

# THE IMPACT OF ENERGY SECURITY ON TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY\*

## ENERJİ GÜVENLİĞİNİN TÜRK DIŞ POLİTİKASI ÜZERİNE ETKİSİ

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**Abstract:** *The emerging multi-polarity requires middle powers to redefine their security understanding. The current energy crisis in Europe after the Russia-Ukraine war put forth the importance of energy security for any international actor. The increased energy requirement of states grows steadily and energy resources have become an important element of foreign policy. Russia, as one of the leading global energy suppliers, has utilized its energy resources as a political tool in the international arena. The recent energy dispute between Russia and the European Union (EU) members confirms Russia's tendency to use energy as a weapon. Turkey has deep and complicated relations with both parties of this energy conflict and Turkey's foreign policy decisions are unavoidably affected by energy security concerns. On the one hand Turkey is a NATO member and a candidate country for the EU. On the other hand, Turkey is highly dependent on Russian energy resources. This paper aims to evaluate the interaction between the energy security concerns of Turkey and its foreign policy choices and argues that energy security has become a new dynamic for the decision-making process of Turkish foreign policy.*

**Keywords:** *Energy security, Turkish Foreign Policy, Russia-Ukraine War, European Union, multipolarity.*

**Öz:** *Çok kutuplu sisteme dönüş orta ölçekli güçlerin güvenlik anlayışlarını yeniden şekillendirmesini gerekli kılmaktadır. Rusya-Ukrayna Savaşı'nın akabinde yaşanan enerji krizi, uluslararası alandaki aktörlerin enerji güvenliğinin önemini bir kez daha ortaya koymuştur. Devletlerin enerji gereksinimlerinin artması da enerji kaynaklarını dış politikanın bir unsuru haline dönüştürmektedir. Önde gelen küresel bir enerji tedarikçisi olan Rusya, uluslararası alanda enerji kaynaklarını araçsallaştırmaktadır. Avrupa Birliği (AB) üyesi ülkelerle Rusya arasındaki güncel enerji krizi, Rusya'nın enerjiyi bir silah olarak kullanma tutumunu teyit eder niteliktedir. Türkiye ise, bu enerji çatışmasının taraflarıyla derin ve karmaşık ilişkilere sahiptir ve Türkiye'nin dış politika kararları kaçınılmaz olarak enerji güvenliği kaygılarından etkilenmektedir. Türkiye bir yandan NATO üyesi ve AB'ye aday ülke konumundadır. Diğer yandan enerji tedarikinde Rusya'ya önemli ölçüde bağımlı durumdadır. Bu çalışma Türkiye'nin enerji güvenliği kaygıları ile dış politika tercihleri arasındaki*

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*ilişkiyi ortaya koymayı amaçlamakta ve enerji güvenliğinin Türk dış politikasında yeni bir karar dinamiği olarak geliştiğini ileri sürmektedir. Anahtar Kelimeler: Enerji güvenliği, Türk Dış Politikası, Rusya-Ukrayna Savaşı, Avrupa Birliği, çok kutupluluk.*

## INTRODUCTION

Since Winston Churchill's decisive step to switch the Royal Navy from coal to oil to gain an advantage for the UK against the rival powers, the impact of energy resources on international actors' foreign policies has gradually increased. Today societies consume more energy in daily activities even when compared to a couple of decades before. Depletion of hydro-carbon resources is another vitally important problem that makes energy an issue of concern for all international actors. In recent years, the use of energy resources as a challenging instrument of foreign policy has become a debated topic in international relations. In particular, Russia's persistent use of its oil and natural gas resources as leverage in its relations with neighboring countries has demonstrated the complicated nature of the issue. In this context, the changing structure of the international system challenges most of the actors who consume more energy than they produce.

On this basis, this paper aims to study the impact of energy security on Turkish Foreign Policy by evaluating the recent energy crisis in Europe. As a net energy-consuming actor, Turkey is vulnerable in terms of energy security, which causes related problems in foreign policy. With its high level of energy dependency in a new era of rising major powers, Turkey needs consistent energy security priorities as a part of its foreign policy. This paper argues that Turkey's decisions on energy security issues are directly related to the EU's energy security which thus, unavoidably, affect the foreign policy choices of Turkey. The paper also claims that being dependent on a rising major power which, has salient interests in the region means that Turkey is at severe risk of entrapment.

Despite neighboring many major petro-states, Turkey is not a self-sufficient country in terms of hydrocarbon resources. It thus plans to improve energy diversification by constructing nuclear power plants as well as renewable energy resources. With its high level of energy dependency in a new era of rising major powers, Turkey needs consistent energy security priorities as a part of its foreign policy. Turkey is a NATO member and has been an EU candidate country for a very long time. Turkey's long-term relations with Western countries are, however, complicated by its role as an energy hub between the EU member states and energy suppliers. In this context, this paper aims to analyze the impact of the current international system and major actors' policies on Turkish foreign policy concerning energy security problems in Europe. Turkey's policy priorities to improve its energy security and diversification efforts are thus analyzed according to the changing nature of international politics.

## 1. ENERGY SECURITY AND FOREIGN POLICY

One of the most prominent examples of energy's primary impact on a country's status in the international arena is the decision of Winston Churchill, then First Lord of the Admiralty, to change the foundations of the Royal Navy from coal to oil (Higgins, 1974: 72). Although this critical move, which made the UK the most powerful naval

force at that time, was an impressive example of the role of energy security on foreign policy, the use of energy as a tool of foreign policy is a relatively new phenomenon. The energy crisis of the 1970s made it clear that energy resources could be used as leverage for foreign policy purposes<sup>1</sup>. Due to the political atmosphere developed after the Yom Kippur War, the Arab members of OPEC as well as Egypt and Syria declared a shocking oil embargo on countries supporting Israel. Those countries were mainly the United States, the then EEC members, and Japan. In this regard, Colgan (2013), in his examination of how natural resource extraction capability affects foreign policy, contends that oil-rich countries are more inclined to conflict than others. Since the 2000s, Russia has become the primary actor generally associated with “energy aggression”, mostly by using its natural gas reserves as a political tool.

The energy security question is naturally a very complex issue, particularly for those countries which suffer politically from the net energy deficit. The level of industrialization also has a strong impact on energy security. In other words, a state that has a considerable industrial capacity as a part of its economic activity and which can only produce limited energy by using its own hydro-carbon and/or renewable resources is seriously vulnerable when compared to self-sufficient states.

As confirmed by the events that took place during the recent war between Russia and Ukraine, industrially developed EU members have been heavily affected by the instrumentalization of energy resources as a part of foreign policy. Germany is one of those vulnerable states with a huge industrial capacity that cannot be supported by self-sufficient energy resources (IEA, 2023). Due to limited hydrocarbon resources, Germany’s energy production is mainly limited to nuclear and renewable resources. The leading power of the EU has a trivial oil and gas production capacity while coal production is comparably more lucrative for the German energy industry. With its leading innovative technological capacity, Germany invests in renewable energy resources more than any other European state. However, huge industrial capacities cannot be supported solely by using renewable energy production or applying energy efficiency measures.

Germany’s high level of energy dependency results in various foreign policy decisions diverging from other EU members. Miskimmon (2012: 402-3) contends that Germany’s abstention from the UN Security Council Resolution 1973 on the intervention in Libya resulted from a realist response based on threat perception. Because the crisis in Libya was not a direct threat to Germany’s national security, there was no clear interest in getting involved in the operation. Miskimmon also links Germany’s energy strategy, which prioritizes relations with Russia, to its abstention. Notably, Germany and Russia, together with India, Brazil and China, were the five members of the UNSC who abstained from the resolution on the situation in Libya.

Needless to say, Germany’s domestic political debates have been effective in its foreign decisions. Even after the annexation of Crimea by Russia, various parties and domestic groups with diverging interests and expectations in German politics declared

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<sup>1</sup> For a comprehensive analysis of the Arab world’s instrumentalization of oil resources for political influence, see Al\_Sowayegh (2023).

their support for a process of conciliation with Putin (Wood, 2019:772-775). By mentioning the complicated interests of the parties in the energy sector, Wood (2019: 782) also contended that “energy is a critical sector and one where political connections are being (re)forged”. Therefore, the impact of energy dependency on Russia’s resources, which shapes domestic political demand, was not only an important element of the decision in the case of Libya in particular, but also of Germany’s national energy security agenda in general.

This suggests that, for a comprehensive understanding of the role of energy in foreign policy, one should focus on Germany-Russia relations. Before the war, Russia was Germany's favorite trade partner, accounting for approximately 2,3% of total exports (Destatis, 2023). This figure makes sense since Germany gets more than one-third of its oil and gas from Russia. Its dependency on Russia’s energy resources makes Germany more sensitive in its relations with Russia. In 2014, Russia’s annexation of Crimea split the EU members; forming a decisive action against Russia has become a difficult task for the EU, as was the case regarding the US intervention in Iraq in 2003. In more concrete terms, many industrialists in Germany were anxious about tougher sanctions on Russia because of their economic interests (Evans, 2014). Therefore, Germany’s special relations with Russia, which are mostly based on energy security and trade concerns, have influenced its foreign policy choices at the global scale.

One of the most impressive factors that force Germany to conduct an energy-based foreign policy is the assertive energy strategy followed by Russia as a part of its foreign policy. Stanislaw (2009) argues that resource nationalism requires actors to revise their foreign policies accordingly even at the risk of contradicting their allies. He further contends that the impact of using energy resources as a tool of foreign policy is at its peak as far as EU members are concerned. In that sense, Germany is not alone within the EU, as most of the former Warsaw Pact members in particular are highly dependent on Russian gas and oil.

The United States has also been fully aware of the importance of energy in shaping foreign policy. Former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton stressed the risks associated with monopoly in the energy sector and argued that “anywhere in the world when one nation is overly dependent on another for its energy, that can jeopardize its political and economic independence” (Porter, 2012). Although Clinton did not directly mention Russia, it is clear that the US has had concerns about Russia's aggressive resurgence in the past decade.

The interest of the United States (US) in the Gulf region is another indicator of the political significance of energy resources, and notably, the 5<sup>th</sup> Fleet of the United States acts as a guardian of the Arabic peninsula, the Red Sea, and the Persian Gulf. Although the US has not been the main customer for the energy resources produced in the Middle East, the American presence in the region can be perceived as a warranty of energy security. This can perhaps explain why the US does not let any other major power dominate the region.

## 2. RUSSIA'S ENERGY STRATEGY: A TOOL FOR FOREIGN POLICY

Russia's energy strategy is mainly based on oil and natural gas, which have mostly been directed towards the EU member states since the 1960s. As a result of the economic crisis in Europe, the demand for supplies declined from 180 bcm in 2008 to 150 bcm in 2012. Gazprom's search for alternative markets, particularly in Asia, has not seemed to result in an alternative to the European energy market. The 2022 crisis confirmed to the Russians that replacing the European market would require substantial investment and time (Jordan and Husbands, 2023). In that sense, the energy relationship between the parties has long been based on mutual interdependence. The 2013 "EU-Russia Energy Roadmap 2050" was an important step that "sets out the main priorities for long-term cooperation in the energy sector, with a focus on a functioning and integrated network infrastructure and open, transparent, and competitive markets" (European Council, 2013: 2). This document was signed by the then Energy Commissioner Gunther Oettinger of Germany and Russian Minister for Energy Alexander Novak, which also implies Germany's sensitivity to energy politics. It is also noteworthy that Germany's former Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder was affiliated with Russia and its hydrocarbon industries. In short, although Russia had shown its intention to use energy as a foreign policy tool in the 2000s against Ukraine, various political and private actors in Germany were enthusiastic about energy cooperation with Russia before the Annexation of Crimea in 2014. However, being heavily dependent on Russia entails a risk of entrapment of foreign policy into energy issues.

Russia is not only a producer and exporter of energy resources but also imports oil and gas. In other words, Russia also acts as an energy transit country. Therefore, its policies towards others differs depending on their relationship. Russia has actively used energy as a political tool in its relations with the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) members. The energy-producing countries of Central Asia have been extremely dependent on the former Soviet pipeline system, which is currently under the control of Russia. On the other hand, energy consumers like Belarus or Ukraine have relied heavily on Russia's oil and gas as long as they can provide reasonable prices. When those former Soviet Union states failed to pay higher amounts -or engaged in policies that Moscow had not approved- energy cuts by Russia caused a crisis in relations between Russia and others. Russia also uses energy as a foreign policy tool against some EU members. Moreover, Russia had severe disputes with Belarus (Parfitt, 2007) and Ukraine (Stern, 2006; Parfitt, 2009). In addition, Russia's long oil embargo against the Lithuanian oil refinery Orlen Lietuva is a clear example of Russia's policy of using another type of resource in a way similar to its gas resources. (Grigas, 2014).

However, it should be kept in mind that using energy as a "carrot or stick" policy is risky, particularly for a country that has limited industrial capacity. As Huotari (2011) argues Russia's dependence on energy revenues would result in drastic consequences for its economy if the use of energy politics by Russia grows in an accelerated tendency. Similarly, the vice-president of the European Commission, Maros Sefcovic insisted on forming an energy union for a stronger position against Russia, arguing that integrating national energy markets and solidarity among EU members would strengthen the EU's negotiation capabilities (Dupakova, 2014). In this way, it could be possible to stop

Russia from using "its energy supplies as a political weapon and for blackmail purposes" (Traynor and Neslen, 2015).

### **3. A GREAT CHALLENGE: THE EU-RUSSIA ENERGY CONFRONTATION**

The initial signs of an energy confrontation between Russia and the EU are rooted in the early invasion of Ukraine by Russia in 2014 when the Russian leader Putin signed a treaty of accession with pro-Russian leaders of Crimea. Russia's reaction was perceived by some pundits as a part of the great power's reaction to a changing international system (Göral, 2015). Although all of the EU member states accepted the Russian move as a breach of international law, the early reaction of the EU was far from a strong condemnation and some member states were reluctant to impose serious sanctions against Russia, which caused discussions over the adequacy of EU steps to provide any desired results (Kurk, 2019). The initial EU reaction included personal sanctions, bans, and asset freezes as well as suspension of EU-Russia summits and bilateral meetings. Further restrictions covered economic sanctions on Crimea and Sevastopol as well as various sectors of Russia's economy. Since 2015, based on a European Council decision, the existing sanctions regime is aligned with the full implementation of the Minsk agreements.

The EU's response to Russia after the latter launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 was more decisive and collective when compared to the annexation in 2014. In addition to sanctions on Russian companies, bureaucrats, and business enterprises, the EU engaged in a difficult task with the decision to limit the energy resource supply originating from the Russian Federation (European Council, 2023). However, Khudaykulova et al. (2022: 45) remind us that diversification of natural gas is harder than oil and the EU's gas supplies might be affected by up to 40% due to the suspension of gas. According to the European Commission (European Commission, 2023), the import ban on oil imports from Russia has an impact on up to 90 percent of oil products, worth approximately €71 billion annually in 2021. Similarly, the EU's sanctions on Russian coal resources cost €8 billion annually to the Russian coal industry. The Commission declared in the same document that the EU further applies measures with long-term impact, i.e. (i) ban on exports of specific refining technologies; (ii) ban on new investment across the Russian energy sector; (iii) prohibiting Russian nationals or entities from booking gas storage capacity in the EU Member States, and last but not least a ban on pipeline oil import directed towards Poland and Germany. As for the natural gas trade with Russia, one of the most immediate sanctions is Germany's decision to suspend the approval process of the second phase of the controversial gigantic Nordstream pipeline project (Oltermann, 2022). Although the European countries are highly dependent on Russian gas, the share of gas transfer from Russia has gradually decreased since the outbreak of war (Koutsokosta, 2023). According to Bruegel's report, the flow of gas from the Nord Stream stopped by September 2022 and has not been restarted yet (Bruegel, 2023). Similarly, the gas flow from the Yamal Pipeline to Europe was halted in 2022. The same report also shows that a considerable portion of the market share lost by the Russians is compensated by increased LNG imports. Among others, the US is by far the leading LNG trade partner for the EU after the war started.

On the other hand, Russia responded with counter-sanctions to those sanctions imposed by the EU. As far as energy trade is concerned, Russia's initial move was to target the economic aspects. Buyers of natural gas based in 'unfriendly states' (all EU member states are considered on this list) were initially obliged to pay for gas in Russian rubles. Natural gas flows to some EU member states were stopped accordingly. Later on, Russia allowed natural gas buyers to pay in foreign currencies (Abay, 2022). Currently, the energy trade relations between the EU and Russia are mostly based on mutual interdependence. With the current diversification efforts of the Union, the member states are trying to relieve themselves from Russia's utilization of energy trade in foreign policy issues. However, it is not so simple for Russia to find an alternative market to the EU for its gas reserves. Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak declared that "Russia has every opportunity to resume the supplies" by using the currently unused Yamal-Europe pipeline (Knight and Pennington, 2022). Russia's policies clearly show that Russia is more vulnerable in the energy sector when compared to the EU.

The energy politics between the EU and Russia doubtless constitute a zero-sum game, in which all parties would suffer in a long-term conflict. Because of the higher energy prices, most of the EU countries have economic problems (Siemplenski Lefort, 2022), and the cost of living has increased for EU citizens (Partington, 2023). Furthermore, the solidarity among EU member states has been questioned as the economic burden negatively affects the EU and it becomes tougher to find common ground among EU members on any kind of decision targeting Russia (O'Donnell, 2022). A similar problem emerged when Hungary's Orban disregarded one of the core values of European integration by applying differentiated petrol prices to the benefit of vehicles with Hungarian license plates (Makszimov, 2022). Last but not least, Chen et al (2023: 3093) argue that the mutual sanctions on energy would result in a negative impact on the global carbon emission strategies. The German Federal Government's decision to reactivate coal power plants (Connoly, 2022) is a clear example of the negative impact of the energy sanctions on Europe.

Although the European countries have long been aware of the fact that energy is a critical issue that can be used by other powerful actors, Russia's 2022 policies made it clear that long-term precautionary measures are vitally important. Due to this prominent requirement, the European Commission prepared a new plan called RePowerEU, which is expected to provide long-term and permanent solutions to serious hardships and global energy market disruption resulting from Russia's invasion. The core elements of this plan consist of diversifying energy supplies, investing more in renewables, applying additional energy-saving measures, and securing affordable energy supplies by collectively applying standards. Among priority issues, new gas storage rules, reduction in gas use, prioritization of green transition, and price ceilings for gas transactions are worth mentioning. (European Commission, 2022)

The current energy crisis in Europe has once more confirmed that the use of energy resources for political purposes is a critical problem for those countries that have an energy security deficiency. It is necessary to strengthen energy security by ensuring supplier and resource diversification. Although the EU in general and most of the member states in particular are fully aware of this fact, a reliable diversification process is a difficult task to achieve. Turkey, similar to its European allies, has certain problems with concerning supplier diversification and energy mix.

#### 4. ENERGY SECURITY AND TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY

The peculiar nature of the current international system and the energy requirements of contemporary societies make it almost impossible to form a reasonable foreign policy without considering energy security. The increasing tendency towards a balanced unipolarity requires middle-power actors to make serious decisions for state survival. Thus, as a regionally active middle power, Turkey's energy security policies may critically affect the country's foreign affairs.

##### 4.1. Turkey's Energy Outlook

Turkey is geographically located in a region where most of the global gas and oil reserves are produced or transferred. Despite Turkey's oil and gas-rich neighborhoods in the north, east, and south of the country, the proven reserves of oil and gas in Turkey are insufficient to sustain the national demand. Therefore, Turkey -as a rapidly developing economy- needs external energy resources to meet the demands of its growing economy and population.

For this purpose, Turkey is engaged in an assertive energy policy, which entails being an energy hub between producers and consumers. Presented as the fourth energy corridor for Europe, Turkey has been eager to be a bridge between European countries and hydro-carbon resources produced in the Middle Eastern, Caspian, and Central Asian countries. Several projects, including the “notorious” Nabucco Project, have appeared on the agenda so far, yet few have currently been achieved. Among Turkey's main achievements in terms of energy transfer is that of Azeri natural gas, which is carried through the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum Pipeline to Greece. However, the delivery to Greece is vulnerable for various reasons. For instance, gas flow once was stopped due to the economic crisis in Greece (Rzayeva, 2015). Another prominent achievement is the Turkstream Pipeline Project (TPP), which carries up to 31.5 billion cubic meters of Russian gas to south and southeast Europe (Project, 2023).

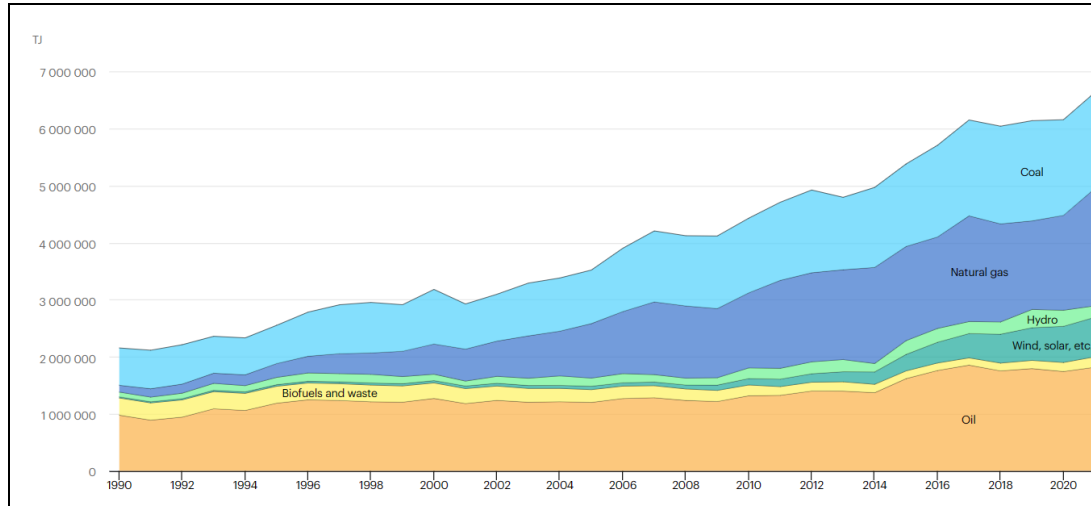
In addition to investments in its role as a regional energy hub, Turkey has also concluded agreements with energy producers to meet its internal energy demand. The consistently growing economy in Turkey, as well as shift to natural gas both for electricity production and heating systems, required Turkey to search for alternative energy supplies. Regarding the diversification of suppliers, Turkey has concluded natural gas agreements with neighboring countries including Iran and Azerbaijan. However, Turkey is still highly dependent on Russian natural gas, which is mostly carried through the Blue Stream Pipeline and TPP. In addition to external resources, Turkey's offshore drilling in recent years has provided potential results, particularly in the Black Sea region. The dispute in the Eastern Mediterranean over energy resources, however, means that this can contribute to Turkey's energy security only in the long term.

Turkey's current level of energy mix and supplier diversification is thus not a favorable one, which entails the risks of failure in the supply of necessary resources. In



that sense, like the EU, Turkey is also open to potential energy threats by any of its suppliers. To form a more sustainable energy supply, Turkey is trying to diversify the supplies of hydro-carbon resources, particularly the natural gas suppliers. Moreover, Turkey is also trying to improve its energy mix by including nuclear power plants and renewables. As shown in Figure 1, the share of natural gas and alternative energy sources has increased sharply during the last two decades.

**Figure 1. Total energy supply (TES) by source, Republic of Türkiye 1990-2021**



Source: International Energy Agency, <https://www.iea.org/countries/turkiye>.

In addition to increased shares of natural gas and alternative energy sources in the energy mix, Turkey enhanced its energy spectrum to include nuclear power plants as well. Russia's Rosatom built and operates Turkey's first nuclear power plant in Mersin and is negotiating with Russia for a second nuclear power plant in the north of Turkey (Ozsoy, 2022).

#### 4.2. Impact of Energy Issues on Turkish Foreign Policy

Turkey has always been seriously affected by moves in the global energy game. In the 1970s, Turkey was indirectly affected when global oil prices suddenly increased incredibly. Turkey's economy was extremely vulnerable at that time, and the economy and the social life of the Turkish people continued to be affected throughout the 1970s. During the Gulf War, on the other hand, Turkey was only partially affected by oil politics, losing its transit revenues when the Kirkuk-Ceyhan Pipeline was suspended.

However, Turkey has not always been negatively affected by energy politics. One of the most ambitious pipeline projects, the Baku Tbilisi Ceyhan (BTC) Pipeline, was achieved with the strong commitment of the United States. The US support for the project was mostly motivated by international political reasons rather than being solely an economic project. These particular cases confirm that the correlation between foreign policy choice and energy security concerns is an unavoidable element of Turkey's foreign policy. In other words, energy security influences Turkey's foreign policy

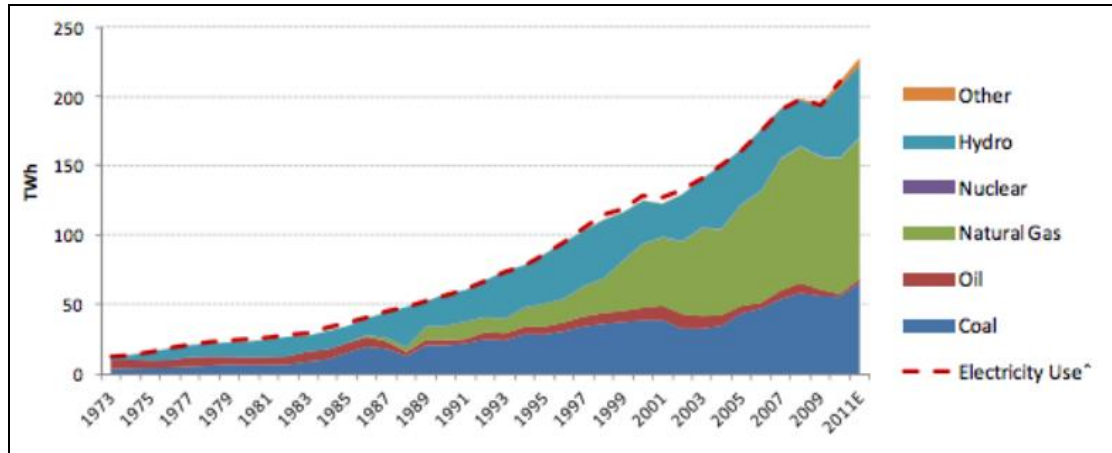
priorities and Turkey's foreign relations with other actors affect Turkey's energy security. In previous cases, Turkey's foreign policy was often the decisive factor as the independent variable, where energy security was the dependent variable. Therefore, in a changed global order, Turkey's foreign policy priorities and its energy security concerns may act interchangeably as independent variables.

#### **4.3. Ambitious Energy Policies: Support for or Constraint on Turkey's Foreign Policy**

As a consequence of its energy security priorities in the previous decade, Turkey finds itself in a challenging situation in terms of foreign policy. Since the inauguration of the Blue Stream Pipeline in 2003 Turkey's energy dependency on Russia has increased. The Turkstream pipeline further increased Turkey's natural gas pipeline dependence on a single actor. Turkey has a growing tendency towards the use of natural gas as a source of electricity production and heating. Even in the 2010s, the total consumption of natural gas in Turkey reached slightly less than 50 billion cubic meters in 2014. Almost 99 percent of the natural gas is provided from external sources, of which 60 percent of the imports are delivered by Russia. In that regard, Turkey constituted the second-largest natural gas market for Russia's Gazprom after Germany. (Turkey, 2015) As of 2022, Germany still leads with 42.6 billion cubic meters (bcm) while Italy, Beluras, and Turkey follow with 29.2 bcm, 18.8 bcm and 16.2 bcm respectively (Sommerlad, 2022). Furthermore, Russia's President Vladimir Putin explicitly mentioned Turkey's new role as an energy hub for Russia's hydro-carbon resources (Sofuoğlu, 2022).

Being highly dependent on Russia entails a serious risk of inaction regarding policies concerning Russia. One of the most salient examples of Turkey's inability to act against Russia is the embargo implemented on Russia by the Western world. Once it acted together with its Western partners, Turkey could only condemn Russia for the annexation of Crimea and declared the situation as an unacceptable act. After Russia's annexation of Crimea, the EU and US have implemented diplomatic and restrictive measures and sanctions on Russia as well as restrictions on major Russian corporations. Turkey preferred not to join the Western embargo on Russia and benefited from the situation particularly via tourism revenues and agricultural exports (Sarıkaya, 2014). Turkey's indifference to Western solidarity can be evaluated from different perspectives. Non-compliance with Western sanctions against Russia brought economic advantages. However, it is not possible to explain Turkey's decision only by economic concerns. During the Gulf War, Turkey imposed sanctions on Iraq despite great losses of revenues from oil transit fees. Energy security concerns in a multi-polar global order may indeed explain Turkey's reluctance to implement sanctions on and restrictive measures against Russia, as imposing restrictions on Russia might result in a counter-action by Russia.

In more concrete terms, any energy cut by Russia either in the form of a sanction or technical failure would result in two main drastic consequences for Turkey. First, in the most densely populated cities of Turkey residential heating systems have been converted to natural gas since the mid-1990s. Therefore, any reciprocal energy sanction by Russia would result in great social problems in Turkey.

**Figure 2. Electricity Generation in Turkey (by Fuel Source)**

Source: Oil and Gas Security, 2013.

Second, Turkey's energy consumption has increased because of the increased electricity consumption. As shown in Figure 2, Turkey's electricity demand is primarily supplied by the transformation of natural gas. The share of natural gas in the country's total energy supply sharply increased from 5% in 1990 to 32% in 2011. The industry also demands slightly more natural gas than residential use. (Oil and Gas Security, 2013) All these data confirm that any natural gas shortage in Turkey would result in drastic social and economic consequences in the country.

Another case that demonstrates the negative effects of Turkey's energy dependency on Turkish foreign policy is the crisis in Syria. Supporting the rival parties in the Syrian civil war, Turkey and Russia had different priorities regarding international intervention. Turkey insists on the necessity of a no-fly zone and safe havens in Northern Syria to protect its borders from instability originating from Syria, control refugee flow, and protect areas held by the opposition (Cagaptay and Tabler, 2014). On the other hand, Russia argues that a no-fly zone would breach Syrian sovereignty and conflict with international law (Abu-Nasr and Arkhipov, 2015). As a result of their different approaches to the crisis in Syria, the tension between Turkey and Russia escalated, culminated in certain events. In one of those events, Russian jet fighters violated Turkey's territory, leading Turkey to declare that an unidentified jet locked its radar onto Turkish fighter jets (Syria Conflict..., 2015). Although Russia rejected that it was harassing Turkish F-16 fighters and blamed adverse weather conditions for the border violations, NATO and Turkey were concerned with Russia's irresponsible and deliberate actions (Barnes, et al., 2015). However, after these breaches of its territory by Russian jet fighters, Turkey did not respond directly. In the last two years, Turkey shot down a Syrian military helicopter in 2013 and another jet fighter in 2014. There was no hesitation in Turkey's decision to shoot Syrian aircraft. However, Turkey preferred not to shot down the Russian planes although they breached Turkish territory twice. Turkey's most prominent response to the violation was Turkish President Erdogan's clear warning to Russia at a meeting in Brussels, against losing Turkey's cooperation. After Russia's harsh economic sanctions on Turkey, a formal apology was issued by Turkey (Stubbs and Solovyov, 2016) to maintain friendly relations with its primary energy supplier.

## CONCLUSION

Due to the gradual change in the international political system, Turkey faces serious security challenges in a multi-polar world order. Turkey naturally enjoys being a regional power with considerable capabilities in terms of population, industrial capacity, geographical location, and military power. However, the lack of sufficient energy resources complicates Turkey's foreign policy options, putting it in a similar situation to its long-term allies in Europe. As current experience in Europe demonstrates, Russia has been inclined to intentionally use energy as strategic leverage. In the last decade, Turkey also faced Russia's harsh policies in a few instances. Therefore, the impact of energy dependency on Turkey's foreign policy cannot be disregarded as far as relations with Russia are considered.

To be relieved from this complicated energy pitfall, Turkey has to improve its diversification efforts immediately. Turkey's long-term allies, the EU members, have already engaged in policies that are helping to improve energy security in the face of the Russian threat. Currently, Turkey's close relationship with Russia in terms of energy allows the country to be less anxious about the natural gas supply. However, Russia's policies may change suddenly, as many previous examples can confirm.

Diversification through supplier proliferation may be a solution, yet this entails certain risks. It should be kept in mind that Iran, as an alternative natural gas supplier, is another international actor that plays the energy card in its foreign policy. Therefore, relying more on Iran is not an alternative to Russia. In that sense, Turkey may invest in LNG terminals to mitigate its dependence on a neighboring energy supplier. Otherwise, the number of examples in which Turkey cannot react promptly and actively in troubled times will increase compared to the previous periods.

Similarly, Turkey may invest in other types of energy resources. As far as renewables and other alternative energy sources are concerned, Turkey may also benefit from certain EU funds, which target EU solidarity against Russia. Last but not least, Turkey's nuclear energy policy should also be revised to improve supplier diversification. As long as Russia has large shares in Turkey's nuclear power plants, Turkey's efforts for supplier diversification are less meaningful.

In short, in a global order where multi-polar actors search for more power, it is very difficult for regional actors to provide, and benefit from, security. Since Russia has emerged as a great power in a multi-polar global order, Russia's leadership is expected to frequently use energy as a foreign policy tool. Turkey, like all the mid-power EU countries, shares the risk of entrapment in a conflict between Russia and the other great power: the United States. There are two options both for Turkey and the EU member states to free themselves from entrapment in others' conflicts. The first one is to put an end to the current alliance structure and withdraw from NATO, in order to build a new alliance with Moscow. The second option is to improve energy security and develop alternatives to Russian resources. As a final remark, energy security concerns are currently the decisive factor affecting Turkey's and EU member states' foreign policy decisions.

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