? The transfer of European Norms Across Time and Space” defines Europeanization as “various modes of diffusion processes of European ideas and practices across time and space” (Flockhart, 2010). So, it can be argued that Europeanization is not merely related to the change brought by the EU and its institutional governance but a whole European culture, norms, rules, and regulations beyond time and space. Thus, it is crucial to draw a line between ‘EU-ization’ and Europeanization, which easily creates confusion when regarded as the same. Hellen Wallace asserts that the existence of the EU itself is the result of

Europeanization; therefore, the EU has a much shorter history and a narrow geographical area that can impact (Wallace, 2000). EU-ization can be defined as “a formal process of alignment with the EU’s institutions, policies, and legal structure”. In the literature, adaptation to the EU’s institutions, policies, and legal structure- that is EU’s first pillar or the EU’s *acquis communautaire*- is regarded as EU-ization; whereas Europeanization is seen as a normative and socio-political context that includes an alignment to Europe’s sociological order, norms, and culture (Kaliber, 2013; Wallace, 2000). That is to say, EU-ization is an integral and most vital part of Europeanization, but Europeanization is a more inclusive concept compared to EU-ization (Kaliber, 2013, p. 65).

However, especially with the enlargement rounds of the EU, Europeanization has been increasingly associated with the EU and the accession process. As mentioned above, this does not mean that the Europeanization and the EU-ization are equal; however, it is apparent that the EU has become the main instrument to enforce the Europeanization process thanks to its mechanisms and power to reward or punish states for the presence or lack of Europeanization (Müftüler-Baç & Gürsoy, 2010, p. 407). That is to say, even though Europeanization signifies more than the transmission of the EU’s rules and regulations to member and candidate states, the EU has become the most prominent catalyzer of the Europeanization process by virtue of its enforcement mechanisms (Müftüler-Baç & Gürsoy, 2010, p. 407). Thus, a quite extensive literature on Europeanization is dedicated to member and candidate countries’ process of alignment with both the formal institutions of the EU and the informal social and normative values of European countries.

Initially, the concept of Europeanization began to be utilized to understand the domestic change in the countries starting with Central and Eastern European countries’ accession process in the 1990s. Schimmelfennig argues that with the enlargement the “Europeanization” or

“Europeanness” of CEECs began to be evaluated by the level of adaptation to the EU’s norms and regulations; thus, the more a country has intensified its relations with the community the more Europeanization has become apparent in there (Sedelmeier & Schimmelfennig, 2002, p. 501). In other words, Europeanization has become more relevant as an analytical tool to assess the influence of the EU on “the socio-political and economic transformation in candidate countries” thanks to the Eastern enlargement of the EU in 2004 (Müftüler-Baç & Gürsoy, 2010, p. 405; Schimmelfennig & Scholtz, 2008; Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier, 2005).

Europeanization can take place in two different ways: formal and informal adaptation. In formal adoption, while engaging with the EU’s accession process, “rule adoption” takes place in countries via the institutionalization of EU rules at the domestic level, for example, adoption of the EU’s legal and institutional framework such as EU *acquis communautaire*, directives, and regulations into domestic law, transforming domestic institutions according to EU’s standards or changing political choices and acts in line with the EU’s expectations (Knill, 2001; Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier, 2006, p. 11). On the other hand, the second way can be regarded as a more constructivist way of explaining Europeanization. In this way, Europeanization can occur when social interactions between European actors and domestic actors increases. In the informal adoption, which is divided into two different forms, namely “the behavioral” and “the communicative or discursive” conceptions, the “rule adoption” is shaped by domestic actors (Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier, 2006). In the case of behavioral conception, the level of adoption is measured by the extent of the compatibility of countries’ behaviors and the EU’s norms (Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier, 2006, p. 12). The communicative or discursive conception, in contrast, looks at the level of inclusion and execution of the EU’s rules positively in the discourse and rhetoric of domestic actors (Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier, 2006, p. 12).

In this point, it is necessary to mention “EU conditionality” in affecting the Europeanization processes in states since “rule adoption” is commonly regarded as EU-driven. Especially within the enlargement literature, it is believed that the impact of the EU is pervasive, which means that the EU’s policies, norms, rules, and regulations expand in a given state once it engages with the EU (Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier, 2006, p. 2). Most scholars consider Europeanization as the “domestic influence of Europe and the EU” in the manner that member and candidate countries transform their domestic institutions in order to adapt to the EU’s rules and regulations (Börzel & Risse, 2007, 2012; Featherstone & Radaelli, 2003). The presence of “misfit” or discrepancy between the EU’s expectations and member or candidate states’ domestic institutions, policies, and political processes also made this change even more necessary (Börzel & Risse, 2012).

Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, in their well-known “external incentives model”, emphasize the dynamics of the EU’s conditionality that motivate the candidate countries to engage in Europeanization efforts (Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier, 2006). They argue that candidate states’ governments implement the EU rules only if the advantages of adoption, such as rewards and membership promises, exceed the adoption costs (Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier, 2006, p. 18). According to them, EU conditionality is the most efficient when the EU’s rules and circumstances are specific; conditional rewards, especially the promise of membership, are certain and definite; the credibility of threats is high, and adoption costs are small (Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier, 2006, p. 26). In this way, EU conditionality works for domestic actors by making the non-compliance costly and disadvantageous.

Although this perspective gives credit for domestic circumstances’ impact on the Europeanization process in some way, Europeanization is generally regarded as a ‘top-down’ process as well as an independent variable which transforms the domestic policies of candidate

or member countries in a certain way that is suitable to European policies, processes and institutions (Risse & Börzel, 2000, p. 3). However, the process of Europeanization can also be domestically driven; thus, approaches adopting top-down perspective has been criticized more and more in the last decade for their lack of consideration for domestic causes other than the EU conditionality (Börzel & Risse, 2012). In the following sections, first of all, the de-Europeanization theory will be analyzed; then, domestic actors' influence on the Europeanization and de-Europeanization process will be examined in detail.

2.2 De-Europeanization Theory: Distancing from European Rules, Norms, and Values

Within the Europeanization literature, de-Europeanization is a newly emerging framework that began to be studied by several scholars in the recent years (Aydın-Düzgit, 2016; Aydın-Düzgit & Kaliber, 2016; Cebeci, 2016; Kaliber & Kaliber, 2019; Murphy, 2019; Raagmaa, Kalvet, & Kasesalu, 2014; Saatçioğlu, 2016; Sipahioğlu, 2017; Wódka, 2017; G. Yılmaz, 2016b). Previously, the classic literature on Europeanization has been mainly focused on the EU's impact on the domestic change in member and candidate states; and, there were only a few sources to analyze 'resistance', 'backsliding', 'retreat' and 'retrenchment' to the Europeanization which can be regarded as the early attempts to define de-Europeanization (Burns, Gravey, Jordan, & Zito, 2019). Besides, in the past, there have been relatively few instances that states diverge from the EU and its policies, which make the studies about this issue comparatively useless. However, in the last decade, the notion of de-Europeanization has become more relevant due to rising debates about the future of the EU, increasing populism, Brexit and so on. The most salient and preferred definition of de-Europeanization, which is also taken into account in this thesis, is by Senem Aydın Düzgit and Alper Kaliber who describe the term as "the loss or weakening of the EU/Europe as a normative/political context and as a

reference point in domestic settings and national public debates”(Aydın-Düzgit & Kaliber, 2016).

There are also other definitions of the term even though there is still a disagreement over the precise meaning of de-Europeanization. According to some scholars, de-Europeanization means “dismantling the EU policy at the national/domestic level”, where dismantling stands for “cutting, diminution or removal of existing policy” in this context (Copeland, 2016; Jordan, Bauer, & Green-Pedersen, 2013). Copeland claims that de-Europeanization is “a process of disengagement combined with the intentional decision to reverse the impact of Europeanization” (Copeland, 2016, p. 1126). For him, in order to assess de-Europeanization in a certain country, there must have been a process of Europeanization in there beforehand, which can be reversed later (Copeland, 2016, p. 1126). In his understanding, deliberateness to reverse the Europeanization process is the key constituent of de-Europeanization through which future uploading and downloading in the governance operations can be prevented (Copeland, 2016, p. 1126). He also makes a distinction between de-Europeanization and disengagement, while defining the disengagement as a situation which a state reduces the intensity of Europeanization process or withdraw from it whereby the policies or reforms that were adopted as a part of Europeanization process are more or less maintained (Burns et al., 2019; Copeland, 2016, p. 1126).

In line with this understanding, the level and scope of de-Europeanization can be measured by assessing the two circumstances in countries (Copeland, 2016). Firstly, the degree of centralization in policy-making matters. If few veto players involved in the policy change, it is easier to reverse policies. Secondly, the knowledge and involvement of the public about a policy that is meant to be changed are important (Copeland, 2016). For instance, in his article focusing on the UK employment policy, Copeland argues that it was easier to roll back the EU

employment policy in the UK because there were relatively limited knowledge and support among the public concerning the issue (Copeland, 2016). That is to say, when there is limited knowledge about a certain policy among social actors who are not a part of the government, the de-Europeanization process is more likely and uncontested (Burns et al., 2019, p. 274). In contrast, the process of de-Europeanization may be more challenging and compelling when there is higher support and awareness in the public for a specific policy (Burns et al., 2019, p. 274). Moreover, it can be discussed that when the process of Europeanization does not have a deep-rooted effect on a country, it is easier to observe de-Europeanization (Burns et al., 2019, p. 274). Nevertheless, if a country has undergone a significant transformation with the Europeanization process, disengagement rather than de-Europeanization is more likely to happen there (Burns et al., 2019, p. 274).

At first glance, the meaning of de-Europeanization can be understood as the negative form or the exact opposite of Europeanization. However, Europeanization and de-Europeanization do not necessarily exclude each other. While there is Europeanization in a certain society, de-Europeanization could also exist (G. Yılmaz, 2016b). However, similar to the definitions discussed above, de-Europeanization as a framework is commonly used in the context of ‘backsliding’, ‘retrenchment’, ‘dismantling’ or ‘retreat’ of Europeanization in the literature (Aydın-Düzgit & Kaliber, 2016; Heritier, 2001; Kaliber, 2016; Radaelli, 2003; Sedelmeier, 2014). Claudio Radaelli, in the early 2000s, asserts that Europeanization can also cause retrenchment, which means that national policies of countries might become less ‘European’ than it was as a result of Europeanization pressure (Radaelli, 2003, p.38). Börzel and Risse, on the other hand, argue that there is not enough study about the unintended, adverse, involuntary, or ‘nasty’ results of Europeanization, which can be regarded as de-Europeanization (Börzel & Risse, 2009, p. 11). So, it is evident that while a country is subjected to the accession

process, the de-Europeanization process might happen along with Europeanization (Aydın-Düzgit & Kaliber, 2016, p. 6).

As mentioned above, Aydın-Düzgit and Kaliber's definition of de-Europeanization as "the loss or weakening of the EU/Europe as a normative/political context and as a reference point in domestic settings and national public debates" (Aydın-Düzgit & Kaliber, 2016, p. 5) differs from the other definitions employed in this nascent literature. The classic literature that focused on terms like 'backsliding', 'retrenchment', 'dismantling', and 'retreat' generally refers to situations where there is a change in policy direction as a response to the EU conditionality. On the other hand, Aydın-Düzgit and Kaliber argue that de-Europeanization addresses to "those cases where policy change, in whichever direction, is incurred without, with minimal or with largely negative reference to the EU/Europe, hence outside the normative/ political context of the EU" (Aydın-Düzgit & Kaliber, 2016, p. 6).

In their understanding, de-Europeanization does not only mean the lack of Europeanization but also signifies the divergence between a country and European values, norms, and rules in many areas of politics and society (Aydın-Düzgit & Kaliber, 2016). In line with earlier arguments, Kaliber and Aydın Düzgit give credit to domestic actors' role in determining the de-Europeanization process in a country. So, de-Europeanization can be considered as a form of Europeanization that transforms with the domestic actors' attitude and discourse against the EU/Europe. Since Europeanization process can differ from one society to another due to the actions and discourse of both European and domestic actors; de-Europeanization is not a situation where there is the non-existence of Europeanization but a withdrawal from European norms, rules, regulations and values (Aydın-Düzgit & Kaliber, 2016, p. 5).

According to Aydın-Düzgit and Kaliber, de-Europeanization can be observed in societies in two ways. First of all, the EU may lose its appeal as an effective organization; while the benefits of engaging with the EU/Europe decreases day by day it leads to the disengagement of the EU/Europe as a normative and political context for a certain state in the end (Aydın-Düzgit & Kaliber, 2016, p. 6). Secondly, increasing skepticism, distrust and indifference among the society against the EU may lead countries to move away from the EU/Europe as the ruling politicians started not to refer to EU/Europe as a legitimate cause of reforms and developments (Aydın-Düzgit & Kaliber, 2016, p. 6). At this point, they agree with Copeland by asserting that the actions and approaches of domestic actors cause the de-Europeanization process. However, Copeland merely refers the cases where reforms are reversed as de-Europeanization; whereas, Aydın-Düzgit and Kaliber include cases where reform is realized without a motivation to align with the EU rules, norms and regulations, or where domestic actors intentionally avoid mentioning the EU as the reason behind reforms (Aydın-Düzgit & Kaliber, 2016). When there is a policy change which is made without any reference or with a negative connotation to the EU/Europe, and reforms and policy choices are not in line with the normative and political context of the EU/Europe it can be said that de-Europeanization is taking place in a country (Aydın-Düzgit & Kaliber, 2016, p. 6).

In a candidate or member state, de-Europeanization may take place in a variety of policy areas, from human rights to environmental policies, education, foreign policy, and so on. So, if one candidate or member state started to change their policies on specific issues without complying with or referring to European policies, it can be said that de-Europeanization is witnessed in that sphere of policy. In the next section, the domestic politics and actors' role in enabling and disabling the Europeanization and de-Europeanization process will be discussed in detail.

2.3 Domestic Politics and Actors' Role on the Europeanization and De-Europeanization Process

While introducing several approaches, it can be said that classic Europeanization literature is dedicated to explaining the domestic influence of the EU on the member states and candidate countries while adopting a top-down perspective that has considered the Europeanization as something linear, conditional, specific and well-dictated by the EU, which put the domestic factors and actors on a position in which they only play the roles that are given to them. The literature's dependence on top-down approaches has led to the ignorance of domestic actors' effectiveness in creating the reputation and impact of the EU in candidate or member countries. However, the recent developments in the literature show that the impact of domestic actors and politics on the Europeanization and de-Europeanization process has become more and more relevant. There is a visible difference in the intensity of Europeanization and de-Europeanization processes in different states, which makes the domestic politics and actors a vital variable. This thesis also adapts the understanding of Europeanization that focused on the influence of domestic actors in creating different Europeanization processes in each country.

In recent years, the concept of Europeanization has been seen in a different way by several scholars who made outstanding contributions to the European studies (Aydın-Düzgüt & Kaliber, 2016; Balkır & Eylemer, 2016; Hughes, Sasse, & Gordon, 2004; Johan P. Olsen, 2002; Kaliber, 2013). Although Europeanization is considerably studied in the last decades, less attention has been paid to the role of the domestic actors and their effects on creating unique processes and divergent paths of development in each country. However, lately, it is discerned that each country has different patterns of Europeanization because of domestic dynamics, the stance and discourse of domestic actors, and the environment that is either suitable or resistant

to change. Thus, the idea of Europeanization having a single meaning and being a stable process of change has begun to be questioned (Johan P. Olsen, 2002, p. 922). Since the beginning, the EU has always been effective in exporting its norms, rules, regulations, and values to new countries through the enlargement process and the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) (Yılmaz, 2016, P. 147). Nevertheless, the Europeanization period does not produce the same consequences in every candidate, member, or neighborhood state, which shows that the European form of governance cannot be transmitted to each country in the same way due to domestic factors and actors. Hughes and Sasse and Gordon argue that the EU's adaptational pressure increasingly varied across candidate countries, which in effect provides domestic actors with significant room for maneuver (Balkır & Eylemer, 2016, p.c30; Hughes, Sasse, & Gordon, 2004, p. 140). Especially, the ones who have a say during the negotiations play a vital role in mediating Europeanization by acting or not acting in line with the EU's demands.

In one of the mainstream arguments of Europeanization, Börzel and Risse argue that we can expect to see domestic change as a result of Europeanization under two circumstances (Risse & Börzel, 2000). First, in case of "misfit" or incoordination between European level and national level policies and institutions, it is expected that domestic change can be observed with the Europeanization process (Risse & Börzel, 2000). That is to say; when there is a poor fit between certain countries' existing domestic policies, practices, and structure and the EU-level expectations, there is a strong pressure to adapt and vice-versa (Bache & Jordan, 2006, p. 20). Secondly, there must be some factors, such as political actors or institutions that respond to "adaptational pressures" (Risse & Börzel, 2000).

This understanding highlighted the role of national actors and factors in determining outcomes. According to the viewpoint of rationalist institutionalists who follow the "logic of consequentialism", Europeanization paves the way for domestic change in countries as a result

of differential empowerment of political and societal actors with the reapportionment of resources at the national level (Risse & Börzel, 2000). Political actors either take advantage of the “misfit” between European and domestic policies, processes, and institutions to promote their own interests; or encounter new obstacles in achieving them due to this “misfit” (Risse & Börzel, 2000). Domestic actors can make use of these opportunities and abstain from the constraints that determine the likelihood of redistribution of power in the domestic political structure (Risse & Börzel, 2000). So, in line with this argument, the capacity of domestic actors to manage domestic change has been affected by two intervening factors, namely the existence of “multiple veto points” in a state’s internal structure and “facilitating institutions” (Green Cowles, Risse, & Caporaso, 2001). The sociological institutionalist view, in contrast, follows the “logic of appropriateness” and emphasizes the persuasion process in leading Europeanization. According to them, Europeanization causes domestic change by means of “socialization and collective learning process” which induces the internalization of European norms and identities (Risse & Börzel, 2000).

On the other hand, Alper Kaliber, in his comprehensive article called “Contextual and Contexed: Reassessing Europeanization in the Case of Turkey” criticizes the heavy emphasis the Europeanization literature puts on the EU-induced domestic process of adaptation; and, argues that a new approach that underlines the importance of ways in which the European integration process is politically used by domestic actors should be employed (Kaliber, 2013). According to him, Europeanization is a context which is continuously reshaped with the impact of domestic and European level discussions; therefore, it is not a technical and stable but rather a changeable and flexible context that can be renegotiated between the domestic and international actors (Kaliber, 2013, p. 53). Not only the European level governance, politics, and formal institutions or the EU integration process are responsible for Europeanization, but the domestic actors’ actions and discourses are also one of the main forces behind

Europeanization in countries. These domestic actors can be government officials, political elites, ruling party leaders, opposition parties, military officials, academicians, journalists, activists, and others. Kaliber claims that, in contrast with the common understanding, “Domestic actors are not ‘mediators’ but creators of Europeanization” (Kaliber, 2013, p. 54). Each country has its own specific and particular process of Europeanization that is shaped by domestic politics, domestic actors’ preferences, and political and social environment. European integration of states is stimulated and utilized politically by domestic actors, especially by political leaders in power. The form and degree of Europeanization depend on the national and sub-national actors’ usage of the European values, norms, and institutions as a reference point in their public narrative (Kaliber, 2013, p. 58). That is to say, domestic actors’ ways to use Europe as a point of reference to publicize their political plans and projects have a big impact on the Europeanization process in a given country (Kaliber, 2013, p. 54).

Like in the Europeanization concept, domestic actors are also the main factor behind the existence of de-Europeanization. While adopting positive or negative stances against the EU, domestic political and civil actors might be effective in determining the degree of Europeanization as well as de-Europeanization. Since Europeanization is a process that is created not only by the expectations of formal institutions but also the actions and discourses of political actors at both European and national level (Aydın-Düzgüt & Kaliber, 2016), it is necessary to look at the influence of domestic actors in creating the de-Europeanization process in a specific country. During the EU accession process for candidate countries, political party elites, ruling party’s political actors, opposition parties’ leaders, and other political figures might have become the key domestic players managing and guiding the Europeanization and de-Europeanization process. While EU-level actors are also important in shaping the process and providing continuance, the degree of Europeanization is determined by the priority that is given by the domestic actors to the issue. Political leaders are strategically and vigilantly use

the Europe/EU in their political agenda through speeches and actions when it is beneficial for their political ambitions and goals. Such rhetorical actions or discourses are formulated by domestic political actors who are effective in shaping the country's stance and receptiveness to Europeanization and de-Europeanization (Balkır & Eylemer, 2016, p.29).

As mentioned earlier, Europeanization affects the domestic politics when domestic political actors used the Europe/EU as a “mobilizing political instrument” or a “survival tool” to boost their political and social power (Kaliber, 2013). Europeanization occurs in a country to the extent that the ideas, norms, rules, regulations, and values are integrated into the domestic systems by the rhetoric of domestic actors (Kaliber, 2013). In the same way, de-Europeanization penetrates into a country if these actors begin to refrain from using the Europe/EU as a reference point or used them in a negative context rather than a positive context (Aydın-Düzgıt & Kaliber, 2016). When there is no improvement in the accession process and the appeal of the EU membership lost its significance in a certain country, it is likely that the references to the EU in the discourse of domestic political actors decrease over time, which paves the way for de-Europeanization.

On the other hand, growing Euro-skepticism among the public can be considered as another domestic factor that leads to de-Europeanization in a given country. The perspective of the public against the Europe/EU is important in influencing how domestic political actors instrumentalize Europeanization/de-Europeanization. Growing skepticism and indifference towards the Europe/EU among the public provide the domestic actors with the justification to move away from the reform processes (Aydın-Düzgıt & Kaliber, 2016, p. 6). When there is a certain doubt among the public towards the EU membership, pursuing the Europeanization reforms might not benefit the political interests or electoral purposes of domestic actors. Hence,

the de-Europeanization process takes place more smoothly, without any contestation from the public.

In the next chapter, the methodology which is used in this thesis is explained in detail. First of all, since the analysis based on the discursive articulations of the EU/Europe/West in President Erdoğan's discourse, the role of discourse in constructing states' identity and power is argued. Then, the method of critical discourse analysis (CDA), along with its sub-branch discourse historical approach (DHA), is discussed. Extensive coverage was given to this chapter because it is significant to understand the method in order to comprehend the ways President Erdoğan's statements is analyzed in the analysis chapter.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY: CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

In this thesis, the main aim is to find answers to the question of “How and to what extent the weakening impact of the EU as a normative and political context in Turkey is normalized and justified through the discursive articulations of the EU/Europe/West in the discourse of political leader in power between 2015 and 2020?”. Thus, in order to come up with a valuable answer to this question, a qualitative study based on the method of critical discourse analysis (CDA), and mostly the discourse-historical approach (DHA) of Vienna School, is employed. In doing so, The Republic of Turkey’s President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s speeches and statements towards or in relation to the EU or Europe is used as the primary source of this research. Therefore, the speeches and statements of the President Erdoğan between the period of 2015 and 2020- more specifically from 20 December 2014 to 31 December 2019- which is available in the website of the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey is analyzed in order to detect the explicit references- or the absences of references- to Europe, the EU, the specific EU member states, or the West in several occasions. Only the speeches or statements that refer to or imply the EU, Europe, specific EU member states, or the West are included. A detailed analysis is then conducted according to the CDA and/or the DHA strand of the CDA method, which is explained in the following.

In this chapter, I, firstly, explain the meaning and interpretations of discourse, its usage in social sciences, and how it is useful for this research. Since the understanding of Europeanization and de-Europeanization adapted in this thesis emphasized the role of domestic actors’ discourse in determining the extent and limits of these processes, it is important to look at discourse and its impact on the construction of the state’s identity and power in depth. Then, the method of CDA, along with the DHA method, will be explained in detail in order to shed

light on the reasons why they are chosen as the preferred method for this dissertation and how they will be conducted.

3.1. The Role of Discourse in Constructing the State's Identity and Power

The humanities and social sciences have started to explore the discourse dimension of language and communication since the 1970s (Dijk & Petöfi, 1981; Georgakopoulou & Goutsos, 2004a; Wodak, De Cillia, Reisigl, & Liebhart, 1999). The term 'discourse' has begun to be used widely and sometimes vaguely by several scholars in different areas such as anthropology, history, sociology, political science, psychology, and philosophy to signify various meanings based on the context. In general, especially in linguistics, discourse is defined as "a coherent or rational body of speech or writing: a speech or a sermon" (Hall, 1992, p. 201). However, the understanding of discourse in social sciences varies from linguistics in some ways with regard to treating discourse as a broader phenomenon directly related to the society and the social context of the discourse. According to Macdonnell, discourse stands for 'all verbal and non-verbal construction of meanings that are practiced in the wider sphere of ideological purposes' (Georgakopoulou & Goutsos, 2004b; Macdonell, 1986). Van Dijk, on the other hand, defines it "as not only an autonomous verbal object but also as a situated interaction, social practice and a type of communication in a social, cultural, historical or political situation" (Teun A. van Dijk, 2008).

In the poststructuralist perspective, people 'discursively' construct social reality by means of the ways they talk about the world. In other words, language is regarded as the creator of social reality and reflects the society in which we live. Thus, the understanding and interpretation of the language have important consequences for realizing the social world. In line with this understanding, Stuart Hall, in 'The West and Rest: Discourse and Power', explains discourse as "a group of statements which provide a language for talking about- i.e., a way of

representing- a particular kind of knowledge about a topic” (Hall, 1992, p. 201). If statements about a specific topic are delivered within a particular discourse, it means that the topic is constructed to represent the ideas and knowledge of this discourse and constrain the other approaches in which the topic can be constructed (Hall, 1992, p. 201).

For some scholars, discourse can be viewed as the sum of speeches and writings that are socially instituted and served as a form of power. Foucault argues that the term discourse is “a way of organizing knowledge that shapes the constitution of social relations through the collective understanding of the discursive logic and the acceptance of the discourse as a social fact” (Foucault, 1969). In the Foucaultian view of discourse, a discourse has a natural regulatory power that generates the objects of our knowledge, constructs the topic, and governs its meaning (Short & Le, 2009, p. 5). Moreover, according to Foucault’s view, discourse produces a logic that is associated with the wider episteme of the historical period in which it appears. There is a specific relation between discourses and power; that is, discourses are constructed by the power within a social order, which determines specific rules and categories and sets the criteria for legitimating knowledge and truth within discursive order (Foucault, 1969). McAuley, in his book titled “An Introduction to Politics, State and Society”, agrees with Foucault by emphasizing that a discourse defines its own truth by pointing out what can be said about a specific topic, what can be regarded as the logic of an argument, and what is accepted as the reasonable premises in such argument (McAuley, 2003). In this understanding, the realization of discourse has crucial implications for the comprehension of power. The power that rests in discourse itself lead us to understand some topics or problems in certain ways, and address question accordingly (Diez, 1999, p. 603).

When a discourse- ‘the representation and constitution of “real”- is constructed, it creates “a managed space in which some statements and depictions come to have greater value

than other” (Campbell, 1998, p. 6). Thus, although discourses do not cause, they can enable certain movements by determining the boundaries and limitations to “what is possible to be articulated” (Diez, 1999, p. 611). This enabling effect can be observed especially in discourses of state officials or political leaders who speak for the public based on their knowledge derived from their status and privileged access to the state-related information and media (Aydın-Düzgit, 2016; Weldes, 1999). Therefore, those who control and spread information through several channels are also influential in constructing the state’s views and ‘identity’ thanks to their position as “representatives who speak for us” (Aydın-Düzgit, 2018; Weldes, 1999). There is also a specific relation between identity construction and the concept of power. Those people who have control over identity formation can impose their versions of identity and marginalize alternative constellations in society (Aydın-Düzgit, 2018; J.A, 1995). Hence, the institutions where identity discourses are located are also the ones where the power is rested (Aydın-Düzgit, 2018).

Foreign policy discourses are one of the most vital tools of realizing constant articulation of the state’s identity and position in relation to ‘others’. According to Ashley’s articulation of foreign policy, it is essential to regard foreign policy as a performance that imposes an analysis of the world and, therefore, of its structure (Ashley, 1987). In his understanding, foreign policy is a specific type of interpretative performance that affects “the constitution and empowering of states and other” (Ashley, 1987). In other words, through foreign policy, state officials engage in a “specific sort of boundary-producing political performance” with the purpose of constructing a state’s own identity and its very own being in relation to ‘others’(Ashley, 1987; Aydın-Düzgit, 2016, 2018). The discursive construction of the state’s identity can be realized through its foreign policy discourses related to several countries and regions (Aydın-Düzgit, 2018).

Although the foreign policy is multifaceted and there can be different foreign policy discourses towards or in relation to various countries, this research will focus on Turkey's foreign policy discourses on the EU/Europe between 2015 and 2020. In doing so, the aim is to understand the changing dynamics of Turkey-EU relations through the lens of the political leader in power's discourse. So, an analysis will be made based on how Turkey's identity was constructed against the EU/Europe/West, and, how de-Europeanization in Turkey and the foreign policy choices regarding the EU/Europe/West are normalized and legitimized by the discourse of political leader in power in this given time period. In the next part, critical discourse analysis and the discourse historical approach that will be used in analyzing the discourse of the political leader in power in Turkey will be examined in detail.

3.2. Critical Discourse Analysis

CDA is a theory and method of discourse analysis which concerned with the relations between discourse and social-cultural developments that lead to the construction of social identities, power, and social relations (Aydın-Düzgit, 2016; Wodak & Meyer, 2001). The main tool of analysis in CDA is texts which constitute a specific discourse. CDA focuses on “authentic everyday communication”, which takes place in media, politics, institutions, or in other areas instead of just analyzing sample sentences or sample texts (Wodak & Meyer, 2001). While implementing CDA, not only texts but also written documents, speeches, spoken interactions, and communications are taken into consideration. These different forms of texts, which are also regarded as ‘genres’, include multimodal visual, electronic, and gestural interactions (Aydın-Düzgit, 2016). Texts can be thought of as “materially durable products of linguistic actions” (Wodak & Meyer, 2001), whereas a genre may be defined as “a socially ratified way of using language in connection with a particular type of social activity” (Fairclough, 1995).

Discourses are constructed by means of genres and texts (Wodak & Meyer, 2001, p. 66). Siegfried Jäger argues that discourse is a “communicative event”, which comprises conversational interaction and written text along with associated gestures, facework, typographical layout, images, and other semiotic or multimedia aspects of expression (Wodak & Meyer, 2001, p. 20). Ruth Wodak and Martin Reisigl, on the other hand, defines discourse as “a complex pile of concurrent and subsequent interrelated linguistic acts that may be observed within and across the social fields of action as thematically interrelated semiotic, oral, written tokens and very often as texts that are bound to particular semiotic types called genres” (Wodak et al., 1999; Wodak & Meyer, 2001, p. 21).

In the method of CDA, language derives its power from influential people who prefer to use it; therefore, it is not effective in its own (Wodak & Meyer, 2001, p. 10). The relation between language and power is emphasized in this method since it deals with analyzing both obscure and obvious structural relationships of power, dominance, discrimination, and control as showed up in language (Wodak & Meyer, 2001). Thus, it is common among critical discourse analysts to quote the understanding of Habermas’ definition of language as a “medium of domination and social force” (Habermas, 1987). According to Habermas, “language serves to legitimize relations of organized power, ... and it is also ideological” (Habermas, 1987; Wodak & Meyer, 2001). CDA deals with the ways in which language and/or texts are used in several forms for manipulations of power (Wodak & Meyer, 2001, p. 11). Power, in this method, is not found only by analyzing the grammatical structure of texts but also by examining the control that a person who speaks seize over the situation or social occasion with his/her discourse (Wodak & Meyer, 2001, p. 11). That is to say; the power is exercised or challenged with the genres used in a given social event or circumstances (Wodak & Meyer, 2001, p. 11). Social or political actors who play a role in the construction of discourse utilized not only their struggles or experiences but also the collective frame of perception that

is named “social representations” (Wodak & Meyer, 2001, p. 21). Discourses develop within a society and are affected by the circumstances in that society; thus, it can only be comprehended by looking at the mutual interaction of “situations, action, actor and societal structures” (Wodak & Meyer, 2001, p. 21).

3.2.1 Discourse-Historical Approach of CDA

In this thesis, the discourse-historical approach (DHA) of CDA will be mainly utilized in order to find a reasonable answer to our question. The reason behind the selection of this branch of CDA may be explained in two ways. First of all, DHA deals with the link between “fields of action”, genres, discourses, and texts (Wodak & Meyer, 2001). In DHA, the main area of the study is the field of politics that conceptual frameworks for political discourse are developed. While analyzing historical, institutional, organizational and political matters, the DHA approach makes use of a wide range of knowledge about the historical events or sources and analyzes the background of social and political circumstances in which discursive events took place (Wodak & Meyer, 2001, p. 65).

In accordance with CDA, DHA treats the discourse as “a form of social practice” and considers the context and circumstances under which the language is used as crucial (Wodak & Meyer, 2001). DHA does not merely focus on spoken or written texts but also deals with the theorization and description of social processes, circumstances, and structures which paved the way for the creation of a text (Fairclough & Kress, 1993; Wodak & Meyer, 2001). It assumes that all discourses are historical, so they can only be comprehended by taking their context into account (Wodak & Meyer, 2001, p. 15). It also analyzes the text which gained its particular value thanks to the construction of meanings, individuals or social groups as social-historical subjects living in certain social circumstances (Fairclough & Kress, 1993; Wodak & Meyer, 2001). In other words, DHA asserts that “there is a dialectical relationship between particular discursive acts and the situations, conditions, institutions, and social structures in which they

are embedded” (Wodak et al., 1999, p. 8). The situational, political, institutional, and social circumstances affect discourses actors choose to use, and, in turn, discourses make an impact on politics and society through its power to shape reality according to its preferred direction.

Discourses are open and hybrid systems that allow them to create new sub-topics (Wodak & Meyer, 2001, p. 66). Thus, the concepts of “intertextuality” and “interdiscursivity” are widely used in the DHA approach to analyze the relationship between different texts (Wodak, 2007; Wodak & Meyer, 2001). Understanding these concepts is vital for examining the connection between old and new texts. ‘Intertextuality’ can be seen when a text refers to another text from the present or the past, either explicitly or implicitly. It can be done through perpetual reference to a subject, an actor, or the same events (Aydın-Düzgit, 2016; Wodak, 2007). The adaptation or quotation of the main arguments from one text to another can also be regarded as ‘intertextuality’ (Aydın-Düzgit, 2016; Wodak, 2007). On the other hand, ‘interdiscursivity’ can be observed when a certain discourse is used while arguing another discourse. In other words, ‘interdiscursivity’ refers to the methods through which discourses are linked and benefit from each other (Wodak & Meyer, 2001).

Girnth introduces the concept of “fields of action” into the DHA approach- which is regarded as “segments of the respective societal reality that contribute to constituting and shaping the frame of discourse” (Girnth, 1996; Wodak & Meyer, 2001, p. 66). According to him, there are different fields of action which serve different functions and socially institutionalized purposes of discursive practices (Wodak & Meyer, 2001). For instance, “law making, the formation of public opinion and self-presentation, political advertising, marketing and propaganda” are among different fields of action that serve different purposes in the area of political action (Wodak & Meyer, 2001, p. 68). However, there is no clear-cut distinction between different fields of action; therefore, a specific discourse can start within one field of action and then move to another (Wodak & Meyer, 2001, p. 67).

Secondly, DHA puts a special emphasis on the discursive construction of identity through which some groups are viewed as ‘in’ and others as ‘out’ (Aydın-Düzgit, 2016, p. 48). It is interested in the examination of “the relationship between discursive construction of national sameness and discursive construction of difference leading to the political and social exclusion of specific out-groups” (Wodak & Meyer, 2001). In the past, several scholars utilized from DHA in analyzing the construction of both national and European identities (Aydın-Düzgit, 2012; Aydın-Düzgit, 2016; Wodak & Boukala, 2015; Wodak et al., 1999, 2009). Since DHA has used widely in the studies of identity construction, it has described and modeled ways to examine the texts through which the process of inclusion and exclusion is taken place in the discursive construction of identities.

The method of DHA is composed of three dimensions, namely discourse topics, discursive strategies, and linguistic means (Wodak & Meyer, 2001). In the first step, one has to establish the main contents or subjects of a particular discourse, which refers to the relationship between Turkey and the EU in the case of this thesis in the widest sense (Aydın-Düzgit, 2016; Wodak & Meyer, 2001). The second dimension explores discursive strategies used in constructing identities through discourse (Aydın-Düzgit, 2016; Wodak & Meyer, 2001). Studies using the DHA approach mainly focuses on five different discursive strategies. Firstly, “referential strategy or strategy of nomination” is used with the aim of constructing in and out-groups through membership categorization, usage of “biological, naturalizing and depersonalizing metaphors and metonymies and synecdoches” (Wodak & Meyer, 2001, p. 27, 73). Secondly, “strategies of predication” are preferred in order to label social actors deprecatorily or appreciatively by means of “stereotypical, evaluative attributions of positive or negative characteristics and implicit or explicit predicates” (Wodak & Meyer, 2001, p. 27, 73). Thirdly, “strategies of argumentation” are used to justify negative and positive attributions that lead to political inclusion, exclusion, discrimination, or preferential treatment (Wodak &

Meyer, 2001, p. 27, 73). The employment of ‘topoi’ is the most common device of argumentation strategies. Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer define ‘topoi’ or ‘loci’ as “parts of argumentation which belong to the obligatory, either explicit or inferable premises in the shape of content-related warrants that connect the arguments with the conclusion” (Wodak & Meyer, 2001, p. 73). For instance, history, culture, usefulness or uselessness, advantage or disadvantage, and justice are among the topos used widely in the discursive construction of identities, especially national identities. The fourth strategy is “strategies of perspectivation, framing or discourse representation”, which is used to express involvement or show the speaker’s point of view (Wodak & Meyer, 2001, p. 27, 73). Reporting, description, narration, or quotation of events and utterances are the most preferred means in this strategy (Wodak & Meyer, 2001, p.73). Lastly, “strategies of intensification and mitigation” are chosen in an effort to intensify or mitigate the illocutionary force of expressions (Wodak & Meyer, 2001, p. 27, 73).

In the third and the last dimension of DHA, “linguistic means” (as types) and “linguistic realizations” (as tokens) that can be regarded as the tools of discursive strategies are explored (Wodak & Meyer, 2001). While centering upon the relations between Turkey and the EU as the main discourse topic, the ‘West’ will also be put under the scope in this research. Since the ‘West’ and ‘Westernization’ has always been associated with Europe and Europeanization in the Turkish context, it is reasonable to include references to the West while analyzing the relations between Turkey and the EU (Arin, 2015; Kaya, 2013; Oğuzlu & Kibaroglu, 2009). Likewise, not only direct references to the EU or Europe but also mentions to specific EU member states or institutions will also be considered as equal.

In this dissertation, discursive strategies used in the statements of President Erdoğan will be identified through answering the following questions: “How are Turkey, Europe, and the EU named and referred to linguistically? What traits, characteristics, qualities, and features

are attributed to them? By means of what arguments and argumentation schemes are certain representations of the parties justified, legitimized, and normalized in discourse? Are the respective utterances articulated overtly, are they intensified or mitigated?” (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001, p. 44; Wodak & Meyer, 2001, p. 73). By responding to these questions, President Erdoğan’s speeches about the EU, Europe, or the West will be analyzed thoroughly. The next part will explain the research design and the processes and results of collecting the data for this thesis.

3.3 Research Design & Collecting the Data

For this thesis, 604 speeches that were delivered by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan between 20 December 2014 and 31 December 2019 are examined. The official website of the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey is used as a source since all speeches the President has made during official schedules are transcribed word to word in there. Among 604 official speeches that were delivered during this time period, 179 speeches have been chosen as the data which are subject to analysis since they are related to this thesis’ subject¹. While choosing 179 speeches, all 604 speeches were examined in order to understand whether they are related to Turkey-EU relations and Turkish foreign policy dynamics. ‘The EU’, ‘Europe’, ‘The West’, and ‘EU member states’ names’ have been determined as keywords in the course of finding speeches that are subject to our analysis. As a result, 179 speeches that include mentions to the EU, Europe, specific member states, or the West in the context of Turkey-EU relations have been chosen. These 179 speeches have been delivered on different occasions in and outside of Turkey, including official speeches during election periods, after the failed coup attempt or

¹ All speeches were accessed in a transcribed form from <https://www.tccb.gov.tr/receptayyiperdogan/konusmalar/>. The translations are done by the author. The links of each statement used in the analysis chapter are given in the secondary sources at the end of this thesis.

other domestic and international events that have an impact on both domestic and foreign policy. Speeches that were delivered in election rallies in different cities are not included in this data as they are not included in the speeches & statements section on the website.

The period between 2015 and 2020 is chosen because it corresponds to a period in which Turkey's foreign policy has undergone a major transformation and the deterioration of relations between Turkey and the EU has become more visible, which raises concerns about the future of accession negotiations even further (Hürsoy, 2017; Werz, 2017). This is also a period when arguments about freezing and/or suspension of negotiations with Turkey have taken place in the EU institutions several times. On the other hand, in this period, there is a certain rapprochement to the East in Turkey's foreign policy, which can also be considered as one of the reasons that the EU lost its effectiveness as a political and normative context in Turkey in recent years. Furthermore, during the last five years Turkey has experienced many elections (three general elections in 2015 and 2018, the constitutional referendum in 2017, presidential election in 2018, one local election in 2019 including the re-election of Istanbul municipality elections), and incidents such as series of terrorist attacks in different cities, migration crisis, failed coup attempt and military operations in Syria which effectively shaped both domestic and foreign policy choices including the relations with the EU.

The reason to choose President Erdoğan's speeches also rests on the dynamics of the selected period in which the AKP has gained more and more power with consecutive election victories and governed Turkey singlehandedly thanks to its firm control over the primary state organs of law enforcement, judiciary and the military. Furthermore, the President has become the sole head of the state with constitutional change in 2018, which made his speeches and statements the reflection of state authority. Almost all speeches the President has delivered during this time period have been broadcasted live on television and covered widely in the media; thus, they have an impact on the views of people who either willingly attended and

listened to his speeches or unconsciously exposed to them through media. Besides, his speeches, especially the public speeches which are well attended by the public, have been delivered with the aim of persuading the public by showing “clear articulation of identities and policies” of Turkey and holds “the formal authority to define political position” (Aydın-Düzgit, 2016; Hansen, 2006).

The analysis will be done by taking three dimensions of the DHA method into account. It will be arranged around the discourse topics- i.e., the relationship between Turkey and the EU between 2015 and 2020 in this case- and discursive strategies and the linguistic means that are used in President Erdoğan’s discourse to normalize and justify de-Europeanization in Turkey. The analysis will be made through selected parts of chosen texts among 179 speeches that mentioned the EU/Europe/West. The analysis chapter will be divided into six different sub-chapters that are constituted based on the regularities and repetitions observed in the discourse of Erdoğan about the EU/Europe/West. Each sub-chapter includes excerpts related to its own categorization of discursive articulations of the EU/Europe/West. These excerpted parts are chosen as our data according to their usage of a great variety of discursive strategies and relevant linguistic means which have been employed throughout the whole text. Their relevance and dominance in the discourse of the political leader in power were also effective in their selection.

In the next chapter, before going through the analysis, the historical background of Turkey-EU relations will be given in-depth in order to shed light on the transformation from Europeanization to de-Europeanization in the country, and the impact of domestic politics and President Erdoğan’s discourse in enabling this transformation.

CHAPTER 4

THE HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF TURKEY-EU RELATIONS: A PATH FROM EUROPEANIZATION TO DE-EUROPEANIZATION

4.1 Turkey-EU Relations Before Turkey's Candidacy

In 2019, Turkey-EU relations hit a new milestone because it has been a sixty year since Turkey first applied for an association to the European Economic Community (EEC) on 31 July 1959. The European Economic Community was established in 1958; thus, it can be said that Turkey is one of the first applicants who envisaged to join the community in its early days. However, the EEC's response was not very welcoming for Turkey since the beginning. Rather than approving the application, the EEC suggested the establishment of an association or partnership with Turkey until it complies with the social and political requirements of the membership. Thus, negotiations between Turkey and EEC began in 1959 for the first time in history, which lasted for four years until Ankara Agreement's signature. On 12 September 1963, the Ankara Agreement was signed, and it entered into force a year later on 1 December 1964. This agreement aimed to ease the way for Turkey to become a member of EEC through the establishment of the Customs Union between two parties. The establishment of the Customs Union did not only encourage Turkey to make necessary developments in economic and trade issues but also provided it with the hope for full membership. In legal terms, the Ankara Agreement is regarded as a 'sui generis' international treaty, which implies that it is not just a trade treaty but between trade treaty and admission agreement (Karayel, 2011; Lasok, 2015). Thus, it can be regarded as a first step in the accession process of Turkey.

The Ankara Agreement triggered a lot of progressive developments in Turkey, especially in the area of the economy. It projects the free circulation of goods, people, services, and capital between Turkey and the EEC; however, Turkey was still excluded from the decision-making processes of the community at that time. In 1970, the additional protocol

which sets the detailed regulations to establish the Customs Union was signed in Brussels. With the implementation of the additional protocol, Turkey and the EEC lifted barriers in significant areas. Some tariffs, custom duties, and quantitative barriers are abolished both by the EEC and Turkey in the long run.

During the period between 1959 and 1980, the relations between Turkey and the European Community (EC) went smoothly but not rapidly. Both the EU-level actors and the domestic actors willingly cooperated; however, there were not clear efforts for Europeanization reforms in Turkey. According to Öniş, the early stages of Turkey-EC relations between the 1950s and 1960s has been characterized by the economic integration rather than a political or cultural integration; that is why reforms were more focused on the economic dimension (Öniş, 2001, p. 108).

The smooth relations between the two sides has been interrupted by the 1980 military intervention in Turkey. After the coup, relations between Turkey and EC came to a deadlock. In the 1980s and 1990s, democracy and human rights became more and more important in defining the European identity constructed by the EC. The quality of democratization and the performance on human rights have been increasingly emphasized as main qualifications of Europeanness, which posed a challenge for Turkey's full membership in the light of unfavorable circumstances in the aftermath of the coup (Öniş, 2001, p. 111). Thus, by taking into consideration of unstable political environment and severe human rights violations, the European Parliament de facto suspended the agreement between Turkey and the EC in 1982. Turkey was also criticized openly for anti-democratization and human rights violations during the three years of military government between 1980 and 1983. Only in 1986, the relations between Turkey and EC has turned to normal after the two parties decided to resume the relations. The Prime Minister Turgut Özal's initiative to start the reform process, especially concerning the free market economy and balanced approach of foreign policy, was effective in

opening the door for Turkey to resume the relations with the EC. However, there were still problems in the area of democracy, the rule of law, and, most importantly, human rights at that time.

Turkey has applied for full membership for the second time in 1987 under the leadership of Turgut Özal even though it did not fulfill the criteria for full membership. However, the decision of the EC was once again unfavorable in the presence of inadequate economic, political, and social conditions in Turkey. The Community declined the application for Turkey's membership in 1990. In 1995, Turkey concluded the transition period envisaged for 22 years in the Ankara Agreement, which led to the completion of the Customs Union between Turkey and the EU. After Customs Union entered into force, Turkey has begun Europeanization efforts in the area of economy and trade by harmonizing its legislation to the EU's legislation and expectations. Öniş argues that the process of Europeanization- which is an integration period in the areas of economy and politics caused by the EU conditionality- started in Turkey when the Customs Union completed in the 1995 (Öniş, 2008, p. 37).

The establishment of the Customs Union is seen as a significant step towards Turkey's full integration with the EU; therefore, Turkey has expected to be included in the EU's enlargement rounds during the late 1990s. However, although the EU confirmed Turkey's eligibility for full membership, it was not included among the candidate countries announced in the "Agenda 2000" at the 1997 Luxembourg European Council Summit. At that time, accession negotiations were opened for all applicant countries apart from Turkey. Instead, the EU announced that it would prepare a strategic plan- "European Strategy for Turkey"- to enhance the relations between two actors and to give recommendations to Turkey in policy areas that are needed to be improved. Müftüler-Baç and McLaren argue that although Turkey was not granted the candidate status in Luxembourg Summit, the decision led to the twist in

efforts to improve Turkey-EU relations that encourage the EU to grant formal candidacy status to Turkey after two years (Müftüler-Bac & McLaren, 2003, p.17).

4.2 Turkey-EU Relations between 1999 and 2004

In the 1999 European Council Summit Meeting in Helsinki, the EU has given the candidate status to Turkey on equal treatment with the other candidate states upon seeing the gradual normalization of Turkey's political life and slow but ongoing democratization efforts (European Parliament, 1999). However, at the same time, the EU declared that Turkey was still unfit to begin accession negotiations and had a long way to go towards the fulfillment of the Copenhagen political criteria (Aydın-Düzgit & Tocci, 2015; European Parliament, 1999).

So, after long years of waiting in the EU's door, Turkey has been granted the candidacy status, which paved the way for Europeanization in the country. Reforms initiated by the governments in the early 21st century have been influential in leading the country towards Europeanization. The initial real efforts of Europeanization in Turkey took place after 1999. Especially the years between 2002 and 2005, which is the period between the AKP's coming off the power and the beginning of the accession negotiations, has been defined as "the golden age of Europeanization" in Turkey (Öniş, 2008, 2010). The concept of "golden years of Europeanization in Turkey" has been implied and used by several scholars in the Europeanization literature in order to define the mass transformation that took place in Turkey after the Helsinki Summit (Aydın-Düzgit & Kaliber, 2016; Aydın Çakır & Arıkan Akdağ, 2017; Öniş, 2010; G. Yılmaz, 2014; H. Yılmaz, 2011). At the beginning of the 2000s, there were mutual efforts by Turkey and the EU in making preparation and transformation smoother and easier for Turkey. These efforts lead to a new wave of Europeanization reforms in Turkey from fundamental rights and liberties to civil-military relations that resulted at the beginning of the accession negotiations with the EU in 2005. First of all, following the Helsinki Summit's decision, the European Commission started to prepare an Accession Partnership for Turkey,

which will be integrated with a National Program for the adoption and implementation of European *acquis* (European Parliament, 1999). With the approval of the National Program by the Turkish authorities, Turkey has undergone a major whirlwind of reforms started with 34 amendments to the Turkish constitution in 2001, and then followed by seven ‘harmonization packages’ adopted between 2001 and 2003 (Aydın-Düzgit & Tocci, 2015).

The victory of AKP in the elections of November 2002 was also effective in opening a new phase in the reform process because the newly-elected AKP constructed its identity as a pro-reformist and pro-EU actor at that time (G. Yılmaz, 2016, p. 88). After they came to power, substantial steps were undertaken to realign civil-military relations and decrease the military’s effect in Turkish politics. There were also several reforms in the area of the judiciary, human rights, freedom of expression and speech, freedom of peaceful assembly and association, and minority rights. The lifting of the state of emergency and the death penalty, introduction of a new Penal Code with articles broadening the freedom of expression and association, stronger protection of detainee rights along with a significant decrease in pre-trial detention periods, the abolition of Art. 8 of the (previous) Anti- Terror Law (propaganda against the indivisibility of the state) and the introduction of the right to learn and broadcast in languages other than Turkish, namely Kurdish, can be given as examples to these reforms (Aydın-Düzgit & Keyman, 2012, p.7). Some of these reforms were exerted during the coalition parties of 1999-2002, while others were implemented by the AKP government after 2002. So, it is important to point out that the political reform process triggered by the EU conditionality has not been exclusive to the AKP but a continuous process since 1999 (Kalaycıoğlu, 2011, p.273).

The reason behind all of these reforms was to accommodate the standards of Turkish democracy with the Copenhagen Criteria, which will lead to the opening of accession negotiations (Kalaycıoğlu, 2011, p. 265). Gözde Yılmaz labeled the time period from 1999 to 2004 in Turkey as the “progressing Europeanization” period due to the fact that domestic

change happened in Turkey in the direction of EU's demands from candidate countries during that time (G. Yılmaz, 2016b). She asserts that strong EU conditionality stimulated Turkey's Europeanization throughout the early 2000s with the help of political choices of the ruling party (G. Yılmaz, 2016b). On the other hand, Senem Aydın Düzgit and Natalie Tocci define the reform process between 1999 and 2005 as "quiet or silent revolution" because the most comprehensive domestic transformation has happened during that time (Aydın-Düzgit & Tocci, 2015, p.160). "Silent revolution" implies the reform process in Turkey between the recognition of Turkey's candidacy and the beginning of accession negotiations. In fact, there were efforts towards democratic change before 1999, which opened a road for Turkey's EU candidacy; however, they had been substantially superficial and ad hoc (Tocci, 2005, p. 73). For this reason, in Turkey's case, Europeanization has been associated with the well-organized and committed reform programs started after 1999.

It can be argued that several reasons have paved the way for 'progressing' or 'deep' Europeanization in the 1999-2005 period; however, it is reasonable to think that the most critical factor was the strong commitment to the EU enhanced by the positive developments in the relations. The motivation derived from the EU's promise to open the accession negotiations under the condition that Turkey complies with the political aspect of the Copenhagen criteria encouraged domestic actors to push for reforms and work for the improvement of domestic conditions in Turkey. After the announcement of Turkey's candidacy, both the "EU-ization" as a process of more formal transformation especially in legislation and institutions and, Europeanization as more complex and comprehensive changes in political, social and economic aspects began to be observed in Turkey (Kaliber, 2013, p. 61). In this respect, the effect of the EU on the reform process can be explained by the literature on democratization. The role of external factors, especially the role of international organizations, in inducing change and democratization in politically developing countries is argued by several scholars in the

democratization literature (Müftüler-Bac, 2016; Müftüler-Baç, 2016). The EU emerges in this literature as a unique international organization with the highest impact on political change through the carrots of association, candidacy, and membership at its disposal (Müftüler-Baç, 2016, p. 89). Therefore, like any other aspirant member states, the EU has become a catalyst for the political change in Turkey during the early 2000s with its emphasis on democratization and human rights.

Apart from external factors like the EU, the internal dynamics and domestic actors have also played a role in Turkey's reform-based process. Governments of the late 1990s and early 2000s have wanted to use the opportunity of EU membership and Europeanization reforms as a way to guarantee and protect their political power in Turkish politics. Especially, the AKP government has shown great commitment to political reforms induced by the EU since they were the most effective tools for the newly-elected AKP to legitimize itself in the eyes of the public and elude its Islamist past to survive in a secular country like Turkey (Aydın-Düzgit & Tocci, 2015, p.162). Most of the reforms implemented in the AKP's first era can be considered as important steps toward the EU membership that the AKP has set as the most vital foreign policy agenda at that time.

The first AKP government played a pivotal role in triggering Europeanization reforms that eventually led to the start of accession negotiations. Taking into consideration all Europeanization efforts, the European Commission recommended the opening of accession negotiations with Turkey by acknowledging Turkey's fulfillment of political criteria in the "2004 Regular Progress Report for Turkey". One month later, European Council decided that Turkey 'sufficiently' fulfilled the political part of the Copenhagen criteria and announced the beginning of accession negotiations in October 2005 without delay (Aydın-Düzgit & Tocci, 2015, p. 21). This decision was the sign of acknowledgment by the EU for the speed of

transformation and reforms that Turkey had undergone during the “golden age of Europeanization” (Öniş, 2010, p. 363).

4.3 Turkey-EU Relations between 2005 and 2010

In the ordinary course of the things, it is expected that a new wave of Europeanization would take place in Turkey after it reached the peak with the beginning of accession negotiations in 2005. However, in Turkey’s case, the beginning of accession negotiations was also regarded as the start of the slowdown in Turkey-EU relations as well as backsliding of Europeanization in Turkey. While the period between 1999 and 2005 was “the golden age of Europeanization” in Turkey, the post-2005 period was known for the slowdown of relations, reforms, and increasing skepticism, doubt, and mistrust among the politicians and the public against the EU (Öniş, 2010). Since 2005, Turkey’s path to the EU’s membership has become more torturous, given the fact that the progress in Turkey-EU relations has been inadequate, and both sides have shown reluctance to improve the relations. First of all, Turkish actors have begun to lose their commitment and enthusiasm against the idea of joining the EU as a full member, which was the center of Turkish foreign policy and the AKP government’s political agenda during 2002 and 2005 (Öniş, 2008, p. 40). According to Öniş and Yılmaz, the AKP’s foreign policy preferences have diverged from “deep Europeanization” drive to “loose Europeanization” or “soft Euro-Asianism” which can be seen as a new strategy aimed at focusing on all neighboring countries rather than just the EU (Öniş & Yılmaz, 2009a).

M.J. Patton, on the other hand, asserts that the slowdown in the reform process has begun even before the beginning of accession negotiations. According to him, as the date determined by the EU as the official start of accession negotiations drew closer, the AKP’s government showed signs of “reform fatigue” (Patton, 2007). By “reform fatigue”, he implies that the ruling party’s policies regarding the reform process have become less aggressive and

the political leaders displayed signs of hesitation and negligence in enforcing the implementation of reforms, especially in the area of human rights (Patton, 2007, p. 340). Nonetheless, although the pace of reforms diminished significantly in the post-2005 period, it is wrong to say that there were not any efforts to introduce and implement new reforms. There is a consensus in the literature that the Europeanization process has continued after 2005 despite slowing down in the reform process with ‘cherry-picked’ reforms (Noutcheva & Aydin-Düzgit, 2012; Paul, 2012; G. Yılmaz, 2016b). The AKP government’s changing political agenda, increasing power with each election, and rapprochement to the Middle East lead to a transformation from “progressing Europeanization” to “selective Europeanization” between 2005 and 2010 (G. Yılmaz, 2016b). During that time, the ruling party leaders preferred to adopt the EU’s demands as long as they align with their political preferences and strategies (G. Yılmaz, 2016, p. 88). That is to say, not the EU conditionality but the political agenda of the AKP was effective in inducing the domestic change in Turkey between 2005-2010 (G. Yılmaz, 2016, p. 88).

Turkey’s newly gained power both in the domestic and international areas has also been influential in the unenthusiastic stance taken against the EU. First of all, domestic dynamics have played a significant role in the changing attitude of political actors. The AKP government won the general elections in 2007, with 47 percent of the votes. This election win was important for Turkey-EU relations in the sense that it affects the reform processes and Europeanization efforts directly by giving the actors confidence in their political durability. In the first term of the AKP government, the party needed the EU integration process for its political survival to attract voters’ attention and support (Patton, 2007, p.343). However, after the AKP guaranteed its position in Turkish politics with almost 50 percent of the votes, it had no longer need the EU for its political survival. Furthermore, although the developments in the EU accession process with the promise of full membership appealed voters and made the AKP

advantageous in upcoming elections during “the golden age of Europeanization”, the slowdown between 2005 and 2007 threatened the AKP’s election win in 2007 which made them move away from the EU even further (Patton, 2007, p.344). Öniş argues that the 2007 election was a great opportunity for the ruling party to revive the Europeanization and reform agenda (Öniş, 2010, p.366). He asserts that the AKP might have been utilized the tremendous support from the public to activate a new wave of reform process; however, they missed the opportunity due to the “exaggerated sense of its own power and a diminished sense of the importance of the EU anchor” (Öniş, 2010, p.366).

The declining support for Turkey’s EU membership among the public after 2005 was another factor in the slowdown of relations. The West-skepticism and Euroscepticism has increased strikingly in Turkey in the late 2000s. The public support for the EU membership fell from 70-75 percent in 2003-4 to 60-65 percent in 2005, and finally, 55-60 percent in 2006-7 (H. Yilmaz, 2011, p.186). There are many reasons behind this decline in support; however, the loss of trust in the credibility of the EU as a reliable and robust partner seems to be the main factor. During the late 2000s, the EU has also been struggling with different problems in politics and economics. The Constitutional Treaty proposed by the EU in 2004 was rejected by France and the Netherlands, which created a constitutional crisis in the union. Moreover, the European economy has been severely affected by the global financial crisis in 2008. Due to these problems and the media coverage of the EU as a crisis-ridden project in Turkey, the EU’s attractiveness has decreased even further among the Turkish public (Öniş, 2010, p.364). On the other hand, Turkey’s rising importance in the Middle East and its vibrant economy during the 2008 economic crisis, in contrast to the EU that has got caught in a debt trap, have provided Turkey with a new sense of confidence (Paul, 2012). While the EU was struggling, Turkey has emerged as a global winner and regional leader who is the representative of secularism, democracy, and power among Muslim countries (Paul, 2012, p. 3). Turkey has become more

and more involved in Middle East politics during this period, which has made the EU a less essential part of Turkish foreign policy (Kubicek, 2013, p. 43).

The EU's reluctance to improve relations after the beginning of accession negotiations has also been effective in slowing down of the Europeanization process in Turkey. After the announcement of Turkey's candidacy, which might have triggered a massive celebration in Turkey, the EU has begun to send mixed signals about Turkey's possible membership by implying that it could suspend the negotiations anytime. As soon as the accession negotiations started with Turkey, some EU member states have begun to raise their voices against Turkey's full membership. "Privileged partnership" suggestions have been brought up by some European states like Germany, France, and Austria, which signifies the ambiguity of the accession process (G. Yilmaz, 2016, p. 90).

In addition to this, European states have begun to put the Cyprus issue forward as an obstacle to Turkey's membership even though it is not included in the Copenhagen criteria for accession. In contrast to Turkey's attitude that treated two issues as irrelevant, the EU's stance is different since 1995 (Müftüler-Bac & McLaren, 2003, p. 26). The likelihood of Cyprus's membership to the EU has also made the situation even more complicated. In January 2006, Turkey presented the United Nations with its new plan regarding the solution to the Cyprus issue that constitutes the biggest challenge against the full membership of Turkey. It was important for Turkey to find a solution to this problem before Greek Cypriots sign the deal because the vagueness of the issue leads to the disturbance among some EU member states that supported the restriction of the closure of many chapters for Turkey's accession. The idea behind the Annan Plan- which was created by the UN based on proposals of both parties- was to solve the conflict and reunify the north and south part of the island; however, it became a major blow (Öniş, 2010, p.365). The Greek Cypriots rejected the referendum on the Annan

Plan, with 75,8 percent of people voted against it, whereas Turkish Cypriots voted for yes with 64,9 percentage. The great support for the plan showed Turks' willingness to solve any issue to prevent the full membership. However, the rejection by the Greek Cypriots was interpreted as the failure of the EU based on the fact that it could not keep its promises to the Turkish Cypriots in spite of their favorable and coefficient approach against the unification (Öniş, 2008, p. 42, 2010, p. 365). In December 2006, the EU decided to close eight chapters related to the Additional Protocol to the Association Agreement about Cyprus and declared that no chapter could be provisionally closed until Turkey meets the obligations, which created a significant obstacle to Turkey's full membership. From that day forward, voices have begun to be raised among the politicians and the general public concerning the unfair and unbalanced treatment of the EU. A belief that the EU use Cyprus as an instrument to exclude Turkey from the union has become common among the public (Öniş, 2008, p. 42).

The failure of the EU to implement the Annan Plan and reward the Turkish Cypriots for their support and willingness to find a solution weakened the enthusiasm of the Turkish government towards the EU membership. The "Christian Club" arguments have also come to light after the unfair treatment of the EU regarding the Cyprus issue. Political leaders have begun to portray the EU as "Christian Club" which would never allow Turkey to enter the union even if all criteria were fulfilled. Furthermore, then Prime Minister Erdoğan has begun to use the rhetoric of changing the Copenhagen criteria with "Ankara criteria" and continue reforms without the EU. The idea behind "Ankara criteria" was to emphasize the importance of the reform process for Turkey's future rather than the ambition to become a full member of the EU.

To sum up, the Europeanization efforts in Turkey has slowed down in the post-2005 period due to several developments in international and domestic politics. However, up until 2011, it was possible to see the genuine steps taken by the government to continue the

Europeanization process that can be considered as “limited” or “selective” Europeanization (G. Yılmaz, 2016b). There was always going forward and back in the relations between 2005 and 2010, and the Turkish government was careful to select the Europeanization reforms according to its preferences and benefits (Aydın-Düzgit & Tocci, 2015). On the other hand, it is obvious that the enthusiastic attitude against the Europeanization reforms in the early 2000s, which Kaliber defines as Euro-enthusiasm, has been lost, and Euro-fatigue has begun to arise in the Turkish reform process (Kaliber, 2013, p.64). The period between 2005 and 2010 can also be regarded as a transitional period from Europeanization to de-Europeanization that will become more evident in the following years (Sipahioğlu, 2017, p.36).

4.4 Turkey-EU Relations between 2011 and 2014

The relations between Turkey and the EU have become more complicated than ever in the 2010s. The de-Europeanization process has gradually replaced Europeanization in Turkey. The reforms decreased significantly, and the EU’s impact has begun to lose its momentum. Especially after the AKP’s third election victory in 2011, the EU’s leverage has begun to lose its importance even more, and the de-Europeanization process accelerated in Turkey (Balkır & Eylemer, 2016; Sipahioğlu, 2017; G. Yılmaz, 2016b). Even though the government seemed to stick to the EU accession process, it was not the main priority for them anymore. The EU accession was regarded as just a part of the “multidimensional” foreign policy strategy based upon an equilibrium between national and universal values (Balkır & Eylemer, 2016, p.37). This approach also put a particular emphasis on Turkey’s historical background, geopolitical position, and changing dynamics of the region and the world as a whole (Balkır & Eylemer, 2016, p.37).

Since the mid-2010s, The AKP government has started to focus more on the Middle East, Balkans, Caucasus, Africa, and Asia rather than the EU in its foreign policy agenda. This

stance also showed itself in the AKP's election propaganda in the 2011 general elections. There was minimal or no reference to the EU during the election rallies in contrast to increased mentions to the Middle East. It was obvious that the AKP preferred to use a "blurred rhetoric" concerning the future of Turkey-EU relations during and after the 2011 general elections. Even when mentioned, it was stressed that relations with the EU must be sustained as long as it is beneficial for Turkey's economy and national interests. On 12 June 2011, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan stated, "Today, 74 million people have won. Today the Western world, Tripoli, Gaza have won. The Middle East, the Balkans, Europe have won. Peace, justice, and stability have won" in his balcony speech, emphasizing his commitment to 'multidimensional' foreign policy (Hürriyet Daily News, 2011). This statement confirms that the AKP has changed its foreign policy preferences from focusing on the EU to being an influential actor in the neighboring countries as well as ex-Ottoman regions (Demirtaş, 2015, p.124).

There were several reasons for this shift in foreign policy choices of Turkey in the early 2010s. First of all, the idea of being a global power by forming simultaneous alliances with neighboring countries prevailed (Arin, 2015). The increasing popularity of Erdoğan as a charismatic leader in the Middle Eastern countries facilitated this goal. On the other hand, the EU's decision to partially suspend accession negotiations with Turkey and its continuous criticisms against Turkey's policies have also affected the changing foreign policy agenda of Turkey. Kubilay Arin, in his article "The AKP's Foreign Policy: From Westernization to Islamization", argues that Turkey's rapprochement to the Middle East, Central Asia, and the Balkans can be explained by its aim to counterbalance its unidimensional dependency on the EU (Arin, 2015, p.30). Moreover, as the EU has lost its credibility in the eyes of the public, the AKP has begun to use the relations with the Middle East to attract its electorate's attention and guarantee its victory in the next election by satisfying their "Ottoman nostalgia" (Arin, 2015,

p.33). The EU's critical response to the crucial developments in Turkey during 2011-2015 has also led up to the rapprochement with the East.

However, although the Turkish government started to follow “we will do what we want when we want to” principle in this period, several reforms have been introduced between 2011 and 2014 (Paul, 2012, p.6). Yılmaz argues that this period shows signs of de-Europeanization simultaneously with Europeanizing reforms (G. Yılmaz, 2016, p.94). Nonetheless, reforms that were made in this period differ from the earlier reforms in the sense that they are chosen according to the political choices of the AKP government rather than the goal of the full membership (G. Yılmaz, 2016, p.95). After 2010, the AKP government continued to make several reforms in the areas such as the judiciary, civil-military relations, freedom of expression, and the fight against corruption. In particular, the government has focused on judicial reforms with the aim of improving the efficiency of the judiciary (G. Yılmaz, 2016, p.94). In the Progress Reports for Turkey from 2011 to 2014, it is accepted that progress has been observed, especially in the judiciary, in line with the efforts of implementing the 2010 constitutional amendments and judicial reform packages. However, as time goes by, there has been a steady decline in progress concerning the fundamental rights, according to the European Commission. In 2011, it was said that there was progress in Turkey with regard to fundamental rights along with the judiciary (European Commission, 2011); however, in the next years, the progress has been regarded as limited by the EU and the emphasis was made on needing further significant progress in this area (European Commission, 2012, 2013, 2014).

At this point, it is vital to mention Gezi Park protests and its implications for de-Europeanization of Turkey. In 2013, few environmentalists started to remonstrate against the authorities who wanted to build a shopping mall in place of Taksim military barracks. However, the protest has transformed from simply an environmentalist protest to an anti-government

protest over time with the support of people from all cities. For almost three months, hundreds of thousands of people took the streets to protest against the policies of the government. The government, on the other hand, responded to the protest by taking severe measurements such as censoring the media, preventing access to social media, using police forces against protestors, which lead to major criticisms by international organizations, including the EU. In the 2013 Progress Report for Turkey, the Commission mentioned Gezi Park events under the headlines of political and economic criteria for many times (European Commission, 2013). In the democracy and the rule of law section, the excessive use of force against the demonstrators by the police that caused a number of casualties and injuries was emphasized (European Commission, 2013, p.5). Furthermore, in the information society and media section, mainstream media's lack of coverage about the Gezi Park protest was criticized, and RTÜK's independence was questioned based on the fact that it fined several television stations for covering the protests (European Commission, 2013, p.32, 53). The European Parliament also issued a resolution on 13 June 2013 about the situation in Turkey in order to express its concern over the police's use of force against protestors and called the authorities to take action to stop violence (European Parliament, 2013). Besides, the parliament urged the Prime Minister to take necessary measurements to avoid further escalation of the events and the polarization among the public (European Parliament, 2013). As a response, Prime Minister Erdoğan harshly criticized the decision of the EP by saying, "I do not recognize this Parliament of the European Union. Do you have the right to take such a decision on Turkey?" (Hürriyet Daily News, 2013). This response and the general attitude against the protests clearly show the divergence between Turkey and the EU and "the weakening of the EU's impact as a normative/political context" in Turkey during the early 2010s (Aydın-Düzgüt & Kaliber, 2016; G. Yılmaz, 2014, p.314).

Apart from this, in 2013, Turkey has undergone a significant operation known as '17-25 December Operations or December 17-25 Judicial Coup Attempt' that brought about a major

transformation in the domestic and foreign policy of the government. Birgül Demirtaş, in her article named “Turkish Foreign Policy towards the Balkans: A Europeanized Foreign Policy in a De-Europeanized National Context”, argues that December 17/25 operations have speed up the de-Europeanization process in Turkey (Demirtaş, 2015, p.124). After these operations, the AKP’s political leaders’ rhetoric towards the EU has become more hostile and aggressive. Even the arguments such as being a member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization rather than the EU has begun to be surfaced. However, at the end of 2013, there was also an improvement in Turkey-EU relations with the signature of the EU-Turkey readmission agreement on 16 December 2013. In the 2014 Progress Report for Turkey, this agreement, along with the start of visa liberation dialogue, was regarded as a new momentum for Turkey-EU relations (European Commission, 2014). It was also a new trigger regarding Turkey’s Europeanization process in the sense that it might lead a new wave of reforms in a highly uncertain environment leading to a de-Europeanized path. This agreement also proves Yılmaz’s argument that claims that the period between 2010 and 2014 showed “instances of de-Europeanization simultaneously with Europeanizing reforms” (G. Yılmaz, 2016, p.94).

In short, there was an apparent change in the direction of the AKP’s policies between 2011 and 2015 towards de-Europeanization. The estrangement from the EU can be explained by various factors such as the rapprochement to the East, the weakness of opposition parties, the gradual disengagement of the military from politics as a result of reforms about military rule and judiciary cases against military officials, political unrest aroused from the Gezi protests and 17-25 operations, and rising confidence and popularity of the AKP after its third electoral victory (G. Yılmaz, 2016, p.97). In this period, the EU lost its appeal to the AKP government due to the fact that the AKP did not need the EU accession process for its political survival anymore (G. Yılmaz, 2016, p.97). For this reason, it can be said that the AKP’s own benefits

and preferences were much more important than the EU's expectations from a candidate country like Turkey throughout this period, which paved the way for de-Europeanization.

4.5 Turkey-EU Relations between 2015 and 2020

There is a consensus among scholars that Turkish foreign policy has been the subject of dramatic transformation over the last five years (Bashirov & Lancaster, 2018; Haugom, 2019; Kaliber & Kaliber, 2019). Since the election of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan as the president of Turkey in 2014, and especially after the failed coup attempt in 15 July 2016, Turkish foreign policy is marked by rapprochement to the Eastern powers, particularly Russia, deteriorating relations with the United States and the EU, and the more independent and proactive role in its neighborhood with the consecutive military operations in Syria and Iraq (Haugom, 2019). While the foreign policy has started to focus more on the national security, an “assertive style of policy making”, and “transaction-based relations” have been preferred under the leadership of President Erdoğan (Haugom, 2019). “Strategic autonomy” has been also put in the center of foreign policy agenda at the expense of disengagement from the international organizations like NATO and the EU (Haugom, 2019).

In the literature, it is accepted that de-Europeanization, along with Anti-Westernism, accelerated in Turkey in the late 2010s (Aydın-Düzgüt & Kaliber, 2016; Kaliber & Kaliber, 2019). When it comes to the period after 2014- which is the period analyzed in this thesis- the relations between Turkey and the EU have gone from bad to worse. In fact, 2015 was the last year when Europeanization efforts were still prevalent in Turkey. There were some improvements in many areas regarding the EU's expectations; however, the pace of reforms slowed considerably. In 2015, Turkey underwent two general elections in June and November, which slowed down the pace of ‘limited’ or ‘selective’ Europeanization reforms even further and made the newly emerging de-Europeanization process more visible in the country. The

AKP's loss of majority in the parliament in June elections constituted a great shock for the party and its executive team, including President Erdoğan, and signaled the transformation of political landscape in Turkey (Bashirov & Lancaster, 2018, p.1222). It was an electoral reaction from the voters who wanted to raise their voices towards the increasing dominance of the AKP with the presidentialism (Bashirov & Lancaster, 2018, p.1222). However, instead of renouncing bid for the presidential system, the AKP government led by President Erdoğan chose to block coalition-building efforts by opposition parties, which paved the way for the November elections (Bashirov & Lancaster, 2018, p.1222).

On the other hand, in between two elections, the security situation in Turkey worsened with several terrorist attacks that made national security a huge priority for Turkish politicians. However, albeit all incidents, Turkey has continued its commitment to the EU accession process, although this commitment was counteracted by the acts taken in the area of the rule of law, freedom of expression, and freedom of assembly which contradicted with the European standards (European Commission, 2015b). The European Commission's report of 2015 on Turkey emphasized that Turkey and the EU maintain cooperation in certain areas related to their common interests, which induced improvement on accession negotiations throughout the year (European Commission, 2015b). The EU and Turkey continued their political dialogue on foreign and security policy, especially in the area of counterterrorism in which they acted together against Daesh. The two sides have also stepped up the cooperation on developing economic ties that lead to the progress on the opening of chapter 17 about economic and monetary policy (European Commission, 2015b).

Migration was also one of the policy areas that Turkey and the EU joined forces with each other. After the first step with the signature of readmission agreement in 2013, a Joint EU-Turkey Action plan for refugees and migration management was signed on 15 October 2015.

Many could argue that this agreement is a clear sign of improvement in the relations in the sense that Turkey and the EU have agreed to cooperate on main policy areas namely asylum and migration; however, there are also some opinions which argues that it is difficult to regard this deal as a development that has brought the two sides closer on the way to accession (Aydın-Düzgıt & Kaliber, 2016, p.3). Debates over Turkey’s position as a “strategic partner” rather than a “potential member” started to escalate among the media and the academia after the deal, which overshadows the thoughts that perceived this agreement as an important step in the accession process (Aydođan, 2016; Haddad, 2016). So, it is difficult to decide whether this deal has triggered a new wave of Europeanization in Turkey.

Furthermore, in 2015, there was also slowing down in reforms exclusively in the areas of the rule of law, functioning of the judiciary and fundamental rights according to the European Commission (European Commission, 2015b). In the Progress Report of 2015, it was highlighted that there had been no progress on the functioning of the judiciary since early 2014 (European Commission, 2015b). Concerns over the independence of the judiciary and the respect of the principle of separation of powers due the introduction of the presidential system have also been raised along with the advice to ease the political pressure on judges and prosecutors (European Commission, 2015b). So, when we look at the EU’s side, the EU accepted that there had been both improvements and setbacks on the accession process in 2015. Turkey has continued to align with the EU’s *acquis* and has achieved visible progress in many areas; however, the pace has indeed slowed down.

Besides, if we look at the Turkish side, apart from developments in key joint policy areas, there has been an actual slowdown or even recession concerning the EU accession process since 2015. Especially after 2015, the EU started to lose credibility in the eyes of both Turkish politicians and the public as the political leaders started to criticize and blame the EU

for the internal and external developments more than ever. Moreover, when discussing the reform agenda, the EU seems to lose its position as a reference point in Turkish political leaders' discourse. So, it can be said that de-Europeanization has become more apparent in Turkey starting from 2015 with the decreasing influence and credibility of the EU as a "normative/political context and as a positive reference point in domestic policies and national public debates" (Aydın-Düzgit & Kaliber, 2016).

In the last few years, Turkey has experienced the two ways that de-Europeanization shows itself in a country. According to Aydın-Düzgit and Kaliber, de-Europeanization demonstrates itself in two ways: firstly, through the loss of the appeal and effectiveness of European rules, values, norms, policies, and institutions that lead to disengagement of the EU/Europe as a "normative/political context" for Turkish politics; and, secondly through the rising Euroscepticism and ignorance of Turkish public against the EU membership causing the EU's removal as a legitimate reference point in the reform process (Aydın-Düzgit & Kaliber, 2016, p.5).

To illustrate the first way, looking at the changing dynamics in the political leaders' discourse may be beneficial. Since 2015, the Europe/EU was mainly mentioned in a negative context by the political parties and leaders showing its loss of effectiveness as a point of reference for progressive reforms happening in Turkey (Alpan, 2016; Aydın-Düzgit, 2016; Aydın-Düzgit & Kaliber, 2016; Balkır & Eylemer, 2016). Especially after the Gezi Park protests and failed coup attempt on 15 July 2016, criticisms towards the EU by ruling party officials, including President Erdoğan, have increased dramatically. Since the Western media supported the protestors during the Gezi Park events and criticized the AKP's methods to deal with the opposition after the failed coup attempt, President Erdoğan has begun to use historical narratives of Western conspiracies plotted against the Muslim world. The EU has been also

dismissed as a driving force and a legitimate actor behind reforms undertaken by the government. The EU's identity has been constructed as the 'other' of Turkey in several statements between 2015 and 2020 (Aydın-Düzgit & Kaliber, 2016; Kaliber & Kaliber, 2019). While "the sense of belonging" served as justification for the accession process in the early 2000s, "the sense of otherness" manifested in the discourse during this period provided the president with the legitimization of de-Europeanization whenever domestic values and preferences contradict with the EU's expectations (Balkır & Eylemer, 2016, p.33).

On the other hand, decreasing public support for the EU membership in Turkey might be considered as the manifestation of the second way that de-Europeanization can show itself according to Aydın-Düzgit and Kaliber's definition (Aydın-Düzgit & Kaliber, 2016). Public support and trust for the EU among the Turkish public have varied across time based on the situation of the relations between Turkey and the EU. When we look at the statistics of Eurobarometer, it can be concluded that the public opinion in Turkey towards the EU membership is exceptionally inconsistent and depend upon the extreme backlashes. In the spring of 2015, those who think that "the EU membership for Turkey is good" has been 33 percent of the population, which shows an apparent decline comparing with 75 percent in 2004 (European Commission, 2015). In addition to this, the support for the EU membership has decreased further with crucial domestic developments in Turkey after 2015. In the survey results of fall 2016, the support for the membership hit bottom, with only 28 percent of the population voted in favor of the EU (European Commission, 2016a). This decline in the support proves that the failed coup attempt of 15 July 2016 is a breaking point in terms of the relations with the EU and the public has disappointed with reactions that the EU and EU member states have given to the major threat against the Turkish democracy (Şenyuva, 2018).

2016 was a tough year for Turkey-EU relations owing to the ever-growing migration crisis, the implementation of the EU-Turkey agreement, and the attempted military coup in Turkey. On 18 March 2016, the first step was taken in order to implement the Joint EU-Turkey Action plan for refugees and migration management. The EU-Turkey deal aimed at tackling the migration crisis and stopping the flow of irregular migrants to Europe via Turkey has come into effect. Turkey agreed to take all new irregular migrants and asylum seekers, who enter Greece as from 20 March 2016 and do not require to get international protection, back (“EU-Turkey statement, 18 March 2016 - Consilium,” 2016). In return for this, the EU allocated three billion Euros to help Turkey to deal with the migration crisis with the promise of additional aid of three billion Euros to be mobilized by the end of 2018 (“EU-Turkey statement, 18 March 2016 - Consilium,” 2016). This deal and the cooperation on migration policy between Turkey and the EU can be considered as a sign of Europeanization in Turkey. It is also essential because it shows that Europeanization and de-Europeanization are not mutually exclusive and could co-exist (G. Yılmaz, 2016b). Under certain conditions, Europeanization in some policy areas can be observed in a country where there is a widespread de-Europeanization trend in other policy areas (Aydın-Düzgit & Kaliber, 2016, p.9).

Although there was a sign of Europeanization in the case of migration policy, other domestic events in 2016 caused a new tension between Turkey and the EU, which sped up the de-Europeanization process in Turkey. On 15 July 2016, there was an attempt for a military coup in Turkey, which the Turkish government accused Fethullah Gülen and his followers of staging it. During and after the failed coup attempt, the Turkish side criticized the EU severely for the lack of support and started to raise some arguments such as the possible return to the death penalty, which is inadmissible for the EU (Perchoc, 2017). The divergence between Turkey and the EU also increased due to the post-coup attempt measures taken by Turkey in order to ensure that those responsible and involved in this attempt are punished. Even though

the EU supported the reorganization of the military with increasing civilian control, it also raised some questions about respecting the rule of law and fundamental rights that should align with Turkey's international commitments and status as a candidate country (European Commission, 2016b). On 24 November 2016, Turkey-EU relations have hit the ground with the European Parliament's adoption of the non-binding resolution, calling for a temporary freeze of accession negotiations as a response for disproportionate precautions taken by the Turkish government after the failed coup attempt (European Parliament, 2016a). Members of the EP claimed that "Turkey is not showing willingness to cooperate as the Turkish government's actions are further diverting Turkey from its European path", which made the temporary halt of the negotiations a necessity for the EU until the situation gets better (European Parliament, 2016b). Turkey, on the other hand, responded it by saying, "the decision had no value at all" (The Guardian, 2016). Nevertheless, despite ongoing tension between two parties, the negotiations between Turkey and the EU have continued throughout 2016, and, at the end of the year, a significant step has been taken with the agreement on the modernization and extension of the 20-year old Customs Union on December 2016.

Throughout the 2010s, the EU has significantly weakened its leverage and effectiveness as a normative actor and political tool for Turkish government with the continuous deterioration of relations between Turkey and the EU (Alpan, 2016; Balkır & Eylemer, 2016; Müftüler-Baç, 2016; Saatçioğlu, 2016). The future of accession negotiations has become as uncertain and complicated as ever (Hürsoy, 2017). By 2017, only one chapter was provisionally closed out of 16 chapters that were opened since 2005. As it comes to the following years, instead of opening new chapters, the suspension of accession talks was the most salient agenda of the EU for Turkey's membership process. In the summer of 2017, the relations have reached a new deadlock as a result of the EP's proposal for the suspension of accession talks with Turkey (European Parliament, 2017). The reason behind this proposal was explained as Turkey's

referendum in April 2017 that will enable the expansion of presidential power with the transition from the parliamentary system to presidential system (European Parliament, 2017). The EP urged the EU Commission and the EU national governments “to formally suspend the accession negotiations with Turkey without delay if the constitutional reform package is implemented unaltered” (European Parliament, 2017). The resolution was approved, with 477 voting in favor of suspension and 64 voting against it. Turkey has answered this call by questioning the legitimacy of the European Parliament itself and labeled the decision as invalid. Although this vote was non-binding, voices started to rise in some EU member states about whether the EU should formally halt the accession process of Turkey or not. In the last few years, alternative forms of partnerships were also brought back to the agenda of the EU by several states such as Germany and France, which Turkey has opposed the suggestions strongly all along (France 24, 2018; Reuters, 2017). Some scholars have also started to claim that Turkey’s integration to the EU has come closer to alternative forms of partnership such as “differentiated integration”, “privileged partnership”, “special status/partnership”, “strategic partnership” rather than full membership in the late 2010s (Hürsoy, 2017; Kaygusuz, 2018; Müftüler-Bac, 2016; Schimmelfennig, 2014).

In other respects, despite an apparent divergence and friction between Turkey and the EU, the AKP government has continued to declare that full membership remains to be the strategic goal of Turkey (Batchelor, 2018). There were also occasional attempts by the government to revive the relations. In 2015, Turkey and the EU decided to conduct high-level dialogues on key areas such as politics, energy, transport, economy, and fight against terrorism. Since then, Turkey-EU High Level Dialogue Meetings took place several times in a year, improving the relations and cooperation between Turkey and the EU. However, in 2019, talks about the formal suspension of accession negotiations with Turkey has started to circulate among the members of the EP, which lead to a new voting round resulting in approval of

suspension with 370 lawmakers voted in favor (European Parliament, 2019). The reasons behind this decision were the concerns about Turkey's poor performance regarding "human rights, the rule of law, media freedom, and the fight against corruption" (European Parliament, 2019). Nonetheless, the will to keep political and democratic dialogue open was emphasized, especially with the continuation of giving funds to Turkish civil society (European Parliament, 2019). As a response to the EU's unfavorable attitude towards Turkey, Turkish politicians blamed the EU/Europe for several factors including "the bloc's indifference to Turkey's anti-terrorism operations, a lack of solidarity following the deadly FETÖ-led coup attempt in 2016, the lack of outside assistance on the migration issue and the bloc's failure to adhere to agreements especially the migration deal signed in 2016" (Daily Sabah, 2019c).

To sum up, Turkey-EU relations have always gone back and forth since the beginning of engagement; nevertheless, in the last few years, the situation of relations has become more complicated than ever. Multiple challenges in the integration process both within and outside of Turkey played a big role in shaping the divergence between Turkey and the EU in the last decade (Müftüler-Bac, 2016). De-Europeanization in many areas such as democracy, the rule of law, civil-military relations, civil society and most importantly in foreign policy choices is the fact of contemporary Turkish politics and the society which made the divergence between the two sides even more apparent (Aydın-Düzgüt & Kaliber, 2016; Kaliber, 2013).

At this point, it is essential to underline the role of political leader in power's discourse in constructing the state's identity and power against and in relation to the EU/Europe/West since the Europeanization and de-Europeanization processes were facilitated by the prevailing discourse in a country. To understand the dynamics behind the deteriorating relations between Turkey and the EU, one should look at how President Erdoğan, who has gained a total control over foreign policy choices thanks to the strong presidential system, reacted and responded to

the multiple challenges Turkey faced in the road of the membership. Thus, in the following chapter, the thesis will focus on the changing dynamics of Europeanization and de-Europeanization in Turkey through the discourse of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and analyze how his discourse normalized and legitimized the de-Europeanization process and the stance of Turkey against the EU, Europe, and the West as a whole.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS: A DE-EUROPEANIZED DISCOURSE

5.1 Introduction: Critical Discourse Analysis of the President's Official Speeches

In the literature, a vast number of studies have focused on the transformation of Turkish foreign policy in the last two decades under the rule of the governing party- the AKP. There is an agreement among scholars that Turkey's foreign policy has become more multidimensional activist rather than unidimensional and cautious in the last decade (Aydın Çakır & Arıkan Akdağ, 2017). Furthermore, the rapprochement to the Eastern powers and the Arab world has been observed in Turkey through the foreign policy choices of the AKP, although the Western orientation has been more visible in the previous decades. That is why, several studies analyzed the "Middle Easternization" or "re-Islamization" of Turkish foreign policy through discourse analysis of political leaders (Balcı & Miş, 2008; Bilgin & Bilgiç, 2011; Sözen, 2010; Yalvaç, 2014). Moreover, some others examine this change in Turkish foreign policy choices and its effects on Turkey-EU relations from the perspective of changing domestic dynamics while putting the concept of de-Europeanization which means "the loss or weakening of the EU/Europe as a normative/political context and as a reference point in domestic settings and national public debates" in the center (Aydın-Düzgit & Kaliber, 2016, p. 5). It is widely accepted that de-Europeanization observed in Turkey's foreign policy, along with different policy areas, has been prevalent in Turkey since 2010 (G. Yılmaz, 2016b).

This situation also shows itself in declining references to the EU and Europe in political leaders' speeches and official documents. The declining emphasis on the EU/Europe and increasing focus on the Middle East can be observed throughout the election manifestos of the AKP in the last decade. While Europe and the EU have been mentioned only a few times or not at all in the election manifestos and the election debates in the media, there were quite a number

of references to the Middle East (Hatipoglu, Aslan, & Iuetgert, 2015; Toker, 2015; Yanık, 2012). Moreover, Europeanization and/or European values were not referred in election manifestos and Erdoğan's speeches in the election rallies beginning from 2010; although there have been a lot of references of them in the election manifestos of general elections in 2002 and 2007 and the local election in 2009 (Hatipoglu et al., 2015; Kılınç, 2009; Zarakol, 2011). Senem Aydın Düzgit, in his article "De-Europeanization through Discourse: A Critical Discourse Analysis of AKP's Election Analysis", analyzed public speeches Erdoğan has made during and after elections between 2011 and 2014 including 'national will speeches' that were delivered after Gezi uprisings in 2013. In her article, she underlined that there were hardly any explicit references to the EU or Europe in the given time period even though almost all speeches mentioned Turkish foreign policy, especially the policies related to the Middle East and North Africa (Aydın-Düzgit, 2016). Also, when the EU and Europe have been mentioned in the speeches, they were generally referred in a negative way except for a few rare instances of positive references.

This trend has also shown itself in the official speeches of president Erdoğan between 2015 and 2020. However, although the focus is generally on the Middle East and North Africa while referring to the Turkish foreign policy, it is wrong to say that the EU or Europe has been completely absent in the speeches of Erdoğan in the last five years. References to the EU, Europe, European member states, and the West have existed in the discourse of Erdoğan; however, the way they are constructed was generally in a negative way. For this reason, the method of CDA is suitable for analyzing the discourse of Erdoğan towards the EU/Europe/West in this period.

While looking at the speeches of Erdoğan between 2015 and 2020, 179 speeches out of 604 speeches- which is more than fourth of all speeches- mentioned the EU, Europe, or the

West; nevertheless, they were mostly mentioned in a negative manner. In other words, in most of the speeches, the EU/Europe or the West were negatively connotated through lexical choice. There were also instances when the EU, Europe, and/or the West were referred in a positive way; however, the ratio of positive references among all references is generally low. Only 28 speeches have mentioned the EU, Europe, or the West positively, and even in most of these speeches, positive connotations were along with the negative ones. When the EU, Europe, and/or the West were referred positively, it was generally for the declaration of Turkey's dedication to the EU's full membership along with the other foreign policy agendas. To give an example, Erdoğan explains the foreign policy perspective of Turkey in 2016 through a speech given at the iftar dinner with ambassadors and presidents of business councils of the Foreign Relation Economic Board (DEİK):

“We do not turn our backs either to the West because of our ties with the Islamic world or to the Middle East and North Africa due to our relations with Europe, America, Asia, or Latin America. We do not see the foreign policy as a zero-sum game. Instead, we believe that it is possible to establish a win-win balance in the foreign policy within the scope of mutual respect, common values, and interests. In this regard, we regard Turkey's full membership to the EU as a strategic goal”² (Iftar Program with Ambassadors and DEİK Business Council Chairs, 15 June 2016).

As demonstrated in the excerpt above, there are number of speeches that explicitly show Turkey's desire to continue the accession process with the EU during the last five years. Especially in the speeches delivered in the presence of international delegates, ambassadors,

² “Biz ne İslam dünyasıyla bağlarımızdan dolayı Batıya sırtımızı döneriz, ne de Avrupa'yla, Amerika'yla, Asya'yla ve Latin Amerika'yla olan ilişkilerimizden dolayı Ortadoğu'ya yahut Afrika'ya sırtımızı döneriz. Biz dış politikayı sıfır toplamlı bir oyun olarak görmüyoruz. Tersine dış politikada karşılıklı saygı, ortak değerler ve ortak çıkarlar ekseninde bir kazan-kazan dengesinin kurulabileceğine inanıyoruz. Bu çerçevede, Türkiye'nin Avrupa Birliği'ne tam üyeliğini stratejik bir hedef olarak görüyoruz.”

businesspeople working abroad, and EU member states' representatives, the positive message and goal to continue the accession process was emphasized. However, the necessary steps were not taken in order to speed up the process. Apart from messages to continue the EU process, the importance of economic relations with the EU/Europe has been highlighted in these speeches. However, even in the speeches that referred to the EU, Europe, or the West in a positive manner, it is evident that Turkey and the EU's relationship was always on edge.

The representation and construction of the EU, Europe, and/or the West in the speeches of Erdoğan has also been affected by the changing dynamics of domestic politics over the years. For instance, speeches mentioning the EU/Europe/West concentrated on specific topics like the migration issue, terrorism, and the failed coup attempt that are directly related to Turkey's existing domestic dynamics in specific periods. It is easy to detect an absolute rage against the EU for their lack of support and trust in Turkey about certain issues in Erdoğan's discourse. That is to say, the focus of speeches against the EU has varied in line with the existing agenda of the domestic politics of Turkey. Statements of Erdoğan have also served all five fields of political action- i.e. "law-making political procedure, the formation of public opinion and self-representation, party-internal development of an informed opinion, political advertising, marketing and propaganda, and, political executive and administration"- in different times (Wodak & Meyer, 2001).

Some similar discursive patterns can be identified in the discourse of President Erdoğan during this period. There were common representations of the EU/Europe/West, which were repeated several times in different speeches that can be classified as key elements in his discourse. While analyzing 179 speeches, six ways of describing or accusing the EU/Europe/West has stood out. Thus, the analysis made upon six discursive patterns that were reproduced in different realms. The EU/Europe/West has been represented vis-à-vis the Turkish

self as ‘a hypocritical and Janus-faced entity’, ‘an unfair and exclusionary entity’, ‘an Islamophobic and racist entity’, ‘a crisis-ridden entity’, ‘an unwelcomed penetrator in Turkish politics’, and, ‘an institution economically and democratically inferior to Turkey’ in the speeches delivered between 2015 and 2020. Thus, the analysis will be based on these regularities in Erdoğan’s discourse. In the following sections, each of the representations will be analyzed in detail.

5.2 The EU as a Hypocritical and Janus-faced Institution

Construction of the EU/Europe as “a hypocritical and Janus-faced entity” or “an unreliable organization which is not true to its word” is the most common pattern in Erdoğan’s discourse throughout the last five years. The EU has been accused of breaking its promise, especially in the case of opening the way for full membership, helping terrorists to live and make propaganda in the EU, and providing financial aid under the migration deal that was signed in 2016.

First of all, almost in all speeches, the migration issue has been mentioned, Erdoğan emphasized the hypocritical character of the EU:

“In the last year, we develop an important cooperation framework with the EU about the migration crisis. We promise each other by accepting the fact that we can deal with the crisis by sharing burden and responsibility. Within this context, we achieved to diminish the number of daily irregular migrants that were seven thousand in previous months by 50 percent. This situation shows that Turkey delivered its commitments successfully in line with the agreement. On the other hand, the promises that were made by the EU in the agreement which is signed in 18 March 2016 were not fulfilled..... the international community, particularly the EU,

cannot give an account of why they show such discrepancy about this humanitarian crisis”³ (The United Nations Summit for Refugees and Migrants, 20 September 2016).

In order to grasp the meaning of this speech, the historical context should be taken into account as the DHA approach suggests. Erdoğan here gave a speech in the UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants on 20 September 2016- six months after the EU-Turkey deal aimed at tackling the migration crisis and stopping the flow of irregular migrants to Europe via Turkey has come into effect. In the excerpt above, first of all, Erdoğan constructed dichotomization between Turkey and the EU. By describing Turkey as ‘we’ and the EU as ‘they’, he underlined the dichotomy between two sides, which is typical in foreign policy discourses and discourses of discrimination in general. Through this classification, he articulates Turkey’s identity in opposition to the EU as the ‘other’. Almost in all speeches in the last five years, Erdoğan used this strategy of “binary dichotomy” while speaking about the EU (Aydın-Düzgüt, 2016). While making this discursive comparison, he constructed the identity of Turkey as a country that is ‘trustworthy’, ‘reliable’, ‘honest’, and the identity of the EU as a ‘hypocritical’, ‘dishonest’ and ‘insincere’ entity.

Erdoğan, here, used the predication strategy, which is the process of assigning positive and negative attributions to subjects. Along with the predication strategy, argumentation strategies were also utilized by means of “topos of burden/weighing down and humanitarianism”. “Topos of burdening or weighing down” is considered as a particular causal topos- i.e. “topos of consequence”- and, can be employed “when a person, an institution or a

³ “Son bir yıldır mülteci krizine karşı Avrupa Birliği’yle önemli bir işbirliği çerçevesi geliştirdik. Sorunun üstesinden yük ve sorumluluğu paylaşmak suretiyle gelebileceğimizi kabul ederek karşılıklı taahhütlerde bulunduk. Bu kapsamda aldığımız tedbirlerle 2015 Ekim’inde 7 bin olan günlük düzensiz göç rakamını son aylarda ortalama 50’ye kadar düşürmeyi başardık. Bu tablo Türkiye’nin, Avrupa Birliği’yle olan mutabakatı çerçevesindeki taahhütlerini başarıyla yerine getirdiğini gösteriyor. Buna karşılık 18 Mart 2016’da varılan mutabakatta Avrupa Birliği tarafından ülkemize verilen sözler maalesef tutulmadı..... Ama Avrupa Birliği başta olmak üzere uluslararası toplum böylesine temel bir insani krizde ortaya koyduğu tutarsızlığın hesabını ilânihaye veremez.”

country is burdened by specific problems and should act in order to diminish these burdens” (Wodak & Meyer, 2001, p. 76). Erdoğan emphasized the burden and responsibility that Turkey faced since the signature of the deal to legitimize the actions taken by Turkey concerning immigrants. In doing so, he also underlined the lack of commitment on the EU’s side to share this responsibility, which created a great justification for Turkey’s policies in the migration issue to diminish this burden unaided. On the other hand, the humanitarian aspect of dealing with the migration crisis and helping immigrants was emphasized through the realization of “topos of humanitarianism”. “Topos of humanitarianism” can be used in a situation when “a political action or decision does or does not conform with human rights or humanitarian convictions and values”. In this text, Erdoğan accused of the EU for the lack of devotion to solving the migration crisis, which is explicitly a humanitarian crisis. Conversely, Turkey was represented as an actor who is responsive to this humanitarian crisis.

In other cases, Erdoğan made more direct accusations against the EU by emphasizing its position as a ‘hypocritical and Janus-faced entity’:

“We spent 35 billion dollars while we host 4 million refugees without any proper support from anybody. Although the EU has promised to provide 6 billion Euros’ financial aid, the amount that was provided is only 1 billion 750 million Euros. They are like that; there is no honesty in their words but many lies”⁴ (“The Future of Business: Threats and Opportunities” International Conference, 19 April 2019).

The excerpt above was delivered three years after the migration deal between Turkey and the EU was signed with the aim of reducing the number of asylum-seekers arriving on Greek

⁴ Ama biz 4 milyon mülteciye ev sahipliği yaparken kimsenin doğru dürüst ciddi desteği olmadan şu ana kadar harcadığımız 35 milyar dolardır. Ve Avrupa Birliği’nin bize verdiği destek, -söz verdiği halde 6 milyar dolar olarak- gelen sadece 1 milyar 750 milyon avrodur, verdikleri söz 6 milyar avro. Bunlar böyle, bunlarda dürüstlük yok, ama yalan bol.

islands from Turkey. According to the deal, in return for Turkey's promise to reduce the number of asylum seekers, the EU has promised to give Turkey 6 billion euros; however, till 2019, only 1 billion 750 million Euros has been granted. On the other hand, it can be said that Turkey has done its part in the sense that the number of asylum-seekers heading to the EU countries decreased significantly after the deal. In 2015 and 2016- the time that the migration crisis was at its height- more than 1,2 million immigrants applied for asylum in the EU countries according to the Eurostat's report of "Asylum in the EU member states" (Eurostat, 2016). However, in the years after the deal, the numbers have decreased considerably, with approximately 650,000 new asylum applications in 2017 and 580,000 in 2018 (Eurostat, 2017, 2018). So, it is reasonable to claim that Turkey has done its part rather successfully, whereas the EU has failed to provide its promised amount of financial aid. The speech above has been made in this historical context; thus, the EU was explicitly blamed for being 'dishonest' and 'liar' under these circumstances.

The dual use of 'we' (the positive self) and 'they' (the negative other) is also visible in this speech through which Erdoğan tried to put Turkey and the EU in an oppositional position once again. "Topos of comparison" has also been used with the help of "topos of finances" in order to demonstrate the 'unreliable' and 'hypocritical' character of the EU in comparison to the 'reliable' and 'honest' character of Turkey. "Topos of finances" can be used to justify an action which is performed to reduce the costs or prevent further costs, when a certain action or situation leads to the loss of too much money (Wodak & Meyer, 2001, p. 76). Erdoğan, here, compares the amount of money that Turkey and the EU have invested for the solution of this crisis since the beginning of the refugee influx through which he demonstrated the clear gap between two parties. In doing so, he emphasized the financial burden this situation has laid on Turkey due to the lack of assistance and support from the EU, which justifies his position towards the EU.

The second topic Erdoğan shows his distrust towards the EU/Europe/West is Turkey's EU membership:

“Hey, The EU! Pull yourself together. If you try to define our current operation as an act of ‘invasion’, our job is easy; we can open the gates and send 3,6 million refugees your way.....You were not sincere towards us; you have been playing with us since 1963. You said that we would join the EU, it will happen soon, this and that. You are not honest; you have not spoken truly even once. Your life is built on lies. Then, keep on attacking Tayyip Erdoğan, you can do it as much as you want; we are taking firm steps towards this path and will continue to do so”⁵ (Extended Provincial Heads Meeting, 10 October 2019).

The message conveyed in this statement was clear: Turkey does not trust the EU in fulfilling its promise of granting full membership to Turkey due to its insincere and Janus-faced attitude towards Turkey. This speech was delivered towards the end of 2019 when the Turkish Armed Forces have initiated Operation Peace Spring against the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and the Syrian Arab Army in northeastern Syria. The purpose behind this operation was to expel the SDF, who is considered as a terrorist organization by Turkey because of its close ties with the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), and create a ‘safe zone’ in northern Syria by resettling some Syrian refugees in there. However, the operation has received negative reactions from the international community. The European Parliamentary Research Service, in its briefing about the operation, asserts that by launching a military operation on Syrian territory Turkish President, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan decide to invade the northeast Syrian region governed by the Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD) (Stanicek, 2019). The EPRS has also emphasized that

⁵ Ey Avrupa Birliği, kendinize gelin. Bak gene söylüyorum, bizim şu andaki operasyonumuzu bir ‘işgal hareketi’ diye nitelendirmeye çalışırsanız işimiz kolay, kapıları açarız 3,6 milyon mülteciyi sizlere göndeririz.....Siz bizi hiçbir zaman samimi, ta 1963’den bu yana oyaladınız. Avrupa Birliği’ne aldık, alıyoruz, alacağız, şuydu, buydu ya siz dürüst değilsiniz, hiçbir zaman doğru konuşmadınız. Hayatınız yalan üstüne bina edilmiş. Ondan sonra Tayyip Erdoğan’a saldırın, istediğiniz kadar saldırın, biz bu yolda emin adımlarla yürüyoruz, yürüyeceğiz.

the decoupling of Turkey from the EU has been once again observed through this operation (Stanicek, 2019).

President Erdoğan had delivered this speech when there was a conflict between Turkey and the EU due to the operation. Against the accusations by the EU, Erdoğan blamed them for being ‘dishonest’, ‘insincere’ and ‘hypocritical’ in the case of Turkey. The referential strategy of “anthropomorphization (personification)”, which means the attribution of human qualities to entities, played a decisive role in constructing the EU as an international actor who is not true to its words. By attributing negative human qualities, the EU’s identity has been portrayed as evil-minded. It is also essential to focus on the last sentence since it shows Erdoğan’s commitment to continue the operation without taking the EU’s expectations into account, which can be regarded as the manifestation of the EU’s weakening impact on Turkey as a normative and political context.

The military operation itself is a sign of Turkey’s de-Europeanization in the area of foreign policy. Since the Europeanization of foreign policy entails that ‘soft power’ must prevail over ‘hard power’, military instruments and force should be the last resort in solving conflicts and disagreements- even in ones that are related to border disputes (Müftüler-Baç & Gürsoy, 2010, p. 40). A Europeanized foreign policy necessitates that conflicts should be solved by using more legitimate ways such as the employment of diplomatic and economic “carrots and sticks” (Müftüler-Baç & Gürsoy, 2010, p. 40). However, Turkey has resorted to the military mechanism to solve the conflict in its Syrian border several times in the last five years, which clearly shows the distancing from the EU’s values and demands.

There are also other speeches that the EU has been accused of being ‘hypocritical’ in case of granting Turkey the full membership. In May 2017, Erdoğan made a speech in the AKP’s 3rd Extra Ordinary Congress:

“European Union membership process, which we see as the anchor and dynamo of our reforms, has come to a deadlock due to the Union’s hypocritical attitude. Imposing the conditions that are not laid down for any candidate country and setting up the rules that are not applied for any candidate country other than us show the true intention of the union. From the moment this problem first appeared, we have always made reforms regarding rights and freedoms not because the EU wanted us to do, but because our own citizens deserved them, and, we will continue to carry them out”⁶ (AK Party’s Third Extraordinary Congress, 21 May 2017).

This speech has been delivered only one month after the constitutional referendum was conducted in Turkey. With the success of the ‘Yes’ campaign taking 51,41 percent of votes, Turkey’s governmental system changed from the parliamentary system to the presidential system. The result made the split between Turkey and the EU more visible because the EU asserted that the new system would threaten the separation of powers in Turkey. Moreover, during the campaigning period for this referendum, Turkey-EU relations hit a new low with the effect of disputes over Turkish politicians campaigning in some EU member states such as Germany, the Netherlands, and Austria.

In this speech, Erdoğan underlined that Turkey’s accession process had reached an impasse because of tensions between two parties. While doing so, he discursively constructed the EU as the one who needs to be blamed for this deadlock because of its hypocritical attitude. He also used “topos of comparison” by making a comparison between the EU’s treatment towards other candidate countries and Turkey. However, what is striking in this statement concerning our thesis argument is that Erdoğan articulated the reason behind further reforms not as the EU but the right of Turkish citizens. In this regard, he presented the reforms as the

⁶ Reformlarımızın çapası, hatta dinamosu olarak gördüğümüz Avrupa Birliği üyelik süreci, Birliğin riyakâr tutumu sebebiyle çıkmaza girmiştir. Hiçbir aday ülkeye konmayan şartların bize dayatılması, hiçbir aday ülke için uygulanmayan kuralların bizim için getirilmesi asıl niyeti açıkça göstermektedir. Biz bu sıkıntının ilk ortaya çıktığı andan itibaren hep hak ve özgürlüklerle ilgili reformları biz Avrupa Birliği istediği için değil, kendi vatandaşlarımız bunlara layık olduğu için yaptık, yapmaya devam edeceğiz.

delivery of the AKP for the sake of the society without the contribution of the EU (G. Yılmaz, 2016b). Since de-Europeanization is understood as “those cases where policy change is incurred without, with minimal or with largely negative reference to the EU/Europe” in this thesis, Erdoğan’s words can be considered as the manifestation of the de-Europeanization process in Turkey (Aydın-Düzgüt & Kaliber, 2016, p.6). Here, it is clearly expressed that the EU has lost its legitimacy as the cause of reforms and developments initiated by the government. In doing so, the President did not avoid referring to the EU; however, he addressed it negatively to discursively construct the EU as an institution with no impact on Turkey. The reason for losing this impact was asserted to be the hypocritical character of the EU in dealing with Turkey’s accession process.

On the other hand, in Erdoğan’s discourse, the ‘hypocritical’ character of the EU has also become the subject of criticism in connection with its attitude towards terrorists living and making propaganda in the EU. Erdoğan, discursively constructed the EU as the safe haven for terrorists in his several speeches, especially after the failed coup attempt in Turkey:

“The EU member states are among the primary ones who disappoint us in our fight against terrorism. We are extremely uncomfortable with the indulgent attitude the EU member states, who explicitly inhibit Turkey’s EU membership, exhibited against terrorist organizations..... Today, Europe has become a place where terrorists can walk around freely and organize against the legitimate administration of Turkey. While some people hold posters that depict me with a gun in my head in front of a European state’s parliament, polices of this state just watched..... Leaflets and banner which aggrandize the terrorist organizations, terrorists, and the murders of these terrorists are distributed everywhere in the European continent. Booths are set up for this purpose. The ones who turned up in our door immediately when their citizens are arrested in our country even in for crimes related to terrorism, do not put documents that we sent them into operation. The hypocritical attitude of the EU against our country in every issue from articles to

free movement and aid has become crystal clear. Even, they do not find an excuse to justify this situation”⁷ (Opening of Turkish Grand National Assembly 26th Term 3rd Legislative Year, 1 October 2017).

Especially between 2016 and 2018, terrorism has become one of the main subjects of criticism towards the EU in Erdoğan’s discourse. The EU’s lack of assistance and support during and after the failed coup attempt and successive military operations in Syria are effective in this discursive articulation of Europe as a supporter of terrorism and terrorists. At the time this speech was delivered, Turkey was still under the state of emergency that was declared after the coup attempt in July 2016. Despite the EU’s immediate response to condemn the failed coup attempt, the Turkish government has not been satisfied with the EU’s muted attitude and lacking measures against the FETÖ (the Gülenist Terror Group that is responsible for the attempted coup) supporters in the European countries. On the other hand, the EU leaders criticized Turkey for the disproportionality of precautions taken under the state of emergency since the failed coup attempt. Furthermore, tensions between the two parties have also increased since EU officials have authorized the PKK supporters to hold rallies across Europe even though the PKK is recognized as a terror organization by the union.

As proposed by Aydın-Düzgüt, the binary dichotomy through the usage of ‘we’ and ‘they’ has been established once again in defining Turkey and the EU in this speech (Aydın-Düzgüt, 2016). By doing so, Turkey’s identity was articulated as a country that pursues an

⁷ Terör örgütleriyle mücadelemizde bizi en çok hayal kırıklığına uğratanların başında Avrupa Birliği ülkeleri geliyor. Türkiye’nin Avrupa Birliği üyeliğine, öyle gizli saklı da değil, göstere göstere engel olanların, terör örgütlerine karşı sergiledikleri müsamahakâr tutumdan fevkalade rahatsızız.....Bugün Avrupa, teröristlerin ellerini kollarını sallayarak dolaştıkları, Türkiye’nin meşru yönetimine karşı her türlü organizasyonu yapabildikleri bir yer haline gelmiştir. Bir Avrupa ülkesinin parlamento binasının önünde, şakağma silah dayanmış posterler açılıyor ve o ülkenin polisleri bunu sadece seyrediyor..... Şu anda bakıyoruz, kıtanın her köşesinde terör örgütlerini, teröristleri, onların işledikleri cinayetleri yücelten broşürler, afişler dağıtılıyor, bunun için standartlar kuruluyor. Kendi vatandaşları ülkemizde, terör dâhil çeşitli suçlardan yakalandığında hemen kapımızta dayananlar, bizim onlara ilettiğimiz dosyaları işleme dahi koymuyorlar. Avrupa Birliği kurumlarının, fasıllardan serbest dolaşıma ve yardımlara kadar her konuda ülkemize karşı sergilediği ikiyüzlü tutum öylesine alenileşti ki, artık bu durumu örtecek mazeret dahi bulamıyorlar.

honorable fight against terrorism and terrorists in contrast to the EU's portrayal as a safe haven for terrorists. The usage of linguistic tools of description and narration in order to create framing and perspectivation shows how Erdoğan positioned Turkey and the EU/Europe with respect to specific events and utterances (Aydın-Düzgit, 2014). By describing organizations made by terrorists such as unfurling a flag, distributing leaflets and brochures, and setting up boots, he led the public to understand the situation in a certain way and strengthen his position.

In other occasions, Erdoğan has continued his accusations towards the EU for being Janus-faced in dealing with terrorism and terrorists:

“Throughout the years, traitor groups that have organized within our country were activated one after another. With this purpose, we have seen that FETÖ has mobilized all its power and means in the fields of security, judiciary, army, business, and other fields. We had seen that the PKK has been engaged in more intense and daring attacks than before in history and occupied our cities. Daesh, the biggest anti-human and anti-Islamic organization that emerged right next to our borders, started to attack our country as if an order was given from somewhere. Many international organizations simultaneously created a negative atmosphere against our country with similar arguments. The same period has also coincided with the fact that the EU sided against our country at the expense of breaking all the promises it has made”⁸ (AK Party Group Meeting, 10 April 2018).

The excerpt above was delivered soon after the Operation Olive Branch in the northwestern Syrian region of Afrin, which caused a new conflict between Turkey and the EU on the ground that the EU released a motion for resolution on 12 May 2018 calling on Turkey to stop the

⁸ Yıllar boyunca ülkemiz içinde örgütlenmiş ihanet odakları birbirinin ardı sıra harekete geçirildi. Bu gayeyle FETÖ'nün emniyet, yargı, ordu, iş dünyası ve diğer alanlardaki tüm gücünü ve imkanlarını seferber ettiğini gördük. PKK'nın tarihinde olmadığı kadar yoğun ve cüretkar saldırılara giriştiğini, şehirlerimizi işgale yeltendiğini gördük. Sınırlarımızın yanı başında ortaya çıkan en büyük insanlık ve İslam düşmanı örgütü olan DEAŞ, bir yerlerden emir verilmişçesine ülkemize saldırmaya başladı. Pek çok uluslararası örgüt de aynı anda ve benzer argümanlarla ülkemiz aleyhinde bir hava oluşturuldu. Avrupa Birliği'nin verdiği tüm sözleri çiğnemek pahasına ülkemize cephe alması da aynı döneme denk geliyor

operation. This motion is perceived as a reflection of the European Parliament's support for PKK, which is a terrorist group acknowledged by not only Turkey but also the EU and the US. Thus, in this passage, the EU has been once again in the line of fire for being dishonest and hypocritical. While the EU was criticized for siding against Turkey and breaking its promises, a connection was made between the EU's backdown and the rise of terrorism that occurred at the same time.

Erdoğan, in this statement, manifested a typical right-wing populist rhetoric by discursively constructing all internal and external opponents of Turkey as menacing 'other' (Aydın-Düzgüt, 2016; Kaliber, 2013). A hidden collaboration between internal enemies like FETÖ and PKK, and, external enemies like Daesh, international organizations, and even the EU was implied in this speech. A clear line between Turkey and its internal and external enemies was drawn, and, the hostile others of the Turkish nation both inside and outside of the country were combined into one by means of discourses of danger expressed through foreign policy (D. Campbell, 1998; Kaliber & Kaliber, 2019). Especially after the failed coup attempt, Turkish politicians began to position Turkey in the Eastern civilization as opposed to Western civilization in the contemporary international power struggle (Kaliber & Kaliber, 2019). Thus, the implications asserting that Western states support diverse terrorist groups that threaten Turkey is common in the rhetoric of Erdoğan. By doing so, he securitizes the West as "either an unfriendly or inimical power threatening the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity" (Kaliber & Kaliber, 2019).

In the continuation of this speech, he made this discursive connection between internal and external antagonists more obvious:

"As you see it in the European Parliament, some of them put rags on their necks. Whose rags are these? The PKK. Whose? The terrorist head's. You know that the EU has declared the PKK

as a terrorist organization. How do they wrap their necks with the PKK's rags even though they have declared them a terrorist organization? Just because they are not honest and sincere. And those who act with them are the same. They will never fool us, and we will say that we never find them sincere to their face"⁹ (AKP Group Meeting, 10 April 2018).

In the passage above, Erdoğan made use of the "argumentation strategy of question begging for an answer". In fact, in Erdoğan's speeches, the use of this strategy is very common (Aydın-Düzgüt, 2016; Küçükali, 2013). The question and exclamatory sentences are essential characteristics of Erdoğan's discourse. Using these types of sentences, he aimed to attract the audience and construct an answer in the audiences' mind that is in line with his point of view on the issue. The message conveyed to the public through these questions was that the EU has never acted sincerely in the case of terrorism by showing an apparent sympathy towards the PKK despite identifying them as a terrorist organization. Moreover, Erdoğan discursively constructed supremacy in favor of Turkey with his articulation of Turkey as an entity that is not fooled by the words of the EU.

5.3 The EU as an Exclusionary and Unfair Institution

The construction of the EU/Europe as an exclusionary and unfair institution is one of the most salient features of Erdoğan's discourse between 2015 and 2020. Especially in the statements about Turkey's membership process, the discriminatory behavior of the EU/Europe has been mentioned a lot. It is common to observe the construction of discursive equivalence between the EU's treatment against other candidate countries and Turkey in the speeches that were delivered in this period. There were several instances where Erdoğan and other important

⁹ Avrupa Parlamentosu'nda görüyorsunuz işte bazıları paçavraları boyunlarına asmışlar, kimin paçavraları bunlar? PKK'nın. Kimin? Terörist başının. Bunlarla, Avrupa Birliği, ki biliyorsunuz PKK'yı terör örgütü ilan etmiştir, terör örgütü ilan ettiği halde bunların paçavrasını nasıl oluyor da bunlar boyunlarına sarıyorlar? Çünkü dürüst değiller, samimi değiller ve bunlarla beraber hareket edenler, onlar da aynı. Biz bunlara hiçbir zaman aldanmayacağız ve onları da hiçbir zaman samimi bulmadığımızı kendilerine yüzüne yüzüne vuracağız.

political figures emphasized the double-standard and discretionary treatment of the EU against Turkey:

“Reforms which Turkey realized earnestly and rapidly might not have been enough to make us a full member; however, they have considerably raised our democratic standards. For this reason, when the EU took an ambivalent stance, we said “If necessary we change the name of Copenhagen criteria to Ankara criteria and continue our way”....We do not accept the fact that rules which are not even brought into question when it comes to other candidate countries are invented in case of Turkey. And we will not accept this in the future. Turkey strictly conformed to the timetable for full membership to the EU. As for chapters and legislative alignment, we have no deficiencies and problems. The only problem we faced with is that the EU does not fulfill its obligations”¹⁰ (International Ombudsman Conference, 25 September 2017).

This speech was delivered in the fall of 2017, which can be regarded as a highly problematic year for Turkey-EU relations due to the fact that there were serious concerns on both sides for the future of accession negotiations. On the side of Turkey, several calls from European institutions and leaders to suspend the accession negotiations and seek another solution for Turkey’s membership raised doubts on the real intention of the EU. On the other hand, the EU has expressed its concern over the continuous state of emergency and the introduction of the presidential system in Turkey, which was regarded as the sign of weakening of democracy and the rule of law. As in the example above, Erdoğan has continuously said that he might change the Copenhagen criteria to Ankara criteria since the late 2000s; however, in the last years, it has become a kind of motto for him due to the frequency of its usage. The rationale behind this

¹⁰ Türkiye’nin Avrupa Birliği üyeliği sürecinde samimiyetle ve süratle hayata geçirdiği düzenlemeler, belki bizi tam üye yapmaya yetmedi, ama demokratik standartlarımızı bir hayli yükseltti. Bunun için Avrupa Birliği ikircikli bir tutum içine girdiğinde biz çıktık, ‘Kopenhag Kriterlerinin adını gerekirse Ankara kriterleri yapar, yine de yolumuza devam ederiz’ dedik.....Diğer aday ülkeler söz konusu olduğunda gündeme dahi getirilmeyen kuralların, konu Türkiye olduğunda adeta icat edilmesini kabul etmedik, etmeyeceğiz. Türkiye, Avrupa Birliği tam üyeliği takvimini harfiyen işletmiştir, fasıllar konusunda, mevzuat uyumu konusunda hiçbir eksikliğimiz, hiçbir sıkıntımız yoktur. Sadece Avrupa Birliği’nin kendi yükümlülüklerini yerine getirmemesi sorunuyla karşı karşıyayız.

saying proves that the EU's conditionality is not the driving force behind reforms in Turkey anymore, and policy changes are incurred without an intention to comply with Copenhagen criteria but Turkey's own criteria, which is Ankara criteria (Aydın-Düzgıt & Kaliber, 2016). Thus, it can be said that de-Europeanization in terms of "weakening of the EU as a normative political context" can be easily detected in these types of speeches (Aydın-Düzgıt & Kaliber, 2016). To justify his assertion, Erdoğan underlined the differential treatment the EU has been showing to Turkey since the beginning of the accession negotiations on several occasions:

"The EU, itself, knows the best that they rotated the criteria they boasted so much like whirligig when it comes to us in the negotiations for full membership. The ones, who quickly granted the full membership to countries that cannot be compared to our country both in an economic and democratic sense, do not hesitate to deny themselves to exclude Turkey"¹¹ (Turkish Military Forces Petty Officer Vocational School Graduation Ceremony, 31 August 2018).

In order to understand the message delivered in this statement, one should look at the historical context. Only one month before this speech, Turkey held its first parliamentary and presidential election after the governmental system change. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who was the candidate of AKP, was elected by taking almost 53 percent of all votes. Two days after the election, the EU General Affairs Council declared that Turkey has been showing the signs of further divergence with the EU (Anadolu Ajansı, 2018). They also said that "Turkey's accession negotiations have therefore effectively come to a standstill and no further chapters can be considered for opening or closing and no further work towards the modernization of the EU-Turkey Customs Union is foreseen" (Anadolu Ajansı, 2018). As a response to this statement, Turkish Foreign Ministry Ömer Çelik said the following: "Though our country's candidate

¹¹ Aynı şekilde Avrupa Birliği'nin tam üyelik müzakerelerinde sıra bize geldiğinde o çok övündüğü kriterlerini nasıl fırlıdak gibi döndürdüğünü en iyi kendileri biliyor. Ülkemizin ne ekonomisiyle, ne de demokrasisiyle mukayese dahi edilemeyecek düzeydeki devletleri çok kısa süre içinde tam üye yapanlar, Türkiye'yi dışlamak için adeta kendilerini inkâr etmekten çekinmiyorlar.

status is not harmed by the decision, we do not accept associating our membership process in 'EU Enlargement' matter with new conditions under a meaningless cause-effect relationship..... We have seen once again that the EU does not treat Turkey fairly” (Anadolu Ajansı, 2018). So, as seen above, the EU was frequently labeled as ‘biased’, ‘inconsistent’, ‘exclusionary’, and ‘unfair’ by Turkish officials, including President Erdoğan regarding this topic.

In the speech above, the EU’s identity was once again discursively constructed through the “topos of comparison”. A comparison was made between Turkey and other candidate states which become full members in spite of their failure to fulfill democratic and economic criteria. Although Erdoğan did not explicitly mention the names of states, it is evident that he referred states which were granted the full membership after Turkey has become the candidate. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that a deliberate equivalence is formed between Turkey and states that were included in the enlargement round of 2004, 2007, and 2013. In doing so, Turkey was discursively constructed as democratically and economically superior to some EU member states, which make the alleged impediments by the EU in the case of Turkey irrelevant. The justification of assertions against the EU was done through the help of “topos of justice”, which renders “if a situation is equal in specific respects, it should be dealt with in the same way” (Wodak & Meyer, 2001, p. 75). Erdoğan calls the EU for “equal rights to all” through the description of the unfair situation in the accession process, especially related to democratic and economic standards.

There are also other examples, particularly in 2018 and 2019, where the EU has become the subject of criticism based on its double standard against Turkey:

“Of course, we could not remain silent in the presence of injustices and double standards applied to our country in the full membership process to the EU. The distress has deepened and spread because some European countries used opposition to Turkey as a tool for their domestic

politics.”¹² (Opening of Turkish Grand National Assembly 27th Term 2nd Legislative Year, 1 October 2018).

“When we look at our relations with the European Union, we see that no promises made to us have been kept since 2004. In particular, free movement and the financial assistance provided to the other candidate countries were spared from Turkey. It is clear that this double standard has no place either in EU law or in conscience”¹³ (Ceremony for the Selection of Judges and Prosecutors, 16 October 2018).

“Despite all the double standards we have been exposed to in 60 years, we never gave up and departed from our way. Neither the injustices we encountered in the process nor the intimidation tactics against our country have affected our commitment to full membership”¹⁴ (Reform Action Group Meeting, 9 May 2019).

In all three excerpts above, the lexical choice of words in describing the unfair and exclusionary character of the EU is similar. The word ‘double-standard’ has been preferred increasingly by Erdoğan in the last years in order to show that the EU does not show loyalty to its own criteria when it comes to Turkey. The argument of injustice also prevailed in all three statements through which Erdoğan claimed that all candidate countries should be treated equally as far as the membership is concerned.

5.3 The EU as an Islamophobic and Racist Entity

Another discursive articulation of the EU/Europe in the discourse of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in the last five years is positioning them as ‘Islamophobic’ and ‘racist’ entity. Erdoğan

¹² Avrupa Birliği tam üyelik sürecinde ülkemize yapılan haksızlıklar ve uygulanan çifte standart karşısında elbette sessiz kalamazdık. Kimi Avrupa ülkelerinin Türkiye karşıtlığını bir iç politika malzemesi haline dönüştürmesi, sıkıntılarının derinleşmesine ve yaygınlaşmasına sebep oldu.

¹³ Avrupa Birliği’yle ilişkilerimizi şöyle bir gözümüzün önünden geçirdiğimizde, 2004 yılından beri bize verilen hiçbir sözün tutulmadığını görüyoruz. Serbest dolaşım ve mali yardımlar başta olmak üzere diğer aday ülkelere sağlanan imkanlar Türkiye’den esirgenmiştir. Bu çifte standardın ne Avrupa Birliği hukukunda, ne de vicdanlarda yeri olmadığı çok açık.

¹⁴ 60 sene içinde maruz kaldığımız onca çifte standarda rağmen asla vazgeçmedik, yolumuzdan geri dönmedik. Ne süreçte karşılaştığımız haksızlıklar, ne de ülkemize yönelik yıldırma taktikleri hamdolsun bizim tam üyelik kararlılığımızı etkilemedi;

used “stigma words” that carry negative associations excessively as a rhetorical device in constructing the identity of the EU/Europe in this period (Aydın-Düzgit, 2014, p.359). The EU/Europe has been referred to as a home for anti-Islamism, cultural racism, xenophobia, ethnocentrism, and fascism either explicitly or implicitly. The anti-Islamist tendencies of the EU/Europe have been continuously articulated along with racist inclinations; thus, they are regarded as interconnected. While doing this construction, Erdoğan frequently made use of historical metaphors and comparisons with other texts and discourses. The terms like ‘Christian club’ and ‘Neo-Nazi’ are commonly used in describing the tendencies of European leaders, parties, and organizations:

“During 113 terrorist attacks carried out by Neo-Nazi groups in Western Europe between 2013-2017, 66 innocents were killed..... Unless we react strongly, the Neo-Nazi virus will further spread to the body. Unless we raise our voices, Western governments will not be bothered to act. Unless we take a stand even at the cost of disturbing some people, the attacks will become even more reckless, and racist fanatics will get wilder. And ultimately, God forbid, irreparable catastrophes like the ones in Europe in the 1940s will happen. So long as we do not voice the truths even if they are bitter, Western media organizations will continue to stir up Islamophobia and add fuel to the fire”¹⁵ (OIC Emergency Open-Ended Executive Committee Meeting, 22 March 2019).

The passage above was quoted from President Erdoğan’s speech in the emergency executive committee meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in 2019. The timing of the speech is very crucial in the sense that it happened only one week after the Christchurch

¹⁵ Batı Avrupa’da 2013-2017 yılları arasında Neonazi gruplarınca gerçekleştirilen 113 terör saldırısında 66 masumun canına kastedildi.

Biz tepkimizi çok güçlü bir şekilde göstermedikçe Neonazi virüsü bünyeyi daha fazla saracaktır. Biz sesimizi yükseltmedikçe, Batılı hükümetler konforlarını bozmayacaktır. Biz birilerini rahatsız etme pahasına tavrımızı ortaya koymadıkça, saldırılar daha da pervasızlaşacak, ırkçı fanatikler daha da azgınlaşacaktır. Sonuçta Allah korusun 1940’larda Avrupa’da olduğu gibi telafisi mümkün olmayan felaketler yaşanacaktır. Biz acı da olsa hakikatleri dillendirmedikçe batılı medya kuruluşları İslam düşmanlığını körüklemeye, ateşe benzin dökmeye devam edeceklerdir.

mosque shootings in New Zealand and one week before the mayoral elections in Turkey. Two consecutive terrorist attacks occurred at mosques in New Zealand on 15 March 2019 that led to the death of 51 Muslim people. The terrorist who initiated these attacks was revealed to be an anti-Islamist and white supremacist person, which led a new wave of arguments about Islamophobia and the rise of alt-right extremism in the West.

In this excerpt, Islam and the West were constructed as two independent homogenous entities that are opposed to each other. While doing so, all of the West was treated as a homogenous, interconnected, and identical unit which is Islamophobic and racist in nature. There is also a constitution of a relationship with other discourses that can be regarded as an act of interdiscursivity. An interdiscursivity with Huntington's "clash of civilizations" thesis was established through which the West and Islam were described as two incompatible and irrelevant entities that are opposed to each other (Huntington, 1993). Erdoğan, in this statement, put Turkish 'self' against the Western 'other' by implying that Turkey is completely the opposite of the West, and it will put an end to brutal and racist actions of them.

"Topos of history" is excessively used in this text to justify the negative attributions which were made to the West and constructing their identity as Neo-Nazi. "Topos of history" serves the intent of showing lessons that should be learned from history (Wodak & Meyer, 2001). It can be defined as follows: "Since history shows that certain actions have certain consequences, one should perform or omit a specific action in a specific situation comparable with the historical example referred to" (Wodak & Meyer, 2001, p. 76). In the excerpt above, the correlation between the newly emerged racist groups and Nazis in 1940s Europe has been established in order to draw attention to the severity of the situation. Erdoğan, in his speeches in the last few years, has used the term Neo-Nazi many times to evoke one of the most sensitive issues in European history. By establishing intertextuality, he implied that if the EU/Europe

continues to support these kinds of groups, it is inevitable for them to experience the same catastrophes they lived in the 1940s again. The term ‘Neo-Nazi’ is used to refer to any social, political, or militant movements established in the post-World War II. These groups seek to revive Nazism as a whole or, in some matters, and internalize the elements of this ideology such as ultra-nationalism, racism, xenophobia, anti-communism, homophobia, and anti-Semitism. By using this historical comparison, Erdoğan emphasized the ‘racist’, ‘ultra-nationalist’, ‘homophobic’ and ‘xenophobic’ characteristics of Europe. Besides, he utilized the “topos of numbers” in order to strengthen his claims. The numbers of terrorist attacks and the people who were killed in these attacks served as evidence for Erdoğan’s claims through which the EU/Europe is discursively constructed as a ‘racist’ entity.

In addition, throughout the speech, Turkey is discursively constructed as a knight in shining armor who will prevent further escalation of these Neo-Nazi groups in Europe by standing against them. Through his articulation of Turkey as a savior, Erdoğan represented Turkey as an active agent who has the power to end all these racist actions and their unfortunate consequences. Thus, the binary opposition was formed once again between Turkey and Europe, through which Turkey’s identity is constructed as an outspoken and forthright actor as opposed to Europe’s silent and indifferent character.

In other statements, especially in the ones that were delivered in the European countries or in the summits and conferences related to Islam, the EU/Europe has become the center of criticism based on the increasing number of ‘racist’ and ‘Islamophobic’ right-wing movements in Europe:

“The Western world wants to strengthen its ideology, its own way of life, through anti-Islamism. Islam, which is the only religion that can respond to the crisis of the modern man, is tried to be labeled and stained by terrorists who are projected. They are also the reason behind the

escalation of diseases like cultural racism, xenophobia, and Islamophobia, and the rise of Neo-Nazi parties that reached the level of becoming a partner of power in the developed countries. Today, attacks against Muslims and refugees have become common in many states that are the apostles of democracy and the rule of law. The workplaces, houses, and places of worship of Muslims are targeted by racist and fascist groups almost every day. It continues to happen in Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, and France. Since they wear headscarves, Muslim women are harassed in the streets, bazaars, and, workplaces; and the most important example of countries that these kinds of actions occurred is France. Is it only this? No, not only do they act like this in case of the headscarf, but they also discriminate against people”¹⁶ (World Muslim Minorities Summit, 16 April 2018).

At the time this speech was delivered, populism gained substantial momentum in Europe, especially among the right-wing politicians. Ultra-nationalist tendencies have increased significantly in several European countries such as Italy, Sweden, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Hungary. According to research conducted by the Guardian, Europeans who vote for populist parties in elections has increased from 7 percent to 25 percent between 1998 and 2018 (The Guardian, 2018). Muslims were among the main victims of rising far-right extremism in Europe during this time period. Only in 2018, there were more than 2000 Islamophobic incidents (70 cases in Belgium, 540 cases in Austria, 676 cases in France, and 678 cases in Germany) happened in Europe (Bayraklı & Hafez, 2019). Erdoğan gave this speech when there were increasing concerns over rising racist and Islamophobic incidents in

¹⁶ Batı dünyası İslam karşıtlığı üzerinden kendi ideolojisini, kendi hayat biçimini tahkim etmek istiyor, onu güçlendirmek istiyor. Modern insanın buhranlarına cevap verebilecek yegane din olan İslam, proje mahsulü teröristler üzerinden yaftalanmaya, lekelenmeye çalışılıyor. Dünyanın birçok gelişmiş ülkesinde kültürel ırkçılık, yabancı düşmanlığı ve Müslüman karşıtlığı gibi hastalıkların yayılmasının, Neonazi partilerin iktidara ortak olacak konuma gelmesinin sebebi de budur.

Bugün demokrasi ve hukuk havariliği yapan birçok devlette Müslümanlara ve mültecilere yönelik saldırılar sıradan hale gelmiştir. Müslümanların iş yerleri, evleri, ibadethaneleri hemen her gün ırkçıların ve faşist grupların hedefi oluyor. Bunun en önemli şu anda zemini de Almanya, Hollanda, Belçika, Fransa, buralarda bunlar devam ediyor. Müslüman kadınlar sırf başörtüsü taktıkları için sokakta, çarşıda, iş yerlerinde tacize uğruyor; bunun da en önemli örneği Fransa. Sadece o mu, başörtüsüyle kalmıyor, bunun yanında bunlar insanları da ayırıyorlar.

Europe. In the first part of the speech, he made a biased generalization by defining countries in which anti-Islamic and racist dispositions are manifested as the Western world. The Western world was discursively constructed as an ill-intentioned entity with plans to destroy the image of Islam in the world and spread hate against Muslims. Once again, the “topos of history and culture” were used to construct the identity of the Western world as culturally racist, xenophobic, and Islamophobic. Fortification of this assertion was enabled via the “argumentation strategy of question begging for an answer”. By asking the rhetorical question of “Is it only this?”, Erdoğan provided the crowd with only one choice that is confirming his views. The question here served the primary function of consolidating Erdoğan’s stance about problematic attitudes of the Western world against Muslims.

In the following parts of the same speech, Erdoğan’s criticism has focused on France rather than the Western world as a whole:

“For example, France threw Romas out of France. You are a member of the European Union. Is it possible that you can throw out any people from a certain race according to the European acquis? Can you throw it out of your country? You cannot. But they did it to Romas. Well, did we do such a thing? No, we live together with Romas”¹⁷ (World Muslim Minorities Summit, 16 April 2018).

In this statement, the contradiction between France’s treatment against Romas and the EU’s values, norms, rules, and regulations has been highlighted. Erdoğan drew attention to the clear difference between the non-discriminatory and egalitarian discourse of Europe and the reality, which can be seen in the chosen example. Then, a discursive equivalence was formed between the deportation of Roma migrants from France in 2009-10 and Turkey’s treatment of Roma

¹⁷ Mesela Fransa Romanları Fransa’dan derdest etti. Hani sen Avrupa Birliği üyesiydin? Avrupa Birliği müktesebatında sen kalkıp da herhangi bir ırka mensup olanı derdest edebilir misin? Ülkenden, topraklarından atabilir misin? Atamazsın. Ama bunlar Romanlara karşı bunu uyguladı. Peki, bizde böyle bir şey var mı? Yok, ben Romanlarla iç içeyim.

minority in the country through the “topos of comparison” in order to demonstrate the difference between the attitudes of two states. Here, “topos of history” served the function of reinforcing discursively constructed dichotomy between Turkish ‘self’ as non-racist and the Western ‘other’ as racist. There are also many other instances in the last five years that Erdoğan refers to historical metaphors, figures, symbols, and myths (Nazis, Crusaders, Janus, etc.) in his discourse to justify negative attributions given to the EU/Europe or the West.

5.4 The EU as a Crisis-Ridden Entity

Apart from the negative attributions mentioned above, Erdoğan’s discourse has served the function of portraying the EU as a crisis-ridden institution whose future is uncertain due to its inability to solve internal and external problems that pose a threat to the position of the unity in the global world order. According to Erdoğan’s rhetoric, there are several reasons behind the potential end of the EU, namely increasing racism, Islamophobia, populism, inefficient policy in the case of refugees, terrorism, and Brexit. Between 2015 and 2020, the EU has been warned by Erdoğan for preparing its own end on many occasions:

“Europe died in Bosnia and was buried in Syria. You should know that innocent child bodies hitting the beach are the tombstones of Western civilization. Unfortunately, the ancient European values have been discredited by the owners of these values and destroyed one by one in the last 7 years. I say it plainly: Europe has no credibility in the eyes of billions of people in the world today. If the current political situation continues, I am afraid that the future will be much worse than today. Europe, where racism and discrimination are on the rise and Neo-Nazi parties reach the power to become a government partner, is drifting towards disaster. The future

of Europe that strangles its principles with its own hands is dark”¹⁸ (Remembrance Event for Alija Izetbegovic, 23 October 2017).

The statement above was delivered in 2017 when the Syrian civil war has reached its 7th year. In the first part of the speech, the subject of the criticism directed to the EU is its incompetent refugee policy. By referring to the Bosnian War, intertextuality between Bosnia and Syria is formed in which the EU’s inefficient response to these two crises was compared. Like in the Bosnian crisis, the EU was not effective in preventing or slowing down the Syrian crisis from escalating in the last seven years. Here, Erdoğan stressed the inability of the EU by using the “topos of humanitarianism” to show the severity of the situation further. The metaphor of ‘tombstones’ was used to serve the main function of indicating that actions of the EU do not conform with human rights, humanitarian convictions, and values, which are the keystones of the EU. Thus, it was referred that the EU has dug its own grave by disregarding these values. Erdoğan also used the discursive strategy of ‘intensification’ through which he asserted that the EU lost its credibility in the eyes of 7 billion people worldwide. Claiming that the EU has lost its legitimacy in the whole world is an obvious exaggeration to enhance his arguments regarding the future of the EU. Although the EU has lost its credibility in Turkey and its neighborhood due to its inefficiency in dealing with the Syrian crisis, it is a fact that it was still one of the most reputable international organization in the world.

In the second part of the speech, the direction of the reason for the potential end of Europe diverged from the Syrian crisis to the rising racism in Europe. Erdoğan discursively constructed Europe’s future as ‘dark’ given the fact that racism and discrimination are on the

¹⁸ Avrupa, Boosna’da ölmüş, Suriye’de gömülmüştür. Sahile vuran masum çocuk bedenleri ise Batı medeniyetinin mezar taşlarıdır, bunu böyle biliniz. Maalesef son 7 yılda kadim Avrupa değerleri, bizzat bu değerlerin sahipleri tarafından itibarsızlaştırılmış, tek tek yok edilmiştir. Açık söylüyorum: Bugün Avrupa’nın dünyadaki milyarlarca insan nazarında hiçbir inandırıcılığı kalmamıştır. Mevcut siyasi tablo devam ederse, korkarım ki gelecek, bugünden de çok daha kötü olacaktır. Irkçılığın yükseldiği, ayrımcılığın arttığı, Neonazi partilerin hükümet ortağı olacak güce ulaştığı bir Avrupa, felakete doğru sürükleniyor demektir. İlkelerini kendi elleriyle boğan bir Avrupa’nın geleceği karanlıktır.

rise. In doing so, he preferred to use the metaphor of ‘disaster’ which is used in defining a dramatic accident or a natural catastrophe that leads to major damage or loss of life in real terms. He also constructed an ‘intertextuality’ between Europe’s catastrophes in the 1940s and its present situation through the historical metaphor of Nazis.

On the other hand, discrimination policies and separatist tendencies along with arguments of rising populism have been put forward by Erdoğan as other reasons for the EU’s precarious future:

“Trends such as racism, xenophobia, and Islamophobia which tend to spread gradually within the EU threaten the future of the union we see as a peace project..... We think that the EU, which cannot solve its own problems, cannot be effective on global issues”¹⁹ (Peace Summit on the 100th Anniversary of Çanakkale, 23 April 2015).

In the excerpt above, the main reason for the possible disintegration of the EU is argued to be trends such as racism, xenophobia, and Islamophobia. Erdoğan, here, made a comparison between ‘the EU as a peace project’ and ‘the EU as a crisis-ridden entity’ which contradicts with each other strikingly. The EU, which is in contradiction with its founding principles, was discursively constructed as an organization bound to eventually break down. One should look at other speeches of Erdoğan in order to understand his point of view about the impact of rising populism on the future of Europe:

“We see that the EU’s enlargement policy has been recently controlled by narrow-minded populist circles. Discriminatory and exclusionary movements across the continent threaten not

¹⁹ Avrupa Birliği içinde giderek yayılma eğilimi gösteren ırkçılık, yabancı düşmanlığı, İslamofobi gibi akımlar bir barış projesi olarak gördüğümüz birliğin geleceğini tehdit ediyor.....Kendi sorunlarını çözemeyen Avrupa Birliği’nin küresel meseleler konusunda da etkili olamayacağını düşünüyoruz.

only Europe's inner peace but also its future and potential for hope”²⁰ (Summit of the South-East European Cooperation Process, 9 July 2019).

As mentioned in the above (Chapter 5.3), populism and right-wing nationalism have been on the rise in European democracies in the last few years. There has been an increase in the number of populist and nationalist parties across Europe, and the voter support for them in elections has risen significantly (BBC, 2019). The AfD has become the biggest opposition party in the German parliament Bundestag in 2017, and Vox has become the third-largest party in Spain in 2019. A new bloc named Identity and Democracy that consists of nine far-right parties was formed in the European Parliament on 13 June 2019. Moreover, Boris Johnson, who campaigned with the motto of “get Brexit done”, won the elections in the UK.

In definition, populism means an “anti-elitist, anti-pluralist” political movement that includes authoritarian and nativist tendencies (Kaliber & Kaliber, 2019, p. 3). Thus, in populist regimes, domestic identities are reproduced with an apparent distinction between national and non-national and the legitimate and illegitimate (Kaliber & Kaliber, 2019, p. 3). So, the rise of far-right populism raised a question about the political establishment of the EU itself due to their Eurosceptic and nationalist tendencies. In Erdoğan’s discourse in the last five years, it is apparent that he wanted to highlight the problems the EU faces in order to weaken the credibility of the EU in the eyes of the Turkish public. In this point, it can be argued that Erdoğan’s strategy to defame the EU may lead to increasing skepticism, distrust and indifference among the Turkish society against the EU, which causes the escalation of de-Europeanization in Turkey. However, the discursive articulation of the EU as an entity which is a home for populist and nationalist movements ignore the fact that populism has gained momentum not only in the

²⁰ Son dönemde Avrupa Birliği’nin genişleme siyasetinin kimi dar görüşlü popülist çevrelerce esir alındığını görüyoruz. Kıta genelinde yükselen ayrımcı ve dışlayıcı akımlar sadece Avrupa’nın iç barışını değil, geleceğini ve umut olma potansiyelini de tehdit ediyor.

Western democracies but also in India, Venezuela, Thailand, the Philippines and even Turkey in the last years (Kaliber & Kaliber, 2019, p. 3).

Apart from inefficient immigration policies, lack of actions regarding the Syrian crisis, rising racism, xenophobia, Islamophobia, and, right-wing nationalism and populism, the support for terrorism has also been constructed as one of the causes for the ‘uncertain’ future of the EU:

“European countries should know well that they prepare their own end with their own hands. They should know that; terrorist organizations, they treat with honor today because they cause trouble to Turkey, will eventually turn their hatred and barrel to them. This is the nature of terrorism; it will definitely bite the hand that feeds it one day”²¹ (AK Party Group Meeting, 10 April 2018).

Here, the EU’s identity as ‘a safe haven for terrorists’ as opposed to Turkey’s identity as ‘a fighter against terrorists’ has been discursively constructed once again as analyzed in chapter 5.2; however, the main focus of the speech is not these identity formulations but possible consequences it will cause to the EU. Through “perspectivation strategy”, Erdoğan expressed perspective on the EU’s future as “an entity moving forward to the end”, which made Turkey’s de-Europeanization process more reasonable and logical.

5.5 The EU as an Unwelcomed Penetrator in Turkish Politics

In other cases, the EU has been constructed as “an unwelcomed penetrator in domestic politics of Turkey” in Erdoğan’s discourse. The EU has always been the subject of criticisms on the ground of its interference with domestic politics in Turkey throughout the years;

²¹ Ama Avrupa ülkeleri şunu iyi bilsinler ki; kendi sonlarını kendi elleriyle hazırlıyorlar. Bugün Türkiye’nin başına musallat olduğu için el üstünde tuttıkları terör örgütleri eninde-sonunda nefretlerini ve namlularını onlara çevirecekler, bunu da iyi bilsinler. Terörizmin doğası budur, kendisini besleyen eli gün gelir mutlaka ısırır.

however, this representation of the EU has become more prevalent in 2019 when discussing local elections and re-run of Istanbul mayoral election:

“I suppose there is no one who did not realize that there is no ordinary election in Turkey, and the whole world keeps an eye on us. If everyone from Europe to America has mobilized for a mayoral election, it is our right to look for other things behind it. Why are Europe and America so interested in the Istanbul election, although they are not concerned with the election of Trump despite his receiving less than 3 million votes in America? Why are they not interested in the presidential election in Austria that was canceled after 2 years? Or, you have probably followed it recently, the election was canceled in Belgium just like Austria. Why is nobody interested in Belgium? Have you heard such an interest from neither my country nor Europe? No.”²² (Ifar Program with AK Party Deputies, 13 May 2019).

“Remember! You have noticed how the West and different countries of Europe enjoy themselves because they thought that a certain person won the election on March 31, right? Did we still not understand what's behind this business? Didn't we understand what was going on?”²³ (Ifar Program in Üsküdar, 31 May 2019).

At the time these speeches were delivered, the main agenda in Turkish politics was the re-run of the Istanbul mayoral election. On 31 March 2019, local elections were held in Turkey that resulted in the AKP's loss of control of the municipal government in the capital city of Ankara and Istanbul. Then, a new wave of arguments took place in Turkey regarding the results of the

²² Türkiye’de hiçbir seçimin sıradan bir seçim olmadığını, tüm dünyanın gözünün üzerimizde olduğunu fark etmeyen herhalde yoktur. Bir belediye başkanlığı seçimi için Avrupa’sından Amerika’sına herkes seferber olmuşsa, bunun arkasında başka şeyler aramak değerli kardeşlerim herhalde hakkımızdır. Ya niçin Avrupa, niçin Amerika İstanbul seçimiyle bu kadar ilgileniyor da, Amerika’da 3 milyon az oy almasına rağmen Trump’ın seçilmesiyle ilgilenmiyor? Veya Avusturya’da 2 yıl sonra bir seçim, Cumhurbaşkanlığı seçimi iptal ediyor da niçin acaba onunla ilgilenmiyorlar? Veya geçenlerde işte herhalde takip etmişsinizdir, Belçika’da yine aynı şekilde bir seçimin iptali yapılıyor, niçin acaba Belçika’yla kimse ilgilenmiyor? Ne ülkemden, ne Avrupa’dan böyle bir ilgilenmeyi duydunuz mu? Yok.

²³ Unutmayın, 31 Mart’ta Batı, Avrupa’nın değişik ülkeleri kazandı diye zannettikleri isim için nasıl eğlendiklerini gördünüz değil mi? Bu işin arkasında nelerin olduğunu hala anlamadık mı? Nelerin döndüğünü anlamadık mı?

Istanbul mayoral election, which the CHP's candidate Ekrem İmamoğlu won by just 14 thousand votes. There were several accusations by the AKP, including irregularities, stolen votes, unofficial ballot box-watchers, and so on. So, after several investigations and police operations, the election board decided to re-run the Istanbul mayoral election on 6 May 2019. According to their decision, the new election was scheduled to take place on 23 June 2019. Thus, a new election campaign has started, which witnessed a tug of war between AKP's candidate Binali Yıldırım and CHP's candidate Ekrem İmamoğlu. A narrative of victimization has been used by both sides to evoke their voters during the election campaign (The Guardian, 2019). The AKP utilized the victimization discourse by asserting that the opposition party cheated in order to win in the earlier election (The Guardian, 2019). On the other hand, the opposition party's victimization derived from their assertions that İmamoğlu's victory was stolen by the AKP and the electoral board that is under political pressure (The Guardian, 2019).

These speeches were given in the immediate aftermath of the election board's decision to renew the elections in Istanbul. Both America and Europe have been criticized for their unnecessary and unwanted intrusion into Turkish domestic politics through implications that they are the external enemies that cooperate with internal enemies- that is, the opposition party and its political figures in this case. Here, the construction of external enemies served the main function of discrediting domestic political opposition in Turkey. In doing so, Erdoğan created an image for the opposition candidate as someone who collaborates with Turkey's the external enemies. So, the opposition party has been constructed as 'the other' of Turkey rather than a part of its identity. That is to say, the opposition party and its political figures were not perceived as the part of self, but of the other. Actually, this is common in populist rhetoric through which the opposition is constructed as "the domestic collaborator of the hostile powers abroad, most notably the West and Europe" (Kaliber & Kaliber, 2019, p. 11).

In the first speech, the “topos of comparison” was used to demonstrate the difference between the West’s attitudes in case of elections in different countries and the one in Turkey. At the end of the passage, a question, which has a clear answer, was asked to the audience to strengthen the image of the West as an external enemy of Turkey that intrudes into domestic politics whenever it wants. Again, at the end of the second speech, the cooperation between the Western powers and the opposition party in Turkey was implied through “argumentation strategy of *petitio principii*”, which is also known as “begging the question” or “circular argument”. This strategy is preferred in a situation where “what is controversial and in question, and has to be proved, is presupposed as the starting point of argumentation” (Aydın-Düzgit, 2016; Reisigl & Wodak, 2001). By asking for confirmation from the public on whether they have noticed Europe’s delightfulness over İmamoğlu’s supposed victory, Erdoğan pointed out Europe’s controversial and suspicious position.

In other statements, the EU institutions, especially the European Parliament, were in the line of fire due to their numerous interventions regarding Turkey’s policies:

“Now I am calling out to the people watching us in front of their television screens today: they should not worry! In the European Parliament, we will be asked to stop the operation concerning Afrin and so on... The lady who is responsible for the enlargement policy made such a request. Do not desire in vain; we won't get out of there until our work is done, you know that. Turkey is not a scapegoat. It is a country that acts with its own will, so we will finish our business there. 3.5 million Syrian brothers are now being hosted in my country. Hey European Parliament, what burden did you take from me here and get up and say that now? There are no words that the European Parliament can say to Turkey, and all these words they said go in at one ear and out

the other”²⁴ (‘High School Students Write About the Victory’ Essay, Story and Poem Writing Competition Award Ceremony, 15 March 2018).

As has been pointed out, the speech was delivered while Operation Olive Branch in the Afrin District of Syrian was conducted by the Turkish Armed Forces. Three days before this speech, on 12 March 2018, the EP has drafted a joint motion calling Turkey to withdraw its forces from the Afrin region. The voting for the approval was set to happen on 15 March 2018. Erdoğan made this speech on the voting day before the voting took place in the parliament. Later that day, the EP has approved the motion.

Here, Erdoğan made it clear that the EP has no right to intervene in Turkish politics and tell Turkey what to do by claiming that Turkey is not a scapegoat. Thus, the EP’s identity has been discursively constructed as ‘an unwelcomed penetrator in Turkish politics’ as opposed to Turkey’s identity as ‘a country who acts with its own free will’. In order to lend credence to this identity formation, the “topos of numbers” was used to show Turkey’s ability to effectively host and deal with a great number of refugees. Further to that, “the topos of burdening or weighing down” was employed to naturalize and legitimize the military operation in Afrin. This type of topos is considered as “specific causal topos (a topos of consequence)”, which suggests that “if a person, an institution or a country is burdened by specific problems, one should act in order to diminish these burdens” (Wodak & Meyer, 2001). In the excerpt above, a connection between the military operation in Afrin and Turkey’s burden of hosting the refugees was established. That is to say, Erdoğan discursively constructed the reason behind the military

²⁴ Şimdi bugün ekranları başında bizi izleyen milletime de sesleniyorum, hiç endişe etmesinler; Avrupa Parlamentosunda Afrin’le alakalı olarak bizim oradaki harekâtı durdurmamız istenecekmiş, isteniyormuş vesaire... Genişlemeden Sorumlu bayan var bir tane, o da böyle arzuda bulunmuş. Boşuna heveslenmeyin, işimiz bitmedikçe oradan çıkmayacağız, bunu bilirsiniz. Türkiye bir şamar oğlanı değildir, kendi iradesini kullanabilen bir ülkedir, dolayısıyla orada işimiz bitecek. 3,5 milyon Suriyeli kardeşim benim ülkemde şu anda misafir ediliyor. Ey Avrupa Parlamentosu, sen burada benden hangi yükü aldın da kalkıp şimdi bunu söylüyorsun? Türkiye’ye Avrupa Parlamentosunun söyleyebileceği hiçbir söz yoktur ve bu sözlerin hepsi de bizim bir kulağımızdan girer öbüründen çıkar.

operation as the burden of hosting too many refugees in his country and the lack of Europe's assistance in this issue. Europe was identified as 'unhelpful', 'ignorant', 'useless' and 'uninformed' about the situation in Syria and its consequences for Turkey through the rhetorical question directed to people, also known as "question begging for an answer". Besides, the message transmitted to the domestic and international audience was that the EU does not have the right to interfere with Turkish politics, and the EP's decision does not have any power on Turkey, demonstrating the weakening of the EU's impact in Turkey. There were also other statements related to Gezi events and the failed coup attempt that the EU's unwelcomed intrusion is the subject of criticism in Erdoğan's narrative in the last five years; however, they are not included in the analysis due to adequateness of the examples given above.

5.6 The EU as an Institution Economically and Democratically Inferior to Turkey

Last but not least, there are many speeches and statements of Erdoğan in the last five years that made a comparison between Turkey and the EU/Europe in terms of economic and democratic values to show the superiority of Turkey in these areas. In economic terms, numerical calculations and figures were used to form an equivalence in favor of Turkey. In democratic aspects, on the other hand, Turkey and the EU have been compared concerning democratic rights and human rights, which Turkey always seems to precede.

The negative representation of the EU/Europe in economic terms began to be observed in Erdoğan's discourse with the effect of the global financial crisis in 2008. Even during the last five years, Erdoğan still utilized the argument of dealing with crisis better than all European countries. For instance, on 9 May 2015, he said that "We are a country that walked away from the global financial crisis in 2008, which has taken the world by storm and affects the EU badly,

with minor damages”²⁵. However, there are also other contexts in which the EU/Europe was constructed as economically inferior to Turkey:

“One of the most important indicators of last year for Turkey is our exports. Unfortunately, our exports fell by 8.7 percent. But again, the world export volume decreased by 11 percent last year. Thus, the situation in Turkey is much better than Europe”²⁶ (Turkish Capital Markets Summit, 4 November 2016).

We ranked first in G-20 and second in OECD countries with a 7.4 percent growth rate we achieved last year. Turkey was not among the G-20 countries in the past, but now we are one of them. Considering that the EU’s average is 2.4 percent, Turkey’s success in achieving this growth rate will be better understood”²⁷ (Global Entrepreneurship Congress, 16 April 2018).

“Although there has been a slight increase in our public borrowing rate due to the increase in the exchange rate and interest rates, we are still in a very good condition according to the European Union criteria. In other words, when you look at the Maastricht Criteria, we are much stronger than all member states of the European Union, we are in a very, very good position”²⁸ (Extended Provincial Heads Meeting, 20 November 2019).

Each of the three statements above was delivered in different years; nevertheless, they show similar narratives concerning Turkey’s economic standards as opposed to the EU/Europe. In all three texts, a comparison is made between Turkey and the EU/Europe/European member

²⁵ Bugün dünyayı kasıp kavuran ve Avrupa Birliği’nin hala etkilerinden kurtulamadığı 2008 küresel finansal krizini en az zararlarla atlattığımız bir ülkeyiz.

²⁶ Türkiye için geride bıraktığımız yılın en önemli göstergelerinden biri ihracattır. İhracatımız maalesef yüzde 8.7 gerilemiştir. Ama yine geçen yıl dünya ihracat hacmi yüzde 11 daralmıştır. Dolayısıyla Türkiye’nin durumu, özellikle de Avrupa’dan çok daha iyidir.

²⁷ Geçtiğimiz yıl elde ettiğimiz yüzde 7,4 büyüme oranıyla G-20’de birinci, OECD ülkeleri arasında ikinci sırada yer aldık. Türkiye geçmişte G-20 ülkeleri arasında yer alan bir ülke değildi; ama şimdi biz G-20 ülkeleri arasında yer alıyoruz. Avrupa Birliği ortalamasının yüzde 2,4 olduğu dikkate alındığında, Türkiye’nin büyüme başarısı daha da iyi anlaşılacaktır.

²⁸ Döviz kurundaki ve faizlerdeki yükselme sebebiyle kamu borçlanma oranımızda bir parça artış yaşanmışsa da hala Avrupa Birliği kriterlerine göre çok iyi bir durumdayız. Yani şöyle Maastricht Kriterlerine baktığınızda biz Avrupa Birliği üyesi ülkelerin hepsinden çok çok güçlüyüz, çok çok iyi konumdayız.

states through the “topos of numbers”. Numbers were given in order to increase the credibility of Erdoğan’s assertions regarding Turkey’s economic superiority against the EU. In the second excerpt, a binary opposition is constructed between ‘the old Turkey’ who was not a member of G-20 and ‘the new Turkey’ who is in G-20. By establishing this dichotomy, the previous governments were negatively represented as ‘unsuccessful’ and ‘ineffective’, whereas the AKP’s governments were depicted as ‘successful’, ‘superior’, and ‘effective’ in dealing with the economy. On the other hand, despite sharp criticism and defamation against the EU, all three excerpts show that the EU was still taken as a reference point in setting the economic standards of Turkey. The mention of the EU and Maastricht Criteria can be regarded as the demonstration of Turkey’s commitment to comply with the EU’s standards in the economic sense.

In democratic terms, on the other hand, it is common to see negative criticisms against the EU/Europe in the matter of democratic values and human rights:

“In fact, there is no smallest reason for excusing anyone in our country for resorting to terrorist methods to seek their rights. Certainly, the tolerance and diversity of the paths for searching one's democratic rights in Turkey could not be found even in European countries. They call it Europe, but it is all a story... You cannot find that tolerance in any of them. We know very well that how strict and vulgar those who criticize us for our fight against terrorism today can be in the face of the smallest threat to them”²⁹ (32nd Mukhtars Local Administrators Meeting, 14 December 2016).

²⁹ Esasen ülkemizdeki hiçbir kesimin, hiçbir kişinin hakkını aramak için terör yöntemlerine başvurmasını mazur kılacak en küçük bir sebep yoktur. Türkiye’deki demokratik hak arama yollarının çeşitliliğini ve toleransını emin olun Avrupa ülkelerinde dahi bulamazsınız. Hani Avrupa Avrupa diyorlar ya, hikâye... Bu toleransı hiçbirinde bulamazsınız. Bugün terörle mücadelemiz için bizi eleştirenlerin kendilerine yönelik en küçük bir tehdit karşısında ne kadar katı ve hoyrat olabildiklerini biz çok iyi biliyoruz.

This speech was delivered four days after two bombings in Beşiktaş municipality of Istanbul that killed 48 people. Besides, just five months have passed after the failed coup attempt on 15 July 2016 and approximately four months after the beginning of Operation Euphrates Shield on 24 August 2016. Thus, the main agenda of Turkey was the fight against terrorist groups such as FETÖ, PKK, and Daesh at that time. Erdoğan here established an equivalence between Turkey and the European countries in terms of democratic rights provided to their people. Turkey was portrayed as more ‘tolerant’, ‘liberal’, and ‘egalitarian’ than European countries claiming to possess these characteristics. Turkey’s actions against terrorism, on the other hand, were justified through the “topos of danger/threat”, which indicates that if there are specific dangers and threats, something should be done.

There are also other cases when the West and Europe have been subject to criticism on the grounds of their human rights practices:

“Our ancestors, from Ahmet Yesevi to Yunus Emre, from Mevlana to Hacı Beştaş-ı Veli, stand out with their advice that shed light on the whole humanity. In this regard, the principles of human rights in the world are not unknown or foreign to us. The greatest struggles on human rights have arisen in places where the greatest persecutions have been made if you pay attention. For example, the West’s history, from America to Europe, is filled with the most severe human rights violations. Those who criticize our country's legitimate right to fight terrorism by putting human rights forward have all sorts of embarrassing disgraces from genocide to colonialism. On the contrary, we have no such shame in the past”³⁰ (Youth Conference titled “Every Person is World”, 10 December 2019).

³⁰ Ahmet Yesevi’den Yunus Emre’ye, Hazreti Mevlana’dan Hacı Beştaş-ı Veli’ye kadar ecdadımız da bu konuda tüm insanlığa ışık tutan tavsiyeleriyle öne çıkmaktadır. Bu bakımdan dünyadaki insan hakları talepleri aslında bize uzak veya yabancı değildir. Dikkat ederseniz, bu konudaki en büyük mücadeleler insana en büyük zulümlerin yapıldığı yerlerde çıkmıştır. Mesela Amerika’sından Avrupa’sına kadar bugünkü Batının, geçmişi en ağır insan hakları ihlalleriyle doludur. Ülkemizin meşru terörle mücadele hakkını insan hakları başlığı altında eleştirenlerin geçmişlerinde soykırımdan sömürgeye kadar her türlü utanç verici leke mevcuttur, tam tersine bizim geçmişte, bugün de böyle bir ayıbımız yoktur.

In the excerpt above, the binary use of ‘we’ and ‘they’ in implying Turkey and the West put these two entities against each other once again. Erdoğan drew a clear line between Turkey’s permissive identity and the West’s brutal identity through the “topos of history”. By mentioning old Turkish Islamic scholars’ names, Erdoğan has compared the “essentially different and morally higher Islamic” self with the inherently inferior and threatening Western other (Alaranta, 2015, p. 31; Kaliber & Kaliber, 2019, p. 2). As a matter of fact, it is common among politicians to use the historical figures and accounts in their rhetoric in order to show their own historical importance and their loyalty to national tradition (Clark, 2010; Palabiyik, 2018). So, it is not surprising that Erdoğan drew a correspondence between the doctrines of significant Turkish historical figures- whose teachings advise toleration, justice, equity, solidarity and cooperation to people- and the prevailing principles of human rights in today’s world in order to validate its views on the democratic superiority of Turkey. By doing so, he referred that respecting human rights is not a new phenomenon for Turkey, unlike the West, whose past is full of human rights violations, especially during the colonial period and World War II.

5.7 Conclusion

The examination of the official statements of Turkish President Erdoğan in the time period of 2015-2020 shows that the apparent divergence between Turkey and the EU and the de-Europeanization process in Turkey has been catalyzed by the negative discursive articulations of the EU, Europe, European member states and the West by the political leader in power. While looking at 179 speeches that mentioned the EU/Europe/West in one way or another, one can observe that the EU has lost its power as a normative and political context in Turkish politics due to its construction as an unfavorable entity through Erdoğan’s rhetoric. Except for 28 speeches that can relatively be regarded as positive, all other speeches portrayed the EU/Europe/West in a negative way. There are still a considerable number of speeches which the EU/Europe was taken as “a reference point in the domestic setting and national public

debates” (Aydın-Düzgit, 2016) especially in the area of the economy; however, even when this is the case, they were referred to show Turkey’s compatibility and superiority.

In the last five years, there were several speeches that Erdoğan clearly said that “We are implementing the reforms not because the EU wants us to, but because our nation needs it” (Daily Sabah, 2019b). The discourse of “changing the name of Copenhagen criteria to Ankara criteria” was also still prevalent in this period (Daily Sabah, 2019a). These types of speeches which explicitly demonstrate the weakening of the EU’s normative power in Turkey served as evidence that the EU is not regarded as the legitimate cause of reforms and developments anymore (Aydın-Düzgit & Kaliber, 2016). Therefore, it can be asserted that the analysis of Erdoğan’s speeches in the period between 2015 and 2020 provides substantial evidence that the de-Europeanization process in Turkey has become more evident in the last five years. Furthermore, the discourse of Erdoğan played a crucial role in normalizing and justifying the de-Europeanization in the country.

As mentioned in the literature review, the domestic actors’ actions and discourses are as important as the European level governance, politics, and institutions in creating Europeanization and de-Europeanization process in a country. Kaliber argues that “Domestic actors are not mediators, but creators of Europeanization” (Kaliber, 2013); therefore, they can determine their own path to Europeanization as well as de-Europeanization. Thus, as the most influential domestic actor in Turkish politics, Erdoğan’s way of constructing the image of the EU/Europe/West in the eyes of the public through his statements had a significant impact on Turkey’s de-Europeanization process. In contrast to the construction of the EU/Europe/West’s identity as ‘hypocritical and Janus faced, ‘exclusionary and unfair’, ‘Islamophobic and racist’, ‘crisis-ridden, ‘unwelcomed penetrator’ and ‘democratically and economically inferior’, Turkey was always represented as having the opposite qualities (which are always positive) in Erdoğan’s discourse. Hence, Turkey and the EU/Europe/West were portrayed as two opposite

entities that are unlikely to reconcile in the near future despite Erdoğan's occasional claims that the full membership is still the strategic goal of Turkey.

It can also be said that Erdoğan's discourse has been significantly affected both by the external and internal circumstances that changed the course of Turkey-EU relations. Among all situations, the refugee crisis took the lead in changing the direction of relations and the Europeanization process in Turkey through its effect on the discourse of Erdoğan about the EU/Europe/West. Since the refugee flow presented Turkey with a new role to play in Europe, the discourse of Erdoğan revolved around the comparisons of Turkey and the EU in dealing with the crisis by which the EU was consistently constructed as 'hypocritical', 'exclusionary', 'racist', 'Islamophobic' and so on. The severity of Erdoğan's criticisms against the EU has also increased after the failed coup attempt on 15 July 2016. Since then, The EU/Europe/West were frequently identified as "inimical other of Turkey threatening its sovereignty and territorial integrity" due to their attitude in the aftermath of the coup attempt (Kaliber & Kaliber, 2019). In Erdoğan's discourse, the EU/Europe/West have been continuously criticized for being 'Janus-faced' for supporting the members of the terrorist organization who escaped to Europe after the coup attempt.

The military operations in Syria have also been one of the most critical matters which shaped Erdoğan's discourse against the EU/Europe/West. As mentioned before, when reforms and policy choices are not in line with the normative and political context of the EU/Europe, it can be said that de-Europeanization is taking place in a country (Aydın-Düzgüt & Kaliber, 2016, p. 6). Thus, the shift from soft power to hard power can also be regarded as a sign of de-Europeanization in a country due to the fact that the EU promotes soft power rather than hard power in foreign policy (Müftüler-Baç & Gürsoy, 2010). Rising military operations in spite of the EU's backlashes proves our argument that de-Europeanization is prevalent in Turkey, and

normalization and justification of these operations in Erdoğan's discourse demonstrate that he is a pivotal actor in enabling de-Europeanization in Turkey.

These types of issues that were commonly utilized in constructing the EU/Europe's identity negatively in Erdoğan's discourse also increased the skepticism, distrust, and indifference among the society against the EU, which paved the way for de-Europeanization process in Turkey. Furthermore, since almost all speeches of Erdoğan are broadcasted live on television, his discourse easily resonated with the public. Thereby, the society acknowledged and internalized the de-Europeanized discourse of Erdoğan, which made the de-Europeanization process in Turkey more likely and uncontested.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I addressed the question of “How and to what extent the weakening impact of the EU as a normative and political context in Turkey is normalized and justified through the discursive articulations of the EU/Europe/West in the discourse of political leader in power between 2015 and 2020?”. To answer this question, I focused on the last five years, which is arguably the most complicated time for Turkey-EU relations, given the fact that the future of relations was always on shaky ground during this period.

As mentioned above, Turkey’s EU journey is a long story; however, it is the last two decades that we can observe the significant transformations in the course of relations. In the early years of the 2000s, Turkey has undergone a process of Europeanization with continuous reforms implemented in several areas such as democratization, human rights, judiciary, military, and so on. The decision of the EU to recognize Turkey’s candidacy triggered a new wave of transformation in the country both in action and in discourse. In the period after 1999, Turkish governments started to use the EU/Europe increasingly as a reference point in governance-related reforms (Aydın-Düzgüt & Kaliber, 2016). Societal actors have also resorted to the European norms and values as an anchor for political change and modernization taking place in the country (Aydın-Düzgüt & Kaliber, 2016). Yet, this era that is labeled as “golden age of Europeanization” lasted only for a while until the formal beginning of accession negotiations (Öniş & Yılmaz, 2009a). From that day forward, the relations have begun to deteriorate day by day. Political leaders, most particularly Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who has increasingly become the sole authority that determine the foreign policy agenda in Turkey, have also enabled the deteriorating relationship with his preferred discourse on the EU, Europe, and the West. So, in the post-2005, Europeanization has begun to lose its momentum in Turkey. It can still be argued that limited Europeanization, selective Europeanization or loose

Europeanization exists in Turkey after 2005 with certain reforms implemented in some policy areas; however, the extent and scope of reforms related to the EU accession process have decreased dramatically (Aydın-Düzgit & Kaliber, 2016; Öniş, 2010; Öniş & Yılmaz, 2009a; G. Yılmaz, 2016b).

The transformation from Europeanization to de-Europeanization in Turkey dated back to the late 2000s. Several scholars argue that de-Europeanization became evident in the post-2007 that corresponds to the time after the third election victory of the AKP government (Aydın-Düzgit & Kaliber, 2016). On the other hand, others assert that the phase of de-Europeanization in Turkey started in the early 2010s and still prevalent in the country (G. Yılmaz, 2016b). When we look at the political choices and discourse of the political leader in power, it is evident that the trend of de-Europeanization in Turkey is still rampant in 2020, along with Anti-Westernism that started to become more and more apparent.

The actions and discourse of President Erdoğan in the last five years demonstrate that the ruling party acted as “the sole democratizing or pro-reform actor in the domestic arena” with minimal or largely negative reference to the EU/Europe (Aydın-Düzgit & Kaliber, 2016; G. Yılmaz, 2016b). In this regard, President Erdoğan presented the reforms undertaken in the last years as the government’s service for the sake of the Turkish public. Hence, he stressed that these reforms were implemented without the contribution and enforcement of any other political actor or institution like the EU. Among the speeches this thesis analyzed, it is common to see that Erdoğan presented the reforms as “the rights and needs of Turkish citizen” rather than the criteria of the EU, which validates our argument that de-Europeanization that can be defined as “loss or weakening of the EU/Europe as a normative/political context and as a reference point in domestic settings and public debates” is indeed prevalent in Turkey (Aydın-Düzgit & Kaliber, 2016).

In contrast with earlier periods, the negative articulations of the EU/Europe and the West increased significantly in the discourse of Erdoğan in the last five years. Among 604 speeches delivered, 179 speeches mentioned the EU, Europe, or the West, and 151 referred to them negatively. These statements were also effective in shaping the public views on the EU/Europe/West because of the fact that they were conveyed to the society through various channels of communication from traditional media to social media, leading to the continuous re-articulation of President Erdoğan's discourse in different settings where exposure to a broader audience is inevitable. Thus, increasing skepticism, distrust, and indifference among the society was ignited by the negative discursive constructions of the EU/Europe/West's identity. In the fall 2016, only 28 percent of population supported the idea of EU membership in Turkey, which constitutes a great decline comparing with 75 percent in 2004 (European Commission, 2016a). So, the de-Europeanization process has become less challenging in the absence of domestic public support for Europeanization reforms in the last five years.

On the other hand, constructing the opposition between the EU/Europe/West and Turkey with the help of binary use of 'we' and 'they' helped Erdoğan to normalize and justify his actions and policy choices that are in contrast with the EU's expectations and demands. It is found that similar discursive patterns were repeated under different circumstances through which Erdoğan reproduced his discourse towards or in relation to the EU/Europe/West. Through the portrayal of the EU as 'hypocritical', 'Janus-faced', 'exclusionary', 'unfair', 'racist', 'Islamophobic', 'crisis-ridden', 'unwelcomed penetrator', and 'democratically and economically inferior' in different occurrences, the incompatibility and discrepancy with the EU has been emphasized again and again. The repeated predication of the EU as a problematic entity also served the purpose of constructing the public views in line with the discourse of Erdoğan, which makes it easier for him to naturalize and justify a de-Europeanized approach towards the EU/Europe and the West.

In light of these, this study contributes to the abovementioned Europeanization and de-Europeanization literature through a qualitative study based on the critical discourse analysis of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's statements in the last five years. As a matter of fact, there were previous studies that analyzed Erdoğan's discourse in the earlier years; however, this thesis differs from them in the sense that it focused on the period between 2015 and 2020, which is arguably the most complicated term for Turkey-EU relations up to now. It is also the most suitable era for observing the de-Europeanization through President Erdoğan's discourse due to the escalation in the density of harsh criticisms and inflammatory speeches regarding the EU/Europe/West. Moreover, the period also corresponds with the time Turkey has governed singlehandedly under the presidency of Erdoğan. Since the election of Erdoğan as the president in 2014, his position as a predominant and hegemonic leader enhanced with the disappearance of structural domestic and international constraints, which made his speeches the reflection of state authority (Bashirov & Lancaster, 2018).

This study shows that de-Europeanization in Turkey was normalized and justified by the negative discursive constructions of the EU/Europe/West in the narrative of President Erdoğan. Although the full membership to the EU was still declared as a strategic goal of Turkey from time to time, the EU was always blamed for blocking the road to the EU membership. On the other hand, there was always a counterstatement asserting that "Turkey does not need the EU" after every statement expressing the strategic goal of membership.

Such a stance illustrates that the EU's legitimacy has lost its appeal both for the political leaders and the public. The AKP does not need the EU for its survival anymore; that is why the domestic agenda and other foreign policy incentives are much more effective in deciding the roadmap of Turkey in this period. In Erdoğan's discourse, it is apparent that the EU was not perceived as an actor who is capable of determining Turkey's policy preferences, actions, and reform process anymore. Erdoğan's statements towards the EU institutions such as "Whatever

report you prepare, the owners of our report are here. The reports prepared by Hans and George do not bind us. Only the ones that are prepared by Ahmet, Mehmet, Ayşe, and Fatma bind us”³¹ can also be considered as evidence for this fact. The actions taken despite the severe criticisms and warnings by the European countries and institutions proved that the EU had lost its ground as the primary reference point in domestic settings and national public debates.

To conclude, it seems like de-Europeanization will continue to be the dominant phenomenon in Turkey as well in the following years since there is no sign for change in the actions and discourses of Turkish politicians regarding the relations between Turkey and the EU. This thesis aimed to assess the relations between Turkey and the EU between 2015 and 2020 through the lens of de-Europeanization that was normalized and justified via discursive articulations of the EU/Europe/West in President Erdoğan’s discourse. While analyzing official speeches and statements of President Erdoğan, it is proposed that his discourse on the EU/Europe/West enabled and naturalized the de-Europeanization process since 2015. However, it is accepted that not including other domestic political actors’ discourse puts some limitations on the analysis. This study preferred to analyze the statements of President Erdoğan due to his dominant and pivotal role in determining the policy choices of Turkey and saying the final word in most political matters in the determined time. The abundance of statements related to the EU/Europe/West in the official website of the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey was also effective in preferring to limit the database to President Erdoğan’s discourse. Nevertheless, the analysis can be further strengthened by looking at the discourse of other important domestic actors in Turkey. Besides, one should look at the time period after 2020 to see the further examples of discursive articulations of the EU/Europe/West in Erdoğan and other domestic actors’ discourse in order to understand the future of the de-Europeanization process in Turkey.

³¹ Ne raporu hazırlarsanız hazırlayın, bizim raporumuzun sahipleri buradadır. Hans’ın, George’un, şunun-bunun hazırladığı raporlar bizi bağlamaz. Bizi Ahmet’in, Mehmet’in, Ayşe’nin, Fatma’nın hazırlığı raporlar bağlar; olay budur.

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