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**THE ROLE OF EUROPEAN UNION
AND BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION
IN THE CONSTRUCTION
OF STATE IDENTITIES:
CASES OF UKRAINE AND TURKEY**

Introduction

In the post-2001 world substantial revision of state identities and interests took place. This revision resulted with an emphasis on international organizations' function against global security challenges. This study focuses on Black Sea Region and takes it as a problematic space where economic and political ambivalencies exist. The crisis spots in the Balkans, and in the Caucasus, ethnic animosities, economic crises, environmental problems, military armaments qualify the region as an instable part of the world. Besides these, with increasing energy dependency of world economies and increasing energy bills, the existence of significant oil and gas reserves and transit routes in the region underlines the necessity of stability in the region. Such challenges made regional cooperation an unavoidable requirement. Therefore, functioning of international organizations, as generators and diffusers of international rules of conduct, appear crucial for the establishment of peaceful environment in which states would interact.

This study focuses on the activity of European Union (EU) and Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC) in the Black Sea Region, and places its argumentation on their capacity to create norms, and their ability to diffuse created norms to regional states — in our study to Turkey and Ukraine. In this effort study subscribes to constructivist approach vis-

a-vis international organizations¹. From constructivist point of view, agents of international relations interact in a social environment in which material conditions are socially constituted. Therefore, meanings and interpretations about the material world are constructed in a process of continuous interaction of agents and structures. Based on this approach it is possible to define international organizations as sources of social meanings, norms which continuously involve in shaping of interests, values and identities of agents. Exploration of levels of norm diffusion and levels of norm adoption is central to the effort of understanding state reactions to regional challenges.

This study first observes place of Turkey and Ukraine in world politics with a reflection on past processes of regional norm constructions and diffusions. Second part evaluates on EU's norm diffusion tools and the recent level of norm adoption in the cases of Turkey and Ukraine. Last part focuses on BSEC as an alternative norm diffusing regional organization and evaluates on the ability of norm adoption in the cases of Turkey and Ukraine.

Turkey and Ukraine in the Black Sea Region

Clarifying positioning of Turkey and Ukraine, especially vis-a-vis the processes of norm constructions and diffusions is essential to the understanding of the nature of states' current interaction in the region. This effort is important as the post-Cold War Black Sea region offers historically unique setting of states with unique qualities/capacities to influence and shape the character of the region.

Historically, the competition to dominate Black Sea stood at the center policy pillar of the regional big powers. Through these accounts of past the region has been dominated for centuries only by big powers. The dominance and control of the Byzantine, Ottoman and Russian empires constructed

¹ For scholarly debate on this approach see, Desler, D., What's at Stake in the Agent Structure Debate, *International Organization*, Vol. 43, 1989, pp. 441–473; Onuf, K., and Frank Klink, Activity, Authority, Rule, *International Studies Quarterly*, 1989, Vol. 33, pp. 149–174; Guzzini, S., A Reconstruction of Constructivism in International Relations, *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 6, 2000, p. 147; Newman, E., Human Security and Constructivism, *International Studies Perspectives*, Vol. 2, 2001, pp. 239–251; Lezaun, J., Limiting the Social: Constructivism and Social Knowledge in International Relations, *International Studies Review*, Vol. 4, Issue. 3, 2002, p. 230; Wendt, A., Levels of Analysis vs. Agents and Structures: Part III, *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 18, 1992, p. 183. For counter argumentation see, Barkin, J., S., Realist Constructivism, *International Studies Review*, Vol. 5, 2003, pp. 325–342.

norms, values, identities and interests for the units of the region. Based on these values and identities provided by empires the agents of Black Sea region defined itself against the rest of the surrounding units and structures. In a similar vein the Soviet Union and its East European periphery surrounded the Black Sea, except for Turkey and Greece, and Soviet Union-centered constructive forces and processes have provided norms, values, identities and interests to the large part of the region. In any of the mentioned time contexts, constructive forces — which were initiated and controlled by Rome, Byzantine, Ottoman, Russian Empires and the Soviet Union — have had an unifying and integrating effect on the parts that they controlled in the Black Sea region².

Currently, Turkey and Ukraine are interacting in a pluralist and disintegrated region, where no regional big power stands as a center of value, identity, rule and interest diffusion³. In this unique historical period of the Black Sea region the responsibility of defining norms, values and identities for the region is transferred to international organizations. Therefore, efficient establishment of “international rule of conducts” by of such organizations are dependent on both on organizations’ capacity to create norms and on individual states’ level of norm adoption. Reactions of Ukraine and Turkey to constructive processes, which are initiated by the EU and BSEC, is of utmost importance as these two are significant members of the region.

EU Norms in the Black Sea Region and Reactions from Turkey and Ukraine

EU has a complex and ambivalent relations with Turkey and Ukraine, and will likely to be so, however, these two countries has a great potential to contribute to EU’s norm-making and diffusing capacities. The EU, both as an international organization and pre-federal structure, influence state behaviours in various ways with the norms that it creates. These norms, no doubt, create results, directly or indirectly, for the neighbouring states. However, success of this effort is also dependent on the adoption of norms by relatively significant neighbouring actors, as these actors constitute a sample to follow for relatively insignificant neighbouring regional actors.

² For nationalization of state actors in the international system see, Rodney Bruce Hall, *National Collective Identity: Social Constructs and International Systems*, Columbia University Press, 1999, pp. 279–300.

³ For discussion on post-international political space see, Yale Ferguson and Richard Mansbach, *Remapping Global Politics: History’s Revenge and Future Shock*, Cambridge University Press, 2005, pp. 67–107.

The EU uses several mechanisms to influence peripheral state's behaviours. Membership conditionality is one of the most influential EU mechanism for norm-diffusion. In addition to that, and rather recently, the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) is used as a mechanism to diffuse EU originated norms to neighbouring states without a condition of membership⁴. Also, in the case of Black Sea Region, the EU has a region oriented policy which is known as "Black Sea Synergy"⁵. These tools work in various ways in the cases of Turkey and Ukraine, since the "two" has different positions and conditions vis-a-vis the EU. While both countries has a desire for full membership, currently Ukraine is in the framework of the ENP, and Turkey is in the framework of membership perspective.

In an effort to comprehend social contexts, which gives meanings to material conditions, it is also required to consider the external material conditions which in turn produced social construction of the EU's behaviour vis-a-vis its Black Sea periphery. The fact that the social environment of interaction changed from EU's point of view, especially with the aftermath of the Bulgaria's and Romania's accession and EU access to Black Sea, triggered a process of construction of meanings and eventual EU interests in the region. No doubt, this development re-determined the meaning, function and the content of the EU's norm diffusion tools mentioned earlier. Such tools are proved to be essential for Brussels, yet not successful, based on the region's quality as a transit way for the energy resources and the home for the instability and conflicts. Practically, based on the perception of problems, EU embarked especially on efforts to promote democracy and stability through cooperation programmes.

As to reactions from Turkey and Ukraine to EU norm diffusion, these two have their own continuously formulated state identities which determine their state interests and their responses in a given time period to norm diffusion of the EU. To observe the level of EU's norm diffusion it is essential to see how domestic environment provide basis for construction of state identity. Embodiment of interests, based on the formulation of identity, determine how a state reacts

⁴ See Communication from the Commission "Wider Europe — Neighbourhood Policy: a new Framework for Relations with our eastern and Southern Neighbours", 11 March 2003, COM(2003)104 final and Communication from the Commission "European Neighbourhood Policy-Strategy Paper", 12 May 2004, COM(2004)373 final.

⁵ For details see, Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, "Black Sea Synergy-A New Regional Cooperation Initiative", COM (2007), 169 Final, 11.04.2007.

to a norm system which it is engaged to through the international processes. Therefore, it is necessary to focus on how states define their goals and how they define themselves in relation to other states and norm diffusing organizations.

In Turkish case, in an effort to search for the level of Turkey's EU norm adoption took place, the period starting from 2002 is important as in this period the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi) largely determined the way Turkish identity was constructed vis-a-vis the EU. In this time period, the EU's level of norm-diffusing capacity over Turkey is highly dependent on the Turkey's domestic forces. The ongoing identity crisis affected, in a confusing manner, the way Turkey's interests embodied and determined limit to the the level of EU's norm diffusion⁶. From the EU aspect, the organization as an external actor strongly enforces its own position to achieve structural changes within Turkey and in any other country that it interacts. This approach naturally aims to create an effect on interests, beliefs and identities of the states that are involved in the interaction which turned out to be a quite a problematic issue with the Turkish government with a religious tendency.

Looking at certain landmarks of the EU-Turkey relations, the first period from 2002 to December 2004 marks an extensive Turkey's norm adoption which ended up with EU's decision to initiate membership negotiations with Turkey. In this two year period the way Turkish government formulated its approach to EU is dramatically different from the rest of their term in power. Especially after power consolidation after second term in government Justice and Development Party (JDP) fostered a confusing international image that is largely based on ongoing domestic discussion of Turkish identity. No doubt, the first two year period and EU adoption of EU norms were expected to provide political ground for JDP and its popular background. However, this extensive norm adoption period and further rapprochement with the EU policies did not produce internal change in Turkey that JDP expected. The expectation was essentially to achieve extensive freedom to open a discussion over the republican ideals and values, and reach a substantial change in these principles⁷. As that process failed to produce expected result for the Turkish

⁶ Identity crisis has its roots in the discussion of secularism and non-secularism. With the Justice and Development Party in power this discussion reached its ultimate levels at a point of domestic conflict in every level of society. Due to space limitations this study excludes further argumentation of internal identity crises that resulted from the mentioned discussion.

⁷ For further argumentation see, Gülnur Aybet, "Turkey and the EU After the First Year of Negotiations: Reconciling Internal and External Policy Challenges", Security Dialogue, SAGE Publications, Vol. 37, No. 4, pp. 529–549, 2006.

government, EU aspiration lost its domestic popularity, and as soon as Turkey went into domestic turbulence adoption of EU norms significantly slowed down⁸.

As to EU front, negotiations with Turkey triggered internal problems in the Union. There, also started a significant discussion which covered issues from religion to culture and to the processes of future EU-identity construction. That discussion had a reflection on EU's conceptualization of EU — Turkey relations. This conceptualization especially was marked by the special term “open-ended negotiations”⁹. Gradually turning into a determinant of membership negotiations the conceptualization openly signaled that the negotiations would not necessarily produce a Turkish membership in the EU. In Europeanizing process articulation of this “special term” and relevant approach limited EU's norm-diffusing capacity over disappointed Turkey. This approach was especially a disappointment for pro-European circles who largely constructed a domestic EU image which was displaying EU as a just and rule based platform free from historical, political, and religious prejudices¹⁰. No doubt, for anti-EU circles this was a ground breaking proof of EU's double standards and the fact that this conceptualization was first time articulated by EU bodies for an accessing country in EU's history gave anti-EU activists a stronger hand.

As to possibilities and potential in the future; with Turkish membership to the EU the panorama of the Black Sea region will no doubt substantially change. First, Turkey will find a platform in which it can define and construct itself as a regional leader enjoying EU backing. Turkey would more likely to draw an active regional image within the framework of ENP and contribute to diffusion of EU norms. On the other hand, Turkey's EU membership may likely to lead to a new definition of the Union with respect to new neighbourhood in the Middle East¹¹. This process has likelihood of leading to increase

⁸ See for more information about decreasing EU support in Turkey; *Sabah*, “Türkler'in AB Üyelğine Desteği Azaldı.”, 19.12.07 (Sabah Daily Newspaper, “Turks' support for the EU is decreased”).

⁹ See how the term was articulated at; IP/04/1180, “Commission recommends to start negotiations with Turkey under certain conditions”, Brussels, 6 October 2004, See http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/report_2004/.

¹⁰ Ortaylı brings forward detailed account of self and the other in the case of EU and Turkey; İlber Ortaylı, *Avrupa ve Biz, Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları*, 2007 (İlber Ortaylı, *Europe and Us*, Turkish İş Bank Cultural Press, 2007).

¹¹ See more details on Turkey's role in Middle East; “Türkiye-Avrupa Birliği-ABD İlişkileri Nereye Gidiyor?”, TEPAV-EPRI ve TOBB Ekonomi ve Teknoloji

in EU's normative power within the regions that Turkey has access. Such redefinitions of the "EU-self" and therefore "EU interests" would likely to face repercussions from Russia. Russia may possibly find itself in an external environment in which it is further alienated and challenged, especially, with diminished loss of regional domination. No doubt, a potential Europe with global power underpinnings will eventually lead to creation of counter-identities, norms and interests as a response from its periphery. However, the character of the counter-responses, either conflictual or peaceful, will be determined by the success of the EU's norm diffusion to the periphery.

Based on the current fact that Turkey-EU relations is troubled with slowed down norm diffusion and adoption a new phase, which provide basis for a shift in Turkish self-identification, is initiated. What extend this new identification will correspond to European norms and values is standing before us as a question. The fact that many negotiation chapters were already have been vetoed by the EU is a negative indicator that Turkish norm adoption process will be paralyzed. Doubtlessly, a discouraged Turkey is on the way may most likely to orient itself to alternative self-identifications with references to different social sources other than European ones. Until this last period under consideration, Turkey attempted with full determination to construct itself as a part of Europe. In the meantime Ankara suffered through EU's norm diffusion procedures which took place as one way norm exportation. Turkey took on norms without taking no part in the norm-making procedures of the EU. Therefore, Turkey was and still is a passive receiver of the EU norms which eventually reached to such a suppressing point where these norms degenerate national self-perception. The Turkish self-perception is further paralysed as negotiation process prolonged with no clear sight of a membership result. The current indications display that Turkey has weak appeal towards European sources and look for newer sources of self-identification. In that perspective Turkey is likely to appeal to an identity which provides more room for relations with Eastern neighbours and with Black sea countries.

To questions of how Ukraine's domestic balances are constructed vis-a-vis EU's norms and values, and how EU as an external dynamic contributed to Ukraine's internal constructions as a co-constructer, European discourse of Ukrainian parties provide indicators. These processes no doubt complex

Üniversitesi, Uluslararası İlişkiler Bölümü, Ortak Çalıştay Raporu, Mart 2006, (Where Turkey-EU-US relations are heading?, TEPAV-EPRI and University of TOBB Economy and Technology, Department of International Relations, Common Conference Report, March 2006).

which this study can not embark on due to limitations, however, study will suffice to evaluate on major domestic discourse.

When looked at the Ukraine's approach to EU the period since 2005 displays quite different features. Compared to the character of Ukraine's EU approach prior to 2005, the post-2005 EU discourse of Ukraine is relatively better founded and depended on a political base. During the period of the "Orange Revolution" pro-Western and pro-European discourse of Orange parties emerged as a crucial effort to re-construct a domestic Ukrainian identity which would re-introduce Ukrainian state to the international environment with a different image. No doubt this discourse was counter by pro-Eastern constructive agents and processes and contributed to the construction of Ukrainian identity in a continuously competitive manner. What is observed here is that this internal interaction produced an relatively more pro-European state identity due to upperhand of pro-Western political discourse in political mechanisms. While this upperhand provided some grounds for norm adoption in Ukraine, the pro-Western discourse is balanced by a strong pro-Eastern discourse. Additionally, in a similar vein with Turkey, internal problems and political turmoils in Ukraine limited the norm adoption capacity of Kiev and therefore, limited the norm diffusion of EU. Years since 2005 swept away high expectations of internal and external circles, who relied on pro-Western "Orange Revolution"¹². Despite expectations of many, "Orange Revolution" fall short of solving major part of domestic questions. The case of political power struggle between offices of presidency and prime ministry, during Victor Yanukovich's office as a prime minister, reflected the nature of internal painstaking dynamics of identity construction. No doubt, continuation of power struggle between presidency and prime ministry had its affect in slowing down the adoption of EU norms.

From EU's perspective, even though Brussels fostered sympathy towards Ukraine, during and immediately after "Orange Revolution", that sympathy did not offer Kiev a future membership promise. However, EU sufficed to further tailor the existent frameworks of interaction and focused further diffusion of EU norms to Ukraine. EU strongly sticks to its "Neighborhood" framework as the major platform for relations with Ukraine. The ENP document is a doubtlessly a tool of norm diffusion¹³.

¹² See Motyl, J. Alexander, *Failed States*, Vol. 29 (4), *Harvard International Review*, Winter 2008.

¹³ See Baracani, Elena, "The EU and Democracy Promotion: A Strategy of Democratization in the Framework of Neighbourhood Policy", Fulvio Attina and Rosa Rossi (eds.), *European Neighbourhood Policy: Political, Economic and*

To that effect, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, European Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy underlined that EU's "soft power" quality as a leverage to spread out European values¹⁴. These values stand for eventual *Europeanization*¹⁵. On the other hand, contrasting to EU's will to diffuse its norms via ENP platform, Ukraine officially rejects this tool of norm diffusion which essentially has no quality to bring future Union membership. Contending expectations of the both sides are constructing the nature of relations and will likely to stay as a determinant of relations of the two. Currently Ukraine perceives EU and Europe as overlapping conceptual constructs and based on that as much as EU constructs Ukraine as a neighbour it will initiate a paralyzation of Ukrainian pro-European rhetoric of "going back to Europe"¹⁶.

As long as EU does not provide Kiev the necessary platform which would contribute to both internal and external construction of Ukrainian identity, Ukraine is likely to fail in construction of a self identity with a western underpinnings. There is little question that appearance of Ukraine's EU fatigue will take quite a time, but Kiev's prolonging realization of EU membership will eventually weaken Ukrainian pro-European discourse and re-orient pro-European and pro-Western political actors in the country to alternative discourses of identity.

In the face of prolonging EU process and hardships of norm diffusion and in the face of a need for external source of a Ukrainian self construction, Ukraine may likely to follow the path that Turkey follow and gradually loose hopes for EU integration¹⁷. Based on this possibility we need to consider

Social Issues, Jean Monnet Centre, University of Catania, 2004. See also Borzel, T and Risse, Conceptualizing the Domestic Impact of Europe: In K. Featherstone and C. Radaelli (eds), *The Politics of Europeanization*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, pp. 57–80.

¹⁴ Speeches by EU Commissioner Benita Ferrero Waldner, "The European Neighbourhood Policy", Ref: Sp06-226EN, European Commission, Stockholm, 7 March 2006 and "The European Union and the World: A Hard look at Soft Power", Columbia University, New York, 24 September 2007.

¹⁵ For more argumentation on the concept of "Europeanization" see; Johan Olsen, "The Many Faces of Europeanization, ARENA Working Papers, 2002. Borzel, T. And Risse, Conceptualizing the Domestic Impact of Europe: In K. Featherstone and C. Radaelli (eds.), *The Politics of Europeanization*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 57–80.

¹⁶ Therefore, Ukraine Left out of the EU is left out of Europe.

¹⁷ In Ukraine EU aspiration is articulated as an essential process of Ukrainian national unity. Internally EU's image is constructed as a source of welfare, and

other available international platforms which may be activated to create norm orders and sources of external identification.

The BSEC as a Norm-Making Platform

This part looks at BSEC and evaluates on its future potential to make and diffuse norms. The initial motive behind the establishment of BSEC was to end East-West confrontation in the region and to develop closer relations among regional states. Therefore, to address regional problems at multinational platform Ankara and Kiev pioneered the establishment of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC). BSEC was perceived by the post-Communist regional states to be a tool of transition to market economy and platform for integration to global economy¹⁸.

In 1998, with the consensus reached at Yalta, BSEC re-designed as a full-fledged regional organization. This re-structuring on a new legal basis generated operational mechanisms for BSEC. These new mechanisms became operational in May 1999. The cooperation through BSEC served well in several aspects. First one is environmental issues. Black Sea Ecological Program became operational to reach lower levels of pollution in the Black Sea. Second successful aspect is measures taken against organized crime. The Cooperation in Combating Crime Declaration (1998) constituting the basis for cooperation on this question defined investigation, disclosure, prevention of acts of terrorism, organized crime, corruption, trafficking drugs and weapons as priorities. Third, aspect is cooperation in building communications substructure. Problems in this field addressed with the conduct of Trans-Asia Europe, Black Sea Fiber Optic Cable System, Trans Europe Telecommunication Project, Italy-Ukraine-Turkey-Russia Fiber Optic Project, Black Sea Fiber Optic Submarine Cable System and TransBalkan Link. Therefore, with these mechanisms in operation the organization has an acting floor for norm making and norm diffusion.

In the functioning of the organization and its norm making processes Turkey plays a leading role and tried to sustain increased regional cooperation.

since welfare is appealing for all eventually brings Ukrainian people together — who are divided on major national and international issues. From this aspect the way EU idea is constructed in Ukraine and Turkey differs. Although the Kemalist modernization process, was based on pro-European and pro-Western orientation, currently EU started to be seen as a threat to the unity of Turkey.

¹⁸ Gültekin, B., and Ayse Mumcu, Black Sea Economic Cooperation, in, V. Mastny and R. Craig Nation, (eds.), Turkey Between East and West: New Challenges for a Rising Regional Power. Westview Pres, 1996, p. 179.

This initiative of Turkey was based on the fact that Ankara considered itself as a regional leader after the end of the Cold War. Being at the intersection point of regions — Middle East, Southeastern Europe, Black Sea, Caspian Region — Turkey continues to claim special status with historical, economic and cultural access to the neighbouring regions. Being a member of BSEC, Turkey constructs itself as the critical and required actor in bringing stability to the region. Turkey's prolonging EU membership process turns BSEC platform for Turkey to contribute more into the regional norm creation process¹⁹.

At a period when regional states namely Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia, are threatened by a regional country, Russian Federation, BSEC's likelihood of becoming a platform for these countries to generate common norms and rules is increased. So far the weight of norm and rule diffusion, in the face of regional challenges, was put on EU and NATO enlargements. However, these organizations are internally and externally challenged by certain factors in their respective future enlargements. Since these organizations fail to import norms and rules to the Black Sea region the region is facing substantial instability. The EU alternative norm diffusion tools created, other than membership tool, are not satisfactory especially in the cases of Turkey and Ukraine. Further instability of Turkey and Ukraine, as larger and critical countries of the region, due to troubles in the norm diffusion processes has likelihood of troubling regional peace. Both countries are in need of external source to ensure domestic reforms, protection of state unity and modernization. Both of the countries are example of civilizational confusion, which further makes external sources of norms and values essential. Waiting for the non-promised EU membership is likely to create a *fatigue* which we can currently observe in Turkey. Therefore, the EU based constructive processes will be devoid of diffusing substantial normative order to these countries. In the face of this presumption BSEC is a potential platform in which full member Ukraine and Turkey can create a regional normative order, diffuse it to the region and construct their regional identities upon it.

So far, in the BSEC platform Ukraine and Turkey highlighted technological and social progress in support of the economic cooperation.

¹⁹ Aybak even brings forward Turkish initiative to establish a Black Sea Cooperation framework in the very beginning of 1990's, as an alternative initiative to stagnating EU prospects of Turkey. Turkey applied for EC membership in 1987 and received a negative response in 1989 with the declared Avis. See for the argumentation of Turkish attitude, Tunc Aybak, Black Sea Economic Cooperation and Turkey: Extending European Integration to the East?, in Tunc Aybak, (ed.), Politics of the Black Sea: Dynamics of Cooperation and Conflict, I. B. Tauris, 2001, p. 33.

Economic perspective of the cooperation is emphasized as a tool to transform region into a peaceful, stable and prosper space. Countries agreed that this could only be achieved by economic prosperity and interdependence. BSEC gradually becomes a platform for regional relations with its prospects for cooperation in transportation, communications, information, finance and ecology. Ankara and Kiev also shared the aim that BSEC would serve for peaceful settlement of disputes in the region.

Initially BSEC was not constructed as an alternative regional project to replace the Euro-Atlantic organizations. It was seen as a complementary organization to support the integration of the region with the rest of the continent and the World. This vision so far limited the horizons of the BSEC countries. However, BSEC is likely to appear as leverage for full integration of region to the world based on the norm construction process of its own. Regional norm creation process which naturally include Russian Federation may have higher chances to create its own order and balance the challenges and threats that are coming from within. Finally, Turkey and Ukraine which may stay outside of the EU may construct themselves an identity in which they may define their own dignity and be recognized as respectable partners and primary counterparts in world politics.